

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

Programme: Bachelor of Arts

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Unit: II

Module Name: Foundation of Indian National Congress

Module No: 08

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Notes:

▪ Introduction

- ✓ Indian National Congress (INC) is one of the oldest and prominent political party.
- ✓ It played an important role in the freedom struggle of India.
- ✓ It gave a platform for many leaders to exhibit their political skills.
- ✓ Leaders like Gokhale, Tilak, Gandhi and many more were associated with INC.
- ✓ INC was founded on 28th December 1885 at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College, Bombay by Allan Octavian Hume, a retired British civil servant.
- ✓ The session was attended by 72 Members.
- ✓ The first president of INC was Womeshchandra Bannerji.
- ✓ A. O. Hume became the General Secretary of INC.

▪ Nationalistic Theory

- ✓ After the 1857 Revolt, many political associations were set up such as Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, Indian Association, Madras Mahasabha, Bombay Presidency Association etc.
- ✓ All these associations were regional and involved in solving local issues, however national issues were ignored.
- ✓ British policies were affecting the national interest.
- ✓ Exploitations, racial discriminations were targeted on the masses.
- ✓ All these factors led to anger towards the colonial rule.
- ✓ The people felt a need to set up a national organization which could raise their voice and fight for their rights and equality.
- ✓ Thus, this led to the formation of the Indian National Congress (INC).
- ✓ People had faith in the INC as it was made of educated and intellectual leaders who could raise their demands before the British Government.
- ✓ A sense of nationalism arose among the people against the British rule.

▪ Safety Valve Theory

- ✓ Lala Lajpat Rai coined the word 'Safety Valve' for INC in his newspaper "*Young India*" in 1916.
- ✓ As per this theory, the foundation of the Indian National Congress did not have any nationalistic approach, but it was the brainchild of Viceroy Lord Dufferin.
- ✓ The Revolt of 1857 gave a severe setback to the British Empire.
- ✓ Even though the revolt was suppressed, the British needed to be careful in the future not to have such revolts.
- ✓ Lord Dufferin with the help of A. O. Hume decided to set up one such organization who could work as a bridge between the Indians and British.

- ✓ The demands of the Indians should pass through INC through petitions.
 - ✓ INC was supposed to work as a safety valve which was similar to that of a pressure cooker.
 - ✓ INC leaders made the masses believe that the British rule is for their betterment and to improve their standard of living.
 - ✓ Thus, A. O. Hume met 12 leaders in Madras in 1884 and told them the objective of the meeting.
 - ✓ It was decided to meet on last 3 days of December i. e. 28th, 29th, and 30th December and form the INC.
 - ✓ Poona was decided as the venue of meeting.
 - ✓ Later due to outbreak of cholera, the venue was shifted to Bombay.
 - ✓ On 28th December 1885, the first national political party was founded with 72 members.
 - ✓ The prominent members who attended the meeting were Firozshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, Dadabhai Naoroji.
 - ✓ Most of the leaders were lawyers by profession.
- Working of INC
 - ✓ INC meeting was to be held annually on the last 3 days of December.
 - ✓ The President was to be chosen by elections.
 - ✓ In the session, the national concerned issues would be discussed.
 - ✓ At the end of the session, the resolutions would be passed.
 - ✓ The resolutions passed would be presented before the British Government through petitions.
 - ✓ The proceedings of the session would be published on local newspapers.

- **Demand made by INC**
 - ✓ Separation of Judiciary from Executive.
 - ✓ Civil Services Examinations to be held in India.
 - ✓ Direct elections for Legislative Assembly.
 - ✓ Reduction of taxes.
 - ✓ Freedom of Press.
 - ✓ Reduction of military expenses.
- **PPP Approach (Petition, Prayer, Protest)**
 - ✓ INC leaders had a great faith in the colonial rule.
 - ✓ They believed that the British rule would take India on the path of development.
 - ✓ They remained loyal to the British Government and their protests were not aggressive in nature.
 - ✓ INC was supported by other British officials such as Sir William Weddenburg, George Yule.
 - ✓ INC was fully under the supervision of British Government.
 - ✓ According to prominent scholars, if the INC was against the policy of British, Lord Dufferin would have suspended it as soon it was set up.
- **Sessions of INC**
 - **First Session**
 - ✓ 1885 at Bombay
 - ✓ Womeshchandra Baneerji
 - **Second Session**
 - ✓ 1886 at Calcutta
 - ✓ D. Nouroji
 - **Third Session**
 - ✓ 1887 at Madras

- ✓ Badruddin Tyabji
- Fourth Session
 - ✓ 1888 at Allahabad
 - ✓ George Yule
- Fifth Session
 - ✓ 1889 at Bombay
 - ✓ William Widdernburn
- Sixth Session
 - ✓ 1890 at Calcutta
 - ✓ Ferozshah Mehta
- The session of 1907 at Surat led to the split of the INC.
- In 1917 session, Annie Besant became first women President of INC.
- Failure of INC
 - ✓ Remained as the party of classes and not masses.
 - ✓ Failed to connect with the masses.
 - ✓ Remained loyal to the British Government.
 - ✓ Split in the INC at Surat Session which led to creation of Moderates and Extremists.
- Summary
 - ✓ Initially, INC members remained loyal to colonial power.
 - ✓ INC was to become the voice of Indians but it was not heard by the colonial power.
 - ✓ Later, most of the national leaders associated with INC, left the party due to differences to form their own organization.