

### **The Early Nationalists:**

- The period from 1885 to 1905 was dominated by a group of people drawn from the educated middle class, called the *Early Nationalists*.
- The Early Nationalists asked for constitutional and other reforms within the framework of the British Rule because they had faith in the British sense of justice and fair play.
- The famous Early nationalist Leaders included WC. Bonnerjee, Rashbehari Ghosh, Surendranath Bannerjee, R.C. Dutt, Dadabhai Naoroji, gopal Krishna Gokhle, Subramania Iyer.

### **Demands of the Early Nationalists:**

- The Early Nationalists wanted to win freedom for the country through gradual process as they believed that India should gradually move towards democratic self-government.
- They demanded reduction in land revenue, protection of peasants, development of banking, and industrial growth through trade protection.
- In the administrative sphere, they demanded Indianisation of services through simultaneous ICS examination in India and England, complete separation of the executive and the judiciary and wider employment of Indians in higher grades.
- They defended their civil rights and demanded freedom of speech, press and association.

### **Methods of the Early Nationalists:**

- They relied on constitutional and peaceful methods and avoided violence and confrontation.
- They made use of three Ps i.e. prayers, petitions and protests to achieve their objectives.

### **Achievements of the Early Nationalists:**

- They aroused the feeling of one nation.
- They trained Indians in the art of political work.

- They exposed the true nature of the British rule in India.
- They pressurised the British government to introduce certain reforms like the appointment of a Public Service commission, holding of ICS examination simultaneously in England and India and appointment of the Welby Commission on Indian Expenditure.

### **British Attitude towards the Early Nationalists:**

- In the beginning the British government looked upon the Early Nationalists with favour.
- Gradually, as the influence of the congress increased, the British officials began to criticise the congress and became indifferent to their demands. They condemned its leaders as *disloyal babus*.
- In 1890, the Government employees were forbidden from participating in the Congress deliberations or attending its meetings.

### **Prominent Early nationalist Leaders:**

1. **Dadabhai Naoroji**: Popularly known as the *Grand Old Man of India*.
  - He looked upon as India's unofficial ambassador to England during his stay in England from 1855 to 1969 because he made England the centre of his political activities and spared no efforts in educating British Public on Indian affairs.
  - He was associated with the Indian National congress right from the beginning. He was thrice elected as the President of the INC in 1886, 1893, 1906.
  - He was the first Indian to become a member of the House of Commons.
  - He was the first person to make the demand for Swaraj from the Congress platform at its Kolkotta session in 1906.
  - In 1865, he founded the London India society in collaboration with W.C Bonerjee.
  - He exposed the exploiting nature of the British rule in India by drawing the attention of the Indians towards the 'drain of wealth' from India to Great Britain and resulting poverty of the Indians. He presented his Drain Theory in the book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*.
2. **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**:
  - He was a great patriot, social reformer and an educationist.
  - In 1905, he founded the servants of India Society and went to England and South Africa to further the cause of India's struggle for freedom.

- He is regarded as the “political guru’ of Mahatma Gandhi. Gokhle persuaded Gandhiji to return to India and join Indian public life.
3. **Surendranath Banerjee:**
- He was a nationalist leader, popular journalist and educated educationist.
  - He was the first Indian to qualify for the Indian Civil service Examination.
  - He was elected to Bengal Legislative council four times.
  - He founded the India Association in 1876 to fight against the wrong policies of the British. He convened the INC in 1883. Its aims were (i) to educate people (ii) to create strong public opinion in the country, and (iii) to arouse political consciousness and unity.
  - He advocated constitutional methods to achieve the goal of self-government for India. He favoured the use of opposition where necessary and cooperation where possible.
  - He opposed the Arms Act, the Vernacular Press Act, the lowering of the age for appearing in the ICS Examination from 21 to 19 years, the Morley-Minto Reforms and the Partition of Bengal.

### **Short Answer Questions**

1. Which methods did the Early Nationalists use to achieve their objectives? **Ans:** Constitutional and peaceful methods based on 3 Ps, i.e., petitions, prayers, and protests.
2. What was the attitude of Early Nationalists towards the British? **Ans:** (i) They had faith in British sense of justice, fair play, honesty and integrity of the British. (ii) They did not regard British colonial rule as an obstacle but believed that the continuation of the British rule was in the interest of India.(iii) They hoped that the British would grant ‘Home Rule’ to Indians.
3. Mention any two constitutional demands made by the Early Nationalist. **Ans:** (i) Increase in the membership of Indians in the Legislative Assemblies and Legislative Councils. (ii) Swaraj or self-governance within the British Empire like the self-governing colonies of Canada and Australia.
4. Name two economic issues raised by the Early Nationalists. **Ans:** (i) Reduction in land revenue and availability of cheap credit (ii) Reduction in expenditure on army and the money thus saved to be spent on welfare activities such as health and education.
5. Name the abolition of two taxes demanded by the Early Nationalist. **Ans:** (i)Salt tax (ii) duty on sugar

6. Why did the Early Nationalist make a demand for the complete separation of the executive and the judiciary? **Ans:** To protect Indians from arbitrary and unjust acts of the police and bureaucracy.
7. What did the Early Nationalists demand for the industrial growth of India? **Ans:** (i) Trade protection by imposing heavy tax on imported goods (ii) Provision of loans for the development of iron, coal, paper and sugar industries in India.
8. Why did the Early Nationalist rely on constitutional means to achieve their goals? **Ans:** (i) They had faith in the British sense of justice (ii) They believed in patience and reconciliation rather than violence and confrontation (iii) They wanted to win freedom from the British rule by a gradual process by offering least resistance to the British government in India.
9. 9. Mention any two reforms made by the British government due to the efforts made by the Early Nationalists. **Ans:** (i) Appointment of Public Service Commission in 1886 (ii) Simultaneous ICS Examination in India and England.
10. What did the Early Nationalist oppose in the field of Civil liberties? **Ans:** (i) Restriction on the freedom of speech and freedom of press (ii) Restriction on right to assemble and form association.
11. Two criticisms levelled against the Early Nationalist. **Ans:** (i) They depended on generosity of the British instead of relying on their own strength. In the process they failed to achieve anything substantial from the British Govt.
12. Two achievements of the Early Nationalists. **Ans:** (i) They trained people in politics by popularising the ideas of democracy, civil liberties, secularism and nationalism (ii) They exposed the true nature of the British rule in India and weakened its foundations in India.

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