

Modern Indian History Themes

1. Social & Religious Reform Movements (1820s–1900s) – Brahmo, Arya, Aligarh, Prarthana, Ramakrishna Mission etc. (we've already done)
2. Rise of Nationalism & Early Nationalists (1885–1905) – formation of INC, moderates' methods, economic critique of colonialism, Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale etc.
3. Growth of Extremism & Swadeshi Movement (1905–1917) – Bengal Partition, boycott & swadeshi, revolutionary movements, Home Rule League.
4. Gandhian Era (1919–1947) – Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, Quit India, role of masses, constructive work.
5. Revolutionary Movements & Leftist Currents – HSRA, Bhagat Singh, Chittagong Armoury Raid, trade unionism, CPI.
6. Constitutional & Administrative Developments under the British – Charter Acts, Councils Acts, Morley-Minto, Montagu-Chelmsford, Simon Commission, Government of India Acts 1919 & 1935, Cripps, Cabinet Mission.
7. Peasant, Tribal and Working-Class Movements – Santhal, Munda, Tebhaga, Moplah, indigo, Bombay textile strikes etc.
8. Communal Politics & Partition – Muslim League, separate electorates, Hindu Mahasabha, Cabinet Mission Plan, Mountbatten Plan, reasons for partition.
9. Princely States & Integration Issues – policies towards princely states, role of Sardar Patel, standstill agreements.
10. Role of Women, Dalits & Marginalised Groups in the Freedom Struggle – contributions, limitations, organisations.

11. Indian National Army & Subhas Chandra Bose – INA trials, impact on British decision to quit India.
12. Post-1947 Legacy of the Freedom Struggle – how the movements influenced Constitution, polity, foreign policy, social reform.

Social & Religious Reform Movements in 19th Century India

Keywords

- Renaissance, modernisation, rationalism, women's emancipation, revivalism, socio-religious awakening.

Facts & Data

1. 19th century = Age of Indian Renaissance; reformers sought to reconcile tradition with modernity.
2. Literacy in 1901 was just ~6%; reform movements linked to education.
3. Women's reforms: Sati abolished in 1829, Widow Remarriage Act 1856, Age of Consent Act 1891.
4. Syed Ahmed Khan's Aligarh Movement founded MAO College in 1875 (later AMU).
5. By 1900, Brahmo Samaj had ~4,000 members, mainly Bengal elite; Arya Samaj had spread across Punjab, western UP.

Major Reform Movements

- **Brahmo Samaj** (Raja Ram Mohan Roy, 1828):
 - Opposed sati, polygamy, caste rigidity.
 - Advocated widow remarriage, women's education, rational monotheism.
- **Arya Samaj** (Dayanand Saraswati, 1875):
 - "Back to the Vedas"; denounced idol worship & caste-based discrimination.

○ Started Shuddhi movement and DAV schools.

- **Aligarh Movement** (Syed Ahmed Khan):
 - Promoted modern scientific education for Muslims.
 - Advocated Hindu–Muslim unity initially, later emphasised separate identity.
- **Prarthana Samaj** (MG Ranade, 1867): Advocated inter-caste dining, widow remarriage, opposed child marriage.
- **Ramakrishna Mission** (Swami Vivekananda, 1897):
 - Focused on spiritual uplift + social service, bridging East & West thought.

Analysis

- Reform movements created the foundation of **social modernisation**: gender reforms, rational education, critique of orthodoxy.
- **Two strands** visible: reformist (Brahmo, Prarthana) vs revivalist (Arya Samaj, Wahhabi).
- Reformers laid **ideological groundwork** for Indian nationalism by promoting unity and social awakening.
- However, **limited outreach** beyond elites; often urban, male-dominated, and slow to penetrate rural India.

Ideological Foundation for Nationalism: These movements created a modern public sphere where debates on freedom, equality, and rationalism prepared ground for the national movement. Leaders like Gandhi and Nehru drew upon reformist ideals.

Women's Empowerment: Reformers attacked oppressive practices (sati, child marriage, purdah) and supported widow remarriage and girls' education, which became cornerstones of later social legislation.

Hindu–Muslim Reform Divergence: While reform among Hindus (Brahmo, Arya, Prarthana) often stressed returning to scriptures with rationality, Muslim reform (Aligarh, Deoband) stressed modern education or theological

purification. This divergence influenced later communal politics.

Spread of Education & Printing Press: English and vernacular education, supported by reformers, accelerated intellectual awakening. Printing press and journals (e.g., Tattvabodhini Patrika, Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq) spread reformist ideas widely.

Cultural Nationalism vs Social Reform: Some revivalist movements (Arya Samaj, Wahhabism) emphasised cultural pride and anti-colonialism more than social reform. This duality sharpened nationalist sentiments.

Limitations: Most reform movements were urban, middle-class centric, with limited impact on rural masses, women outside elite groups, and Dalits. Social evils like untouchability remained largely unaddressed till Gandhian era and Ambedkar's leadership.

Colonial Context: While reformers challenged orthodoxy, they often worked within the colonial legal framework. British support for reforms like abolition of sati also led to charges of "Westernisation" from conservatives.

Long-Term Legacy: These reform currents influenced the framing of the Indian Constitution, particularly provisions on equality, secularism, and social justice (Articles 14–17, 25–28).

Examples/Legacy

- Widow Remarriage Act (1856), spread of modern universities, rise of press.
- Vivekananda's Chicago address (1893) → global recognition of Indian spirituality.
- Arya Samaj schools produced leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai.

Conclusion

The reform movements were **not isolated** religious efforts but socio-political catalysts. They challenged orthodoxy, empowered marginalised sections, and prepared Indian

society for the freedom struggle by promoting rationalism, equality, and national consciousness.

Rise of Nationalism & Early Nationalists (1885–1905)

Keywords

Indian National Congress (INC) • Allan Octavian Hume • Dadabhai Naoroji • Moderates • Economic Critique of Colonialism • Drain of Wealth • Poverty & Un-British Rule in India • Surendranath Banerjee • Gopal Krishna Gokhale • National Awakening • Vernacular Press • Associations (Indian Association, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha) • Political Consciousness • Petition Politics • Representation • Simultaneous ICS Examination • Famine Relief • Public Grievances • Liberalism • Prayer–Petition–Protest • Safety Valve Theory • Role of Middle Class • Social Bases (professionals, zamindars) • Rise of Political Nationalism • Balancing Loyalty & Critique.

Facts & Data

1. INC founded in 1885 with 72 delegates; A.O. Hume acted as convener.
2. Dadabhai Naoroji's "Drain of Wealth" theory (estimated £200 million/year loss).
3. First public demand for simultaneous ICS exam in India (1886).
4. By 1905, INC sessions had grown to >800 delegates, reflecting expanding base.

Core Content

- Associational Politics before INC (Indian Association, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha) created a political network.
- Moderate Leaders (Naoroji, Gokhale, Banerjee) relied on constitutional agitation:

petitions, resolutions, British Parliament lobbying.

- Economic Critique became the ideological core—drain of wealth, discrimination in civil services, high land revenue.
- Demands: legislative councils' expansion, Indianisation of services, protection of local industries, reduction of military expenditure.
- Social Base: urban, educated middle class; lawyers, teachers, zamindars.

Analysis

- **National Consciousness:** Early nationalists created the vocabulary of political rights and economic justice.
- **Moderate–Extremist Continuum:** Though derided as "prayer and petition", moderates laid groundwork for later mass movements. Economic Nationalism: Drain theory linked poverty to colonial exploitation—still cited in economic history.
- **Safety Valve Debate:** Whether INC was a British "safety valve" or nationalist forum reflects competing historiographies.
- **Institution Building:** Demands for ICS, legislative reforms sowed seeds of constitutionalism visible in India's post-1947 polity.

Legacy / Examples

- Dadabhai Naoroji became first Indian MP in the UK (1892), raising Indian issues in House of Commons.
- Gokhale's Servants of India Society (1905) carried moderate ideals into social reform.

Conclusion

The rise of nationalism between 1885 and 1905 **transformed scattered grievances into an organised political movement.** By **institutionalising economic critique and constitutional demands**, the early nationalists

built the ideological and organisational base for the later phases of the freedom struggle.

Growth of Extremism & Swadeshi Movement (1905–1917)

Keywords

Partition of Bengal (1905) • Lord Curzon • Swadeshi • Boycott • National Education • Extremists (Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai) • Lal-Bal-Pal • Bande Mataram • Ganesh & Shivaji Festivals • Surat Split (1907) • Revolutionary Nationalism • Vande Mataram Movement • Use of Vernacular Press • Nationalist Songs & Literature • Passive Resistance • Self-Reliance • Bengal Secret Societies (Anushilan Samiti, Jugantar) • Indian Industries Promotion • Arbitration Courts • National Schools • Students Participation • Impact on Muslim League (1906) • Morley-Minto Reforms (1909) • Ghadar Party (1913) • Home Rule Leagues (1916).

Facts & Data

1. Partition of Bengal announced 1905; annulled 1911 due to mass protest.
2. Swadeshi industries: e.g., Bengal Chemical Works, National Soap, National Tannery.
3. Surat Split (1907) formally divided INC moderates and extremists.
4. Home Rule Leagues by Tilak & Annie Besant in 1916 had over 60,000 members within a year.

Core Content

- **Trigger:** Curzon's partition of Bengal sparked mass opposition, transforming moderate agitation into a broader movement.

- **Methods:** Boycott of British goods, promotion of indigenous industry, national schools, swadeshi crafts, arbitration courts.
- **Extremist Leaders:** Tilak advocated self-rule as birthright; Pal and Lajpat Rai emphasised mass agitation.
- **Cultural Mobilisation:** Festivals, songs, press and literature infused nationalism with emotional appeal.
- **Revolutionary Activities:** Secret societies in Bengal, Punjab and abroad (Ghadar) began armed resistance.
- **Political Outcomes:** Formation of Muslim League (1906); Morley-Minto reforms (1909) introduced separate electorates; Home Rule Leagues revived constitutional agitation.

Analysis

- **Shift in Strategy:** From prayer-petition to boycott, passive resistance and self-help.
- **Mass Involvement:** Students, women, and rural artisans drawn into the movement for the first time.
- **Economic Self-Reliance:** Swadeshi fostered indigenous industry, cooperative ventures and national education.
- **Polarisation & Split:** Surat split revealed ideological tensions but also diversified nationalist tactics.
- **Legacy for Future Movements:** Techniques like boycott, swadeshi and parallel institutions became templates for Gandhi's mass satyagrahas.

Legacy / Examples

- Tilak's Kesari & Mahratta papers popularised extremist ideas.
- National Council of Education in Bengal (1906) later evolved into Jadavpur University.

Conclusion

The growth of extremism and the Swadeshi Movement represented a decisive radicalisation of Indian nationalism. By combining economic self-help, cultural assertion and mass politics, this phase bridged the gap between moderate constitutionalism and Gandhi's later mass movements.

Revolutionary Movements in India & Abroad (1907–1934)

Keywords

Anushilan Samiti • Jugantar • Alipore Bomb Case (1908) • Khudiram Bose • V.D. Savarkar • India House (London) • Abhinav Bharat • Berlin Committee • Indo–German Conspiracy • Ghadar Party (1913) • Komagata Maru (1914) • Annie Besant & Home Rule context • Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) • Kakori Conspiracy (1925) • Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) • Bhagat Singh • Chandrashekhar Azad • Lahore Conspiracy (1929) • Saunders Killing • Central Assembly Bombing • HSRA Manifesto (Why I am an Atheist) • Chittagong Armoury Raid (Surya Sen) • Udham Singh • Kirti Kisan Party links • Revolutionary activities abroad – USA, Germany, Afghanistan • Decline & absorption into mainstream politics.

Facts & Data

- India House (London) founded by Shyamji Krishna Varma in 1905; hub for Savarkar & fellow revolutionaries.
- Ghadar Party (USA) established 1913; attempted armed uprising during WWI.
- Kakori Train Robbery (1925) executed by HRA revolutionaries to fund activities.
- HSRA formation (1928) signalled socialist orientation.

- Chittagong Raid (1930) led by Surya Sen; inspired youth in Bengal.

Core Content

- Origins: Frustration after the Surat Split & repression of Swadeshi drove youth to secret societies.
- Nature: Small groups, clandestine operations, bomb-making, assassination attempts on colonial officials.
- Abroad Links: • London – India House, Savarkar's revolutionary writings. • USA & Canada – Ghadar Party mobilising expatriate Punjabis. • Germany & Turkey – Indo–German plot during WWI. • Afghanistan – Provisional Government of India (1915).
- Transition: Post-1919, revolutionaries shifted focus to organised action; HSRA combined socialism with nationalism.
- Iconic Actions: Bhagat Singh & Batukeshwar Dutt bombing the Assembly "to make the deaf hear"; Udham Singh avenging Jallianwala Bagh by killing O'Dwyer in 1940.
- Chittagong Raid: Surya Sen's guerilla-style attack on armoury; inspired similar attempts.

Analysis

- Impact: **Kept the flame of militant nationalism alive** when mainstream politics was dormant; inspired youth and widened the scope of struggle.
- **Limitations:** Lack of mass base, scattered efforts, harsh repression and executions.
- **Shift to Socialist Ideas:** HSRA's manifesto moved beyond mere assassination to envision socio-economic transformation.
- **Contribution to Freedom Struggle:** Though failing to overthrow British rule, these movements injected courage, sacrifice and revolutionary zeal into Indian politics.

Legacy / Examples

- Influence on INA & Subhas Bose in 1940s.
- Cultural imprint: songs, literature and martyrdom stories continue to inspire.
- British introduced harsher laws like Defence of India Act due to revolutionary threats.

Conclusion

Revolutionary movements in India and abroad acted as the militant edge of the national struggle, sustaining nationalist passion during lulls and laying ideological foundations—socialist, republican and anti-imperialist—that later blended with mainstream politics.

Gandhian Mass Movements (1919–1942)

Keywords

Champaran Satyagraha (1917) • Kheda Satyagraha (1918) • Ahmedabad Mill Strike • Rowlatt Act (1919) • Satyagraha Sabha • Jallianwala Bagh • Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–22) • Khilafat–Hindu unity • Chauri Chaura • Swaraj Party (1923) • Bardoli Satyagraha (1928) • Civil Disobedience Movement (1930–34) • Salt March (Dandi, 1930) • Gandhi–Irwin Pact (1931) • Karachi Resolution (1931) • Poona Pact (1932) • Round Table Conferences • Individual Satyagraha (1940) • Quit India Movement (1942) • “Do or Die” slogan • Parallel governments • People’s participation – peasants, women, students, tribals • Constructive Programme • Khadi, removal of untouchability, village industries.

Facts & Data

- Champaran marked Gandhi’s first mass Satyagraha in India; abolished tinkathia system.
- Non-Cooperation saw boycott of foreign cloth and schools; 1 crore members enrolled in Congress.
- Salt March: 240-mile trek from Sabarmati to Dandi triggered mass defiance; 60,000 arrested.
- Quit India: 1942 uprising; over 90,000 arrests; 250+ railway stations attacked.

Core Content

- Pre-Gandhian Context: Extremist vs. moderate split left a vacuum; Gandhian method offered non-violent mass action.
- Non-Cooperation: First all-India mass movement under Gandhi; boycott of councils, titles, law courts.
- Civil Disobedience: Broader participation including women and rural masses; refusal to pay taxes, break salt laws.
- Constructive Work: Parallel to protests, building alternative institutions – Khadi, basic education, Harijan upliftment.
- Quit India: War-time demand for immediate independence; decentralised uprisings, underground networks, parallel governments in Ballia, Satara, Tamluk.

Analysis

- Mass Mobilisation: Gandhi transformed Congress into a mass party cutting across class, caste and region.
- Non-violence & Satyagraha: Provided moral legitimacy, international sympathy; but required discipline and suffered setbacks (Chauri Chaura).
- Leadership & Strategy: Alternating between confrontation and compromise (Gandhi-

Irwin Pact) frustrated some but broadened participation.

- Social Impact: Women, students, workers entered politics; removal of untouchability and emphasis on self-reliance reshaped social attitudes.
- Limitations: Failure to prevent communal divide; repeated withdrawals demoralised sections of youth leading to radicalisation.

Legacy / Examples

- Institutionalised non-violent protest as a global method (inspired Martin Luther King Jr.).
- Strengthened democratic ethos within freedom struggle.
- Showed potential of combining political agitation with social reform (Constructive Programme).

Conclusion

Between 1919 and 1942 Gandhian movements shifted the freedom struggle from elite petitioning to a broad-based, ethically grounded mass movement, weaving political independence with social transformation.

Leftist, Peasant & Worker Movements

Keywords

Socialist thought in Congress • Congress Socialist Party (1934) • All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) • Bombay textile strikes • Railwaymen's strike • Kisan Sabhas (1930s) • All India Kisan Sabha (1936) • United Provinces Kisan Sabha • Bihar Kisan Sabha (Sahajanand Saraswati) • Tebhaga Movement (Bengal, 1946–47) • Telangana Armed Struggle (1946–51) • Punnappra–Vayalar uprising (Kerala, 1946) •

Indigo and Deccan riots (as precursors) • Bombay Plan vs workers' demands • Communists in Quit India • Red Flag unions • Minimum wages • Tenancy reforms • Sharecroppers' rights • Food security protests • National Planning Committee (Nehru) • Role of CPI/Forward Bloc/left groups in mass politics.

Facts & Data

- AITUC founded 1920 by Lala Lajpat Rai – first national trade union.
- All India Kisan Sabha 1936 – Faizpur session of Congress; peasant charter of demands.
- Tebhaga Movement: Sharecroppers demanded two-thirds produce, inspired by CPI.
- Telangana Struggle: Armed resistance of peasants against feudal landlords and Nizam's forces; 3,000+ villages involved.

Core Content

- Origins: Economic distress from colonial land revenue systems, depression of 1930s, and industrial exploitation created fertile ground.
- Peasant Mobilisation: Kisan Sabhas and local uprisings demanded reduction in rents, abolition of zamindari, fair share for tenants.
- Worker Mobilisation: AITUC and Red Flag unions pressed for 8-hour day, living wages, better working conditions; strikes in textile mills, railways, plantations.
- Leftist Ideology: Socialist and communist groups within and outside Congress influenced demands for planning, state control of key industries, and pro-labour laws.
- Interaction with Congress: Congress leadership oscillated between support and caution; leftists gave mass base but were often repressed under wartime laws.

Analysis

- Broadened Freedom Struggle: Brought class issues—land, wages, working conditions—into nationalist discourse.
- Shift in Agenda: From purely political independence to socio-economic justice.
- Regional Variations: Movements in Bengal, Telangana, Kerala, Bihar each had distinct triggers but common themes of tenancy and wages.
- Limitations: Fragmented leadership, ideological splits (socialist vs communist), state repression, and compromise politics restricted impact.

Legacy / Examples

- Shaped post-Independence land reforms, trade union laws, and planning.
- Many leaders of future communist and socialist parties cut their teeth in these movements (Nambudiripad, Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan).
- Set precedent for organised agrarian and labour mobilisation in democratic India.

Conclusion

Leftist, peasant and worker movements injected a social-economic dimension into the national movement, pressing not just for political freedom but also for justice and redistribution—laying foundations for India's later welfare-oriented policies.

Revolutionary Movements & Subaltern Uprisings

Keywords

Anushilan Samiti • Jugantar • Abhinav Bharat • India House (Shyamji Krishna Varma) • Ghadr

Party • Berlin Committee • Hindu–German Conspiracy • Komagata Maru • Kakori Conspiracy (1925) • HSRA (Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad) • Assembly Bomb Case • Lahore Conspiracy Case • Hindustan Republican Association • Kirti Kisan Party • Peshawar/Kanpur/Merut conspiracy trials • Revolutionary nationalism in Punjab & Bengal • Women revolutionaries (Kalpana Dutt, Pritilata Waddedar) • Tribal/subaltern uprisings (Santhal 1855, Munda 1899, Bhil 1913) • Eka & Moplah uprisings • Rampa rebellion • Forest rights grievances • Militant vs non-violent strands • British repressive laws (Rowlatt Act, Defence of India Act) • Exile networks & diaspora support.

Facts & Data

- Anushilan Samiti (1902) & Jugantar spearheaded secret societies in Bengal.
- Ghadr Party formed in USA (1913) by Punjabi migrants; planned armed revolt during WWI.
- Kakori Conspiracy: Train dacoity by HRA (1925) to fund revolution.
- HSRA renamed in 1928 under Bhagat Singh to combine socialism with revolution.
- Santhal Rebellion (1855–56): 60,000+ Santhals rose against oppressive revenue policies.
- Munda Uprising (1899–1900) led by Birsa Munda—against “dikus” & British.

Core Content

- Origins: Frustration with constitutional methods, repression post-Partition of Bengal, and global anti-colonial currents inspired secret societies and militant action.
- Urban Revolutionaries: Focused on assassinations, bombings, and propaganda to shake British confidence.
- Diaspora Networks: India House (London), Ghadr (North America), Berlin Committee

coordinated international support, arms, and funds.

- Subaltern & Tribal Uprisings: Driven by exploitation under zamindars, forest laws, missionary activities and loss of customary rights—precursors to later agrarian movements.
- Ideological Shift: By 1920s, revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh moved from individual heroism to collective, socialist-inspired action, linking independence with social justice.

Analysis

- Contribution: Kept the spirit of defiance alive, radicalised youth, forced colonial state to tighten security but also consider reforms.
- Limitations: Lack of mass base, secrecy, premature plans, and harsh repression curtailed effectiveness.
- Subaltern Significance: Tribal and peasant risings signalled deep-rooted resentment beyond urban elites, highlighting the plural character of resistance.
- Link with Mainstream: Non-violent national movement absorbed many radical ideas; INC had to respond to the pressure from militant groups.

Legacy / Examples

- Inspired generations—Bhagat Singh's martyrdom became rallying cry; songs & literature glorified revolutionaries.
- Tribal uprisings laid the groundwork for protective legislation and recognition of forest rights in post-Independence India.
- Diaspora activism foreshadowed present-day soft power of overseas Indians.

Conclusion

Revolutionary movements and subaltern uprisings injected urgency and radicalism into the freedom struggle. Though lacking the scale of mass movements, they broadened the social

base of resistance and enriched the nationalist imagination with sacrifice, militancy, and calls for socio-economic justice.

Social Reform Movements – Renaissance, Women's & Caste Reform

Keywords

Brahmo Samaj (Rammohan Roy) • Prarthana Samaj (Ranade) • Arya Samaj (Dayanand Saraswati) • Aligarh Movement (Sir Syed) • Young Bengal • Theosophical Society (Annie Besant) • Ramakrishna Mission (Vivekananda) • Widow Remarriage Act (1856) • Abolition of Sati (1829) • Age of Consent Act (1891) • Bethune School (1849) • Women's organisations (All India Women's Conference 1927) • Caste reform – Satya Shodhak Samaj (Jyotiba Phule), SNDP Movement (Narayana Guru) • Temple Entry Movement (Vaikom 1924) • Depressed Classes/Harijan uplift (Ambedkar) • Poona Pact (1932) • Self-Respect Movement (Periyar) • Social-religious renaissance • Interface of reform and nationalism.

Facts & Data

- Sati Abolition (1829) by Bentinck after Raja Rammohan Roy's efforts.
- Widow Remarriage Act passed in 1856 through Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's campaign.
- Bethune School (Calcutta, 1849) first girls' school with government support.
- All India Women's Conference formed 1927 to demand franchise & education.
- Temple Entry Proclamation (Travancore, 1936) opened temples to all castes.

Core Content

- Religious-Social Reform: New organisations challenged superstition, idolatry, and caste rigidity while promoting monotheism, rationality, and modern education.

- **Women's Empowerment:** Campaigns for female education, abolition of child marriage, and property rights laid foundations for later constitutional guarantees.
- **Caste Reform:** Movements among non-Brahmin and oppressed castes (Phule, Periyar, Narayana Guru, Ambedkar) demanded equality, representation, and social justice; linked social emancipation with political rights.
- **Muslim Reform:** Aligarh Movement modernised education and created new middle class but also later influenced separatist trends.

Analysis

- **Positive Impact:** Spread modern ideas, eroded some social evils, prepared ground for nationalism by creating a self-confident, modernising elite.
- **Limitations:** Urban, upper-caste bias in early reforms; many movements worked in isolation and met orthodox resistance.
- **Women's Role:** Early reforms paternalistic, but by 20th century women themselves became leaders (Sarojini Naidu, Kamini Roy).
- **Caste Dimension:** Non-Brahmin and Dalit movements challenged the Congress's elitism and shaped later affirmative action policies.

Legacy / Examples

- Constitutional provisions on equality, abolition of untouchability (Art. 17), and affirmative action trace back to these movements.
- Social reform gave ideological base to Gandhian constructive programme (khadi, basic education, Harijan uplift).

Conclusion

The 19th–20th century reform movements represented India's social renaissance. They attacked entrenched inequalities, opened education to women and lower castes, and infused nationalism with a moral and social agenda, laying the groundwork for a democratic and inclusive polity after independence.

Peasant Movements & Agrarian Unrest

Keywords

Indigo Revolt (1859) • Pabna Rent Movement (1873) • Deccan Riots (1875) • Moplah Rebellion (1921) • Champaran Satyagraha (1917) • Kheda Satyagraha (1918) • Bardoli Satyagraha (1928) • Eka Movement (1921–22) • Tebhaga Movement (1946–47) • Telangana Armed Struggle (1946–51) • All India Kisan Sabha (1936) • Ryotwari & Zamindari systems • Tinkathia system • Rent enhancement • Forced cultivation • Debt bondage • Peasant–nationalist linkages.

Facts & Data

- **Indigo Revolt (1859–60):** led by Digambar & Bishnu Biswas; European planters forced indigo cultivation.
- **Pabna (Bengal, 1873):** peasants formed agrarian leagues to resist excessive rents.
- **Deccan Riots (1875):** against moneylenders in Maharashtra; led to Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act (1879).
- **Champaran Satyagraha (1917):** Gandhi's first satyagraha; abolished Tinkathia system.
- **Tebhaga (Bengal, 1946):** sharecroppers demanded two-thirds of produce; inspired later land reforms.

Core Content

- Colonial Agrarian Policies: High revenue demands under Zamindari/Ryotwari, commercialisation of agriculture, and coercive practices created peasant distress.
- Early Movements: Spontaneous, localised revolts (Indigo, Deccan) primarily economic but sowed seeds of organisation.
- Gandhian Phase: Champaran, Kheda, Bardoli linked peasant grievances with non-violent mass politics; gave peasants national voice.
- Left Influence: 1930s–40s saw radical agrarian movements (Tebhaga, Telangana) aligned with socialist/communist groups demanding structural change.

Analysis

- Shift in Character: From sporadic protests to organised movements with ideological backing and leadership.
- Impact on Policy: Pressured colonial state to enact limited tenancy & debt relief laws; post-independence land reforms drew from this legacy.
- Limitations: Regional, caste, and class divisions often limited unity; leadership sometimes external (lawyers, nationalists).
- Women's Participation: Visible in Tebhaga & Telangana struggles; foreshadowed later rural women's movements.

Legacy / Examples

- Inspired creation of Kisan Sabhas, cooperative credit societies, and eventual abolition of Zamindari (1951).
- Provided organisational template for later farmer movements (e.g., Shetkari Sanghatana, 1980s).

Conclusion

Peasant movements exposed the exploitative underpinnings of colonial agrarian policy and

politicised the countryside. By linking local grievances with national politics, they transformed peasants into an enduring force in India's democratic and agrarian reform agenda.

Working-Class Movements & Labour Struggles

Keywords

Bombay Mill Strike (1919) • Ahmedabad Textile Strike (1918) • Madras Labour Union (1918) • All India Trade Union Congress – AITUC (1920) • Girni Kamgar Union • Great Indian Peninsular Railway Strike • Communists & trade unionism • Indian Trade Unions Act (1926) • Royal Commission on Labour (1929–31) • Telco Jamshedpur strike • "8-hour day" demand • Wage, safety & housing issues • Plantation workers • Dock & railway strikes • Left–Congress split within unions.

Facts & Data

- First organised union: Madras Labour Union (1918, B.P. Wadia).
- Ahmedabad Textile Strike (1918): Gandhi introduced "strike fund" and hunger fast; secured 35% wage rise.
- Bombay Mill Workers: large strikes 1919, 1928; 1.5 lakh workers involved.
- AITUC (1920): Lala Lajpat Rai president; first national platform for labour.
- Trade Unions Act (1926): legal recognition to unions; registration & immunity from certain liabilities.

Core Content

- Colonial Industrialisation: Cotton mills, jute mills, railways, plantations—harsh conditions, low wages, no social security.

- Early Phase: Welfare & paternalistic approach (philanthropists, social reformers) – mostly grievance redressal.
- Gandhian Influence: Non-violent negotiation, arbitration, moral appeal (Ahmedabad model).
- Radical/Left Phase: 1920s onwards, communists and socialists built militant unions (Girni Kamgar, railwaymen).
- Legal Framework: Royal Commission (1931) recommended reforms; but implementation weak.

Analysis

- Shift in Character: From sporadic, city-based strikes to national, issue-based unionism under AITUC & later INTUC/HMS.
- Link with National Movement: Labour issues dovetailed with Swadeshi & anti-colonial struggles; strikes often timed with political agitations.
- Limitations: Fragmentation along political party lines (Congress vs Communists vs Socialists); weak organisation in unorganised sectors.
- Women & Migrant Labour: Plantation workers and women workers (jute, beedi) faced double exploitation; minimal representation in leadership.

Legacy / Examples

- Strengthened legal protections (Factories Acts amendments, 8-hour day acceptance by 1940s).
- Post-independence rise of INTUC, HMS, CITU; formation of welfare boards, EPF, ESI.
- Provided template for later mass workers' agitations (Railway strike 1974, Maruti–Suzuki 2012).

Conclusion

Working-class movements transformed industrial workers from isolated employees into a politically conscious collective. By blending economic demands with anti-colonial politics, they helped embed labour rights into India's constitutional and legislative framework after 1947.

Women's Movements & Social Reform (19th–20th Century)

Keywords

Sati Abolition (1829) • Widow Remarriage Act (1856) • Age of Consent Act (1891) • Female Infanticide Regulation (1870) • Bethune School (1849) • Pandita Ramabai • Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar • Jyotiba & Savitribai Phule • Women's Indian Association (1917) • All India Women's Conference – AIWC (1927) • Annie Besant • Sarojini Naidu • Margaret Cousins • Education, suffrage & property rights • Social legislation vs social custom • Nationalist women leaders • Participation in Civil Disobedience & Quit India.

Facts & Data

- Sati abolished (1829) by Governor-General Bentinck after Raja Ram Mohan Roy's campaign.
- Widow Remarriage Act (1856) opened legal door but social stigma persisted.
- AIWC became largest women's organisation; by 1930s it had >10,000 members.
- Women's franchise: limited voting rights in some provinces (1919 reforms), expanded under 1935 Act.
- Participation in movements: thousands of women courted arrest in Salt Satyagraha (1930); prominent in Quit India (1942).

Core Content

- Early Phase (social reform): Led by male reformers; legal measures on sati, widow remarriage, age of consent, female infanticide. Focus on education (Bethune School, Phule couple's schools).
 - Emergence of Women Leaders: Pandita Ramabai advocated female education and widow upliftment; Savitribai Phule pioneered girls' schooling.
 - Organised Associations: Women's Indian Association (1917), All India Women's Conference (1927), National Council of Women in India pressed for suffrage, labour rights, maternal health, inheritance and property rights.
 - Integration with Nationalism: Women like Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, Aruna Asaf Ali, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay took leadership in Home Rule, Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India movements.
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- Shift from Reform to Empowerment: From social-religious reform to political rights, employment, and leadership roles; foundation for post-independence constitutional equality (Articles 14–16, 15(3), 39).

Takeaway for Mains

Link social reform → organisation building → nationalist participation → constitutional equality. Show how legal changes alone were insufficient without grassroots activism and education.