

Chapter 9 The Making of the National Movement: 1870s-1947

1. Why were people dissatisfied with British rule in the 1870s and 1880s?

Answer.

The people were dissatisfied with British rule because of the following reasons:

- British were exercising control over the resources of India
- British were exercising control over the lives of its people, and until this control was ended India could not be for Indians.
- The Arms Act was passed in 1878, disallowing Indians from possessing arms.
- Vernacular Press Act was also enacted in 1879 in an effort to silence those who were critical of the government.
- In 1883, there was a furore over the attempt by the government to introduce the Ilbert Bill. The bill provided for the trial of British or European persons by Indians, and sought equality between British and Indian judges in the country.

2. Who did the Indian National Congress wish to speak for?

Answer.

The Congress was composed of the representatives, not of any one class or community of India, but of all the different communities of India. Hence, the party wished to speak for the masses to fight for the freedom struggle.

3. What economic impact did the First World War have on India?

Answer.

The First World War altered the economic and political situation in India. It led to a huge rise in the defence expenditure of the Government of India. The government in turn increased taxes on individual incomes and business profits. Increased military expenditure and the demands for war supplies led to a sharp rise in prices which created great difficulties for the common people. On the other hand, business groups reaped fabulous profits from the war. The first world war caused a decline in imports from other countries into India.

4. What did the Muslim League resolution of 1940 ask for?

Answer.

In 1940 the Muslim League had moved a resolution demanding "Independent States" for Muslims in the north-western and eastern areas of the country. The resolution did not mention partition or Pakistan.

5. Who were the Moderates? How did they propose to struggle against British rule?

Answer.

The Moderate leaders wanted to develop public awareness about the unjust nature of British rule. They published newspapers, wrote articles, and showed how British rule was leading to the economic ruin of the country. They criticised British rule in their speeches and sent representatives to different parts of the country to mobilise public opinion. They felt that the British had respect for the ideals of freedom and justice, and so they would accept the just demands of Indians. What was necessary, therefore, was to express these demands, and make the government aware of the feelings of Indians.

6. How was the politics of the Radicals within the Congress different from that of the Moderates?

Answer.

To fight for swaraj, the radicals advocated mass mobilisation and boycott of British institutions and goods. Some individuals also began to suggest that “revolutionary violence” would be necessary to overthrow British rule. Moderates, on the other hand, wanted to follow the rules and law and order posed by the British. They followed the ‘practise of prayers’ which radicals totally opposed.

7. Discuss the various forms that the Non-Cooperation Movement took in different parts of India. How did people understand Gandhiji?**Answer.**

The places in the country showed different reactions, given below:

- a. In Kheda, Gujarat, Patidar peasants organised non-violent campaigns against the high land revenue demand of the British.
- b. In coastal Andhra and interior Tamil Nadu, liquor shops were picketed.
- c. In the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, tribals and poor peasants staged a number of “forest satyagraha”, sometimes sending their cattle into forests without paying grazing fee.
- d. In Sind (now in Pakistan), Muslim traders and peasants were very enthusiastic about the Khilafat call.
- e. In Bengal too, the Khilafat-Non-Cooperation alliance gave enormous communal unity and strength to the national movement.
- f. national movement. In Punjab, the Akali agitation of the Sikhs sought to remove corrupt mahants – supported by the British – from their gurdwaras.

People thought of Gandhiji as a kind of messiah, as someone who could help them overcome their misery and poverty. Gandhiji wished to build class unity, not class conflict, yet peasants could imagine that he would help them in their fight against zamindars, and agricultural labourers believed he would provide them with the land. At times, ordinary people credited Gandhiji with their own achievement.

8. Why did Gandhiji choose to break the salt law?**Answer.**

The Salt March related the general desire of freedom to a specific grievance shared by everybody and thus did not divide the rich and the poor. Hence, in 1930, Gandhiji declared that he would lead a march to break the salt law.

9. Discuss those developments of the 1937-47 period that led to the creation of Pakistan.**Answer.**

The developments of 1937-47 which led to the creation of Pakistan are given below:

- a. A two-nation theory - Initially the Muslim league never mentioned Pakistan to be the nation of Muslims however, since the 1930s, it started demanding a separate country for Muslims.
- b. Provincial elections of 1937 - The elections were a decisive factor for Muslim league to decide that Muslims are a minority in India and they have to have a separate nation for them for their just representation in the politics.
- c. Tiff between congress and Muslim league - When congress rejected the Muslim league’s offer for a joint congress-league government in united provinces, the league decided to part ways forever.
- d. Failed talks - No discussion could turn out to be successful where both Congress and Muslim league come to a conclusion of only one nation. British too at the end of 2nd world war opened negotiation talks with both congress and league however it turned futile.
- e. Provincial elections of 1946 - Muslim league’s spectacular victory on the seats reserved for Muslims gave the confidence to create a separate nation.
- f. Mass agitation - The failure of cabinet mission 1946 led to the mass agitation led by the Muslim league.
- g. Partition was finalised and Pakistan was born.