

## UPSC Civil Services Examination

### UPSC Notes [GS-I]

#### Topic: Causes of Indian National Movement [Modern Indian History]

#### Notes for UPSC]

NCERT notes on important topics for the UPSC [Civil Services Exam](#). These notes will also be useful for other competitive exams like banking PO, SSC, state civil services exams and so on. This article talks about the Causes of the Rise of the Indian National Movement.

The rise of national consciousness in India took place towards the latter half of the 19th century only. Before that, there were struggles and battles against British colonialism but they were all confined to smaller areas and in any case, did not encompass the whole of India. In fact, some scholars at the time did not consider India to be a country. Though political union had occurred in the past under great kings like Ashoka and Akbar and under the Marathas to an extent, they were not permanent. However, cultural unity was always seen and foreign powers always referred to the subcontinent as India or Hind as being one entity, despite being ruled by many rulers.

It can be said that the national movement, with the political and social emancipation of the people as its aim, arose in India in 1885, with the formation of the Indian National Congress.

#### Causes of the rise of the National Movement in India

- **Western education**

Macaulay had instituted a western educational system in India with the sole aim of creating a class of educated Indians who could serve their colonial masters in the administration of the 'natives'. This idea sort of backfired because it created a class of Indians who became exposed to the liberal and radical thoughts of European writers who expounded liberty, equality, democracy and rationality. Also, the English language united Indians from various regions and religions.

- **Vernacular languages**

The 19th century also saw the revival of vernacular languages. This helped the propagation of the ideas of liberty and rational thought to the masses.

- **End of the old social order**

British imperialism put an end to the old social order of the country. This was resented by many Indians.

- **Socio-religious reform movements**

Socio-religious reform movements of the 19th century helped a great deal in the rise of nationalism in India. These movements sought to remove superstition and societal evils prevalent then, and spread the word of unity, rational and scientific thought, women empowerment and patriotism among the people. Notable reformers were Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jyotiba Phule and so on.

- **Economic policies of the British**

The oppressive economic policies of the British led to widespread poverty and indebtedness among the Indians especially farmers. Famines which led to the deaths of lakhs were a regular occurrence. This led to a bitter sense of suppression and sowed the seeds of a yearning for liberty from foreign rule.

- **Political unity**

Under the British, most parts of India were put under a single political set-up. The system of administration was consolidated and unified throughout in all regions. This factor led to the feeling of 'oneness' and nationhood among Indians.

- **Communications network**

The British built a network of roads, railways, post and telegraph systems in the country. This led to increased movements of people from one part of the country to another and increased the flow of information. All this accelerated the rise of a national movement in India.

- **Growth of the modern press**

This period also saw the rise of the Indian press, both in English and in the regional languages. This also was an important factor that helped in the dissemination of information.

- **Lord Lytton's policies**

Lord Lytton was the Viceroy of India from 1876 to 1880. In 1876, there was a famine in south Indian which saw the deaths of almost 10 million people. His trading policies were criticised for having aggravated the famine. Also, he conducted the grand Delhi Durbar in 1877 spending huge amount of money at a time when people were dying of hunger.

Lytton also passed the Vernacular Press Act 1878 which authorised the government to confiscate newspapers that printed 'seditious material'. He also passed the Arms Act 1878 which prohibited Indians from carrying weapons of any kind without licenses. The act excluded Englishmen.

- **Legacy of the Revolt of 1857**

After the Revolt of 1857 and its bitter crushing by the British, there was a deep racial tension between the British and the Indians.

- **Ilbert Bill controversy**

In 1883, the Ilbert Bill was introduced which gave Indian judges the power to hear cases against European, by the then Viceroy Lord Ripon and Sir Courtenay Ilbert, the legal advisor to the Council of India. But there was a huge outcry against this bill from Britishers in India and in Britain. Arguments made against this bill displayed the deep racial prejudice the English had for Indians. This also exposed the true nature of British colonialism to the educated Indians.

- **National movements outside the country**

There were many national movements outside the country that inspired the Indian nationalists like the French Revolution, the American War of Independence and so on.