CHAPTER - II

FOUNDATION OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND VIEWS OF EARLY NATIONALISTS

In the early nineteenth century, many educated Indians began to feel that western culture and the rising tide of Christianity posed a challenge to their age old traditions and beliefs. “In their attempt to remedy the situation, many reformers became critical of the past and began to look for ways to rid the society of its evils, such as caste distinction, purdah system and the custom of sati.”1 They wanted a new social order in keeping with the traditional values and modern development. Many Indians were impressed by progress made by science as well as the doctrine of reason and humanism of the west. “The social condition of the 19th century led to socio-religious reform movements. Some of such reform movements were the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission.”2

2.1 The Brahmo Samaj:

The Brahmo Samaj or the Society of God was founded in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He was born in Radha nagar in Bengal. He was a scholar and was well versed in Sanskrit, Persian, English, Hindi and Bengali. He made an intensive study of Christianity and other religions. After that he came to the conclusion that the Hindu Society needed reform and India had to learn a lot from the west. Raja Ram Mohan Roy served the East India Company for a number of years. He was a critic of the unjust actions and policies of the British Government in India. He protested against the curbs on the freedom of the press. “His progressive views helped to change Hindu society but these views were bitterly opposed by the orthodox Hindus.”3 He was a social and religious reformer, an educationist and a political leader. He is remembered for his help in the abolition of sati and in modernization of educational practices. His ideas on social and religious reforms constitute the ideals of the Brahmo Samaj founded by him in 1828.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy inaugurated the modern age in India. He was the father of Indian Renaissance and the prophet of Indian nationalism.”4 One of his greatest achievements is the uplift of the position of women in India. First of all, he tried to give women proper education in order to give them better social status in society. His
effort in the abolition of sati made him immortal as a social reformer. Sati was an ancient Hindu custom, according to which a wife immolated herself at the funeral pyre of her husband. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first Indian to protest against this custom. In spite of protests from orthodox Hindus, he carried on his propaganda against the custom. Finally, he won the cause when Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General of India passed a law in 1829 abolishing the custom of sati. According to this law the custom of sati became illegal and punishable as culpable homicide. “Raja Ram Mohan Roy also opposed child-marriage and supported widow remarriage.”

Pioneering Western Education. Raja Ram Mohan Roy supported Western education, including learning of English and the knowledge of science and philosophy. He, along with David Hare, a missionary, founded schools to impart English education to Indian children. He founded the Hindu College which finally developed into the Presidency College in Calcutta. “Raja Ram Mohan Roy did not want the Indians to imitate the West.”

He based his teachings on the philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads and tried to bring about a synthesis of the Vedic religion and the Christian humanism. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was also a social reformer. He focused the attention of the British Government to such demands as appointing to higher posts.

2.2 Ideals of Brahmo Samaj:

The ideals of the Brahmo Samaj have their origin in the synthesis of the Vedic religion and the Christian humanism. It advocated that there is one God, who is present everywhere, and is without shape and form. His worship lies in intense devotion. It believed in the brotherhood of man and treated all men as equal. Raja Ram Mohan Roy started a magazine entitled Samwad Kaumodi, to teach people love of mankind. “It supported the introduction of English in schools with belief that the study of English would open the door to modern sciences.”

It condemned social evils such as casteism, untouchability, child marriage and the sati system. It was due to the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy that Lord William Bentinck abolished sati system in 1829 by declaring it an offence. It advocated freedom of the press and condemned any restriction imposed on it by the government. It supported widow-remarriage and the education of girls. “Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first to agitate for getting women their rightful place.” After the death of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the work of the
Brahmo Samaj was carried on by great men like Devender Nath Tagore (father of the Rabindra Nath Tagore) and Keshab Chandra Sen. The Brahmo Samaj, besides reforming the Hindu society, Heralded a new era of reform movements such as the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission, and the Prarthana Samaj (in Maharashtra).

2.3  The Arya Samaj:

The Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati who was a Hindu revivalist. He wanted to reform Hinduism on the basis of the Vedas. Born in an orthodox Brahmin family of Gujarat, “he became a sanyasi.” He was a scholar of Sanskrit and the Vedas. He believed that the Vedic religion was the only true religion in the world. He wanted to revive the old Vedic religion by removing from it all corrupt practices. His famous book Satyarth Prakash, which contains his teachings, is written in Hindi.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati was perhaps the first to preach about the spirit of Swadeshi and to claim the principle of India for the Indians. After his death in 1883, his work was carried on by such great men as Mahatma Hans Raj and Lala Lajpat Rai. This movement for instilling pride of their religion and self-confidence in themselves, paved way for the rise of a national movement against the British Rule in India. Mrs. Annie Besant of the Theosophical Society said, “it was Dayanand Saraswati who first proclaimed that India was for the Indians.” Both Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Dayanand Saraswati wanted to reform Hinduism removing its futile practices. They also wanted to adapt Hinduism to the needs of the times by incorporating in it the scientific approach and humanism of the West. But while Raja Ram Mohan Roy drew inspiration mainly from Christianity and modern European ideas of humanism, Swami Dayanand Saraswati drew inspiration from the Vedas. Raja Ram Mohan Roy held that all religions were basically the same. The Swami, on the other hand was of the firm belief that only the Vedic religion was true religion. “Both these reformers wanted to prevent the Hindus from being converted to other religions.”

2.4  Ramakrishna Mission:

Swami Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna Mission in 1896 to spread the message of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, his teacher. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa
was the priest of the Kali temple at Dakshineswar near Calcutta. He was a Sanskrit scholar who interpreted the Hindu religion in the true Vedantic spirit. He preached that all religion were different paths leading to the same God. The aim of all religions was the realization of God. He wanted to bring about a synthesis of different faiths. He held that every man was an embodiment of God and, therefore the service to man was the service to God. Ramakrishna studied the ideals of other religion to understand them deeply. “He even practiced different religions to show that all religions equally lead to God.”

He died in 1886. Swami Vivekananda was the greatest disciple of Ramakrishna. The real name of Swami Vivekananda was Narendra Nath Dutt. Born in 1863, he graduated from the Calcutta University. He was well-versed in Indian Western philosophies. Like his teacher, he believed in equality of all religions and that the massage of Vedanta was the essence of all religions. In 1894, Vivekananda attended the Parliament of World Religions in America to represent the Hindu religion. There he was acknowledged as an enlightened man after he presented the tenets of Hindu religion. Vivekananda held that the Hindu religion had a world-wide significance. This gave Indians self-confidence and encouragement. Thus, “Vivekananda revived the spiritual superiority of India not only among the Indians, but also in the whole world.”

Progressive ideas of Ramakrishna Mission established by Vivekananda in 1896. In order to achieve these aims, Vivekananda organized his disciples into an order (Ramakrishna Mission). The Belur math, near Calcutta was then centre of the activities of the Mission. Later on it had branches in many countries such as Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Malaysia, America and different countries in Europe. Ramakrishna Mission is known for its social service schemes which include schools, colleges and hospitals. “It also organizes relief work when there are natural calamities like floods and famine.”

2.5 Impact of Vivekananda’s Philosophy

Vivekananda held that the Hindu religion has a relevant message for the world. He declared the spiritual supremacy of Hindu religion and culture which is based on materialism. Thus, his teachings gave to the people of India self-confidence. They began to take pride in their glorious past. Through Vivekananda ridiculed the materialistic philosophy of the west, he attached importance to Western sciences and humanism. This helped the Ramakrishna Mission to work for the people with a
balanced view. Vivekananda condemned the prevent ills of the Hindu society like untouchability, caste system and meaningless rituals. This puts the Indian society in the right track in having "social equality and scientific temper."\textsuperscript{15}

2.6 The Rise of Nationalism:

The Revolt of 1857 was an important landmark in India’s struggle for freedom. The revolt was suppressed by the British but the spirit of freedom, which had animated the revolt, could not be suppressed. The memory of the Revolt inspired Indians to go ahead with their struggle for freedom as a result of which armed revolts began to break out in many parts of the country. Resentment of the people against the foreign rule was expressed through Indigo Disturbances of 1859-61 in Bengal, and the Santhal Outbreak of 1871-72 in Bihar. There were also movements of non-cooperation. The Kuka Movement was one of them. In this movement, the Kukas, that is, the religious leaders of the Sikh community in Punjab, boycotted railways, post officers and established a sort of parallel government. "All these movements were confined to small areas and involved only some sections of Indian society."\textsuperscript{16} but towards the end of the 19th century, a systematically organized national struggle for freedom began to take shape.

2.7 Factors leading to the National Movement:

The most important event of the time of Lord Dufferin was the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. “The nationalism at the time of Mutiny of 1857 was not an organized force. But the year 1857 represent the watershed from where new forces were generated which culminated in the rise of organized national movement under the leadership of Congress.”\textsuperscript{17} A variety of factors contributed to this movement and eventually India attained independence.

2.8 Political Unification:

Contribution of British rule in India had negative and positive points. Among the positive contributions was the political unity which British imperialism and British Language gave. When the Britishers came, “India was a land of warring
factions. The Marathas, the Jats, the Sikhs and the Muslims had broken up the country into categories of states, each having its own political and territorial existence.”18 The British pressed them all together under the steamroller of their military might which brought about political unification. During the course of Indian national movement, the people of all sections of society were welded together due to this political unity and they offered a joint front on an all-India basis for pressing their demands. Under the British, a uniform system of administration was established. The local peculiarities and racial difference began to die slowly. The administration began to be conducted on the principle known as the rule of law. The uniform system of administration generated a feeling of oneness among the people. A regular hierarchy of courts was established in which the princes and paipers received equal treatment. Such a system was bound to generate deep underlying fundamental unity in diversity. A network of roads and railway lines laid down for economic exploitation and strategic purposes had also positive effects in as much as they facilitated contacts among the people in various fields. “Karl Marx had said that the railway system would become in India truly the forerunner of modern industry.”19 There was then the inter-mixing of population. In the railway compartments, all the low castes and high castes sat together. The people moved about and the distances were reduced. This made it possible for national figures to grow. The horizon of national leaders become wide and parochial considerations rank into insignificance.

2.9 Impact of western education:

Then, there was the western education which lifted India out of her stagnation of fanaticism, fantasies, superstition and other traditional outlook and thought. India had lost its prestigious glory as the time passed. The financial mental exercises were substituted by real understanding. There was a time when India was the glory of the world and a cradle of flourishing and advanced civilization. But in 19th century, India becomes a land of spiritual speculations and of the fantastic and capricious imagination. “Link with the glorious past was severed and during the British rule, darkness enveloped until education was introduced. In Europe, the people slowly emerged from darkness to the light of intellectual glory.”20 The Renaissance revolutionized European thought. The British came to India and brought their learning into this land. The English literary thought Byron’s praise for liberty,
Wordsworth’s upholding of the dignity of mankind, Shelley’s exhortations to revolt against priest-craft, the spirit of nationalism, and love of democracy and self-government of England’s great political writers such as Locke, Spencer, J. S. Mill, Macaulay and Burke, the “no taxation without representation” cry of the American War of Independence, the Equality, liberty and Fraternity of the French Revolution, the spirit of the Italy’s struggle for independence all registered a decisive impact on the people of India. The new wine of Western learning went into India’s head. Realism came into touch with conventionalism. The corrupted imaginations began to totter, founder and die. New light shone forth and India began slowly to rise from her lethargy of thought and action. A new age dawned. Great hopes and aspirations emerged. Ramsay Macdonald writes “Herbert Spencer’s individualism and Lord Macualay’s liberalism are the only battery of guns which India has captured from us and condescends to use against us.” Both Indian and European scholars began to dig into the mysteries of India’s past. Ranade, Har Parsad Shastri, R. G. Bhandarkar and Rajendra Lal Mitra, Max Mueller, Sir William Jones, Colebrook and Roth slowly and laboriously removed the century’s old deep layers of earth underneath which lay buried the gems of India’s past glory. It was all brought to the surface slowly. India rediscovered herself and the people became proud of their glorious past and desired to retain their cultural identity despite westernization of society. Thus, Indians confidently carried on the national movement. They were only westernized in appearance but truly Indian at heart and in spirit. The revival of the glorious past of India eventually led to the happy synthesis between the East and the West.

2.10 Impact of religious and social reform movement:

Important reform movements emerged on Indian national scene. These reform movements were the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Satyasodhak Samaj, the theosophical society and the Ramakrishna Mission. K. T. Paul has aptly remarked: “India would not be India if her national movement did not begin in the place of religion. The Brahmo Samaj founded by Raja Mohan Roy was an attempt to express religious life and thought afresh in the assimilation of some of the ideas and usages presented by the West.” It purged Indian society of its evils. This movement was the first in the response of India to the West.
The Arya samaj was a deliberate turned aside from western to re-order Hindu life and religion so as to save it from falling in to the hands of the Western influences. It was founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in Bombay in 1875. “Dayanand Saraswati who proclaimed India for Indians.”24 His philosophy was to bring the people back to the vedas and create pride in their cultural heritage. The samaj worked for the Hindu orphans, for widow remarriage and against the evil customs of the Hindu society. The Theosophical society and the Ramakrishna mission also tried to awaken India and give an impetus to the National Movement.

The Indian press attained a high standard, despite the repressive policy of the British administration and published critical comments on Indian Government’s policies and actions by the educated Indian public. Thus, the press united the policies of the government. Among the most eminent writers who were the product of the new age and who decisively influenced Indian’s political thought were Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Keshav Chandra Sen, Hem Chandra, and Rabindra Nath Tagore. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s single song Bande Mataram which was sung by the people as a national anthem and for which they were kicked and imprisoned by the Britishers, played a great part in bringing the people together against British rule. Lord Lytton’s misdeeds created a great stir in Indian. The Indian press launched a blistering attack on his costly first Afghan war. So he gagged the press by passing Vernacular press Act which imposed discriminatory restrictions on the vernacular newspapers. “His very costly Delhi durbar in the background of south Indian’s acute famine, his abolition of import duties on cotton for the satisfaction of the Lancashire industry and his arms act which forbade Indians alone from carrying arms without a licenses all these outraged the public opinion.”25

2.11 Ilbert Bill controversy:

Lord Ripon introduced the Ilbert Bills which permitted the Indian judges to try the Europeans. This sparked off the political agitation of the European community which hurled open abuses at the Governor-General, throwing all property and moderation to the winds. Ultimately, lord Ripon was constrained to withdraw the Ilbert Bill. Thus, the British were obsessed with the idea of racial superiority. The Ilbert Bill controversy constituted a serious affront to the Indian judges and it was a
clear violation of the principle of equality. There was a lot of unemployment of India’s educated people. All the key posts were given to the Europeans while Indians were no better than the helots of the land, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. The government discriminated against educated Indians in every branch of Indian civil service. In 1877, Sir Surendranath Banerjee launched an agitation against this step. He went on a grand lecture tour of northern India from Banaras to Rawalpindi to arouse public opinion in favour of raising the age limit for the Indian civil service examinations and for holding these examinations simultaneously in England and India. In 1878, he undertook a similar tour of south India. “An All India memorial to be presented on this issue to the British parliament was prepared and Lal Mohan Ghose, a brilliant orator, was sent to England to acquaint the British public and the members of British parliament with the grievances of India.”

The British policy of economic exploitation and administrative centralization resulted in the progressive decline of autonomous village communities. The oppression of landlords and a complicated administrative system made the life of the peasants more miserable than before. Added to this was the ever-increasing land revenue, its commutation in cash and its collection at harvest time, all of which told heavily on the precarious financial of the peasants.

On the other hand, there was the heavy drain of money from India. This drain can be well imagined from the parliamentary report of 1773 which said that, at that time, about one-third of the total revenue of Bengal was sent to England every year. This was in addition to the amount of one lakh pounds which every year went to subsidies the company’s trade in China. The British were bleeding Indian while the Indians naturally harbored a deep resentment against the opulent English community and the appalling gap between affluence of the English community and the subject poverty of Indians which was so disquieting and glaring that the people rose above their petty differences and became involved in the exalted filed of freedom struggle.

Commenting on the miserable lot of Indians, Lal Murlidhar of Punjab had aptly remarked thus what fair play can there be between impoverished India and the bloated capitalist England? What are all these chandeliers and lamps and European-made chairs and tables, and samrat clothes and hats and English coats and bonnets and frocks and silver mounted canes all the luxurious fittings of your houses but the trophies of Indian misery, mementoes of India’s starvation? In the same vein, “Sir
William Hunter remarked thus in 1880 “There remained forty million of Indians who go through life on insufficient food”. Lord Salisbury, secretary of state for India, admitted in 1875 that British rule was bleeding Indian white. The net result of all these factors was that there was great misery in India. The disquieting frequency in the occurrence of famines further aggravated the situation and the people grew restive. At this junction, the organization of Indian national congress was a godsend for the people who at least got a forum for the ventilation of their grievances and ultimately, under its leadership, Indians attend the long cherished goal of independence for India.

2.12 Associations prior to Indian National Congress:

The earliest political organization to be formed was The Landholders’ Society founded in 1838. The Zamindari Association, which was later renamed Landholders’ Society, was established in 1838 by Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Radhakanta Deb, Ramkamal Sen and Bhabani Charan Mitra. It has been described as the first organisation of Bengal with distinct political object. The society virtually became defunct after the death of Dwarkanath Tagore. Its aim was to safeguard the interest of the landlords of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Bengal British India Society was formed in 1843 to protest the interests of general public. Both these organizations merged in 1851 to form the British India Association of Bengal. These organizations were provincial in character and lacked national outlook.

Similar associations such as the Bombay Association and the Madras Native Association were formed in 1852. In Bombay and Madras, there were two important first political organizations. The first political organization of the Bombay Presidency was the Bombay Association which was started on 26 August 1852, to vent public grievances to the British. The first organization in the Madras Presidency to vent for the rights of Indians was the Madras Native Association which was established by Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty in 1849. However, both of them were essentially local in character and so got disbanded in a few years. The aim of these associations were to make reform in the administration and to encourage educational activities. All these associations were local in character. They were dominated by wealthy aristocratic In-
dians who co-operated with the British. Educated people and the Indian masses looked for some organization which would foster Indian interests.

Dadabhai Navroji, the Grand old man of India, made England the centre of his political activities. In 1866, he organized the East India Association in London. He thought that the British were basically just and fair. Through his association, he wanted to make them conscious of the grievances of Indian people so that they could find a remedy for their ills. Later he opened branches in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Dadabhai Navroji was one of the first popular leaders in India. He was an economic thinker. That is why he declared that the single cause for India’s poverty was the faulty economic policies followed by the British in India.

In 1870, the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was founded by the Nationalists of Poona under the leadership of Justice Ranade. Its objective was to arouse public opinion and focus the attention of the Government to economic hardships of the people. Sisir Kumar Ghose along with a group of progressive leaders, founded the India League in 1875 in Bengal. In 1875, the Indian League was founded because prominent political leaders felt that they needed an All India organization to promote a sense of nationalism among the people. It merged with the Indian association in 1876.

The Indian Association of Calcutta was founded in 1876 by Surendra Nath Banerjee. It was the first organized political party to express Indian disillusionment with British administration. Its main objectives were to create public opinion on political matters and to evolve a common political program. Among other things, its chief demands were: (a) reform of the Indian Civil Service examination; (b) repeal of the Arms Act; (c) repeal of the Vernacular Press Act and (d) protection of the rights of the tenants against landholders and British planters. Surendra Nath Banerjee made an extensive tour of the country. He received a tumultuous welcome wherever he went and his brilliant speeches criticizing the Government roused considerable political consciousness. Encouraged by the response he received in different parts of the country, Surendra Nath Banerjee conceived the idea of an All-India National Conference. This Conference met in Calcutta in December 1883, and it was attended by representatives from all parts of India. This was the first political organization of an All-India character.
"The Congress was founded by Indian and British members of the Theosophical Society movement, most notably A.O. Hume." It has been suggested that the idea was originally conceived in a private meeting of seventeen men after a Theosophical Convention held at Madras in December 1884. "Hume took the initiative, and it was in March 1885 that the first notice was issued convening the first Indian National Union to meet at Poona the following December." Founded in 1885 with the objective of obtaining a greater share in government for educated Indians, the Indian National Congress was initially not opposed to British rule.

The Congress met once a year during December. Indeed, it was a Scotsman, Allan Octavian Hume, who brought about its first meeting in Bombay, with the approval of Lord Dufferin, the then-Viceroy. Womesh Chandra Banerjee was the first President of the INC. The first meeting was scheduled to be held in Pune, but due to a plague outbreak there, the meeting was later shifted to Bombay. The first session of the INC was held from 28–31 December 1885, and was attended by 72 delegates. Within a few years, the demands of the INC became more radical in the face of constant opposition from the government, and the party became very active in the independence movement. By 1907 the party was split into two halves the Garam Dal (literally hot faction) of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and the Naram Dal (literally soft faction) of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, or Moderates distinguished by their attitude towards the British.

From its foundation on 28 December 1885 until the time of independence of India on August 15, 1947, the Indian National Congress was the largest and most prominent Indian public organization, and central and defining influence of the Indian Independence Movement. Although initially and primarily a political body, the Congress transformed itself into a national vehicle for social reform and human upliftment. "The Congress was the strongest foundation and defining influence of modern Indian nationalism."

A.O. Hume embarked on an endeavor to get an organization started by reaching-out to selected alumni of the University of Calcutta, writing in his 1883 letter that, "Every nation secures precisely as good a Government as it merits." If you picked men, the most highly educated of the nation cannot scorning personal ease and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration, a larger share in the management
of your own affairs, then we your friends, are wrong and our adversaries right, then Lord Ripon's noble aspirations for your good fruitless and visionary then at present at any rate all “hopes of progress are at an end and India truly neither desires nor deserves any better Government than she enjoys.”

In May 1885, Hume secured the Viceroy's approval to create an Indian National Union, which would be affiliated with the government and act as a platform to voice Indian public opinion. On 12 October 1885, Hume and a group of educated Indians also published an appeal from the People of India to the electors of Great Britain and Ireland to ask British voters in 1885 British general election to help support candidates sympathetic to Indian public opinion, which included opposition to the levying of taxes on India to finance the “British Indian campaigns in Afghanistan and support for legislative reform in India.” The appeal was a failure, and was interpreted by many Indians as "a rude shock, but a true realization that they had to fight their battles alone." On 28 December 1885, the Indian National Congress was founded at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Bombay, with 72 delegates in attendance. “Hume assumed office as the General Secretary, and Womesh Chandra Banerjee of Calcutta was elected President.” Besides Hume, two additional British members both Scottish civil servants were members of the founding group, William Wedderburn and Justice later, Sir John Jardine. “The other members were mostly Hindus from the Bombay and Madras Presidencies.”

Though there has been discussion over the fact that the Congress was founded by a retired civil servant and not by Indians G.K. Gokhale with his characteristic modesty and political wisdom, stated this explicitly in 1913 “No Indian could have started the Indian National Congress if an Indian had come forward to start such a movement embracing all Indians, the officials in India would not have allowed the movement to come into existence. If the founder of the Congress had not been an Englishman and a distinguished ex-official, such was the distrust of political agitation in those days that the authorities would have at once found some way or the other to suppress the movement”

Muslim community leaders, like the prominent educationalist Sayeed Ahmed Khan viewed the Congress negatively, owing to its membership being dominated by Hindus. The Orthodox Hindu community and religious leaders were also averse, seeing the Congress as supportive of Western cultural invasion. The ordinary people
of India were not informed or concerned of its existence on the whole, for the Congress never attempted to address the issues of poverty, lack of health care, social oppression and the prejudiced negligence of the people's concerns by British authorities. The perception of bodies like the Congress was that of an belief, then educated and wealthy people's institution. This trend was personified by Dadabhai Navroji, considered by many as the eldest Indian statesman. Navroji went as far as contesting, successfully, an election to the British House of Commons, becoming its first Indian member. That he was aided in his campaign by young, aspiring Indian student activities like Muhammad Ali Jinnah, describes where the imagination of the new Indian generation lay. The Moderates, led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Navroji held firm to calls for negotiations and political dialogue. Gokhale criticized Tilak for encouraging acts of violence and disorder. But the Congress of 1906 did not have public membership, and thus Tilak and his supporters were forced to leave the party.

2.13 The National Congress and Early Political Literature:

Political activity in India has been marked a beginning and very rapid development. For the first thirty or forty years after the decision to base higher education on occidental rather than on oriental literature, educated Indians were engaged in absorbing the new ideas. The first effects of the impact were noticeable in the religious field, causing the formation and growth of new sects, accompanied by a revival of orthodoxy. Higher education was so largely in the hands of missionaries that the earliest activities were directed towards examination of faith and consequently led to movements for social reform. In Bengal the Brahmo Samaj founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a theistic sect, the members of which supported the abolition of sati. While it was under the leadership of the Debendranath Tagore a schism occurred. A young minister of the sect, Keshub Chundra Sen was dismissed and founded new society, the main question dispute being the toleration of “Hindu usages and customs which appeared innocent.”

Members of this pressed on radical social reforms in regard to marriage, female education and temperance. From ethics and social improvement the step of political activity was short. Works by the English liberals provided inspiration, and the affairs if Italy, and above all, the career and writings of Mazzini, quickened the imagination of young Bengalis, already
enlivened by religious and ethical excitement. At Calcutta there already existed a
British Indian Association, chiefly supported by the landed proprietors to look after
their interests. “Sir S.N. Banerjee, who joined the Indian Civil Service in 1871 and
was dismissed a year later”39, took up educational work and devoted much time to his
students outside the class-rooms.

In his own words his aim was “to kindle in the young the beginnings of public
spirit and to inspire them with a patriotic ardour, fruitful of good to them and to the
motherland”40 and his method was to lecture on Indian unity, the study of history, “the
lives of Mazzini and Chatianya,”41 and higher education in English. Pursuing his
desire to awaken in the middle classes a more lively interest in public affairs, he
helped to found the Indian Association in 1876. Within a year an opportunity came
for extending political agitation in other parts of India. The reduction of the age limit
for entrance to the Indian Civil Service was regarded as injustice to Indian candidates
and delegates were sent first to Northern India, and later to the west and south, to
arouse interest in a memorial praying for the raising of the limit and for simultaneous
examinations, and to establish branch associations. “Accompanying these legitimate
movements was an undercurrent of dislike and antagonism which showed itself by
scurrilous writings in the vernacular press charging the British government with
injustice and tyranny.”42 In April, 1878, an act was passed for the better control of the
vernacular press, and this measure and an act to limit the possession of arms led to
further activity in criticism of the government and discontent with the opportunities
available to Indians of controlling the direction of public affairs, as well as of
obtaining posts in the public service.

A change in the government in England led to the resignation of Lord Lytton,
who was succeeded as Viceroy by Lord Ripon in 1880. His early announcement of
projected advance in local self-government was welcomed by the Indian Association,
and his repeal of the Press Act which had been condemned at the time of its passing
by Mr. Gladstone, greatly increased his popularity. During his term of office racial
conflict was embittered by a controversy over limits to the jurisdiction exercised by
Indian magistrates in cases where a European was charged with an offence. “Lord
Ripon’s government introduced a bill”43 to extend this jurisdiction and a strong
agitation was raised by non-official Europeans, especially the indigo and tea planters,
who resided on estates often remote from the headquarters of police and magistrates and were particularly liable to be the subject of groundless or exaggerated charges.

A counter resentment was stirred up in the minds of the Indian middle classes, who felt that a racial privilege was being perpetuated, and that a slur was cast on Indian magistrates. Sir Henry Cotton, who at the time was an official in Bengal, and who after his retirement joined the Indian National Congress, was of opinion that this agitation and the protests by Europeans against the policy of Lord Ripon tended more strongly to unite Indian national opinions than legislation on “the lines of the original bill would have done.”

In 1885 the national conference met again at Calcutta, with delegates from Northern India as well as from Bengal, and simultaneously the national union held a series of meeting at Poona which constituted the first Indian National Congress, and absorbed the earlier institution. The promoters of both these gathering made representative government their main objective, and announced their hopes that the conference would develop into India parliaments. A congress resolution asked for a considerable proportion of elected members in the existing councils, for the creation of new councils in the North-Western Province and Oudh in Punjab, for the right to discuss the budget and put interpellations on all branches of the administration, and for the formation of standing committee of the House of Commons to consider protests of by legislative councils if they were over ruled by the executive. The Congress also desired to abolish the council of the secretary of state to have simultaneous examinations in India and England to admit candidates for the Indian Civil Service, the age being raised, and to limit military expenditure. It deprecated the annexation of Upper Burma on the score of expense, and suggested that, if annexation took place, the whole of Burma should be administered separately from India, as a crown colony.

The Meeting stimulated further political activity and organization, and was repeated annually. An attempt was made to give it a representative character, but for some years the delegates could be chosen by any association of any kind or indeed at any public meeting convened by anybody. A few Europeans became members, but their examples as not had many followers. Muslims joined only in small numbers, and their sympathy as a community with the Congress weakened by a lecture delivered at Lucknow by the late Sir Sayeed Ahmad in December, 1887, while “the Congress was
meeting in Madras. Sir Sayeed, after a long career in the judicial service of the United Province, had devoted himself to promoting the study of English by Muslims, and had a nominated member of the imperial legislative council. He was entirely free from religious prejudice, and had indeed exerted himself to reduce it, but he mentioned that, in the conditions then existing in India, compliance with the demands made by the congress would injure the state. Competitive examinations, though suitable in English conditions, would in India lead to the selection of officials whose origin would make them in acceptable to the strongly conservative Indian with his pride in ancestry. Diversity of race and tradition created another problem, and domination by the Bengalis, who were likely to gain most of the posts, would not be submitted to Muslims and Rajputs with their more warlike traditions. The second Congress in 1886 had elaborated the previous scheme for representation in legislative Councils, asking that not less than half the members should be elected, and not more than a quarter nominated non-officials. Sir Sayyid pointed out that in any ordinary system the Muslims would be in a minority, and, even if special representation were given to them, their backwardness in education and there comparative poverty would place them at a disadvantage.

He asserted the loyalty of the Indian people and the comparative insignificance of those who wished the political power, and he questioned the authority of the Congress to criticize military expenditure. In a letter address he shrewdly doubted the willingness of Indian to tax them even if they had the power. Although the third congress elected a Muslim gentleman from Bombay as a president, Sir Sayyid’s advice was followed by most Muslims for twenty years, and was not appreciably affected by a resolution of the fourth congress that resolution should not be introduced for discussion if one community strongly objected, or be passed if such objections became apparent during discussion.

A change in Viceroy, Lord Dufferin having succeeded Lord Ripon in 1885, meant no reversal of the generally policy of meeting reasonable demands with a liberality confined only by restriction which those best fitted to judge held necessary in the view of all interests. Lord Dufferin had previous experience in the near East of the ways of Eastern autocracy, and in Canada of the positive of a constitutional governor general in a dominion feeling its way to responsible government. His natural inclination to liberal measures was tempered by the dangers of academic idealism
impressed on him as an Irish land-Lord, who had managed his own estates. “Only a year before he went to India he had drawn up a scheme” for associating the people more closely with the government in Egypt, which was in force for “twenty years” and had been copied by several constitution makers for India. After two years’ study of Indian conditions he recorded a minute which exhibits his insight into the real desires of the forward party, and his strategy regarding the method for meeting them. He desired to make a careful examination of the demands, to give quickly and with a gods grace whatever it may be possible or desirable to accord; to announce that the concessions must be accepted as a final settlement of the Indian system for the next ten to fifteen years; and to forbid “mass meetings and incendiary speech.”

Soon after his arrival he had felt the desirability of reform in the legislative councils, and he advocated change which would give the viceroy the advantage of relying more largely upon the experience and counsels of Indian coadjutors, while the possibility of their having a party behind them would relive the Government of India from its existing isolation. Another period of two years passed before definite proposals were sent home (November, 1888), in a dispatch accompanied by a minute of Lord Dufferin. He had described in 1886 the risks to be incurred by introducing a representative element into the Government of Indian, but was prepared to liberalize at all events the provinces legislative councils, one of which, in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, was created in that year, supported by a committee of his executive council Lord Dufferin described his scheme as a plan for the enlargement of our provincial councils, for the enhancement of their status, the multiplication of their functions, the partial introduction into term of the elective principle, and “the liberalization of their general character as political institutions.” At the same time he deprecated the inference that the government of India were contemplating in the provinces, an approach to English parliamentary government and an English constitutional system. The Indian executive was directly responsible to the sovereign and to the British parliament and must remain so while Great Britain continued to be the paramount administrative power in India. Describing the British system of responsible government, he pointed out that it could not be introduced into an Indian province because the governor, if a vote was carried against him in his legislative council, could not call upon the dissentients to take the place of his own official advisers, who are nominated by the queen-empress on the advice of the secretary of
state. In proposing to liberalize the government therefore, he insisted the necessity of leaving in the hands of each provincial government the ultimate decision upon all important questions and the paramount control of its own policy, by arranging that nominated members of legislative councils should outnumber the elected members, and that the governor could over-rule his council when he felt it necessary to do so. He foresaw that even with these limited powers the elected members would be able to influence the policy of the government, and he felt that their presence in the council would be beneficial by enlarging the field of public discussion, while they would consider themselves responsible to enlightened and increasing sections of their own countrymen. The Conservation government in England declined to agree to any system of election on the ground that “it would be unwise to introduce a fundamental change of this description without much more evidence in its favour than was forthcoming”\textsuperscript{53}. Lord Lansdowne, who had now succeeded Lord Dufferin, supported his recommendation, and asked that at least the Government of India might be empowered to make rules for the appointment of additional members by nomination or otherwise, to include election where conditions justified its use. A bill was prepared in 1889, but not introduced till February, 1890 House of Lords, “From the papers which were simultaneously presented”\textsuperscript{54} all reference to a system of election was completely excluded, and the only portions of Lord Dufferin’s minute, a state paper of the highest value, which appeared in them were “his recommendations that the annual budget should be presented and discussed,”\textsuperscript{55} and that non-official members should be allowed to ask questions. Lord Cross accepted these and also prepared to increase considerably the number of nominated members in the councils, and “the bill provided for all these matters.”\textsuperscript{56}

While the proposals met with no opposition in the House of Lords, the government was strongly pressed to allow some method of election, and to publish in full the dispatches and minutes. Lord Ripon asserted that Lord Dufferin’s minute had been surreptitiously printed in India, and it was known that he favoured election. Lord Northbrook spoke eloquently in favour of it, while at the same time deprecating any approach to the British system: “India is a long way from having what it called a responsible government, namely an administration composed of men who possess a majority in the representative assembly”.\textsuperscript{57} He was not opposed to a body like the Congress, though he admitted that certain Members were circulating papers which
might be dangerous, and he deprecated the scheme of election which it had advocated. All those who supported him were agreed that details must be worked out in India owing to the complexity and variety of Indian conditions, and there was a disposition to avoid motions on the budget as leading, to irresponsible discussion. Lord Salisbury laid stress on the deep responsibility on any government that introduced the elective principle as an effective agent in the government of India. He was a careful to make no rash prophecy about the future and said: “It may be I do not desire to question it that it is to be the ultimate destiny of India”. But he pointed out that the idea was foreign to the East and its adoption had so far produced no tangible results in Turkey or Egypt.

Representative government appeared to him admirable only when all those who were represented desired much the same thing and had interests which were tolerably analogous. Echoing perhaps the addresses of Sir Sayeed Ahmad, he laid stress on the radical and acrid difference between Hindu and Muhammad an, and he poured ridicule on the idea that a constituency for representing various communities like Panjabis and Rajputs or even the ryots could be found in a body elected for marking streets and drains. He held that the chief need was for a fuller representation of all interests. Though the bill quickly passed through the House of Lords, it was never taken up in the Commons. Irish affairs, while they had been an incentive to the Indian politicians and their supporters in England, proved a deterrent to the government. Mr Bradlaugh had already introduced one Home Rule bill for India, at the request of the Indian National Congress of 1889. It provided an elaborate scheme of electoral colleges, with proportional representation, and a large number of elected members. After the withdrawal (5 August, 1890) of the government measure, he produced a modest bill, leaving details to be settled by rules. Mr. Balfour’s Land Purchase Bill for Ireland was occupying public time, and, though the Indian Councils bill was revived early in 1891, the certainty of great pressure to make it more liberal deterred the government, and it was again dropped after several postponements, causing great disappointment in India. The president of the congress meeting of that year explained the dropping of the bill as due to the death of Mr. Bradlaugh.

By a strange coincidence it fell to Mr. G. N. Curzon to conduct this bill through the House of Commons, as under-secretary of state, and a quarter of a century later to draw up the final draft of a pronouncement which led to the tentative
introduction of responsible government in Indian province. “Like other spokesmen of the government he described the bill as in no sense creating a parliamentary system.”

No objection was raised to the proposals for discussion of the budget, and the right to put questions. The chief controversy was on the matter of election, and an amendment was moved by “Mr. Schwann to declare that no system would be satisfactory which did not embody this.”

In committee he elaborated details which would have had the effect of fixing the number of elected members at between one-third and a half of the total membership, with “election by ballot and not less than two percent of the population enfranchised.”

Though the government was not prepared to bind itself to such a definite scheme, it was clearly understood that the rules to be framed would recognize the principle of election. Sir R. Temple, who had wide official experience in India and had been governor of Bombay, suggested that the sixteen additional members of the viceroy’s council should be chosen by the towns in which an elective system was in force for “municipal purposes,” and Mr. Curzon indicated as bodies which would be suitable as constituencies the British India Association (which Lord Ripon had already use to suggest addition members for the discussion on the Bengal Tenancy Act), the Chambers of commerce, the corporation of great cities universities and various great religious association, Mr. Gladstone was satisfy that it was intended to have selection after election and deprecated a division on Mr. Schwann’s proposal to prescribe this in the bill has it was not the business of parliament to devise machinery for the purpose of Indian government thought it was right to give those who represented her Majesty in Indian ample information has to what “parliament believed to be the sound principles of government.”

The premature claims of the congress to be accepted as representative were criticized by Mr. Curzon in picturesque and illuminating fashion you can as little judge of the feeling and inspiration of the people of India from the plans and proposals of the congress party as you can judge of the physical configuration of a country which is wrapped in the mists of early morning, but a few of whose topmost peaks have been touched by the rising sun. Sir Richard Temple, with a more intimate knowledge of individual members, gave a warning against entrusting more political powers to them until they showed “greater moderation, greater sobriety of thought, greater robustness of intelligence, greater self control all which qualities build up the national character.”

The bill having been passed without amendment 26 May, 1892, the Government of India were informed that parliament intended that: Where corporations have been
established with definite powers, upon a recognized administrative basis, or where associations have been formed upon a substantial community of legitimate interests, professional, commercial or territorial the governor-general and the local governors might find convenience and advantage in consulting from time to time such bodies, and in entertaining at their discretion an expression of their views and recommendations with regard to the selection of members in whose qualification they might be display to confide. The possible number of additional members was increased under the act from twelve to sixteen in the imperial council, was more than doubled in Bombay and Madras, and was raised by 70 percent. In Bengal and the North Western Province and Oudh. “By the regulations it was provided that some of these should be nominated after recommendation by certain bodies.”

of the ten non-official members of the imperial council, four were to be chosen by the non-official additional members of the councils in Madras, Bombay, Bengal and the North-Western Province and Oudh, and one by the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce, the remaining seats being reserved for the appointment of experts on special subject of legislation and the proper representation by nomination of difference classes of the community. For the provincial councils the method of selection varied according to local conditions. Each of the three presidency cities (Madras, Bombay and Calcutta) nominated a member, and there were representatives of the trading associations and senates of universities. Representatives of the district boards and smaller municipal boards met in an electoral college to select other nominees. The scale of representatives of municipal boards was based on the income of the municipality in Bengal and on the population in Bombay, While in the North Western Province and Oudh each municipal board sent only one representative to the Electoral College. Thus in Bengal the influence of the towns outweighed that of the countryside. In Bombay the bigger landowners also had a right of nomination. Although the act was criticized by the Congress of 1892 for not containing an explicit recognition of the right to elect, the regulations made under it had the practical effect of instituting an elective system, and the other change it made indicated that the councils were no longer to remain, as they had been under the act of 1861, bodies which met only when legislative business was no hand. In the thirty years which had elapsed since they were constituted it had been possible only on sixteen occasions to discuss financial matters, while now the budget was to be presented annually whether taxation was
being altered or not. And the right to put questions was a definite enlargement of the powers of members.

With the foundation of the Indian National Congress, the national movement grew slowly but steadily. In the words of Bipin Chandra, The year 1885 marked a turning point in this process, for that was the year the political Indians, the modern intellectual interested in politics, who no longer saw themselves of as spokesmen a narrow group interests, but as representatives of national interest visa-a visa foreign rule, as a national party saw their efforts bear fruit. The all-India nationalist body that they brought into being was to be platform, the organizer, the headquarters, the symbol of the new national spirit and politics.

2.14 Views of Early Nationalists

Nationalist Sentiments were sown by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the early half of the 19th century. The Second half of the 19th century witnessed the formation of various political associations which were born out of nationalism and political consciousness. Such organizations emerged in different parts of the country but they had a common objective: that is, to unite the people for a Common cause and to make them conscious of the ills prevalent in the British rule. These organizations were local in character. However, they played an important role in the foundation of the Indian National Congress. Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj. He preached to the people of India the lesson of self-confidence and faith in their future. He reminded them of the glory and greatness of India’s past and exhorted his audiences to leave no stone unturned to make India great. He raised the slogan of “Back to the Vedas.” He declared that good government was no substitute for self-government and the rule of India by the Indians was to be preferred in every way. It is well known that many leaders of the Arya Samaj like Lala Lajpat Rai played a glorious part in the nationalist movement of the country. “Olcott has rightly pointed out that Swami Dayanand exercised great nationalizing influence upon his followers”. The View of Annie Besant was “It was Dayanand Saraswati who proclaimed India for the Indians.”

Ramakrishna Paramhans exercised great influence on his followers. He has rightly been given the credit of assisting the growth of national consciousness among
the people. The Ramakrishna Math and Mission have in many ways helped the cause of self-consciousness among the people of India. Swami Vivekananda was the pupil of Ramakrishna Paramhans and he in his own way helped the future of the country. About Swami Vivekananda, Niveditta says: “The queen of his adoration was the motherland.” Like Swami Dayanand, Swami Vivekananda taught India self-confidence and self-reliance. The founders of the Theosophical Society of India and Mrs. Annie Besant made their own contribution towards the cause of the national awakening. They asked the people of Indian to realize that they were not so bad as the Christian missionaries painted them to be. They were as good as many advanced people of the world were. They asked the people of India to look to their glorious past and try to bring back the same.

They thought people to have faith in themselves. The Indian press and literature, both English and Vernacular, also aroused national consciousness. Great was the influence of newspapers like the Indian Mirror, the Bombay Samachar, the Hindu Patriot, The Amrita Bazar Patrika, The Hindu, The Kesari, The Bengalee, The Hurkura, The Bengal Public Opinion, The Sanjibam, The Sadharm, The Hitavadi, The Rast Goftar, The Indu Prakash, The Standard, The Swadeshmitran, The Herald of Bihar, The Advocate of Lucknow etc on the political life of the country. The growth of the Indian press was phenomenal and by 1875, there were no less than 478 newspapers in the country.

Without them, it would have been impossible to create an atmosphere in which the people of Indian could be made to think of their common problems and common grievance. Undoubtedly, The Indian Press played a meritorious role in not only creating a national awakening in the country but also guiding the people of India throughout their struggle for independence. It goes without saying that Indian Press also paid a part of the price for the freedom of the country. The Indian press was the target of the British Government from the very beginning but it boldly and fearlessly faced the challenge. The writing of Dinbandu Hemchandra Banerjee, Navin Chandra Sen, R.C Dutt, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee affected the minds of the people of India. Through his writing, Rabindra Nath Tagore appealed to the higher sentiments of the people of India to work for the glory of their country. He tried to raise the moral tone of his countrymen. The Anand Math of Bankim Chandra Chatterji Which embodied the patriotic song Bande Mataram (Hail to the Mother),
Aurobindo Ghose wrote in 1907. “As a poet and a stylist, Bankim did a work of supreme national importance, not for the whole of India but for Bengal which was destined to lead India and be in the Vanguard of national development.” Bankim’s Bengalee nationalism gave to the rest of India the prototype of the state of mind which inspired many subsequent national endeavours. In the words of Aurobindo Ghose, “It is not till the Motherland reveals herself to the eye of the mind as something more than a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, it is not till she takes shape as a great Divine and Maternal power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart that these petty Fears and hopes vanish in the All-absorbing passion for the Mother and her service, and the patriotism that works miracles and saves a doomed nation is born.” A critical study of the writings of Bankim shows how, he wanted his countrymen to make supreme sacrifices for the nation could be served. There is one particular thing about Bankim Chandra Chatterji which must be noticed here. He did not believe that the message of nationalism could reach the masses through the English languages. He wanted the vernacular languages to be used to reach the people and this is exactly what was done later on under Mahatma Gandhi with great success. To quote Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, “We are strangely apt to forget that it is only through Bengali that the people can be moved. We preach in English and hear in English and write in English perfectly forgetful that the great masses whom it is absolutely necessary to move in order to carry out any great project of social reform, remain stone-deaf to all our eloquence.” Rabindra Nath Tagore and D.L. Roy gave us a lot of national poetry, songs and music. The writing of the Indian patriots brought about a revolution in the minds of the Indian and those revolutionary minds were responsible for the growth of nationalism in the country. Rightly or wrongly, the Hindus had a very high opinion of themselves. There was a lot of discontentment in the country on account of many causes and that discontentment gave a stimulus to the growth of the nationalist movement in the country. The masses suffered from economic troubles. The middle classes suffered from the bugbear of unemployment. All the intelligent Indians felt and bewailed the economic exploitation of their country. The British officials working in India were a very heavy drain on the India resources. The economic system of India was adjusted to the needs of the people of England. The interests of the Indians were completely ignored. Blunt rightly points out that the voice of Indian finance was that the Finance Minister of India looked
more to the interests of Great Britain than to those of India. All tariff duties were abolished in 1879 with a view to benefit Lancashire. In 1895, an excise duty of 5 per cent was imposed on Indian cotton goods with a view to countervail similar tariff on Lancashire goods imposed in the interests of revenue. The value of the Indian rupee in terms of the English pound was fixed in such a way as to help imports from England and discourage exports from India. Sir Henry Cotton condemned the economic exploitation of India and the consequent miseries of the people of the country. The Indians resented the attitude of the Englishmen towards them. The Europeans in India were arrogant. They had a very low opinion of the India character.

They took pleasure in calling the Indians the ridiculed the Indian black heathens “worshipping stocks and stones and swinging themselves on bamboo trees like bees.” 74 The European master regarded the Indians as “the helots of the land, the hewer of wood and the drawers of water.” 75 The life of an India was estimated by most Europeans as no higher than that of a dog. In 1819, Sir Thomas Munro confessed that although the foreign conquerors have treated the natives with violence and cruelty, but they had not treated them with so much scorn as the Englishmen had done. Setonkerr, a Secretary to the Government of India, spoke of the “cherished conviction which was shared by every Englishman in India, from the highest to the lowest the conviction in every man that he belongs to a race which God has destined to govern and subdue.” 76 Field Marshall Lord Roberts, who at one time was the Commander-in-Chief of Indian, did not regard even the bravest of the Indian soldiers as equal to British officer. Traveling in the upper class railway compartments was not for the Indians. Even the ruling Chiefs while traveling in the upper classes were bullied into unlacing the books and shampooing the weary legs of the Sahibs just back from hunting excursions. Assaults on Indians by Europeans were frequent.

As the Europeans were tried by juries consisting of Europeans, They very often escaped scot free. The administration of criminal justice in such cases was “a judicial scandal.” 77 There was the long succession of murders and brutalities perpetrated by Englishmen upon the Indians which either went unpunished or in which, at the demand of the whole European community, only a small penalty was exacted. “This scandal, of which there were many flagrant instances in the sixties, had continued till recent times.” 78 . Sir Theodore Morrison, a member of the Indian Civil Service, wrote thus in 1890 “It is an ugly fact which it is no use to disguise that the
murder of the natives by Englishmen is no infrequent occurrence.” The Europeans have certain maxims about the Indians. “The first was that the life of one European was worth those of many Indians. The second was that only things that an oriental understood were fear. The third was that England had been forced to lose many lives and spend many millions to hold India and did she not meant some more substantial recompense that the privilege of governing India in a spirit of wisdom and unselfishness?” Such an attitude was bound to create a lot of bitterness between the back of the ruled.

Edward Thompson observes: “Right at the back of the mind of many an Indian, the Mutiny fits as he talks with an Englishman-an unavenged, an unappeased ghost”.

The free trade policy of the Government of India stood in the way of the development of the country. Lala Murlidhar of the Punjab observed thus in 1891: “Free trade, fair-play between nations, how I hate the sham? What fair-play in trade can there be between impoverished India and the bloated capitalist England?” Again, “What are all these chandeliers and lamps and European-made chairs and tables and smart clothes and hats, English coat and bonnets and frocks and silver-mounted canes and all the luxuries fittings of your house but trophies of India’s misery, mementoes of India’s starvation?” D. E. Wacha points out that the economic condition of the people of India deteriorated under the British rule. 40 millions of Indians had to be contented with one meal a day. That was due to the tribute exacted by England from the starving peasantry and “exported to fructify there and swell still further the unparalleled wealth of these distant isles.”

Before the outbreak of the Mutiny in 1857, there were many Englishmen who honestly believed and worked for the good of India. However, during the Mutiny days a lot of blood was shed on both sides. The Europeans wreaked their vengeance on the helpless and innocent Indians after the Mutiny. It was this policy of oppression and repression which added to the discontent of the country. The Indians were completely excluded from the legislatures in the country and also from the key-posts in the administration. Zacharias says: “The light of distrust had begun to full upon England’s relations with India; these people had mutinied once and committed dreadful atrocities-how could one trust them not to plan further sedition” Another writer points out that “the old sympathy with India changed to a feeling of
repugnance the old spirit of content with life and work in India, the old inclination to regard things in an Indian rather than an English light, gave place to a reluctance to stay in Indian longer than needs must, and a disposition to judge things by an emphatically English standard.”

The English killed their prisoners without trial and in a manner held by all Indians to be the height of barbarity. They massacred thousands of the civil population.

“General Neil gave orders to his lieutenants that certain villages were marked out for destruction and all the men inhabiting them were slaughtered and the indiscriminate burning of their inhabitants occurred wherever our English armies moved.”

The English language played a very important part in the growth of nationalism in the country. It acted as the lingua franca of the intelligentsia of India. Without the common medium of the English language, it would have been out of the question for the Madras is Bengalese and the Punjabis to sit at one table and discuss the common problems facing the country. The English language also made the Indians inheritors of a Great literature which was full of great ideas and ideals. “We had come to know England through her glorious literature, which had brought new inspiration into our young lives.”

The English authors, whose books and poems we studied, were full of love for humanity, justice, and freedom. This great literary tradition had come down to us from the revolutionary period. We felt its power in Wordsworth’s sonnets about human liberty. We glorified in it even in the immature production of Shelley written in the enthusiasm of his youth when he declared against the tyranny of priest craft and preached the overthrow of all despotism through the power of suffering bravely endured.

The ground was ready and the acts of omission and commission in the time of Lord Lytton accelerated the nationalist movement. The period from 1876 to 1884 has been called the seed time of Indian nationalism. Lord Lytton held his famous Delhi Durbar in 1877 at a time when the people of South India were suffering terribly from the callousness of Lytton. An appropriate comment was made in these words: “Nero was fiddling while Rome was burning.”

The second afghan war cost the Indian treasury a lot. No wonder, the Indians criticized Lytton passed the notorious Vernacular Press Act in 1878. The discriminatory provision of this Act was universally condemned by the people belonging to all walks of life. Sir Erskine Perry
points out that the Act was “a retrograde and ill-conceived measure injurious to the future progress of Indian.” It was called the Gagging Act. Lytton passed the Arms Act in 1878 which made an invidious distinction between the Indians and the Europeans. While the Europeans were allowed to keep arms freely, the Indians could not do so without a license. In the words of Surendra Nath Banerjee, the Arms Act “imposed upon was a badge of racial inferiority.” Such a measure was derogatory to the self-respect of the people of India. Lord Lytton removed the import duty on cotton manufactures with a view to help the British manufactures and thus was resented by the grievances of India, but before he could do so, the Ilbert controversy came to the fore.

The Ilbert Bill was a simple measure whose object was to put the Indian judges on the same footing as the European judges in dealing with all cases in Bengal Presidency. The necessity of this bill arose as the Indians who had joined the judicial service were rising in the ranks and that involved the possible trial of Europeans by an Indian judge without a jury. This was considered to be too much by the Europeans. A strong agitation was brought into existence by the Europeans who were not prepared to be tried by an Indian judge. Lord Ripon became the target of the agitation.

He was boycotted by the Europeans community. He was threatened to be kidnapped to England. Ultimately a compromise was arrived at which suited the Europeans. However, this set a wrong precedent. The flag of racialism was hoisted by the Europeans. The Indians realized that they could not expect any justice or fairplay from the Englishmen when their own interests were involved. Surendranath Banerjee observes: “No self-respecting Indian could sit idle under the fierce light of that revelation. It was a call to high patriotic duty to those who understood its significance.” Before the effect of the Ilbert bill controversy was over, the Indians had already organized themselves into the Indian National Congress founded in 1885.

On 26 August, 1852, the principal Hindus, Parsees, Mohammedans, Portuguese and Jews of Bombay met to consider “the desirableness of forming an association with a view to ascertaining the wants to the people of this country and the measures calculated to advance their welfare and of representing the same to the authorities in India or in England.” On that occasion, Dadabhai Navroji observed “Many ask what this Association means to do when it is well known that under our present government we enjoy an amount of liberty and prosperity rarely known to the
inhabitants of Indian under any native sovereign. In reply to this it is said we ought to demand redress for our grievances. But what are those grievances? There may be many or none, yet nobody here is at this moment prepared to give a decided replay; when we see that our Government is often ready to assist us in everything calculated to benefit us, we had better, than merely complain and grumble, point out in a becoming manner what our real wants are. We are subject to the English government, whose principal officers being drawn from England do not, except after a long residence and experience, become fully acquainted with our wants customs. Though they may always be anxious to do good to us, they are often led, by their imperfect acquaintance with the country, to adopt measures calculated to do more harm than good, while we, on the other hand, have no means preventing such occurrence. The most we can do is complain through the medium of the paper. In time all is hushed up and the people carry with them in not attending to their complaint. We have, therefore, to consider what we ought to do to secure our own good, and at the same time keep up a good understanding between us and Government.”

On the same occasion, the Chairman of the Bombay Association, Mr. Juggonathjee Sincerest sated: “Now as the British Government acknowledge their duty to be to effect whatever good they can for the benefit of this country, it is clear that their object and our object are one and the same. We are not in opposition to Government nor can Government be opposed to our objects, if it be shown that the good of the country is what we seek. The Government has the power to do much good and we have many a proofs. Witness this noble Institution which they do generously support and in which so many, who are now present, have received a most excellent education I might also refer to the recent appointment of so many Natives to the highly responsible situations of Deputy Collectors and Magistrates. The Government is willing, I am sure, to do what good they can. When they are correctly informed they will always be ready to act to the advantage of the people over whom they rule; but they are not in possession of full and correct information on all subjects connected with the welfare of the people. Besides their official sources of information Government will be glad to have other channels of information on which they can rely. An Association like the one now established will doubtless be listened to with attention in respect to all matters which of course natives have better means of their official situations.”

Within a few months if the formation of the Bombay Association, it submitted a petition to the British Parliament. Another petition was submitted a year later. In these petitions, the
Bombay Association criticized the existing machinery of the East India Company in India and asked for a system which was “less cumbersome, less exclusive, less secret, more directly responsible and infinitely more efficient and more acceptable to the governed.” The blessings of the British character rather than to the plan of government which is but little suited to the present state of India. The dual authority of the Court of Directors and the Board of Control was described as an anachronism. The authority exercised by the Calcutta authorities over the Governments of Bombay and Madras was criticized. The administration was condemned as being unduly expensive. The attitude of the English officials was described as despotic. It was contended that “the Europeans local officers scattered over the country at great distance from one another, and having large districts to attend to, far beyond their powers of supervision, and dependent to a very great degree on their subordinates, are compelled to dispose of the greater part of their business in a very imperfect manner; and their statements to Government—whether emanating from persons who it is known may be trusted or from those in whose accuracy Government are aware no confidence can be placed are on system accepted as equally trustworthy and the official vindication of the acts of government is one of first impressions.” It was alleged that as the work of the Government was done in secrecy, it tended “to engender and perpetuate amongst the young servants of Government an illiberal and despotic tone; to give full scope to the prejudices, the ignorance, and the self-sufficiency of all; to discourage progress; to discountenance all schemes of improvement emanating from independent and disinterested sources, and not within the views of the officers to whose department they are referred; and to cramp all agriculture or commercial energy all individual enterprise.” The Association protested against the “exorbitant salaries of many highly paid officers whose duties are so trifling or involve comparatively so little labour or responsibility that the advantage may be amalgamated with other offices or remunerated in a manner commensurate with the nature of the duties to be performed.” The foreign character of the administration was criticized and it was contended that “the time has arrived when the natives of Indian are entitle to a much larger share than the country and that the Councils of the Local Government should, in matters of general policy and legislation, be opened, so as to admit of respectable and intelligent natives taking a part in the discussion of matters of general interest to the country, as suggested by Lords Ellen borough, Elphinstone and others.” It was contended that there was absolutely no substance in
the contention that the Indians were not fit to hold positions of trust and responsibility. It was pointed out that “the decisions of the native judges were in every respect superior to those of the Europeans.”\(^{101}\) It was also pointed out that the declaration in the Charter Act of 1833 that no natives of Indian shall be disqualified from office by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent or colour, had remained a dead letter and nothing had been done to put the same into practice. It was also urged that the executive Government should always include “some persons trained and experienced in public offices a more extended knowledge and wider view than are to be expected from those Europeans gentlemen who have passed all their days from boyhood in the bad systems of this country and know no other by which to compare and improve them.”\(^{102}\) It is true that the petitions submitted by the Bombay Association did not have much effect immediately but they undoubtedly created a lot of stir in London. The result was that an India Re-form Society with John Bright as one of its associates, was set up to put forward the point of view of the Indians. During his visit to London, Dadabhai Navroji addressed many meeting of the newly formed East India Association. He was able to convince the English people that the educated Indians were not satisfied at all. He put a lot of emphasis on the exclusion of Indians from the higher services. To quote him, “Either the educated natives should have proper fields for their talents or education open to them in the rulers must make up their minds and candidly avow it, to rule the country with a rod of iron.”\(^{103}\) On his return to India in 1869, Dadabhai Navroji declared that the goal of all patriotic Indians was the attainment of a Parliament in Indian. He also urged the Indians to set up in England an organization to “fight the last and greatest battle of representations.”\(^{104}\)

2.15 Indian Press:

In 1868, Sir Kumar Ghosh started the Amrita Bazar Patrika. Through the instrument ability of this newspaper and even otherwise, he attacked all forms of government restrictions on civil liberties and the economic exploitation of Indian by Great Britain. He called upon the Government to solve the problem of unemployment among the educated classes. He demanded that the Indian Nation be given a democratic, representative government, specifically a Parliament on the lines of the British Parliament. In 1875, he founded the India League as a focal point for the district bodies after failing to persuade the British Indian Association to lower its
annual subscription from Rs.50. He fixed the annual subscription of the Indian League at Rs.5 which was well within the means of the educated middle classes of Bengal. The India League was the first political body in India which set up links with political groups outside Bengal. Sir Kumar Ghosh went to Bombay to create unity between the political organizations. Vasudeo Joshi had already founded in 1870 the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha which counted among its members of this Sabha were elected by the caste groups and other interests. It is true that the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was a major centre of Western Indians political activity for a few decades but it never assumed an all-Indian role.

The congress had been formed as an organization of educated persons like teachers, professors, lawyers, medical men and businessmen. Its main aim in the beginning was to get the Indians recruited in higher civil services in the British administration. It was then, a non-political association of Indians who wanted to get some concessions from the British rules. “The congress soon attracted wide membership and held its sessions annually in different cities to rouse public opinion in favour of its aims.”

The congress was a national organization representing the interests of the Indians irrespective of their caste, creed and communities. It united all people for achieving a common goal. It gave self-confidence and leadership to the people to fulfill their aspirations to shun the yoke of foreign rule. “It launched the freedom movement against the British in India.” It achieved its objective when India became independent on 15th August, 1947.

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