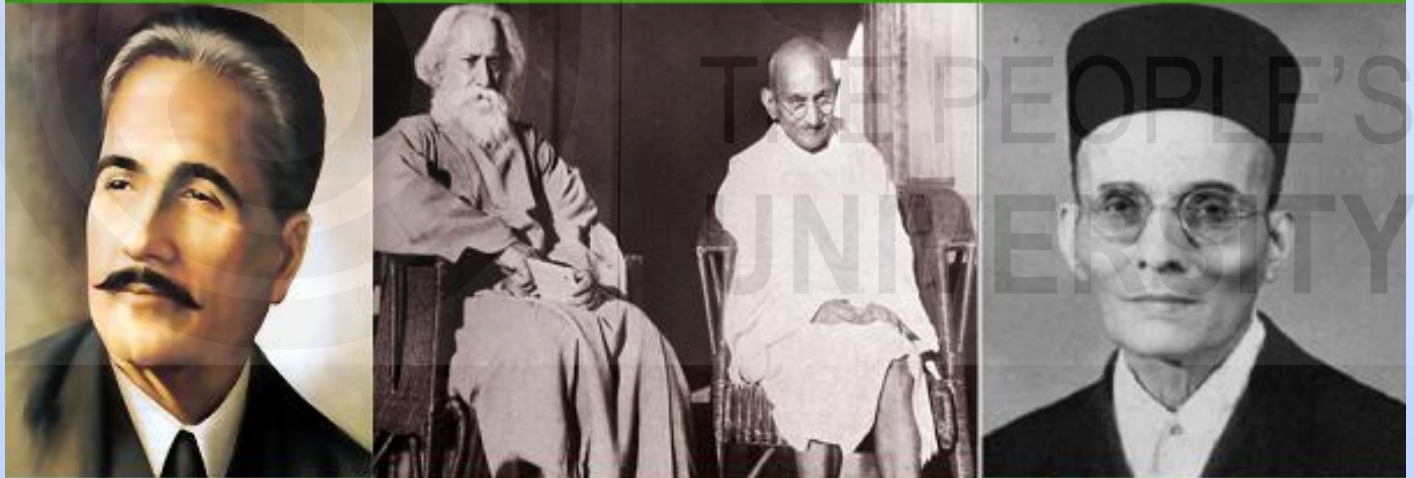# BPSC-114
INDIAN POLITICAL
THOUGHT – II

INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT –II

**CBCS CORE COURSE (B.A. HONOURS)
VI SEMESTER**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY**

COURSE PREPARATION TEAM

BLOCKS AND UNITS	UNIT WRITER
BLOCK I: Introduction to Modern Indian Political Thought	
Unit 1 Genesis and Salient Features of Modern Indian Political Thought	Prof. Bipin Kumar Tiwari, Dept. of Political Science, University of Delhi & Dr Raj Kumar Sharma, Post-Doc Fellow, Delhi School of Transnational Affairs, Institution of Eminence, University of Delhi
BLOCK II: Encounter With Modernity and The Question of Reforms	
Unit 2 Rammohan Roy: Social Reform and Affirmation of the Modern	Dr Sima Mallick, Vice Principal, Kendriya Vidalyaya, Delhi
Unit 3 Pandita Ramabai: Women and Religions Authority	Dr. Sanhita Joshi, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai
BLOCK III: Engagement with Tradition	
Unit 4 Swami Vivekananda: Reclaiming Tradition and the Idea of Self –Nara Narayana	Rohit Sharma, Assistant Professor, PG Department of Political Science, Arya College Ludhiana
Unit 5 M.K. Gandhi: Critique of Tradition and the Idea of Swaraj	Dr Raj Kumar Sharma, Maharishi Kanad Post Doc Fellow, Delhi School of Transnational Affairs, University of Delhi & Geetanjali Atri, Research Scholar, School of Social Sciences, JNU
BLOCK IV: Imaginaries of the Nation and the World	
Unit 6 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Constitutional Democracy and Social Justice	Prof. Valerian Rodrugues, Centre for Political Studies, JNU, New Delhi – 110067 (adopted from course MPSE -004)
Unit 7 Rabindranath Tagore: Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism	Dr Kiran Agawane, Assistant Professor, Dept of Political Science, SRM University Delhi-NCR
Unit 8 Jawaharlal Nehru: State, Nation Building and Secularism	Dr Bipasha Rosy Lakra, Assistant Professor, Dept of Political Science, JMC, University of Delhi
Unit 9 Ram Manohar Lohiya: Socialist Democracy	Dr Kiran Agawane, Assistant Professor, Dept of Political Science, SRM University Delhi-NCR
Unit 10 M.N. Roy: Radical Humanism	Adopted from course EPS-03, Unit -29.
BLOCK V: Community and Nation	
Unit 11 Mohammed Iqbal: Community, Religion and Modernity	Dr Amitanshu Verma, Senior Researcher, Centre for Equity Studies, New Delhi
Unit 12 V.D. Savarkar: Hindutva	Dr Priyanka Jha, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, BHU

UNIT FORMATTING, VETTING & CONTENT UPDATING

Dr. Raj Kumar Sharma
Consultant, Faculty of Political Science
IGNOU, New Delhi

SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Rakesh Chandra Joshi
AE (DP), SOSS
IGNOU, New Delhi

PRINT PRODUCTION

Shri Rajeev Girdhar, Assistant Registrar	Shri Hemant Parida, Section Officer,
MPDD, IGNOU	MPDD, IGNOU
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi	Maidan Garhi, New Delhi

Course Contents

COURSE INTRODUCTION

The term 'modern' may have different interpretations which make it difficult to exactly trace the date of origin of modern Indian political thought. However, it can be said that it generally covers the 18th, 19th and 20th century. *Bidyut Chakrabarty* and *Rajendra Kumar Pandey* (2009) in their book, *Modern Indian Political Thought: Text and Context* have argued that modern Indian political thought involves three related issues of 'nation', 'nationalism' and 'national identity'. Needless to say, these themes were missing in the writings of ancient Indian political thinkers.

Broadly, modern Indian thought can be divided into *two* phases. The first phase was of 'Social Reform'. Thinkers of this phase were more concerned with the internal regeneration of indigenous society. The second phase, more complex and textured in many ways, is the phase that we can designate as the nationalist phase. The concerns in this phase shift more decisively to issues of politics and power, and of freedom from colonial rule. It is important to remember that what we are calling the 'nationalist phase' is merely a shorthand expression, for there were precisely in this period, many more tendencies and currents that cannot simply be subsumed under the rubric of 'nationalism'. At the very least, there are important currents like the *Muslim* and the *Dalit* that mark the intellectual and political 'search for the Self' in this period.

According to *Ramdhari Singh Dinkar*, modern Indian political thought could be seen as Indian response, resistance and mobilisation of the Indian tradition to British colonial conquest of India. Through the spirit of renaissance, there was an attempt to adapt to the Western modernity in a positive way while through revivalism, Indian tradition tried to respond to British colonialism by reaction and resistance (*Himanshu Roy* and *M P Singh*, 2017). It can be highlighted that the enlightenment that started in Europe in the 18th century did lead to voices which justified superiority of the Europeans over the other civilisations. Modern Indian political thinkers not only sought to infuse pride in Indians by highlighting its rich cultural heritage, but some also tried to critique the Western civilisation. Gandhi's critique of Western civilisation as one which lacked moral and spiritual dimensions, is a case in point. This course covers some of the important thinkers from modern Indian political thought. It is divided in *five* blocks.

Block 1 introduces modern Indian political thought with one unit, *Genesis and Salient Features of Modern Indian Political Thought*. **Block 2** deals with the encounter with modernity and the question of reforms. It covers ideas of *Rammohan Roy* and *Pandita Ramabai*. **Block 3** highlights *Vivekananda's* and *Gandhi's ideas on tradition*. **Block 4** highlights imaginaries of the nation and the world through thinkers like *Ambedkar, Tagore, Nehru, Lohiya* and *M N Roy*. *Iqbal's* and *Savarkar's* views about community and nation find a mention in **Block 5**.

Every unit has exercises to assess progress and the answers are given at the end of each unit. There is a list of readings at the end of the course that would help to broaden perspective and go deep into the study of modern Indian Political Thought.

BLOCK I
INTRODUCTION TO MODERN INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

INTRODUCTION

The 19th century political thinkers in India sought to analyse how a huge country like India fell to subjugation. Their aim was to attain freedom from foreign rule. Modern Indian thought can be divided into *two* phases. The first phase was of Social Reform. Thinkers of this phase were more concerned with the internal regeneration of indigenous society. The second phase, more complex and textured in many ways, is the phase that we can designate as the *Nationalist* phase. To establish their ideological and cultural hegemony, the British created their supporters among Indians like the landlords and the educated urban middle class. However, a rival understanding of the colonial rule also developed during this time which appreciated traditional practices and institutions. The liberals highlighted the positive aspects of the British rule. *Rammohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Dada Bhai Naoroji, G.K. Gokhale, M.G. Ranade,* as well as *CR Das* and *Moti Lal Nehru* spoke, in varying degrees of the benefits of the British rule in India. Despite the appreciation for certain English values and institutions, all the stream of anti-colonial nationalist thought commonly held that colonial rule was dehumanising and exploitative. The 20th century liberals, without refuting the 'civilising' role of colonial rule, pleaded for the *transfer of power*. The decade of 1920s was the decade of radicalisation of anti-colonial thinking. A section of the educated youth critical of Gandhi's ideas and methods, sought to advance the understanding of British and to evolve new methods of political struggle. The *Revolutionary Nationalists* emerged out of this trend. *Subhash Chandra Bose* and *Jawarharlal Nehru* became the spokesmen of this section. The essentially Indian spiritual approach to politics, developed by *Vivekananda* and *Aurobindo Ghosh* found its continued expression in Gandhi. Another trend was represented by the *Socialists* and the *Communists*. M.N. Roy, official ideologue of the Indian Communists in the 1920s, emphasised the linking of anti-colonialism with the campaign against world capitalism. The Congress socialist thinkers, particularly *Jaya Prakash Narayan* and *Acharya Narendra Dev*, made an attempt to synthesise socialism with nationalism and to press socialism in the service of nationalism, i.e. in the anti-colonial struggle.

UNIT 1 GENESIS AND SALIENT FEATURES OF MODERN INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT[*]

Structure

1.0   OBJECTIVES

This unit will introduce and explain the genesis and characteristics of modern Indian political thought. After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the concept of modern Indian political thought
- Explain its genesis and salient features
- Know the main thinkers who shaped the evolution and progress of modern Indian political thought

1.1   INTRODUCTION

With the rise of India on the global stage in the 21st century, academic interest in Indian political thought has been gradually increasing. Political thought has a continuous and long historical presence in India starting from the ancient times. Understanding modern Indian political thought is necessary to analyse how Indian thinkers have related with concepts like nation, religion, democracy, rights, customs, traditions and modernity etc. For many Indian modern political thinkers, the canvas of their thoughts was wider as they treated *humanity* as their audience

[*]Prof. Bipin Kumar Tiwari, Dept. of Political Science, University of Delhi & Dr Raj Kumar Sharma, Post-Doc Fellow, Delhi School of Transnational Affairs, Institution of Eminence, University of Delhi

(not only Indians). They tried to resolve not only Indian predicaments, but also world problems. They advocated their visions of good life, interpretations of history, conceptions of man, economic development and use of machines, morality and politics etc. These issues were equally applicable to other colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America. V R Mehta in his 1974 book, *Ideology, Modernisation and Politics in India* has argued that the Western thought works in binaries and dichotomies between matter and spirit, society and culture and freedom and society. Indian thought *rejects* these divisions as unreal and superficial. A non-dualistic approach helps to sustain community and cooperation, world brotherhood and humanism, while it also breaks the silos between elites and masses, ends and means, friend and foe and subject and object which lead to self-realisation. Modern Indian political thought arose when British colonialism interacted with an Indian response which could also be conceptualised as a *struggle* between Occidental (West/British) and *Oriental* (Colonies/India) thought process. While this nomenclature could seem old, the spirit of this struggle has continued in contemporary times which can be seen in the form of debates around *Global North vs Global South* or *Developed vs Developing countries.*

1.2 GENESIS OF MODERN INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

There was no serious existential challenge to British colonialism in India and their power was well established by the third quarter of the 19th century. They started to consolidate their colonial rule for which they needed a support base amongst the Indian subjects. For this, the British created an educated urban middle class and the other one of *landlords* who were employed in colonial administration. They planned to reinforce their cultural hegemony through the system of education. All in all, *three* steps were taken by the British imperialists to make India conform to their way of life, according to *M N Jha* (1975). *First*, they brought the whole country under one administrative unit. *Second*, an English system of education was established. *Third*, the British also tried to show India's cultural inferiority through researches carried out by anthropologists and archaeologists. It was in this political-socio-cultural milieu that modern Indian political thought emerged.

According to *M P Singh* (2017), the catalytic factors responsible for the emergence of modern political thought in India were – the British colonial rule, modernisation of Indian tradition and challenges of nation-formation, state formation and economic development. India's long drawn struggle for independence from the British rule was an exercise that brought about changes in social, political, economic and cultural aspects of our diverse country. Modern Indian Political thought arose in 18th – 19th century when there were diverse responses from India to British colonialism. There was simultaneous rise of modern Indian political thought and Indian renaissance (which started in Bengal). Bengal was naturally suited to play a larger role in reawakening of India as Calcutta was an older centre of British rule. The early schools, colleges and press started here. With its energetic people, comparatively rich commercial and

agricultural area, Bengal was eager to take advantage of new opportunities. A big chunk of India's freedom fighters came from Bengal (*Brown*, 1953).

There was intellectual reawakening among a section of Indians who were deeply affected by the problems plaguing Indian society at that time and they were determined to overcome them. It was a period of cultural decline as the need for creativity and analytical thinking was on the wane. People were stuck with old superstitions and dogmas while there were attempts made by our leaders to overcome these issues and reclaim the glory of the past. The nature of renaissance, however, *differed* in the West and in the context of India. In the West, it was a kind of revival of what had happened before (ancient Greece). In India, renaissance did *not* mean abandoning of past traditions and going back to ancient ones, but instead, strengthening the older traditions viewing them through rationality. It was more of an intellectual and cultural rediscovery instead of a restoration of the past. The Indian reawakening was in the context of Indian history which made it easier to accept ideas and concepts that were similar to the West. For example, ideas of tolerance and secularism were there in ancient and medieval times in India. *Upanishads* say that the whole world is a family (*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*) while *Akbar's Sulh-i-kul* (peace with all) was meant to ensure peace and harmony with all (*Bhattacharya*, 2022). It also stood for what the West would call *tolerance*. There was a debate among the leaders of India's freedom struggle regarding what should come *first*, political freedom or social freedom (reform). *Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo* and *V D Savarkar* gave more importance to political freedom while *Rammohan Roy, Gandhi, Tagore* and *Ambedkar* preferred social reform first. *Tilak* opposed reform efforts of *M G Ranade* and *Gopal Krishna Gokhale* as he believed that *Swaraj* or Indian independence should precede reform while he was also against their western methods and attitudes (*Brown,* 1953).

Another point is that there was *contradiction* between the spirit of modernity in the West and colonialism. Modernity gave a call for universal freedom while colonialism is an idea which favoured subservience and hierarchy and hence, was against freedom. It has been highlighted that the British never wanted to modernise India, but they wanted to *westernise* India's medievality because continued medievality of India was necessary to continue British rule in India (*Jha,* 1975). It can be highlighted that the enlightenment that started in Europe in 18th century did lead to voices which justified racial superiority of the Europeans over the other civilisations (also called the *White Man's Burden*, which supports the view that the white people should manage the affairs of non-whites who are an *inferior* civilisation). Modern Indian political thinkers not only sought to infuse pride in Indians by highlighting there rich cultural heritage, but some also tried to critique the Western civilisation. Gandhi's critique of Western civilisation as one which lacked moral and spiritual dimensions is a case in point. This dichotomy between the essence of Western modernity and colonialism was very much known to leaders of India's freedom struggle who began to see the demerits of

British rule in India in the 20th century and ultimately, demanded independence for India.

M P Singh (2017) has given *seven* main phases and patterns of evolution of modern Indian political thought as given below.

- Reactive, like the 1857 revolt
- Responsive like Raja *Rammohan Roy's Brahmo Samaj*, Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh founded by *Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan* and *Congress Moderates*
- Revivalist, for example *Arya Samaj* by *Swami Dayananda Saraswati*, *Deoband* School and *Congress Extremists*
- Revolutionary Nationalists like *Bhagat Singh* and his *Hindustan Revolutionary Party* (HRA)
- Militarist like *Subhash Chandra Bose* and his *Indian National Army*
- Transformative, examples include *Congress Nationalists* like *M K Gandhi, J L Nehru*; *Dalit liberal democrat Dr B R Ambedkar, Marxists* like *M N Roy* and *Rajani Palme Dutt, Congress Socialists* and other socialists like *Jayaprakash Narayan* and *Ram Manohar Lohia*
- Free enterprises like *C Rajagopalachari* and recent neo-liberal capitalists

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

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

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

1. Highlight the contradiction between Western modernity and colonialism?

……………………………………………………………………………………..……

……………………………………………………………………………………..……

……………………………………………………………………………………..……

……………………………………………………………………………………..……

……………………………………………………………………………………..……

……………………………………………………………………………………..……

1.3 SALIANT FEATURES OF MODERN INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

1.3.1 General Features given below the general characteristics of modern Indian political thought are as.

(a) Practical Perspective: Most of the modern Indian political thinkers were *not* systemic political philosophers like their Western counterparts such as *Hegel, T H Green* and *John Locke*. They were more of social and political activists who tried to reform their society by either engaging with the British in a dialogue or acting against them. Hence, there was no grand political treatise written during this period like *Kautilya's Arthashastra* or *Zia Barani's Fatwa-i-Jahanadari*.

(b) Engaged with pre-British Political Thought: Modern Indian political thinkers had to engage with pre-British political thought also which was rich and diverse in nature. Modern Indian political thought is based on the ancient civilisation of India and its capacity to accommodate various foreign elements and ideas brought by various foreign invasions (*Bhattacharyya & Ghosh*, 2007).

(c) Reflection of India's Diversity: At the same time, the diversity of India was reflected in thoughts of modern Indian political thinkers. They came from various backgrounds (caste, language, region etc) and had expressed their own experiences through their views. For the people of India who had existed as an old civilisation before advent of colonialism, the most important task at hand was to shake and remove the foreign rulers. Hence, an anti-colonial nationalism came up which was constructed and structured differently by different thinkers during different times and this remains the *cornerstone* of modern Indian political thought.

(d) Influence of International Events: Modern Indian political thinkers were also influenced by developments around the world at that time. Rise of *nationalism* in Europe exhibited by events like *German unification* under *Bismarck* and *unification of Italy* (called *risorgimento* in Italian meaning resurgence) were sources of inspiration for them. *Giuseppe Mazzini* and *Giuseppe Garibaldi* played an important role in Italian unification. *Gandhi, Nehru* and *Savarkar* were influenced by Mazzini's ideas. Defeat of Russia by an *Asian* power, *Japan* in 1905 was another international event that inspired Indian freedom fighters. *Gandhi* and *Nehru* believed that Japan's victory would cultivate self-respect in Asians and lead to self-belief that European powers could be defeated by Asians.

In the 1920s, successful *Irish* resistance against the British also strengthened the will of India's leaders against the British. The *Easter Uprising* in *Ireland* in 1916 against the British inspired anti-colonial movements in Asia and Africa. *V V Giri,* who later became the President of India, was a student in Ireland in 1916 and had later said that he felt a complete sense of identity with the Irish cause. The *Indian Home Rule Movement* was inspired by Home Rule Movement of Ireland. The First World War led to Non-Cooperation movement and the *Khilafat* movements in India while the Quit India movement was launched during the Second World War. The Great Depression during the inter –war years exposed economic vulnerability of the colonial powers including the British. The other important international events that inspired modern Indian political thinkers are the *American, French* and *Russian* revolutions. The American Revolution showed the world that the British power could be challenged and successfully defeated, while the French Revolution popularised the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. The Russian Revolution gave ideas of socialism and communism which attracted a large chunk of workers towards India's freedom struggle. Many of these ideas were reflected in India's constitution after India became independent.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

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

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

1. What were some of the foreign influences on modern Indian political thinkers?

…………………………………………………………………………...……

…………………………………………………………………………...……

…………………………………………………………………………...……

…………………………………………………………………………...……

…………………………………………………………………………...……

…………………………………………………………………………...……

1.3.2 Ideological Features

Based on the diversity of thinkers and their ideology, modern Indian political thought can be arranged as below.

(a) Liberal Reformers: The liberals in India were influenced by their British counterparts like J S Mill. *Liberal reformers in India include Raja Rammohan Roy, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, M G Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji, S N Banerjee* and *Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.* As an idea, liberalism gives centrality to the individual in areas like politics, society and economics. They concluded that in India, society or community was given paramount importance while the individual was subservient to it. Liberals saw this as a cause of downfall of a great civilisation like India. India needed social reform like the reformation that took place in Europe. Liberals were basically supporters of the British rule and saw this as a vehicle for India's modernisation. They argued that India was enslaved as its social set up did not have the spirit of freedom. Further, they believed that people would support their efforts if they knew their real purpose. Liberal reformers saw the British rule as a necessity to pushback against the conservatives, who would raise their voice against any kind of reform. Hence, they saw British rule necessary to guide India from traditionalism to modernity. The liberal ideas began with traditional elites in India like the *Bhadralok* of Bengal, Brahmins of Madras and the Prabhus and Brahmins in Bombay. Rammohan Roy has been also called the *Father of Indian Renaissance* for his fight against religious rigidity and dogmas. It can be argued that views of *Jyotiba Phule* and *Dr B R Ambedkar* were also influenced by liberalism as they argued that all men and women were born free and equal and hence, social divisions between them should be eliminated. They stood for social justice and raised their voice against caste hierarchy to safeguard rights of the depressed sections. *Sir Syed Ahmed Khan* was a Muslim reformer who tried to improve the condition of Muslims through invoking scientific temper and English education.

(b) Conservatives: In modern Indian political thought, there were many thinkers who upheld India's traditional values in their efforts to rediscover cultural identity of India. They focused on idea or consciousness which forms the basis and essence of the universe. There is a contradictory view, *Materialism* which says that it is not the ideas, but matter which is the essence of the universe. Marxism, as a concept, is based on materialism. Consciousness becomes the basis for humans to live in a community which has its own traditions, culture and identity. Within the conservatives, it can be said that there were *two* strands. *Swami Dayanand Saraswati* and to a lesser extent, *Lala Lajpat Rai* were revivalists who wanted revival of Vedic civilisation. *Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Sri Aurobindo* and *Bipin Chandra Pal,* on the other hand, stressed on inalienability of freedom for people and their hypotheses were too universal to invoke national parochiality (*Jha*, 1975). *Swami Dayanand* established *Arya Samaj* in 1875 which rejected the *Brahmo Samaj* of Rammohan Roy, calling it ignorant of Hindu Culture and traditions having fallen for Western influence. *Arya Samaj* advocated Sanskrit and Vedic education. *Tilak* opposed reform efforts of *Ranade* and *Gokhale* as he believed *Swaraj* should precede social reform. Likewise, *Aurobindo* had warned that India should not become 'brown ape of Europe', something that was likely to happen if India followed Westernisation. He further said that India would not be able to govern and shape its existence as its ancient heritage would perish under Occidental modernity. Based on his cultural reading of India, *Savarkar* gave his idea of *Hindutva*, which forms the basis of modern Hindu nationalism. It was an idea of majoritarian nationalism in which Muslims and Christians (whom he considered foreign faiths) had no equal political and cultural space. At the same time, Savarkar comes across as a rationalist who argued against irrational and unwanted practices and customs within Hinduism. His *Hindutva* did not aim for cultural homogenization, but favoured cultural diversity without compromising on the need for political consolidation (Ragi, 2017).

(c) Humanists: There was another strand in modern Indian political thought called *Humanism*. They put their faith in individual intellect and understanding by arguing that human beings can achieve self-realisation through rationality. Since its focus was on humanity at large, humanism was not bound by the divisions like race, nation, gender and religion. *Swami Vivekananda* argued that spirituality had the power to uplift the whole humanity. He tried to combine the East and the West, religion and science on the basis of practical philosophy of *Vedanta*. He supported socialism as it was in favour of the poor and downtrodden, but he rejected its constant commitment to material progress. The other important humanist was *Noble Laureate Rabindranath Tagore*. He was a *critic* of state-centric nationalism espoused by Indian National Congress. He argued for synthetic universalism, where individual personality went beyond national borders. He had a broader vision of world unity and cooperation. His idea of *cosmopolitanism* was marked by cooperation, coexistence, humanity and spiritual universalism. Tagore had criticised Western concept of nationalism as it was driven by desire for power and competition, not social cooperation. Tagore made a distinction between *rashtratantra* (rule of the state) and *samajtantra* (rule of the

society). He argued that in *rashtratantra*, decline of the state (as a result of war, for example) was accompanied by decline of the society, as in the case of *ancient Greece* and *Rome*. But countries like India and China had been able to maintain their existence amidst changes in state as their trust was widespread over society (*Bhattacharyya,* 2007). *M N Roy* was another humanist who gave his idea of scientific or radical humanism. He argued that ignorance was biggest hindrance to human freedom and scientific knowledge alone could help in restoring it. His humanism was based on three pillars – rationality, morality and freedom. To Roy, freedom meant progressive disappearance of all restrictions that prevent attainment of an individual's full potential.

(d) Critics of Caste System and Advocates of Social Justice: *Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Dr .B R Ambedkar* and *E.V. Ramaswami Naicker,* also called *Periyar* were prominent representatives of the depressed sections who analysed and highlighted their problems and sought social justice. One of the influences on Phule was the revolutionary liberalism of *Thomas Paine*. He criticised Ranade's politics as representative of higher castes while he also criticised establishment of *Brahmo Samaj* and *Prarthana Samaj* on similar lines. Phule's views on economy were guided by interests of masses and peasants, whom he thought were being exploited by feudal rulers and Brahmin elites (*Vora*, 1986). He preferred a society based on liberty and equality while he also argued to replace Hinduism with a new universal religion. *Dr. Ambedkar* expressed his faith in a constitutional democracy as democracy and freedom protected by rule of law would lead to common good. He favoured the idea that political democracy should consolidate into a social democracy where liberty, equality and fraternity are the basic principles. Ambedkar had *differences* with Gandhi on how to eradicate discrimination against the depressed sections. Unlike Gandhi's gradual and peaceful abolition of untouchability, Ambedkar preferred annihilation of caste. He did not approve of Gandhi's emphasis on spiritual and other-worldly search as issues of this world were equally important to him. Ambedkar gave a lot of importance to education for the depressed sections while he preferred that they should produce their own leaders. It can be argued that Phule's and Ambedkar's liberalism stood in contrast to liberalism of elites.

(e) Socialists: Socialist thought appeared in India's freedom struggle in the first quarter of the 20th century. The Russian revolution and the establishment of a Marxist state in Russia had ripple effects around the world. Socialists argue that society is a relationship of interests determined by the dominant interest and whether a society is free or not, is determined by the nature of the dominant interest. In India's freedom struggle, socialist ideas were *not* a coherent thought but were a body of ideas that were organically linked to India's liberation movement which aimed to strengthen the base of this movement. Young freedom fighters like *Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan, Bhagat Singh* and *Chandra Shekhar Azad* were influenced by revolutionary socialism and were members of the *Hindustan Socialist Republic Association* (HSRA). There was disillusionment due to Gandhi's emphasis on non-violent methods against the British while the

younger generation was willing to use violence against their repressive policies. *Communist Party of India* had been established in 1925 and its main centres of activity were *Calcutta, Punjab* and *Bombay*. In 1934, *Congress Socialist Party* was established to steer the Indian National Congress towards Leftist ideology. It included prominent faces like *Acharya Narendra Dev* and *Jaya Prakash Narayan*. Both believed in socialism but tried to infuse human values in it. *Ram Manohar Lohia* advocated incorporation of Gandhian ideas in socialist thinking. Like Gandhi, Lohia also argued for decentralisation of political and economic power. Lohia sought social justice for a wider section of society including women and backward castes. Within the broader socialist thought, *Subhash Chandra Bose* was a *radical* in terms of his methods to struggle against the British. He favoured use of military power against the British as against Gandhi who followed the path of non-violence. In the international relations terminology, Bose was a realist who understood importance of military power and tried to seek help from both *Germany* and *Japan*, as both countries had adversarial relations with the British.

(f) Supporters of Gender Equality: As the Western ideas of liberty and equality made an impact in India, attention was drawn to the plight of women in Indian society. It may be generally stated that male reformers played the central role in the beginning of the movement for gender equality during the colonial period. *Rammohan Roy's* crudase against *Sati* and other unwanted practices against women are noteworthy. *Savitribai Phule* emerged as a pioneer of women's movement in India and she started India's first school for girls in 1848. *Pandita Ramabai* spoke heavily against the caste system and patriarchy. Her reading of asymmetrical gender relations and respect for liberty and equality prompted her to raise her voice against gender injustice within the insular Hindu social and religious order of that time. She even married outside her caste and converted to Christianity. Later, *Gandhi* had also addressed the question of women who argued that women were superior to men in their spiritual and moral strength. He also disapproved the idea of male superiority over females. Gandhi advocated freedom and equality for women.

(g) Islamic Thought: Beginning of British rule marked the end of the rule of Muslim elites in north India and Bengal. Muslims had an antagonistic view towards the British while they stayed away from the early currents of modernity in India. They criticised the whole movement as an attempt to Christianise the population and destroy the foundations of Islam. In comparison, Hindus engaged with Western modernity, as explained earlier and were beneficiaries not only in matters of public employment, but also in relation to intellectual revival (*Brown*, 1953). *Sir Syed Ahmed Khan* was hailed as a liberal reformist and modernist in Muslim society. He had established the *Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College*, Aligarh to spread scientific knowledge. He argued that Islam was compatible with modern values and ideas. Poet-philosopher *Mohammed Iqbal* was another modernising force amongst Muslims during India's freedom struggle. He argued for individual freedom saying destiny was in the hands of an individual. Iqbal believed in Islamic universalism while he was a critic of territorial nationalism,

since both ideas were contradictory to each other. During his stay in Europe, Iqbal saw concerted efforts to demolish elements of Islamic culture and religion which made him sceptical of well-being of Muslims in pluralistic societies including India. It was in 1930 that he made a reference to reorganisation of India on a *religious* basis. It is important to note that he only demanded a reorganisation of India on a religious basis and *not* partition of India. However, he remained an ideological inspiration for India's partition and creation of Pakistan (*Chakrabarty & Pandey*, 2009). The British had played an important role in the birth of Hindu and Muslim nationalism. Historian *Ayesha Jalal* has argued that both these competing visions of nationalism rose due to British social engineering that began after 1857. They conducted a census focusing on an individual's religious inclination and this allowed comparisons between Hindus and Muslims on the basis of their economic condition (*Bhattacharya*, 2022).

(h) Political Thought of Gandhi and Nehru: *Mahatma Gandhi* and *Jawaharlal Nehru* were central figures in India's freedom struggle. Gandhi wanted to restore the past glory of India's civilisation that would be the basis of the future of humanity. Gandhi's political thought was multi-dimensional and different from Liberal and Marxist discourses on development as it was derived from India's civilisational resources to restore *Ramrajya* – an imagined idealist concept of society of small traditional peasants in autonomous villages following *Sanatani* ethics and scriptures. Gandhi neither followed the constitutional loyalism of Moderates nor did he favour extreme methods of the Extremists. Gandhi was of the view that *Swaraj* for India would not come from British Parliament nor through violent means, but through non-violent direct action, known as *Satyagraha*. Gandhi was a seeker of indigenous roots and wanted to retain India's heritage by modernising whatever was worth salvaging and useful in the Indian civilisation. Gandhi attempted to synthesise material with the spiritual and individual with the common good. Unlike the Enlightenment version of individualism that separates human beings from their traditions and vice versa, Gandhi supported individuals as autonomous who should be empowered by their community and traditions. Nehru was a nationalist and state-builder who espoused a blend of diverse ideas – liberalism, socialism and nationalism rooted in reason, rationality and scientific temper specific to Indian conditions. As a socialist, Nehru believed in state planning but class struggle and violence were not to be used for social transformation. Instead, Nehru believed that democracy and socialism were not contradictory and democratic methods should be used to achieve socialism, not violence. As a nationalist, Nehru argued that India's diversity was not an obstacle but an asset in efforts for nation building. His ideas on nationalism were part of *third wave* of nationalism. Finally, he believed that secularism should be promoted for national progress and unity. He observed that state shall observe neutrality in matters of all religions (*Bhattacharyya*, 2013).

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

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

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

1. Highlight the differences between liberal reformers and the conservatives?
………………………………………………………………..……
………………………………………………………………..……
………………………………………………………………..……
………………………………………………………………..……
………………………………………………………………..……
………………………………………………………………..……

1.4   LET US SUM UP

The factors responsible for the emergence of modern political thought in India were – the British colonial rule, modernisation of Indian tradition and challenges of nation-formation, state formation and economic development. Modern Indian political thought reflects India's diversity and was a body of knowledge that came across as a practical thought rather than as a theory. Modern Indian political thought also engaged with its roots in ancient and medieval Indian thought. In terms of the ideological strands, it consisted of the liberal reformers, conservatives, humanists, critics of caste system and advocates of social justice, socialists, supporters of gender equality, Islamic thought and political ideas of Gandhi and Nehru. Modern Indian political thought was elitist in character (as most of its leadership was made up of elites) while efforts to evolve and shape a syncretic character were limited in terms of thought of Gandhi and humanists like Tagore and Vivekananda. The complex interplay between three factors, British social engineering of divide and rule, Hindu and Muslim nationalism ensured that India was partitioned in 1947, an event which continues to echo in politics of South Asian states even today.

1.5   REFERENCES

- Bhattacharya, Sanjukta Banerji. (2022). Introduction. In Suratha Kumar Malik and Ankit Tomar (ed.). *Revisiting Modern Indian Thought – Themes and Perspectives*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Bhattacharyya, H. (2007). Introduction. In *Indian Political Thought and Movements: New Interpretations and Emerging Issues*. in Harihar Bhattacharyya and A. Ghosh (eds.). Kolkata: K. P. Bagchi.
- Bhattacharyya, Harihar & A. Ghosh (eds.). (2007). *Indian Political Thought & Movements: New Interpretations and Emerging Issues*. Kolkata: K P Bagchi.
- Brown, D Mackenzie. (1953). *The White Umbrella: Indian Political Thought from Manu to Gandhi*. University of California Press.
- Chandra, Bipan. (1979). *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Chakrabarty, Bidyut and Pandey, Rajendra Kumar. (2009). *Modern Indian Political Thought – Text and Context*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Guha, Ramachandra. (ed.). (2013). *Makers of Modern India*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University of India.

- Jayapalan, N. (2000). *Indian Political Thinkers: Modern Indian Political Thought*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors.
- Jha, M. N. (1975). *Modern Indian Political Thought – Ram Mohan Roy to Present Day*. Daryaganj: Meenakshi Prakashan.
- Mehta N. & Chhabra S. P. (1976). *Modern Indian Political Thought*. New Academic Publishing Co.
- Padhy, K S. (2011). *Indian Political Thought*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd.
- Ragi, Sangit. (2017). Savarkar: Hindutva and Critique of Caste System. In Roy, Himanshu and M P Singh. (2017). *Indian Political Thought – Themes and Thinkers*. Noida: Pearson.
- Sharma, Urmila & Sharma, S K. (1996). *Indian Political Thought*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors.
- Vora, Rajendra. (1986). Two Strands of Indian Liberalism: The Ideas of Ranade and Phule. In Thomas Pantham & K L Deutsch (ed) *Political Thought in Modern India*. New Delhi: Sage.

1.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) Your answer should highlight following points

- Contradictory relationship between the spirit of modernity in the West and colonialism
- Modernity gave a call for universal freedom while colonialism favoured subservience and hierarchy
- Western enlightenment led to voices which justified racial superiority of the Europeans over the other civilisations (also called the White Man's Burden)

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) Your answer should highlight following points

- Rise of nationalism in Europe exhibited by events like German unification under Bismarck, unification of Italy
- Defeat of Russia by an Asian power, Japan in 1905
- Successful Irish resistance against the British
- The First and Second World Wars
- American, French and Russian revolutions

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1) Your answer should highlight following points

- Liberal reformers in India were influenced by Western modernity and British liberalism
- Conservatives focused on India's traditional and cultural values
- Liberal reformers gave more importance to individual rights, Conservatives preferred community first approach
- Some liberals argued social reform should happen before political reform, Conservatives like Tilak argued that political reform should happen before social reform