

## UPSC Civil Services Examination

### UPSC Notes [GS-I]

#### Topic: The Moderate Phase of the Indian National Movement [Modern Indian History for UPSC]

Indian nationalism arose in the latter half of the 19th century as a result of various factors like western education, socio-religious reforms, British policies and so on. In 1885, the Indian National Congress was formed which played a significant role in India's freedom movement.

The time period from 1885 to 1905 can be called the 'Moderate Phase'. The leaders of this phase are called moderates.

#### The Indian National Congress (INC)

- Formed in 1885 by Allan Octavian Hume, a retired British civil servant.
- Other founding members include Dadabhai Naoroji and Dinshaw Wacha.
- First session was held in Bombay under the presidency of Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee in 1885.
- First session was attended by 72 delegates from across the country.
- Viceroy of India at the time was Lord Dufferin who gave his permission to Hume for the first session.
- The Congress was formed with the intention of discussing problems faced by the people of the country irrespective of caste, creed, religion or language.
- It was basically a movement of the upper and middle class, western educated Indians in its moderate phase.
- Second session of the Congress was held in Calcutta in 1886 followed by the third in Madras in 1887.

#### Moderate phase (1885 – 1905)

- Moderate phase of the Congress (or the national movement) was dominated by the 'moderates'.
- They were people who believed in British justice and were loyal to them.

#### Prominent moderate leaders

Dadabhai Naoroji

- Known as the 'Grand old man of India.'
- He became the first Indian to become a member of the House of Commons in Britain.
- Authored 'Poverty and Un-British Rule in India' which focused on the economic drain of India because of British policies. This led to an enquiry on the matter.

Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee

- First president of the INC.
- Lawyer by profession. First Indian to act as Standing Counsel.

G Subramanya Aiyer

- Founded 'The Hindu' newspaper where he criticised British imperialism.
- Also founded Tamil newspaper 'Swadesamitran'.
- Co-founded the Madras Mahajana Sabha.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale

- Regarded as Mahatma Gandhi's political guru.
- Founded the Servants of India Society.

Sir Surendranath Banerjee

- Also called 'Rashtraguru' and 'Indian Burke'.
- Founded the Indian National Association which later merged with the INC.
- Cleared the Indian Civil Service but was discharged due to racial discrimination.
- Founded newspaper 'The Bengalee'.

Other moderate leaders included Rash Behari Ghosh, R C Dutt, M G Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta, P R Naidu, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Ananda Charlu, S Subramania Iyer and William Wedderburn.

### Aims and demands of the moderates

- Education of the masses and organising public opinion, make people aware of their rights.
- Indian representation in the Executive Council and in the Indian Council in London.
- Reform of the legislative councils.
- Separation of the executive from the judiciary.
- Decreased land revenue tax and ending peasant oppression.
- After 1892, raised the slogan, "No taxation without representation."
- Reduced spending on the army.
- Abolishing salt tax and duty on sugar.
- Holding the ICS exam in India along with England to allow more Indians the opportunity to take part in the administration.
- Freedom of speech and expression.
- Freedom to form associations.
- Development of modern capitalist industries in India.
- End of economic drain of India by the British.
- Repealing the Arms Act of 1878.
- Increasing spending on education of Indians.

### Methods of the moderates

- They believed in peaceful and constitutional methods to demand and fulfil those demands.
- Used petitions, meetings, resolutions, pamphlets, memoranda and delegations to voice their demands.
- Their method has been called 3P – Prayers, Petition and Protest.
- Had complete faith in the British justice system.
- Confined to the educated classes only. Did not try to employ the masses.
- They aimed only at getting political rights and self-government under British dominion.

### Successes of the moderates

- Indian Councils Act of 1892 was the first achievement of the INC.
- This Act increased the size of the legislative councils and also increased the proportion of non-officials in them.
- They were able to sow the seeds of nationalism in the people.
- They popularised ideals like democracy, liberty and equality.
- They exposed many draining economic policies of the British.
- Leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale and M G Ranade were social reformers too and opposed child marriage and imposed widowhood.

### Limitations of the moderates

- This phase of the national movement excluded the masses and only the educated elites participated in it.
- They did not demand complete independence from foreign rule.
- They did not understand the power of a mass movement of people unlike Gandhi who used this power.
- Drew most of their ideas from western political thinking which further alienated them from the people.