

Lesson 20

NATIONALISM

Summary

Nationalism as an idea first developed in Europe during the 19th century. In Europe this idea was linked to industrialization and the onset of modern industrial economy. Indian Nationalism was different from European Nationalism. The process of industrialization was very slow in India and India was largely an agrarian economy. Nationalism in India developed primarily as a response to the British rule. It was also aimed at uniting the people of India. The idea of Nationalism was manifested in many fields-culture, economy, religion etc. Nationalism as an idea helped in building a powerful national movement in India.

NATIONALISM: ORIGIN & MEANING

- Nationalism, in the sense in which we use it today, did not exist in India before the 19th century.
- Nationalism in India developed primarily as a response to the British rule.
- A combined opposition to British rule and a desire to achieve national unity lay at the heart of Indian nationalism.

CULTURE AND NATIONALISM

It was in the field of culture that the ideas of nationalism was expressed first. This happened at two levels:

- A desire to bring about reforms in it by removing some socially undesirable feature of Indian culture like caste system, religious superstitions, priesthood, discrimination against women etc.
- Secondly, an attempt was also made by the Indians to oppose the British encroachment in the Indian culture.

ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

- The origins of economic nationalism 19th century was awakened by Indian leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade and Romesh Chandra Dutt.
- The relevance of economic nationalism, as formulated by the nationalist leaders.

RELIGION AND NATIONALISM

- Religion was a very important moral force in the Indian society.
- On the one hand, leaders like Mahatma Gandhi welcomed the use of religion for nationalist mobilization.
- They used the symbols and language of Hinduism, Islam and other religions too.
- Activities of organizations like Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League.
- Whereas the leaders of Hindu Mahasabha confined their activities only to Hindu, those of the Muslim League appealed only to Muslims.

Evaluate Yourself

- Q. Trace the origin of nationalism.
- Q. Explain cultural nationalism.
- Q. Describe economic nationalism.