Chapter 1:
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Nationalism emerged in nineteenth century Europe, but it spread throughout the world in the twentieth century. Most of Europe’s nations were created only in the twentieth century, though the seeds for their emergence were sown in the previous century. The same century also saw the first instances of state-creation, where the clearly defined goal was to unify a nation under one state, as in Italy and Germany. The ideas of liberal nationalism, the oldest form of nationalism, were expressed most clearly by Giuseppe Mazzini, often thought of as the prophet of Italian unification. Mazzini’s nationalism fused a belief in the nation as a distinctive linguistic and cultural community with the principle of liberal republicanism. Nationalism may have been born in Europe, but it became worldwide phenomena thanks to imperialism. The experience of colonial rule helped to forge a sense of nationhood and a desire for national liberation amongst the people of Asia and Africa; and gave rise to a specifically anti-colonial form of nationalism. Many of the leaders of independence movements in these continents were western educated. It is therefore, not surprising that anti-colonial movements sometimes articulated their goals in the language of liberal nationalism, reminiscent of Mazzini and Wilson.

No political and historical event can be judged except against the backdrop of the historical situation prevailing at that time. Indian independence was the product of certain specific environment, and result of the impact of international linkage. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the British rule to the growth of Indian nationalism was the introduction of western education in India. Western education brought the Indians into touch with the works of great European thinkers and leaders. The knowledge of certain contemporary events and movements such as unification of Italy, Germany and Ireland, deeply stirred the emotion of Indians. Thus, European nationalist movements led to development of nationalism in India. The Indian freedom struggle against British imperialism derived
inspiration from various liberation struggles, the world over. Ireland and Italy ranked foremost among them. However Italian nationalism had two distinct facets. The Italian unification movement spearheaded by Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi, inspired and influenced the revolutionary movement in India in a decisive way. The rise of Fascism was viewed by the nationalist leadership with mixed feelings, admiration with reservation.

The origins of Italian nationalism have been traced to the Renaissance, where Italy led a European revival of classical style of art, philosophy and culture. Renaissance-child Niccolo Machiavelli in his work ‘The Prince’ appealed to Italians to make their country strong and united. The important figure in the development of Italian nationalism was Mazzini, followed by Garibaldi and Cavour. Both the Indian and the Italian liberation movements found a unifying factor in that. Indian nationalists drew great inspiration from the Italian Risorgimento which had brought the unification of Italy into fulfillment almost a century earlier than achievement of Indian freedom. The socio-religious reform movements also known as the Indian renaissance, were the first expression of national awakening. Nationalist literature in the form of novels, essays and patriotic poetry played an important role in creating national consciousness. Many historians and political scientists have expressed the view that there was a close link between Italian and Indian renaissance, and subsequently the origin and rise of Indian nationalism. The present research work intends to explore influence of Italian nationalism on Indian freedom struggle.

The seizure of power by Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini as Prime Minister of Italy in 1922 and his development of a fascist totalitarian state in Italy involved appeal to Italian nationalism, advocating the building of an Italian empire. Some Indian personality had a direct and effective contact with fascist regime and Mussolini. On the other hand, some historians refused to accept such influence and linkage. Ideologically and philosophically, Fascism was incompatible with all the streams of the nationalists movements. The movement of the Indian National Congress led by Mahatma Gandhi, was
based on non-violence and repudiated the fundamental philosophy of Fascism which was based on violence and brute force. Militant nationalists, like Subhas Chandra Bose, never identified themselves ideologically with Fascism, and yet wanted to enlist its sympathy and support for India’s freedom. These debated and contentious issues are sought to be analyzed on a wide canvas in the present research study.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Like all politico-historical events, the two liberation movements, Italian and Indian; and the emergence of their nationalism were the product of a specific environment. Indian liberation movement derived inspiration from Italian unification movement. Even the operational environment revealed the linkages between Indian nationalist leaders and fascist regime in Italy. Italy had shown the path to be followed by all those countries which were striving to win back their national dignity. After 1870, Italy became a constant term of reference in the Indian nationalist discourse. In this connection, we may now focus on the background of Indian and Italian nationalism, and fascist period of Italy.

In the first half of eighteenth century, the decline of Mughal Empire provided the British with the opportunity to establish their power in Indian politics. The East India Company gained administrative control over the regions of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa after the battle of Buxar in 1765. Most of south India came under the company’s direct rule after the defeat of Tipu Sultan. In the course of the struggle against British oppression, Indian Nationalism took shape. The British rule was naturally motivated by considerations of British interests. This brought Britain into conflict with the various classes of Indian people and they found in British rule, an alien force which obstructed their social, economic and culture development; and the national sentiment spontaneously developed among them.

The work of socio-religious groups represented the religious expression of the national awakening of the western educated men. After the revolt of 1857, the British
government took control of the company. The decades following the rebellion were a period of growing political awareness and emergence of Indian nationalism. The Indian National Congress was established in 1885. In its early period, it passed numerous resolutions demanding increasing share in political power. But Extremists and Revolutionary leaders wanted Dominion status, Home Rule and lastly complete independence.

Like India, Italy before unification, had been divided into several small parts which were under foreign domination. After the Congress of Vienna, Italy was divided into eight states, and the northern part of Italy was controlled by Austria-Hungary; and the expansion of Austrian Control in Italy stimulated intense anti-foreign sentiment among Italians. By 1830, revolutionary sentiment in favour of a unified Italy began to experience resurgence, and a series of insurrections prepared the ground for the creation of one nation along the Italian peninsula. In 1831, Mazzini formed the Society of Young Italy and the spread of nationalism throughout Italy. In 1848, there was the Risorgimento movement. Though Italy was fully united state in 1870.

The two liberation movements whose fruits were born almost at the same time, had however, different objects; the fascist regime for Italy, and colonial domination for India. The combination of economic crisis, political instability and frustrated nationalism provided fertile ground for the fascist movement. In Italy, Benito Mussolini was appointed PM in 1922 and by 1926, a one party fascist state had been established.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Political thought and actions have been greatly influenced by historical events. Historical and political thought lie behind every political activity. Political science and history are very intimately connected. Traditional political theorists recognized the interdependence of the two disciplines. History provided raw materials for Political Science. History is the store house of political thought and action. In this study, the researcher seeks
to explain the influence of actions and thoughts of Italian nationalist leaders on Indian freedom struggle. Though sporadic effort has been made to investigate the integral linkage between the nationalist movement of India and Italy, yet no comprehensive study has been provided, till date, to provide a critical and total analysis on the subject. Previous researchers have highlighted different aspects and influences behind the formation of Indian nationalism. No attempt has been made in the field of research to relate Machiavelli to Indian nationalism. All the studies are partial and fragmentary, not comprehensive studies based on a total analysis. The present study ventures to undertake this task on a wide canvas and adopting a framework of investigation which incorporates all the diverse and inter-related issues on the subject which are of great historical and political importance for any contemporary scholar. In this way, the present study fills up a major research gap on the subject.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The periodization of the study encompasses the period beginning from the Italian renaissance up to the era of fascist Italy under Mussolini. It also encompasses the period beginning from the Indian nationalism i.e. renaissance period of nineteenth century to the culmination of Indian independence in 1947, covering the different phases of Indian freedom struggle.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study may be enumerated as follows:

1. The study seeks to evaluate the impact of Italian renaissance on the emergence of Indian nationalism.

2. The study attempts to highlight the impact of the Italian liberation movement on Indian freedom struggle.
3. The present study undertakes to explore the influence of Italian nationalism and unification movement on the different phases of the Indian freedom movement spanning the moderate, extremist and revolutionary phases and extending up to the Gandhian Phase.

4. The study also ventures to explore the Indian nationalist response to the rise of fascism in Italy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The selection of appropriate method of data collection generally depends on the nature, scope and objectives of the study. The present study is based on qualitative research for the purpose of collecting and analyzing data and is historical and descriptive in nature. Documentary analysis is based on both primary sources and secondary sources. The research design of the study is exploratory by nature. Central to it is the formulation of research problems for precise investigation. For this purpose, extensive literature survey on the subject has been conducted. This study is based on the use of books, journals, periodicals, internet etc. Data analysis is done with reference to the objectives of the study and major research questions.

MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present research addresses itself to certain pertinent major research question which requires elucidation for a proper understanding of the same.

1. To what extent did the Italian renaissance influence the Indian renaissance?

2. How did the Italian unification movement influence and inspire the Indian nationalist movement?

3. How far were the Indian nationalists and freedom fighters influenced by the action and thought of the Italian nationalists?
4. How prominently did Italy figure in the agenda of Indian overseas revolutionaries?

5. Was the impact of Italian nationalism on the Indian freedom movement a transitory phenomenon or an enduring process?

6. How far did the rise of fascism influence the Indian nationalists?