

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

**MASTER OF ARTS-POLITICAL SCIENCE
SEMESTER -II**

**INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT
SOFT CORE-203
BLOCK-2**

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 endeavours.



INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Unit- 3:Salient Features Of Modern Indian Political Thought

Unit-4: Early Nationalist Response

Unit-5: Moderates And Extremists: Dadabhai Naoroji, Ranade And Tilak

Unit-6 Hinduism : Swami Vivekananda And Sri Aurobindo Ghosh

Unit - 7: Hindutva: V. D. Savarkar And M. S. Golwalkar

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UNIT - 8 Muslim Thoughts and contribution In Modern India, Views on Hindu Muslim Unity and Jinnah Thoughts and Philosophy and Two Nations Theory.

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UNIT - 10: Nehru's Theory of Culture and Political Ideas. Views on Nationalism and Democracy. Administration in Indian Politics and International outlook.

UNIT - 11: Ambedkar's View on the British Rule in India. Administration and Political Views, Democracy and socialism. and Indian Constitution.

UNIT - 12: Rabindranath Tagore Freedom Theory and Philosophy. Difference with Gandhi and Tagore and Human Reason.

UNIT: 13: Rammanohar Lohia and Jaypraksh Narayan Thoughts and Philosophy and Socialist movement in India, Program and Policies.

UNIT - 14: to understand the concept of Orientalism and the question of modernity and its colonial roots in India, Liberal ideas and Indian constitution in 19th century.

UNIT-8: MUSLIM THOUGHT: SIR SYED AHMED KHAN, MOHAMMEDIQBAL, MAULANA MAUDOQDLL AND MOHAMMED ABL JLNNAH

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8.0 OBJECTIVE

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Know about Muslim thoughts in Indian politics

Notes

- Muslim contribution in Indian education
- Know about Hindu and Muslim Unity and Ideology
- Explain about Md. Ali Jinnah's thoughts.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Muslim thought in modern India can be understood properly only in its larger historical setting. It is important to note that the evolution of the Muslim political thought was a complex phenomenon involving historical context of the Muslims' social, cultural and political life and interactive process with the colonial rule which had been established in India particularly in the aftermath of the Revolt of 1857. Several issues had emerged, such as relative backwardness of Muslim in relation to modern tendencies which had come in the wake of the establishment of the colonial rule. The question of accommodation of various social groups including Muslim in the existing and future power structures became an important issue which was widely debated among all groups. Equally important was the issue of religion- cultural identity of various communities which went through a process of redefinition in the late nineteenth century as well as the first half of the twentieth century. All these issues emerged over the years with varying responses from different social groups which, in the long run, affected inter-community relations. These developments also affected the political processes which) were unfolding in the course of an articulation of anti-colonial nationalist ideology.

While all these issues were matter of concern for all, it is important to recognize that the response of the Muslim to all these issues was not uniform but varied since the Muslims did not constitute a monolithic community. The Muslims were divided on lines of language, region and class as any other religious community. When a community is vertically as well as horizontally divided, the response to any issue would most certainly be as divided. It is vitally important to recognize that thoughts of several leaders, that we shall be shortly discussing, can only be seen in their evolutionary

perspectives since they were not fixed in a timeframe and were constantly evolving. In the course of evolution of the thoughts of the person under discussion we shall discover that in certain respects there is continuity while in others there is a contradiction. The contradiction and continuity may be seen as the running thread in the thoughts of all those under discussion. It is up to the readers to discern the meaning of those thoughts in historical time.

8.2 SIR SYED AHMAD KHAN (1817-1898)

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was one of the most formidable figures of the late nineteenth century India. He emerged on the Indian scene as one of the great reformers, educationist and modernizer within the Muslim community. He was born on 17th October 1817 in one of the respected families associated with the Mughal court. Sir Syed was a direct witness to the declining fortunes of the Mughals and was conscious about the fact that while the glory of the Mughals was as good as gone, the political force which was gaining ground was that of the British. In any case, the British East India Company had already gained tremendous power in the eastern part of India in the second half of the eighteenth century. Gradually it had been spreading its influence in other parts of India as well. The British had started knocking on the doors of Delhi under the Mughals and by 1803 they had succeeded in confining the Mughal rulers within the precincts of the Qila-i-Muazzam (The Red Fort). It was a part of the growing experience of Syed Ahmad Khan to have seen that the Mughals were surviving on the suffrage of the British since 1803. It is not surprising therefore that Syed Ahmad Khan took a minor post with the British at the age of twenty one years despite some opposition in the family. Subsequently he passed the examination of the Munsif and was appointed at Mainpuri. In 1842 he was transferred to Fatehpur Sikri and in 1846 re-posted at Delhi and stayed here for about nine years. During his stay at Delhi he engaged himself in academic pursuits and apart from other things; he produced an important work *Asar-us-Sanadeed*, a monumental work on the monuments of Delhi which was widely

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acclaimed. Later in 1855 he was given promotion and appointed as Sadr Amin at Bijnor. While Sir Syed was posted here at Bijnor, the Revolt of 1857 broke out which had shaken the British. In 1857 at Bijnor, Sir Syed had played an active role in saving the lives of several British officers. In this Revolt Sir Syed's family too suffered loss of some family members and was able to take his mother and aunt to safety in Merrut with great difficulty.

Sir Syed, having seen the Revolt and subsequently its brutal suppression by the British, was convinced that the British were too powerful and any attempt to resist them might not be fruitful at all. From this time onwards, the British started suspecting the Muslims at large as they were violently opposed to them (British). As a consequence of such an approach, the Muslims were treated more harshly than any other social group involved in this revolt. The prospects looked bleak as regards the collective lives of the Muslim in India, Sir Syed took it upon him to bring about reconciliation between the Muslims and the British. In the immediate aftermath of the Revolt, Sir Syed wrote several pamphlets (Booklets) on various issues concerning the Revolt. The first was, *Tmikh-i-Sarkashiye Bijnor*, with a narrative of the developments as regards the Revolt. However more important was his *Asbab-i- Baghawat-i- Hind* published in 1858, in which he tried to explain various underlying causes of the Revolt. However, his central argument was that the Revolt came about because the British were entirely unaware of the Indian opinion since Indians were deliberately kept out of the governance of their country. He argued, as if addressing the government of the day, that, "It is from voice of the people that the government can learn whether its projects are likely to be well received. This security can never be acquired unless the people are allowed a share in the consultation of government." It is difficult to establish any co-relation but the fact remains that within a short time, Indians were to be incorporated in the Governor- General's Council as per the provisions of the Indian Council Act of 1861.

After having convinced the British that it would serve their interests to take Indian opinion too in the governance of India, he wrote another pamphlet,

The Loyal Mohommedans of India in 1860, in which he argued that it was not true that all the Muslims were the enemy of the British as enumerated, that there were several Muslims who had stood by the British during the tumultuous days of the Revolt. From this time onwards, Sir Syed devoted his entire life to bring about reconciliation between the British and the Muslim. However it was clear to him that his attempts at reconciliation would not bear fruits unless the Muslims' attitude towards many modern institutions such as modern education including science etc., undergo some transformation.

8.2.1 Contribution to Modern Education

Sir Syed was, by now, convinced that in order to stem the declining fortunes of the Muslims, it was important that they took to modern education as it was introduced by the British. With this purpose in mind, he founded the Scientific Society in 1863 at Ghazipur, in Uttar Pradesh. The basic objective was to translate scientific literature, into Urdu. In this project, he was supported by all including several Hindu friends, The subjects such as mechanics, electricity, pneumatics and natural philosophy received particular emphasis. Subsequently, this society was shifted to Aligarh. In 1866, Sir Syed started a journal on behalf of the Society called the Indian Institute Gazette. During 1869-70, he travelled to England and was able to observe the British educational institutions and was impressed by them. Upon his return from this extended journey he developed an idea that in order to improve educational standards of the Muslims of India, there must be modern educational institutions for them. This was the larger objective in mind with which he founded Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental (MAO) College in 1875/ 1877. It was proposed that here, while modern education would be imparted to the Muslims, they would also have some training in the preservation of their cultural heritage. It is interesting to note that while MAO College was founded for Muslims, its doors were open to all. Many graduates in the early years of this college were Hindus. He also wanted the Indian Muslims to bring about reforms in their society with the help of a

magazine called Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq, in which he ridiculed many practices which were out of tune with modern trends of the time. For all his efforts to reconcile the Muslims with the British, modern education, his advocacy for fresh interpretation of the Quran and keeping the door of the MAO College open to all, he was fiercely attacked by the conservative Muslims. He remained undaunted in his endeavour.

8.2.2 Hindu Muslim Unity

Sir Syed was also a champion of the Hindu-Muslim unity. He had once described the Hindus and Muslims as two beautiful eyes of a beautiful bride. He wrote two essays in Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq, one in 1888 and another in 1898 exhorting Muslims to give up killing of cows since this would bring about a good neighborly relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. There were innumerable occasions when he strongly advocated for this unity between the two important religious communities.

While these were some aspects of the various thoughts of Sir Syed where he was committed to larger wellbeing of the Muslims, there were certain other aspects as well where he seemed to suggest distinct political options for the Muslims and did not wish them ever to come closer to the Congress. Some of these tendencies were visible from the time the movement to replace Urdu in Persian script with that of Hindi in Nagari script had emerged in the United Provinces in 1867. The protagonist of this movement had argued that Urdu was not the language of the masses as Hindi was, and thus, such a demand was raised. Sir Syed was disturbed by such a development since he was himself given to use Urdu extensively in producing all kinds of literature and treatises. This sudden development on the language and script question led him to argue that, "Now I am convinced that these two nations will not work unitedly in any cause. At present there is no hostility between them. But, on account of the so called educated people it will increase a hundred fold in the future." Later, in a letter dated 20th April 1870 to Nawab Mohsinul Mulk he wrote, "This is proposal which will make Hindu-Muslim unity impossible to achieve. Muslims will never agree to Hindi and if the

Hindus, in accordance with their latest attitude, insist on India, they will reject Urdu. The inevitable consequence of such a move will be that the two will be permanently separated."

In the political realm too, Sir Syed did not have any conception of bringing religious communities together for certain political action. On the contrary he maintained that these communities would have distinct political options separate from each other. This was the driving force which made him argue that the Indian National Congress was not in the best interest of the community of Muslims. He thought the Congress was likely to take a confrontational insistence in due course of time, which it would be curious to the interest of the Muslims since they had already suffered as a consequence of the Revolt of 1857. He further thought that a ruler passing resolutions by the Congress did not make it national in character. In general he argued with Muslims that they should keep away from the Congress. Sir Syed was also opposed to the principle of election even for the local boards and district boards. He argued 'that keeping in view the social differences that existed in the Indian society, it would be imprudent to introduce the principle of elections. He suffered from a strange fear that, in the event of elections, various religious communities would vote for leaders of the respective communities which would result in the political nomination of the Muslims. Instead he favoured the principle of nomination which would ensure certain representation of Muslims too. In making these arguments, Sir Syed betrayed certain elite bias. He himself was nominated to the Imperial Legislative Council in 1878.

It is another matter altogether that there were not many among Muslims who paid heed to his exhortations. For instance, Badruddin Tayabji refuted Sir Syed's argument and said that Muslims' interest would be better served by advancing the general progress of India. There were scores of Muslim delegates participating in the proceedings of the Indian National Congress since 1887 and many of them came from the same province 'as Sir Syed's.

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The Ulema of Darul Uloom at Deoband were issuing Fatwas exhorting Muslims to join the Congress.

It is important to remember that in a country such as India where diversity of all hues existed for such a long time, religious communities were no exception. Every community threw up diverse options keeping in mind the class, linguistic, regional and other backgrounds in mind. After all Sir Syed was not preaching any hatred between communities. However his major concerns were to promote the interests of the Muslims at large particularly the established groups. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan died on 27th March 1898.

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. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's views on Hindu-Muslim Unity.

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8.3 MOHAMMED IQBAL (1876-1938)

Mohammad Iqbal is commonly referred to as Allama Iqbal for the reason that he was considered as one of the important intellectuals among the Muslims in the first half of the twentieth century. Even though he is widely known for his Urdu and Persian poetry, he was a practitioner of the politics as well. Between his poetry and politics, he was able to blend elements of philosophy as well, in which he had received training in Germany in the beginning of the twentieth century. He started his career as a poet rather early in life who, later on, acquired immense maturity. He is one of the few

Urdu poets whose compositions required prior initiation for better comprehension. However, in this section, we shall concern ourselves more with his social, cultural and political world view than his poetry.

8.3.1 Early Life

Mohaminad Iqbal was born on 22nd February 1873 at Sialkot, in Punjab. His forefathers were Kashmiri Brahmins who had embraced Islam about three hundred years ago. Mohainmad Iqbal looked at his ancestry with pride and gave enough reflection to it in his poetry as well. His initial education was in a traditional Maktab Latei he joined Sialkot Mission School and upon completing matriculation, he went to Lahore for higher studies and joined the Government College there and completed his B.A. in 1897. Two years later, he secured his Masters' degree and was appointed as a lecturer in the Oriental College, Lahore to teach History, Philosophy and English where he served between 1899 and 1905. He went to Europe and secured a Ph.D at Munich and returned to Lahore in 1908. In the course of his stay in Europe, he also obtained degree to practice as a barrister.

8.3.2 Ideas On Nationalism

Before Mohammad Iqbal had visited Europe he was given to espouse a rather strong sense of patriotism. For instance his famous song Sure Jahan se Achcka Hindustan Hunzara was the ultimate tribute to the motherland, India. His poem, NayaShivala too was an example of sincere exhortations to his countrymen to give up petty-mindedness and develop broader vision and perspective about the corporate life as Indians. However, upon his return from Europe he seemed to develop some distaste for nationalism because of the way various European nations were pursuing this, The period he was in Europe was truly an age of aggressive nationalism. Nations were attempting to run down each other. Such observations of Iqbal led him to believe that nationalism was too narrow an ideology to make an ideal of human and territorial groups. However, the point that must be noted here is that nationalism in a colonial society such as India was not directed towards dominating any other nation but seek liberation from colonial rule and exploitation at the hands of the British. The Indian nationalism, as it was

unfolding in the course of its evolution, was more progressive than jingoistic.

8.3.3 Political Activities

While Iqbal had his one step firmly rooted in poetry and philosophy, his second step gradually started setting into the world of politics as well. He had become familiar with the Muslim League propagation of the demand for separate electorates while he was still in England in 1906. After his return to India in 1908, he joined the provincial Muslim League in Punjab. From this time onwards, Iqbal's concerns remained only with the promotion of the Muslims' interests. In order to engage himself in this exercise, he argued with Muslims that there was no point in opposing the British. He disagreed with the Muslim individuals and groups who were active in the freedom struggle and accused them of harbouring too much of the Western ideas which he thought the nationalism were. In 1909, he argued that for Muslims, the basis for nationhood was Islam itself, since nationality for Muslims was not based on material and concrete notion of such a country in terms of certain physical embodiments. Iqbal argued that in Islam the essence was 'non-temporal' and 'non-spatial' and could not be bound by character and features of a particular social group alone. The question of nationality in Islam was based on abstraction and potentially expansive groups. The values of collective life for the Muslims were based on firm grasp of the principles of Islam. Iqbal believed that Islam was a potent source to challenge the 'race-idea', which had proved to be the hardest barrier in actualising the humanitarian ideal; therefore, the Muslims must reject it. He asserted that Islam was non-territorial and believed in encompassing the entire humanity, thus rejected the limited and narrower boundaries. He asserted that the 'idea of nation' as some kind of principle of human society was in direct clash with Islam since it believed in the principle of human society. In the course of articulation of his political philosophy, he disagreed with those who believed that religion could coexist with political nationalism. He asserted that in a country such as India where different faiths existed, making the land or geographical territory as the basis of nationhood would, in the long run, result in undermining the religion itself because in the event of such a

development, Islam will be reduced to mere 'ethical ideal', without its accompanying 'social order'.

Iqbal was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1927 and actively participated in the debates of the Assembly. While participating in the Budget discussion on 5th March 1927, he pleaded for more allocation for rural sanitation and medical relief for women. In the course of the proceedings of the House, he also pleaded for more funds for mass education, which he thought was absolutely essential in the interest of the people. However, at the same time, ' Iqbal was keen that Muslims should develop their own educational institutions without which their history and cultural achievements would be overshadowed. On various occasions in the Assembly debates, he kept on emphasizing that to talk about united nationalism was a futile exercise since all the communities were more concerned about their exclusive interests rather than the 'national' interests. All through he never allowed his focus shift away from this position.

In the wake of the communal riots in Punjab in 1927, he pleaded for harmony among the communities. While Iqbal was a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly he was elected the Secretary of the All India Muslim League. But he soon ran into differences with many leaders of the League on the issue of the boycott of the Simon Commission, which was an all-white commission for making suggestions to bring about constitutional changes in the existing Government of India Act 1919. He left the Secretary ship of the League but continued to remain loyal to the ideology and large principles of the party. Later in 1930 he was invited to preside over the session of the Muslim League at Allahabad. In this session he delivered a speech which was to have delineated certain options which hitherto was not envisaged by anybody else. He argued, "To base a constitution on the conception of a homogeneous India, or apply to India principles dictated by British democratic sentiments is utopianly to prepare her for a civil war. The formation of a consolidated North-West Muslim Indian states appears to be the final destiny of Muslims, at least of North-West India, I therefore demand the formation of a consolidated Muslim state in the best interest of

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India and Islam." This statement of Mohamad Iqbal in a way contradicted much of what he was saying since the beginning of 1909 that Islam and many of its principles could not be kept confined to any geographical limits since they were expansive in nature. But his new set of ideas was to become an ideological reference point for the League in times to come.

However, it has to be noted that Iqbal did not maintain consistency in his formulations on the question of nationalism. In March 1933 he remarked that nationalism implied certain race consciousness which was against the grain of his conviction. He argued that if such a consciousness was allowed to take place in the Asian context, it was recipe for some kind of disaster. Again in 1938 he argued that it was not the national unity but human brotherhood alone was the unifying force for the mankind since such a thing would be above the considerations of race, colour, language and nationality. He believed that in order to achieve higher goals of humanity, it was important to blur these distinctions. He reiterated the same principles in his response to Husain Ahinad Madani's argument for territorial nationalism encompassing all religious communities of India. While Iqbal was arguing for a universal brotherhood, according to him, it was to be based on his conviction that it was [Islam alone which would provide sue11 a ground. It is not difficult to discern therefore, certain contradictions in his world-view of universal brotherhood based only on Islam, thus leaving out all other philosophy for similar options. Another glaring contradiction that we can notice is that his universalism was tampered with an argument for the Muslims maintaining their separate identity in a clearly demarcated geographical area.

Iqbal's participation in the contemporary political process was full of contradiction and inconsistencies. However his contributions in the realm of poetic creativity were for more - enduring. He breathed his last on 21"April 1938.

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. Summaries Mohammad Iqbal's ideas on Nationalism and his contribution to the Muslim Thought.

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8.4 MAULANA MAUDOUDI (1903-1979)

Syed AbulA'laMaududi popularly known as Maulana Maududi, is one of the greatest revivalists of Islam in the 20d1 century. Apart from having produced a large number of literature concerning Islam and Muslims, he was the founder of the Jamat-i-Islami in 1941. Maulana Maududi was born on 2nd September 1903 in a devout Muslim family of Aurangabad, in the present day Maharashtra. His educational training was steeped in Islamic studies right from the beginning. Towards the close of the second decade of the twentieth century he was

drawn to the nationalist movement in the wake of the on-cooperation-Khilafat movement and was impressed by Gandhi's work so much that he wrote a book on his personality and work but it was confiscated by the British Government. After a brief stint with a paper called Taj at Jabalpur, he came in contact with Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind a body of Muslim theologians committed to the cause of Indian's struggle for independence, which was founded towards the end of 1919. He became the editor of the paper launched by it called the Muslim and served it till the end of 1923 when this paper was closed. Subsequently the Jamiat-ul- Ulenza-i-Hind launched another paper called al-Jarniat which Maulana Maududi again joined it as the editor and continued to serve the paper till the end of 1927

The time Maulana Maududi broke his links with the Jamiat, he launched himself as an independent Islamic thinker with the Publication of al-Jihadfil-Islam in 1927, which he had written to address many issues which had arisen as a consequence of the assassination of Swami Shardhanand and went into some length to argue that not all acts of aggression, a Muslim deserves to describe as Jihad .This book was considerably noticed in religious and political circles. However MaulanaMaududi did not have any defined pursuit of career. I-Ie came to much wider prominence with the editorship of Tarjzmmman-ul-Qzna at Hyderabad since 1936. His writings attracted even Mohammad Iqbal, who invited him to Pathankot and pursue his studies there. He offered the support of some Wakf property there. He moved to Pathankot in January 1938 to establish Darul Islam Academy. However the death of Mohammad Iqbal soon after, made MaulanaMaududi return to Lahore to teach Islamiyat at Islamia College there.

8.4.1 Views On Nationalism

There appears some shift in Maulana Maududi's world-view as regards the Muslims being a part of the territorial nationalism or distinct from it. We have already discussed the point that in the early years Maulana Maududi strongly believed in the composite territorial nationalism but from this time onwards he seemed to have undergone ideological transformation. He started arguing that Islamic 'nationhood' was more rational than the territorial nationalism. It had the capacity to absorb all, therefore capable of absorbing all and lay the foundation of cultural unity. He argued that Islamic 'nationhood' could not coexist with other 'nationalities' of race, language and country. He asserted that Muslims must sever all links with the land of birth. In Maududi's perception, Islamic and geographical nationalism were two mutually exclusive entities, therefore he was apprehensive that geographical nationalism among Muslims would undermine Islamic 'nationhood' and unity. He thought that Indian leaders were mistaken in their belief that in order to fight the British; they must create a common nationality. He disagreed with Husain Ahmad Madani's contention that in the Indian context a religious community did not constitute a nation unto itself. On the contrary, ail religious communities must politically merge together in order

to emerge as a distinct nation on territorial basis. However while Husain Ahmad Madani was making these arguments on behalf of the Jamiat- ul- Ulema-i-Hind, he was also conscious of the fact that while Muslims were willing to join the process of the making of a nation, they must retain their distinct religion-cultural identity. Maududi's notion of Islamic 'nationality' reached an incomprehensible length when he argued that all those who were struggling against the British should be aware that if the British were to transfer power to non-Muslims then the very participation of a Muslim in this process would not be valid from the point of view of religion. He further argued that if the Muslims truly want to fight for the freedom from the British then they should have one clear objective in mind that they would strive to make India *din-ul-Islam* where it would be possible for Muslims to organise their life according to the principles of Islam. Around 1937-38 Maulana Maududi proposed some kind of state within a state where the Muslims would enjoy freedom to organize their life according to the Sharia and preserve their 'national life'

Maulana Maududi's conception of the Muslims constituting some of transcendental nation was so strong that he neither endorsed the Congress' approach to bring the whole of India under popular sovereignty of all its people, nor did he endorse the Muslim League's claim that Indian Muslims were a nation unto themselves in order to justify their demand for the partition of India and the making of Pakistan. According to Maulana Maududi, the Muslim League notion of nationalism too was self-limiting. In order to propagate the religious and political philosophy of Maulana Maududi, a party was established under his leadership called the Jama't-i-Islami on 25th August 1941. At the time of founding the Jamat, a constitution was also drawn up where the emphasis was more on religious matters rather than political.

Encouraged by the criticism of the Congress too, the Muslim League thought of enlisting the support of the Maulana Maududi twice through Maulana Zafar Ahmad Ansari. He was once invited in 1937 to join the research group of the League; in 1945 again similar kind of invitation was

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extended to him by Maulana Ansari. On both the occasions he turned down the League's invitation. In a booklet titled as *Rah-i-Anzal* published in 1944, Maulana Maududi argued that their (Muslims) opposition was neither to the Hindus nor the British. Their only aim and objective was establishment of the sovereignty of God. Keeping this in mind he castigated all other Muslim organisations for being obsessed with 'freedom' either from the Hindus or British imperialism. According to him, the real salvation of the Muslims was in deliverance from the rule of those other than God.

Maulana Maududi did not endorse the Muslim League's claim for Pakistan for it was not in tune with his conception of Islamic 'nation' since such a demand was based on the notion of territorial nationalism. He could not have accepted it. However when the partition became imminent, he decided to split the Jamat-i-Islami into two, one part working in Pakistan and the other in India in order to realise the goals it laid set before itself at the time of its foundation. It is another matter altogether that in 1948 Maulana Maududi himself migrated to Pakistan and ran into troubles with the Pakistan Government from time to time.

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

2. The Islamic nationhood and geographical nationalism, as Maulana Maududi argued, are two distinct identities. Explain.

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8.5 MOHAMMED ALI JINNAH (1 876- 1948)

Mohammad Ali Jinnah travelled long distances in his political career finally to become the Qaid-i-Azam, which literally means a great leader to the Pakistanis since he had the credit of founding Pakistan after seeking the partition of India on 14th August 1947. It was argued by the All India Muslim League and M.A.Jinnah in March 1940 that Indian Muslims were not only just a religious community seeking certain constitutional arrangements which would ensure better and secure future of the Muslims of India, but also make it a distinct nation. Once such a declaration was made, the next logical step was to demand a state in the name of Pakistan. The man who carried this demand to its fruition was the one and only M.A.Jinnah.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah was born on 25th December 1876 in the family of a relatively prosperous business family of Jinnabhai in Karachi. After his initial education in Karachi and Bombay, Jinnah went to England to study law which he soon completed at the age of eighteen years with two more years of stay there at Lincoln Inn's formal training. At the age of twenty he returned to India to join the Bar first in Karachi and later in Bombay and soon established himself among the legal fraternity of the city.

Jinnah became a part of the Congress led politics by joining the party in 1906. At the annual session of the Congress, the same year, he acted as the private secretary to Dadabhai Nauroji who was the president of the Indian National Congress for that year. Around this time he was largely given to a liberal world-view and strongly believed in the constitutional process. He came quite close to a moderate Congress leader, Gopal Krishna Golchale and received his initial political training under him and soon earned recognition. He was a part of the battery of lawyers who defended Lokmanya Tilak in 1908 when he was prosecuted by the British. In 1909 he was elected to the Imperial Legislative Council from Bombay and excelled in this performance in defending several issues which affected the lives of Indians including the struggle which was going on in South Africa under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He spoke about the harsh treatment meted

out to the Indians there. Jinnah supported Gokhale in 1912 when he came up with the Elementary Education Bill and argued for more allocation of money for the purpose. While Jinnah was still in the Congress, he joined the Muslim League as well on the suggestion of Maulana Mohammad Ali and Wazir Husain in 1913. However before joining the League, he ensured that joining it never meant any compromise on the larger national cause as espoused by the Congress. The same year he was instrumental in accepting the Wakif Validating Bill by the then Viceroy, which was meant to safeguard the interests of the beneficiaries of the Muslim family trusts against the folly of any one member of the family. This particular act of Jinnah earned him recognition among the Muslims.

8.5.1 Jinnah And The Muslim League

It must be pointed out that while Jinnah left the Congress, he retained his association with the Muslim League. However, after leaving the Congress, he remained politically dormant but sprung to action once again when it was announced that an all-white Simon Commission would visit India to study the working of the Government of India Act 1919 and make recommendations for bringing about changes in it. All shades of political opinion barring sore, decided to boycott the Commission. At this point of time the Muslim League was split into two wings - one led by Mohammad Shafi of the Punjab and the other by M.A.Jirina¹¹. The Shafi wing of the League agreed to cooperate with the Commission whereas the Jinnah faction decided to go along with the Congress in boycotting it. In view of these developments, it was resolved that instead of cooperating with the commission; Indians would work out their own constitution acceptable to all. In the context of this resolve that Indians would work out their own constitution, various groups activated themselves to come up with proposals which might be given some consideration while preparing the constitution. Many prominent Muslim leaders met in Delli on 20th March 1927 under the presidentship of Mohammad Ali Jinnah to discuss Muslim representation in the legislature and after long deliberation came up with certain proposals which are popularly known as the Delhi Declaration. It was for the first time that many Muslim leaders had agreed to give up separate electorates, which

was considered a stumbling block in bringing the two important communities together. The Declaration said that giving up separate electorates should be conditioned upon the following:

- (1) Sind to be separated from the Bombay Presidency and made a separate province
- (2) Reforms to be introduced in the North-West Frontier Provinces and Baluchistan on the same footing as any other province in India
- (3) In Bengal and Punjab proportion of representation to be made in accordance with the size of population
- (4) in the Central Legislature, Muslim representation to be not less than one-third, It was said that after these demands were accepted, Muslims would accept joint electorates in all the provinces so constituted and make to Hindu minorities in Bengal, Punjab and North-West Frontier Province similar concessions that the Hindu majorities in other provinces were prepared to make to the Muslims.

The Madras session of the Congress held in December 1927 broadly accepted the suggestion made in the Delhi Declaration and gave assurances to Muslims that their legitimate interests would be secured by reservation of seats in the joint electorates on the basis of population in every province and in the Central Legislature. It had also agreed to other proposals regarding Sind, N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan. In order to work out a constitution, an All Parties Conference was constituted which, in turn, constituted a Drafting Committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru. In the course of deliberations and consultations with all concerned parties, it came to the fore that despite the Congress approval of the Delhi Declaration, the Hindu Mahasabha was not willing to concede demands raised by various shades of Muslim opinion. As a result, in the final Report which is popularly known as the Nehru Report, these issues were ignored thus causing disappointment to many Muslim groups. However in order to get the final approval of the said Report, an All Parties Conference was convened in Calcutta in December 1928. In this meeting Jinnah made a fervent plea with members present there

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that for the sake of unity among the communities particularly the Hindus and Muslims, "It is absolutely essential to our progress that Hindu Muslim settlement should be reached, and that all communities should live in friendly and harmonious spirit in this vast country of ours." He further added by way of caution, "Majorities are apt to be oppressive and tyrannical and minorities always dread and fear that their interests and rights, unless clearly defined and safe-guarded by statutory provisions, would suffer." Jinnah was shouted down in this All Parties Conference. With disappointment Jinnah came back to Bombay and soon after left for England with an intention to settle down there practicing law.

This episode was a turning point in the political life of Jinnah. Determined to stay in England but on the persuasion of Liaqat Ali Khan, the future first Prime Minister of Pakistan, Jinnah decided to return to India in 1934. Soon he was elected as the permanent President of the All India Muslim League. He worked hard to expand the social base of the League. There was one opportunity to test the electoral strength of the League in the context of 1937 elections, which was held under the provisions of the Government of India Act 1935. The said Act was severely criticised by all, including Jinnah. Yet many, including the Congress, thought of using this opportunity to test their respective strengths. The Muslim League could secure only 109 out of total 482 Muslim seats in all British Indian provinces. It was nowhere close to forming the majority in Muslim majority provinces. It turned out to be a sad commentary on the League's performance in the 1937 elections. Combined with such dismal performance it (League) was alarmed by the Muslim Mass Contact Programme of the Congress and feared that such a programme would undermine its claim to represent Muslims. Coupled with this, there were also two unsuccessful attempts to form coalition Ministries in Bombay Presidency and United Provinces. The Muslim League adopted an aggressive attitude towards the Congress and the Congress-led ministries in various provinces. It charged them of pursuing anti-Muslim policies and started describing the Congress as caste-Hindu party instead of national party.

8.5.2 Two Nation Theory

In its opposition to the Congress, the Muslim League crossed all limits and finally came around to the idea of describing the Muslims of India not as a religious community or a minority in a Hindu-majority country but a distinct nation. Thus according to the League's formulations, India was home to not one but two nations which led the demand that India be partitioned so that there could be separate homeland to the Muslims as well. This understanding was put to crystallization in the annual session of the Muslim League held in Lahore on 23rd March 1940. The Resolution adopted here is popularly known as the Pakistan Resolution or

Two-Nation-Theory'. In this resolution it was said that the Muslims of India on account of their religious, cultural and historical distinctiveness in contrast with the Hindus, constituted a nation unto themselves. Since then, Jinnah reiterated this position on all occasions and from all platforms. From this time onwards, the Muslim League, under Jinnah, did not look back and never considered any settlement which was not conceding Pakistan. In this effort of the League, the British Government was more than obliging right since the time of August offer of 1940 and right through the Cripps Mission of 1942 and the Cabinet Mission of 1946. In the Simla Conference held in 1945, Jinnah had argued that in the event of any interim arrangements of ministry formation, only the Muslim League would have the right to nominate Muslim members. In an unspoken manner, Lord Wavel, the then Viceroy, conceded this demand raised by the Muslim League. As a consequence many Muslim political leaders in provinces such as Punjab switched sides in favour of the League and in the elections of 1945-46 it was able to secure almost 75% of the Muslim votes. However it is important to mention that these elections were held under the provisions of the Government of India Act 1935 and the average franchised percentage did not exceed more than 15% of the total population, Muslims being no exception to it.

It is pertinent to recall that there was opposition to Jinnah's formulations of Muslims constituting a nation from within the Muslims, apart from the

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Congress and others. For instance within one month of the passing of the 'two-nation theory', various Muslim political formations from different parts of the country and representing different sections but firmly committed to the cause of Indian nationalism, came to form a coalition called Azad Muslim Conference. In April 1940 a huge convention was organised in Delhi where 'Two-nation theory' was challenged. It was argued that while Muslims were a distinct religious community with their cultural world-view, they did not constitute a nation as claimed by Jinnah and the Muslim League. In several places the League had to face electoral challenge from the constituent of this Azad Muslim conference. For instance in Bihar six Muslim League candidates were defeated in the provincial elections in 1946 by the candidates of All India Momin Conference, a body of Muslim weavers. Jamaiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, a body of Muslim theologians, too kept on challenging the League for its demand for partition. It vehemently argued that Muslims were not a nation but a religious community and it was an integral part of the single territorial nationhood along with the rest of the people of India.

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.

4. Briefly analyses M.A. Jinnah's contribution to the 'Two Nation Theory'.

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8.6 LET US SUM UP

In the preceding pages we have discussed the emergence and evolution of the Muslim thought only with reference to four persons. In all cases we have noticed that these thoughts were fixed entities since they were continuously evolving in the context of certain historical developments. In many cases some thoughts of these men became irrelevant while in others they persisted. However it is important to underline that Sir Syed was more concerned about 'securing the future of Muslims through modern education and reconciliation with the British. In case of Mohammad Iqbal and Maulana Maududi, we find that they were more concerned with the theological aspects of Muslims' life. They both treated nationalism outside the pale of Islamic principles of life. But Mohammad Ali Jinnah essentially focused on the political dimensions of the collective life of the Muslims. He started well in tune with Indian nationalism but in due course of time adopted a belligerent attitude and called Muslims a nation, therefore justifying the demand for partition of India and the making of Pakistan.

It is important to bear in mind that while these four were important figures who attempted to influence the thought process and political 'developments, there were many others in their contemporary times who held diametrically opposite view to all these. At the same time, let

us bear in mind that since the Muslims were not a homogeneous community, no single individual or formation could ever make a legitimate claim to represent the entire community in the realms of thoughts and politics. We have to take into account diverse voices emanating from equally diverse society such as India's without any exception.

8.7 KEY WORDS

Anti-Colonial Nationalist: Anti-colonial nationalism occurs where the diverse peoples in a **colony** come together (for example across tribal and

other social boundaries) and decide that - they have a common national identity; and. they can rule themselves better than their colonial masters.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a lawyer, politician and the founder of Pakistan or Dominion of Pakistan. Jinnah served as the leader of the All-India Muslim League from 1913 until Pakistan's creation on 14 August 1947, and then as Pakistan's first Governor-General until his death.

Two-Nation-Theory: The two-nation theory is the basis of the creation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It states that Muslims and Hindus are two separate nations by every definition.

Hindu Mahasabha: The Hindu Mahasabha is a right wing Hindu nationalist political party in India. The organisation was formed to protect the rights of the Hindu community in British India.

8.8 QUESTION FOR REVIEW

1. Analyse Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's views on Hindu-Muslim Unity.
2. Summaries Mohammad Iqbal's ideas on Nationalism and his contribution to the Muslim Thought.
3. The Islamic nationhood and geographical nationalism, as Maulana Maududi argued, are two distinct identities. Explain.
4. Briefly analyse M.A. Jinnah's contribution to the 'Two Nation Theory'.

8.9 SUGGESTED READINGS & REFERENCES

- Bhikhu Parekh, Gandhi's Political Philosophy: A Critical Examination.
- Douglas Allen (ed.), The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.

- B. A. Dar, A Study of Iqbal's Philosophy.
- Pantham and Deutsch (ed.), Political Thought in Modern India.
- S. R. Bakshi, AbulKalam Azad: The Secular Leader.

8.10 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See sub-section 8.3.2

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See sub-section 8.4

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See sub-section 8.5 and 8.5.1

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) See sub-section 8.6.2

UNIT - 9: M.K. GANDHI

STRUCTURE

- 9.0 Objective
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Philosophical Foundations of Gandhi's Political Perspective
- 9.3 Views on Human Nature
- 9.4 Relationship between Religion and Politics
 - 9.4.1 Concept of Religion
 - 9.4.2 Concept of Politics
 - 9.4.3 Relationship between Religion and Politics.
- 9.5 Unity of Ends and Means
 - 9.5.1 Relationship between Means and Ends
- 9.6 Satya, Satyagraha and Ahimsa
- 9.7 Concept of Swaraj
- 9.8 On Parliamentary Democracy
- 9.9 Ideas on the economy
- 9.10 Sarvodaya: The Rise of All
- 9.11 Theory of Trusteeship
- 9.12 Evils of Industrialism
- 9.13 Concept of Swadeshi
- 9.14 Let us sum up
- 9.15 Key Words
- 9.16 Questions for Review
- 9.17 Suggested Reading and Reference
- 9.18 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.0 OBJECTIVE

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the philosophy of M.K.Gandhi
- Explain the theory of Trusteeship

- Explain the relationship between Religion and Politics and ideas on economy
- Explain about concept of Swadeshi

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948), herein after Gandhiji, was undoubtedly the most authentic and celebrated representative of the wisdom and culture of India in our times. His countrymen address him, with respect, as the Mahatma. For Many, among the greatest, Gandhiji was the great. He was a social reformer, an economist, a political philosopher and a seeker of truth. We consider him as a 'yugapurusha', one who inaugurated a new era.

The contribution of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to the Indian national movement was unparalleled. He made the Indian National Congress a peoples' Congress and the national movement a mass movement. He made people fearless and bold and taught them the non-violent methods for fighting against injustice. He had a passion for individual liberty which was closely bound with his understanding of truth and self-realization. His search for truth led him to make deep forays within his own inner self as it led him to probe into the natural and social world around him, particularly the tradition which he considered his own

Gandhi's philosophy was a profound engagement with modernity and its pitfalls. Against the evils of wanton industrialization, materialism and selfish pursuits, Gandhi suggested, in turn, swadeshi, primacy of the self and trusteeship; against the institution of state, as the force personified, and the prevalent notion of democracy where only heads are counted, he favoured a Swaraj type of democracy where everything springs from the free individual and wiser decisions are made bottom-up with the locus of power below. He proposed a minimal state, vested only with coordinative powers, that supports decentralization with the autonomous individual as its base of support.

A spiritual perspective infuses Gandhi's whole approach to life. His political understanding and practices, suggestions on the economy, social mobilization and practical life have their basis in morality and ethics. Pursuit of Truth is his mantra and non-violence was integral to it.

Among Gandhiji's notable writings, mention may be made of An Autobiography: The Story, of UIJ, Experiments with Truth; The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi; Panchayati Raj; Satyagraha in South Africa; Sarvodaya and Hind Swaraj. He edited Young India which he later renamed as Harijan which remained his mouthpiece.

As is true about anyone else, Gandhiji was also influenced by many: Tolstoy (Gospels in Brief; What to Do, The Kingdom of God is Within You), Ruskin (Unto This Last), Thoreau (Essay on Civil Dis-obedience), Swami Vivekananda, Gokhale and Tilak, just to mention a few. There is the strong stamp of his family and the Indian national movement with its cross-currents on him. He was familiar with the teachings of the major religions of the world. He was exceptionally well-read and even translated such works as Plato's Republic into Gujarati. He maintained extensive correspondence with some of the most outstanding figures of his time, He maintained a whipping schedule travelling to different parts of the vast Indian subcontinent sometimes traversing long distances on foot. Many associated themselves personally close to him and he left his imprint on many who came into contact with him. He learnt from everyone. He came across and no significant event of his times escaped his attention. His assassination brought to a close a life of undaunted courage resting on the call of conscience, committed to the service of his country, common welfare and universal love.

9.2 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF GANDHI'S POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Gandhiji was a deeply religious man. This - perspective shaped his politics, his economic ideas and his view of society. However, the religious approach that he imbibed was markedly different from other religious men. He wrote to Mr. Polak, "Most religious men I have met are politicians in disguise; I, however, who wear the guise of a politician, am at heart, a religious man. My bent is not political but religious."

He accepts the inner oneness of all existence in the cosmic spirit, and saw all living beings as representatives of the eternal divine reality. Divine presence envelops the whole world and it makes its reflective presence felt in men and women. Gandhiji believed that man's ultimate goal in life was self-realization. Self-realization, according to him, meant seeing God face to face, i.e., realizing the absolute Truth or, what one may say, knowing oneself. He believed that it could not be achieved unless man identified himself with the whole of mankind. This necessarily involved participation in politics. Politics is the means, par excellence, to engage with the world. Such an engagement is expressed in service. Gandhiji was clear in his mind that Truth could not be attained by merely retiring to the Himalayas or being bogged down with rituals but in actively engaging with the world, keeping oneself open to the voice of God and critically reflecting upon oneself and letting others to reflect on you.

Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political; religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His Creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. I am a part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity. My countrymen are my nearest neighbors. They have become so helpless, so resource less, and so inert that I must concentrate myself on serving them. If I could persuade myself that I should find Him in a Himalayan cave I would proceed there immediately. But I know that I cannot find Him apart from humanity."

It is only through the means of self-purification that self-realization can be attained. The fasts, prayers and works of service that he undertook were all directed towards such an end. In his Autobiography, Gandhiji says that self-realization required self-purification as its ethical foundation. Man's moral life flows from such a search inward into his own self and expresses itself in outward activity of fellowship and concern to others. Gopinath Dhawan writes in this connection: "This ethical outlook is the backbone of Gandhiji's political philosophy even as his ethics has for its foundation in his metaphysical principles. To him the moral discipline of the individuals is the most important means of social reconstruction." Gandhiji invoked the five-fold moral principles: truth, non-violence, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy. The observance of these moral principles would purify man and enable him to strive after self-realization.

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 briefly the philosophical foundations of Gandhiji's political philosophy

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9.3 VIEWS ON HUMAN NATURE

Gandhiji's views on man, human nature and society are in consonance with his philosophical outlook and reflect his convictions regarding morality and ethical pursuit of life. At the same time he was deeply aware of the

imperfections of human beings. What is important, however, is the disposition: "There is no one without faults', not even men of God. They are - men of God not because they are faultless but because they know their own faults and are ever ready to correct themselves." Conscious as Gandhiji was about man's weaknesses as an individual or a member of a group, he still did not think of man merely or only as a brute. Man, he was convinced, was after all a soul as well. Even the most brutal 'of men, he felt, cannot disown the spiritual element in them, i.e., their potentiality for goodness. While regarding the individual as imperfect, he had great faith in human nature. "I refuse" he says, "to suspect human nature. Its will is bound to respond to any noble and Friendly action". At another place, he says, "There are chords in every human heart. If we only know how to strike the right chord, we bring out the music." What distinguishes man from the brute is the self-conscious impulse to realize the divinity inherent in him. He writes: "We were born with brute strength but we were born in order to realize God who dwells in us. That indeed is the privilege of man and it distinguishes him from the brute creation." He argued that every man and woman has capacity in them to change their life and transform themselves truly into the self they are. "Man as animal," he says, "is violent, but as spirit (he) is non-violent. The moment he awakens to the spirit within he cannot remain violent."

Man is inherently predisposed towards his self-realization. In him, moral qualities and social virtues such as love, cooperation, and tolerance preponderate over violence, selfishness and brutality, and man keeps working for higher life. He writes: "I believe that the sum total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up and that is the result of the definite, if unconscious, working of the law of nature"

Gandhiji believed that human nature is, in its essence, one and that everyman has the capacity for the highest possible development: "The soul is one in all; its possibility is, therefore, the same for everyone. It is this

undoubted universal possibility that distinguishes the human from the rest of God's creation."

9.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND POLITICS

The modern world attempted to mark off religion from the political domain and made religion a purely personal affair. Religious beliefs and commitments by themselves are not supposed to shape the political realm. Against such a position Gandhiji called for the reinsertion of religion in shaping public life and saw an intimate relationship between the health of a polity and religious pursuits.

9.4.1 Concept Of Religion

What does religion stand for? How does one make sense of diversity of religions? Gandhiji's answer was, "I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world they were at the bottom all one and were all helpful to one another." There were, according to him, as many religions as there were minds. Each mind, he would say, had a different conception of God from that of the other. All the same they pursue the same God. He insisted that religion be differentiated from ethics. Fundamental ethical precepts are common across religions although religions may differ from each other with respect to their beliefs and practices. "I believe that fundamental ethics is common to all religions. By religion I have not in mind fundamental ethics but what goes by the name of denominationalism".

Religion enables us to pursue truth and righteousness. Sometimes he distinguished religion in general and religion in a specific sense. One belongs to a specific religion with its beliefs and practices. As one proceeds through the path suggested by it one also outgrows its limitations and comes to appreciate the common thread that binds all religions and pursuers of truth. Gandhiji once said: "Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not

the Hindu I religion which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends

Hindustan, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and whichever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself knows its maker and appreciates the true correspondence between the Maker and itself'. Any kind of sectarian foreclosure, he felt, was a violation of human nature and its authentic striving. He said, "Religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in ordered moral government of the universe. It is not less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality". Talking about specific religions, he says, "Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals". While diversity of religions is admissible, he did not think that any religion can claim itself as superior over others. In fact, when a religion claims itself superior to others its credentials are suspect and it becomes a hurdle in the path of our self-realization: "So long as there are different religions, every one of them may need some distinctive symbol. But when the symbol is made into a fetish and an instrument of proving the superiority of one's religion over others, it is fit only to be discarded.

9.4.2 Concept Of Politics

Politics, for Gandhiji, was but a part of man's life. Though he thought that an increase in the power of the state did the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lay at the root of all progress, yet he viewed political power as a means that enabled people to better their conditions in every department of life. Politics therefore is an enabling activity. He wrote, "My work of social reform was in no way less or subordinate to political work. The fact is that when I saw that to a certain extent my social work

would be impossible without the help of political work, I took to the latter and only to the extent that it helped the former".

Political activity of man is closely associated with other activities of man and all these activities, according to Gandhiji, influence each other. "Life is one indivisible whole, and all my activities run into one another". Therefore political activity is intimately related to other walks of life and pursuits. What he hated in politics was the concentration of power and the use of violence associated with political power.

9.4.3 Relationship Between Religion And Politics

He formulated the relationship between politics and religion as an intimate one. Religion cannot be divorced from politics. Given the fundamental objective of life as self-realization, if politics does not enable religious pursuits it is not worthwhile at all. He stated categorically, "For me, politics bereft of religion is absolute dirt, ever to be shunned". He further thought that political activity that divorces itself from the quest of self-realization is not worth the salt. Politics creates the conditions for pursuits which members of a polity feel are basic to the making of their selves. What could be more basic than pursuit of one's own self? He felt, "For me there is no politics without religion - not the religion of the superstitious and the blind, religion that hates and fights, but the universal religion of toleration."

Politics is intimately related to the entire activities of human life. This is particularly true in modern times. He wrote, "The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments."

While regarding politics as the method through which men can rule themselves without violence and religion as the embodiment of ethical and moral rules, Gandhiji argued that their close relationship has to be

recognized. So much importance did he attach to politics that he insisted on taking part in politics as if it is something religious in nature.

As evident, Gandhiji looked at politics with a view to reform it. He firmly believed that he could lead a truly religious life only when he took part in politics. But the motivation that imbues one in participation in public life is important.

The Gandhian view of politics was a politics where people participated in public affairs for purposes of serving others. Hence, for him, all political activities concerned themselves with the welfare of everyone. As political activity is closely related to the cause of the people it is essential that such activity be permeated by religion or at least should be the concern of the people who are religiously motivated. Politics permeated by religion, according to him, means politics dedicated to serve the cause of humanity which eventually leads to a better understanding of truth. For him, the kingdom of God lies here in this world, in the men here, and within men, those whose political activity is directed towards the service of humanity. To quote him, "I could not be leading a religious life, unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind, and I could not do so unless I took part in politics"

For Gandhiji, politics is one method of seeking a part of the whole truth. Political activity helps man to achieve the capacity to rule himself, a capacity wherein he obeys rules of the society without any external force or external imposition. Religion and politics, so understood, make a good case for *swaraj*. He regards concentration of power as detrimental to the individual freedom and initiative.

Gandhiji never considered political power as an end; it was a means to enable people to better their condition in every walk of life. For him political power was a means to regulate public life at various levels in tune with the principles stated above. If the life of a polity becomes self-regulated, there was no need to have representative government. It will then - be an

enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone will be his own ruler respecting the self-rule of others over themselves. It would then be a completely non-violent society and state. However felt that no society can ever become completely non-violent but if it does 'it would be the purest anarchy'. The latter is the ideal to strive for. In the idol state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no state.

9.5 UNITY OF ENDS AND MEANS

That the ends and means are related to each other is one of the basic tenets of Gandhian philosophy. Gandhiji drew no distinction between the means and the ends implying thereby that one leads to the other and that the latter is the effect of the former, Such an assertion, for him, approximates the scientific principle of the relationship between cause and effect, ' Gandhiji would not like to attain the noblest end if that was to be achieved through impure means.

9.5.1 Relationship Between Means And Ends

He felt that the relationship between means and ends are integral and constitutive. "Means and ends are convertible terms in my philosophy of life". Refuting those who opined that 'means are after all means', he said, "means are after all everything". As the means so the end. There is no wall of separation between means and ends. While good ends have to be cherished they are not in our control. But means are in our control. "Indeed the Creator has given us control (and that too very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception." Therefore, "If one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself."

He rebuked those who think that if one seeks good ends the morality of means can be left to themselves. For him, "Impure means result in impure end. One cannot; reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can

reach Truth". He argued that means and ends are enmeshed into each other. "Are not non-violence and truth twins?" He replies, "The answer is an emphatic 'No'. Non-violence is embedded in, Truth and vice-versa. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other."

Inspired by the *Gita*, the ethical principle that he upheld was *atmasakti*. One does not perform his duty expecting the fruit of his action and does it for the sake of duty. It sought detachment from the fruits of action. "By detachment I mean that you must not worry - whether the desired result follows from your action or not, so long as your motive is pure, your means is correct. Really it means that things will come right in the end if you take care for the means and leave the rest to Him."

His approach to action was to be stated by him in categorical terms "I have concerned myself principally with the conservation of the means and their progressive use. I know if we can take care of them, attainment of the goal is assured. I feel too that our progress towards the goal will be in 'exact proportion to the purity of our means.

This method may appear to be long, perhaps too long, but I am convinced that it is the shortest."

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 Gandhiji's views on religion and its relationship with politics.

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- 2. Comment on Gandhi's views on the End-Means unity.

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9.6 SATYA, SATYAGRAHA AND AHLMSA

Truth or Satya, for Gandhiji, is God himself. He therefore changed the statement, "God is Truth", later in his life into, "Truth is God" and suggested that it was one of the fundamental discoveries of his life's experiments. It is Truth, he says, that exists; what does not exist is untruth. The life of man, for Gandhiji, is a march of his pursuit in search of Truth or God.

According to Gandhiji, truth is what the inner self experiences at any point of time; it is an answer to one's conscience; it is what responds to one's moral self. He was convinced that knowledge alone leads a person to the truth while ignorance takes one away from the truth.

Satyagraha means urge for Satya, or truth. Satyagraha is not merely the insistence on truth; it is, in fact, holding on to truth through ways which are moral and non-violent; it is not the imposition of one's will over others, but it is appealing to the reasoning of the opponent; it is not coercion but is persuasion.

Gandhiji highlights several attributes of Satyagraha. It is a moral weapon and does not entertain ill-feeling towards the adversary; it is 'a non-violent device and calls upon its user to love his enemy; it does not weaken the

opponent but strengthens him morally; it is a weapon of the brave and is constructive in its approach. For Gandhiji, a Satyagrahi is always truthful, morally imbued, non-violent and a person without any malice; he is one who is devoted to the service of all.

Truth, he firmly believed, can be attained only through non-violence which was not negative, meaning absence of violence, but was positively defined by him as love. Resort to non-violence is recourse to love. In its positive sense, non-violence means love for others; in its negative sense, it seeks no injury to others, both in words as well as deeds. Gandhiji talked of non-violence of different people. There is the non-violence of the brave: one has the force but he does not use it as a principle; there is the non-violence of the weak: one does not have faith in non-violence, but he uses it for attaining his objectives; there is the non-violence of the coward: it is not non-violence, but impotency, more harmful than violence. For Gandhiji, violence was a better option than cowardice.

Through non-violence one appeal to the truth that nestles in people and makes the latter realise it in themselves, come around, and join hands in the common march to truth along with those whom they earlier considered as their adversaries. Given the enmeshing of means and ends, Gandhiji, often saw Love, Truth, God and Non-violence as interchangeable terms. Truth or God or Self-realisation being man's ultimate goal in life, this goal can be attained only through non-violence or ahimsa.

9.7 CONCEPT OF SWARAJ

Gandhiji's concept of Swaraj was not merely confined to freeing India from the British yoke. Such freedom he desired but he said that he did not want to exchange 'king log for king stork'. Swaraj is not transfer of political power to the Indians. Nor does it mean, as he emphasized, mere political self-determination. For him, there was no Swaraj in Europe; for him the movement of Swaraj involved primarily the process of releasing oneself

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from all the bondages one is prey to both internal and external. It involves a movement of self-purification too. It is not the replacement of one type of authority by another. He felt, "the real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused". Swaraj, he used to say, is power of the people to determine their lot by their own efforts and shape their destiny the way they like. In other words, "Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority".

Swaraj is usually translated in English as 'Independence'. Gandhiji, however, gave this term a much deeper meaning. "The word Swaraj is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self- rule and self-restraint and not freedom from all restraint which 'independence' often means". He saw *swaraj* as freedom for all plus self-control by all. It is related to the inner strength and capacity of a people which enable them to understand and control their social world: "The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment. And if this is the correct view of freedom, our chief energy must be concentrated upon achieving reform from within".

Freedom from within means control over oneself, which, in turn, means a life based on understanding one's own self. Gandhi perceived non-violence as the key to attain such freedom and self-control. Non-violence needs to be imbued in our thought, words and deeds. Once non-violence as Love takes possession of these dimensions of the person then a sense of duty prevails over those of rights. We tend to do things for others without expecting returns thereon. "In Swaraj based Ahimsa, people need not know their rights, but it is necessary for them to know their duties. There, is no duty that does not create corresponding rights and those rights alone are genuine rights, which flow from the performance of duty.

Swaraj is thus a basic need of all. It recognizes no race, religion, or community. "Nor is it the monopoly of the lettered persons, Swaraj is to be

for all, including the former but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the starving, toiling millions. A stout hearted, honest, sane, literate man may well be the first servant of the nation." Swaraj will necessarily be inclusive of the poor and the toiling masses. Therefore, he adds, "Let there be no mistake as what Purna Swaraj means. It is full economic freedom for the toiling millions. It is no unholy alliance with any interest for their exploitation. Any alliance must mean their deliverance." (Young India, 16.4.1931, p.77). In the same vein, Gandhiji made it very clear that India's Swaraj did not mean the rule of majority community i.e. Hindus. 'Every community would be at par with every other under the Swaraj constitution.'

Swaraj, implying government based on the consent of the people is not a gift which comes from above, but it is something that comes from within. Democracy, therefore, is not the exercise of the voting power, holding public office, criticizing government; nor does it mean equality, liberty or security, though important as they all are in a democratic polity. It is when the people are able to develop their inner freedom which is people's capacity to regulate and control their desires impulses in the light of reason that freedom rises from the individual and strengthens him.

His Swaraj had economic, social, political and international connotations. Economic Swaraj, as he says himself, "stands for social justice, it promotes the good of all equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life." Social Swaraj centers on "an equalization of status." Political Swaraj aims at 'Enabling people to better their condition in every department of life.' In the international field, Swaraj reemphasised on interdependence. "There is", he says, "No limit to extending our services to our neighbours across state-made frontiers. God never made those frontiers."

9.8 PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

Gandhiji did not subscribe to the view that democracy meant the rule of the majority; He gave several definitions of democracy on several occasions.

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When we put them together, Gandhiji may say, "Democracy must in essence, mean the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in service of the common good of all." He further said, "true democracy or the Swaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means, for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make the individual freedom. individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated Ahimsa."

Democracy is a reflective and deliberative activity marking the presence of everyone. "In true democracy every man and woman is taught to think for him or herself. HOW this real revolution can be brought about I do not know except that every reform, like charity must begin at home." Democracy extends consideration to the viewpoints of others as it expects consideration to one's own viewpoint. "The golden rule of conduct (in a democracy), he said, "Is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike and that we shall always see Truth in fragments and from different angles of vision. Conscience is not the same thing for all. Whilst, therefore, it is a good guide for individual conduct, imposition of that conduct upon all will be an insufferable interference with everybody-else's freedom of conscience."

Gandhiji was wedded to adult suffrage. He felt that it is the only way to safeguard the interests of all: the minorities, the poor, the Dalits, the peasants and women. He hoped that the voters give weight to the qualifications of the candidates, not their caste, community, or party affiliation. He wanted men of character to enter legislatures for even if they commit mistakes they would never do anything against the interests of the voters. Men and women without character elected by the people would destroy the democratic system.

Referring to parliamentary democracy in 1931, Gandhi envisaged a constitution of independent India "which will release India from all thralldom

and patronage, and give her, if need be, the right to sin". He laid down his vision of an independent India as follows: "I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability, or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy same rights as men. Since we shall be at peace with all the rest of the world, neither exploiting nor being exploited. We shall have the smallest army imaginable; all interests not in conflict with the interests of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected whether foreign or indigenous. Personally, I hate distinction between foreign and indigenous. This is the India of my dreams. ... I shall be satisfied with nothing less."

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 Gandhiji's views on truth and non-violence.

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- 2. Explain the uses of power according to Mahatma Gandhi.

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9.9 IDEAS ON THE ECONOMY

Gandhiji's political philosophical ideas came to shape his ideas on the economy centrally. His economic thought revolves around the following normative ideas: (i) Economic process must work towards equality and non-exploitation (ii) it must be consistent with full employment (iii) it must provide low priced consumer goods which satisfy the needs of the people (iv) all those industries with sophisticated technology must be in the public sector (v) no mass production without equal distribution.

For Gandhiji, the two cardinal principles in his economic thought are the promotion of equality together with social justice. For the purpose the three principles which he prescribed are: (a) of non-possession i.e., economic policies to be pursued on need-base and not on the want- base (b) inequality arises with irrational desires to have more than what one wants (c) in technologically advanced countries, people do not consume goods in the same proportion they produce; labour-intensive technologies are to be preferred to the capital-intensive ones.

Gandhiji's economics stressed on equality, social justice, full employment and harmonious labour-capital relations. The last two centuries produced a good number of social thinkers and scientists. Marx offered an alternative to the capitalistic system articulated by Adam Smith. He called it communism. In between capitalism and communism stood socialism. Capitalism gave rise to colonialism and exploitation of the poor against which Gandhi fought all through his life. But he opposed capitalism as much as communism. For him the individual, his freedom, dignity and satisfying life were more important than mere economic progress, which both capitalism and communism promised to deliver; anything that did not liberate the man was unacceptable to Gandhi.

Morality and ethics occupy a central place in Gandhian concept of economics. "True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics to be worth its name must. An economics that inculcates Mammon worship and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak is a false and dismal science. It spells death. True economics, on the other hand, stands for social justice; it promotes the good of all, equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life."

In Gandhian economics, the supreme consideration is the human being. Every man has the right to live and, therefore, to find work to meet his basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, education, health and self-esteem. He felt, 'these should be freely available to all as God's air and water are ought to be. They should not be made a vehicle of traffic for exploitation of others. Their monopolization by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust".

He argued that we must utilize all human labour before we entertain the idea of employing mechanical power. "Real planning", according to Gandhi, "consists in the best utilization of the whole man-power of India and the distribution of the raw products of India in her numerous villages instead of sending them outside and re-buying finished articles at fabulous prices.

9.10 SARVODAVA:THE RISE OF ALL

Gandhiji was critical of the path both capitalist and socialist economies had taken, America harbours massive poverty amidst abundant wealth. "America is the most industrialized country in the world, and yet it has not banished poverty and degradation. That is because it neglects the universal manpower and concentrates power in the hands of the few who amass fortunes at the expense of the many." Socialist economies, he felt, put the cart before the horse: "As I look at Russia where the apotheosis of industrialization has been reached, the life there does not appeal to me. To use the language of the Bible, 'what shall it avail a man if he gain the whole world and lose his

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soul? In modern terms, it is beneath human dignity to lose one's individuality and become a mere cog in the machine. I want every individual to become a full blooded, fully developed member of the society."

While he looked at socialism positively, he felt that it was deeply enmeshed in 'violence "Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended, socialism, even communism is explicit in the first verse of *Ishopanishad*. What is true is that when some reformers lost faith in the method of conversion, the technique of what is known as scientific socialism was born. ... I accepted the theory of socialism even, I while I was in South Africa. My opposition to socialists and others consists in attacking violence as a means of affecting any lasting reform." Further, socialism has only one aim that is material progress. "I want freedom for full expression of my personality. Under I the other socialism, these is no individual freedom. You own nothing, not even your body." (Harijan, 4.8.1946).

Against capitalism and socialism, Gandhi proposed the concept of Sarvodaya, which was based on three basic principles:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all;
2. That the lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, in as much as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work;
3. That a life of labor, i-e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living.

9.11 THEORY OF TRUSTEESHIP

One of the most original contributions of Gandhiji in the area of economics is the concept of trusteeship. Gandhiji wanted complete equality in so far as the basic needs of the people were concerned. The fact he wanted the basic

needs of all including animals to be met satisfactorily. But at the same time, he wanted people to have incentives to remain economically active and produce more. This naturally would lead to some people having more than what they need. They would be rich but there would be no poor because the basic needs of all would be satisfied.

To ensure that those who were rich did not use their property for selfish purposes or to control others, he derived the term "Trusteeship". Explaining the meaning underlying this term he said, 'Everything belonged to God and was from God. Therefore, it was learnt for His people as a whole, not for particular individuals. When an individual had more than his proportionate portion he became trustee of that portion for God's people'

He wished that the idea of trusteeship becomes a gift from India to the world. Then there would be no exploitation and no reserve. In these distinctions he found the seeds of war and conflict.

He elaborated on his idea of trusteeship extensively. He suggested "as to the successor, the trustee in office would have the right to nominate his successor subject to the legal sanction."

The idea underlying the concept of trusteeship was twofold:

1. All humans are born equal and hence have a right to equal opportunity. This means that all must have their basic needs fully satisfied.
2. All humans, however, are not endowed with equal intellectual and physical capacity. Some would have greater capacity to produce than others. Such persons must treat themselves as trustees of the produce beyond their basic needs.
3. Violence and force as modes of distribution of produce have to be rejected.

9.12 EVILS OF INDUSTRIALISM

Gandhiji was against industrialization on a mass scale because it leads to many insoluble problems such as the exploitation of the villagers, urbanization, environmental pollution etc. He wanted manufacturing to be done in villages and by the villagers. This would keep the majority of the people of India fully employed; they would be able to meet their basic needs and would remain self-reliant. Even modern machines could be used provided they did not lead to unemployment and become the means of exploitation.

Gandhiji considered the prevailing industrialization as a disease. 'Let Us not be deceived by catchwords and phrases', he admonished. Modern machines 'are in no way indispensable for the permanent welfare of the human race.' He was not against machinery as such; he was against industrialism, i.e. industrial and mechanical mentality. "Industrialization is, I am afraid, going to be curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit. India, when it begins to exploit other nations - as it must if it becomes industrialized - will be a curse for other nations, 2 menaces for the world".

It is because of this perspective that Gandhi suggested the boycott of mill made cloth and manufacture of handmade cloth in each and every household particularly in the rural areas, The efforts he made to promote Khadi were just a beginning of the movement he wanted to launch to promote village industries in general. One must see Gandhiji's concept of basic education (Nai Taleem) in relation to his movement for village industries.

9.13 CONCEPT OF SWADESHI

Swaraj as we would see later does not mean just political freedom. Gandhi ascribed a far deeper meaning to this term. It means self-control to begin with. Swaraj and Swadeshi go together. Swadeshi is 'that spirit in us which

restricts us to use the services of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote".. "Much of the deep poverty of the masses", he felt, "is due to the ruinous departure from swadeshi in the economic and industrial life." Swadeshi will not merely reinforce autonomous local units but also build cooperative relations with others with whom they need to associate. 'If we follow the swadeshi doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find our neighbours who can supply our wants and to teach them to supply them. Then every village of India will almost be self-supporting and self-contained unit exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages as are not locally producible"

Swadeshi and self-sufficiency go together. The former is possible only if the latter is accepted as a matter of principle. Each individual, each family, each village and each region would be economically self-reliant, "Self-sufficiency does not mean narrowness; to be self- sufficient is not to be altogether self-contained. In no circumstances would we be able to produce all the things we need. So though our aim is complete self-sufficiency, we shall have to get from outside the village what we cannot produce in the village; we shall have to produce more of what we can in order thereby to obtain in exchange what we are unable to produce".

There are two other concepts, which go together with Swadeshi: they are Decentralization and Cooperation. "Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self- sufficiency. Man is a social being. Without inter-relation with society he cannot realize his oneness with the universe or suppress his egotism.. . If man were so placed or could so place himself as to be absolutely above all dependence on his fellow-beings, he would become so proud and arrogant, as to be veritable burden and nuisance to the world. Dependence on society teaches him the lesson to humility". He felt that the value of self-sufficiency central to swadeshi has its limits. 'Self Sufficiency too has a limit. Drops in separation could only fade away; drops in cooperation made the ocean which carried on its broad bosom, greyhounds.'"

The concept of Swadeshi, for Gandhi, is encompassing. In religion, it means to be faithful to our ancestral religion; in politics, it means the use of

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indigenous institutions; in economics, it emphasized on the use of things produced in the immediate neighbourhood; one must prefer locally produced things even if they are of relatively inferior quality or costly. It does not mean that one should hate foreign-made products. Gandhiji had a place for foreign-made goods, especially medicines and life-saving drugs if they are not produced in the country.

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. Highlight the Gandhian concepts of economic equality and swadeshi.

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9.14 LET US SUM UP

There is a remarkable consistency and continuity in the political ideas of Gandhiji and the uses he put them to. Gandhi considered man as embodying the spiritual principle in him which is divine. His self-realization is the prime task of every man and woman. While man is not perfect and desires and mundane interests constantly pitch themselves as his prime wants, he has an innate disposition to seek his spiritual realization. If the spiritual nature of man has to be privileged then man's priorities have been to be ordered accordingly. He therefore bitterly criticized modernity and its insinuations which confine man to this world and its allurements. He argued that the divine nature of man makes religion to engage itself positively with the world. He did not agree that religion should be separated, from politics. He thought that politics offers great opportunities to serve others and such

service is an essential attribute of religion. While Gandhi believed in his own religion and thought highly of it, he had equal respect for all other religions, considered all of them as true but not without shortcomings. He considered that ends and means are integral to each other. He did not subscribe to the idea that good ends justify appropriate means. He applied this principle to the pursuit of truth as well, which he considered as God himself. Truth as end and non-violence as means are inseparable.

While Gandhiji appreciated the need of power in the absence of a fully self-regulated and self-directed order, which he called Swaraj, he did not consider political power as an end; it was only a means to serve the people, especially the poor. Its primary purpose is to enable people to be themselves and to establish the conducive conditions for the purpose. He was the votary of Swaraj which meant more than political freedom. Swaraj to him meant self-control. A person who can control his thoughts, words and actions is well-disposed to self-realization. If all are imbued with Swaraj individually and collectively, an ideal society would become a reality,

He saw democracy as an art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in service of the common good of all. It cannot come about by untruth and violence.

Gandhi considered capitalism, communism and socialism as socio-political systems that do not recognize adequately the freedom, equality and dignity of the individual. Their priorities remain lop-sided. He advocated the principle of *Sarvodaya* - the rise of all - which ensures basic needs of all and extends equal consideration to all.

Gandhi rejected the concept of Homo economics on which modern economics and civilization is based. Gandhian economics focuses on meeting the basic needs of all through self-employment. This is possible only if the wants are minimized and they are placed in perspective with the essential striving of man. Gandhi believed that trusteeship ensures creativity and initiative, ensures freedom while at the same time ensuring equal

distribution of goods. Gandhi stood for village based decentralized system of governance. He wanted to see villages as self-governing republics with maximum autonomy but at the same time cooperating and interdependent upon one another. He defended swadeshi wherein all the basic needs of citizens can be met locally. Gandhiji not only encountered strong opposition to his ideas but also received support in ample measure. But these consequences did not deter him from holding fast to his ideas and formulate his practices accordingly.

9.15 KEY WORDS

Sarvodaya: Sarvodaya is a term meaning 'Universal Uplift' or 'Progress of All'. The term was first coined by Mohandas Gandhi as the title of his 1908 translation of John Ruskin's tract on political economy, "Unto This Last", and Gandhi came to use the term for the ideal of his own political philosophy.

Swaraj: Swaraj can mean generally self-governance or "self-rule", and was used synonymously with "home-rule" by Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati and later on by Mohandas Gandhi, but the word usually refers to Gandhi's concept for Indian independence from foreign domination.

Gandhian concept: Gandhism is a body of ideas that describes the inspiration, vision and the life work of Mohandas Gandhi. Gandhism also permeates into the realm of the individual human being, non-political and non-social. A Gandhian can mean either an individual who follows, or a specific philosophy which is attributed to, Gandhism.

Panchayati Raj: In India, the Panchayati Raj generally refers to the system of local self-government in India introduced by a constitutional amendment in 1992, although it is based upon the traditional panchayat system of the Indian subcontinent.

Satyagraha: Satyagraha or holding onto truth or truth force – is a particular form of nonviolent resistance or civil resistance. It is not the same as passive

resistance, and advocates resisting non-violently over using violence. Resisting non-violently is considered the summit of bravery.

9.16 SUGGEST AND REFERENCE

- Bhikhu Parekh, Gandhi's Political Philosophy: A Critical Examination
- Douglas Allen (ed.), The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi
- Buddhadeva Bhattacharyya, Evolution of the Political Philosophy of Gandhi.
- Pantham and Deutsch (ed.), Political Thought in Modern India.

9.17 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Explain briefly the philosophical foundations of Gandhiji's political philosophy
2. Discuss Gandhiji's views on religion and its relationship with politics.
3. Comment on Gandhi's views on the End-Means unity.
4. Discuss Gandhiji's views on truth and non-violence.
5. Explain the uses of power according to Mahatma Gandhi.
6. Highlight the Gandhian concepts of economic equality and swadeshi.

9.18 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 2) See sub-section 9.2

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See sub-section 9.4 and 9.4.3
- 2) See sub-section 9.5

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Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See sub-section 9.6 and 9.7 and 9.8

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) See sub-section 9.9 and 9.12

UNIT – 10 JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

STRUCTURE

10 .0 Objective

10 .1 Introduction

10.2 Nehru's Scientific Temper

10.2.1 Science and Religion

10.2.2 Scientific Humanism

10.3 Nehru's Theory of Culture

10.4 Political Ideas of Nehru

10.4.1 On Nationalism

10.4.2 On Democracy

10.4.3 Individual Freedom and Equality

10.4.4 On Parliamentary Democracy

10.5 Nehru on Socialism

10.6 Nehru's International Outlook

10.7 Let Us Sum Up

10.8 Key Words

10.9 Suggested Readings and References

10.10 Questions for Review

10.11 Answer To Check Your Progress

10.0 OBJECTIVE

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the Nehru's thought
- Explain the Nehru's scientific temper
- Explain the socialism and international outlook
- Freedom and equality
- Nehru's political ideas on democracy and nationalism

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The contribution of Jawaharlal Nehru is rightly acclaimed as the maker of modern India. Having faith in the Indian people, he sought to build a democratic polity, nil economically modernized nations and a country whose role in the continuity of nations he perceived clearly. He was both a philosopher as well as a practical political leader. He did learn the western style of living and life, and to that extent he did imbibe in himself the western culture and western democratic thought with a clear tilt towards a near-communist thinking, yet, in his later years, he acquired, as Michael Brecher said (Nehru: A Political Biography), "a deeper appreciation of Indian history and philosophy and enriched the basis for subsequent thought and action." He was influenced by the developments of the 19th and 20th centuries ' as he found them in the world, but at no point of time, he closed his eyes from the ground realities of the country he belonged. Though he belonged to life of comforts and luxuries, he remained a man of masses.

Jawaharlal Nehru (henceforth, Nehru) was born in 1889. He received education at his home in Allahabad and at Harrow and Cambridge. During his seven years stay in England, he, imbibed the traditions of British humanist liberation, subscribing largely to ethos propagated by Mill, Gladstone and Morley, Among those whose ideas influenced Nehru were George Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell. He was not a political philosopher like Hobbes, Rousseau, or Marx, but he was certainly a man of ideas as also of action.

Nehru was one of the indomitable fighters of Indian freedom who led the Congress movement (under Gandhiji's leadership) along with a host of other leaders such as Vallabhai Patel, Subhash Chandra Bose, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Rajendra Prasad, to mention a few. He led the interim government in 1946 and became the first Prime Minister of the independent India and occupied this position till his death in 1964. During the period of national movement, Nehru suffered imprisonment many a times and had presided

over the Congress a couple of times. He was the Congress President in 1929 when it adopted the historic resolution of 'Purna Swaraj '.

Nehru authored Glimpses of World History, Autobiography and The Discovery of India.

10.2 NEHRU'S SCIENTIFIC TEMPER

Nehru was basically a scientist in his approach. In fact, he was the first amongst the nationalist leaders who did recognize the importance of science and technology for the modernization of the Indian society. For a modern educated Indian and this is true as well, Nehru represented the desire to be modern and scientific in one's outlook. To Nehru, Science constituted the very essence of life, without which, he would say, the modern world would have found it difficult to survive. Science, being the dominant factor in modern life, Nehru asserts, must guide the social system and economic structure. Emphasizing the achievements of science which include mighty and fundamental changes in numerous fields, what is the most important of all changes is the development of the scientific outlook in man. Together with the scientific method, the new outlook of man alone could offer to mankind hope and expectation of a good life and an ending of the agony of the world, Nehru argued. He was aware of the difficulties inherited "in nurturing science and technology in a society where thought processes were governed by traditional mores." He was never tired of speaking about the scientific temper or fighting irrationality (See R.C. Pillai, Nehru and His Critics, P. 29).

Addressing the Indian Science Congress in late thirties, Nehru stated: "Politics led me to economics and this led me inevitably to science, and the scientific approach to all our problems and to life itself. It was science alone that could solve these problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and literacy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people."

Like his father, Nehru was an agnostic. Nehru had never been able to absorb the religious devoutness of his mother. In spite of his over thirty years' contact with Gandhiji whose prophetic personality impressed everyone; Nehru continued and in fact, remained agnostic. He was not a dogmatic or militant atheist, but he was not a spiritualist either. He writes: "Often, often as I look at this world, I have a sense of mysteries, of unknown depths. What the mysterious is I do not know. I do not call it God because God has come to mean much that I do not believe in . . ." But what he could call spiritual, the term that he used often, was nothing but one that we subscribe to 'moral' or 'ethical' and Nehru was, only in that narrow sense, religious; religious in the framework of science. Science was Nehru's mantra: "science as the way of observation and precise knowledge and deliberate reasoning"

10.2.1 Science And Religion

Nehru's scientific temper did not permit him to be dogmatic. He had, therefore, no attraction for any religion, for that it is said nothing more than super situation and dogmatism in the religion, in any religion. Behind every religion, Nehru are lied, lay a method of approach which was wholly unscientific. But he did recognize that religion does provide some kind of a satisfaction to the inner needs of human nature and give a set of moral and ethical values of life in general. Religion was acceptable to Nehru only to that limited extent. He was not a religious man, nor would he ever spend time, as a routine, for morning and evening worshipping. Science was much preferable to religion; Nehru used to argue and continued

As Nehru had scientific temper, it was natural that he would be a secularist. V.P. Varma (Modern Indian Political Thought) writes, "But for a person (Jawaharlal Nehru, for example) who is an agnostic, materialist or atheist, it is easy to adopt a secularist attitude." "Jawaharlal was", he continues, "an agnostic and was not emotionally involved in religious disputations."

Secularism is basically the separation of religion from politics. Politics is associated with public activities. Religion is an individual affair, giving everyone the right to practice one's own religion. Referring to the concept of secularism, Nehru says "Some people think that it means something opposed to religion. That obviously is not correct. What it means is that it is a state which honors all faiths equally and gives them equal opportunities; that as a state, it does not allow itself to be attached to one faith or religion, which then becomes the state religion." As a part of religious community anyone can share any belief. People observe their religious festivals, rituals and customs. But at the same time, if anybody wants to come out of this belief system, he has a right to do so. If somebody is an atheist, he is free not to have any faith. State is not going to interfere in somebody's belief system.

Nehru did not take religion in a narrow sense: religion does not teach hatred and intolerance; all religions speak the truth; that is the essence of each religion. He was of the view that the religious basis of politics does not help social progress. At the same time, Nehru had respect for Gandhi's view on the role of religion in politics. Nehru was of the opinion that Gandhi had a moral view of politics. For Gandhi, religion can teach the politicians to be moral and ethical; it has a role in a society for teaching moral values and maintaining an ethical order. To that extent, Nehru was one with Gandhi. But at the same time he opposed the view that political parties should be organized on the basis of religion. That created hatred between different religions and hatred breeds violence and intolerance among people. He agreed to the point that religious equality can be the basis of creating a peaceful and harmonious society. Without social peace, no social progress is possible. Changing the religion of a group can create social disharmony; though he theoretically agreed to this point of view, he did not support it politically.

Nehru was a secularist. He disapproved both the Hindu communalism as well as the Muslim communalism. His loyalty to secularism has been a great relief to the minority group in India. His belief in scientific methodology

with its stress on rationalism has helped the evolution of his nationalist political ideology.

10.2.2 Scientific Humanism

It is not easy to declare Nehru irreligious; he was, in fact, not opposed to religion. He did recognize that religion 'supplied a creeper craving of human beings'. He did admit that religion served a significant human purpose as "the resting ground for 'faith' and 'faith in progress, in a sense, in ideals, in human goodness and human destiny" (see Nehru, *An Autobiography*). According to Nehru, it was from 'faith' that 'the inner imaginative urges' which distinguished man from other beings, flowed, and it was to these urges that the ends of a life bore reference. Science too, Nehru says, suggested the existence of the inner world of spirit, but the latter was beyond the reach of science, for his understanding of science was that it explained the 'How's of the existence but left the 'why's' of its alone'. Obviously then, man had to turn inwards to his intuition to see the world of spirit. Thus, between science and intuition, the role was clear: science could help refine one's senses; intuition could help understand the spiritual world. The only adequate philosophy of life, 'the integral vision of life', as Nehru called it, was the one that had the 'temper and approach of science allied to the philosophy and with reverence for all that lies beyond "It was", as Nehru had said, "philosophy which explained the matter of existence while science explained the manner of it." (See, Nehru, *The Discovery of India*). So, Nehru concludes: "Lest the approach of life grew lopsided, with either the outer self or the inner self, and not both as combined when as the whole life, reconciling of the scientific with the spirit of philosophy was necessary for 'balancing of an individual's outer and inner life.'" (See M.N. JHA, *Modern Indian Political Thought*, Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut.) Nehru, thus, adds the environmental dimension to Gandhi's worldview on the one hand, and though he drifts away from Gandhi, he aligns himself with him on the other. Though he got influenced by Marx's scientific approach, he alienated himself from him for his hostility to the spirit of man. To that extent Nehru combines the scientific aspect of the Marx and the spiritualist aspect of

Gandhi, especially in his scientific humanism. Scientific humanism forms the basic content of Nehru's view of human relationship.

Nehru's scientific humanism had the combination of scientific dimension as well as the spiritual dimension. Unlike Gandhi's uni-dimensional approach, there is a in-dimensional approach in Nehru. According to Nehru, "the way to the spiritualization of human relationships lay through that of the circumstaitices environing them". Nehru himself admitted that it was in the interest of matt to have faith in the essential spirituality of manhood, but he emphasized that faith was merely the concluding end of the rationalist process. He was of the opinion that man would never have faith in the spirituality of the human being unless circumstances environing him compelled it. He asserted that the way to the spiritualization of the social progresses lay through the objectifications of the spirit of malt alone and to the realization of the social processes lay through the objectification of the spirit of man alone, and to the realization of it.

The key to man's problems lies, as Nehru believed, if people tried to imbibe in themselves the highest ideals, such as humanism and scientific spirit. He did not see any conflict between the two: "there is a growing synthesis between humanism and scientific spirit, resulting in the kind of scientific humanism". He *rites: "the modern mind, that is to say, the better type of the modern type, is practical and pragmatic ethical and social, altruistic and humanitarian. It is governed by a practical idealism for social betterment. It has discarded to a large extent the philosophic approach of the ancients, their search for ultimate reality as well as the devotionals and mysticism of the medieval period. Humanity is its god and social service, its religion"

Endowed with a scientific and rational temper, Nehru always looked upon science as an effective means for the liberation of man.

10.3 NEHRU'S THEORY OF CULTURE

As an active politician and an author with sociological realism and political pragmatism, Nehru would hardly subscribe to the concept of culture as an organic unity permeated with some primordial systems. Nehru could never entertain such a perspective of India's structural cultural continuity, but he did appreciate the vicissitudes of India's historical transformations from the days of the ancient Harappa civilization to the contemporary one. He was not the man who would acknowledge the revelation of God or Dharma in the Indian cultural manifestations. Nehru is a naturalist determinist who upholds physical, geological, zoological, chemical and anthropological data, but sees no spiritual governance of the cosmic process. So with Nehru's historically, there are no providential dispensation and no emotional attachment to any specific culture.

Though Nehru was a Brahmin, he did not attach any meaning to ritualism; he did admire the Gita gospel of dedicated disinterested altruism, and was never thrilled by the exalted orations of the Visvarupa of the Gita's eleventh chapter. He was more influenced by Russell and Lenin than by the notion of Nirvana. The external materialistic attempts of the Western- Soviet worlds fascinated Nehru more than the Puranic cosmography of the oriental world. That does not mean that Nehru was all Marxist-Leninist. He did know the strength of Marxism - Leninism, but he also knew that it was weak in domains relating to humanist values, when it ignored the positive aspects of capitalistic system, and also when it comes to dwell solely on materialistic factors. Nehru was a blend of the two extremes: the external civilization advancement together with a quest for die realization of values it) all spheres of human activities. Professor Varnia holds the view: "Towards the latter part of his life, Jawaharlal would have agreed that materialistic dialectics and class polarity cannot be adequate tools for understanding the widespread ramification of alienation." "Valires", he continues, "in turn, lose their significance if they are solely regarded as class ideological responses."

Nehru's concept of culture was not spiritual, but material; it was not eternal, but humanist; it was, more or less, this worldly, historical and to that extent a blend of secular and temporal, social and economic values. His culture was not dogmatic, fundamentalist, fanatical, narrow, prophetic, algological, divine and godly. It was one that was an apostle of compassion, altruism, humanism and one which was more close to liberty, equality, fraternity, human rights, and rationalistic. Speaking about the concept of culture, Professor Varma says, "Cultural comprehensiveness requires an emancipated mind liberated from the shackles of dogmatic and revealed theology, the renunciation of unjust demands for the retention of unfounded socio-economic vestiges and the abjuration of all claims to impose one's limited conceptions of ethics, justice and social norms on others professing loyalty to divergent creeds and religious tenets." About Nehru's culture, Professor Varna concluded, "Jawaharlal and some other top spokesmen of Gandhian values found it easy to reconcile democratic liberalism with social toleration and cultural pluralism because they had genuine commitment to the demands of patriotism oriented towards cosmopolitan fulfilment. Jawaharlal was sincere in his advocacy of secularism as a political and cultural value,"

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 Nehru's scientific temper and his concept of scientific humanism.

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10.4 POLITICAL IDEAS OF NEHRU

10.4.1 Nationalism:

Nehru was a great nationalist, though he had no theory of nationalism. He did believe in the objectivity of the fundamental unity of India nurtured on cultural foundations which was, according to him, "not religious in the narrow sense of the term. He did accept the narrow diversities, but, at the same time, he admired the unity running throughout the Indian history. He was, indeed, inspired by the concept of cultural pluralism and synthesis. To him, nationalism was a noble phase of self-magnification. He writes: "Nationalism is essentially a group memory of past achievements, traditions, and experiences, and nationalism is stronger today than it has ever been wherever a crisis has arisen, nationalism has emerged again and dominated the scene, and people have sought comfort and strength in their old, traditions. One of the remarkable developments of the present age has been the rediscovery of the past and/ or the nation." But nationalism has also solid - social, political and economic – foundations.

By nature, Nehru was a nationalist and was a rebel against authoritarianism. He did not like the politics of talks, of too much submission and appeal to authorities and that was why he always found himself akin to Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He says: "So far as political matters were concerned, I was, if I may say so, an Indian nationalist desiring India's freedom, and rather, inclined, in the context of Indian politics to the more extreme wing of it, as represented then by Mr. Tilak." But he was in the way in agreement with Tilak's, deep religious motivations.

Nehru's nationalism had its clear distinctive features. It was a composite and a living force and as such could make the strongest appeal to the spirit of man. Only such a type of socialism could be a driving force for freedom, and it alone could give a certain degree of unity, vigour and vitality to many people all over the world. But Nehru did not appreciate the narrow and

fanatical type of nationalism. R.C. Pillai writes about Nehru's views on narrow nationalism: "Nationalism would be harmful, if it ever made the people conscious of their own superiority. It would be most undesirable if the spirit of nationalism pushed up any people towards aggressive expansionism," Nehru himself says of the Indian nationalism as liberal and tolerant: "Nationalism is essentially an anti-feeling and it feeds and fattens on hatred and anger against other national groups."

Translated into action, Nehru's nationalism was patriotism and independence of the country. In fact, Nehru's nationalism was a firm commitment to the idea of complete independence of the country. In his sharply worded rejoinder to all those who still advocated dominion states, Nehru most emphatically stated, way back in 1928, "If India has a message to give to the world, it is clear that she can do so more effectively as an independent country than as a member of the British group." And in 1928, he presided over the Lahore Congress session and got the Purna Swaraj resolution passed.

10.4.2 On Democracy:

Nehru was a great champion of democracy, throughout his life; he laid emphasis on the importance of democracy and desired passionately that independent India would go along the full democratic process. He had a great passion for freedom. Grown in the Western democratic traditions, Nehru absorbed, since childhood, many of the dominant concepts of modern democratic thought. He had read extensively philosophers such as Rousseau, Montesquieu, Mill and made reference of their works in the writings. He conferred and wrote in his *An Autobiography*, "My roots are still perhaps partly in the 19th century and have been too much influenced by the humanist liberal tradition to get out of it completely".

For Nehru, democracy was an intellectual condition; it was primarily a way of life, based on the hypothesis that the freedom was integral to the being of

man. He was also aware that freedom required a set of conditions. He writes: "Self-discipline, tolerance, and a taste of peace - these were the basic conditions for living a life of freedom". He did not subscribe to the view that unrestrained freedom made any sense. He held, M.N. Jha says, "that the state was born to make a reality of the freedom of its citizens, for, it served to counteract the evil influences of the lower instincts of the individual man in the social process." The state, Nehru held, was a spiritual necessity for man to clear the particularistic convictions that the religions promote.

Nehru was a true democrat, for he never doubted the soundness of democracy as a spiritual proposition. In his view, the spiritualization of a social process was, "synonymous with the maximization of democracy within it, and the latter called for the objectifications of not merely the guarantees of rights but also of rights themselves."

Nehru's concept of democracy had specific implications. In the early years of liberation struggle, democracy, for Nehru, meant the ideal of self-rule or responsible government. Later, with the socialist ideas altering his world-view, he came to see democracy as one that emphasized an equality of opportunity to all in the economic and political field and freedom for the individual to grow and develop to the best of his personality.

10.4.3 Individual Freedom and Equality:

Nehru 'was a democrat by nature, temperament and conviction; he held individual freedom and equality as important components of any democratic polity. According to Nehru, the creative spirit of man could grow only in an atmosphere of freedom. To promote and preserve the values of human life, both society and individual must enjoy freedom. The purpose of a democratic society, Nehru held, was essentially to provide necessary conditions of creative development. Why must India accept the democracy process? Nehru gave the following reason

'it is not enough for us merely to produce the material goods of the world. We do want high , standard of living, but not at the cost of man's creative

spirit, his creative energy, his spirit of adventure, not at the cost of all fine things of life which have ennobled man throughout .- the ages. Democracy is not merely a question of elections."

Nehru believed in the primacy and autonomy of the individual; the state had no right to, suppress the individual, no development could be attained if man's creative abilities were to remain suppressed. Nehru's concept of individual freedom necessarily implied freedom of speech, and expression of association, of many other fields of human activities. The general - health of a society, Nehru believed, was largely determined by the freedom of its people.

In Nehru's democratic thought, equality constituted an important component of his concept of democracy. "The spirit of the age is in favour of equality "Nehru declared. The doctrine of equality, according to Nehru, meant equal opportunities for all; it presupposed a certain faith in and respect for humanity as a whole, and a belief that the progress and well- being of individuals, groups, or races mainly depended upon the enjoyment of equal opportunities by all, with more opportunities to the weaker sections of society.

10.4.4 On Parliamentary Democracy:

Indian cultural traditions and historical experience under the British rule helped Nehru to support the parliamentary democracy instead of Presidential system of the USA. Parliamentary democracy is much more flexible to accommodate diverse social groups. No social group is allowed to go out of the system as the system is ready to bear the agitation organized by such a group to a point. Even Nehru did not agree to the demands of such groups but accommodated their demands in a democratic process. Once the system accepts the demands, the agitation fritters away. For instance, the states' reorganization on the basis of language is a classic case. There was agitation by Telugu people for the separation of Andhra from Madras Presidency;

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Nehru as the Prime Minister accepted the demand by constituting a Committee of Reorganization of States on the basis of language with some reservation. This is the spirit of a democratic leader. Very often the leader may not agree to the point theoretically but accepts it as the best policy for creating a healthy system. Once the states are reorganized on the basis of language, the Indian democracy functions as a federation; though in the Constitution it is written as a union of states, in practice it functions as a federation. Federation helps in building an institutional framework for nurturing the cultural identities of a linguistic group. In the Indian Constitution there is a distribution of powers between the centre and the states. Legal and institutional arrangements hold the key to democracy, while linguistic federalism provides the flesh to the skeleton democracy. This ' political arrangement has been working for fifty years without creating problem of unmanageable magnitude, though there are problems for the Indian Federation from the peripheral states.

Parliamentary democracy supports cabinet form of executive that can accommodate each state and community in it. The formation of Council of Ministers helps to give a place to each group and state. This creates a healthy federation by accommodating and incorporating representatives from different groups. In the Presidential system it is not possible, as the formation of the executive becomes prerogative of the President. Further, there is a chance that the President can turn into an authoritarian personality. This is not possible in the parliamentary system. The Prime Minister is one of the Council of Ministers though he is the leader of the House and leader of the nation. He cannot but be a democrat as he listens to various viewpoints not only from the Ministers as his colleagues, but also from the Chief Ministers. Nehru was always in constant communication with the Chief Ministers; sometimes there was opposition from the Chief Ministers to his viewpoint but he listened to them. In the case of Hindu Code Bill had a strong difference with the President of India, Rajendra Prasad. But he tried to accommodate Prasad's viewpoint in making the Hindu Code Bill, though he characterized the bill as a conservative one. Nehru opposed the

intervention by the President, as unconstitutional, on the grounds that in the Indian democracy, the President is a nominal head. As a Prime Minister, he recognized the President's position and wanted the latter to lead as a friend and guide, and not as a master of the team.

Parliamentary democracy depends on the balancing of institutions. Nehru played a decisive role in bringing a balance between the legislature, executive and judiciary. He had a high regard for the legislature. He made it a point to attend every session of the Lok Sabha. He tried to listen to the opposition with a sharp attention. He saw to it that his cabinet colleagues did some homework before attending the session. He, as a team leader, provided leadership to his team for performing better in Parliament. He cooperated with his colleagues and the opposition leaders for showing to the world that India's nascent democracy function is well. The outside intelligentsia, who did study the functioning of Indian Parliament, gave due recognition to Nehru as a Parliamentarian, who got due cooperation from the opposition and his colleagues. There were many stalwarts on the opposition front, leaders like Lohia, Masatxi and Kripalani. There were political leaders outside the parliamentary system like JP Narain and Vinoba who recognized the leadership qualities of Nehru. Very often these lion- parliamentary leaders, branded as the 'saintly politicians' of this country had a bigger influence in politics than the political parties and Nehru was able to get necessary cooperation from these outstanding leaders as well. He directed the administration to provide all cooperation for making the Bhoodan movement a success.

Parliamentary democracy depends on the periodic election for getting a mandate of the people, wherein a political party puts forth an election manifesto and faces the election which is conducted by the neutral authority, the Election Commission. The Congress, under the leadership Nehru faced the general election to the Lok Sabha and secured the majority in the Lok Sabha and formed the government at the centre. It is interesting to note that the Congress Party under Nehru's leadership faced the general election

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successfully till he was alive. He placed an Election manifesto in 1946 general election regarding the abolition of the Zamindari System. The general public gave wide support to him, though the election was held before Independence. His leadership was recognized and got legitimacy among the people ' of India. In the 1952 general election, the manifesto of the Congress carried the question of the implementation of the programs of the first five year planned document which contained the state's role in both the rural and industrial economy. The public accepted this overwhelmingly, The Congress Party won each election on the basis of its performance, competing with the opposition political parties like the Socialist, Swatantra and Communists, But Nehru had a high regard for these political leaders and parties. He helped some of the leaders to get elected in the by-election to the Lok Sabha and did not field any candidate against the opposition leaders. He was concerned about the quality of the debates in tile parliament which was possible only with the presence of the top leaders on the opposition side, Moreover, participation in electoral politics strengthens the parliamentary democracy. Competitive politics is based on the participation of different political parties with a different ideology. Election becomes the festival for the parliamentary democracy. Nehru used to participate in these festivals with all seriousness. Election studies conducted by the independent academia show that the 'Congress had got the electoral support from each section of the society, both in terms of caste and class. Electoral politics help in the mobilization of various social groups into the system whose demands keep increasing the capacity of the political system.

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. State briefly the main tenets of Nehru's political ideas.

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10.5 NEHRU ON SOCIALISM

Nehru's interest in socialism can be traced to his Cambridge days when the Fabianism of George Bernard Shaw and the Webs attracted him. He was, during those days, attending the lectures of John Maynard Keynes and Bertrand Russell, which influenced his ideas. The fast changing political, social and economic ideas taking place throughout the world sharpened his socialistic influences. India's millions living in poverty made Nehru a socialist, notwithstanding the Marxist ideology of Marx and Lenin which had its profound impact on him. Socialism, with Nehru, was not merely an economic doctrine; 'it is a vital creed', Nehru spoke at the 1936 Congress session, "which I hold with all my head and heart." He was convinced that there was no other way of ending the appalling mass poverty and sufferings in India except through socialism.

Nehru was of the opinion that no ideology other than socialism could fit in the democratic pattern as that of India. He was convinced that no democracy could succeed without imbibing socialist pattern. The essence of socialism, Nehru used to say, lies in "the control by the state of the means of production", and the idea inspiring socialism was the prevention of the exploitation of the poor by the rich. The socialist way, to Nehru, was that of "the ending of poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and the subjection." He laughed off Gandhi's claim to being a socialist and rejected the Marxian thesis of the dictatorship of proletariat. Under India's peculiar conditions, Nehru came to advocate the socialistic, if not socialism, pattern of society.

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Nehru's concept of socialism was not the abolition of private property, but the replacement of the present profit system by the higher ideal of cooperative service. His socialism was not the state ownership of the means of production, but was their societal and cooperative ownership. Nehru brought socialism close to democracy.

Nehru's socialism has the distinctive characteristic of progressive industrialization through which alone the Indian economic problems (poverty, backwardness, 'low rate of production) could be solved and through which alone the modern India could be built. He strongly believed that in industrialization, "the only solution for this lay in utilizing modern science and technology for accelerating the progress of industrialization on which depended also the prospects of agricultural development". For industrialization, Nehru ruled out the capitalistic model and pleaded the socialist model by limiting the same to nationalization of certain key industries and cooperative approach in agriculture while allowing the private sector to participate in industry and agriculture. That was what one may say the essence of socialistic pattern of society the model which was made to work through (1) economic planning; (ii) mixed economy, (iii) five years plans. Nehru knew that the socialistic pattern of society was "not socialism in its pure form but this form would," he was convinced, "lead the country in the direction of socialism."

Nehru's concept of socialism had a vision of future India and of modernizing India. He wrote: "For we have to build India on a scientific foundation to develop her industries, to change that feudal character of her land system and bring her agriculture in time with modern methods to develop the social services which she lacks so utterly today." If India has to modernize itself, it must, Nehru said, "lessen her religiosity and turn to science. She must get rid of her exclusiveness in thought and social habit which has become like a prison to her, stunting her spirit and preventing growth."

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. State the evolution of Nehru's concept of socialism. What are the characteristics of his theory of socialism?

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10.6 NEHRU'S INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Nehru's significant contribution lies in the evolution and growth of an international outlook. Indeed, he was a great nationalist and as such had a vision of independent India's foreign policy which was in tune with India's national interest. Non-alignment as foreign policy was nationalistic in its objectives. India could not have devoted itself to modernization, nor would it have successfully protected her frontiers, had it aligned with any one of the two military blocs. Her economy, politics, social existence, internal circumstances would have been at risk if India would have chosen the path of joining ally block of the post-war (1945) days. So, if Nehru sought to build an independent non-aligned foreign policy for India, it made sense and brought to the fore Nehru as a nationalist.

But Nehru was, despite his being a nationalist, a great internationalist. He was the architect of non-alignment as a movement and as a force on the international forum. At heart, Nehru was internationalist, an advocate for the United Nations, a champion of the world. He had a role for India in the community of nations. India, therefore, Nehru argued, "must be prepared to discard her narrow nationalism in favour of world cooperation and real internationalism." He used to insist that the states should maintain a reasonable balance between nationalism and internationalism. Narrow

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nationalism, according to him, leads to imperialism which all discarded out rightly, to fascism which he denounced at the first opportunity, to exploitation of one state by another which he thought posed a threat to world peace. He would rather visualize the emergence of a world federation, and a world republic, and not an empire for exploitation Nehru says: "The world has become internationalized, production is international, markets are international and transport is international. No nation is really independent, they are all interdependent.

If romantic loyalties had made Nehru a nationalist, "the rational and pragmatic considerations," Professor Varma says, "for human welfare made him a believer in peaceful coexistence and the ideals of "one world". In an age of nuclear fission, hydrogen fusion and the prospects of neutron bombs and chemical warfares, Nehru could have been an apostle of world peace, a champion of disarmament , and a true believer of the ideals of the United Nations. There is only one alternative to world terrorism, and it is, as Nehru rightly says, world peace.

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. Explain briefly Nehru's international outlook.

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10.7 LET US SUM UP

Nehru's contribution to India's freedom struggle and to the malting of modern India can hardly be denied. He was one of the important leaders of

the Indian National Congress. Though he was a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and also his successor, he had significant differences with him. Nehru was not a religious man while Gandhi was; he never shared Gandhi's views on spiritualization of politics; he never subscribed to Gandhiji's economic ideas of trusteeship. Nehru was agnostic, and hence, in politics, a secularist. He found in science a solution to all problems. All through his life, Nehru advocated a scientific temper and preached scientific humanism.

Nehru was a political realist and had always a pragmatic approach towards all the problems. In his political ideas, Nehru was a nationalist to the point of internationalism, a firm believer in democracy; had a passion for individual freedom and for equality. He advocated.

10.8 KEY WORDS

Purna Swaraj: The Purna Swaraj declaration, or Declaration of the Independence of India, was promulgated by the Indian National Congress on 19 December 1929, resolving the Congress and Indian nationalists to fight for Purna Swaraj, or complete self-rule independent of the British Empire.

Communalism: Communalism usually refers to a system that integrates communal ownership and federations of highly localized independent communities.

Fabianism: The Fabian Society is a British socialist organisation whose purpose is to advance the principles of democratic socialism via gradualist and reformist effort in democracies, rather than by revolutionary overthrow.

10.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Explain Nehru's scientific temper and his concept of scientific humanism.
2. State briefly the main tenets of Nehru's political ideas.

3. State the evolution of Nehru's concept of socialism. What are the characteristics of his theory of socialism?
4. Explain briefly Nehru's international outlook.

10.10 SUGGEST READING AND REFERENCE

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- S. Gopal (ed.), Jawaharlal Nehru.

10.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 3) See sub-section 10.2 and 10.2.2

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See sub-section 10.4

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See sub-section 10.5

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) See sub-section 10.6

UNIT - 11: B.R. AMBEDKAR

STRUCTURE

11.0 Objectives

11.1 Introduction

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11.0 OBJECTIVE

This unit deals with the thought of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. The purpose

- to introduce Dr. Ambedkar's political ideas
- to outline the ideological basis of his struggle for abolition of the caste system,
- make you understand the 'significance of Dr. Ambedkar's social and political thought.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on 14 April, 1891 in Mahar caste. The Mahar caste was one of the 'untouchable' castes. This created many difficulties in Ambedkar's higher education. With the help of a scholarship from Sayajirao Gaekwad, Maharaja of Baroda, he attended Columbia University, USA, and later on with hard work managed to study at the London School of Economics. In England he attained a doctorate and also became a barrister. On returning to India he virtually dedicated himself to the task of upliftment of the untouchable community. Soon he won the confidence of the- untouchables and became their supreme leader. To mobilise his followers he established organisations such as the Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha, Independent Labour Party and later All India Scheduled Caste Federation. He led a number of temple-entry Satyagrahas, organized the untouchables, established many educational institutions and propagated his views from newspapers like the 'Mooknayak', 'Bahishkrit Bharat' and 'Janata'. He participated in the Round Table Conference in order to protect the interests of the untouchables. He became the Chairman of the drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly and played a very important role in framing The Indian Constitution. He was also the Law Minister of India up to 1951. Right from 1935 Ambedkar was thinking of renouncing Hinduism. Finally, in 1956 he adopted Buddhism and appealed to his followers to do the same. He felt that the removal of untouchability and the spiritual

upliftment of the untouchables would not be possible by remaining a Hindu. Hence, he embraced Buddhism.

Ambedkar was not only a political leader and social reformer but also a scholar and thinker. He has written extensively on various social and political matters. 'Annihilation of Castes', 'Who Were the Shudras', 'The Untouchables', 'Buddha and His Dharma' are his more important writings. Besides these, he had also published many other books and booklets propagating his views. His thinking was based on a deep faith in the goals of equity and liberty. Liberalism and the philosophy of John Dewey also influenced his thinking. Jotirao Phule and Buddha have exercised a deep influence on Ambedkar's ideas on society, religion and morality. His political views were also influenced by his legal approach. Ambedkar's personal suffering, his scholarship and his constant attention to the problem of bringing about equality for the downtrodden untouchable community forms the basis of his thinking and writings.

11.2 AMBEDKAR'S VIEW ON THE BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

Ambedkar was aware of the drawbacks inherent in foreign rule. The British government had introduced some representative institutions in India. But full self-government could not have any alternative. Besides, Ambedkar always complained that the plight of the untouchables did not change under British rule. The British rulers were not interested in removing untouchability. Their policy had always been cautious in the matter of social reform. Reforms were likely to anger the upper castes and give them an opportunity to rally against British rule. Therefore, British rulers did not encourage rapid social reforms. Even in the field of education, Ambedkar felt that the government was not sincere in spreading education among the untouchables. All educational facilities were utilized by the upper castes only. Moreover, the interests of the upper castes and those of the untouchables were opposed to

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each other. Ambedkar's wanted the British government to mediate on behalf of the untouchables. But the government neglected this responsibility. Because of this attitude of neglect, the untouchable community could not get any benefit from the British rule. He was also not very happy about British administration. He was particularly critical of the administration on account of its over expensive character and general neglect of public welfare.

But he knew that abrupt departure of the British would result into political domination of the upper castes. Therefore, a political settlement was necessary clearly mentioning the powers of and safeguards for the untouchable community. Without this, independence would be meaningless for the untouchables. In short, Ambedkar criticized the British rule for failing in its duty to uplift the untouchables. For this reason he supported the cause of self-government. But he insisted that in free India, the untouchable community must get a proper share in the power structure; otherwise independence would merely mean rule by the upper castes.

Check Your Progress 1

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

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. Briefly discuss Ambedkar's views on the British Rule in India.

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11.3 AMBEDKAR ON DEMOCRACY

Like many other national leaders Ambedkar had complete faith in democracy. Dictatorship may be able 'to produce results quickly; it may be effective in maintaining discipline but cannot be one's choice as a permanent

form of government. Democracy is superior because it enhances liberty. People have control over the rulers. Among the different forms of democratic government, Ambedkar's choice fell on the parliamentary form. In this case also he was in agreement with many other national leaders.

11.3.1 Meaning: Social and Economic Democracy:

Ambedkar viewed democracy as an instrument of bringing about change peacefully. Democracy does not merely mean rule by the majority or government by the representatives of the people. This is a formalistic and limited notion of democracy. We would understand the meaning of democracy in a better fashion if we view it as a way of realizing drastic changes in the social and economic spheres of society. Ambedkar's idea of democracy is much more than just a scheme of government. He emphasises the need for bringing about an all-round democracy. A scheme of government does not exist in vacuum; it operates within the society. Its usefulness depends upon its relationship with the other spheres of society. Elections, parties and parliaments are, after all, formal institutions of democracy. They cannot be effective in an undemocratic atmosphere. Political democracy means the principle of 'one man one vote' which indicates political equality. But if oppression and injustice exist, the spirit of political democracy would be missing. Democratic government, therefore, should be an extension of a democratic society. In the Indian society, for instance, so long as caste barriers and caste-based inequalities exist, real democracy cannot operate. In this sense, democracy means a spirit of fraternity and equality and not merely a political arrangement. Success of democracy in India can be ensured only by establishing a truly democratic society.

Along with the social foundations of democracy, Ambedkar takes into consideration the economic aspects also. It is true that he was greatly influenced by liberal thought. Still, he appreciated the limitations of liberalism. Parliamentary democracy, in which he had great faith, was also critically examined by him. He argued that parliamentary democracy was

based on liberalism. It ignored economic inequalities and never concentrated upon the problems of the downtrodden. Besides, the general tendency of the western type of parliamentary democracies has been to ignore the issues of social and economic equality. In other words, parliamentary democracy emphasised only liberty whereas true democracy implies both liberty and equality. This analysis becomes very important in the Indian context. Indian society was demanding freedom from the British. But Ambedkar was afraid that freedom of the nation would not ensure real freedom for all the people. Social and economic inequalities have dehumanized the Indian society. Establishing democracy in such a society would be nothing short of a revolution. This would be a revolution in the social structure and attitudes of the people. In the place of hereditary inequality, the principles of brotherhood and equality must be established. Therefore, Ambedkar supported the idea of all-round democracy.

11.3.2 Factors Necessary for the Successful Operation of Democracy:

We have already seen that Ambedkar favoured the parliamentary form of government. For the successful functioning of this form of government, it is necessary that certain other conditions must be fulfilled. To begin with, political parties are necessary for the effective working of parliamentary democracy. This will ensure existence of the opposition which is very important.

Parliamentary government is known as responsible government mainly because the executive is constantly watched and controlled by the opposition. Respect and official status for the opposition means absence of absolute power for the executive. The other condition is a neutral and non-political civil service. A neutral civil service means that administrators would be permanent - not dependent on the fortunes of the political parties - and that they would not take sides with political parties. This will be possible only when appointments of civil servants are not made on the basis of political consideration. Success of democracy depends on many ethical and moral factors also. A country may have a constitution. But it is only a

set of rules. These rules become meaningful only when people in the country develop conventions and traditions consistent with the constitution. People and politicians must follow certain norms in public life. Similarly, there must also exist a sense of morality and conscientiousness in the society. Law and legal remedies can never replace a voluntary sense of responsibility. No amount of law can enforce morality. Norms of honest and responsible behavior must develop in the society. Democracy can be successful only when every citizen feels duty bound to fight injustice even if that injustice does not put him into any difficulty personally. This will happen when equality and brotherhood exist in the society.

To make democracy successful in India, Ambedkar suggested a few other precautions also. Democracy means rule of the majority. But this should not result into tyranny of the majority. Majority must always respect the views of the minority. In India there is a possibility that the minority community will always be a political minority also. Therefore, it is very essential that the minority must feel free, safe and secure. Otherwise, it will be very easy to convert democracy into a permanent rule against the minority. Caste system could thus become the most difficult obstacle in the successful functioning of democracy. The castes which are supposed to be of low status will never get their proper share in power. Caste will create barriers in the development of healthy democratic traditions. This means that unless we achieve the task of establishing democracy in the social field, mere political democracy cannot survive.

Check Your Progress 2

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

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. Critically examine Ambedkar's views on democracy.

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11.4 ON STATE SOCIALISM

From this discussion, you will realize that Ambedkar was not only a scholar with a firm intellectual grip on concepts, but he was also aware of the practical social difficulties in the way of democratic functioning. Therefore, he emphasizes that mere liberty cannot be an adequate goal. Liberty is meaningful when accompanied by equality. We want a democratic government which will uphold the idea of equality also. The western ideas of liberal democracy and parliamentary form of government do not ensure equality. So Ambedkar turned to socialism.

11.4.1 Inclination to Socialism:

In those days, two varieties of socialism were prominent. One was Marxist Socialism. Ambedkar studied various aspects of Marxism and favoured some Marxist principles. He generally subscribed to the material view of history and agreed to the need for a total change for bringing about equality. He also accepted the idea of public ownership of property. However, he did not become a Marxist. The other important variety of socialism was Democratic Socialism. Ambedkar's firm belief in democracy attracted him to this ideology. He felt that socialism must function within a democratic framework. Democracy and socialism need not be opposed to each other. Thus, in 1947, Ambedkar propounded the idea of 'State socialism'. Even earlier, when he established the Independent Labour Party in 1937, he had adopted a broadly socialist programme. The name of the party itself indicates that it was to be a party of all depressed classes. Its programme included state management of important industries and bringing about a just economic system. The party wanted to ensure minimum standard of living for agricultural and industrial workers.

11.4.2 Meaning of State Socialism:

In 1947, Ambedkar suggested that the Constitution of India should incorporate the principle of State Socialism. State socialism means that the state would implement a socialist programme by controlling the industrial

and agricultural sectors. There are two major aspects of Ambedkar's State socialism. (a) Key industries and basic industries will be owned by the state. There will be no private ownership of such industries. This will help in rapid industrialization and at the same time, benefits of industrialization will be distributed among all the sections of the society by the state. Insurance will also be timely under state control; (b) Agriculture will be treated as a state industry. This means that the state will initiate collective farming. Farmers will be allowed to enjoy part of the agricultural produce and the state will get some share in the form of levy. Foodgrains procured by way of levy will be used for distribution at fair prices. In other words, the state will actively control both the industry and the agriculture. This will ensure equitable distribution of wealth and protect the needy and the poor. Rapid industrial progress and welfare of all the sections of the society will be the responsibility of the state. However, the democratic institutions such as the parliament will also remain intact.

In the parliamentary form of government, the same party may not remain in power permanently. Different parties with different programmes may come to power. Therefore, Ambedkar suggested that the programme of State Socialism should be made an inalterable part of the constitution', so that any party which comes to power will have to implement that programme. This idea of State Socialism shows that Ambedkar was aware of the problems of poverty and economic inequality. He laid great emphasis on industrialization. He believed that India needed rapid industrial growth. This will help to ease out the burden on agriculture. But merely of wealth, the menace of capitalism had to be avoided.

11.4.3 Role of Government:

This was possible only if the state functioned as a major partner in the field of industry. Ambedkar believed that the state operating through government will be a neutral agency looking after the interests of the entire community. Therefore, he attached much importance to the role of the government. Government, according to him, has to perform the role of a welfare agency. It has to ensure rapid progress and just distribution of the fruits of that

progress. The role of the government was not restricted to industry only. It was expected to be active in the area of banking and insurance. Moreover, the government must also control the agriculture. By owning major industries and controlling agriculture, the government will curb economic injustice. In other words, changes of a revolutionary nature are to be brought about through the efforts of the government.

Check Your Progress 3

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

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. Discuss Ambedkar's concept of State Socialism.

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11.5 AMBEDKAR AND DRAFTING OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

In 1947, Ambedkar became Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly of India. His contribution in this role has become memorable. Ambedkar's legal expertise and knowledge of constitutional laws of different countries was very helpful in framing the Indian Constitution. His deep regard for a democratic constitution and insistence upon constitutional morality also helped in this process. In this sense, he is rightly regarded as the architect of the Indian Constitution. There are many administrative details in the Indian Constitution (e.g. provisions regarding the Public Service Commission, Attorney General, Comptroller and Auditor General, etc.) which have made the constitution a very lengthy document. But Ambedkar defended inclusion of such details. He argued that we have created a democratic political structure in a traditional society. If all details

are not incorporated, unscrupulous rulers in the future' may misuse the constitution without technically violating it. Thus, formally the constitution may remain in operation but its real purpose may be defeated. To avoid this, the best safeguard is to write down all necessary details and to bind future rulers to these details. In a society where the democratic tradition is weak, such safeguards become essential. This shows that Ambedkar was a staunch constitutionalist. He believed that a government must be constitutional and that constitution must be treated as a basic and sacred document. There was no room for extra-parliamentary activity in constitutional politics. He also attached much significance to the evolution of constitutional norms and public practices consistent with the constitution.

Dr. Ambedkar's most important contribution to the Indian Constitution may be seen in the areas of fundamental rights, strong central government and protection of minorities. As a liberal Ambedkar believed that fundamental rights constitute the most important part of the constitution. But mere listing of these rights is not sufficient. What makes fundamental rights really fundamental is the guarantee of constitutional protection to these rights. Ambedkar was proud of Article 32 of the Indian Constitution which guarantees judicial protection to fundamental rights. Such protection makes the rights real and meaningful. There was general agreement in the constituent assembly that India needed a strong central government. Ambedkar shared this view. But his chief reason for advocating a strong central government was slightly different from that of the others. He was aware that India was a caste-ridden society in which lower castes have always received unjust treatment from the higher castes. He was afraid that casteism would be all the more powerful at local and provincial levels. Government at these levels would be easily subject to caste pressures and it would fail to protect the lower castes from higher caste oppression. The national government would be less influenced by these pressures. It would be more liberal in its approach than the local governments. 'Only a strong central government, therefore, will ensure some protection to the lower castes. This was Ambedkar's most important reason for creating a strong central government. He knew that the minority communities in India were in

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the most vulnerable position. In India, there was a tendency of a communal or caste majority becoming a political majority also. Thus, a minority will be both a caste minority and political minority. It will be subject to political as well as social harassment. The democratic rule of 'one-man-one-vote' will not be sufficient in such a situation. What we need in India is some guarantee of a share in power for the minorities. Minority communities should get an opportunity to elect their representatives. The views of these representatives must be fully respected. Ambedkar attempted to incorporate many safeguards for the minorities, including definite representation in the executive. He was successful in creating provisions regarding political reservations in legislatures and the appointment of a special officer for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Commissioner) under Article 338 etc. He would have liked to create many more safeguards but for the unwillingness of the majority in the constituent assembly. What is significant here is Dr: Ambedkar's view that democracy is not merely majority rule and that caste-communal minorities must be fully protected to make democracy meaningful. He 'was, in other words, against the 'Majoritarianism Syndrome'.

Check Your Progress 4

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

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. What role did Ambedkar play in drafting of the country's constitution?

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11.6 ON SOCIAL CHANGE

Ambedkar made ceaseless efforts for the removal of untouchability and the material progress of untouchables. From 1924 onwards, he led the movement of untouchables till the end of his life. He firmly believed that the progress of the nation could not be realized without first removing untouchability. Ambedkar held the view that the removal of untouchability was linked to the abolition of the caste system and that it could be only by discarding the religious notions from the basis of the caste system. Therefore, in the course of his analysis of the caste system, he examined the Hindu religious philosophy and criticized it. He did this boldly, often facing strong resentment from the orthodox Hindus.

11.6.1 Priority to Social Reform:

Social reform was always the first priority of Dr. Ambedkar. He believed that the economic and political issues should be resolved only after achieving the goal of social justice. If priority is given to the issue of political emancipation, it would mean transfer of power from foreign rules to the upper caste Hindus, who are equally distant from the lower castes. Hindus, injustice against the untouchables would still continue. Similarly, the idea that economic progress would resolve all social problems was also ill-founded, according to Ambedkar. Casteism is an expression of mental slavery of the Hindus. It made them insensitive. Therefore, no real change could take place without doing away with the evil of casteism. Social reform was the precondition of revolutionary changes in our society.

Social reform consisted of reform of the family system and religious reform. Family reform included abolition of practices like child-marriage etc. This was important mainly because it involved upliftment of women. Reforms regarding marriage and divorce laws for instance, would benefit women who were as oppressed as the untouchables. Ambedkar strongly criticized the degradation of women in the Indian society. He believed that women were entitled to an equal status with men and that they must have the right to education. He lamented that the Hindu religion had deprived women of the right to property. In the Hindu Code Bill which he prepared, he took care that women should get a share the property. While he organized the

untouchables, he always called upon women of the untouchable community to come forward and participate in social and political movements.

11.6.2 Attack on the Caste:

Ambedkar's main battle was against the caste system. Caste had made Hindu society stagnant. Due to the caste system, Hindu society is unable to accommodate outsiders. This drawback poses permanent problems for integration. Even internally, the Hindu society fails to satisfy the test of a homogeneous society. It is only a conglomerate of different castes. Caste is an obstacle in the growth of national spirit. Most importantly, caste system perpetrates injustice on the lower castes. It does not allow progress of the lower castes. Lower castes receive nothing but contempt. This has resulted in moral degradation and demoralization of the lower castes. The untouchables, in particular are the constant object of injustice. They are denied education, good livelihood and human dignity. The caste system has dehumanized them thoroughly. The very idea that the mere touch of one human being pollutes another shows the gross level of inequality and brutality to which the caste system had sunk. Therefore, the battle for the removal of untouchability becomes the battle for human rights and justice.

11.6.3 Origins of Caste and Untouchability:

The caste hierarchy and the practice of untouchability find justification in religious scriptures. The Hindus widely believed that persons belonging to the untouchable community were originally from non-Aryan races that they were of lowly origin; they have no capabilities, etc. Ambedkar wanted to refute these misunderstandings and create self-respect among the untouchables. For this purpose, he made extensive study of Hindu scriptures and the ancient Hindu society. In his books 'Who Were the Shudras?' and 'The Untouchables', he dispelled many misconceptions about untouchability. Through research and interpretation, he made scholarly attempts to prove the origins of untouchability. He argued that originally only three Varnas existed: Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The Shudras were a powerful tribe belonging to the Kshatriya Varna. Conflict

between the Shudras and the Brahmins resulted in the Shudras' degradation from Kshatriya status because the Brahmins denied them the rights of Upnayana, sacrifice and kingdom. Thus, the Shudras became the fourth Varna below the other three. He shows how the religious and ritual power of Brahmins caused the downfall of the Shudras.

This indicates the overall supremacy of the Brahmin Varna in the ancient society. Untouchability was also partly a result of this Brahmin supremacy. Untouchability resulted from the conflict between Brahminism and Buddhism.

Ambedkar denies that untouchables were originally non-Aryans. In fact, he argues that in the Indian society, we find a mixture of various races. Therefore, the idea that the untouchables belonged to some inferior or defeated race was untenable. He provides a sociological answer. Originally there existed a number of unsettled tribes. They came into conflict with other wandering tribes. These, wandering tribes were defeated and their members scattered. These scattered people finally became attached to various settled tribes. However, their status remained subordinate to the settled tribes. Thus, the wanderers stabilized as outsiders. The next round of conflict between these outsiders and the settled tribes took place on the issue of religion and subsequently beef eating. Ambedkar argues that to meet the challenge of Buddhism, Brahminism adopted complete non-violence, total renunciation of meat-eating and deification of the cow. The outsiders who were followers of Buddhism traditionally ate meat of dead animals including cow. Since they did not suspend the practice of beef-eating, they were excommunicated by the settled tribes under the influence of Brahmins. This ex-communication was later justified by incorporating it in religious scriptures. Thus, untouchability became a permanent and sacred part of religion.

Although some of Ambedkar's interpretations have been debatable, nobody denies that untouchability first came into existence and then became part of religion. Moreover, the most important task that Ambedkar's research has fulfilled is to create self-respect among the lower castes and untouchables.

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He convinced them that there is nothing shameful in their past, nothing inferior or inglorious in their heritage. He convinced them that their low status was not due to any disability on their part, but it was a result of social mechanism under the influence of Brahminism. His interpretations, above all, convinced everyone that a scrutiny of the religious foundations of Hinduism was necessary.

Check Your Progress 5

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

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. Critically examine Ambedkar's views on the caste system.

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11.7 REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY

How can untouchability be removed? Untouchability is the indication of slavery of the entire Hindu society. If the untouchables find themselves chained by the caste Hindus the caste Hindus themselves live under the slavery of religious scriptures. Therefore, emancipation of the untouchables automatically involved emancipation of the Hindu society as a whole. Ambedkar warns that nothing worthwhile can be created on the basis of caste. We can build neither a nation nor morality on this basis. Therefore, a casteless society must be created. Inter caste marriages can effectively destroy the caste but the difficulty is that people will not be prepared to marry outside their caste so long as casteism dominates their thinking. Ambedkar describes such methods as inter-caste dining or marriage as 'forced feeding'. What is required is a more drastic change: liberating people from the clutches of religious scriptures and traditions. Every Hindu is a slave of the Vedas and Shastras. He must be told that these scriptures

perpetrate wrong and therefore need to be discarded. Abolition of castes is dependent upon destroying the glory of the scriptures. Till the scriptures dominate the Hindus they will not be free to act according to their conscience. In place of the unjust principle of hereditary hierarchy must establish the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity. These should be the foundations of any religion.

11.7.1 Self-respect among Untouchables:

However, Ambedkar knew that all this involved a total change in Hinduism which would take a very long time. Therefore, along with this suggestion for basic change, he also insisted on many other ways for the uplift of the untouchables. Under the influence of tradition the untouchables had completely surrendered to the domination of the upper castes. They had lost all spirit to fight and assert themselves. The myth of inherent pollution also considerably influenced the minds of untouchables. Therefore, it was necessary to arouse their self-respect. Untouchables should realize that they are the equals of caste Hindus. They must throw away their bondage.

11.7.2 Education:

Ambedkar believed that education would greatly contribute to the improvement of the untouchables. He always exhorted his followers to reach excellence in the field of knowledge. Knowledge is a liberating force. Education makes man enlightened, makes him aware of this self-respect and also helps him to lead a better life materially. One of the causes of the degradation of the untouchables was that they were denied the right to education. Ambedkar criticized the British policy on education for not adequately encouraging education among the lower castes. He felt that even under the British rule education continued mainly to be an upper caste monopoly. Therefore, he mobilized the lower castes and the untouchables and funded various centers of learning. While a labor member in the executive council of the Governor-general, he was instrumental in extending scholarships for education abroad to the untouchable students. Ambedkar wanted the untouchables to undergo both liberal education and technical education. He was particularly opposed to education under religious

auspices. He warned that only secular education could in still the values of liberty and equality among the students.

11.7.3 Economic Progress:

Another very important remedy which Ambedkar upheld was that the untouchables should free themselves of the village community and its economic bondage. In the traditional set up, the untouchables were bound to .specific occupations. They were dependent upon the caste Hindus for their sustenance. Even for meager returns they had to submit themselves to the domination of caste Hindus. Ambedkar was aware of the economic dimension of their servitude. Therefore, he always insisted that the untouchables should stop doing their traditional work. Instead, they should acquire new skills and start new professions. Education would enable them to get employment. There was no point in remaining dependent upon the village economy. With growing industrialization, there were greater opportunities in the cities. Untouchables should quit villages, if necessary and find new jobs or engage themselves in new professions. Once their dependence on caste Hindus is over, they can easily throw away the psychological burden of being untouchables. In a realistic evaluation of the villages, Ambedkar graphically describes them as 'a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism'. Therefore, the earlier the untouchables become free of village-bondage, the better. Even if the untouchables had to live in the villages, they should stop doing their traditional work and seek new means of livelihood. This would ensure their economic emancipation to a considerable extent.

The mainstay of Ambedkar's argument was that the oppressed classes must generate self-respect among themselves. The best policy for their uplift was the policy of self-help. Only by working hard and casting off mental servitude, they can attain an equal status with the remaining Hindu society. He did not believe in social reform on the basis of humanitarianism, sympathy, philanthropy etc. Equal status and just treatment was a matter of right and not pity. The downtrodden should assert and win their rights through conflict. There was no short cut to the attainment of rights.

11.7.4 Political Strength:

As a step in this direction, Ambedkar attaches much importance to political participation of the oppressed classes. He repeatedly emphasized that in the context of colonialism, it had become imperative that the untouchables gain political rights by organizing themselves politically. He claimed that by attaining political power, untouchables would be able to protect safeguards and a sizeable share in power, so that they can force certain policies on the legislature. This was so because during the last phase of British rule, negotiations had already begun for the settlement of the question of transfer of power. Ambedkar wanted the untouchables to assert their political rights and get an adequate share in power. Therefore, he formed political organizations of untouchables.

11.7.5 Conversion:

Throughout his life Ambedkar made efforts to reform the philosophical basis of Hinduism. But he was convinced that Hinduism will not modify its disposition towards the untouchables. So, he searched for an alternative to Hinduism. After careful consideration, he adopted Buddhism and asked his followers to do the same. His conversion to Buddhism meant reassertion of his faith in a religion based on humanism. Ambedkar argued that Buddhism was the least obscurantist religion. It appreciated the spirit of equality and liberty. Removal of injustice and exploitation was the goal of Buddhism. By adopting Buddhism, the untouchables would be able to carve out a new identity for themselves. Since Hinduism gave them nothing but sufferings, by renouncing Hinduism, the untouchables would be renouncing the stigma of untouchability and bondage attached to them. To live a new material life, a new spiritual basis consistent with the liberal spirit was essential. Buddhism would provide this basis. Therefore, at the social level, education; at the material level;, new means of livelihood; at the political level, political organization and at the spiritual level, self-assertion and conversion constituted Ambedkar's overall programme of the removal of untouchability.

Check Your Progress 6

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

ii) Check your answer with that given at the end of the unit.

1. Discuss the efforts made by Ambedkar to help remove untouchability.

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11.8 EVALUATION

Nineteenth century Maharashtra witnessed reform activity on a large scale. Under the influence of British liberalism and in response to the criticism by Christian missionaries, many intellectuals started looking critically upon their religious ideas. This led them to a re-examination of the nature of Hinduism. The most radical among them was Joti Rao Phule. Ambedkar's thought is the continuation of this radical search for an alternative to Hinduism. It is a continuation of Phule's ideas in one more sense also. Ambedkar's thought has essentially a liberal basis. The influence of Dewey, the British Educationist and the parliamentary system, along with his legal training created an inclination towards liberalism. Although Ambedkar was aware of the limitations of liberalism, he never ceased to be a liberal. His faith in democracy, his insistence on discussion as a method of decision-making and above all, the belief in the ability of law and constitution are all instances of his liberalism.

11.8.1 Political Awakening among Untouchables:

His writings and activity greatly contributed to the resurgence of the untouchable community. He created a sense of political awareness among the downtrodden. This resulted in the emergence of Dalit power in the Indian society. Ambedkar realized that the most oppressed section of the society was that of the untouchables. Therefore, he insisted upon the

progress of this section as a condition for the development of Indian society. In order to create a spirit of self-assertion among the untouchables, they had to be given their own identity. This task of their mental liberation was fulfilled by Ambedkar's criticism of Hinduism. He touched upon the most basic feature of Hinduism: the authority of the Vedas and Shastras. He argued that Hindu religion was merely a set of meaningful rules and regulations. It was devoid of any philosophical basis. He demonstrated that Hinduism had come to be identified with Chatuwarna and Brahminism. By Brahminism he meant negation of the spirit of justice.

11.8.2 Liberty, Equality and Fraternity:

What was the basis of Ambedkar's ideology? He was deeply influenced by the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. These are the guiding principles in all his writings. He visualized a new society based on these principles. He was aware that liberty alone would not be sufficient. Liberty and equality must exist simultaneously. This alone will ensure that the quality of moral and material life of all individuals will improve. Economic disparity and social injustice are negations of liberty. Therefore, as we have seen earlier, political democracy without social democracy and economic justice is meaningless. But equality and liberty will be realized only when there is a strong sense of unity among members of the society. People must first realize that they have common interests, a common future. In a society divided by caste and class barriers, people of one caste or class will be suspicious of people of other castes or classes. A society can have a common goal only when its members share the sorrows and joys of their fellow beings. This sense of brotherhood - a feeling that we belong to the same social fabric - must emerge in the society. Fraternity, thus, becomes a necessary condition for equality and liberty. Ambedkar made it clear that the ideal society of his conception would be a society based on liberty, equality and fraternity.

11.9 LET US SUM UP

Finally, what is the relevance of Ambedkar's thought? In his lifetime

Ambedkar was constantly responding to contemporary issues. Therefore, his propagation of separate electorates or reservations, his views on linguistic states, etc. have a specific context. It would be wrong merely to take up the same programmes which Ambedkar had to take up in those circumstances and try to delineate the essence of his political ideology. We have seen that Ambedkar steadfastly held the image of society free from injustice and exploitation. Therefore, he repeatedly announced that an ideal society will be based on liberty, equality and fraternity. What are the forces operating against these three principles? Casteism and communalism on the one hand, and economic exploitation on the other continue to provide strength to the prevalent inequality in the Indian society. Ambedkar fought for a society free from caste-domination and class-exploitation. So long as these two machines of exploitation - caste and class - are in existence, Ambedkar's thought would be relevant as an inspiration in the fight against them.

11.10 KEY WORDS

Liberty: The state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's way of life, behavior, or political views.

Fraternity: Friendship and mutual support within a group, a group of people sharing a common profession or interests.

Dalit: In the traditional Indian caste system, a member of the lowest caste.

Brahmanism: A religion that emerged in post-Vedic India (c. 900 BC) under the influence of the dominant priesthood (Brahmans), an early stage in the development of Hinduism.

Untouchable: A member of the lowest-caste Hindu group or a person outside the caste system. Notable or allowed to be touched or affected.

Socialism: A political and economic theory of social organization which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole.

11.11 QUESTION FOR REVIEW

- 1) Briefly discuss Ambedkar's views on the British Rule in India.
- 2) Critically examine Ambedkar's views on democracy
- 3) Discuss Ambedkar's concept of State Socialism
- 4) What role did Ambedkar play in drafting of the country's constitution?
- 5) Critically examine Ambedkar's views on the caste system.
- 6) Discuss the efforts made by Ambedkar to help remove untouchability.

10.12 SUGGESTED READINGS & REFERENCES

- Bharill, Chandra, 'Social and Political Ideas of B. R. Ambedkar', Jaipur, 1977.
- Keer, Dhananjay. 'Ambedkar - Life and Mission', Bombay, 1961.
- Lokhande, G.S., 'B. R. Ambedkar : A .Study in Social Democracy', New Delhi, 1977
- Zelliott, Elenaur, 'The Social and Political Thought of Dr. Ambedkar, in Pantham T. and Dutsch K. (eds) Political Thought in Modern India, New Delhi, 1986. pp. 161-175.

10.13 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 4) See sub-section 11.2

Check Your Progress 2

- 2) See sub-section 11.3 and 11.3.1 and 11.3.2

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Check Your Progress 3

- 2) See sub-section 11.4 and 11.4.1 and 11.4.3

Check Your Progress 4

- 2) See sub-section 11.5

Check Your Progress 5

- 1) See sub-section 11.6 and 11.6.2

Check Your Progress 6

- 1) See sub-section 11.7

UNIT - 12: RABINDRANATH TAGORE

STRUCTURE

- 12.0 Objective
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Theory of Freedom and Self-Realization
- 12.3 Emphasis on Human Reason
- 12.4 Critique of Nationalism
- 12.5 Differences with Gandhi
- 12.6 Analysis of Bolshevism
- 12.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.8 Key Words
- 12.9 Questions for Review
- 12.10 Suggested Readings & References
- 12.11 Answer to Check Your Progress

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain about Tagore's theory on freedom and self-realization
- Explain emphasis on human reason
- Explain difference between Gandhi and Tagore

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was an outstanding literary figure of India who exerted considerable influence on human thinking in the contemporary world. This influence extended to the political arena as well by his lucid elucidation of important concepts like nationalism, freedom, human nationality and his many differences with Mahatma Gandhi's (1869-1948) philosophy and strategies.

While Gandhi was a political and social activist and Tagore was a poet, there was remarkable consistency in the enunciation of their major political themes, which they developed and refined reflecting on major events of their time. Furthermore, in Tagore there was a quest of a poet for human perfection and completeness and not merely a pragmatic analysis of a particular problem or a situation, His expression was an eloquent appeal of his faith in the human spirit and the optimism by which the entire humankind could think of realizing freedom, breaking all artificial barriers, which had been built over the years. These barriers built on prejudices and hatred were the stumbling blocks in the way of achieving the ultimate aim of a beautiful and harmonious world for all paving the way for human perfection with flowering of human creativity and with triumph of human dignity. The modern Indian political tradition of assimilating the western ideas with the Eastern ones, which began with Rammohan Roy, reached its culmination in Tagore.

12.2 PHILOSOPHY OF TAGORE

Tagore authored about one hundred books of poems, about fifty plays and about forty works of fiction, about fifteen books of philosophical lectures and essays. His best-known poems appear in *Gitanjali* (Song offerings), originally written in Bengali and translated by himself into English. His writings of philosophical interest are *Sadhana: The Realisation of Life* (London: Macmillan 1913), *Personality* (London: Macmillan 1917), *Creative Unity* (London: Macmillan 1922), *The Religion of Man* (London: Unwin Books 1931). Obviously, Tagore did not give any systematic exposition of his philosophy. However his writings are charged with a particular vision of reality and a lot of suggestions of a system of philosophy. Attempts have been made to interpret Tagore's philosophy in the light of its own fundamental principles, supplying the premises, drawing out the conclusions, and giving the setting where necessary. The most famous of such attempts is a big volume *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore* by Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan (London: Macmillan 1918). Tagore

himself is reported to have appreciated it. The philosophical teachings of Tagore became popular all over the world not only because of literary beauty but also on account of the lofty ideas they contain. Here you are given a synthetic presentation of the essential elements of his thought.

GOD: Tagore is a non-dualist, but not like Sankara. The absolute in its perfection, living away from all that happens in the world, is of no interest to human. It is the picture with all the richness of its colours, shades, and forms that interests us, but not the canvas on which it is painted. The author of the picture is a person, a spiritual reality. Hence, the absolute is a person, a creative person which acts and creates, whom we can love and be loved. Limitation of the Unlimited is personality. God is everything, but not everything is equally God. To realize God as the Supreme person is our destiny, our dharma. We fulfill it when we know our true nature, which is oneness with God. We do not really know our oneness with God because of our ignorance (avidya). We can overcome maya and avidya only through a genuine love of God. The vision of God is a direct and immediate intuition. We feel God as we feel light. The joy we feel in our vision of the Supreme is the evidence that the Supreme exists.

LOVE: Love is more important than knowledge. In knowledge, the distinctions are either kept separate or completely dissolved in a rare unity. But in love, the lover and the beloved are distinguished, yet united. Love retains both unity and difference. Love is the consummation of knowledge. The Supreme Person creates human beings in order to realize the bliss of love, which is possible only if lover and beloved are separate beings.

Nature and Human Being: Nature is created both as human's home and also as an instrument which, through its beauty, awakens the human heart and directs it towards the Beloved (the Supreme). Just as an artist creates a work of art both to express and evoke a certain mood (rasa), God creates the world of nature to evoke love in the human being. The fundamental fact about human is one's dual nature. Human is both earth's child and heaven's

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heir. Like the lotus, which has its roots in mud but its flower in clear sunlight, human has a finite pole in the world of necessity and an infinite pole in aspirations towards divinity. Human is the “angel of surplus” since the spirit of human has an enormous surplus far in excess of the requirements of the biological animal in human. Civilization and culture – through the development of art, religion, philosophy, and science – is the product of surplus in human, which enables human to surpass one’s biological inheritance. Applying this concept of surplus to the Supreme, Tagore says that the Supreme is boundless in his superfluity, which expresses itself in world process. At his least developed level, the human is a desiring animal, desiring things and people for self-aggrandizement.

Knowledge: Human has three sources of knowledge: senses, intellect and feeling. Senses: Human knows the world through the senses. Intellect: Human discovers science and logic-centred philosophy by intellect. Feeling: Human discovers the Supreme Person by feeling. True knowledge is a knowledge of things in their relation to the universe, a knowledge that retains the distinctions and yet grasps them in their unity.

Sadhna: Sadhna, the true realization of life, leads from love of self to love of others. To love God is to love the entire creation moving from duality to unity. The ideal human being fulfils the demands of life and meets all his social obligations. The path of renunciation is not an ideal. For those entirely engrossed in the world and those who renounce the world are equally doomed.

Religion: Tagore advocated the religion of humanity. A person must live by one’s dharma. One must respond to the love-call of God with love. Love for God includes love for humanity and all of nature. True religion is love, harmony, simplicity. “While God waits for his temple to be built of love, men bring stones.” He also wrote against idolatry, superstition, and religious fanaticism. “We must go beyond all narrow bounds and look towards the day when Budha, Christ and Mohammad will become one.”

Social Philosophy: The human must engage both externally in coping with nature and internally in developing spiritually. Tagore did fight against the evils of his society such as poverty, superstition, untouchability and oppression of women. He did not find the West to be the source of all evil. He welcomed Western science and Western beliefs in individual worth, freedom, and democracy. He believed that nationalism deteriorated from patriotism to chauvinism. Nationalism is individual selfishness raised to a higher level. Just as a human must rise above self-centredness to love for all, the nations of the world too must grow to love other nations.

Education: Tagore’s own childhood experiences encouraged his lifelong commitment to education. In his view, the traditional schools imprison children who are born with a power to be happy and to make others happy. But in traditional schools they are like flowers pressed between book leaves. Hence, he started a model-school after the ancient hermitage schools of India: Santiniketan (the abode of peace). A garden and a handicraft shop were attached to the school. His ecological concerns were manifested in his tree planting programmes. He also widened his educational commitment by founding a university – Visva Bharati – where he promoted an international culture of unity in diversity.

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. Sum up Tagore’s teachings on God.

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2. How does Tagore understand education?

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12.3 THEORY OF FREEDOM AND SELF- REALISATION

A specific Indian idea of freedom that started to evolve with Rammohan, was articulated subsequently by Swami Vivekananda (1863- 1902), Aurobindo Ghosh (1872- 1950), Gandhi and Tagore. Rammohan wanted to synthesis Indian and Western ideas with an unflinching commitment to his own tradition. Vivekananda like Rammohan was rooted in the Indian tradition. Aurobindo, Gandhi and Tagore reiterated his emphasis on harmony without losing sight of one's identity and culture.

For Tagore, freedom was not merely political emancipation but the mingling of the individual with the universe depicted in his song- my freedom is in this air, in the sky and in this light of universe. The goal of freedom lay in making one perfect. He significantly remarked that many nations and people were powerful but not free because realization of freedom was something very different from merely using coercive power. It was the condition and attitude of life in which one might wish to develop his best. The human being as a part of this great universe could enjoy real freedom only when he could harmonies his relations with the world. It is a bond of unity where power leads to disunity.

Tagore's notion of freedom was influenced by Expressionism (1910-24) and political theorists of the early Twentieth century like Ernest Barker, Mary Follet and Harold Laski who vigorously pleaded for a plural society as a basic precondition for the successful functioning of democracy. He shared with Eliot the idea of the modern society as mechanical and hollow thwarting the creative human spirit and energies. He desired a freedom that would enable a human being to realize his ideas and aspirations as it found expression in different types of creative art with the help of reason and scientific outlook and by allowing the potentialities of industrialization towards human liberation.

Tagore guided by the *Upanishadic* doctrine of Satyam, Sivam and *Advaitam* (truth, of goodness and unity) was utterly dissatisfied with the philosophy of glorification and expansionism pursued by powerful nations for that thwarted human creativity. This was evident in his two symbolic works *Raktakorabi* and *Muktadhara*. However, like Russell, he continued to retain his faith in the human being as evident from his *Russian Chithi* and *Africa* with its clear preference for socialism, democracy, freedom and social justice that transcended national boundaries and races.

For Tagore, freedom of the individual was the basis or the growth of human civilization and progress. It was the inner urge of a person to be in harmony with the great universe. Freedom was everything creative and spontaneous in human mind and spirit. It was the capacity to create a better order. Tagore was against unquestioned conformity which he described as "the state of slavery which is thus brought on is the worst form of cancer to which humanity is subject". As a believer in individual action he rejected the claim of finality of any action and insisted that there were many paths to individual salvation and moral progress. He conceived of history as the gradual unfolding and realization of absolute truth and through it the individual revelation and fulfillment and in the end the emergence of the truly free and content human being. He remarked to Einstein that his religion was the

religion of man. His was quest for the eternal and. it is due to such generous and humane ideas that civilization assumes meaning.

Tagore, like the early Indian liberals considered the real problem of India as social and not political. A narrow vision of political liberty would grossly be inadequate in establishing a good society for that would deny individual's moral and spiritual freedom. He characterized even the free independent countries being a reflection of this narrow view. Mere political freedom could not make one free, as cleavages and weaknesses of society would pose a danger to politics. Without creating confidence in the average person, he would always feel inferior and "the tyranny of injustice" would perpetuate. It was in this emphasis of comprehending the essential basis of realizing freedom by broadening the base through inculcating a sense of identity and pride in every single individual in the world that Tagore's conception departed from other popular political theories of freedom which focuses more on the abstract individual.

12.4 EMPHASIS ON HUMAN REASON

In *Sabhyatar Sankat or Crisis in Civilization* (1941) he mentioned his admiration of the humanistic tradition of English literature, which formed the basis of his faith in modern civilization. He admitted that India's link with the outside world was established with the arrival of the British and cited Burke, Macaulay, Shakespeare and Byron as those who inspired and generated a confidence in the triumph of the human being. Indians aspired for independence but believed in English generosity and the British character, which reflected their philosophy of universal fellowship. Like other contemporary Indian thinkers, Tagore also believed that India benefitted from her contact with the West in general and Britain in particular. He considered the British victory over India as the victory of modernity. The right to freedom in a modern world is a basic human right.

Tagore not only mentioned how as a young person he was immensely influenced by Jhon Bright but also the pain he felt at the denial to Indians the industrial power that made Great Britain a world power. He also pointed out to the lack of modernity and absence of scientific temper in India, a void filled by coming into contact with the West thereby making the nineteenth century an age of co-operation with Europe. However Europe in the twentieth century failed by its own criterion for it was unable to transmit its basic civilization traits to others. In this context he provided an interesting contrast between the nature and purpose of the British rule with that of the Soviet rule, the two powers that administered a number of divergent races. Britain by its rule had made the subject races docile whereas the Soviets were trying to make them strong. India experienced the strength of the West but not its liberating power. The British official policy was in sharp contrast to outstanding individuals like C.F. Andrews that Britain produced, which was an unparalleled feat, and one that reinforced his faith in humanity and in the ultimate triumph of human reason and freedom (Tagore 1961: 414).

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 Rabindranath Tagore’s idea of freedom and self realization.

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12.5 CRITIQUE OF NATIONALISM

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Tagore's perception of the dual role, one positive, "the spirit of the West" and the other negative, "the nation of the West" was the starting point of his analysis of nationalism as it developed in the West (Tagore, 1976: 11). He paid glowing tributes to the achievements of the West in the field of literature and art which he described as "titanic in its uniting power, sweeping the height and the depth of the universe" and also mentioned the presence of outstanding individuals fighting for the cause of humanity. However, behind this beneficence also lay the malefic aspect, "using all her power of greatness for ends, which are against the infinite and eternal in Man" (Tagore *ibid*: 39-40). He attributed this contradiction to the malady of the nation-state. The nation, which represented the organized self-interest of a whole people, was also the "least human and least spiritual" and the biggest evil in the contemporary world. It built a "civilization of power" (Tagore *ibid*: 8) which made it exclusive, vain and proud. One form of its manifestation was the colonization of people and subjecting them to exploitation and suffering. In this context Tagore cited the example of Japan-which had secured the benefits of Western civilization to the maximum possible extent without getting dominated by the West. He considered the nation to be nothing else than an "organization of politics and commerce" (Tagore *ibid*: 7) and its emphasis on success made it a machine that stifled harmony in social life and eclipsing the end of good life, namely the individual, He however the anarchists who opposed any form of imposition of power over the individual. He rejected the philosophy of a balance of terror on the premise that man's world was a moral one. He denounced communal sectarianism and nationalism and criticized abstract cosmopolitanism Berlin (1977: 65) wrote:

"Tagore stood fast on the narrow causeway, and did not betray his vision of the difficult truth. We condemned romantic over attachment to the past, what he called the tying of India to the past "like a sacrificial goat tethered to a post", and lie accused only who displayed it - they seemed to the reactionary- of not knowing what true political freedom was, pointing out that it is from English thinkers and English books that the very notion of

political liberty was derived. But against cosmopolitanism he maintained that the English stood on their own feet, and so must Indians. In 1917 he once more denounced the danger of "leaving everything to the unalterable will of the Master," be he Brahmin or Englishmen.

Tagore saw very clearly two clear-cut alternatives to the present scenario: one to continue to fight amongst one another and second, to locate the "true basis of reconciliation and mutual help" (Tagore *ibid*: 60). This strong denunciation of nationalism was surely hastened by the First World War. In *What is a Nation?* (1901), he analyzed Renan's (1823-1892) views and categorically declared imperialism as the logical culmination of a nation and that race, language, commercial interests, religious unity and geographical location did not constitute the human essence. In the early years of the twentieth century he noted the dangers of narrow religious beliefs and aggressive nationalism at the expense of liberalism and offered universalism as an effective substitute, reflected in many of his later writings including the *Gitanjali*.

Tagore wrote of the European dominance of Asia and Africa while dissecting the causes of the First World War. The root cause of the War was the German scramble for colonies and division of the world into the ruler and the ruled. He aptly remarked that which such philosophy was propounded outside Europe, the Europeans did not understand its bitterness but when they were at the receiving end they felt the pinch. Germany's action at that time was not a unique one but a part of the History of European civilization. He also prophesied correctly that the First World War would not be the last one and that another war was inevitable.

The immediate reception of Tagore's criticisms of nationalism was a mixed one. The American Press was hostile. The *Detroit Journal* warned the people against "such sickly saccharine mental poison with which Tagore would corrupt the minds of the youth of our great United States" (cited in Kriplani 1961: 139). Within India some of his contemporaries took exception to his

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remarks. For instance, some members of the Chadar Party mistook his criticisms "as betrayal of Indian some nationalist aspiration" (cited in Kriplani *ibid*; 139). They thought that Tagore, who was knighted by the British a year ago, was a British agent and was sent to the United States to discredit India. In Japan, initially he received great ovation as poet-seer from the land of the Buddha. But when in his lectures he warned them against imitating the lust for power of the Western civilization as well as its worship of the European state he was virulently criticized. When he cautioned Japan to follow only the human: values of the West his popularity declined (cited in Kripalani *ibid*: 139). However, a small number of Japanese intelligentsia became aware of the significance of Tagore's plank. After the war, it came to be known that typed copies of Tagore's Nationalized were distributed amongst: soldiers on the Western front. There were speculations that this was the work of the European pacifists.

A British soldier Max Plolnann admitted after the war that he left the army forever in 1917 after reading Tagore's work. Rolland in a letter dated August 26th 1919 expressed views similar to that of Tagore's.

Tagore characterized the modern age as European because of Europe's leadership in innovation, science and technology and emphasis on reason. But he was equally conscious of its weaknesses namely arrogance of power, exploitative and dominating nature and desire for supremacy. Though the time and context of Tagore formulations has drastically changed, his concerns, namely non-acceptance of Euro-centralism and its inability to transmit basic traits of a universal civilization remain valid even today.

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 Tagore's critique of nationalism

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12.6 DIFFERENCE WITH GANDHI

The essence of Gandhi's entire political philosophy is in the *Hind Swaraj* (1908) and Tagore's in *Swadeshi Samaj* (1904). Both of them had a great deal of respect and reverence for one another, though this mutual respect did not prohibit them from expressing basic disagreements about their respective perceptions of contemporary reality and the desired nature of the movements in the given Indian situation. A major controversy erupted between them following Gandhi's return to India from South Africa and his meteoric rise in Indian politics culminating in the non-co-operation movement and Tagore's articulation of a philosophy of universalism and his criticism of the cult of nationalism during the First World War.

Tagore regarded India's basic problem to be social and not political, though like Gandhi, he was conscious of the acute differences and conflicts in the Indian society. As such society and not politics was his primary area of focus. He could perceive that the triumph of science had united the whole country into one which made possible for seeking a unity that was not political. This perception led him to conclude that India could offer a solution in this regard for her "never had a real sense of nationalism" (Tagore *ibid*: 64). Regarding the nationalist upsurge he was convinced that it would popularize the struggle for independence but would be unproductive in the overall context of its own development for the quest of freedom would imperil its realization.

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Tagore developed this argument after a careful scrutiny of the Gandhian leadership and strategy. He derived the basic framework of this evaluation from his earlier experiences during the days of agitation against Bengal partition of 1905. In that movement, initially Tagore took an active part popularizing Raksha Bandhan and nationalistic songs. It was immediately during the period after the publication of *Swadeshi Samaj* that he passionately pleaded for the revitalization of the decaying villages and creation of new awareness amongst the ordinary people. Though initially he was in the forefront of the movement, he became disillusioned since he could very clearly see that there was no concern about the need for mass awareness and that the city-based middle class were not keen protecting its own selfish interests. After withdrawing from the movement he made serious attempts to rebuild the village life within the Zamindari system, the then prevailing system. This background is important for completion his basic disagreements with Gandhi.

Tagore's first written evidence about Gandhi's preferences and policies were in a letter written on 12th April 1919 from *Shantinikatan* advising Gandhi to be cautious about the programme of the co-operation for in no way did it represent India's moral superiority. He took note of the important changes that came with the rise of Gandhi in Indian politics. He thought very highly of Gandhi's leadership and could also see that the proposed non-co-operation movement would engulf the whole country and would be much bigger than the anti-partition movement of Bengal. He could also grasp the important difference between the present phase and the earlier ones. Earlier the political leaders did not look beyond the English educated people, whereas in contrast, Gandhi emerged as the spokesman of millions of poor illiterate Indians. He spoke their language and wore their dress. Though his precepts were practical and not bookish they lacked logic and scientific reasoning. They did not contain a philosophy for awakening the nation. Instead of following the path of truth Gandhi attempted a shortcut by taking the easy path.

Subsequently he was perturbed by the fact that everyone talked in the same voice and made the same gestures and characteristic this development as symbolizing the worst manifestations of nationalism for it indicated a slavish mentality and had nothing to do with the alien rule. What he resented most was the fact that the Gandhian directives, which included manual spinning of yarn and burning of foreign cloth, were medieval in nature. None of these stipulations were dissected critically and were accepted as dogmas. The Gandhian directives were followed mechanically and not rationally. Moreover the emphasis on simplicity would retard economic advancement for the narrow form of swadeshi would only result in restrictive provincial attitude, isolationism and provoke unnecessary hostility in the rest of the world. Gandhi's plans would lead to India's isolation preventing western knowledge and advancements from reaching India.

Disagreeing with Gandhi, Tagore pointed out that it was not possible to estimate the exact magnitude of idle time among the middle class and that peasant who constituted eighty- percent of the Indian population without a meaningful occupation for six months in 'a year. He wondered whether it was desirable to popularize the use of the spinning wheel. Instead he preferred constructive programs like co-operative agricultural for that would eliminate the malaise of small unproductive holdings and fight poverty. He felt that popularizing a scientific concept like co-operative agriculture would be more important than any political action. He thought it was wrong of Gandhi to instruct Indian women to stop reading English and also opposed Gandhi's call for boycott of government schools. Though critical of the existing system he felt that in the absence of a better alternative it would only result in perpetuating ignorance, superstitions and backwardness. In 1928 Tagore criticized Gandhi's defines of varnashrama by arguing that the system was inefficient as the occupation follows birth and not individual capacity. Hereditary occupation was mechanical, repetitive, obstructed innovation and retarded Human freedom, He lineated that a true *kshatriya* was conspicuous by its absence in India. Similarly he dismissed Gandhi's blame on untouchability as the cause of the Bihar earthquake 01.1 5"

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February 1934, as unscientific, unreasonable and that it failed to explain the fact as to why the poor and the lower castes suffered more than the privileged and upper castes. On 20th May 1939 in a letter to the Congress he warned against the worship of power within the Congress when some of Gandhi's followers compared Gandhi to Mussolini and Hitler thus insulting Gandhi before the entire world. As a desired alternative, Tagore pleaded for "universal Humanity and gave a call for recognizing the vast dimension of India in its world context" because "henceforth any nation which seeks isolation for itself must come into conflict with the time-spirit and find no peace. From now onwards the thinking of every nation will have to be international. It is the striving of the new age to develop in the mind this faculty of universality" (cited in Dalton 1982: 202).

In response to these charges Gandhi replied that "Indian nationalism is not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive. It is health-giving, religious and therefore humanitarian". He defended the use of the spinning wheel for that was the only way to realize the essential and living oneness of interest among India's myriads". Its purpose was to symbolise "sacrifice for the whole nation". To the charges of narrow provincialism and dangers of his kind of nationalism he pointed out: "I hope I am as great a believer in free air as the great poet. I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any". Furthermore, Gandhi did not regard his patriotism to be exclusive; "it is calculated not only to hurt any other nation but to benefit all in the true sense of the word. India's freedom as conceived by the call never be a menace to the world" (cited in Dalton *ibid*: 202-03). Tagore too shared the same attitude toward cultural diversity but was more cautious than Gandhi for his perception of the possible decay and degeneration as he saw in the later developments at the time of the partition of Bengal in 1905.

Rolland characterized Tagore's revolt against Gandhi as "the revolt of the free soul" (1976: 64). C.F. Andrews expressed similar views about Tagore.

Nehru wrote in 1961 "Tagore's article The Call of Truth and Gandhi's reply in his weekly Young India which he called 'The Great Sentinel' made wonderful reading. They represent two aspects OF the truth, neither of which could be ignored" (Dalton ibid: 204). Tagore's role was that of a critical but sympathetic observer of the nationalist upsurge in India, which he wanted to be based both on reason and a concern for the masses, He criticized Gandhi whenever he felt that the Mahatma was deviating from these planks. He not only criticized but also provided an alternative perception to that of Gandhi. He acknowledges his greatness and lauded his role in fighting casteism, untouchability and communalism but was equally forthright in pointing out the limitation of the Gandhian schemes. For instance he criticized Mahatma's basic education scheme of 1937 popularly known as the Wardh Scheme on two grounds. First, he questioned the desirability of the precedence of material utility over development of personality. Second, the scheme of a special type of education for the rural poor would limit the choice of their vocation and that it is unfortunate that even in our ideal scheme education should be doled out in insufficient rations to the poor". He identified the lack of basic education as the fundamental cause of many of India's social and economic afflictions and desired lively and enjoyable schools.

Tagore had the courage of conviction to point out the inadequacies of Mahatma's vision. Since some of his criticisms are well founded, it is time to work out a synthesis with the experience of last five decades particularly in the major areas of our shortcomings like rural reconstruction, education and provide the requisite incentive for the rural poor to lead a decent and dignified life.

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

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1. Discuss and distinguish the basic disagreement between Tagore and Gandhi

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12.7 ANALYSIS OF BOLSHEVISM

Tagore visited Europe and the United States several times but he went to the USSR only once when he was seventy years old and considered the trip a pilgrimage and felt that had he not gone his life would have remained incomplete. The trip was for two weeks only and he could not go anywhere else except to be in Moscow. The Letter from Russia expressed his recollections of the Soviet Union. It is not a travelogue but a reflective account of what he saw and what he liked and disliked. Most of the letters were written after he left the Soviet Union.

Before going there, all interesting incident took place in Tokyo, where a young man from Korea entered into a conversation with Tagore which the latter recorded himself. The questions and answers revolved around the emergence of the new Soviet society. In this conversation, the Korean emphasized on the question of the animosity between the rich and the poor and the inevitability of the revolution. After a few months of this conversation, Tagore went to the Soviet Union. He was not as overwhelmed as the Korean young man as he had serious doubts about the new culture being propagated by the new socialist regime. He praised the Soviet efforts of creating a new society giving rights to ordinary people and for starting collective enterprises in important areas like educational agriculture, health and industry.

Tagore attributed the widespread Human suffering as the cause for the rise of Bolshevism but subsequently denounced the regime's use of violence, cruelty and repressive brutality. Its forced harmony was based on uncertain foundations. The contact between the leader and the followers was elusive and imperfect and a constant source of trouble. Added to this "the habit of passive following weakens the mind and character. Its very success defeats itself". In repudiating violence there is a similarity in the outlook between Tagore and Gandhi. Both distance themselves from the Bolshevik practice mainly because of its glorification and practice of violence.

Tagore appreciated the fact that the Bolsheviks had ended many of the evil practices of the czarist regime except one important practice, that of suppression of opinion and advised the Bolsheviks to end this evil. He was always against unquestioned allegiance, which was one of his criticisms of Gandhi's leadership in India. He, as a believer in the importance of freedom of mind, could easily see the dangers of suppression of dissidence and alternative points of view within the Soviet system. He was against the preaching of anger and class hatred, which the Soviets taught and that any good society must acknowledge the existence of difference of opinion through freedom of expression. His primary interest was with the new educational system and he was pleased with the vigor with which it spread throughout the Russian society. The achievement was not only numerical but also in its intensity creating a sense of self-respect. However, his insight did not miss its major defects as it turned the system into a mould whereas humanity is a living mind and that "either the mould will burst into pieces or man's mind will be paralyzed to death or man will be turned into a mechanical doll". He looked to Bolshevism as a medical treatment for a sick society and could not conceive of it being a permanent feature of a civilized society. He commented "indeed the day on which the doctor's regime comes to an end must be hailed as a red letter day for the patient".

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Tagore's account of the Soviet Union was a balanced one, which highlighted both the negative and positive aspects. In this respect he compared more favorably with H.G. Wells rather than with Sidney and Beatrice Webb who also visited the Soviet Union in the 1930s. The Webbs, unlike Wells, ignored the negative aspects of the Soviet society.

Check Your Progress 5

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

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

1. Evaluate Tagore's views on Bolshevism.

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12.8 LET US SUM UP

Tagore was a pragmatic idealist and as Mulk Raj Anand wrote:

‘A visionary who believed that in sentiment a multinational civilization was the way through which individuals and nations might surrender their power. He knew as an Indian, that in actual fact, several of the potentially freedom-loving nations were handicapped by the numerous aggressive nations built on greed and plunder. So he struggled against the imperialists of his day with a resilience that lends to his political thought a peculiar realism as well as a visionary quality (1967: 31).

He did not merely contemplate but tried to experiment and put his ideas in practice. Armed with courage of convictions he raised his voice against the

cult of nationalism, about inequality among nations imperialism including cultural imperialism and about lack, of freedom in the colonial world where the majority lead deprived lives. He never lost hope in human rationality and thought as Plato did that education holds the key to human excellence and a better future. Amartya Sen aptly pointed out "Rabindranath insisted on open debate on every issue, and distrusted conclusions based on a mechanical formula, no matter how attractive that formula might seem in isolation. The question he persistently asked is whether- we have reason enough to want what is being proposed, taking everything into account. Important as history is, reasoning has to go beyond the past. It is in the sovereignty of reasoning- fearless reasoning in freedom- that we can find Rabindranath Tagore's lasting voice"

The mechanism of globalization is a new device to perpetuate the spirit of domination and exploitation of the older imperial times rather than make an attempt to create a new partnership among nations and its people based on equality and shared prosperity. It is because of the perpetuation of an outmoded and short-sighted policy of the advanced countries that the philosophy of universal brotherhood has been relegated to a secondary status. The process of globalization continues with what Tagore accused the West of demonstrating its strength but not its liberating power. Utilises and until this is rectified the West would continue to be held as suspect by nearly eighty per cent of the people of the world of peace and order are to be realized the humanistic side of the West has to come to the forefront. This would be possible only if the West sheds its narrow nationalistic concerns as stressed by Tagore. I hoped for the triumph of humanism, reason and science with the West showing the way. In the background of the two World Wars and the increasing realization that for a continued peaceful evolution of the global village there is a need for a universal minimum in defining the goal and the desirable and in mitigating the disparity between the privileged and the underprivileged, Tagore's critique could become the starting point of this rectification, and one which is long overdue.

12.9 KEY WORDS

Self-aggrandizement: Self-aggrandizement is the act of making oneself more powerful, wealthy, etc., in a ruthless way.

Intuition: Intuition is the act by which the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas.

12.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- 1) Sum up Tagore's teachings on God.
- 2) How does Tagore understand education?
- 3) Discuss Rabindranath Tagore's idea of freedom and self-realization.
- 4) Explain Tagore's critique of nationalism.
- 5) Discuss and distinguish the basic disagreement between Tagore and Gandhi
- 6) Evaluate Tagore's views on Bolshevism.

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12.13 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 5) See sub-section 13.3

Check Your Progress 2

- 6) See sub-section 13.3

Check Your Progress 3

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3) See sub-section 13.5

Check Your Progress 4

3) See sub-section 13.6

Check Your Progress 5

3) See sub-section 13.7

UNIT – 13 SOCIALIST THOUGHT: RAMMANOHAR LOHIA AND JAVAPRAMASH NARAYAN

STRUCTURE

- 13.0 Objective
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 History of Socialist Movement in India
- 13.3 Congress Socialist Party: Program and Policies
- 13.4 Socialist Thought of Dr. Rammanahar Lohia
- 13.5 Socialist Thought of Jayaprakash Narayan
- 13.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 13.7 Key Words
- 13.8 Questions for Review
- 13.9 Suggested Readings & References
- 13.10 Answer to Check Your Progress

13.0 OBJECTIVE

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain about Socialist Movement in India
- Explain about Dr. Rammanohar Lohia's Thought.
- Explain about Congress Socialist Party's policy and Jayaprakash Narayan's thought.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

The growth of socialist thought as a philosophy of social and economic reconstruction is mostly the product of the Western impact on India. One of the leading saint-philosopher of India, Aurobindo Ghosh's criticism of the middle class mentality of the leaders of the Indian National Congress and his plea for the social development of the "proletariats" in his articles' to the

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magazine "Indu Prakash in 1893, B. G. Tilak's reference to the Russian Nihilists in the Kesari in 1908, C.R.Das's reference to the glorious role of the Russian Revolution in the contemporary international system, and particularly his emphasis on the role of the trade union movements in the structural development of the social and political system of India, in a his Presidential address at the Gaya Session of the Indian National Congress in 1917, and Pandit Jawaharlal Neheru's eloquence about the New Economic Policy of 1926 and other developments in the Soviet Union in his articles and books such as Soviet Russia, Autobiography, and Glimpses of World History, are some of the examples of the impact of the Soviet ideas and thoughts on the minds of the leading Indian thinkers and political leaders.

One of the leading figures of the freedom struggle in India, Lala Lajpat Rai was considered by some critics as the first writer on Socialism and Bolshevism in India. The Marxist leader, M.N.Roy was very critical of Lala Lajpat Rai's writings particularly his book, The Future of India. He considered him as "a bourgeois politician with sympathy for socialism". Roy, in his book, "India in Transition and Indian Problem" was also critical of the bourgeois attitude of the leaders of the Indian National Congress. Roy was not a blind follower of Russian communism. He considered Russian communism as a form of state capitalism. In his book, Russian Revolution, he regarded the Russian Revolution as "a fluke of history".

13.2 HISTORY OF SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

The socialist movement became popular in India only after the First World War and the Russian Revolution. The unprecedented economic crisis of the twenties coupled with the capitalist and imperialist policies of the British Government created spiralling inflation and increasing unemployment among the masses. According to John Patrick Haithcox, imperialism was considered as a form of capitalist class government intended to perpetuate the slavery of the workers. The success of the Russian Revolution under the

leadership of Lenin and Trotsky and the economic growth of that country inspired intellectuals and political leaders of the developing countries of the Third World including India.

A number of radical groups and youth leagues opposing the policies of the British government were born in India. A left wing was created within the Congress Party under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. In November 1928 an organization called the Independence for India League was created under the leadership of S. Srinivas Iyengar. Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were its joint secretaries. This left oriented pressure group within the Congress spearheaded the movement for complete political, social, and economic independence. In the Lahore Session of the Congress, in 1929, Jawaharlal Nehru, with the help of this left wing group, got a resolution for complete independence passed. After this resolution for independence was passed, the Independence for India League got slowly disintegrated.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century a number of political parties based on religion, caste, and community came into existence in India. According to a leading social scientist, Goal Krishna, "Articulate political parochialism - characteristic of a society where primary Loyalties continue to centre around caste and community, social and geographic mobility was minimal and attitudes were not enlightened by an awareness of the larger national community - resulted in the early formation of communal and caste parties, seeking in their own way to participate in the process of political modernization."

The Ashtray Sway is Sava Singh (RSS), the precursor of the Jan Singh, was born in 1925. The Justice Party, an anti-Brahmin movement in the Madras Presidency, came into existence in 1917. Both the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha were formed in 1906.

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As a result of the impact of the Russian Revolution, 111 lost of the left parties were formed in the Third World countries. The Communist Party of India (CPI) was born in 1925. This left party was linked with the Communist International of Moscow. Besides, a lot of radical splinter groups also were born in different parts of India.

The Communist Party, with the help of the Communist International and the British Communist Party, made rapid progress in the field of trade union movements till the Sixth Communist Congress in 1928. With the criticism of the Congress Party as an instrument of 'bourgeoisie nationalism' and Gandhism, which Lenin regarded as 'revolutionary', as an "openly counter revolutionary force", the communist Party got alienated from the masses as well as from the freedom struggle. M.N.Roy also started his radical group in 1930 after he was expelled from Congress in 1929,

The failure of the two civil disobedience movements of 1930 and 1932 and the compromising attitude of the Congress at the two Round Table conferences made a number of young leaders disillusioned. During this time, Gandhi also suspended his Satyagraha movement and started concentrating on constructive programs. Many congressmen considered this development as failure of Gandhi's non-violent struggle. In this atmosphere of disillusionment an attempt was made to form the Congress Socialist Party, a Marxism oriented organization, within the Congress Party in 1934.

The socialist groups were also formed in Punjab, Bengal, Benares and Kerala. In Poona the task of forming the socialist party within the Congress was entrusted to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Yusuf Meherally and Purshottam Trikamdas. Other leaders who were instrumental in the formation of the Congress Socialist Party were: Jayaprakash Narayan, Minoo Masani, Asoka Melita, Achyut Patwardhan, N.G.Goray, M.L.Dantwala, Acharya Narendra Deva, Dr.Rammanohar Lohia and S.M. Joshi. While in prison, these leaders prepared the blue print for the Congress Socialist Party. Thus the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) was born out of the

disillusionment with the civil resistance movement, growth of constitutionalism, and antinational role of the communist Party of India and its alienation from the national mainstream. Some socialist critics are of the opinion that if the Communist Party of India would not have shown its anti-Gandhi and anti-freedom struggle mentality, and the Congress Party would not have been dominated by the conservative elements, perhaps the Congress Socialist Party would never have been born at all.

During the thirties, Jhalarlala was considered as a great champion of the socialist philosophy.

Every young leader of the Congress party looked upon him as the symbol of socialism. In a letter to Minoo Masani on December 1934, Nehru welcomed the “formation of the socialist groups within the Congress to influence the ideology of the Congress and the country.”

By 1934, many socialist groups were formed in different parts of the country. It was then realized that these groups were to be brought under one socialist platform. Jayaprakash Narayan organized a conference of socialist members in Patna in May 1934. He also revived the Bihar Socialist Party. The All India Congress Socialist Party was formed at this conference. Gandhi's decision to withdraw the civil disobedience movement and the revival of the rightist Swaraj Party precipitated the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934. Gandhi's favorable attitude towards the Swarajists like B.C. Roy, K.M. Munshi, Bhulabhai Desai and others and the Congress decision to withdraw the civil disobedience movement and launch a parliamentary program in the forthcoming Patna meeting on 18 May 1934, made socialist forces in the Congress to create the Congress Socialist Party on 17 May 1934. Acharya Narendra Deva was made the chairman and Jayaprakash Narayan as the organizing secretary of the committee to draft the constitution and the programs of the Congress Socialist Party.

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 the history of socialist movement in India.

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13.3 CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY: PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

The birth of the Congress Socialist Party in May 1934 was a landmark in the history of the socialist movement of India. While assessing the programs and policies of the congress socialist party, it will be desirable to remember the contribution of the Meerut Conspiracy case in spreading the ideology of the early 1930s, Besides, the creation of the All India Kisan Sabha in 1936, and the role of the Youth League and independence for India League can never be ignored in the growth of the socialist thought in India. The Congress Socialist Party provided an all India platform to all the socialist groups in India. The publication of the Party and the writings of the socialist leaders inspired the youth of India in different parts of the country to take up constructive programs for the upliftment of the downtrodden Ashok Mehta's democratic Socialism, and Studies in Asian Socialism, Acharya Naretdra Deva's Socialism and National Revolution Jayaprakash Narayan's Towards Struggle (1946), and Dr.Ramtnanohar Lohia's The Mystery of Sir Stafford Cripps (1942) played a significant role in spreading the messages of socialism in India.

It was declared in the Socialist conference of 1934 that the basic objective of the Party was to work for the "complete independence in the sense of

separation from the British Empire and the establishment of socialist society." The Party membership was not open to the members of the communal 'organizations. Its basic aim was to organize the workers and peasants for a powerful mass movement for independence. Programs included a planned economy, socialization of key industries and banking, elimination of the exploitation by Princes and landlords and initiation of reforms in the areas of basic needs.

The ideology of the Congress Socialist Party was a combination of the participles of Marxism, the ideas of democratic socialism of the British Labor Party, and socialism mixed with the Gandhian principles of Satyagraha and non – violence. The Party was under the influence of deep Marxist ideas in its formative phase. The leading numbers of the Congress Socialist Party belonged to different streams of thought. According to Masani, "I was a staunch democrat of the Labor Party kind and had little sympathy with communist methodology or technique though I was a rather starry-eyed admirer of the October Revolution in Russia. JP on the other hand was a staunch believer in the dictatorship of the proletariat, whatever that may mean. Marxism was the bed rock of his socialist faith."

Some of the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party like Acharya Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan were the strong supporters of the Marxist trend in the CSP. By 1940s, JP came under the spell of Gandhi and the Gandhian socialism. By 1954, He was disillusioned with the functioning of party politics. He left CSP and joined the Sarvodaya movement, Other leaders like M.I., Dantwala. M.R. Masani, Ashok Mehta, and Pursottam Trikam Das were the followers of the principles of the British Fabian socialism. Masani left the CSP in 1939 and became a strong supporter of free enterprise. He was instrumental in the formation of the Swatantra Party in 1959. Achyut Patwardhan and Dr. Rammanohar Lohia was the follower of Gandhian methodology in the Party. Patwardhan become a follower of J. Krishnamurti in 1950 and left all party politics. Dr. Lohia continued to be a prominent Gandhian socialist leader throughout.

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The ideological differences among the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party had a deep impact on the policies, programs and organizational development of the Party. In the formative phase of the Party, all the leaders remained together because of their strong sense of nationalism, camaraderie, and brotherhood and what is often referred to as their "intensive personal friendship". According to Madhu Limaye, they were all from a similar urban, middle class, highly educated background. They were also young and idealistic, possessed a strict code of ethics and had great "respect for values of truth and decency. Of all the leaders, JP was the most prominent cohesive factor. He was considered as the most important leader of the socialist movement. Because of his organizational capacity and strong Marxist approach, the Party, in the formative phase, followed the Marxist approach and principles."

The 1936 Meerut Thesis put emphasis on the Party to follow and develop into a national movement, an anti-imperialist movement based on the principles of Marxism. According to this thesis, it was "necessary to wean the anti-imperialist elements in the Congress away from its present bourgeois leadership and to bring them under the leadership of revolutionary socialism." This task can be accomplished only if there is within the Congress an organized body of Marxian socialists. ... Marxism alone can guide the anti-imperialist forces to their ultimate destiny. Party members must therefore fully understand the technique of revolution, the theory of practice of the class struggle, the nature of the state and process leading to the socialist society." This thesis was adopted at the Faizpur Conference of the Congress Socialist Party in 1936.

The socialists played an important role in the 1942 Quit India Movement, and in organized trade union movements of the country. Their increasing popularity was neither tilted by the leading numbers of the Congress nor by the communists and the Royalists. The communists were not part of the nationalist struggle against the British imperialism. They also did not like

the popularity of the trade union movements under the leadership of the socialists. They criticized them as fascists and symbol of 'left reformism'

The Congress leaders were not very sympathetic to the role of the socialists inside the Congress organization. The socialists of the Congress, particularly the CSP members, were opposed to the constitutional arrangements of the 1935 Act and did not like the Congress decision to participate in the elections in the states although ultimately persons like Acharya Narendra Deva participated in the elections. The Congress decision to form ministers in the states after the elections in 1937 was opposed by the socialists. Leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan of the CSP were convinced that this very constitutional arrangement would create obstacles in the growth of the 'revolutionary mentality in the Congress'. In his report at the Nasik Conference of the Congress Socialist Party in 1948, Jayaprakash Narayan said, " Looking back , however , and in spite of the years , I still believe it was wrong to have accepted offices that . While it yielded no advantage, it gave birth to a mentality of power politics within the Congress that threatens now to become its undoing."

In 1952, immediately after the first national election, the Socialist Party and the Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) of J.B.Kripalani took a decision to merge into a single organisation.

The socialist organisations in India then had two basic objectives: (a) They wanted to develop into an all-India organisation for social and economic reconstruction and (b) Development of the weaker sections of the social structure and also as an ideological framework for political connection of India.

The Bolshevik theory of democratic centralism deeply influenced the ideological deliberations of the Congress Socialist Party till the independence. With the attainment of independence in 1947 and death of Gandhi in the next year, the Congress Socialist Party underwent a

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significant transformation. It moved away from the communist principle of democratic centralism and Marxist methodology towards the area of democratic socialism. Also, in order to achieve a mass base, the CSP diluted some of its earlier ideological frameworks and methodology. Soon the electoral processes of adjustments, alliances, and even mergers were undertaken with political organisations that neither believed in democratic processes nor in the principles of nationalism, socialism and democracy. From a revolutionary path, it moved towards parliamentary methods of coalitional approach.

The Congress Socialist Party adopted the principle of democratic socialism in the Patna Convention of the party in 1949 more seriously. While emphasising its ideological purity the party was more careful about its constructive activities among the peasants, poor and the working class. In its famous Allahabad Thesis of 1953 the party proposed to go for a11 electoral alliance adjustment with the opposition parties. But the Party was not prepared to have any united front or coalition with any political party. In the Gaya session of the Party statements the separate identity of the Congress Socialist Party was also emphasised. Tile Party was reluctant to have electoral adjustment or coalition with the Congress, Communalist or Hindu Fundamentalist Party or Organisations. But this attitude was toned down and diluted during the General Elections of 1957 and thereafter.

In 1952, the Congress Socialist Party strongly advocated for the greater syntliesis of the Gandhian ideals with socialist thought. Dr. Ramnanohar Lohia as the President of the Party put emphasis on a decentralised economy based on handicrafts, cottage industries and industries based on small machines and maximum use of labour with small capital investment. During the Pancharnarhi Socialist Convention in May 1952, this line of thought of Dr. Lohia did not impress several Socialist leaders of the Party. In June 1953, Ashok Melita's thesis of the "Political compulsion of a backward economy" pleaded for a greater coopersatonal between the Socialist and the Congress Party. As a counterpoise to Ashok Mehla's thesis, Dr. Lollia

offered the "Theory of Equidistance". This theory advocated equidistance from the Congress and the Communists by the Socialist parties. As a result of these two streams of thought the Congress Socialist Party was divided into two camps. Some of the numbers even thought of quitting the party to join the Congress, one of the prominent leaders of the Congress Socialist Party, Acharya Narendra Deva was not in favour of the Socialists to join the Congress. He was a staunch believer in the principle of dialectical materialism of Marx. He said, "We can perform the task before us only if we try to comprehend the principle and purposes of Socialising and to understand the dialectical method propounded by Marx for the correct understanding of the situation and make that understanding the basis of true action we must make our stand on scientific socialism and steer clear of utopian socialism or social reformism. Nothing short of a revolutionary transformation of the existing social order can meet the needs of the situation. He believed in the moral governance of the world and primacy of moral values. He considered socialism as a cultural movement. He always emphasised the humanist foundation of socialism; it was not in favour of the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence in its entirety. He was in favour of broadening the basis of the involvement by organising the masses on an economic and class-conscious basis. He was in favour of an alliance between the lower middle class and the masses. He said that "They could become class conscious only when an appeal was made to them in economic terms" to understand India. He pleaded for an alliance between the Socialist movement and the National movement for a colonial country. He said that political freedom was an "inevitable stage on the way to socialism". That was a strong supporter of George Sorel's Syndicalist Theory of "General Strike". It said, "In India, unlike Russia, the proletarian weapon of strike has not yet been the signal for mass action; but the working class can extend its political influence only when by using its weapon of general strike in the service of the national struggle, it can impress the petty bourgeoisie with the revolutionary possibilities of a strike".

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During the socialist movements in the pre independence phase, and subsequently during the 1940s, 50's and 60's, greater emphasis was put on the acceleration of agricultural production, cooperative, land ceiling, reduction of unemployment, and the raising of the living standards of the suppressed and backward communities. The socialist party always advocated for the separation of the judiciary from the administration and its centralisation on the lines of the Balwant Rai Mehta committee report. The basic philosophy of the Socialist thought in India was based on a synthesis of secularism, nationalism and democratic decentralisation process

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 evolution and origin, program and policies of the Congress Socialist Party

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13.4 SOCIALIST THOUGHT OF DR. RANXMANOHAR LOHIA

Lohia was one of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party and editor of its mouthpiece *Congress Socialist*. In 1936, he was selected by Jawaharlal Nehru as the secretary of the Foreign Department of the All India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C), the highest body of the Congress Party. By the time he quit that responsibility in 1938, Lohia started to develop his own political

standpoint by critically examining positions held by the Gandhian leadership of the Congress and the Communists who had poured into the CSP. In June 1940, he was arrested and sentenced to a jail term of two years for delivering anti-war speeches. Already released by the end of 1941, Lohia became one of the leading figures of the Central Directorate which clandestinely tried to organise the Quit India revolt, sparked by Gandhi in August 1942. Captured in May 1944, he was incarcerated and tortured in Lahore Fort. As one of the last high security prisoners, Lohia, together with Jayaprakash Narayan, was finally released on 11 April 1946

Lohia made a significant contribution in the field of socialist thought in India; He always laid greater emphasis on the combination of the Gandhian ideals with the socialist thought that was a proponent of the cyclical theory of history. He believed that through the principles of democratic socialism the economy of a developing country could be improved. Although Dr. Lohia was a supporter of dialectical materialist he put greater emphasis on consciousness. He was of the opinion that through an internal oscillation between class and caste, the historical dynamism of a country could be insured. According to Dr. Lohia, the classes represent the social mobilisation process and the castes are symbols of conservative forces. All human history, he said, has always been "an internal movement between caste and classes - caste loosen into classes and classes crystallise into castes". He was an exponent of decentralised socialism. According to him small machines, cooperative labour and village government, operate as democratic forces against capitalist forces. He considered orthodox and organised socialism "a dead doctrine and a dying organisation".

Lohia was very popular for his Four Pillar State concept. He considered village, Mandal (district), province and central, government as the four pillars of the state. He was in favour of villages having police and welfare functions.

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He propounded his theory of New Socialism at Hyderabad in 1959. This theory had six basic elements. They were equalitarian standards in the areas of income and expenditure, growing economic interdependence, world parliament system based on adult franchise, democratic freedoms inclusive of right to private life, Gandhian technique of individual and collective civil disobedience, and dignity and rights of common man. In his Panchamarlii conference address in 1952 he said, "The tensions and emptiness of modern life seem difficult to overcome, whether under capitalism or communism as the hunger for rising standards is their mother and common to both. Capitalists expected their ideal kingdom to arise out of each man's self-interest operating under a perfect competition; communists still expect their ideal kingdom to arrive out of social ownership over means of production. Their common fallacy has now shown up that the general aims of society do not inevitably flow out of certain economic aims. An integrated relationship between the two sets of aims has to be set up by the intelligence of man."

Lohia advocated socialism in the form of a new civilisation which in the words of Marx could be referred to as 'socialist humanism'. He gave a new direction and dimension to the socialist movement of India. He said that India's ideology is to be understood in the context of its culture, traditions, and history. For the success of democratic socialist movement in India, it is necessary to put primary emphasis on the removal of caste system through systemic reform process. Referring to the caste system he said, "All those who think that with the revolution of poverty through a modern economy, these segregations will automatically disappear, make a big mistake." He often highlighted the irrelevance of capitalism for the economic reconstruction and development of the Third World countries.

Lohia was opposed to doctrinaire approach to social, political, economic and ideological issues. He wanted the state power to be controlled, guided, and framed by people's power and believed in the ideology of democratic socialism and non-violent methodology as instruments of governance.

Lohia was deeply influenced by Leon Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution". He preached and practiced the concept of "permanent civil disobedience" as a peaceful rebellion against injustice. To him the essence of social revolution could be achieved through a combination of jail, spade and vote. His theory of "immediacy" was very popular among the youth. He wanted that organisation and action must continue as parallel currents and strongly pleaded for "constructive militancy" and "militant construction".

Lohia was convinced that no individual's thought could be used as the sole frame of reference for the ideology of any movement. Although he was in favour of Marx's theory of dialectical materialism, he was aware of its limitations. He emphasised both the economic factors and human will as important elements of development of history. He was convinced that "logic of events" and "logic of will" would govern the path of history.

He was not convinced by the Marxist thesis that the revolutions were to occur in the industrially developed societies. He said that communism borrowed from Capitalism its conventional production techniques; it only sought to change relationship among the forces of production. Such a process was in suitable for the conditions prevailing in India. He pleaded for small unit technology and decentralised economy. For him the theory of determinism was not a solution for the tradition bound Indian society where class distinctions and caste stratifications rule the day. The Marxist theory of class struggle is not an answer for the complex social structures of India

Lohia was convinced that the concept of "welfare-statist" was not an answer for the social and economic progress of countries in the Third World. The Marxist concept of class struggle had no place for the peasant because he was "an owner of property and an exactor of high prices for their food." Dr. Lohia always emphasised on the role of peasants in the economic, political and social developments of the country. According to him, "Undoubtedly, the farmer in India, as elsewhere, has a greater role to play, than whom none is greater, but others may have equal roles to play. The talk of subsidiary

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alliances between farmers and workers and artisans and city poor must be replaced by the concept of equal relationship in the revolution." He gave a call for the civil disobedience movements against all forms of injustice and for the creation of a new world order.

Lohia was of the view that the universal male domination and obnoxious caste system as the two basic weaknesses of India's social structure and pleaded for their eliminations at all levels. He said, "All politics in the country, Congress, Communist, or socialist, has one big area of national agreement, whether by design or through custom, and that is to keep down and disenfranchise the Sudra and the women who constitute over three-fourth of our entire population." He appealed to the youth to be at the forefront of the social reconstruction process to eliminate these social evils. He said, "I am convinced that the two segregations of caste and women are primarily responsible for this decline of the spirit. These segregations have enough power to kill all capacity for adventure and joy." Poverty and these social segregations are inter-linked and thrive 'on each other's' worms. He asserted, "all war on poverty is a shame, unless it is, at the same time, a conscious and sustained war on these two segregations

Religion and politics, said Lohia, are deeply inter-linked and have the same origin. Although the jurisdictions of religion and politics are separate, a wrong combination of both corrupts both. He was of the view that both religion and politics could be judiciously administered to develop the infrastructures of the political systems. He said, "Religion is long term politics; and politics is short term religion. Religion should work for doing well and praising goodness. Politics should work for fighting the evil and condemning it. When the religion instead of doing something good confines itself to praising the goodness only, it becomes lifeless. And when politics, instead of fighting evil, only colour it, it becomes quarrelsome. But it is a fact that imprudent mixture of religion and politics corrupts both of them. No particular religion should associate itself with any particular politics. It creates communal fanaticism.

The main purpose of the modern ideology of keeping religion separate from politics is to ensure that conzrnunal fanaticism does not originate. There is also one more idea that power of awarding punishment in politics and religious orders should be placed separately, otherwise it could give impetus to conservatism and corruption. Despite keeping all the above precautions in view, it is all the more necessary that religion and politics should be complementary to each other, but they should not encroach upon each other's jurisdiction. "

As a socialist thinker and activist, Lohia has carved out for himself a unique place in the history of Indian socialist thought and movement. Although there has been a tendency among the contemporary researchers not to recognise him as an academic system-builder in the tradition of Kant, Hegel or Comte, his democratic socialist approach to look at ideology as an integrated phenomenon is now being widely accepted throughout the world.

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 the Socialist Thought of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia,

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13.5 SOCIALIST THOUGHT OF JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Jayaprakash Narayan popularly known as 'JP' was a confirmed Marxist in 1929. By the middle of 1940s was inclined towards the Gandhian ideology. Till 1952 JP had no faith in non-violence as an instrument of social transformation process. The transformations of the Russian society in the late 1920s had thereafter changed his outlook towards Marxism and the process of dialectical materialism. Soviet Union was no more an ideal indole for him for a socialist society. The bureaucratised dictatorship with the Red Army, secret police and guns produced an inherent disliking for the Soviet Pattern of development. It was convinced that it did not produce "decent, fraternal and civilised human beings". He said in 1947, "The method of violent revolution and dictatorship might conceivably lead to a socialist democracy; but in only country where it has been tried (i.e. the Soviet Union), it had led to something different, i.e. to a bureaucratic slate in which democracy does not exist. I should like to take a lesson from history".

JP was convinced that there was inter-relationship between nature of the revolution and its ' future impact. He was convinced that any pattern of violent revolution would not lead to the empowerment of people at the grassroots level. He said, "A Soviet Revolution has two parts: destruction of the old order of society and construction of the new. In a successful violent revolution, success lies in the destruction of the old order from the roots. That indeed is a ' great achievement. But at that point, something vital happens which nearly strangles the successful process. During the revolution there is widespread reorganised revolutionary violence. When that violence assisted by other factors into which one need not go here, has succeeded in destroying the old power structure, it becomes necessary to cry halt to the unorganised mass violence and create out of it an organised means of violence to protect and defend the revolution. Thus a new instrument of power is created and whosoever among the revolutionary succeeds in capturing this instrument, they and their party or faction become the new

rulers. That becomes the masters of the new, state and power passage from the hands of the people to them. There is always struggle for powers at the top and heads roll and blood flows, victory going in the end to the most determined, the most ruthless and best, organised. It is not that violent revolutionaries deceive and titrat; it is just the logic of violence working itself out. It cannot be otherwise JP was very much critical of dialectical materialism on human development. He was convinced that this methodology would affect the spiritual development of man. His concept of Total Revolution is a holistic one. He used this term Total Revolution for the first time in a British magazine called *The Time* in 1969. Underlying the emphasis on the Gandhian concept of non-violence and Satyagraha he said, "Gandhiji's non violence was not just a plea for law and order, or a cover for the status quo, but a revolutionary philosophy. It is indeed, a philosophy of total revolution, because it embraces personal and social ethics and values of life as much as economic, political and social institutions and processes."

The concept of Total Revolution as enunciated by JP is a confluence of his ideas on seven revolutions i.e. social, economic, political, cultural, ideological and intellectual, educational and spiritual. JP was not very rigid regarding the number of these revolutions. He said the seven revolutions could be grouped as per demands of the social structures in a political system. He said, "For instance the cultural may include educational and ideological revolutions. And if culture is used in an anthropological sense, it can embrace all other revolutions." He said, economic revolution maybe split up into industrial, agricultural, technological revolutions etc. similarly intellectual revolutions maybe split up into two - scientific and philosophical. Even spiritual revolution can be viewed as made of moral and spiritual or it can be looked upon as part of the culture. And so on." The concept of total revolution became popular in 1974 in the wake of mass movements in Gujarat and Bihar. He was deeply disturbed by the political process of degeneration in the Indian politics of the time. During his Convocation Address at the Benaras Hindu University in 1970 he said, "Politics has, however, become the greatest question mark of this decade."

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Some of the trends are obvious, political disintegration is likely to spread, selfish splitting of parties rather than their ideological polarisation will continue; the devaluation of ideologies may continue; frequent change of party loyalties for persona; or parochial benefits, buying and selling of legislatures, inner party indiscipline, opportunistic alliance among parties and instability of governments, all these are expected to continue."

JP was deeply moved by the mutilation of democratic process, political corruption and fall of moral standards in our public life. He said that if this pattern of administrative process continues then there would not be any socialism, welfares, government, public order, justice, freedom, and national unity and in short no nation. He said, "No ism can have any chance, democratic socialism symbolises an incessant struggle for the establishment of a just, casteless, social and economic order under a democratic system in which an individual is provided with proper environment." In his address in Patna on 5th June 1974 he said, "This is a revolution, a total revolution. This is not a movement merely for the dissolution of the assembly. We have to go far, very far".

In a letter to a friend in August 1976, JP defined the character of the Total Revolution. He wrote, "Total revolution is a permanent revolution. It will always go on and keep on changing both our personal and social lives. This revolution knows no respite, no halt, certainly not complete halt. Of course according to the needs of the situation its forms will change, its programmes will change, its process will change. At an opportune moment there may be an upsurge of new forces which will push forward the wheels of change. The soldiers of total revolution must keep certainly busy with their programmes to work and wait for such an opportune moment."

JP's Total Revolution involved the developments of peasants, workers, harijans, tribal people and indeed all weaker sections of the social structure. He was always interested in empowering and strengthening India's democratic system. He wanted the participation of people at all , levels of

decision-making process. He wanted that electoral representatives should be accountable to his electors, not once in five years but if is unsuitable before the expiry of his five year term he should be replaced. The political representative must be continuously accountable to the public. He wanted electoral reforms to be introduced in the political system to check the role of black money in the electoral process of the country. He said that some kind of machinery should be established through which there could be a major of consultation with the setting up of candidates. This machinery should "keep a watch on their representatives and demand good and honest performance from them". Regarding the statutory provision for recalling the-elected representatives he said "I do recognise of course that it may not be very easy to devise suitable machinery for it and that the right to recall may be occasionally misused. But in a democracy we do not solve problems by denying people their basic rights. If constitutional experts apply their minds to the problem, a solution may eventually be found."

JP was deeply disturbed by the growth of corruption in the Indian political system. He said "I know politics is not for saints. But politics at least under a democracy must know the limits which it may not cross." This was the focal point of JP's Peoples Charter which he submitted to the Parliament on 6th March 1975. He said "Corruption is eating into the vitals of our political life. It is disturbing development, undermining the administration and making a mockery of all laws and regulations. It is eroding people's faith and exhausting their proverbial patience."

JP wanted a network of Peoples Committees to be established at the grass roots levels to take care of the problems of the people and the programmes for development. He wanted the economic and the political power to be combined in the hands of the people. Analysing his economic program he said, "A Gandhian frame laying emphasis on agricultural development, equitable land ownership, the application of appropriate technology to agriculture such as improved labour, intensive tools and gadgets ..., the

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development of domestic and rural industries and the widest possible spread of small industries".

JPs Program of Antyodaya meaning, the upliftment of the last man was an essential aspect of his socialist thought. On 21" march 1977, in a statement he said, "Dapu gave a good yardstick. Whenever you are in doubt in taking a particular decision remembering the face of the poorest man and think how it will affect him. May this yardstick guide all their actions?" Right to work was an integral part of his concept of Total revolution, he said "Once the state accepts this obligation, means will have to be found for providing employment to all. It is not so difficult to do so." JP was also particular about social reforms such as elimination of dowry system, development of the conditions of the harijans and abolition of the caste system in India's political system.

Analysing his concept of an ideal state, he said in 1977 that "the idea of my dream is a community in which every individual, every resource is dedicated to serving the weak, n community dedicated to Antyodaya, to the wellbeing of the least and the weakest. It is a community in which individuals are valued for their humanity, a community in which the right of every individual to act according to his conscience is recognized and respected by all. In short, my vision is of a free, progressive and Gandhian India."

Mino Masani said, "All through the vicissitudes and jig-jags of JPs Life, there has throughout been a non-violent means for total revolution." JP, throughout his career, highlighted the role of students and youth in the field of people's movement. He said "Revolutions an' no brought about by those who are engaged in the race for power and office whether in the government or in non-official organizations. Not also by those who are totally preoccupied with the burden of providing bread to their families and are wary of adopting any risky step. The youth of a country alone are free from these constrains. They have idealism, they have enthusiasm, and they have a capacity to make sacrifice from which older men shrink." In his letter to

youth in August, 1976 he said, "for the long and endless battle for Total Revolution there is a need of new leadership, the forces of history are with you. So go ahead with full confidence. Victory is certainly yours." Throughout his life JP has always tried to put men in the centre of picture. JP said, "In the society that I have in view for the future, man should occupy the central place, the organization should be for man and not the other way round. By that I mean that the social organization should be such as allows freedom to every individual to develop and grow according to his own inner nature, a society which believes in and practices the dignity of man just as a human being.

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. Explain the Socialist Thought of Jayaprakash Narayan

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13.6 LET US SUM UP

It is often said that the Indian socialist literature did not attain the depth and theoretical maturity like that of Plekhanov, or Bukharin or Rosa Luxemburg. But one must not forget that the significance of Indian Socialist thought lies in its emphasis on the needs of original socialist thinking in the context of agrarian, caste bound underdeveloped economy and polity of India. The German Marxists considered the peasants as reactionary elements. The socialist thought in India highlighted the role of peasants in the structural

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development of the economy. The Indian Socialists were interested to eliminate the prevailing class and caste struggles of Indian society. They indeed brought about some original thinking on the basic problems of Indian society - the role of peasants, caste struggle and planning in an under developed economy. They were for the synthesis of political liberty and economic reconstruction with the emphasis on the Gandhian principles of Non Violence and Satyagraha. This indeed is their contribution to the Indian Socialist thought.

At a time when the growth of excessive authoritarianism of political process and marginalization of majority has coupled with a nexus between native monopolies and multinational industrial corporations, and unethical interactions between local ruling elite and their external counterparts, have created a new correlation between economic power and political power, there is indeed, a need to remember the program, policies, ideals, methodology and message of the Indian socialists, particularly. As founding members of the Congress Socialist Party, freedom fighters and socialist theoreticians and political activists, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan played an immortal role in the socialist thought and economic development of India.

13.7 KEY WORDS

Socialist: A person who advocates or practices socialism.

Lala Lajpat Rai: Lala Lajpat Rai was an Indian freedom fighter. He played a pivotal role in the Indian Independence movement. He was popularly known as Punjab Kesari. He was one third of the Lal Bal Pal triumvirate.

Marxist: A supporter of the political and economic theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

13.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- 1) Explain the history of socialist movement in India.
- 2) Discuss the evolution and origin, program and policies of the Congress Socialist Party
- 3) Examine the Socialist Thought of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia,
- 4) Explain the Socialist Thought of Jayaprakash Narayan

13.9 SUGGESTED READINGS & REFERENCES

- Bhikhu Parekh, Gandhi's Political Philosophy: A Critical Examination.
- Douglas Allen (ed.), The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Pantham and Deutsch (ed.), Political Thought in Modern India.

13.10 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 7) See sub-section 13.3

Check Your Progress 2

- 4) See sub-section 13.4

Check Your Progress 3

- 4) See sub-section 13.5

Check Your Progress 4

- 4) See sub-section 13.6

UNIT – 14 ORIENTALIST DISCOURSE AND COLONIAL MODERNITY

STRUCTURE

- 14.0 Objective
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Different Strands of Recent Scholarship
 - 14.2.1 The Neo-Gandhian Critique
 - 14.2.2 The Subaltern Studies School
 - 14.2.3 The Anthropological Studies in the U.S.
 - 14.2.4 Edward Said's Orientalism
- 14.3 Nationalism and Colonial Modernity
 - 14.3.1 Nationalism as "Difference"
 - 14.3.2 Anxieties about the Nation's Women
 - 14.3.3 Cultural Split and Liberal Ideas
 - 14.3.4 A Different Sequence and Different Modernity
- 14.4 Nationalism, History and Colonial Knowledge
 - 14.4.1 Constitution of India in the 19th Century
 - 14.4.2 Nationalist Imagination Indian History
 - 14.4.3 Orientalism and the Colony's Self Knowledge
- 14.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.6 Key Words
- 14.7 Questions for Review
- 14.8 Suggested Readings & References
- 14.9 Answer to Check Your Progress

14.0 OBJECTIVE

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain about colonial modernity.
- Explain about different stands and scholarship in Indian Politics.

- Explain about Liberal ideas.
- Explain about Indian constitution in 19th century.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, an attempt will be undertaken to understand the concept of Orientalism and the question of modernity and its colonial roots in India. This is a relatively new field that has opened up new questions and has significantly reconstituted the old field of colonial history, both for the ex-colonized societies as well as of the colonizers themselves. The history of Europe too, is now increasingly marked by an awareness of the ways in which the colonial encounter crucially shaped the self-image of Europe itself. In this unit we will mainly be concerned, however; with the history of the Indian subcontinent.

Although the unit will be concerned with the debate on the colonial period, it is necessary to understand that it is a field that is irrevocably constituted by the present context. In the last few decades, particularly since the 1980s, this field has given rise to a whole new body of work and serious, often very sharp debates among scholars. It was during this period that an intense and fresh engagement with the whole question of our colonial modernity came to the fore. What is crucially important about this development in the scholarship on the Indian subcontinent is that it focuses, unlike earlier writings on colonial history, on the politics of knowledge implicated in that history. In a very significant way, it foregrounds the manner in which our knowledge of 'our own history - and our own selves - is framed by and understood through categories produced by colonial knowledge.

Before we go into a discussion of our actual subject matter, let us make a preliminary observation. Indian history today is no longer what we have known it to be so far from our history text-books. The new developments have illuminated aspects of that history that were hitherto covered in darkness. What do we mean when we say some aspects were 'covered in

darkness"? It is not as though some entirely new 'facts' have been uncovered. New facts have certainly become known to us, or known facts, often considered unimportant, have acquired new meaning because the way we look at that history has now changed. As we will see later in the unit, the idea of history as a repository of some kind of uncontaminated truth about our past, itself has become problematic in the light of these developments. Let us keep this in mind before we proceed.

14.2 DIFFERENT STRANDS OF RECENT SCHOLARSHIP

There are at least four different strands of scholarship that have come together since the 1980s, that have been at the root of this transformation.

14.2.1 The Neo-Gandhian Critique:

In the first place, there has been since the early 1980s, the reactivation of an older Gandhian critique of modernity. Central in this strand has been the work of scholars like Ashis Nandy, Veena Das and scholar-activists active in the environment and science movements like Claude Alvares and Vandana Shiva. Much of the critique of this set of scholars has been directed at a critique of science and rationality as the ruling ideological coordinates of modernity, alongside the related notion of development followed by the Nehruvian state. Though not all scholars associated with this strand have an explicitly Gandhian orientation, they broadly extend elements of Gandhi's rejection of modern Western civilization and its, faith in science and reason as the conditions of human freedom. Ashis Nandy directed his main attack on this ideological constellation of modernity; namely the constellation of science, reason and development. He also extends that critique to the nation-state itself, which he sees as the institutional embodiment of modernity, as an institution that is always intolerant of popular beliefs and ways of living. Nandy sees in the project of the modern nation-state, an inherent drive towards homogenisation, towards cultural genocide and the desire to reduce life to a few, easily definable and negotiable categories. His central

argument in this respect is that notions of the self in the South Asian context have been largely fluid and it is only with the onset of the modern nation-state that the attempts have been made to fix identity into singular categories like Hindus and Muslims. He points to the fact that even today, there are hundreds of communities who combine elements of both Hinduism and Islam and find it difficult to 'classify' themselves in neat and exclusive categories. Such an argument is substantiated, for instance by anthropological surveys by scholars like K. Suresh Singh

14.2.2 The Subaltern Studies School:

The second strand can be identified in the work of the Subaltern Studies School of Indian Historiography (henceforth referred to as 'Subaltern historians'). This school too made its first public appearance on the scene in the early 1980s - although its work began in the late 1970s. This group of historians and some political scientists came from a primarily Left-wing political background and much of their initial work was a continuation of the concerns that they had developed through the impact of Maoist political practice in the 1970s. Important among scholars of this school were historians Ranajit Guha, Gyanendra Pandey, Shahid Amin, David Hardiman and Dipesh Chakravarty and political scientists like Partha Chatterjee and to some extent, Sudipta Kaviraj. The common thread that links the effort of the early work of the Subaltern historians with that of scholars like Ashis Nandy was a critique of nationalizing and nationalist historiography and a concern with popular consciousness. Through a series of volumes published in the 1980s, the Subaltern historians launched a major critique of nationalist historiography which subsumed all histories into the 'History of the Nation'. By initiating this critique, they sought to recover what Ranajit Guha called "the small voice of history". They sought to understand what those who participated in the nationalist or peasant struggles in the colonial period thought, why they participated and what were the forms of their motivation and participation. In other words, they sought to recover the subjectivity and agency - the autonomy - of the subaltern classes, the word 'subaltern', as many of you would know, comes from the writings of the Italian Marxist

Antonio Gramsci. In the early subaltern studies, this term was used to distinguish it from other more restrictive categories like class. 'Subaltern' simply means 'subordinate' and could be used to designate different kinds of social, economic and political subordination. As Guha put it in his "Preface" to the first volume, it would "include subordination in South Asian society whether it is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way.

14.2.3 The Anthropological Studies in the U.S:

The third strand comes from within the field of area studies from anthropologists like Bernard Cohn, largely situated in the United States. Bernard Cohn's work spans a much longer period starting from the mid-1950s. It had been writing on questions relating to colonial knowledge of India and the ways in which this knowledge transformed the very society it claimed to study. His researches also showed how these knowledge constituted political subjectivities in the colonial world. Under his stewardship a whole generation of scholars from the University of Chicago, like Nicholas Dirks, Arjun Appadurai and others worked on the different modalities of colonial knowledge to show how it was thoroughly embedded in the colonial project and power. It was a knowledge that provided the intellectual justification for Britain's civilising mission in India, where, in Ranajit Guha's words, "an official view of caste, a Christian missionary view of Hinduism and an Orientalist view of Indian society as a 'static, timeless, space less' and internally undifferentiated monolith, ., were all produced by the complicity of power and knowledge." (Ranjit Guha, "Introduction" to Bernard Cohn (1988) *An Anthropologist among Historians and Other Essays*, p. xix). Around the 1980s this anthropological work gets reconfigured into a different kind of framework that explicitly situates itself within the field of our discussion. In an influential essay published in 1984, "The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia", Cohn showed, for instance, how the colonial censuses not only produced

knowledge about India and its people, but also produced an India that was not necessarily the India that existed prior to the advent of colonial rule.

14.2.4 Edward Said's Orientalism:

Finally, there is the work of Palestinian-American scholar, Edward Said that could be said to have made possible the coming together of these different bodies of work. With the publication in the 1978, of Said's highly acclaimed tract *Orientalism*, different efforts to deal with the continuing legacy of the West in the former colonies as well as in immigrant communities in the West received a major fillip. In this tract, which became very influential in and around the mid-1980s, Said showed how certain constructions of the East or the 'Orient' have been crucial to Europe's self-image. He showed through a reading of major literary texts as well as political documents, parliamentary speeches and such other sources, how the 'Orient' was a peculiar European construction - backward, superstitious, barbaric and irrational on the one hand and exotic and pristine on the other. Said emphasizes, however, that it should not be assumed that "the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths"; it should be understood as a "body of theory and practice". This body of knowledge, he argues, undoubtedly had an older history, but "in the period from the end of the eighteenth century, there emerged a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character."

It can easily be seen that all the strands of scholarship mentioned above had already begun in different ways to challenge the very frameworks of knowledge that had dominated our understandings of our history. With the exception of the early Subaltern Studies school, all the others had explicitly begun asking fundamental questions about Western knowledge - especially colonial knowledge - itself. Even in the case of the Subaltern historians, their

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relentless interrogations of nationalist and elitist history-writing and the quest for subaltern autonomy led them eventually to question some of the very crucial ways in which nationalism itself was structured by western knowledge. It should also be mentioned at this stage, that these different and diverse strands could come together because of another intellectual development in Europe and the United States. This was what is loosely called the post-structuralism current - or what is often loosely termed 'postmodernism' - which launched a vigorous internal critique of the entire tradition of Western philosophy and metaphysics since the Enlightenment. However, that is not our immediate concern here and we shall return to some of its more relevant aspects later. Let us now examine the main contentions of 'colonial discourse theory'.

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 different strands of thought among scholars on the question of colonial modernity.

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14.3 NATIONALISM AND COLONIAL MODERNITY

While we have delineated the main currents of thought that went into the renowned interrogations of colonial history, our main concern in the rest of the unit will be mainly with the work of Subaltern historians and scholars

like Kaviraj and Nandy. It is not within the scope of this unit to make an assessment of the entire body of work produced under the rubric of Subaltern Studies. What we are concerned with here mainly is the later body of work - what "Sumit Sarkar has called the 'late Subaltern Studies'. For it is there that the concern with Orientalism and colonial discourse acquires its most articulate expression. It is there that the most sustained and thorough-going examination of both colonial discourse and the peculiar features of what Partha Chatterjee have called "our modernity" has been carried out. Much of the later work of Bernard Cohn himself and his students like Nicholas Dirks and Gyan Prakash too can be said to fall broadly within the same body of work. In the discussion that follows, we will discuss certain themes that emerge from this body of work, rather than proceed in a strictly chronological order.

We have mentioned that the early work of the Subaltern Studies scholars was concerned with the search for subaltern autonomy; that is, of trying to understand forms of subaltern consciousness and their divergences from those of nationalist political elites, even when they participate in movements led by the latter. This concern naturally led to explorations of how elite consciousness too is/was formed in a context of colonial subjugation. It led to an exploration of nationalist discourse, its structure and assumptions, as well as to explorations of forms of subaltern consciousness. Two things started becoming apparent in the course of these explorations. First, that nationalism was not simply one monolithic ideological formation that every modern society must have. The situation was complicated by the fact that societies like India's were inserted into modernity by the agency of colonialism. The desire to be modern here was, therefore, enmeshed with the desire to be free and self-governing; that is to be 'Indian'. Early nationalist elites were forced to articulate their politics in a condition of subjugation where they simultaneously aspired to the principles of universal equality and liberty embodied by modern thought, and had to mark their difference from the West. Second, as a consequence, it was also becoming apparent that nationalism therefore, also involved a formidable and creative intellectual

intervention, formulating and defending its main postulates in the battlefield of politics, as Partha Chatterjee put it. With the publication in early 1983, of Benedict Anderson's now classic *Imagined Communities*, the possibilities had opened out for a more sustained investigation of how nations are invented. With the publication of this immensely insightful book, the idea that there is anything natural or eternal about nations was laid at rest. All nations, Anderson argued, are imagined communities we should clarify one common misconception here. When Anderson suggests that nations are imagined communities, he does not suggest that nations are therefore 'unreal' or 'fictitious'. On the contrary, he claims, they are real and call forth such passion that people are ready to die and kill for it, precisely because they are brought into existence as a consequence of collective imagination.

14.3.1 Nationalism as "Difference":

Let us now turn to some of the features of nationalism and colonial modernity as we know it today from the work of scholars mentioned above. Attaining the nationhood and self-governance, the nationalists understood, was the only way to be modern. That was the way the world they discovered, actually was. The great intellectual question that the nineteenth century intelligentsia had posed to itself was '<why did India become a subject nation? How did a small island nation called Britain attain mastery over this huge landmass?' Their answer, we now know, was that this was because India, on the eve of colonial subjugation, was internally divided. That there were hundreds of different principalities and quarrels, deep internal divisions like those of caste and it was these that made it impossible for the country to resist colonization. In the modern world, these could not continue. If we have to become free, we had to overcome the deep internal divisions and usher in a form of self-government that will recognize its entire people as free citizens. The only way this could be achieved was through the attainment of nationhood, for that was the way modern societies existed. Yet, it was something that troubled the emergent nationalist elite. How could they be modern and yet not simply ape the ways of the Western colonial masters. Being modern and striving for nationhood that is for

liberation from colonial rule required the subjugated nation, therefore, to mark its difference from the rulers. It had to be a modernity that was different in crucial ways from the baggage of western modernity as they saw it. The search for a different, Indian modernity was then what animated the discourse of nationalism in India. In his essay on "The Census and Objectification", for instance, Bernard Cohn cited from a 1943 text by Jawaharlal Nehru where Nehru observed: "I have become a queer mixture of the East and the West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere ... They are both [i.e. the East and the West] part of me, and though they help me in both the East and the West, but they also create a feeling of spiritual loneliness. I am a stranger and an alien in the West. But in my own country also, sometimes, I have an exile's feeling."

This above quotation by Nehru highlights one of the most abiding inner conflicts of Indian, but more generally, of all postcolonial nationalisms. If we remember that Nehru was by far the most radical of modernists among all the nationalists, we can imagine what would have been the situation of other nationalist leaders. In fact this is an anxiety that is evident among the intellectual elite of Indian society long before the formal appearance of nationalism towards the end of the 19th centuries. Ashis Nandy for instance, showed in an early essay that there was a resurgence of the phenomenon of Sati in Bengal towards the end of the 18th century. Through an examination of statistical evidence, he argues that it was only in this period that "the rite suddenly came to acquire the popularity of a legitimate orgy." Before that it had declined substantially in most parts of the country. Nandy suggested that it was in "the groups made psychologically marginal by their exposure to Western impact" that the rite became popular. These groups therefore felt the pressure "to demonstrate to others as well as to themselves their allegiance to traditional high culture." The Bengali elite being the closest to western contact was, thus most affected by this anxiety to be different. The question of modernity was of course not yet on the agenda at this time, more to the point, in that respect, is Dipesh Chakravarty's reading of early nationalist tracts in Bengal that concerned domesticity and the position of

women. While most writers of the latter half of the 19th century were clear that "women of this country" were "uncivilized, lazy, quarrelsome" and therefore bad for domestic happiness, due to lack of education, they were also convinced that education itself could produce undesirable traits in women. For education could also make them "arrogant, lazy, immodest and defiant of authority". This was clearly a fear about modern education and exposure to Western ideas that was being expressed by the early elite.

14.3.2 Anxieties about the Nation's Women:

The concern with women is evident in both, Nandy's exploration of Sati and Chakravarty's explorations of domesticity. It is the 'Women's Question' therefore, argues Partha Chatterjee, that becomes the site for a major nationalist intervention. Chatterjee explores what he calls the nationalist resolution of the women's question to suggest that the way in which nationalism sought to mark out its difference was by demarcating a sphere of inner sovereignty. What is the nationalist resolution of the women's question? Chatterjee notices that in the last years of the 19th century, with the appearance of nationalism, all the important questions of social reform centred on the status of women (like widow remarriage, education of women, against child marriages etc.), disappear from public discourse. This happens, he contends, because nationalism starts its journey by demarcating an 'inner' and an 'outer' sphere and declaring itself sovereign in the inner; cultural sphere. In the outer sphere its subjugation is a given fact, but in the inner domain of culture it claims complete sovereignty. It refuses to make the question of women a matter of negotiation with the colonial state. On the other hand, it does not simply rest content with the old status of women. It rather embarks on a project of creating a 'new woman', educated, active in public life and at the same time fully aware of her domestic, womanly duties. This 'inner domain' then, suggests Chatterjee, becomes the sphere where nationalism begins to mark its difference from colonial, Western modernity. But by valorizing cultural difference, nationalism was not always being modern. In fact, as many other studies show the assertion of cultural

difference often became a way of relegating questions of internal inequalities between groups to the sphere of the 'unspellable'. The problem then, Chatterjee suggests is that there appeared to be a contradiction lodged at the heart of the nationalist project: its search for modernity was rankled by a struggle against modernity in some sense. "What was national was not always secular and modern, and the popular and democratic quite often traditional and sometimes fanatically anti-modern."

14.4.3 Cultural Split and Liberal Ideas:

Sudipta Kaviraj introduces three more interesting aspects in his delineation of the features of colonial modernity. First, he argues, modern colonial education introduced a split in the Indian cultural life, by bringing into being two "rather exclusive spheres of English and vernacular discourse." The concerns that animated these different spheres were very different. While the English-speaking world was more concerned with ideas of individual liberty, those working in the vernacular world were far less concerned with democracy as a form of government. The vernacular nationalist intelligentsia was more concerned with the problem of "collective freedom of the Indian people from British rule" rather than with that of individual freedom. Indian nationalist elite encountered the great liberal ideas of equality, freedom and autonomy in a context of subjugation and were therefore, more immediately concerned with issues of national sovereignty. They, therefore, chose to transfer these ideas into their own concerns. Here, we see the second feature: Liberal ideas, Kaviraj contends, did have a deep and profound influence in Indian political argument" but this influence was not in terms of implanting liberal ideas but nationalist ones. This is not a minor or trivial difference but in a sense crucial, for as Kaviraj points out, the idea of equality between nations or societies can be completely blind to the idea of internal equality within the national

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community. Hence, even somebody like Gandhi could easily justify the caste system while claiming national equality and freedom from the British.

This is what is called in political theory, 'the space of civil society'. In the historical trajectory of the West, democracy emerged after the other two processes had developed to a high degree. Initial disciplining of the working class, for instance, took place in a context where there was no possibility of democratic resistance. In fact, democratic aspirations were, at least partly, a consequence of the process of capitalist industrialization. In India, on the other hand, democracy and parliamentary institutions preceded the other two processes. Kaviraj links this different sequence to a kind of populist politics that comes to dominate the political scene in India and many post-colonial countries.

It is this problem that Partha Chatterjee has recently conceptualised in his idea of "political society". Chatterjee argues that what is called civil society in the West is a domain of the individuated, rights-bearing citizen that is governed by rules of free entry and exit and individual autonomy. Non-Western societies, he suggests, are marked by a permanent hiatus between this domain of civil society, which is governed by the normative ideals of Western modernity and the vast areas of society that relate to the developmental state as 'populations' that are subject to the policy interventions by the state. Mere, it is the responsibility of the government rather than any notion of rights that becomes the ground on which claims of these populations are negotiated. We cannot go into a longer discussion of this concept as elaborated by Chatterjee, but it is important to note that according to him, one of the crucial defining features of 'political society' is that it is a domain where the idea of a community still holds a powerful sway - as opposed to the individual who is the defining characteristic of civil society. It is the argument of scholars like Chatterjee and Kaviraj that this peculiar feature of non-Western modernity should not be understood as a 'lack' or 'underdevelopment' or as an 'incomplete modernity'. Rather, they should be seen as the specific way in which modernity in the colonial

context came to be constituted. It has a different history from that of Western modernity and is likely to have a different future.

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. Explain Nationalism's concern with Orientalism and colonial discourse.

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14.4 NATIONALISM, HISTORY AND COLONIAL KNOWLEDGE

So far we have talked about nationalism, assuming that there was one single entity called nationalism - and that was Indian nationalism. As it happens, there was neither a single nationalism, nor for that matter, a single Indian nationalism. We know, for example, that the Indian National Congress espoused one kind of Indian nationalism that we may call "secular-nationalism". We also know that the Muslim League espoused, at least from around 1940 onwards, a Pakistani nationalism. This is often referred to as the 'two-nation theory'. This was also propounded by someone like Vinayak Damodar Savarkar who stood for explicitly Hindu-Indian nationalism. We also know for instance, that there was during the nationalist period a Bengali nationalism, an Assamese nationalism, Malayali nationalism and such other nationalisms. The question is that if there was an already existing object

nation called India, how do we account for the fact that so many different people saw it in so many different ways? Sudipta Kaviraj answers this question, in his well-known essay "The Imaginary Institution of India", by claiming that the India that we talk of so unproblematically today was not really a discovery; it was an invention! By calling it a discovery as Nehru did in his Discovery of India, we seem to imply that "it was already there", presumably from time immemorial. If you are asked today to describe what India is, you will most probably point to its geographical boundaries stretching from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea; you will recount the different linguistic, religious, caste and tribal groups that inhabit this landmass. You will also probably say that because of all this India represents a 'unity in diversity'. And yet, what if you are told that before the nineteenth century, nobody exactly knew the physical stretch of this landmass and that our ancestors had no idea of how many communities and religions existed in this land. Nor did they have any idea of how many people there were in each community. What then is the picture of India that you will draw? How did the early nationalist draw the picture of their India?

14.4.1 Constitution of India in the 19th Century:

Take for instance the fact that the first tentative of 'India' - the name for India too did not exist at that time - were drawn up by James Rennell, a colonial official in Bengal, between 1782 and 1788. It was only by 1818 that, with the East India Company's annexation of large parts of the subcontinent, that an idea of the geographical stretch of the land began to emerge. It was only in the 19th century that the idea of a geographical entity called 'India' was consolidated. As Mathew Edney's detailed documentation and analysis of the mapping of India argues, "In constructing a uniform and comprehensive archive of India, the British fixed the scope and character of the region's territories. ~h& located and mapped the human landscape of villages, forts, roads, irrigation schemes, and boundaries within the physical landscape of hills, rivers and forests. "It was also in the 19th century that the

first censuses of India were done and only in 1881 that the first comprehensive census took place. It was then that the idea of the different communities that inhabited the land became available, as also their numbers. But this was not all. It was not simply that the British compiled information about the land in an objective manner. To count and make sense of the huge population of a land like the Indian subcontinent, they had to classify the population into different groups. As - there were no clear-cut notions of community the British defined them in their own ways for purposes of classification. Large categories such as 'Hindu' and 'Muslim', as well as those of caste (in which they fitted thousands of jatis) were in a sense, colonial constructs, devised primarily for the purpose of census enumerations. It is not as though religious denominations and jatis did not 'exist' before the censuses, but there were large zones of indefinable 'grey areas' that were not easily amenable to classification. These hundreds of categories had to be reduced to a few, easily handle-able, administrative categories. For that purpose their boundaries had to be precisely defined, In doing so, colonial rule actually created new categories and fixed them in certain specific ways, as a lot of historical work now shows. This is not a matter that we can go into at any length here, but a few points should be noted.

In his essay mentioned above, Kaviraj has made a distinction between what he calls 'fuzzy' and 'enumerated' communities. One of the ways in which the very act of enumeration and classification transformed the way in which communities exist, is captured by Kaviraj in this distinction. Individuals in pre-modern, fuzzy communities did not have a fixed sense of identity but that does not mean that they had no sense of identity. Individuals, he argues, could on appropriate occasions, describe themselves as vaishnavas, Bengalis or maybe Rarhis or Kayasthas, villagers and so on. But none of these would be a complete description of their identity. Each of these could very precisely define their conduct in specific situations but it was radically different from the identity of modern enumerated communities in one way. It was only when one singular identity was fixed that they would begin to

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ask, as modern communities do, about how many there were in the world, what was their representation in public institutions, how were they being discriminated against and so on. So, as Dipesh Chakravarty asserts, "by the 1890s, Hindu and Muslim leaders were quoting census figures at each other to prove that whether or not they had received their legitimate share of benefits (such as employment and education) from British rule." In that sense, modern notions of majority and minority and such other questions become possible to pose only with the emergence of such enumerated communities. It is from this angle that Gyanendra Pandey contends, in his *Construction of Communalism Colonial North India*, that even though there were sectarian conflicts among Hindus and Muslims before colonialism, they were usually local conflicts with many different roots. They were not communalism in the modern sense because there was no sense of a 'community' in the first place. At any rate, he argues, there was no sense of an all-India Hindu or Muslim community before colonial practices and knowledge inscribed this difference as essential to Indian society. We can see for instance, that the whole discourse about the Muslim population overtaking the Hindu population could only begin to take shape once the idea of a majority and minority was made possible through practices of enumeration and classification.

One of the major facts that emerge then from the discussion of colonial governmental practices is that our very idea of India, its geographical boundaries, its population and its cultural competition etc. are all formed by the knowledge produced by the colonial state. What is most important is that all subsequent politics, including nationalist politics, was shaped by this knowledge? In the initial phases of the nationalist movement, it was not really clear what nationalism was all about. There was a critique of colonial rule, to be sure. But then, this critique was not being mounted on behalf of a clearly defined nation called India. As many studies have shown, there was often a Bengali nationalism or an Assamese nationalism and such others that were the first identifications of the anticolonial elite. As the idea of India became more entrenched and as its contours became more clearly -defined,

nationalism quickly appropriated this India as the ideal candidate for the new nation-to-be.

14.4.2 Nationalist Imagination Indian

History:

There was one problem, however. How could a so recent an entity claim to any kind of legitimacy as a nation? For the very idea of nationhood required that the new political community laid claim to an ancient history. For the large part of the nineteenth century therefore, we see early nationalists vigorously at work to invent a history of India. As Kaviraj puts, in this period, particularly in Bengal, "history breaks out everywhere". Important thinkers like Rishi Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay proclaim, "We must have a history" in fact, puts it more vehemently that "Even when they go hunting for birds, sahibs i.e. Britishers write its history, but alas, Bengalis have no history." Notice that even at this stage, Bankimchandra was only thinking of Bengal and Bengali as his nation; nevertheless the desire to have a history He was already powerful." What does this search for history mean? Does it mean that Bengalis or Indians had no past? Certainly that was not the case. But as in all premodern cultures, the relationship to the past was of a different kind. What is it that made 'history' in the modern sense different from the earlier accounts of the past? If we look at the accounts that are available in the precolonial period, they are either accounts of genealogies of kings or they are orally transmitted stories of particular events. For there to be history there had to be a community - an enumerated community - whose history it would be. There had to be a more concretely and rigidly defined sense of a community or a people whose history could then be written. This sense arose only when the idea of 'India' became a tangible reality, thanks to colonial governmental practices referred to above. Much of the effort of the nationalists of different hues was directed then at defining the political community such that it could incorporate all the diverse elements within the land called India. And this India had to have a history. Where did the resources for writing a history of India come from?

14.4.3 Orientalism and the Colony's Self Knowledge:

It is well known that academic knowledge about India - its history - was produced by the efforts of the great Orientalist scholars of the late 18th and 19th centuries. The founding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784, by British Orientalists like William Jones, can be considered as a milestone in this enterprise. O. P. Kejariwal's *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India Past* for instance document the work of this pioneering institution in the excavation of India's past. You might be surprised to know, as Kejariwal was when he started looking at the work of the Asiatic Society, that till as late as 1834, the names of ancient emperors like Samudragupta and Chandragupta Maurya were not known to anybody. He even mentions with some excitement, "I discovered that even Asoka and Kanishka, not to mention their dynasties, were unknown names till the Society's work brought them to light". He goes on to observe that it was astonishing for him to see that even the history of other well-known dynasties like the Palas, the Senas, the Maukharies, the Valabhies and such others were unknown till the 19th century, when the Asiatic Society scholars brought them to light. This is not the place to dwell on the details of the voluminous work done by Orientalist scholars of the 19th century to unearth the history of India. What is important for us to note is that if right upto the 19th century, what we know today as the "ancient nation" of India did not have a clear geographical form, did not have an account of the different cultures and communities that lived in it, did not have a history, then what was it that made possible the story that we know today - that 'India' is an ancient nation, which had an apparent Golden Age in the time of the Gupta and Mauryan Empires, and so - on? The point being made here by scholars whom we have been discussing above is that India, like most other nations is a relatively new and modern entity. Like other nations, it is the work of a collective imagination that was at work from the second half of the 19th century onwards, which deftly appropriated the work done by Orientalist scholars, in order to produce the narrative of a great and ancient civilization. This was the nationalist imagination - that retrospectively produced a History of the Nation, in which

all the separate histories of the different entities that today form a part of the landmass called India became reconfigured as the History of India. So when 19th century nationalists like Bankimchandra proclaimed the need for history, they were actually proclaiming the need for a history of this modern, rationalistic kind. This is why Kaviraj claims that India was an object of invention and not a discovery. That is why there is something worth thinking about for instance, in Kaviraj's claim that incorporating the history of the Satavahanas or of the Indus valley civilization into a history of 'India' involves a certain disingenuousness. Or, let us say, on the basis of present geographical boundaries can we then lay claim to the Indus Valley civilization and Mohenjo-Daro, because they fall in present-day Pakistan? In other words, how legitimate is the effort to - claim all past histories as parts of present-day India's national history?

Now, the fact that "we did not have a history" before the 19th century should not be understood to mean that 'we' did not have any sense or relationship with the past. Nationalists of the 19th and early 20th centuries routinely saw this as a sign of our backwardness, of a 'lack' that showed that we were not modern. Here, an important point should be kept in mind. One of the ways in which post-structuralism has questioned the common sense of Western Rationalism since the Enlightenment is by challenging its notion of 'human history' as a singular and linear development. We know, for example, that the story of human history as a story of progress from lower to higher forms has been the basis of modern historical consciousness. Post-structuralism has, among other things, challenged the idea that there can be only one way - the historical way - of relating to the past. Again, this is not a question that we can go into in any detail here, but it is useful to bear in mind that such historical self-consciousness is a characteristic of modern enumerated communities who need to continuously provide definitions of their collective selves to themselves and to others. If premodern communities did not need any rational account of their past, it was simply because their ways of being in the world did not require them to demonstrate who they are. The notion of time in such communities marks no clear separation between

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mythical time and lived time. One of the ways in which this understanding of history and historical time has affected lives in the colonies - and continues to do so - is that it institutes a particular historical journey for all societies as though they were a single entity. In that story, Europe appears as the place where history is, because it is foremost in the scale of progress. All societies then become condemned to replay European history on their ground. One of the lessons of the body of work discussed above is that we have to begin writing on own histories, not by rejecting Europe but by denying it and its History the universal status that it has acquired.

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. Critically examine the Construction of India in the 19th Century.

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2. Discuss Orientalism and the colony's self-knowledge.

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14.5 LET US SUM UP

This unit is devoted to a thorough discussion of the concept of Orientalism and the question of modernity and its colonial roots in India. This is a comparatively new field of study and has thrown up new and revealing

insights for both ex-colonies and their erstwhile colonial masters. For instance, the idea that history of Europe alone cannot be a reference point when writing histories of former colonies.

The unit starts with a discussion of the different strands of scholarship on the subject. Four strands Neo-Gandhian Critique, Subaltern studies School, U S based Anthropological studies and Edward Said's Orientalism has been examined. One next move on to an examination of the questions of nationalism and colonial modernity. Here, it has been explained as to how the way nationalism evolved in the former colonies was different from its evolution in Europe. It was nationalism with a difference. The last section of the unit examines how the idea of India as we know it today was conceptualized and developed by nationalist historians of colonial India.

14.6 KEY WORDS

Mohenjo-Daro: Mohenjo-Daro is an archaeological site in the province of Sindh, Pakistan. Built around 2500 BCE, it was one of the largest settlements of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization.

Kanyakumari: Kanyakumari is a coastal town in the state of Tamil Nadu on India's southern tip.

Jutting into the Laccadive Sea, the town was known as Cape Comorin during British rule and is popular for watching sunrise and sunset over the ocean.

Bankimchandra: Bankimchandra Chatterjee was an Indian novelist, poet and journalist. He was the composer of Vande Mataram, originally in Sanskrit stotra personifying India as a mother goddess and inspiring activists during the Indian Independence Movement.

Samudragupta: Samudragupta was a ruler of the Gupta Empire of present-day India.

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As a son of the Gupta emperor Chandragupta I and the Licchavi princess Kumaradevi, he greatly expanded his dynasty's political power.

Chandragupta Maurya: Chandragupta Maurya was the founder of the Maurya Empire in ancient India.

He built one of the largest-ever empires on the Indian subcontinent and then, according to Jain sources, he renounced it all and became a Jain monk.

14.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- 1) Discuss different strands of thought among scholars on the question of colonial modernity.
- 2) Explain Nationalism's concern with Orientalism and colonial discourse.
- 3) Critically examine the Construction of India in the 19th Century.
- 4) Discuss Orientalism and the colony's self-knowledge.

14.8 SUGGESTED READINGS & REFERENCES

- Pantham and Deutsch (ed.), Political Thought in Modern India.
- S. Gopal (ed.), Jawaharlal Nehru.
- Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle (2 vols).
- Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India.
- Buddhadeva Bhattacharyya, Evolution of the Political Philosophy of Gandhi.

14.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 8) See sub-section 14.3

Check Your Progress 2

- 5) See sub-section 14.4

Check Your Progress 3

- 5) See sub-section 14.5.1 and 14.5.3