

Rise of English Power and Evolution of Nationalism in India in the 19th Century: A Historical Study

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ABSTRACT

Nation and nationalism were a cultural and political movement that transformed societies across the world. The concept initially emerged in Europe during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, largely driven by the desire to break away from the feudalistic and monarchic systems and to create independent nation-states based on shared culture including beliefs, language, customs, traditions, common history, and collective identities. European nationalism coincided with the rise of democratic movements, greater political participation, and self-governance. In the meantime, a European power Britain was engaged to establish its hold over India. Along with its rule, the notion of nation and nationalism came to India which was home to diverse cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious communities, that coexisted for centuries without identifying themselves as a single or diverse nation. Contrary to European nationalism, the people of India adopted nationalism differently. Initially, the natives of India were united against the British under Indian nationalism, and then Hindu-led linguistic, religious, and political movements struggled to unite the Hindus. In response, the Muslims began to unite themselves under Muslim nationalism. The pervasive European nationalism became pernicious on India's peace, prosperity, unity, diversity, beauty, and territorial integrity.

Keywords: Hindu Nationalism, 19th Century India, Nation-State, Territorial Integrity

Introduction

After the Battle of Plassey (a town in West Bengal) in 1757, the power of the Mughal emperor had virtually transferred into British hands. Still, the shadowy figure of the emperor continued to remain in the “Red Fort of Delhi” till the following century. Since the onset of the 19th century, the British began to interfere in religious, social, economic, and educational matters of India. Christian missionaries began to arrive, various social reforms were introduced, the Western education system replaced the vernacular education system, and it all led to widespread discontent and dissent. An Indian reformer, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the key figures to introduce early Indian nationalism. He advocated for social, and religious reforms, and modernization for the development of India. The early Indian nationalist movements, including those led by Roy, were not restricted to any religious community but rather represented all Indians. Gradually Indian nationalists sought to promote their identity and culture and challenged the British

colonial rule. They were united for independence from British rule in 1857, they waged a war but failed in their endeavor.

In the post-war period, the British began to treat Indians on a communal basis. Their policies contributed to the growth of nationalist sentiment and had a significant impact on the development of Hindu and Muslim separate identities such identities were uncommon in India before the 1857 war. Based on nationalism, British oppressed minority groups, sustained social inequalities, and widened economic disparities. It paved the way for Hindu nationalism, known as Hindutva, fueled by the belief that India was a Hindu nation, and that Hindus were the rightful owners of the land. In response, the ideal of Muslim nationalism surfaced.

Historical Overview of the British Rise in India

British came to India in the early 17th century primarily for trade. Britain desired to enter international trade and participate in lucrative commerce. On December 31, 1600, a royal charter was granted to the London East India Company. Through this Charter the British Queen Elizabeth constituted a corporate and political body named “Company of Merchants of London, trading to the East-Indies (Bruce, 1810).” Initially, it was difficult for the British to secure trading activities in India in the presence of the Portuguese and Dutch. A mercantile competition began among them (Gokhale, 2003). It was a time when the Muslim Mughal dynasty ruled India and was at its peak with a strong central government and a well-established administrative system. The East India Company (EIC) sent Captain William Hawkins in 1608 to the court of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir to obtain permission for a trading post in India. The English merchants faced tremendous opposition from their European commercial rivals, the Portuguese and the Dutch in India (Chopra et al., 2003). Due to the stronghold of the Portuguese and local merchants, the emperor did not grant trading rights to the English. The Portuguese influenced the emperor's decision when Hawkins again asked Emperor Jahangir for a license for the factory at Surat (Mukherjee, 1974). At the end of November 1612, the English and Portuguese navies fought a battle. The English navy defeated the Portuguese in the Battle of Swally at Suvali in Surat. The English victory established the maritime supremacy of the British in the Indian seas and eventually pushed the Portuguese off the coast of India. It further paved the way for the imperial *Farman* to the British settlement on the mainland of India (Chisholm, 1910). The English East India Company (EIC) was granted permission to build a factory at Surat that became the headquarters of the English in western India. On January 10, 1616, Sir Thomas Roe arrived in Ajmer with gifts to Emperor Jahangir and lived there until February 17, 1619. Emperor Jahangir did not grant any trading privileges to the English. Thomas Roe devoted his time and energies to improving England's standing with Mughal officials and made valiant efforts to secure a royal *Farman*, or trade contract, for ongoing commerce (Foster,

Rise of English Power and Evolution of Nationalism in India in the 19th Century: A Historical Study

1906). The strategy of Roe outmaneuvered his enemies who were the Spanish, the French, and the Portuguese to get favor from the emperor. A journal that Roe kept from 1615-1619, the years he spent in India, details his work at the Mughal court. With its extensive trade network and military capabilities, the EIC was seen as a useful ally of the Mughals in maintaining order, stimulating trade, and pursuing military objectives. The EIC gradually established fortified coastal cities and factories (Louis et al., 1988). Till the following century, the Company's main interest was in getting valuable Indian goods, such as textiles and spices, for export to Europe. During the 17th century, the relationship between the Mughal rulers and the EIC was relatively stable.

In early the 18th century 1707 the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb died after ruling for fifty years. Aurangzeb's territorial expansion contributed to the empire's eventual decline. His successor could not administer the vast empire and internal divisions, military setbacks, and economic troubles weakened it. The British were able to take advantage of the situation. Shrewd, ambitious, daring, and always watchful of the internal political situation in the country, the English thought of acquiring territorial possession, when possible (Chopra et al., 2003), and expanding their control over various parts of India. British fought the Battle of Plassey in 1757, which saw the defeat of the Nawab of Bengal and the establishment of British control over it. Bengal was one of the wealthiest and most populous region in India, with a thriving agricultural economy, a highly skilled workforce, and a strategic location on the Bay of Bengal. The battle marked the beginning of British colonial rule in India. However, the Mughal Emperor remained a powerful symbol of authority.

In Britain, the British parliament continued to control the EIC by extending its charter for only twenty years (Mahajan, 2022). One of the notable charters was the Regulating Act of 1773 which was renewed in 1793 to maintain the trade monopoly of the “East India Company” in India. This period expired in 1813, and the Company applied for its renewal. The British merchants, manufacturers, and shipowners sent petitions against the renewal until the trade was opened to private individuals. They demanded to allow Christian missionaries to go to India for the propagation of Christianity. The supporters of the EIC objected to this demand considering that it would make English rule unpopular. The EIC objection was ignored, and on July 1, 1813, the British Parliament allowed the missionaries to proceed to India (Sharma, 1988). The Act abolished the Company’s monopoly of trade with India and an interference of private individuals began in lingual, cultural, educational, and religious matters of India.

In the Charter Act of 1813, Clause 43 stated that the Company should set aside 10,000 pounds equalling 1 lakh Indian Rupees per year for an education budget for the Bengal, Bombay, and Madras Presidencies (Sharma & Sharma, 2000). This sparked a debate about whether English or classical Indian education should be funded. The different aims of the “orientalists and anglicizers” also surfaced (Sharma & Sharma, 2000, p.80).

Imrana Begum

The 1813 Act also removed the long-standing ban on Christian missionaries into company territory to enlighten the Indian people. Those were the initial steps taken by the British Government to evangelize and spread the Christian faith and Western education in India. The British merchants and missionaries were permitted to settle in India. The British missionaries for the propagation of their religion had far-reaching effects on Indian society. They built churches and ran hospitals and missionary schools. Their activities in due course spread such an infection among ignorant Indians that many of them embraced Christianity (Sharma, 1988). The British introduced various social reforms they believed were necessary to improve Indian society. For instance, they attempted to abolish sati, child marriage, and female infanticide.

In compliance with the Charter Act, a group of British officials and Indian elites established the first Anglo-Indian school in Calcutta, the Hindu College, in 1817. The college aimed to promote education among Indians of all castes and religions and received financial support from the East India Company. Raja Rammohan Roy (a Hindu social reformer) believed that the key to India's progress and prosperity lay in promoting modern education (Sharma & Sharma, 2000).

The EIC could not make any definite education policy about the disbursement of the sum of rupees one lakh allotted for education for the next 20 years. There was a significant development in British education policy when Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay came to India as a law member of the Governor-General's executive council on June 10, 1835 (Amala, 2004).

Thomas Babington Macaulay was known for his contribution to the reform of British education and his advocacy of English as the language of instruction in Indian schools during the colonial period (Amala, 2004). He was appointed as the president of the General Committee of Public Instruction. As a law member, Macaulay was asked to give a legal opinion on any other possible mode of utilizing the sum of 1 Lakh rupees than an Oriental Education (Sharma & Sharma, 2000).

Macaulay believed that English education was superior to traditional Indian education, which he saw as outdated and impractical. He believed that the adoption of English education would not only modernize India but also serve as a means of cultural and political domination by the British (Rosselli & Bentinck, 1974).

At the request of the legislative council, Macaulay presented a policy document in 1835 known as "Minutes on Indian Education" to the Governor-General of India. It laid the foundation for the establishment of a network of English-medium schools and colleges across India. Later on, the British Raj established several universities in India, including the University of Calcutta in 1857, the University of Bombay, and the University of Madras (Das, 2008) in 1858. These universities offered degrees in various fields of study and played a key role in the development of modern education.

Rise of English Power and Evolution of Nationalism in India in the 19th Century: A Historical Study

Evolution of Nationalism in Europe

When the British Raj was strengthening its hold over India, a political concept called nationalism emerged in Europe. Before this, the monarchy was a natural form of government throughout much of human history, and many monarchs engaged in territorial conquests and overseas expansion to increase their power and wealth. The 18th and 19th centuries witnessed many far-reaching changes all over the world. Several states in North America, joined together to form the United States of America; nation-states emerged in Germany and Italy which previously were only geographical expressions. Following a revolution, France entered the modern phase, and Japan rapidly shed her medievalism (Burke, 1973). The rise of nationalism introduced new ideas about political and territorial identity, social integrity, individual rights, reason, and democracy. These developments challenged feudalism and kingdoms eventually leading to the decline of feudalism and the downfall of many monarchies in Europe and elsewhere (Riemer et al., 2014).

Johann Gottfried von Herder, a German philosopher (1744–1803) is considered one of the founding fathers of modern nationalism. His emphasis on the importance of language, culture, and tradition in defining national identity had a profound impact on subsequent thinkers and helped lay the foundation for the emergence of nationalist movements in Europe in the 19th century (Murray, 2004). A century later French philosopher Joseph-Ernest Renan (1823-1892) worked on the development of nationalism in Europe. In his famous lecture "What is a Nation?" delivered in 1882 Renan argued that the idea of the nation was not based on objective, scientific criteria, but rather on a collective sense of belonging and a shared historical memory (Renan, 1990).

Nationalism became an ideology that places the nation at the center of its concerns and seeks to promote its well-being. Nationalism called on people to identify themselves based on shared identity, culture, and history with the interests of their national group and to support the creation of a nation-state. Nationalism transformed Europe in a few decades, formerly ruled by monarchs, and was replaced by self-determination and newly formed nation-states i.e., Greece, Belgium, Italy, and Germany (Renan, 1996).

Emergence of Indian Nationalism

In the first half of the 19th century, while political and social developments were taking place in Europe, India was undergoing a different path. The British were consolidating their hold on the Indian subcontinent. Under the East India Company, the Mughal emperor was reduced to a mere symbolic figure the actual governing power was in the hands of the British. The British, meddling in Indians' socio-religious, political, and economic affairs created resentment and annoyance in the society. Their policies were seen as offensive, oppressive, and exploitative. This eventually led to various forms of opposition and resistance. The sentiments

Imrana Begum

of repulsion and resentment towards foreign domination led to the birth of Indian nationalism. All Indians, irrespective of their caste, creed, and religion, rose against the British as a nation in defense of their respective culture and religions (Burke & Quraishi, 1995). They were adamant about getting the British out of their land. The war for independence from the British began on May 10, 1857 (Walia, 2022) and became the greatest armed challenge to the British. Although there were various movements and uprisings against British colonial rule in different parts of India, some areas had a tradition of revolts i.e., West Bengal and Bihar. In the early 19th century, peasant uprisings in the above-mentioned regions aimed at resisting British land revenue policies and other forms of exploitation (Gough, August 1974). In the late 1820s, there was also a movement for social and religious reforms i.e., the Brahmo Samaj. It was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy to promote monotheism, rationalism, and social reform within Hinduism. However, Brahmo Samaj was not necessarily unified in its aims or methods and did not have a clear concept of Indian nationalism as a unified movement (Leonard, 1879).

The idea of Indian nationalism emerged more clearly in the mid-nineteenth century, as different groups and communities across India came together to resist British colonialism and asserted their national identity. The Indians, not any community fought the war of independence from colonial rule under the banner of Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. Though the British succeeded in quelling this first war of independence, they realized that the unity among Muslims and Hindus and their emergence as a single nation could threaten their rule in India (Chitkara, 2004).

At the end of the war on June 20, 1858 (Singh, 2009), the British shifted their approach to control, administer, and govern India. The British parliament passed the Government of India Act which received Royal assent on August 2, 1858. The Act transferred the administration of India from the East India Company to the British Crown (Singh, 1998). The triumphant British put an end to the Mughal monarchy in 1858 by readily killing both sons of emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, charging them of treason and expelling the final monarch to Burma till his demise on November 7, 1862 (Tomar & Malik, 2022).

Rise of Hindu Nationalism

Indian nationalism did not demarcate Muslims as an exterior to the Indian nation but within it. The vast and diverse territory of India has been a testament to the coexistence of various communities with distinct linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds under the universal principles of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Islam. The Muslim Sufis and Bhakti Saints played a vital role in bringing harmony and peace to Indian society. They emphasized the principles of unity, equality, and tolerance in India. While they emerged from different religious traditions—Sufism within Islam and Bhakti within Hinduism—shared common

Rise of English Power and Evolution of Nationalism in India in the 19th Century: A Historical Study

themes that promoted inclusivity among diverse communities. The blending of different cultural traditions led to a vibrant and dynamic society, with unique art, architecture, music, cuisine, language, and literature. However, with the change of rulers, from Muslims to British, the latter put Muslims and Hindus into two different molds and attributed to each a specific identity (Misra, 2004).

The historical investigation traces and connects the rise of Hindu nationalism in India during the post-war of independence period when the British accentuated the importance of religion, education, and language. The colonial masters began to categorize and interact with Indians based on religious identity, which contributed to the "divide and rule" strategy to prevent future rebellion (Chitkara, 2004). It differed from the policies of Muslim rulers that aimed at political stability by integrating diverse communities within their empire. The rise of Hindu nationalism was also due to Christian missionary activities and British policies that attempted to assimilate Indians into British culture. Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan, a Muslim scholar wrote a book one year after the war of 1857, entitled "Causes of the Indian Revolt. He writes that "As the power of British government increased, and there no longer remained foreign enemies to fight against, or internal troubles to quell, it turned its attention inwards, and carry out interference with their creed and religious observations (Graham, 1885)." In response, Hindu reform movements sought to revive and reinterpret ancient Hindu traditions and texts. This laid the foundation for a sense of pride in Hindu heritage and led to the emergence of Hindu nationalism, also known as Hindutva, a political and social movement based on the belief that India belonged to a Hindu nation and that Hindus were the rightful owners of the land. It sought to reassert the primacy of Hindu culture and traditions in the face of British colonialism and Western modernity (Jaffrelot, 2021). There was a grand spiritual revival through the words and writings of Hindu spiritual leaders like Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, and Maharishi Gayamand who portrayed India as a land of spirituality and West materialism (Jaffrelot, 2021). It paved the way for the first showdown between these two communities appearing on the language question.

British interference in Indian languages began in the first half of the nineteenth century when Macaulay's "Minutes on Indian Education" laid down the vision for English education and language reforms in India. British adopted the policy of favoring one language over the other, leading to tensions between various linguistics and religious communities. The British substituted Persian with an Indian vernacular for local administrative requirements, and the Act XXIX of 1837 permitted the British Governor-General to substitute English for Persian as the language of government (Diamond, 2012).

The Persian language had a long history with pre-colonial Muslim administration, and the British sought to use an administrative language that did not reflect the tradition of Muslim control. Even though English was used for official British correspondence, few Indians could understand it at the time, therefore it could not be used for daily use. In the northern regions of the Indian

Imrana Begum

subcontinent, Urdu, in Persian script, was chosen as the replacement for Persian, rather than Hindi in the Devanagari script. Although the British government encouraged both Hindi and Urdu as a medium of education in schools, however, it discouraged Hindi or Devanagari script for official purposes (Sultana, 2021). This policy gave rise to conflict between students educated in Hindi or Urdu for the competition for government jobs, which eventually took on a communal form. In 1867, some educated Hindus in the North-Western Provinces of Agra and Oudh launched a Hindi movement that began to demand the replacement of Urdu from Hindi as an official language. Babu Shiva Prasad of Banaras was one of the early proponents of the Nagari script. In a Memorandum on court characters written in 1868, he argued that the official encouragement given to Urdu in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh impeded the study of Hindi and the development of primary education. He accused the early Muslim rulers of India of forcing them to learn Persian (Ammon, Hellinger (ed), 1992). The Persian script used to write Urdu was akin to that of Arabic, which was the language of the Quran, the Muslim Holy Book, which was another reason why Urdu was opposed (Bawa, 2023). On the other hand, Sanskrit means “the divine script.” Devanagari developed from the early Brahmi script, used in the third-century BCE inscriptions of the emperor Ashoka, and was the script in which Sanskrit, Hindi, and Marathi were written (Dalal, 2014). It was the first seed of political dissension between the two communities and well-suited the British as they had pursued this political strategy since the beginning. The Hindi-Urdu controversy began on the provincial level and gradually expanded to the national level in the following century (King, Fall-Winter-Spring-Summer 1977-1978).

The agitation of Hindus of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the replacement of Urdu (in Persian script) with Hindi (in the Devanagari script) as the court language continued for more than three decades from 1868 to 1900 (Brass, 1974).

A strong feeling of Hindu identity and the promotion of Hindu culture meant portraying Hindus as the dominant and superior community and other religious communities—particularly Muslims—as subordinate or secondary. Muslims in India, a country with a predominately Hindu population, felt marginalized, and their future was in doubt.

Muslims Reaction on Hindu Nationalism

In response to British political domination, and Hindu economic, social, and lingual aberration, the idea of Muslim nationalism evolved in India. Before focusing on the emergence of Muslim nationalism in India a brief history of Muslims in India would contribute to strengthening the argument of the article.

Muslims had co-existed peacefully and connected with Hindus since the inception of Islam. The teachings of Islam started spreading in the Arabian Peninsula in 610 AD, however, in much earlier times and pre-dated Islam, the Arab traders had

Rise of English Power and Evolution of Nationalism in India in the 19th Century: A Historical Study

been engaged in Malabar's trade located on the southwestern coast of India, The Arab traders settled on these coasts and there were historic ties between South Arabia and southwestern India (Prange, 2018). In the ports of South India, Jews were traditionally believed to have been settled since the time of King Solomon, and also the Nestorian Christians on the eastern and western coasts of South India. Nestorian Christians came originally from Sasanian Iran and whose crosses, one with a Pahlavi inscription, have been preserved in some places of India (Shokoohy, 2023).

Islam expanded peacefully along old and well-established trade routes of Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. The process of settlement and conversion of an Islamic community in the Malabar Coast of southwestern India shaped the evolution of particular Muslim societies. The Hindu rulers of Kerala depended upon commercial duties for the bulk of their public revenues, and they welcomed foreign merchants guaranteed the security of their trade, and granted their settlements autonomy as culturally or religiously defined commercial communities (Dale, *Studia Islamica*, 1990).

Contrary to the general belief that Islam reached Sindh, a part of India through Muhammad bin Qasim, three of the first mosques were built during the life of the last prophet (PBUH) by Arab traders and local people in India. The Barvadda mosque in Ghogha, Gujarat was the first mosque built in 623 CE, the Cheraman Jumma Masjid in Karrassa (629 CE) and the Palaiya Jumma Palli (or old Jumma Masjid 628-630 CE) in Kilakarai, Tamil Nadu (Sayeed, 2021).ⁱ Afterwards, in 712 AD an Arab force from its bases in Shiraz in Southern Persia advanced upon the Kingdom of Sindh (Bede, 2017)ⁱⁱ eighty years after the passing of the last Prophet (PBUH) in 632 AD.

Following the Arabs, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni (998-1030), who belonged to the Turkic dynasty of Ghaznavids (Bellew, 1891)ⁱⁱⁱ attacked India several times. He introduced the Persian language in India, which later became the official and literary language (Ikram, 1992). After about two centuries in 1206 Muslims from Central Asia were able to consolidate their rule throughout India which endured until 1857. This brief history of Arabs and Muslims is evident that there were deep-rooted relations between the Muslims and Hindus. Before the British Raj, the Muslims of India lived with the Hindus as Indians or Hindustanis. They professed different religions but lived together in the spirit of being one undivided people till the middle of the 19th century (Chitkara, 2004).

Despite being a minority, Muslim rule left behind a rich legacy of contributions to India in the form of construction, literature, art, language, and magnificent architecture. The native inhabitants of India, Hindus lived in harmony with Muslims, and there was no significant conflict similar to the War of Independence in 1857. However, the language issue sparked nationalist sentiments among Hindus and Muslims. Urdu, which was developed during the Muslim rule period in India, formed the core of this issue. Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan, a British employee since 1838, was the first Muslim leader who laid the foundation of

Imrana Begum

Muslim nationalism in India. He was promoted to a judge on August 15, 1867, and transferred to Benares (a city in northern India) where language controversy began. Mr. Shakespeare was the Divisional Commissioner of Benaras when Hindu demonstrators demanded the replacement of Urdu with Hindi. He was among the British officers who were saved by Sir Syed during the War of 1857. The protest of Hindu community against Urdu language and in favor of Hindi became a turning point in Syed's life. In those days, Sir Syed, in his conversation with Mr. Shakespeare said, "I am now convinced that the Hindus and Muslims could never become one nation as their religion and way of life was quite distinct from one another." Sir Syed's political philosophy initiated the trend that ultimately convinced the Muslims that they and the Hindus constituted two irreconcilable nations (Burke & Quraishi, 1995). Earlier, he used to consider both Hindus and Muslims as one *qawm* ('nation'), arguing that "the word *qawm* is used for the inhabitants of a country, even though they have characteristics of their own (Mujahid, *Islamic Studies*, Spring 1999)."

Syed Ahmed Khan also reacted to the lingual demand in a letter written during his stay in England on April 29, 1870, to Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, prophesying that the Hindu attempt to replace Urdu with Hindi would strike at the root of Hindu-Muslim unity (Ikram, 1992). The Hindi-Urdu controversy of the nineteenth century reached its greatest intensity in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh rather than elsewhere (Rieck, 2015). The two movements played a vital role in the political, cultural, and religious awakening of Hindus and Muslims in India; the Aligarh Muslim Movement and the Arya Samaj movement. Both movements launched in the aftermath of the War of Independence 1875 reflected a powerful urge to reform and reaffirm traditional religious paradigms in their quest for modernization (Ishwaran, 1999).

In the Muslim renaissance, the Aligarh movement had a pivotal role in India. Aligarh was a small town in the United Provinces that stretches between the Ganga and Jamuna rivers in an area of 112 kilometers in length and 72 kilometers in breadth (Muhammad, 2002), was chosen by Sir Syed as a center of Muslims learning. It made a significant contribution to various aspects including educational advancement, social coherence, national consolidation, and fostering solidarity among the Muslims (Ikram, 1992). After serving thirty-eight years Sir Syed Ahmed Khan retired from British service in 1876. His retirement enabled him to focus solely on the Aligarh movement (*Indian Book Chronicle*, 1997).

For the development of the Hindu society, on April 6, 1875, Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati established the Arya Samaj in Bombay. It operated under the Vedic principles and established a nationwide network of gurukuls, colleges, and schools for both boys and girls where Hindi was used as the primary language of instruction (Pruthi, 2004).

Another significant development that contributed to nationalism was the representation of Indians in legislative bodies. In India's legislative history, the Indian Council Act of 1861 decentralized legislative powers and involved Indians

Rise of English Power and Evolution of Nationalism in India in the 19th Century: A Historical Study

with the law-making process. The Legislative Council at Calcutta authorised to pass laws for the whole British India, and the Legislative Councils of Bombay, and Madras could make laws of their respective presidencies. It laid the foundation of the legislative devolution policy (Gupta, 2011). In 1878 Lord Lytton nominated Sir Sayed on the Imperial Legislative Council. And his term of appointment was renewed by Lord Ripon. But after some time, he resigned owing to his preoccupation with the affairs of the Aligarh College (Cughtia, 2005).

Following the sufficient class of educated Indians, the British decided to introduce the Western political system based on local participation in governance. In 1885 the first political party the Indian National Congress, was founded by a British retired civil official Allan Octavian Hume. At a time when communal and national sentiments were growing among the Indians, the political party was named as Indian National Congress indicating that all Indians were one nation. Sir Sayed realized that Muslims would be easily subjugated by the Hindus if they were involved in politics. And all his attempts to bridge the gap between the British and the Muslims would be widened again. Keeping in view he established the Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1886 as a distinct forum for Muslims in India. He stated that the Conference was a platform to bring together Muslims from all regions of India to discuss their differing problems and to promote national brotherhood. He also formed another organization the *Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu* (organization for the development of Urdu). Such organizations helped enhance the Indian Muslims' consciousness of themselves as a community (Minault, 1982).

The rise of nationalism has made Indians aware of their legal rights. following the establishment of the Congress. The need for greater Indian representation in the legislature and the urge for administrative reforms gained momentum in 1885 (Chaurasia, 2002). The Congress started calling for election bodies and representative government. Sir Sayed opposed any political agitation for a representative government at the time because of the Muslims' economic hardship and lack of education. He argued that such agitation could only invite British retaliation, especially against the Muslims. Nor could the Muslims in their parlous state of education, economic backwardness, and numerical inferiority compete with Hindus in elections. The Muslims would have one vote to Hindus four votes. In the northwest provinces, Sir Sayed advocated for equitable representation for Muslims and Hindus. For distinct electorates and weights, as well as for nomination in cases when elections failed to fill the Muslim quota. These plans, which are still unperceived, laid the groundwork for the Muslim proposal at Simla in 1906 and ultimately planted the seeds for Pakistan. Pakistan would not have existed if there had not been distinct electorates (Mujahid, Spring 1999). By 1885, the Muslim support of the British Raj had passed, and a new generation of Muslim leaders emerged such as Muhsin-al-Mulk and Viqar-ul-Mulk (Graham, 1909). The Honorary Secretary of the M.A.O. College in Aligarh, Mohsin-ul-Mulk, was chosen by the Board of Trustees (A.1915), the successor of Sir Syed. In the middle

Imrana Begum

of the 1890s, there were several signs of increasing disenchantment among Muslims with British policy. The Gladstonian Council Act extended Indian membership in the imperial and provincial legislative bodies (Biagini, 2000). Syed Ahmed was concerned when the Legislative Council extended to include electoral constituencies in 1892, he believed that it would harm Muslim interests and bring the Hindu majority into power. The agitation by the Hindus against cow slaughter in 1894 was also seen as a direct threat to Muslim identity.

For the rest of the 19th century, language, religion, and representation issues dominated Indian politics. The lingual issue reached its peak during the visit of the Hunter Commission in 1882 (King, Fall-Winter-Spring-Summer 1977-1978) and the very last years of the 19th century, a decision was made on April 18, 1900, to grant the Devanagari script in the courts of the province (Rai, 2001). However, it did not pacify nationalist sentiments.

In the 20th century, Muslim nationalism was directed to a Muslim nation-state in the northern parts and a Hindu nation-state comprising the central and western areas of India.

Comparison and Analysis

The rise of nationalism in Europe and India shared certain similarities and differences. In Europe, various empires, monarchies, and kingdoms existed in distinct regions, each characterized by different cultures, languages, and dialects. These regions also had unique historical identities. However, nationalism grew in India during the colonial period although significant cultural and linguistic diversity, and historical identities were there Before the British period. There was a similar connection between European and Indian imperial aspirations. Before the British Indian emperors used geographical conquests to increase their power and wealth, just like European monarchs did.

While Europe predominantly Christian, with various denominations, India had religious diversity with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam as the major religions.

The concept of nation and nationalism initially took root in Europe, a continent comprising many distinct countries, each ruled by its sovereign. In contrast, India was a vast subcontinent that encompasses an extensive part of South Asia. when the British came to India for trade, it was ruled by the Muslim Mughal dynasty.

European nationalism evolved following pivotal events such as the Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution, and the rejection of feudalism. These transformative moments ushered in new ideas about political and territorial identity, individual rights, reason, and democracy. Contrarily, India did not experience any such revolution. Instead, the people of India considered themselves Indians or Hindustanis and were united in their determination to oust the British colonial occupiers. The Indian War of Independence although unsuccessful, posed a significant threat to British rule. In response, the British began categorizing

Rise of English Power and Evolution of Nationalism in India in the 19th Century: A Historical Study

Indians on a communal basis as part of their divide-and-rule policy. This policy fostered sentiments of cultural, linguistic, and religious divisions among the two largest communities in India. These divisions were rooted in different historical identities and gradually laid the foundation for the development of the concepts of nation and nationalism in India.

Nationalism that rose in India in the last decades of the 19th century played a central role in the 20th century eventually leading to the division of India and the creation of two separate nation-states. Based on communal lines, the division resulted in a situation where the larger Muslim community lived in India. Additionally, the Kashmir region became a contentious point of dispute between Pakistan and India. Moreover, the linguistic disputes did not end even after the creation of Pakistan and they re-emerged following the creation of Pakistan, further fragmented the nation. It ultimately led to the creation of a third nation-state, Bangladesh, in 1971. In India, during this period, there was also an ethno-religious movement known as the “Khalistan movement,” that demanded a separate homeland for the Sikh community. Verily, the subcontinent had a history of people coexisting in relative peace and harmony. This is evident in the absence of a conflict of the scale of the 1857 war and the absence of a concept like the two-nation theory, which later played a decisive role in the fragmentation of the subcontinent.

Conclusion

Before the advent of the British Raj, the people of India were not familiar with the concept of nationalism. The Muslim rulers often assimilated themselves into the local social, cultural, and political landscape of India. Their efforts extended to fostering unity among various communities. The Indian War of Independence in 1857 emerged as a threat to British rule. Due to the great diversity in Indian society, the British began to categorize people along communal lines. British intervention in educational, linguistic, religious, social, and economic matters exposed differences among the Indians. The British language policy replacing Persian with English and adopting regional vernacular languages further exacerbated divisions. Language and their writing scripts were viewed through the lens of religion. The communal divisions initiated by the British ultimately gave rise to nationalism in India. The Hindu nationalism, arising in the 19th century asserted India as a Hindu nation and Hindus as the rightful owners of the land. In response to Hindu nationalism, Muslim nationalism emerged as a reaction.

The rise of English nationalism in the 19th century had profound and lasting effects on Indian politics in the 20th century. The initial communal tension escalated into extremism and eventually contributed to the disintegration of India and the formation of two separate nation-states. It left a legacy of pervasive and pernicious communal divisions. These historical divisions continue to exert a

significant influence on India's social fabric and political landscape, even in contemporary times.

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Rise of English Power and Evolution of Nationalism in India in the 19th Century: A Historical Study

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Imrana Begum

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