

# **THE REFORM MOVEMENTS IN INDIA AND SRI LANKA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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**BY**

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**M.A.S.R. Sanjeevi Manthrirathne**



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## *Certificate*

Certified that the present research work entitled “**Reform Movements In India And Sri Lanka: A Comparative Study**”, submitted by **M.A.S.R. Sanjeevi Manthrirathe** through the Institute of Kashmir Studies for the award of the degree of Doctor of philosophy (Ph D) in History is a bonafide research work and has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any other degree to the best of my knowledge.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b><i>CHJ</i></b>	Ceylon Historical Journal
<b><i>CJHSS</i></b>	Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Science
<b><i>IJHS</i></b>	Indian Journal of History of Science
<b><i>JRASL (NS)</i></b>	Journal of Royal Asiatic Sri Lanka (New Series)
<b><i>JPHS</i></b>	Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society
<b><i>JRAS (CB)</i></b>	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch)
<b><i>JRAS (BGI)</i></b>	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society (Great Britain and Ireland)
<b><i>JAS</i></b>	Journal of the Asian Studies
<b><i>C. O.</i></b>	Colonial Office Records
<b><i>CCP</i></b>	Colebrook Cameron Papers
<b><i>HBCNC</i></b>	Hand Book of the Ceylon National Congress
<b><i>UCHC</i></b>	University of Ceylon History of Ceylon

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India and Sri Lanka, the two subjugated countries under the British Imperialism, witnessed a series of revivalist/reformist movements during the nineteenth century aimed at making people conscious about the religious traditions, spiritual and ideological foundations, the glorious past of the respective countries. The founding fathers of the movements made exhortations to the masses to go back their religious traditions and to restore their pristine purity and not to get influenced by the tenets of Christianity besides also appealing them to ward off from entering into its fold.

The term renaissance meaning ‘rebirth’ was originally applied to an intellectual and artistic movement that began in Italy in the 14<sup>th</sup> century culminated there in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and influenced other parts of Europe in a variety of way.<sup>1</sup> Before explaining the reform movements in India and Sri Lanka, it is necessary for holistic understanding to define and elaborate the terms such as ‘renaissance’ and ‘reform’. The renaissance signified a rebirth of the human spirit in the attainment of liberty, self-confidence and optimism. It was a conception of the new human, the individual motivated by fame and glory, self-actualization and happiness, rather than self-denial and religious faith that form essence of the renaissance. On the other hand reformation was a religious movement that swept Europe in the sixteenth century challenging the authority, doctrine and liturgy of the Roman churches.<sup>2</sup> In many ways the reformation was the repudiation of renaissance, a reaction against the humanism, classism and secularism. No part of the world remained uninfluenced by such ideas of renaissance and reformation. In the same manner such terms began to be used by Indian and Sri Lankan historians to indicate the social changes and cultural renaissance which led to the emergence of these

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1 John M. Najemy, (ed.), *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance: 1300-1550*, London, Oxford University Press, 2004, p.89.

2 *Ibid.*

countries from the Medieval to Modern Age. It also set in motion those nations to raise their voice against the exploitation of the foreign rule.

The reform movements could be broadly termed social movements because every such movement aimed at ameliorating and bettering the conditions of the people at large. The term social movement was introduced in 1848 by the German Sociologist Lorenz Von Stein in his book on 'The History of the Social Movement in France, 1789-1850', edited, and translated by Kaethe Mengelbergin which he elaborately introduced and defined the term social movement for scholarly discussions.<sup>1</sup>

As far as the reform movements are concerned a number of scholars have presented them under the context of social movements which included Charles Tilly, a known sociologist who has defined social movements as a series of contentious performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others. Further he says that social movements are a major vehicle for ordinary people's participation in public politics.<sup>2</sup>

Tilly argues that there are three major elements in a social movement.

- i. Campaigns: a sustained, organized public effort in making collective moves targeting authorities;
- ii. Repertoire: employment of combinations from among the following forms of political action: creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering;

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1 Von Stein Lorenz, *The History of the Social Movement in France, 1789-1850*, edited, and translated by Kaethe Mengelberg, Bedminster Press, 1964, pp.79-90.

2 Charles Tilly, *Social Movements 1768-2004*, London: Paradigm Publishers, 2004, pp.262-265.

- iii. Displays: participants concerted public representation of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitments on the part of themselves and or their constituencies.<sup>1</sup>

The reform movement in India and Sri Lanka during 19<sup>th</sup> century amply demonstrates what Tilly has mentioned in his second element.

In the context of Indian civilization and culture the term ‘reform’ is used to indicate changes in religious beliefs or social practices. This is similar in Sri Lanka also. According to sociologists there are several types of social movements. The main focus of Indian and Sri Lankan social movements was not only to make people conscious about various issues of social and religious nature but also to gain freedom from British imperialists.

The British imperialists in the subjugated countries made every conscious effort towards economic exploitation during their prolonged rule of almost two centuries (from 1757 to 1947 in case of India and from 1796 to 1948 in case of Ceylon).<sup>\*</sup> However, one cannot overlook the fact that this imperial rule had unwittingly created some advantages for the natives but disadvantages and deprivations were more obvious. The greatest demerit of this rule was that the core spirit and enterprise of the subjugated nation’s ideological institutions were deteriorated; indigenous languages, art forms and other foundations and structures were declined.

The renaissance movements both in India and Sri Lanka had a long history which marked the beginning of a new era with movements essential for a complete reformation and liberation from the British yoke.<sup>2</sup> Hence, in spite of political convulsion and economic retrogression, the first century of British rule

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1 Charles Tilly, *Social Movements 1768-2004*, London: Paradigm Publishers, 2004, pp.262-265.

\* Under 1972 Constitution Ceylon named as Sri Lanka.

2 Loyd, Trevor Owen., *The British Empire 1558–1995*, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 62-75.

(1757-1858) is in certain respect a memorable epoch in their history. The period witnessed a remarkable outburst of intellectual activity in India and Sri Lanka and a radical transformation in their social and religious behavior and ideas. Through the medium of British education came the liberal ideas of the West which stirred the people and roused them from the slumber of ages. A critical outlook on the past and new aspirations for the future marked the new awakening. Reason and judgment took the place of faith and belief superstition yielded to science, immortality was replaced by progress, and a zeal for reform against social disabilities and abuses over powered age-long apathy and inertia, and a complacent acquiescence in whatever was current in society.<sup>1</sup> The traditional meaning of the *Sastras* was subjected to critical examination and new conceptions of morality and religion remodeled the orthodox beliefs and habits. As a result of all these changes, two countries passed from the medieval to the modern age.

Once the British had established themselves in Sri Lanka, they aggressively expanded their territorial possessions by a combination of annexation and intervention, a policy that paralleled the approach pursued by Lord Wellesley in India in the early nineteenth century. This strategy directly threatened the continued existence of the Sri Lanka, Kingdom of Kandy. Unrest at the Kandyan court between a ruling dynasty of alien southern Indian antecedents and powerful indigenous Sinhalese chieftains provided opportunities for British interference.<sup>2</sup> Kandyan headmen and the British signed a treaty known as the Kandyan Convention on 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1815.<sup>3</sup> The treaty decreed that the Kandyan provinces be brought under British sovereignty and that all the traditional privileges of the chiefs be maintained. The Kingdom

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1 Loyd, Trevor Owen., *The British Empire 1558–1995*, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 62-75.

2 De Silva K.M., *History of Sri Lanka*, Colombo, Vijitha Yapa Publishers, 2003, pp.239-356.

3 *The Proclamation of 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1815 or The Kandyan Convention in a Revised Edition of the Legislative of Ceylon*, vol. 1, Colombo, 1923, pp. 59-60.

of Kandy was also to be governed according to its customary Buddhist laws and institutions but would be under the administration of a British “resident” at Kandy, who would, in all but name, take the place of the monarch.

In 1829 the British Colonial Office sent a Royal Commission of Eastern Inquiry the Colebrook-Cameron Commission to assess the administration of the island. The legal and economic proposals made by the Commission in 1833 were innovative and radical.\* The proposed reforms opposed mercantilism, state monopolies, discriminatory administrative regulations, and, in general, any interference in the economy.<sup>1</sup>

As experienced and done in India rules and regulations pertaining to lands rights of Sri Lanka had been changed under British administrative system and it was regulated to establish tax payment procedure. The colonial rulers intended to bring down the power of Kandyan headmen by introducing the tax payment system. It led to the Kandyan rebellion in 1818.<sup>2</sup> Civil service scheme of the country was introduced by the British to coastal area in 1802 a later on the superstition of the Governor Thomas Maitland and it spread to the upcountry.

The introduction of English education system launched through Protestant Missionary Colleges during the period of the Governor Robert Brownrig proved blessing for many people as the local headmen had opportunities to send their children to England as per the requirements of the British government and British rulers encouraged them to study in United Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Thus Mr. Samuwel Dias, Hendry Dias, and Hendry de Seram were among the first beneficiaries of the Western education in Sri Lanka.

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\* The members of the 1833 Constitution were liberalists and their policies also progressive.

1 Mendis G.C. (Edited) *The Colebrook-Cameron Papers, vol. 1: Documents on British Colonial Policy in Ceylon 1796-1833*“Introduction”, Oxford, 1956, pp. xxxvii-xli.

2. Vimalananda, Tennakoon, *The Great Rebellion of 1818: The Story of The First War of Independence and Betrayal of the Nation*. Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1970, pp.10-67.

3 Siriwardana, P.K.W., *Buddhism and Christianity*, Thisara Press, Colombo, 1955, pp. 32-34.

Keeping into consideration the mercantilist nature of the British rule Edward Barnes began experimenting with a variety of commercial crops, such as coffee, cinchona as well as tea. These experiments provided the foundation of the plantation, an economic system which became exploitative in nature a decade later. In administrative matters, the British were initially careful not to change the basis of existing social order such as caste system. A sharp distinction was made between the rulers and the ruled but in due course of time the distinction became less defined.<sup>1</sup>

Among all of the commercial crops experimented with during the British rule there was steady decline of coffee and it was only tea that showed the signs of success. It is important to note that the tea estates needed a completely different type of labor force than had been required by the coffee. Tea was harvested throughout the year and required a permanent labor force. Waves of Indian Tamil immigrants settled on the estates thereby changing the demographical profile of the Island and eventually became a large and permanent underclass that endured abominable working conditions and squalid housing. The huge number of immigrants is evidenced from the census of 1911 which recorded the number of Indian labourers in Sri Lanka at about 500,000- about 12 percent of the island's total population.<sup>2</sup>

With the development of plantations sector in Ceylon, there emerged a class capitalist comprising those who had large farms and close associations with British rulers and in fact became the collaborators of the foreign rule in the country. In the emerging situation, the administration also offered a tiny position in local administration to the deprived sections of the society, like village headmen. In this connection the appointments of Jeranio de Soysa who

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1 Bandarage Ashoka, *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, lake house investment LTD, Colombo, 1950.pp.66-84.

2 Jayewardene Kumari, *The rise of the labour movements in Ceylon*, Duke University Press, Edinburg, 1972, pp.2.

belonged to “Karawe” caste\* for the post of Chief Mudaliyar may be cited as an example. As people were ruled by the middle class headmen and the new tax scheme was too burdensome, the result was an organized resistance movement in 1848 aiming at driving the British out of the Indian soil.<sup>1</sup>

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, the Buddhist clergy attempted to reform the Sangha (religious community), particularly as a reaction against Christian missionary activities. In 1873 there was at Panadura another public controversy between Protestant Christians and Buddhist. Thousands of Buddhists assembled to hear the discussion and showed their great interest in their religion and also their anxiety about its future. The chief figure at this controversy was Migettuvatte Gunananda, who had taken part in some of the previous controversies. By his oratory he exercised an immense influence over the minds of his hearers and gave strength to the cause of Buddhism.<sup>2</sup>

The controversy ended peacefully but had far-reaching effects. Discussions with regard to the merits and defects of Buddhism and Christianity continued in the Sinhalese journals run by Buddhists, Roman Catholic and Protestants. An account of the controversy reached colonel Olcott who was to play an important part in the history of Sri Lanka Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> At this time with advance in scientific studies there was much interest among the educated classes in Europe and America in the religious institutions of other races. In New York in 1875 the Russian Madame Blavatsky and the Americans H.S. Olcott founded the Theosophical Society with the discovery of truth in all

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\* Hierarchically the second high caste after ‘Goigama’ caste. Most of the “Karawe” people inhabited in coastal areas in Ceylon.

1 Patric Peebles, *Social Change in Nineteenth Century Ceylon* (Governor Sir Arthur Gordon and the Administration of Sri Lanka), New Delhi, 1995, pp.243-246.

2 Malalgoda, K., *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900: A study in Revival and Change*, University of California Press, 1976, pp.166-169.

3 Olcott, H.S., *Old Diary Leaves*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, Madras, 1928, p.157.



religion as one of its objects.<sup>1</sup> In 1878 they made Adyar in Madras their headquarters and began the study of Hinduism. In 1880 Olcott came to Ceylon and adopted Buddhism. He and his Western followers championed Buddhist aims and practices idealized Sri Lanka past and placed Buddhism on a higher plane than Christianity which they opposed as an exotic religion. Their influence definitely encouraged the revival of Buddhism which the Christian missionaries had tried to discredit.<sup>2</sup> A number of Buddhist Sunday and other schools were also opened and in 1890 they numbered nearly fifty.<sup>3</sup>

The zeal for new organizations did not prevent the Buddhists from developing their ancient institutions. In the ancient days these were established and maintained by the king and the chief. That work was now undertaken by members of the new middle class who had acquired wealth by taking to new enterprises. In 1873 the Vidyodaya Pirivena was started at Maligakanda in Colombo with the learned scholar Rev. Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala as its principal. In 1876 Vidyalanakara Piriwena was established at Paliyagoda in Kalaniya with Rev. Rathmalana Sri Dharmaloka as its principal.<sup>4</sup>

This revival of Buddhism gave a new impetus to oriental studies. Early in the nineteenth century Christian missionaries and civil servants asserted by Buddhist scholars had begun to study Sinhalese. They had compiled dictionaries and produced works on Buddhism and Hinduism.<sup>5</sup> George Turnour had published in 1873 together with an English translation the first part of the Mahawamsa the ancient chronicle of Sri Lanka from its legendary beginnings to A.D.362. In 1852 James de Alwid had published an edition of the Sidath

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1 Malalasekara, G.P. (ed.), *Diamond Jubilee souvenir of the Buddhist Theosophical Society, 1880-1940*, 1940, p.04.

2 Olcott, H.S., *Old Diary Leaves*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, Madras, 1928, p.157.

3 Malalasekara G.P. (ed.), *Diamond Jubilee souvenir of the Buddhist Theosophical Society, 1880-1940*, Colombo, 1940, p.04.

4 Mendis, G.C., *Ceylon under the British*, Colombo, Apothecaries' Co. Ltd., 1952, pp.127-130.

5 Malalgoda, K., *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900: A study in Revival and Change*, University of California Press, 1976, pp.166-169.

Sagarawa the Sinhalese grammar written in the thirteenth century besides other Pali and Sinhalese works. The scholars who passed out of the Pirivena to edit and publish Sanskrit Pali and Sinhalese work and helped the study of these languages in the country.<sup>1</sup>

There had always been efforts on the part of the rulers and the ruled to safeguard the interests of their ideological and spiritual foundations. While the British rulers started to create a new society by introducing Catholic religion, in the same manner a particular group of Buddhists started creating local societies against the designs of the missionaries. A.E. Bultjens was a leading character among the Buddhist who was to start his services through Theosophical Society. Equally Anagarika Dharmapala was the most popular national leader of the society who worked zealously for the progress of Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> He joined the society in 1880 and his untiring services paved the way for the establishment of Mahabodhi Society (1891) and in order to give vent to his feelings and ideas he launched Buddhist Newspaper in 1906 under the title of “Sinhala Bauddhaya” (Sinhala Buddhist). The services he rendered through these institutions contributed a great deal towards the reawakening and making conscious the Buddhists of the Island.<sup>3</sup>

In Sri Lanka a good number of associations and other organizations emerged. The C. H. De Soysa was involved in establishing Ceylon Agricultural Association in 1882 for the need of traders of cinnamon.<sup>4</sup> This was later known as Ceylon National Association. James Pieris and Ponnambalam Ramanathan, were other leading figures of the association.<sup>5</sup> Plumbago Merchants Union was

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1 Mendis, G.C., *Ceylon under the British*, Colombo , Apothecaries' Co. Ltd., 1952, pp.127-130.

2 Karunaratna, D., *Anagarika Dharmapala*, Colombo, Gunasena and Co., pp.35-38

3 Malalgoda, K., *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900: A study in Revival and Change*, University of California Press, 1976, pp.166-169.

4 *The Ceylon Standard*, Supplement, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1906.

5 *The Ceylon Observer*, Over Land Edition, 26<sup>th</sup> September, 1888.

established in 1888 to meet the requirements of members of this trade.<sup>1</sup> Low Country Product Associations founded in 1907 to fulfill the needs of coconut planters.<sup>2</sup> Ceylon Social Reformed Society was established in 1905 for the protection of local customs and cultural values.<sup>3</sup> Temperance Movement was established in 1912 to counter the new act on the alcoholism introduced by the British Government. Ceylon Reform League was formed in 1915 to suggest the proposals for reforming the constitutional changes of the country. Ponnambalam Arunachalam, James Pieris,<sup>4</sup> W.A. de Silva, C .H.Z Fernando, Marcus Fernando were some leaders of this league. The list of the establishment of reformatory organizations was huge however, only a few with considerable significance have been focused.

The advent of renaissance was facilitated mainly by two groups of people. One group comprised those individuals who formed social and religious reform organizations with a view to spread socio-religious awareness and also awaken people to fight against the exploitative political system. As representatives of civil society these individuals formed reform organizations which aroused national feelings of the masses. The other group comprised members of the Constitutional Council who urged the British authorities to make suitable constitutional reforms. To create India and Sri Lanka on an entirely new foundation these organizations worked hand in glove. The present study will indeed focus on the problem of how far these voluntary social or religious reform organizations of civil society have contributed to achieve the objectives of the renaissance movement in both countries.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Wright, Arnold, *Twentieth Century Impression, Asian Educational Services*, 1999, p.588.

2 Nawarathna Bandara, A.M. *National Movements in Sri Lanka under the British Rule*, Colombo, 2007, pp. 310-15.

3 *Ibid.*, pp.315-30.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 310-15.

5 De Silva K.M., *History of Sri Lanka*, Colombo, Vijitha Yapa Publishers, 2003, pp. 239-353.

A great contrast existed between eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth-centuries in India. On one hand, India had a stagnating traditional culture and society at very low ebb; while on the other hand it possessed a still traditional society and the creative excitement of modernizing and of emerging as a new nation. The nineteenth century initiated this process of transformation in the religious, social, economic, political, and cultural spheres.<sup>1</sup> The impact of the British Raj influenced administration, legislation, trade, network of communications, industrialization and urbanization in India, affecting not only society as a whole but also the traditional pattern of social life. British scholars, educators and missionaries also impacted the cultural field in a variety of ways. The efforts put in by reformers in that it consciously reacted to the new situation and advocated deliberate changes in social and religious attitudes and customs with the purpose of safeguarding the cultural ethos and religious symbols in the fast changing India.<sup>2</sup> The reformers had a great impact on nineteenth-century India but there were also other factors affecting change. The nineteenth-century reform movement took up other issues and became closely conjoined to a political movement and consequently sought to influence political authority, administration, and legislation. This political movement eventually became an all-India nationalist movement. Whereas previously social reform was inextricably interwoven with religious motivation and improvement, in the nineteenth century, the relationship of the two fluctuated, and sometimes secular and rationalistic motives were the decisive ones.<sup>3</sup>

The British administration and European literature brought a constellation of fresh ideas which posed a challenge to the new intellectuals. Rationalism as the basis for ethical thinking, the idea of human progress and

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1 Benerji, S.N., *A Nation Making Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Public Life*, Delhi, 1925, p. 41.

2 Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar, *From Plassey to Partition: History of Modern India*, Oriental Black Swan publishers, 2013, pp. 13-157.

3 *Ibid.*

evolution, the possibility of scientifically engineering social change were all unfamiliar to the traditional society. The Christian missionaries also had a strong influence.<sup>1</sup> The nineteenth-century reformers starting with Raja Ram Mohan Roy, acknowledged their indebtedness even though certain aspects of missionary's activity were opposed. Initially, India had already produced a small social group, the English-educated intelligentsia, closely associated with British administration.<sup>2</sup> They quickly realized the lacunas and faults in the social and religious characteristics of society and thus they were the one who first of all propagated several ideas of reform amongst them. At this stage, there was no concern for the general people or any desire to transform the structure of society at large. The focus could have been on improving and reshaping their lives according to the new standards and the demands of the time.

Social reformers in Indian renaissance had germinated mostly from Bengal where the British first established their suzerainty. During the period under review many individuals of repute appeared on Indian scene and acted as the harbingers of change. Beginning with Raja Ram Mohan Roy and perhaps ending in the last days of Indian independence with Nirad C. Chaudary, reformist elements had incessantly procured multi-faceted results.

Devendranath Tagore formed Calcutta Brahma Samaj.<sup>3</sup> In the course of controversy with the Christians in 1845 the Vedas were publicly proclaimed as the basis of the religion of the Brahma Samaj. The next group of leaders from 1850 to 1856 included men like Kesab Chandrasen, Isvarchandra Vidyasagar, Dayananda Sarasvati, and Swami Vivekanada. Kesab established Sangat Sabha

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1 Oddie, G.A., *Social Protest in India; British Protestant Missionaries, and Social Reforms 1850-1900*, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 9-14.

2 Ghosh, S.C., *The History of Education in Modern India, 1757-1986*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1995, pp. 20-25.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Sastri, Sivanath, *History of the Brahma Samaj*, vol. I, Calcutta, 1911, p. 2.

and infused anew life into the almost dying Samaj. He spread Brahma Samaj branches, which had confined itself to Bengal initially, to many parts of India. He also formed Prartana Samaj.<sup>1</sup> Dyananda Sarasvati laid the foundations of the Arya Samaj.<sup>2</sup> On the whole, they kindled the interest of the fellow citizens to liberate the nation from subjugation, subordination and subjection of various forms of exploitation. Apart from emphasizing the social and personal freedom which was bound to evoke the sense and value of political freedom, Kesab indirectly contributed to the growth of nationalism in several other ways. The great respect which he commanded among all sections in India including Europeans and Christian missionaries and the honours heaped upon him during his visit to England increased the self-confidence of the Indians and helped the growth of Indian nationalism. A large number of individual members of the Brahma Samaj also made valuable contributions to India's struggle for political emancipation.<sup>3</sup>

There are various socio-religious reform organizations among the Muslims. The Wahabi Movement founded by Syed Ahmad of Rae Bareilly was the first resistance and well organized movement challenging British supremacy in India from 1820 to 1860. The leader of this movement was influenced by the teaching of Abdul Wahab of Arabia, but even more by the preaching of the famous theologian and scholar of Delhi Shah Waliullah. Syed Ahmed condemned all accretion to and innovations in Islam and advanced a return to the Prophet's times. The Wahabi Movement was basically a revivalist cum political movement. In the end the cherished desire for the establishment of the Muslim rule, the Wahabi leadership did not succeed.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Farquahar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movements of India*, Delhi, 1915, pp. 29-31.

2 Upadhyaya, Ganga Prasad, *The Origin, Scope and Mission of the Arya Samaj*, Allahabad, 1954, pp. 22-37.

3 W. Jones, Kenneth, *The New Cambridge History of India: Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, Cambridge, 2006, pp.139-141.

4 Ahmad Qeyamuddin., *The Wahabi Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1966, pp. 27-32.

The other important movement was the Faraizi Movement of Bengal. The movement in view of its socio-religious and economic stance, with the passage of time became a militant movement aimed at fighting against the atrocities inflicted upon the Muslims in various part of Bengal in the wake of the land settlements which would only take into consideration the British imperialism. The movement was founded by Haji Shariat Ullah. It did not succeed in its avowed objectives yet it created an enthusiasm among the Muslims to fight for their interests.<sup>1</sup>

The traditional revivalism was spearheaded by the Deoband movement. Founded in 1867 by theologians of the School of Wali-Ullah, the most prominent among whom was Muhammad Qasim Nanotawi. The principal objectives of the seminary at Deoband were to re-establish contact between the theologians and the educated Muslim middle class and to revive the study of Muslim religious and scholastic sciences.<sup>2</sup> As a religious university Deoband soon became an honored institution not only in Muslims India but also in the world of Islam at large and had a reputation second only to that of A-Azhar in Cairo.

Again, among the Muslims the Aligarh Movement was a religio-political movement which contributed a lot for the regeneration and revival of the Muslims of the Sub-continent. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and his colleagues by their combined efforts tried to equip the Muslims community of Sub-continent with modern knowledge based on English language and scientific western ideas.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan, *History of the Faraidi Movement in Bengal 1818–1906*, Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1965, pp. 68.

2 Guidere Mathieu, *Historical Dictionary of Islamic Fundamentalism*, London, Scarecrow Press, 2012, pp. 79-80.

3 Jain, M.S., *The Aligarh Movement its Origin and Development 1856-1908*, Agra, 1965, pp.20-32.

A comparative study of these institutions of both countries and their contribution to the renaissance before 1885 in India and 1919 in Ceylon is of paramount importance.

The reform movements played a vital role in religious and social spheres an aspect which has not so far been studied especially in Sri-Lanka where much thrust is laid towards political and economic history. Thus touching upon the socio-religious issues became a priority with the leaders of Sri Lanka and a sine quo non before a political movement on its sound footing was initiated.<sup>1</sup>

An attempt will be made in the succeeding pages to understand the background of the nature and the role of voluntary social and religious reform organizations that emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in India and Sri Lanka and their contribution to renaissance movements in both countries. An attempt will also be made to highlight the role of various organizations in making the British Administrative Policy manifested in the two countries and to evaluate the role played by these organizations in making people conscious about achieving independence from the British supremacy.

There is no dearth of material available on the subject in various libraries, seminaries, archives, administrative reports, census reports of India and Sri Lanka and in the India office Library London however, critical analysis of the socio-religious reform movements have not been made especially by the scholars of Sri Lanka. Thus the present study is an attempt to fill this long awaited gap while relying on both the conventional as well as non-conventional sources.

There are six chapters in the present thesis. A preliminary introduction about the Indian Historical background of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and the Sri

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1 Panikkar, K.N. (editor), *Studies in History: Special Issue on Intellectual History of Colonial India*, vol.3, no.1, 1987, pp. 18-20.



Lanka Historical background 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century will be briefly discussed with the aims and objectives in the first chapter.

This will be followed by a description of the administrative policy in India and Sri Lanka. A special attention is focused here on the pattern of this British administration before the National Congresses were formed both in India and Sri Lanka in year 1885 and 1919 respectively.

The third chapter ‘Emergence of Nationalism and Renaissance Movements in India and Sri Lanka’ deals with the administrative system introduced under the British domination in India and Sri Lanka. The chapter also aims at depicting the emergence of the middle class of both countries which benefitted from the English education. It also occasionally takes into consideration the freedom struggle initiated in other parts of the world against foreign domination and subjugation. Again a brief role of the educated middle class in various countries will be depicted with the purpose of creating consciousness among the Indian and Sri Lankan people and also building up a nationalist feeling and a national identity among them.

The fourth chapter ‘The Origin and Development of Reform Organizations in India and Sri Lanka’ discusses about the formation of civil reform organizations in these two countries. After consciousness was created among the citizens of India and Sri Lanka with the formation of various political, social economic as well as religious organizations, there was a need to have a strong organization to fight for their national identity. However our subject of discussion will be only with such an organization which was formed prior to the establishment of the National Congress in India and Sri Lanka.

“Evaluation of the Role Played by the Reform Organizations in the Renaissance Movements of India and Sri Lanka” is the fifth chapter of the study. In fact it is a review and analysis of the activities of the organizations

identified in earlier chapter. These organizations had been established for achieving various objectives of the peoples of both countries. Here especially deals with the struggles carried out by these organizations for protecting the rights of citizens and Law they managed to co-ordinate with the British government. The building up of a national identity and the formation of the basic foundation necessary for gaining independence for both countries from British domination are made basis for the future political course in both the countries. It was due to the energetic activities of these organizations that strong organizations called National Congresses were subsequently established in both countries espousing the cause of freedom from the clutches of foreign rule.

## 2.1 BRITISH ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY IN INDIA

### The British Conquest of India

The Mughal Empire, at its height, had imposed on the greater part of the Indian Sub-Continent a fair degree of political unity. Centralized administration, a uniform revenue policy, a network of inland trade fostered by Mughal peace and active encouragement to an expanding overseas commerce created conditions in which economic stimuli travelled fast enough from one part of the empire to another. Prices in the different ports and emporia moved along similar if not identical lines. The empire was of course not a firmly unified modern nation state and subsistence agriculture sustained a hard core of economic isolation in all but the most commercialized regions and stimulated an expansion of commerce and production effort. However, by the middle years of the eighteenth century the empire lay in ruins, its once vast possessions reduced to roughly a rectangular wedge of territory about 250 miles from North to South and 100 miles abroad.<sup>1</sup> A number of depredating forces, recalcitrant elements appeared on the scene and all those who had grabbed authority in their own territories did pay lip service to the sovereignty of the emperor, but, in fact were vultures hovering on the corpse of the empire, trying to tear away as large a chunk from it as others would permit.<sup>2</sup> The English East India Company having defeated its rivals in the contest of establishing its imperialist rule in India was consolidating its own position. In these conditions of turmoil and anarchy, fort was established in some pockets of Bengal where from actually its dream of carving out an empire began. Before dealing with the administrative measures of the British, it is necessary to offer a brief history with an underlying purpose of having a holistic understanding of the subject under review.

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<sup>1</sup> Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughal*, Cambridge, 1951, p.15.

<sup>2</sup> Qureshi, I.H., *Ulema in Politics*, Delhi, 1985, p.112.

The British first came to India as a trading company like other Europeans. The company which later came to be known as the East India Company was incorporated in London on December 31, 1600 under a charter of Queen Elizabeth. It had very humble beginnings in India. By 1623 it had established factories (Trading posts) at Surat, Broach, Ahmedabad, Agra, and Masulipatam. From the very beginning, it tried to combine trade and diplomacy with war and control of the territory where their factories were situated.<sup>1</sup>

Referring to the rise of the English power in India, Lord Palmerston said:

“The original settlers began with a factory and grew into a fort; the forts expanded to a district and the district to a province, and then came collisions with less civilized, neighbors’ injuries to be resented, attacks to be repelled and conflicts which always ended in victory and extension of territory. So gradually from one transaction to another grew up that state of things in which the East India Company invested itself with vast commercial privileges and most important political functions”.<sup>2</sup>

Palmerston was, in fact, mentioning a bare process and not properly defining it. His statement therefore requires to be viewed in the light of certain historical facts. It was not always due to some unavoidable opportunities or certain unsought for evolutionary processes that their factory was converted into a fort. In these conversions there was the hand of definite ambitions and deliberate planning on the part of the English.<sup>3</sup> For example, as early as 1689, significant instructions arrived from England which embodied their determination to become a ‘nation’ in India, rather than to remain a set of ‘interlopers’ or group

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Fawcet, (ed.), *English Factories in India*, New Series, 1670-84, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936, p.354

<sup>2</sup> Roberts, P.E., *History of British India*. (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), London, Oxford University Press, 1958, p.43.

<sup>3</sup> Malleon, G.B., *Final French Struggles in India*, Delhi, 1872, p.32.

of mere ‘traders’.<sup>1</sup> This anxiety had also been expressed in a dispatch in 1687 when the authorities in London urged the President and the Council in India to ‘establish such a polite, civil and military power as may be the foundation of large well-grounded sure English dominion in India for all times to come.’<sup>2</sup> Even before this, in 1671, Bombay was definitely styled as English ‘colony’ in a dispatch from India.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly before the close of the seventeenth century they had established a post office, a municipal Government, and Court of Justice at Bombay,<sup>4</sup> besides fortresses at certain places.<sup>5</sup> “They had not yet acquired provinces but they ruled over towns with heterogeneous populations trading under the license of the Company”.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile Aurangzeb died in the year 1707. The strength and unity of the Mughal Empire now showed signs of breakdown. The intrigues of the insubordinate nobles and the rapid succession of incompetent, depraved and imbecile sovereigns precipitated its disintegration.<sup>7</sup> Province after province began to fall away from the imperial throne. The successive invasions of Nadir Shah, the Marathas and Ahmad Shah Abdali subjected the Mughal Empire to a complete cycle of utter lawlessness and anarchy.<sup>8</sup> India was then reduced to the position of “country not only divided between the Muslims and the Hindus but between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste; a society – whose frame work was based on a sort of balance, resulting from general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members.”<sup>9</sup>

The English clearly saw this hideous rottenness of the Empire and utter weakness of the general anarchy and frequent revolutions at Delhi. They

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<sup>1</sup> Torrens, W.M., *The Empire in India*, Delhi, 1872, p.15.

<sup>2</sup> India office record letter book no.9, Dispatch to Fort St. George, 12-12-1687.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.77.

<sup>5</sup> Torrens, W.M., *The Empire in India*. 1872, Delhi, p.18.

<sup>6</sup> Vidor Robots, P., *History of British India*, Delhi, 1947, p.44.

<sup>7</sup> Keene, H.C., *Hindustan Under the Free Land, 1770- 1875*. London, 1866, pp. xxii-xxiii.

<sup>8</sup> Qureshi, I.H., *Ulema in Politics*, Delhi, 1985, p.113.

<sup>9</sup> Max Karl, *Historical Writings*. vol. I, New York, 1909, p.125.

increased their power and strengthened their roots. About 1715, they had completed the building of Fort William. In 1737, they possessed a force of 2,600 men in Bombay. And by the year 1740, the English had in the south a stronghold with 193 mounted guns.<sup>1</sup> Thus, at a time when the Mughal Empire was sinking into decrepitude, and the impatient nobles and unworthy princes were carving out weak and petty principalities for themselves, the East India Company emerged with its humble but sure beginnings.

Unfortunately, the nobles and princes impelled by a short sighted policy of obtaining momentary advantages as well as to keep their heads above the seething surface of political whirlpools, gradually began to seek the help of European troops. It was obvious, but perhaps not evident to them that, whether the troops of England or France prevailed, the Indian allies must be rendered more and more dependent on the conqueror. This is why the three *Carnatic* wars in which the English and French appeared as rivals and as helpers of the contending Indian Princes, left the English securely established in the South. The Northern *Circars* passed under their sway. The superiority of a European army and of the maritime supremacy was impressed and gave to the English ascendancy in the peninsula.<sup>2</sup>

In Bengal, the English flouted the authority of Nawab Siraj-ud Daullah<sup>3</sup> by digging trenches, erecting fortifications, misusing trade privileges and flirting with the fugitives from his Court. The result was the famous battle of *Plassey* (1757)<sup>4</sup> in which the English came out victorious. In its consequences, *Plassey* was great and decisive, but as a battle it was not something to be proud of. Treason, treachery, forgery and bad faith were its commanding features. Mir Jafar, the Commander of the Nawab's forces, Rai Durlab, his treasurer and

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<sup>1</sup> Vide Roberts P., *History of British India*, Delhi, 1947, pp. 61,69,71,74.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, C. R., *Annals of the Early English in Bengal*, Calcutta, Thacker and Co., 1895, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Gupta, B.K. *Siraj-ud-Daullah and the East India Company 1756-1757: Background to the Foundation of British power in India*, Leiden; E.S. Brill publishers, 1962, pp.10-15.

<sup>4</sup> Subramaian Lakshmi, *Indigenous Capital and Imperial Expansion-Bombay, Surat and the West Coast*. New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp.68-72.

Jagath Seth, the richest banker in Bengal, were induced through the agency of Aminch and to join in a general conspiracy in order to betray their master and to barter Bengal away in to the hands of the aliens.<sup>1</sup>

The new Nawab Mir Jafar, was meant to be little better than creature and protégé of the Company's servants who could draw upon him as often and as heavily as they pleased. In his anxiety to shake off the yoke he flirted with the Dutch at Chinsura but the exploits of Clive and Forde foiled his attempts.<sup>2</sup> After awhile the Calcutta Council realized that more gains could follow only if Bengal was resold. Accordingly, Vansittart and Howell opened secret negotiations with Mir Qasim and Rai Durlab respectively. These intrigues were successful and Mir Jaffar was ultimately deposed in the middle of October, 1760.<sup>3</sup> Mir Qasim, who became the next Nawab, honestly performed his part of the secret agreements with the English. But he tried in fact to put an end to the discrimination in trade, improving his finances, strengthening his army and properly locating his capital away from the pernicious influence of the company. All this was sufficient to provoke the Calcutta Council to bring about his downfall in the battle of Buxar (1764).

Mir Jafar was subsequently re-installed, and a dual system of government was established as a result of the grant of Diwani by Shah Alam (1765).<sup>4</sup> The victories of Plassey and Buxar had placed Bengal, Bihar and Orissa at the feet of the British and finally thrown the helpless fugitive Emperor of Delhi as well as the Nawab Vizier of Oudh at their mercy.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the ground work for the conquest of Hindustan had by this time been

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<sup>1</sup> Sarkar Jadunath, *History of Bengal*, vol. II, Dhaka, 1948, pp.468-70.

<sup>2</sup> Marshal, P.J., *Problems of Empire: Britain and India 1757-1813*. London, George Allen Unwin Ltd., 1968, p.165.

<sup>3</sup> Sarkar Jadunath, *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, Dhaka, 1948, pp.473-475.

<sup>4</sup> Melleson, G.B., *The Decisive Battles of India from 1746 to 1849*. Delhi, 1938, p.4.

<sup>5</sup> Fisher Michael, H., *Introduction to the Politics of the British Annexation of India 1757-1857*, Oxford University Press, 1993, pp.50-52.

nearly completed. The process of absorption and expansion, however, continued of which only a brief narration may be attempted.<sup>1</sup>

The East India Company became the real master of Bengal at least from 1765. Its army was in sole control of its defense and the supreme political power was in its hands. The Nawab depended for his internal and external security on the British. As the Diwan, the company directly collected its revenues, while through the right to nominate the deputy Subahdar, it controlled the nizamat or the police and judicial powers. This arrangement is known in history as the dual or 'double' government.<sup>2</sup> It held a great advantage for the British; they had power without responsibility. The Nawab and his officials had the responsibility of administration but not the power to discharge it. The weaknesses of the government could be blamed on the Indians while its fruits were gathered by the British. The consequences for the people of Bengal were disastrous; neither the company nor the Nawab cared for their welfare.

The Company servants now had the whole of Bengal to themselves and their oppression of the people increased greatly. We can quote Clive himself:

“I shall only say that such a scene of anarchy, confusion, bribery, corruption, and extortion was never seen or heard of in any country but Bengal; nor did such and so many fortunes acquire in unjust and rapacious manner. The three provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, producing a clear revenue of £3 million sterling, have been under the absolute management of the company's servants, ever since Mir Jafar's restoration to the subahship; and they have, both civil and military, exacted and levied contributions from every man of power and consequence, from the Nawab down to the lowest zamindar”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chand Tara, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. I, New Delhi, 1990, pp.220, 221.

<sup>2</sup> Chandra Bipan, *History of Modern India*, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 71, 72.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm, J., *The Life of Robert Lord Clive*, New Delhi, 1890, pp. 10-21.



The Company's authorities on their part set out to gather the rich harvest and drain Bengal of its wealth.<sup>1</sup> They stopped sending money from England to purchase Indian goods. Instead, they purchased these goods from the revenues of Bengal and sold them abroad. These were known as the Company's Investment and formed a part of its profits. On top of all this the British government wanted its share of the rich prize and ordered the Company to pay it £400.00 per annum in the year 1667, 1767 and 1768 alone, nearly £5.7 million were drained from Bengal. The abuses of the 'dual' government and the drain of wealth led to the impoverishment and exhaustion of the province.<sup>2</sup> In 1770, Bengal suffered from a famine which in its effects proved one of the most terrible famines known in human history. People died in thousands of Bengal's population fell victim to its ravages. Though the famine was due to failure of the rains, its effects were heightened by the Company's policies.<sup>3</sup>

The East India Company had become an important Indian power and its Directors in England and its officials in India set out to consolidate their control over Bengal before beginning a new round of conquests. However, their habit of interfering in the internal affairs of the Indian states and their lust for territory and money soon involved them in a series of wars.

In 1766 they joined the Nizam of Hyderabad in attacking Hydar Ali of Mysore. But Haidar Ali forced the Madras Council to sign a peace-treaty on his terms.<sup>4</sup> Then, in 1775, the English clashed with the Marathas. An intense struggle for power was taking place at that time among the Marathas between the supporters of the infant Peshwa Madhav Rao II, led by Nana Phadnis, and Raghunath Rao. The British officials in Bombay decided to intervene on behalf

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<sup>1</sup> Nightingale, P., *Trade and Empire in Western India 1784-1806*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp.10-12.

<sup>2</sup> Ingram Edward, *Commitment to Empire: Prophecies of the Great Game in Asia 1797-1800*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981, pp.115-191.

<sup>3</sup> Hill, S.C., *Bengal in 1756-57*. Vol.1, Madras, 1948, pp. 138,139.

<sup>4</sup> Sen, S.P., *The French in India 1763-1816*, (second edition). New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1971, pp.28-30.

of Raghunath Rao.<sup>1</sup> They hoped thus to repeat the exploits of their countrymen in Madras and Bengal and reap the consequent monetary advantages. This involved them in a long war with the Marathas which lasted from 1775 to 1782.<sup>2</sup> This was a dark hour indeed for British power in India. All the Marathas Chiefs were united behind the Peshwa and his Chief Minister, Nana Phadnis. The southern Indian powers had been resenting the presence of the British among them, and Haider Ali and the Nizam chose this moment to declare war against the Company. Thus the British were faced with the powerful combination of the Marathas, Mysore and Hyderabad.<sup>3</sup>

The British in India were, however, led at this time by the energetic and experienced Governor-General Warren Hastings. He acted with firm resolve and determination. Neither side won victory nor did the war come to a standstill. Peace was concluded in 1782 with the treaty<sup>4</sup> of *Salbai* by which the status quo was maintained. It saved the British from the combined opposition of Indian powers. This war, known in history as the First Anglo-Maratha war, did not end in victory for either side. But it did give the British 20 years of peace with the Marathas, the strongest Indian power of the day. The British utilized this period to consolidate their rule over the Bengal Presidency, while the Maratha chiefs frittering away their energy in bitter mutual squabbles. Moreover, the Treaty of *Salbai* enabled the British to exert pressure on Mysore, as the Marathas promised to help them in recovering their territories from Haidar Ali. Once again, the British had succeeded in dividing the Indian powers.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sen, S.P., *The French in India 1763-1816*, (second edition). New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1971, pp.28-30.

<sup>2</sup> Majumdar, R.C., *Advanced History of India*, New York, 1967, pp.658, 59.

<sup>3</sup> Bandyopadhyay Sekhar, *From Plassey to Partition: History of Modern India*, Oriental Black Swan publishers, 2013, pp.52-53.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Majumdar, R.C., *Advanced History of India.*, New York, 1967, pp.670, 671.

In the meantime, war with Haider Ali had again started in 1780. Repeating his earlier exploits, Haidar Ali inflicted one defeat after another on the British armies in the *Carnatic* and forced them to surrender in large numbers. He soon occupied almost the whole of the *Carnatic*. But once again British arms and diplomacy saved the day. Warren Hasting bribed the Nizam with the cession of Guntur District and gained his withdrawal from the anti-British alliance. During 1781-82 he made peace with the Maratha and thus freed a large portion of his army for use against Mysore.<sup>1</sup> In July 1781 the British army under Eyre Coot defeated Haidar Ali at *Porto Novo* and saved Madras. After Haider Ali's death in December 1782, the war was carried on by his son, Tipu Sultan. Since neither side was capable of overpowering the other, peace was signed by them in March 1784 and both sides restored all conquests. Thus, though the British had been shown to be too weak to defeat either the Marathas or Mysore, they had certainly proved their ability to hold their own in India.<sup>2</sup>

The third British encounter with Mysore was more fruitful from the British point of view. The peace of 1784 had not removed the grounds for struggle between Tipu and the British; it had merely postponed the struggle.<sup>3</sup> The authorities of the East India Company were acutely hostile to Tipu. They looked upon him as their most formidable rival in the south and as the chief obstacle standing between them and complete domination over South India. Tipu, on his part, thoroughly disliked the English, saw them as danger to his own independence and nursed the ambition to expel them from India. War between the two began in 1789 and ended in Tipu's defeat in 1792. By the

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<sup>1</sup> Bandyopadhyay Sekhar, *From Plassey to Partition: History of Modern India.*, Oriental Black Swan publishers, 2013, pp. 53-55.

<sup>2</sup> Majumdar, R.C., *Advanced History of India.*, New York, 1967, pp.678-680.

<sup>3</sup> Fisher Michael, H., *Introduction to the Politics of the British Annexation of India (1757-1857)*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1991, pp.19-20.

treaty of *Seringapatam*, Tipu ceded half of his territories to the English and paid 330 lakhs of rupees as indemnity.<sup>1</sup>

In 1772, Warren Hastings Who had long served the Company in various capacities, was appointed Governor of Bengal. He tore the mask of *Mughal* sovereignty asunder and presented the company in its true colours as a military power holding the country by right of conquest. He repudiated unilaterally the agreement with the Mughal emperor and the Nawab of Bengal. He deprived the Nawab of his rights as the Nazim and joint to the Diwani (land-revenue grant) the Nizamat (administration of criminal justice and police). He dismissed the Naib-Diwans, assumed the administration of land revenue, and transferred the Board of Revenue and the treasury from *Murshidabad* to Calcutta. The tribute promised to the emperor was withheld and the Nawab's share of the revenue reduced. The subahs of Allahabad and Korab which had been assigned to the emperor were ceded to the Nawab of Oudh for fifty lakhs of rupees, and an English brigade was lent to the Nawab for a sum of £.4000,000 to crush the Rohillas. Burke denounced these transactions as a "shocking, horrible and outrageous breach of faith". The Governor General and that of his apologists gave lame excuses for these.<sup>2</sup>

Given the political history of Indian subcontinent of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the company realized a radical change was required in the constitutional, administrative and economic system of the Company for in the words of *Chatham*, "India teems with iniquities so sink, to smell to earth and heaven." No longer was it possible to shirk of the responsibility of the management of an empire which had been acquired by a private agency. The East India Company

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<sup>1</sup> Fisher Michael, H., *Introduction to the Politics of the British Annexation of India (1757-1857)*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1991, pp.19-20.

<sup>2</sup> Warren Hastings, *A Narrative of Insurrection which happened in the Zamindar of Benares*, Roorkee Publishers, 1853, p. 27.

was no longer a merely commercial body.<sup>1</sup> It had developed into a political organization exercising sovereign authority over several million subjects. It was necessary to formulate afresh the relations between the State and Company's ruling organs in England and also to determine the relationship of the State with the Company authorities in India which involved a reconsideration of the relations between the Companies' Directors at home and its officials in India.<sup>2</sup>

**The Regulating Act of 1773** (Lord North Regulating Act) was Parliament's answer to the Indian problem faced by the Company more in view of its relations with India. It amounted to a compromise.<sup>3</sup> It avoided encroachment upon the property rights of the Company. It left the Diwani or the Land revenue administration delegated by the *Mughal* emperor with the Company. It also avoided the dangers involved in the increase of patronage in the hands of the English ministers. Hence, while proprietary rights were safeguarded, sovereignty over the settlements and the territories won by war was vested in the British crown. The Directors were required to inform the treasury of all revenue receipt and the Secretary of State of advices concerning all civil and military affairs.<sup>4</sup> The regulating Act named *Warren Hastings* as the Governor General and also appointed the four members of his Council. It created a Supreme Court with a Chief Justice and three judges to be appointed

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<sup>1</sup> Burke Edmund, *The Works of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke*, Volume 08, 'Report of the Selected Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of India, June 25, 1783', London, C. and J. Privington Publishers, 1827, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> Burke Edmund, *The Works of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke*, Volume 08, 'Report of the Selected Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of India, June 25, 1783', London, C. and J. Privington Publishers, 1827, pp.8-10.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Arthur Berriedale, *A Constitutional History of India 1600-1935*, (Reprint), City Book Center, Srinagar, 2008, pp.59-84.

<sup>4</sup> Fadia, B.L., *Indian Government and Politic*, Agra, 2008, p.50.

by the British Government\*. It empowered the Governor General in Council to make rules, ordinances, and regulations for good order and civil government.<sup>1</sup>

Thus provision was made for all the activities of the state- Legislative, Judicial and Executive and foundation of a new structure was not easy. For the task that lay before Warren Hastings was truly Herculean. He had to transform a company of merchants, factors and clerks into the machinery of government and to replace a dying Indian system through the agency of a purely mercantile community, ignorant of the customs, the religions, and the social habits of its peoples; neither acknowledging nor ever recognizing any responsibility to its subjects, and yet wielding in reality a power over them as unrestrained as the absolute of despotisms.<sup>2</sup>

A clash of irreconcilable elements was inevitable, for the gulf that separated a vanquished and bleeding India from England fast climbing the heights of imperial power and dominion, was unbridgeable. Warren Hastings, whose formative years had been spent in India, had acquired a respect for traditional Indian methods and forms of government, and his vision was “unclouded by sentiments of racial superiority or a sense of mission”<sup>3</sup> He attempted “to adopt our regulations to the manners and understanding of the people, and exigencies of the Country, adhering, as closely as we are able, to their ancient usages and institutions.”<sup>4</sup> But although he succeeded in averting the grave threat to British dominion in India at a time when the British empire was crumbling in the American continent, and although he overcame the obstacles which the Regulating Act placed in his path, his success in

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\* In 1773, the British monarch was King George III and his title at that time was King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

<sup>1</sup> Keith Arthur Berriedale, *A Constitutional History of India 1600-1935*, (Reprint), City Book Center, Srinagar, 2008, pp.59-84.

<sup>2</sup> Fadia, B.L. *Indian Government and Politics*, Agra, 2008, pp.50,51.

<sup>3</sup> Monckton Jones M.E., *Warren Hastings in Bengal*, Oxford University Press, London, 1756, pp.104-110.

<sup>4</sup> Forrest, G.W., *Selections from the State Papers of the Governor General of India: Warren Hastings*, Oxford, Blackwell publishers, 1910, p.277.

establishing an administrative order based on a compromise between the Eastern trading and western conceptions was modest. He put an end to the confusion and oppression of the diarchic rule. But he had to carry out the reorganization of the government amidst difficulties which may have overwhelmed a person of lesser resilience and tenacity. His efforts to organize the land-revenue administration and the judiciary, to introduce proper discipline and reform among the civil and military officials, and to rehabilitate the finances, were abortive, although they prepared the ground for the creation of a stable system afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that Warren Hastings ended the dualism which divided governmental authority between the company and the Nawab and concentrated all powers in the hands of the Company, but the dualism within the Company's system continued.<sup>2</sup> At the top of the assertion of Parliaments sovereignty was not accompanied by the creation of the Governor General was limited by that of the members of his Council and of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The relations between the Governor General and the Governors of the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay were ill-defined.<sup>3</sup>

Duality existed in the legal systems. The Supreme Court administered the laws of England while the Sadar Adalat and the Sadar Nizamat Adalat, and their subordinate courts, dispensed Indian civil and criminal laws or regulations framed by the Governor General and his Council. There was a conflict of jurisdictions, for the Supreme Court could construe the law to extend its civil jurisdiction over the Company's Courts. Then the procedures followed in the two sets of courts were different.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Monckton Jones M.E., *Warren Hastings in Bengal*, Oxford University Press, London, 1756, pp.104-110.

<sup>2</sup> [Forrest George, \*Selections from the State Papers of the Governor General of India: Warren Hastings\*](#), Oxford, Blackwell publishers, 1910, pp.63-68.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Monckton Jones M.E., *Warren Hastings in Bengal*, Oxford University Press, London, 1756, pp.104-110.

The system of administration set up in the districts for the collection of revenue and the maintenance of law and order was modelled after the *Mughal* organization, and its personnel was a mixture of English and Indian officers. But the Company's constitution and the working of its central organization was subject to the laws of England.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, the authority of the Company had a dual source and, therefore, a dual responsibility. It derived its civil powers from the British crown. Its loyalty to the emperor demanded that it should respect Indian laws, religions and customs. On the other hand, as the agent of the British Government, it was bound to uphold British methods and principles. Thus the inevitability of it was the conflict between the advocates of *Indianisation* on the one side and of *Anglicization* on the other.

As pointed out earlier, with the appointment of Warren Hastings change began. The Court of Directors had issued orders to the President and Council in India "to stand forth as *Diwan* and by the agency of the Company's servants to take upon themselves the entire care and management of the revenues<sup>2</sup>" This decision was of historic importance and its effects cannot be expressed better than in the words of James Mill:

The change was a revolution much greater, probably, than previous conjuncture- what the change from Hindu to Mohammedan mastery had been able to create. The transition from Hindu to Mohammedan masters had only changed the hands by which the sword was wielded, and favours were dispensed: the machine of the government, still more the texture of the society, underwent feeble alternations; and the civil part of the administration was, from convenience, left almost totally in the hands of the Hindus.<sup>3</sup> A total

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<sup>1</sup> Dodwell, D.D. *Cambridge History of India*. Vol. v., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1963, pp.207-208.

<sup>2</sup> Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol.1, Calcutta, 1971, p.17.

<sup>3</sup> Mill and Wilson, *The History of British India*, Vol.111, Calcutta, 1962, p.365



change in the management of the revenues more deeply affected the condition, individually and collectively of the people of India, that it is easy for the European reader to conceive. “It was an innovation by which the whole property of the country, and along with it the administration of justice, were placed upon a new foundation”.<sup>1</sup>

On 13<sup>th</sup> April, Hastings had entered on his office of Governor; on 14<sup>th</sup> April, the Court of Directors’ decision to abolish the post of Naib-Diwan reached him. The Nawab was a minor at that time so that the abolition of the post of Naib-Diwan brought the Company directly into contact with the people as the supreme power in the land. In the words of the Committee of Circuit, the Court had been pleased to direct a total change of system, and have left the plane and execution of it to the discretion of the Board without any formal repeal of the regulations which they had before framed and adapted to another system the abolition of which necessarily includes that of its subsidiary institutions unless they shall be found to coincide with the new.<sup>2</sup>

Another administrative policy pertaining to the question of farming out the revenue to the existing *Zamindars* or to the new bidders was discussed at great length between the members of the Governor’s Council on the one hand, and between the president and Council and the Court of Directors on the other.<sup>3</sup> And finally it was decided to make use of the existing agency of collection rather than pension off the zamindars and make the ryots the virtual proprietors of their holdings.<sup>4</sup> To expose the *zamindars* and *taluqdars* to this risk, wrote Hastings, is neither consistent with our notions of equity, nor with your orders, which direct that we do not, by any sudden change, alter the constitution, nor deprive the *zamindars* etc. of their ancient privileges and amenities. But at the

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<sup>1</sup> Mill and Wilson, *The History of British India, Vol.111*, Calcutta, 1962, p.366.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> [Forrest George, Sir](#), *The Administration of Warren Hastings, 1772-1785*. Reviewed and illustrated from original documents, Calcutta, Government Print, Calcutta, 1892, pp.58-60.

<sup>4</sup> Monckton Jones, M.E., *Warren Hastings in Bengal*, Oxford University Press, London, 1756, pp.104-110.

same time, the interests of the State were not to be sacrificed.<sup>1</sup> It was laid down, therefore, that the settlement be made with the existing *zamindars* and *talugdars* wherever they were available, in preference to the new revenue farmers, but where *zamindar* were not forthcoming or were not willing to take up the obligation to pay the amount of revenue that the new bidders were willing to do, settlement might be made with the latter. Thus preference was to be given to the existing *zamindars* only so far as they were willing to pay the amount of revenue that the Company could extract from others who did not possess any rights previously. It was decided in 1772 to have a five year revenue settlement.<sup>2</sup>

Another important administrative change introduced by Warren Hastings had been in the mode of securing the payment of government dues. "In case of their falling in arrears, they shall be liable to make up the deficiency".<sup>3</sup> This led to numerous abuses - severity on the part of collectors, rack-renting on the part of farmers, and concealment and evasion by the cultivators. Regarding the effects of these measures, Philip Francis recorded in his minute that the greater part of the *zamindars* was ruined, and people of lower rank were employed by the Government to collect the taxes. R.C. Dutt, reviewing the proceedings, says, "All the great *zamindars* of *Bengal*, all the ancient families, suffered under this system of annual settlements, frequent enhancements, and harsh methods of realization such as they had never known before. Descendants of old houses found their estates pass into the hands of moneylenders and speculators from Calcutta;<sup>4</sup> minor proprietors saw their peaceful subjects oppressed by rapacious agents appointed from Calcutta. He

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<sup>1</sup> Warren Hastings, *A Narrative of Insurrection which happened in the Zamindar of Benares*, Roorkee Publishers, 1853, p. 27

<sup>2</sup> Chand Tara, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*. vol.1, 1911, New Delhi, pp. 244,245.

<sup>3</sup> Kaye, J.W., *The Administration of the East India Company*, London, 1932, p.172.

<sup>4</sup> Dutt, R.C., *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, Calcutta, 1958, p.61.

illustrated these remarks by describing the suffering of the people in the three largest estates in Bengal, *Burdwan*, *Rajshahi* and *Dinajpore*.<sup>1</sup>

The British Government in order to run the affairs of India smoothly and in keeping into considerations the paramount concern of the Crown, passed in **1784 Pitt's India Act**, aimed at giving the Crown the power of guiding the politics of India, with as little means of corrupt influence as possible, established the structure of the government control of Indian affairs that was to last until the Company disappeared in the aftermath of the *Sepoy* Revolt and made Parliament the Supreme authority primarily for preventing the conflicts over Indian policy.<sup>2</sup> The Act set up a Board of Control consisting of six Privy Councilors serving without pay, the president of which was the equivalent to the Secretary of State for Indian Affairs who served in the British Cabinet when the crown governed India directly after 1858. The board was responsible for the obviously political functions that had hitherto been the province of the Court of Directors, the administration of the land revenue, diplomatic negotiations, and the conduct of war.<sup>3</sup> The Court retained its control of commercial matters and patronage with these powers no longer inhibited by the veto of the shareholders who in effect became renters rather than proprietors. The Governor General's authority in Bengal was strengthened with respect both to his Council and to the subordinate Presidencies.<sup>4</sup> The Act declared that 'to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, honor and policy of this nation, a salutary reminder that legislative intent and the unfolding of history are not necessarily consonant. The Act also provided for periodic charter reviews which led to successive reductions of the Company's commercial responsibilities until in

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<sup>1</sup> Dutt, R.C., *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, Calcutta, 1958, p. 61-65.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Arthur Berriedale, *A Constitutional History of India 1600-1935*.(Reprint), City Book Center Srinagar, 2008, pp.101-103.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> C. Kashyp, Subhash, *Our Constitution*, New Delhi, 2007, pp.12.13.

1833 its trading rights were divested and it became solely a governing institution.<sup>1</sup>

*Pitt's India Acts* was, however also defective because it set up a dual system of government at home. It was illogical. The Board of Control was made very powerful in India; the Governor General had to serve two masters at home the Court of Directors and the Board of Control. In spite of all these drawbacks, the Pitt's India Act was the first effective substitution to Parliamentary control over East India Company through the Board of Control.

Important changes were at the same time introduced in the Indian administration. The members of the Governor-General's Council were reduced to three and only the covenanted servants of the Company were made eligible for these posts.<sup>2</sup> The control of the Governor General in council over the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay was clearly defined and rendered more effective. By a supplementary Bill, passed in 1786, the Governor General was authorized in special cases to act against the majority of the Council, and also to hold the office of Commander in Chief.<sup>3</sup> The constitution set up by Pitt's India Act did not undergo any fundamental change during the existence of the Company's rule in India. We may therefore pass in rapid review the minor changes that occurred between 1786 and 1858. It may be noted that legislative changes during this period were always associated with the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1793, 1813, 1833 and 1853. As regard the Home Government the most notable changes were in regard to the Board of Control. Its powers were gradually concentrated in the hands of the President, who thereby virtually became the Cabinet Minister for India.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fadia, B., *Indian Government and Politics*, Agra, 2008, p.51.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Arthur Berriedale, *A constitutional History of India 1600-1935*, (Reprint), City Book Center, Srinagar, 2008, pp.101-103.

<sup>3</sup> Misra, B.B., *The Central Administration of East India Company 1771-1834*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1959, pp.18-23.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

In India, the power of the Governor General over the subordinate Presidencies were further enlarged by the Charter Act of 1793, which enabled him to proceed in person to Madras and Bombay and exercise the same authority over their administration as in Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

*The Charter Act of 1813* abolished the monopoly of the Company's India trade and laid down "the undoubted sovereignty of the Crown" in and over the possessions of the East India Company. The Charter Act of 1833 abolished the trading activities of the Company and henceforth it became a purely administrative body under the Crown.<sup>2</sup>

*The Charter Act of 1833* not only gave the Governor General and Council the superintendence, direction and control over the subordinate presidencies, but also took away from the latter all powers of making laws, and concentrated all legislative authority in the former. Henceforth, with certain necessary exceptions, the Governor General and Council could make laws and regulations for all persons, whether British or Indian, and for all courts of justice, whether established by His Majesty's charters or otherwise.<sup>3</sup>

In order to enable the Council to discharge these important functions efficiently, a new member with expert knowledge of law was added to it. The law member must not be a servant of the Company and could speak and vote only at meetings of the Council which discussed legislative business.<sup>4</sup> In order to emphasize the superior role which the Governor General and Council would play over all the Company's possessions in India, the supreme authority in the country was henceforth designated as the Governor General of India in Council. The Governor General in Council also constituted the Government of

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<sup>1</sup> Fadia, B.L., *Indian Government and Politics*, Agra, 2008, p.52.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Arthur Berriedale, *A Constitutional History of India 1600-1935*, (Reprint), City Book Center Srinagar, 2008, pp.116-119,127,128.

<sup>3</sup> Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar, *From Plassey to Partition: History of Modern India*, Oriental Black Swan publishers, 2013, pp. 80, 81.

<sup>4</sup> Marshal, P.J., *Problems of Empire: Britain and India 1757-1813*, London, George Allen Unwin Ltd., 1968, p.31.

Bengal, and the Act permitted a member of the Council to be appointed Deputy Governor of province.

What is important to know is that whatever changes Government of British India desired to bring always kept within its prism of national interest. Seen in this perspectives the *Charter Act of 1853*<sup>1</sup> introduced further changes. The number of Directors was reduced to eighteen, of whom three (later six) were to be appointed by the Crown. It took away from them the power of patronage by instituting an open competitive examination for the recruitment of civil servants. The salary of the President of the Board of Control was made equal to that of a Secretary of State, and the approval of the Crown was necessary for all appointments of Councilors, both central and provincial.<sup>2</sup> All such responses of the officials had to be borne out from the resources of India.

As regards the Government of India, the most important changes were concerned towards legislative function. The law member was made an ordinary member of the Governor General's Council and no law could be enacted without the assent of the Governor General. The Council itself was enlarged for legislative purposes by the addition of six new members, called "Legislative Councilors"<sup>3</sup> These included four nominees of the four provincial Governments (Bengal, Bombay, Madras and North-western Provinces) and the Chief Justice and a Judge of the Supreme Court. The nominated members must be civil servants of at least ten years' standing. A Law Commission was appointed in London for the codification of Indian laws, and it ultimately led to the enactment of the Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, and the Civil Procedure Code.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Arthur Berriedale, *A Constitutional History of India 1600-1935*, (Reprint), City Book Center Srinagar, 2008, pp.116-119,131,132.

<sup>2</sup> Kashyap, Subhash, *Our Constitution*, New Delhi, 2007, pp.13, 14.

<sup>3</sup> Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar, *From Plassey to Partition: History of Modern India*, Oriental Black Swan publishers, 2013, pp. 80, 81.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

The changes made by the successive Charter Act merely sought to carry to its logical conclusion the process that had been begun by Lord North's Regulating Act and Pitt's India Act, viz., gradual transference of power and authority from the Company to the Crown.<sup>1</sup> The relation between the two was throughout this period, a complicated one, and depended to a large extent upon the personality of the president of the Board and his influence with the Cabinet. In addition to initiative, direction and control, a strong president could coerce the Directors in to submission in almost every matter, but the latter always possessed, to a large extent, the power of resisting and putting obstacles in his way. The right of recalling the Governor General was always an important instrument in their hands and no President would lightly risk their determined hostility and desperate resistance. But the inevitable chain of events pointed to the extinction of the Company as the only logical end. It should be pointed out here that after the Charter Act of 1833 the main privilege and justification for the existence of the Company was the appointment of civil servants, a powerful patronage which could hardly be transferred to the Cabinet without danger to British democracy. With the institution of competitive examination for the recruitment of civil servants, this last vestige of effective power was gone and the way was made clear for the abolition of the Company and the transfer of its powers to the Crown. This end was already visualized by many and must have shortly been realized in the ordinary course even if the revolt had not suddenly brought it about in an abrupt manner.<sup>2</sup>

The creation and functioning of the Legislative Council made the Charter Act of 1853 an important constitutional measure of the nineteenth century. However, the major defect of the Act was that Indians were once again denied any share in government. This had major repercussions as it continued

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<sup>1</sup> Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar, *From Plassey to Partition: History of Modern India*, Oriental Black Swan publishers, 2013, pp. 80, 81.

<sup>2</sup> Ananda A. Yang, *The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran Distric, 1793-1920*, California, University of California Press, 1989, pp.90-98.

to feed the fire of Indian resentment and rebellion which culminated in the revolt of 1857.

The facts of the Great Revolt are not in dispute. It was triggered by *Sepoys* in the Company army who were apprehensive about what they thought were attempts by the British to attack and demean their religious beliefs. When the rumour got about that the new Enfield rifles with which the *Sepoys* were being armed in 1857<sup>1</sup> used cartridges that were greased with the fat of cows and pigs, Hindus as well as Muslims were alarmed at the possibility of being polluted. The assault on religious belief and the intent to Christianize the Indian armies appeared inexorable.<sup>2</sup>

The initial outbreak occurred in Meerut in north India in May 1857 and spread to Delhi and other military posts in the North western Province and Oudh.<sup>3</sup> At the height of the rebellion the British Military forces in those territories were reduced to besieged garrisons in Lucknow and Kanpur (Cawnpore) and a detachment of troops holding a ridge outside of Delhi. Bengal remained loyal as did the Punjab. Nor did the disaffection of the *Sepoys* in the Bengal army spread to the Bombay and Madras armies. Moreover, most of the princely states remained firm in their support of the Company. What made the rebellion more than a military was its support among the civilian population in north India, particularly those magnates in Oudh, the *Taluqdars*, who had lost their prerogatives or had been threatened by the precipitous policy of the Company in making land settlements with the peasants. When the *Taluqdars* joined the rebellion, so did many peasants who, whatever their stake in the land settlements, looked to them as local leaders.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mukherjee, Rudrangshu, *Awadh in Revolt 1857-1858: A Study of Popular Resistance* Delhi, Oxford, University Press, 1984, pp.12-18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Embree, A.T., *1857 in India: Munity or War of Independence*, Boston, D.C. Heath Company, 1963, pp.28-31.

<sup>4</sup> Metcalf, Thomas R., *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857-1870*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1965, pp.10-12.



The successful mutiny of the Sepoys was the precursor of the revolt of the civil population. If there were no mutiny, there would have been no revolt. It is, necessary to find out first, the cause of the mutiny of the Sepoys. Mention has been made above of the grave discontent and disaffection towards the British rule among all classes of people. There is no doubt that the Sepoys were largely affected by them. But in addition there were special grievances felt by the Sepoys. It has been shown” how they exhibited strong resentment and disaffection, and not infrequently local units broke out into mutiny.<sup>1</sup>

British historians initially were inclined to trivialize the issue justifying the role of British rule in India, emphasizing the misguided and misperceived grievances of the Sepoys and minimizing the extent of the disaffection of the civilian population. Indians under the influence of the nationalist movement viewed the rebellion as the first installment of the continuing struggle of Indian people for independence.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently many historians in both England and India have interpreted as a revolt against the reforms the British introduced in to India, a last stand of conservative, traditional, backward-looking communities against the threats to its privileges, apposition not dissimilar to the one expressed by Marx in his dispatches to the *New York Daily Tribune* at the time the events were unfolding in India.<sup>3</sup>

The outbreak of 1857, called by V.D. Savarkar as the First war of Independence, was a shock to the British government and its bureaucracy.<sup>4</sup> The Revolution of 1857 was much more than a mere product of Sepoy discontent. It was reality a product of the character and policies of colonial rule, of the accumulation grievances of the people against the company’s administration and of their dislike for the foreign regime. For over a century, as the British had

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<sup>1</sup> Metcalf, Thomas R., *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857-1870*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1965, pp.10-12.

<sup>2</sup> Embree, A.T., *1857 in India: Munity or War of Independence*, Boston, D.C. Heath Company, 1963, pp.28-31.

<sup>3</sup> Chaudari S.B. *Civil Rebellion in the Indian Mutinies, 1857-1859*, Calcutta, 1957, pp.257, 258-299.

<sup>4</sup> Fadia, B.L., *Indian Government and Politics*, Agra, 2008, p.53.

been conquering the country bit by bit, popular discontent and hatred against foreign rule had been gaining strength among the different groups of Indian society.<sup>1</sup> It was this discontent that burst forth in to a mighty popular revolt. The revolt was suppressed. The rebels were dealt an early blow when the British captured Delhi on September 20, 1857.<sup>2</sup> The aged Emperor Bahadur Shah was taken prisoner and exiled to Rangoon where he died in 1862.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the great House of the Mughals was finally and completely extinguished. However, the revolt of 1857 gave a severe jolt to the British administration in India and made its reorganization inevitable. The Government of India's structure and policies underwent significant changes in the decades following Revolt.<sup>4</sup>

The revolution established beyond doubt that the Indians wanted a new political system, in which they should have their own share. They proved that they were politically conscious and thus could not be manhandled by their rulers. Then as Keith has pointed out, "inevitably the blame for the debacle fell on company and its rule was doomed"<sup>5</sup> The British Government therefore, decided to take over Indian's administration in its own hands and give the country a new political system. In February, 1858 Lord Palmerston introduced a bill for the abolition of East India Company.<sup>6</sup> This was ably opposed by J.S. Mill, who supported the cause of the company. The bill introduced afterwards by Derby and Disraeli in a modified form was passed by the parliament in 1858.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Metcalf, Thomas R. *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857-1870*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1965, pp.14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Norman D. Palmer, *The Indian political System*, New York, 1970, p.108.

<sup>5</sup> Keith Arthur Berriedale, *A Constitutional History of India 1600-1935*, (Reprint), City Book Center Srinagar, 2008, pp.161,162.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Mill, John Stuart. *Writings on India*, Edited by John M. Robison and Group, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990, pp.78.

## **Intervention of British Parliament**

The Government of India Act, 1858 ending the Company's Rule transferred the governance of the country directly to the British Government. Company's rule was thus terminated and the administration was taken over to be carried on in the name of the British Crown, through the Secretary of State who assumed the powers of the company's Board of Directors and the Board of Control. The Secretary of State was to be assisted by a Council of India consisting of 15 members. Eight out of these members were to be appointed by the Crown and the remaining seven were to be elected by the Court of Directors. The Secretary of State was required to lay before the British Parliament an annual statement regarding the moral and material progress of India as well as an account of the annual produce of the revenues of India.<sup>1</sup> Commenting on the importance of the Government of India Act, 1858, G.N. Singh observes in his book that<sup>2</sup> "It closed one great period of Indian history and ushered in another great era- the direct rule of the Crown". Thus, in 1858, the Government of British India was transferred from the Company to the British Crown. This, indeed, was a landmark in the political evolution of India.<sup>3</sup> India.<sup>3</sup>

The Indian Council Act of 1861 is an important landmark in the constitutional history of India. It is important for two main reasons. First, it enabled the Governor General to associate representatives of the Indian people with the work of legislation by nominating them to this expanded Council. Secondly, it decentralized the legislative power of the Governor- General's Council and vested them in the Governments of Bombay and Madras.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mukherji Panchanandas Edited, *Indian Constitutional Documents 1600-1918*, vol. 1, Calcutta, Thaker Spink and Co., 1918, pp.1-20.

<sup>2</sup> Singh, G.N., *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development, 1600-1919*, vol.1, Delhi, 1950, pp.68.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Norm and D, Palmer *The Indian political System*, London, 1970, p.108.

The Executive Council of the Governor General was enlarged by the addition of a fifth member who was to be a jurist and for purposes of legislation by the addition of not less than six and not more twelve additional members, at least half of whom were to be non-officials. Although not expressly provided for in the Act, the non-official element of the legislative council could include Indians.<sup>1</sup> Actually in 1862, the Governor-General, Lord Canning, appointed three Indians –the Maharaja of Patiala, the Raja of Banaras and Sir Dinker Rao –to the newly constituted Legislative Council. For the first time since the beginning of British rule in India, Indians were being associated with the work of legislation.<sup>2</sup>

The 1861 Act suffered from many defects; also it did not satisfy Indian aspirations. It made the Governor General all powerful. The non-official members could hardly play any effective role. No questions could be asked and the budget could not be discussed.<sup>3</sup> The political and economic situation in the country steadily deteriorated. There was an acute scarcity of food grains and a severe famine broke out in 1877. The discontent was widespread and the situation explosive. The repression that the 1857 revolt had created strong feelings against the British. These were further deepened by the strong opposition by the Europeans and Anglo Indians to the Ilbert Bill which had sought to remove all invidious distinction between European and Indian members of the Civil Services.

What is of significance to understand is the fact that the company initially wanted to maintain all neutrality in matters of Indian religious territories customs, mores, practices etc. in which each Indian was entrenched. Immediately after the acquisition of political power in India company officials

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<sup>1</sup> Hutchins, F.G. *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1967, p.99.

<sup>2</sup> Metcalf, Thomas R., *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857-1870*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1965, p.323.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Arthur Berriedale, *A Constitutional History of India 1600-1935*, (Reprint), City Book Center Srinagar, 2008, pp.161,162.

wanted to maintain neutrality or non-intervention in the sphere of religion and culture of the indigenous society. The reason behind it was partly the fear of adverse reaction and opposition to their role by the local people. However, constant pressure from different quarters, the Missionaries, the Liberals, the Orientalists, the Utilitarians compelled the company to give up its policy of neutrality and to take the responsibility of promotion learning.<sup>1</sup>

The next important point around which the opinions were sharply divided was whether the company should promote western or oriental learning. In the initial stage the company officials patronized oriental learning. It cannot be denied that some of the Englishman had the genuine desire to and promote oriental learning.<sup>2</sup>

In this context, the mention may be made of about the establishment of the Calcutta Madrasa by Warren Hastings (1781), the Benares Sanskrit College by Jonathan Duncan (1791) and the Asiatic Society of Bengal by William Jones (1784).<sup>3</sup> Those who were in favour of continuation of the existing institutions of oriental learning and promotion of Indian classical tradition were called 'Orientalists'. The argument put forward by the Orientalists was that generally there was a prejudice among Indians against Europeans knowledge and science, so there might be complete rejection of western knowledge. Some of them were also interested to explore the classical tradition and culture of this ancient civilization. But even if we acknowledge the genuine desire of some of the Englishman for the promotion of oriental culture, there is no doubt that the Orientalists were guided by some practical consideration. They wanted to teach the British officials the local language and culture so that they would be better at their job. This was the prime objective behind the foundation of the Fort

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<sup>1</sup> Ghosh, S.C., *The History of Education in Modern India, 1757-1986*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 1995, pp.20-25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar, *From Plassey to Partition: History of Modern India*, Oriental Black Swan Publishers, 2013, pp.141, 142.

William College at Calcutta in 1800. The other motive was to develop friendly relations with the elites of the indigenous society and to understand their culture. This was the main reason behind the establishment of the 'Calcutta Madrasa' and 'Benares Sanskrit College'.<sup>1</sup>

The real beginning of western education in India therefore be dated from the Charter Act of 1813, which not only allowed the missionaries to travel to India, but provide for the allocation of one hundred thousand of the learned natives of India and the revival of and improvement of literature; secondly, the promotion of a knowledge of the science amongst the inhabitants of that country.<sup>2</sup>

In official thinking in India, the Orientalist thoughts were still powerful, having received strong support in a then recent Minute of Lord Minto, the Governor General between 1806 and 1813. The new general committee of Public Instruction was dominated by the Orientalist, who interpreted the clause (43) mean advancement of Indian classical literature and the sciences of the land. The programme they chalked out was for the establishment of a Sanskrit College in Calcutta, two more Oriental Colleges at Agra and Delhi and patronage for the tols patshalas and madrassas as institutions of indigenous learning.

In the meanwhile, however public attention in India was steadily being drawn away from these traditions of indigenous classical learning. Christian missionaries and European individuals like David Harve, started opening schools in all parts of India, where English became the medium of instruction. And then the Calcutta School Book Society and later Calcutta School Society (started in 1819) began to promote vernacular school for elementary education. The tide seemed to shift decisively in the other direction when Raja Rammohan

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<sup>1</sup> Ghosh, S.C., *The History of Education in Modern India, 1757-1986*, Hyderabad, Orient Longman, 1995, p.40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, pp.41, 42.

Roy sent a memorandum to the Governor General protesting against the founding of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta. Roy represented a generation of Indians who believed that modernization of India would come through English education and the dissemination of knowledge of the Western science.

William Bentinck, a Utilitarian reformist, took over as Governor General in 1828 and Thomas Babington Macaulay was appointed the law member in his council in 1834. The later was immediately appointed the President of the General Committee of Public Instruction. On 2 February 1835 he issued his famous Minute on Indian Education, which became the proposal for the introduction of English education in India. Full of contempt for oriental learning, Macaulay's minute asserted that 'a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia'. What he advocated, therefore, for the Indians was an education in European literature and sciences, inculcated through the medium of English language. Such an education, he argued, would create 'a class of persons between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect'.<sup>1</sup> Bentinck immediately endorsed his proposals in an executive order of 7 March 1835 and did not budge from this position despite loud protests from the Orientalists. Thus as Sabyasachi Bhattacharya has put it a new education system was introduced in India in which the task of producing knowledge was assigned to the metropolitan country while its reproduction replication and dissemination were left for the colonized people.<sup>2</sup> This was the beginning of the new modernization project for India.

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<sup>1</sup> Ghosh, P.C., *The History of Education in Modern India: 1757-1986*, Hyderabad, Oriental Longman, 1995, pp.31-33.

<sup>2</sup> Bhattacharya S., *Introduction to the Contested Terrain: Perspectives on Education in India*, Hyderabad, Oriental Longman, 1998, p.7.

## 2.2 BRITISH ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY IN SRI LANKA

### British Conquest of the Maritime Province in Ceylon

The British began its foothold in Sri Lanka from 15th February, 1796, when the Dutch Governor, Gerard van Angelberk, surrendered Colombo, with the remaining Dutch territory in Ceylon and the dependencies in South India, to the superior British forces till British had attacked Trincomalee on the 18th August, 1795 and conquered it eight days later.<sup>1</sup> By the 6th October they had reduced all the fortresses along the coast northwards from Batticaloa to Mannār. Soon after this, five of the companies of the de Meuron regiment had left the service of the Dutch in Sri Lanka and joined the British in India. Van Angelbeek then withdrew his forces in Galle to strengthen the defense of Colombo. Finding it impossible to retain it, he accepted the terms offered by the British.<sup>2</sup>

After the British conquest in 1796 Sri Lanka\* was made a dependency of the Madras Presidency, since it seemed unnecessary to create a separate government when the island might be restored to Holland. Furthermore, Madras troops had conquered Sri Lanka at a cost of £12,000, and the cession may have been made so that the East India Company could recover its expenses from the profits of the Dutch monopolies of pearls and cinnamon. While Sri Lanka was not formally granted to the Company until 1796 Madras had already established its administration in the conquered districts in 1795.<sup>3</sup>

In the given political, social, economic, religion and cultural scenario of Sri Lanka, it continued to remain under the Legislative influence of Madras Presidency as will be clear from the pages ahead. The Madras Government

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis, J.B.T. *Collected Papers on the History of the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon 1796-1805*, Colombo, Times of Ceylon, 1923, p.9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

\* See Appendix-I

<sup>3</sup> De Silva K.M., *'The Coming of the British Ceylon, 1762-1802'*, University of Ceylon History of Ceylon, Vol. iii, edited by K.M. De Silva, 1973, pp.3-6.



created a dual civil and military control; and since the respective powers were not clearly defined a considerable amount of friction was created. The Commander-in-Chief in Sri Lanka was not only in control of the troops but had a discretionary authority, Civil as well as Military, the revenue and commercial officials being subject to his orders.<sup>1</sup> In general, however, he seems to have interfered but little with the civil administration. The civil government was carried on by members of the Madras Civil Service under the general control of Robert Andrews, the Resident and Superintendent of Revenue.<sup>2</sup> After his mission of Kandy was completed he returned to Sri Lanka and took up his duties early in 1796. The number and duties of Andrew's subordinates were difficult to trace, but these were probably four: John Jervis, Senior Assistant at Jaffna; Alexander, Assistant at Colombo and Galle; and Garrow, Assistant at Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Mullaittivu. John Macdowall, Paymaster to the Sri Lanka Expedition, was also probably an Assistant.<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1797 Lord Hobart, who had recently paid a visit to the settlements appointed committee to investigate the state of revenue and other matters connected with the administration of the country. This committee consisted of three persons, Brigadier-General de Meuron, (president) Major Agnew and Robert Andrews.<sup>4</sup> The president was a man who had resided in Sri Lanka in Dutch times and was acquainted with the Dutch government and the customs of the Sinhalese. Moreover, on the sudden death of Doyle, he became military governor.<sup>5</sup> Major Agnew, too, was a man of many parts. Andrews, on the other hand, could not well sympathize with a committee that was to sit in judgment over a system of his own introduction, and took very little part in the

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<sup>1</sup> Wickremeratne, V.C., "The English East India Company and Society in the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon 1796-1802". *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 2, 1971, pp. 139-155.

<sup>2</sup> De Silva Colvin R., *Ceylon under the British Occupation*, Colombo, 1953, pp.18-20

<sup>3</sup> Wikramaratna U.C., "The English East India Company and Society in the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon 1796-1802", *JRAS (GBI)*, vol.2, 1971, pp.131-135.

<sup>4</sup> Cambell, L. D. and Samual, E., (ed.) "Adders to Lord Horbart". *Asiatic Annual Register*, vol.1, London, Asiatic Press, 1880, pp.14, 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

deliberations. But under the direction of de Meuron and with the patience and energy of Agnew, this committee rendered a most valuable service to the country and the government. It inquired very patiently into every aspect of the case, remedied the grievances of the people and pointed out the chief mistakes of Andrews administration of revenue, De Meuron also examined the Dutch records and brought to light the Dutch methods of collecting revenue and the Dutch treaty of 1766.<sup>1</sup>

But before the committee began its deliberations, Robert Andrews renewed the coconut-tax, which gave rise to open revolts, owing especially to the fact that the renters themselves were the magistrates who enforced the tax. An *aumildar*<sup>•</sup> was murdered by the infuriated populace at Trincomalee. The rioters in the Colombo district entrenched themselves at Kaduvella and Hanvella, and a battalion of Sepoys had to be sent against them before they dispersed. The Committee of Investigation immediately proposed and carried a resolution abolishing the coconut tax “as it possibly contributes to the present disturbances”.<sup>2</sup>

The committee also recommended the appointment of respectable Sinlalese as magistrates for the trial of civil cases between the renters and the inhabitants, the exclusion of the Madras *dubashes*<sup>•</sup> and the re-introduction of service- tenure. Andrews opposed this motion by insisting that the mudaliyars<sup>\*</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva K. M., *A History of Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 2002, pp.212, 213.

<sup>•</sup> A Collector of Revenue.

<sup>2</sup> Collins, C.H., “Extracts from the Proceedings of the Committee of Investigation 1797-1798”. *Historical Manuscripts Commission Bulletin* 1, Colombo, 1937, p. 10.

• Language barriers between the European traders and the native merchants caused the emergence of the *dubashes* as interpreters. But gradually the *dubashes* became the middlemen in all business transactions, in the process exploiting both parties.

\* **Mudali** (or **Mudaliyar**) was a colonial title & office in Sri Lanka. The Portuguese colonials created the [Mudaliyar](#) class in the 17th century by enlisting natives of different castes from the coastal areas, who were most likely to serve the Portuguese masters with utmost loyalty. The Dutch continued the practice of the Portuguese. This class used the *Mudali* as a hereditary title; however, the British re-established a Mudaliyar class, with appointments that had the title of Mudali, this process was stopped in the 1930s when the Native Department of the British government of Ceylon was closed down. All appointments of Mudaliyars were made by the Governor of Ceylon.

now appointed in Colombo, Galle and Matara, should be placed under the superintendent of revenue and not under the representative of government.<sup>1</sup> De Meuron and Agnew would not tolerate this, for they desired the magistrates to be independent of the revenue officers, as they considered the recent disturbances to be due to the union of the powers of a magistrate with that of a renter and the delegation of authority to coast Malabars.<sup>2</sup>

In July 1798, one year after the appointment of the committee, a proclamation was issued by De Meuron that “the Governor of Fort St. George from a desire to adopt such measures for the conduct of affairs in the island, as may be satisfactory to the native inhabitants of the provinces of this island under his government, and conducive to their happiness, has thought proper to direct the re-establishment in great measure of the customs and usages formerly in force.

Notice is hereby given to all whom it may concern that from and after the first day of September next Parvenies\* will be as formerly exempt from all payments to excepting the personal services of their proprietors to ancient usage, and from the same date the requisite number of Mudaliyars and other Sinhalese Native officers will re-establish in the country to fulfill the functions they formerly held”.<sup>3</sup>

In July 1798, while the Committee was still engaged in making its investigations, news was received that the home government had decided to withdraw the administration of Sri Lanka from the East India Company. The

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<sup>1</sup> Wikramaratna, U.C. “The English East India Company and Society in the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon 1796-1802”, *JRAS (GBI)*, vol.2, 1971, pp.131-155.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

• According to their castes and ranks for the service which they are under obligation to perform Saparamadu, Appuhami, Lascarins ect. Those performing extraordinary services Coolies, Toddy Tappers, Carpenters etc. Whose children and heirs are under obligation at the death of their parents to follow them each in his turn and to perform the company’s statutory service de facto without being specially ordered to do so which is an absolute law among them and is imposed upon them by birth.

<sup>3</sup> De Silva Colvin R. *Ceylon under the British Occupation*, Colombo, 1953, pp.213, 214.

first proposal was to take over the Government of Sri Lanka completely under the Secretary of State, and Frederic North set out as the first king's governor with Hugh Cleghornas secretary to the government.<sup>1</sup> But after their departure there was a debate in the India House, in consequence of which the secretary of state was obliged to modify his plan of taking over the government completely and even to promise that, if Sri Lanka was preserved to the English at the peace, the king would again resign it to the Company. Meanwhile it was only the administration of the country that was to be taken over by the king's government. All trade, commercial interests and the collection of revenue were still to remain under the Company's civil service on the Madras establishment for the benefit of the Company. The administration of justice, police and all civil, military and judicial authority was to be vested in the governor, who was to depend on the Secretary of State but he was to correspond with the Board of Directors of the East India Company and be subject to their orders.

Frederic North's first act was to restore the headmen to office and in so doing he implemented one of the Committees principle recommendations and one on which they had deferred a decision when they learnt of the new arrangements for the administration of the maritime regions of Sri Lanka. The re-establishment of *rajakariya*<sup>♥</sup> and *uliyam*<sup>\*</sup> was decisive in the restoration of the old order but this was complicated now by the fact that after two years from them the people were reluctant to see them resumed, and once the restoration of *rajakariya* was attempted there was widespread evasion of such service.<sup>2</sup> North

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<sup>1</sup> Nail William (ed.), *The Cleghorn Papers, A Footnote to History: Being their Diary, 1795-1796 of Huge Cleghorn of Stravithie First Colonial Secretary of Ceylon 1798-1800*, A and C Black Lt., 1927, pp.40-50.

<sup>♥</sup> Compulsory service known as *rajakariya* was prevalent in Ceylon ever since the monarchy was established in the Anuradhapura period. It was a service done free for the king. In other words the king forced the people to work for him without payment. Each person has to work 40 days each year to this principle. It was almost a kind of 'beggar' prevalent in various parts of India for many generations.

<sup>\*</sup> Uliyam: the residence taxes on Muslims and Chetties; also the obligation to unremunerated service in Jaffna as well as its partial or total commutation.

<sup>2</sup> De Silva, M.U., "Land Tenure, Caste system and Rajakariya under Foreign Rule: A Review of Change in Sri Lanka under Western Powers 1597-1832", *JRASL*, (NS), no.37, 1992-93, pp.158.

sought to resolve this by trying to make *Rajakariya* acceptable and this proved to be more difficult than a straightforward abolition. He began with attempt to get all those holding land under *rajakariya* to register themselves with the family as the unit for registration. When this failed to yield the results he anticipated he responded by embarking on an even more ambitious project registering title to holdings on the basis of single ownership. This more sophisticated venture in registration began on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1800 and a special administrative structure was created for this purpose with an improvised Survey Department as its core.<sup>1</sup> Two advantages were anticipated from this radical departure from the traditional system: obscurity of title to land would be eliminated and single ownership would be an incentive to more efficient production in agriculture. Registration on a single owner basis became one of North's most cherished projects, but it made little or no headway in the face of the people's reluctance to embark on so radical a departure from custom and tradition.<sup>2</sup>

There were, however aspects of *rajakariya* which were more amenable to control. Under a proclamation of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1801 all *rajakariya* land were made liable to taxes of one fifth of the produce on low land and one tenth on high land . This was almost in conformity with existing practice. But there was also a new tax of one tenth of the produce on dry grain, in place of a medley of land taxes which had not brought in much revenue and which generally varied from region to region.<sup>3</sup> It did not take Frederic North long to realize that the restoration of the old order and old institutions which he was attempting benefited the headmen more than the people or the government. He moved now to reduce their powers. By a proclamation of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1801 they were deprived of their accommodation and were to receive salaries

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva, M.U., "Land Tenure, Cast system and Rajakariya under Foreign Rule: A Review of Change in Sri Lanka under Western Powers 1597-1832", *JRASL*, (NS), no.37, 1992-93, pp.158, 159.

<sup>2</sup> Samaraveera Vijaya, Economic and social development under the British 1796-1832, *UChC*, vol. iii, Peradeniya, 1973, pp.59, 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

instead. A fresh limitation of the scope of headmen's duties was introduced by deliberately excluding them from the registration of holdings under *rajakariya*. Frederic North realized that *rajakariya* had to be enforced on the basis of caste and that the headmen had made themselves indispensable in this because of the information and local knowledge which they had accumulated. A solution of this problem was sought in codifications of caste law, which was easier suggested than done; in fact it was never done. North hoped that once a code of caste law was compiled, the *landraaden* (Civil Court) would adjudicate in caste disputes.<sup>1</sup>

The Madras presidency of the English East India Company resented the loss of patronage which it suffered by the introduction of the system of Dual Control. Frederic North, for his part obliged by order of the Directors of the East India Company to fill most of the vacancies in the Madras administration with Madras civil servants. Such a move, was however protested vigorously but of no avail. From the moment of his arrival in the island he faced the unconcealed hostility of the Madras civil servants and these strained relations continued throughout the period of Dual Control, although there was some improvement when Frederic North's own men were found to be just as prone to corruption and inefficiency as the Madras men.<sup>2</sup> Salaries and prospects of promotion in Sri Lanka were so inferior to those in Madras that no civil servant of ability or ambition sent to the island from that Presidency was willing to remain there for long. Moreover, the languages and customs of the people of Sri Lanka littoral were quite different from those of Madras. Frederic North strongly urged that the only solution to this problem was the creation of a separate civil service for Sri Lanka, but this was impossible for as long as the system of Dual Control was in operation. Nor was he any more successful in

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva, M.U., "Land Tenure, Cast system and Rajakariya under Foreign Rule: A Review of Change in Sri Lanka under Western Powers 1597-1832", *JRASL*, (NS). No. 37, 1992/93, pp.158.

<sup>2</sup> Kannangara, P.D., *The History of the Ceylon Civil Service 1802-1833: A Study of Administrative Change in Ceylon*, Dehiwala, 1966, pp. 12, 13.

the measures of administrative reforms which he initiated in this phase as the Madras civil servants gave him little support.<sup>1</sup>

### **Maritime Provinces under the Crown (1802-1811)**

The experiment of joint control by the Crown and the Company was not a success, and in December 1800 Dundas<sup>\*</sup> informed the Directors that he had resolved to make Sri Lanka a Crown Sri Lanka. The attempt to use Madras officials in Sri Lanka had failed owing to the dissimilarity between the languages and problems of Sri Lanka and India. An expert knowledge of Sinhalese conditions could only be obtained by the establishment of a separate Sri Lanka Civil Service, composed of men who would spend the whole of their official careers on the island. Another reason for the severance from India was that on account of Sri Lanka's perennial deficit the salaries were considerably lower than in India, while with the small number of posts the chances of promotion were far fewer. Experience had proved that no Madras civilians of ability would willingly remain in Sri Lanka nor could they reasonably be expected to do so owing to the serious injury to their prospects which this would entail. Dundas was also influenced by North's severe complaints of the cabal of Madras officials against him.<sup>2</sup>

On January 1, 1802, the control of the East India Company was abolished and Sri Lanka became a Crown Colony under the Colonial Office. Legislative and Executive powers continued to be vested in the Governor alone, subject to revision and confirmation or rejection at home.<sup>3</sup> A very important innovation was the establishment of an advisory Council composed of the Governor, the Chief Justice, the officer commanding the troops in Ceylon, the Principal Secretary to Government; and two other officials

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<sup>1</sup> Kannangara, P. D., *The History of the Ceylon Civil Service 1802-1833: A Study of Administrative Change in Ceylon*, Dehiwala, 1966, pp. 12, 13.

<sup>\*</sup> Hendry Dundas, President of the Board of Control for India.

<sup>2</sup> C.O. nos. 55. 61: Dec 30, 1800.

<sup>3</sup> C.O. nos. 54. 55: Mar. 13, 1801.

nominated by the Governor.<sup>1</sup>

The Governor was expected to consult the Council on all matters of importance but was not required to follow its advice, although a dissenting member might enter a protest on the Minutes. The Governor had power to suspend or dismiss members.<sup>2</sup> A separate Sri Lanka Civil Service was established and the Madras officials were encouraged to return to India. About twenty civilians appointed by Dundas were sent to Ceylon in 1801 and 1802 and were amalgamated with those who had gone out with North in 1798, and a few survivors of the Madras regime. While Dundas appointed Robert Arbuthnot Chief or Principal Secretary (the present Colonial Secretary) he left Frederic North a considerable degree of freedom in arranging the Civil Service. Dundas advised that salaries should be lower than in India, ranging from £300 to £3,000 for the Principal Secretary but should permit a decent scale of living and the saving of a competence.<sup>3</sup> All vacancies except writerships, the junior rank of the service (the present cadetships), were to be filled by promoting at the Governor's discretion the existing civil servants in Sri Lanka. The principle of an exclusive Civil Service was established, since nothing could be more unjust and heartbreaking to young men than to labour under the apprehension of having their services superseded by favor and interest at home. Following the rule in the Indian Civil Service promotion should normally be by seniority, unless the Governor considered that this claim was outweighed by superior merit.<sup>4</sup> All appointments by the Governor were provisional until confirmed by the Cabinet, but this is a power which unless in cases of manifest injustice or abuse, I am satisfied will seldom or never be exercised. Appointments to writerships were to be made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva Colvin R. *Ceylon under the British Occupation*, Colombo, 1953, p.28.

<sup>2</sup> C.O. nos.54. 55: Mar. 13, 1801.

<sup>3</sup> Kannangara, P.D., *The History of the Ceylon Civil Service 1802-1833: A Study of Administrative Change in Ceylon*, Dehiwala, 1966, pp. 12, 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



accordance with the Governor's annual statement of vacancies.<sup>1</sup> The appointment of army officers to fill vacancies in the Civil Service was strictly forbidden since it lessened the civil servants' chances of promotion. For a colony with an annual deficit the expedient of appointing army officers had much to recommend it: they often made very efficient administrators especially in the more backward parts of the country, and they were glad to do the work in return for a small addition to their army pay. If a civil servant were appointed he would require a much larger salary which Sri Lanka could ill afford. The vacancies in question were usually minor administrative and judicial positions in the provinces such as Assistant Agents of Revenue and Frederic North and his successors frequently attempted to fill them with army officers. The Colonial Office firmly adhered to its veto, although an exception was very occasionally made when the case for it was overwhelming.<sup>2</sup>

The three last years of Frederic North's governorship from 1802 to 1805 were spent in arranging the salaries and duties of the civil servants, with the result that the Sri Lanka establishment was in a state of flux. North complained frequently that the Colonial Office interfered unduly in matters of detail, while the Colonial Office retorted that Frederic North had a genius for creating pluralities.<sup>3</sup> Many officials held several posts, each with its attendant salary, and the Colonial Office insisted that the number of positions be decreased by consolidating their duties., The principal officials of the central administration were the Governor and Treasurer; the Chief Secretary; the Deputy Secretary; the Vice-Treasurer, who did most of the work of the Treasury; the Accountant-General and

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<sup>1</sup> C.O. no. 55. 61: May 1, 1802.

<sup>2</sup> C.O. no. 56. 61: Feb. 8, 1803.

<sup>3</sup> De Silva K.M., "The Coming of the British to Ceylon", *UHC*, vol. iii, Ed. by De Silva, K. M. Peradeniya, 1973, pp.1-11.

Civil Auditor; the Civil and Military Paymaster-General; and the Board of Revenue and Commerce (the Chief Secretary, the Vice-Treasurer, the Accountant-General, and the Paymaster-General). Under the control of the Board were the Superintendent of Cinnamon Plantations and his staff, and the Revenue Department composed of the members of the provincial administration. Sri Lanka was divided into eight Districts, each under an Agent of Revenue and Commerce with one or two Assistants. In all there were about forty-five members of the Civil Service. Attached to each office was a varying number of clerks, the majority being burghers.<sup>1</sup>

### **Kandyan Kingdom Conquest by the British**

In their early years in the coastal lowlands, the British relaxed control that had been imposed by the Dutch over the external trade of the Kandyan kingdom\* by allowing the Kandyan king to use some of the island's sea ports.<sup>2</sup> This move was motivated by desire to convince the Kandyan king that British presence in Sri Lanka would be beneficial to him. However, once their political authority was entrenched in the coastal lowlands, the British sought to subjugate the Kandyan kingdom. Among the reasons for this were: reduce insecurity and expenditures involved in guarding the frontiers; gain direct access between the western and eastern coasts of Sri Lanka; and control the products of the Kandyan kingdom. But the Kandyan monarch remained unmoved by diplomatic pressures and resisted subordination to the British. As elsewhere in the nonwestern world, resistance by the native ruler (in this case,

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<sup>1</sup> C.O. no.54. 13: Jan. 1, 1804.

\* See Appendix-II

<sup>2</sup> De Silva, K.M., *The Kandyan Kingdom and the British –The Last Phase, 1896 to 1818*, *UCHC*, vol. iii, ed. by, K.M. de Silva, vol. 3, 1973, p.15.

the Kandyan king) brought forth formal political annexation by the militarily and technically advanced nation (Britain).<sup>1</sup>

The British had attempted to annex the Kandyan kingdom several times between 1803 and 1815 but failed in the face of guerilla resistance by the Kandyans. But when a faction of the Kandyan aristocracy opposed the king solicited the British to intervene, the British came in and exploiting this opportunity, they deposed the Kandyanking. Moreover, the British ‘liberators’ usurped the Kandyan throne for themselves; an outcome unanticipated by the Kandyan aristocratic conspirators. The justification given by the British for their intervention was the desire to rescue the Kandyan people from the tyranny of their king, Sri Vickrama Rajasinghe and to project and promote Buddhism, the religion of the people, which the tyrannical king had neglected.<sup>2</sup> But as J. S. Furnivall, the early theorist of colonialism, has pointed out, colonizing powers tend to “justify their activities on moral grounds and colour them with the warm glow of humanitarianism” even though their primary motive was “the search for material advantage.”<sup>3</sup>

We lack sufficient evidence of the magnitude of the tyranny inflicted by Sri Vickrama Rajasinghe (the king of the Kanyan province) on the Kandyan people or the level of popular resentment against him. But the consensus among Ceylonese historians is that the deposal of the king was due to aristocratic opposition rather than popular rebellion. For example, K. M. de Silva says:

“Sri Vickrama Rajasinghe’s rule for all the drama and the political turmoil associated with it was singularly and significantly free of any such demonstrations of the people’s dissatisfaction. The people gave

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> De Silva, K.M., *The Kandyan Kingdom and the British –The Last Phase, 1896 to 1818*, UCHC, vol. iii, ed. by, K.M. de Silva, vol. 3, 1973, p.15.

<sup>3</sup> J.S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study Burma, Netherland and India*, Cambridge University Press, 1948, p. 22.

little or no support to the advancing British army in 1815, and demonstrated no enthusiasm at the cession of the Kandyan kingdom to the British. Thus the political turmoil in the Kandyan Kingdom in 1814-15 can by no stretch of the imagination be called a rebellion of the people”.<sup>1</sup>

When the people were deeply dissatisfied with their ruler over a political economic, religious or other issue, they resorted to riots or rebellions. These popular rebellions were not inspired by any particular ideology or a desire to restructure the existing social order but by the immediate collective need to show disapproval.<sup>2</sup> But according to K. M. de Silva and other writers, no such mass revolt took place in 1815. It was rather the intensification of the power struggle between monarchical and feudal interests in Kandy, and the emergence of Britain as the dominant force in the South Asian region that led to the alliance between the aristocracy and the British and the subsequent cession of the Kandyan kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

It appears that the aristocratic disaffection with the king grew out of those policies of the absolutist monarch which threatened the interests of the feudal chiefs as a social class. The king had on occasion “conferred superior office on men of a lower status than that from which it was customary to fill such positions,”<sup>4</sup> which was obviously a cause for much grievance among the nobility. In addition, the king sometimes took measures to restrain the chiefs from exercising their powers over the people arbitrarily. Apparently, the aristocratic opposition to the king gained greater momentum with the disenchantment of prominent Buddhist clergymen (*bhikkus*) with Sri Vikrama Rajasinghe. However, as K. M. de Silva has pointed out that there is

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva Colvin, R., *Ceylon under the British Occupation*, vol. 1, Colombo, 1953, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> De Silva Colvin, R., *Ceylon under the British Occupation*, vol. 1, Colombo, 1953, p. 158

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 160,161.

<sup>4</sup> Peris Ralph, *Sinhalese Social Organization: The Kandyan period*, Colombo, University press, 1956, p.46.

insufficient evidence to determine whether the alienation and opposition of the clergy were caused by the king's religious policies or the clergy's kinship ties to the aristocracy.'<sup>1</sup> It was probably due to a combination of both these as well as other factors. As noted above, on deposing the Sinhala monarch, the British annexed the Kandyan Kingdom instead of securing the throne for the puppet king chosen by the aristocracy. As Colvin R. de Silva has remarked:

“The Kandyans (the aristocracy) had turned with too facile readiness to the idea of bringing in the foreigner to settle their political differences, that pitcher went once too often to the well. The convenient arbitrator became the permanent master. The Kandyans accomplished their own political doom”.<sup>2</sup>

It has been pointed out that the Portuguese and the Dutch, who ruled maritime Sri Lanka prior to the British were unable to conquer the Kandyan kingdom because of the inadequacy of their own military resources rather than any inherent military strength of the Kandyan kingdom. In contrast, by 1815, the British were not only the most formidable imperial force in the world but also the dominant force in the South Asian region.<sup>3</sup> It is important to note, however that the Kandyan kingdom was ceded, not conquered by the British. It was political acumen rather than military strength that led to the British success in taking Kandy.

### **The Kandyan Convention of 1815**

By the Kandyan Convention of March 2, 1815 signed by the British and members of the Kandyan feudal-administrative class, the kingdom was turned into a British colony. However, the British recognized the political necessity of providing guarantees to those groups and individuals who had assisted them in

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Colvin R. De Silva, *Ceylon Under British Occupation*, vol. 1, Colombo, 1953, p. 158.

<sup>3</sup> K. M. De Silva, *The Kandyan Kingdom and the British – The Last Phase, 1796 to 1818*, *UChC*, vol. iii, edited by K.M. De Silva, 1973, p.19.

pacifying the kingdom which hitherto no European power had been able to conquer. It was for these reasons that the British tactfully agreed to govern according to the customary laws and institutions of the kingdom and particularly to maintain the “rights, privileges and powers of the chiefs, the Buddhist Religion and the Sangha”.<sup>1</sup>

The Kandyan Convention was aimed at conferring legitimacy on British rule in the Kandyan kingdom. It enabled the British colonial state to present itself as the rightful successor to the Sinhalese monarch. In fact, as noted earlier, the very reason given by the British for their intervention was the liberation of the people from their oppressive king who violated the customs and conventions of Kandyan society. The justification then was that the British would be more Kandyan than the Kandyan king himself.

### **The Great Rebellion of 1817-1818**

The British established a separate administrative structure for the Kandyan Provinces by superimposing a British Board of Commissioners on the native feudal administration. They also maintained intact the basic institutions of Kandyan society. However, dissatisfaction with British rule soon spread among the feudal nobility, the Buddhist clergy and the peasantry. As Colvin R. de Silva has pointed out, the primary reason for the feudal dissatisfaction was loss of their status in society.<sup>2</sup> The superimposition of a European administrative class above the entire feudal administrative hierarchy meant that all feudal chiefs were now compelled to pay homage and obeisance even to a common British soldier whereas, in pre-British times the nobles were subordinate only to the Kandyan monarch. Furthermore, the British sought to curtail some of the emoluments and powers of the chiefs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The proclamation of 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1815 or The Kandyna Convention in a revised Edition of the Legislative of Ceylon*, vol. 1, Colombo, 1923, pp. 59-60.

<sup>2</sup> Colvin R. De Silva, *Ceylon under British Occupation*, vol. 1, Colombo, 1953, p.60.

<sup>3</sup> Peris, P.E., *Tri Sinhala: The Last Phase: 1795-1815*, second edition, 1939, p.22.

The Buddhist clergy too became dissatisfied with the alien Christian government and the severance of the historical link between the state and Buddhism. The Sinhalese monarchs personally took part in religious ceremonies; they paid homage to the clergy particularly by bestowing large land grants to the temples for the maintenance of the clergy. The clergy soon came to realize that the British officials who were Christians could not replace the Kandyan king. Nor were the British prepared to give the clergy the veneration they were accustomed to receive from the Kandyan kings.<sup>1</sup>

It seems that the masses of the people were not favorably disposed towards the British either. The substitution of an alien race in place of the monarch that they had deified, the diminution of the dignity of their chiefs who were their patriarchal lords, probably contributed to the peasants' own loss of national pride and growing antipathy towards the British.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it is likely that even at this early stage of British rule, the manner in which the British began to abuse traditional institutions such as corvee labor (*rajakariya*) caused great hardship to the producer classes and contributed to their desire for the restoration of Kandyan monarchy.<sup>3</sup>

The revolt that ensued quickly spread throughout the Kandyan Provinces. This revolt was considered the most formidable insurrection during the whole period of British occupation in Ceylon,<sup>4</sup> is also generally known as the Great Rebellion of 1817-1818. All segments of the Kandyan population, many factions of the aristocracy, the clergy and the peasantry seem to have participated in this effort to drive out the British.<sup>5</sup> The rebellion sparked off when a Muslim population in the outlying provinces of Bintanna and Vellassa

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<sup>1</sup> Mendis, G.C., *Ceylon Under the British*, Colombo, Apothecaries Co. Ltd., 1952, p.16.

<sup>2</sup> Colvin R. De Silva, *Ceylon under British Occupation*, vol. 1, Colombo, 1953, p.162.

<sup>3</sup> Peris Ralph, *Sinhalese Social Organization: The Kandyan Period*, Colombo, University press, 1956, p.46.

<sup>4</sup> K. M. De Silva, *The Kandyan Kingdom and the British – The Last Phase, 1796 to 1818*, UCHC, vol.iii, University of Peredaniya, 1973, p.32.

<sup>5</sup> Peris Ralph, *Sinhala and the Patriots 1815-1818*, Colombo, 1950, p.10.

persuaded the British to appoint a Muslim headman in order to escape payment of levies to their Sinhalese governor (*dissava*). The Sinhalese governor naturally objected to the reduction of his income and authority. So, when a pretender to the Kandyan throne named Vilbave appeared, the governor and his people supported him. Though there was no pre-arranged plan, once the revolt began, many other Kandyan chiefs who were dissatisfied with the British joined the rebels. Before long only a few chiefs remained loyal to the British rather provided all sorts of support for the continuation of the British rule in Sri Lanka.<sup>1</sup> It was only with the utmost severity and repression that the British put down the rebellion. Historians agree that the Great Rebellion of 1818 was a post pacification revolt in which all segments of the Kandyan population came together to drive out the common enemy and restore the pre-colonial social order.<sup>2</sup> The rebellion was not simply a feudal reaction but also a popular nationalist revolt.

### **Consolidation of British Political Authority in Kandy: 1818**

Following the standards of English constitutional law, the British treated the 1815 Kandyan Convention as any other ordinary treaty capable of amendment by subsequent legislation.<sup>3</sup> This the British did by passing the Proclamation of 1818. The object of introducing the new bill was to bring the rebellious Kandyan Provinces more firmly under British control and to curtail the powers and the privileges of the Kandyan chiefs. For example, British officials known as Government Agents, rather than the feudal chiefs, were now made the central figures of the provincial administration. Furthermore, the protection afforded to Buddhism was reduced, in effect, by being extended to other religions as well. In addition, the British experimented with several alternative strategies to offset the power of the feudal chiefs. One such was the

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<sup>1</sup> Mendis, G.C., *Ceylon under the British*, Colombo, 1944, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> K.M. De Silva, *Nineteenth-Century Origins of Nationalism in Ceylon*, *UCHC*, vol. iii, University of Peradeniya, 1973, pp. 249-60.

<sup>3</sup> K. M. De Silva, *The Kandyan Kingdom and the British – The Last Phase, 1796 to 1818*, *UCHC*, vol. iii, University of Peradeniya, 1973, p.34.



attempt to institute a free peasantry. This they tried to do by releasing the tenant cultivators of the former crown villages (*gabadagam*) from forced labor duties and having them pay a grain tax instead.<sup>1</sup>

The changes introduced by the Proclamation of 1818, along with the network of roads built to link the interior and the coast, opened the Kandyan Highlands to increasing influences from the outside world. However, it was with the introduction of a plantation economy around the third decade of the nineteenth century, which the isolation of the Kandyan kingdom was completely broken down. This process included the incorporation of Kandy into the world economy and the adaptation of pre-colonial social institutions to satisfy the needs of the colonial plantation economy and industrializing Britain.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms**

The Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms of 1833 that provided the politico-juridical framework for the ‘modernization’, specifically the capitalist development of Sri Lanka, and provided a definite watershed in the history of the island. However, it must be noted that these Reforms were not without ambiguities and, when put into effect did not always yield the anticipated results.

The conquest of Kandy and the suppression of the Great Rebellion of 1818, problems of internal security were largely eliminated economic interests came to the fore. In spite of increased taxation of the producer classes, the deficit in the colonial state budget continued.<sup>3</sup> The Colonial Office in London wanted to make Sri Lanka a self-financing colony; moreover, a profitable one. These interests prompted the appointment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry to

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<sup>1</sup> Peris Ralph, *Sinhalese Social Organization: The Kandyan Period*, Colombo, University Press, 1956, p.52.

<sup>2</sup> Powel, G., *The Kingdom Wars the British Army in Ceylon 1803-1818*, London, 1973, pp. 18-20.

<sup>3</sup> Pieris Ralph, “Some Neglected Aspects of the British Colonial Policy in Ceylon”, *Ceylon Historical Journal*, Vol. 1, 1951, pp.18-24

make recommendations for the improvement of the revenue, the administration and the judiciary in Sri Lanka. Of the two members of the Committee, William Colebrooke, the investigator of revenue and administrative matters, was an unmistakable proponent of laissez-faire; and Charles Cameron, the legal advisor, of this commission.<sup>1</sup> Colebrooke was the principal member of the Commission; Cameron's concerns and activities were restricted to this area of professional training - the judiciary. The foremost commercial corporation, abolished in 1813 and its commercial operations terminated in 1833.

It was when these ideas had begun to influence British colonial policy that Colebrooke and Cameron arrived in Sri Lanka. Their task was not limited to proposals for balancing the budget. They were instructed to inquire into the state of the Colony, its whole civil government the state of its laws and the practical administration of justice. They were not required as in 1802 to maintain a strong government by keeping the powers of the Governor undiminished to preserve the ancient institutions of the people or follow Indian practice. On the other hand, they were expected to recommend for Ceylon a system of administration in accordance with British conception of government.<sup>2</sup>

With their disregard for traditions their acceptance of utility as the criterion for assessing the value of things their beliefs in private enterprise and free trade in democracy and in the applicability of British institutions to all countries irrespective of their stage of development or differences due to their geographical and cultural environments Colebrook and Cameron could not appreciate the existing system of government in Ceylon its general spirit or tendencies. They therefore began to make proposals to alter radically the entire

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<sup>1</sup> Mendis, G.C., (Ed.), *The Colebrook-Cameron Papers, Vol.1: documents on British Colonial policy in Ceylon 1796-1833*, Oxford, 1956, pp.12-18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

system of government and the economy which it upheld in order to bring them into line with their own ideas.

One of the first things that Colebrooke disapproved of was the medieval system of rajakariya even in the modified form. The objection raised by Frederic North to these feudal services have already been mentioned. Colebrooke opposed them on both economic and humanitarian grounds. They hindered the development of agriculture and commerce by their interference with normal occupations.<sup>1</sup> They denied people the chance of changing their form of work or migrating from the district in which they lived. They reduced the people to a state of serfdom and compelled Government to preserve distinctions of race and caste in order to get its work done and to deny equal rights to all its subjects.<sup>2</sup>

Colebrooke raised objections also to the way rajakariya was enforced. He found that work did not fall equally on all people. A holding had to provide a male for government work but the holdings were not of the same size not equally productive nor owned by an equal number of persons.<sup>3</sup> If a holding was owned by one man he had to work for Government and during that time neglected his own lands. Further the chief exempted to such an extent those who bribed them that the work at times fell very heavily on the others.

Colebrook realized too that the attitude of most people toward rajakariya was no longer what it had been in the days of Frederic North and many now desired its abolition. It is possible that the administrative changes since the British occupation had undermined the relations that existed in the feudal economy and had begun to transform the outlook of the people. But what they mainly objected to was rajakariya as exacted by the British. They were often

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<sup>1</sup> Perera, A.B., "Plantation Economy and Colonial Policy in Ceylon", *CHJ*, vol.1, 1952, pp.34, 35.

<sup>2</sup> De Silva, M.U., "Land Tenure, Caste System and Rajakariya under Foreign Rule: A Review of Change in Sri Lanka under Western Powers 1597-1832", *JRASL*, (NS). no.37, 1992-93, pp.158-64.

<sup>3</sup> Vijata Samaraveera, *The Colebrook Cameron Reforms*, *UCHC*, vol. iii, University of Peradeniya, 1973, p.86.

employed outside their districts without adequate compensation. The work they rendered to government clearing and maintaining village paths was light and directly beneficial to them whereas work on modern roads and buildings was very heavy and was of no direct value to them as their economic conditions were primitive.<sup>1</sup>

The Sri Lanka Government did not approve of a sudden abolition of rajakariya. It did not want its work disorganized as in the days of Frederic North. But its arguments did not carry weight with the Imperial Government and rajakariya was abolished in 1832. The abolition of rajakariya was opposed also by the chiefs and the Bhikshus (Buddhist Reverent) of the Kandyan Provinces.<sup>2</sup> The influences of the chiefs depended on the continuance of the tenurial services and of the caste system. The Bhikshu's belief that the abolition would run the *Vihares* the *Devalas* that depended on the services of the tenants.<sup>3</sup> Therefore the service tenures in the *nindagam*, *daladagam*, and *viharagam* were permitted to remain and they continued to exist till 1870 when services were allowed to be commuted for payment.

The objection raised against rajakariya applied equally to monopolies and other government activities in agriculture and trade as they were all carried on by means of these services. Colebrooke further objected to monopolies as he was opposed to mercantilism. If rajakariya had prevented the feudal basis of society from changing into a commercial one mercantilism as followed by the Dutch and the early British governors had prevented the monopoly of the trade with India had been taken away from the East India Company, which had

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<sup>1</sup> Vijaya Samaraveera, Economics and Social Developments under the British 1796-1832, *UCHC*, vol. iii, University of Peradeniya, 1973, p.49.

<sup>2</sup> De Silva M.U., "Land Tenure, Caste System and Rajakariya under Foreign Rule: A Review of Change in Sri Lanka under Western Powers 1597-1832", *JRASL*, (NS),no. 37, 1992-93, pp.165-67.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

survived the assaults made on it for over a century. So Colebrooke opposed all commercial enterprises by Government.<sup>1</sup>

Cinnamon was the chief government monopoly at this time. Colebrook objected not only to the monopoly but also to the system of cinnamon production as well as to the organizations of the trade. A whole caste of people was compelled to cultivate and collect cinnamon for wages which did not amount to more than what was earned by a labourer. According to the cinnamon laws all cinnamon plants wherever they grew belonged to Government and anyone who destroyed a cinnamon plant could be severely punished.<sup>2</sup> Therefore the lands on which plants grew wild near cinnamon plantations went down in value. The government monopoly prevented the people from taking a share in the production and sale of cinnamon. The profits derived by Government too were not as large as they might have been had the trade been in private hands.<sup>3</sup> On Colebrooke's recommendation the cinnamon monopoly was abolished in 1833 and cinnamon laws were repealed. Other monopolies also were discontinued and activities in agriculture and trade abandoned. The coffee and pepper plantations were sold and export of coconut oil and plumbago were given up.<sup>4</sup>

Colebrooke did not approve of direct taxes as they led to government interference in agriculture and industry. He objected to the land tax and the export duties which hindered the development and sale of the products of Ceylon but he recommended only their gradual abolition as Government could not afford to abandon immediately these important sources of revenue. He also suggested the imposition of an export duty on cinnamon as he feared that

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<sup>1</sup> Mendis, G.C., edited, *The Colebrook-Cameron Papers*, vol.1, *Documents on British Colonial Policy in Ceylon 1796-1833*, Oxford, 1956, pp.66, 67.

<sup>2</sup> Vijaya Samaraveera, "The Cinnamon Trade of Ceylon in the Early Nineteenth Century", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol.8, part 4, pp.415-42.

<sup>3</sup> De Silva K.M., "The Colebrook-Cameron Reforms", *CJHSS*, vol. 2, 1959, pp. 2130.

<sup>4</sup> Mendis, G.C., edited, *The Colebrook-Cameron Papers*, vol.1, *Documents on British Colonial Policy in Ceylon 1796-1833*, Oxford, 1956, p.70.

Government would suffer by a sudden loss of income. Colebrooke believed that these changes would remove restriction on trade the free movement of labour and the liberty to cultivate any description of produce. He also expected that they would encourage private enterprise and lead to the accumulation of capital in the hands of the people and the development of agriculture and trade.<sup>1</sup>

Colebrooke was no doubt influenced also by the view that a country like Sri Lanka could not afford to pay a large staff of European Civil Servants and he hoped that Sri Lankan would be trained before long to fill the higher government posts. With this object in view he recommended an increase on the vote for education.<sup>2</sup> He proposed the abolition of the inefficient vernacular school run by Government which did not give an education sufficient for contemporary needs and recommended the establishment of English schools for the purpose of qualifying Sri Lankan's for government employment. The correspondence of Government of Sri Lanka was already conducted in English. The work of the law courts was soon to be carried out entirely in English. If the Sri Lankan's were to be useful government servants they had to gain knowledge of the language, modes of thought and ideas of their masters. He probably held the view that the government money could be more usefully spent in giving an English education first of all to the upper and the middle classes.<sup>3</sup> In 1832 the Government Sinhalese and Tamil schools were abolished and five English schools were established in Colombo, Gall, Jaffna, Kandy and Chilaw. In 1836 the Colombo Academy (now called Royal College) was opened as a secondary school. It was expected to provide teachers for other schools. The number English schools soon rose and in 1848 there were sixty of them with an attendance of 2,714 pupils. They included three central Schools in

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva K.M., *History of Sri Lanka*, Vijaya Yapa publication, Colombo, 2003, pp.239-253

<sup>2</sup> Mendis G.C. (ed.), *The Colebrook-Cameron Papers*, vol.1: *Documents on British Colonial Policy in Ceylon 1796-1833*, Oxford, 1956, p.78.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Colombo, Kandy and all for boy's three Superior Schools for girls and sixteen girls' schools.<sup>1</sup>

Though Colebrook did not approve of the connection of the Sri Lanka Government with Buddhism he did not propose any important changes and Government continued to extend its protection to Buddhist property in the Kandyan provinces. A share of the revenues of the gabadagam<sup>•</sup> went towards the celebration of certain Buddhist festivals. When the gabadagam were sold after the abolition of rajakariya Governor Hoton arranged the make annual payments instead as he did not wish to break away from earlier declaration.<sup>2</sup> But during his period the Christian missionaries and their powerful friends who believed that a British Government should associate with no other religion than Christianity opposed Governors connection with Buddhist which they considered an idolatrous faith; and they were supported by the Secretary of state. The result was that Buddhist property which had already suffered from the abolition of rajakariya began to be neglected with the severance of Government connection with Buddhism.<sup>3</sup>

The next reformed Council came into existence in 1912. The only new features were the introduction of the elective principle and the enfranchisement of the Sinhalese and Tamil middle class. The Burghers had always been a middle class body. The official majority was maintained by the addition of two official members. McCallum had pointed out that the best representatives of the masses were the Government Agents and the Civil Servants and not the English educated middle class, but no Government Agent of the backward areas was included in the Council. The nominated Sinhalese and Tamil members had hitherto belonged to the Goigama and the Vellala communities respectively. In

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<sup>1</sup> Mendis, G.C., *Ceylon Under the British*, Colombo, Apothecaries Co. Ltd., 1952, pp.69,76-77

• Royal estates.

<sup>2</sup> Mendis, G.C., *Ceylon Under the British*, Colombo, Apothecaries Co. Ltd., 1952, pp.78-80.

<sup>3</sup> Mendis G.C. (ed.), *The Colebrook-Cameron Papers*, vol.1: *Documents on British Colonial Policy in Ceylon 1796-1833*, Oxford, 1956, pp.78, 80.

the new council the second Sinhalese and Tamil seats were given to members of the Karawa community, which in the Sinhala districts had grown in wealth and influence. The educated Ceylonese chose Sir Ponnambalam Ramanadan, a Tamil, as their members, and he by his exceptional services retained the seat till the next reform of the Legislative Council.<sup>1</sup>

The reform of the Legislative council in 1912 had not met the wishes of the Sinhalese and Tamil middle class. It had perpetuated racial representation and had failed to bring the legislative Council into line with the developments in administration.<sup>2</sup> It had neither satisfied the political aspirations of the middle class nor met the claims of Sri Lankan's for equality of status with ruling race. After the reform in 1912 the middle class grew in strength with the extension of plantations and trade, the expansion of government services, and the growth of the medical, the legal, and the teaching professions and by 1917 it began to ask once more for a reform of the constitution.<sup>3</sup>

The agitation for reform this time received an impetus from a number of new factors. In May June 1915, during the Great War riots occurred in certain parts of the island when some Muslims suffered at the hands of some Sinhalese.<sup>4</sup> The British officials probably owing to the war exaggerated the gravity of these local disturbances and as had happened in 1848 it was imagined that the unrest represented a conspiracy against British rule.<sup>5</sup> Resorting to severe measures of repression under martial law, they punished and executed many innocent persons. Some of these acts of repression were condemned even by the British governor Sir Jone Anderson (1916-1918) the successor of Sir Robert Chalmers (1913-1916) in whose time the riots occurred

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<sup>1</sup> Jennings Sir Ivor, *The Constitution of Ceylon*, Oxford University Press, 1953, pp.22-26.

<sup>2</sup> *Papers relating to the Constitutional History of Ceylon, 1908-1924*, Colombo, Government, Printer, 1927.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 1927.

<sup>4</sup> Fernando P.T.M., "The Post Riots Campaign for Justice", *Journal of the Asian Studies*, vol. xxix, 1970, pp.255- 66

<sup>5</sup> De Silva K.M., "The Rebellion of 1848 in Ceylon", *CJHS*, vol.7, no.2, 1964, pp.144-170.



and they roused a considerable amount of hostile feeling against the British. The Sinhalese in particular realized that the only way they could prevent the repetition of such acts of misrule was by obtaining some control over the administration.

The British Empire at this time was viewed as consisting of two sections. One part like India and Ceylon was held in trust and the other like the Dominions in partnership. The reforms of 1919 formed the first step in transferring India from the first group to the second. The educated classes in Sri Lanka naturally expected that in accordance with the ideals proclaimed during the war and the declarations made regarding India the British would grant the beginnings of responsible government to Sri Lanka too.<sup>1</sup>

A third factor strengthened the movement for reform. Situation has been made to the revival of Buddhism and Hinduism as a result of the grant of religious toleration by the British. This revival created an interest in the ancient cultures not only of the Sinhalese and Tamils but also of the Muslims and the Burghers. The Sinhalese and Tamils now began to magnify worth of their past civilization which under British rule they had underrated. This cultural revival while it naturally made the Burghers realizes the closeness of their connection with the British strengthened the political and economic reaction of the Sinhalese and the Tamils against British domination by drawing into the movement for reform a large number of persons from among those who had not received an education on modern lines.

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva K.M. *History of Sri Lanka*, Vijitha yapa Publications, Colombo, 2003, pp.385-386. The agitation for constitutional reforms in India did not cease after the establishment of the Morley-Minto Council in 1909 and towards the 1919 The Indian National Congress and the Muslim League asked for a considerable advance in self-government. The British Government in Britain and in India could not ignore the united request. Besides they had to recognize the services rendered by India during the war. Further they had declared that they were fighting to defend the cause of national freedom and democracy and had championed the ideals of self-development and self-determination for national units.

The agitation for reform in Sri Lanka began in April 1917 under the vigorous leadership of Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam. The Ceylon Reform League was formed in May 1917 and a public conference was held in December to consider the nature of the reform that should be demanded. In December 1919 the Low-country Sinhalese a considerable number of Tamils and a few others representing other communities formed the Ceylon National Congress. Following the memorials sent earlier to the Secretary of state the Congress demanded a constitution similar to that recommended by Lord Willington for the Presidency of Bombay.<sup>1</sup> It asked for a council of about 50 members of whom four fifths were to be territorially elected and the rest nominated officials and unofficial. It asked further for an elected Speaker the retention of the control of the budget wide male franchise and restricted female franchise as well as the inclusion of three Sri Lankan's in the Executive Council with portfolios, two of whom were to be chosen from the elected members of the Legislative Council. In other words the Ceylonese demanded parliamentary institutions for Ceylon: full representative government and an executive partially responsible to the legislature.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jennings Sir Ivor, *The Constitution of Ceylon*, Oxford University Press, 1953, pp. 38-42.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3.1 Emergence of Nationalism and Renaissance Movements in India

The revolt of 1857 was significant in many respects in that it demolished many popular British notions about India and its people, but it also reinforced certain others.<sup>1</sup> The localized character of the revolt, its failure to throw up any outstanding ‘national’ leader, and the relative ease with which they were able to make use of Indians against Indians in order to put down the revolt; confirmed many Britishers in their old belief that the people of India had ‘no conception of national independence’ or patriotism.<sup>2</sup> In subsequent years with British power more firmly rooted in Indian soil than ever before and the memories of the dark days of the revolt fading over, some of the old and popular British clichés about India gained increased currency. The favourite British description of India in the latter half of the nineteenth century was ‘a congeries of tribes, religions and castes’. It was commonly asserted that the word ‘patriotism’ had no place in the Indian vocabulary, that Indians did not mind being ruled by foreigners because they had been accustomed to foreign rule for centuries and that they had no capacity for self-government.<sup>3</sup>

The Britishers during the formative phase of their rule in India began creating certain facilities with an underlying objective of prolonging rule in India notwithstanding the fact that these would prove beneficial for the Indians to expose the cause of freedom in India. Then these came as blessings in disguise for the Indians as will be understood in its proper historical perspective in the pages ahead.

The introduction of the modern means of communication – the press, the new postal system and the railways – which followed the establishment of British rule in India linked the metropolitan centre with the *mofussil* and one

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<sup>1</sup> Metcalf, Thomas R., *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1857-1870*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1965, pp.10-12.

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 1858.

<sup>3</sup> Tomlinson, B. R., “India and the British Empire 1880-19335”, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol.12, pp. 337-65.

province with another in a closer, more intimate and living unity. We have already made a passing reference about the significant role played by the press in India in criticizing the acts of the administration, in ventilating the grievances of the public, in creating political consciousness and in promoting a sense of national unity.<sup>1</sup> In a vast country like India, which had few representative institutions and where other forms of agitation were either undeveloped or only resorted to spasmodically, the press provided a regular, easy and potent means of constitutional agitation. It was not long before the Fourth Estate in India established itself as a tribune of the people and a permanent opposition to the government. The ability and courage with which many of the Anglo – Indian newspapers in India carried out their self-imposed duty made them a power in the land.<sup>2</sup> The government of India had to reckon with them and the people in India were glad to follow in their footsteps. Both in their spirit and in their style of writing Indian newspapers, especially those in English, were modelled on their Anglo – Indian contemporaries.<sup>3</sup> Like the latter, they fearlessly criticized official policies and gave expression to the wants, grievances and views of the people. In this particular respect, Indians were better placed than the people of many other countries in Europe, where the freedom of the press was severely restricted. Like their Anglo-Indian counterparts, Indian newspapers developed an all-India outlook. Not only did they take note of happenings in all parts of India, they also circulated freely in all parts of the country. Those educated on Western lines were always on the look out to know the political happenings of various parts of Indian subcontinent with avidity. The practice of exchanging free copies enabled the editor say, a paper in Madras to easily obtain dozens of other newspapers published in different parts of the subcontinent. One has only to glance through

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<sup>1</sup> Harington, L.S., *Sketch of the History and Influence of the Press in British India*, New York, Chapter, 1823, pp.6-34.

<sup>2</sup> Desai A. R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*. Mumbai, Popular Prakashan, 2012, pp.206-223.

<sup>3</sup> Lovett, Sir Verney, *History of Indian Nationalist Movement*, Delhi, 1920, pp.18-20.

the periodically published subscription lists of, for example, the *Hindu Patriot* and the *Amerita Bazar Patrika* to realize that, though published from Calcutta, they had their huge readers in almost every important town of India. The horizon of the vernacular newspapers was naturally more limited and their circulation was not as wide as that of English newspapers.<sup>1</sup> But even they did not confine themselves to purely parochial matters. Their editors were very often English-educated and they closely followed the example of their English contemporaries. Nor was the circulation of the vernacular newspapers as restricted as is generally supposed.<sup>2</sup> For example, Urdu newspapers published from Lahore, Delhi, Aligarh, Lucknow, Patna, Calcutta, Bombay or Madras, circulated throughout the length and breadth of India. Similarly, Bengali newspapers were read not only in Bengal but also by Bengalis in other parts of northern India; and Marathi newspapers from Bombay or Poona found subscribers among the Marathi-speaking population scattered all over northern, central and southern India. Some Indian newspapers, like the *Indian Mirror of Calcutta* made it their conscious policy to inculcate an all-India outlook in their readers.<sup>3</sup>

The importance of the press, therefore, in promoting a pan-Indian consciousness cannot be exaggerated. It broke down internal barriers and encouraged inter-regional solidarity. It enabled the people in one part of the country to become aware of the existence of those in other parts of the country and of their feelings and aspirations. Because of the press, the efforts of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar<sup>4</sup> to promote the cause of social reform in Bengal became easily known to people in other parts of India and stimulated them to emulate his noble example in their respective provinces. The news of a protest meeting in Calcutta against the imposition of income tax led to similar

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<sup>1</sup> Harington, L.S., *Sketch of the History and Influence of the Press in British India*, New York, Chapter, 1823, pp.6-34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Mirror*, 1<sup>st</sup> August 1861, 1<sup>st</sup> April 1862, 1<sup>st</sup> August 1863.

<sup>4</sup> Educationist and Social Reformer.

meetings in the other towns of India. “Whenever I came across anything in the Bengal papers regarding the doings of that energetic and influential body at Calcutta, the British Indian Association, said Mangaldas Nathubhai<sup>1</sup> at a meeting held in Bombay on 14 December 1867 for the purpose of re-establishing the Bombay Association, I always felt ashamed of our inactivity. Let us therefore wipe away the blot upon our patriotism”.<sup>2</sup> Thanks to the press, public men such as Harish Chandra Mukerji,<sup>3</sup> Dadabhai Naoroji, Syed Ahmed Khan, Kristodas Pall<sup>4</sup> and Surendranath Banerjea became all-India figures. More than any other single factor, the press helped to unite the country and to create a community of thought and feeling, both within each province and between one province and another.<sup>5</sup> This was most vividly illustrated by the unanimity with which public opinion in all parts of India condemned the government of India’s handling of the Baroda affair in 1875 and sympathized with the fate of the deposed Gaikwar Malhatrao. The wide publicity which the press gave to the affair not only helped to originate a movement throughout India demanding that the British government adhere to its declared policy of non-annexation of princely states, it also aroused, as the Bombay Gazette noted,<sup>6</sup> the ‘latent patriotism’ of the Indian people. So the newspapers played valuable and significant role for the development of national consciousness among the people in India.

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<sup>1</sup> Businessman and Philanthropist; Member of Bombay Legislative Council 1866-74, President of Bombay Association 1867-75.

<sup>2</sup> Proceedings of a Meeting, Held on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1867, at the residence of the Hon’ble Mangaladass Nathoobhoy, for the Purpose of Re-establishing the Bombay Association, (1868), p.2.

<sup>3</sup> Employed in military auditor-general’s office, Calcutta, editor of *Hindu Patriot* from 1855 until his death in 1861; *Hindu Patriot*, December, 1861.

<sup>4</sup> Assistant secretary and later secretary of British Indian Association 1857-84; member of Bengal legislative Council 1874-82 and of Indian Legislative Council 1883-4, editor of *Hindu Patriot* from 1861 until his death in 1884.

<sup>5</sup> The Reverend James Long noted this in 1860. Giving evidence before the indigo commission in June that year, he remarked that the Indian press was ‘welding the natives of the different Presidencies into one patriotic mass, with a community of feeling on Indian subjects’. Report of the Indigo Commission, Parliamentary Papers, 1861, vol. xlv, no.72-I. p. 95.

<sup>6</sup> *Bombay Gazette*, 13, February, 1875.

Railways were another potent means of unifying the country. The construction of railways in India commenced in the early fifties (1853) of the nineteenth century. Progress was rather slow in the beginning but its pace was quickened in the next two decades by the lesson of the rebellion and the demands of British commerce and the need to prevent recurrent famines in India. By the early 'eighties, about 10,000 miles of railway had been constructed in India.<sup>1</sup> The coming of the 'steam horse' to India not only meant increased and rapid communication between different parts of the country, it also brought about a profound change in the habits and outlook of the people. Noticing in January 1855 how all the seventeen carriages of the Pandua – Calcutta train were 'full to the brim' with Indian passengers, the *Friend of India* remarked: 'It is one of the wonders of the age to see how the people of India have suddenly changed the stereotyped habits of twenty centuries.'<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the railway compartment, in which people of all castes, creeds and provinces were huddled together, became the symbol of a new and united India in the making and as such shattered the caste distinctions in its own way. 'Railways may do for India', Edwin Arnold wrote in 1865, 'what dynasties have never done – what the genius of Akbar the Magnificent could not effect by government, nor the cruelty of Tippoo Saheb by violence; they may make India a nation.'<sup>3</sup> Twenty years later Madhav Rao<sup>4</sup> remarked: 'What a glorious change the railway has made in old and long neglected India. The young generation could not fully realize it. In passing from the banks of the Tambrapurny to those of the Ganges, what varied scenes, what successive nationalities and languages flit across the view! Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, Marathi, Gujerati, Hindustani, Bengali, - populations which had been isolated for unmeasured ages, now easily mingle in civilized confusion. 'in my various

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<sup>1</sup> Report from the Select Committee on East Indian Railway Communication, Parliamentary Papers, 1884, vol. xi, no. 284.

<sup>2</sup> *Friend of India*, 25 January 1855.

<sup>3</sup> E. Arnold, *The Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration*. vol. ii, 1865, pp. 341-2.

<sup>4</sup> Divan of Travancore 1858-72, of Indore 1873-5 and of Baroda 1875-82; 1891.

long journeys it has repeatedly struck me that if India is to become a homogeneous nation, and is ever to achieve solidarity, it must be by means of the Railways as a means of transport, and by means of the English language as a medium of communication'.<sup>1</sup>

Travel over one's own country is usually a great education in patriotism. It heightens one's awareness of the geography, history and culture of one's native land. The knowledge gained through books, newspapers and hearsay acquires a new meaning and definitiveness. There is a widening of sympathy and a broadening of outlook.<sup>2</sup> One understands of an attachment to one's country the people gave. This was especially true of the nineteenth century. We can see it clearly in the cases of Bhau Daji, Keshab Chandra Sen and Surendranath Banerjea in the 'sixties and seventies. Their extensive travels in India, which were made easy by steamers and railways, helped them, so to speak, to discover their own country, and added a new dimension to their sense of patriotism. When Keshabchandra Sen, for example, visited Madras and Bombay for the first time in 1864, he appears to have been agreeably surprised to find that, despite local peculiarities, the people of Madras and Bombay were not very different from those in Bengal, and that in the religious, social and political spheres they were facing the same problems as were the Bengalis. In private conversations and public addresses, therefore, Keshab Chandra told his admiring and inquisitive audiences more about Young Bengal, and himself tried to probe deeper into the minds of Young Madras and Young Bombay.<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, Keshab Chandra's trip to Madras and Bombay in 1864 made him realize more vividly than ever before the basic unity of Indian life and encouraged him in his project of an All-India Union for Religious and Social Reform<sup>4</sup> Samajas similar to the Brahma Samaj in Calcutta were organized in

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<sup>1</sup> *Madras Times*, 29 July 1885.

<sup>2</sup> R. C. Dutt, *Rambles in India During Twenty-Four Years, 1871 to 1895*, 1895, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> K.C. Sen, *Diary in Madras and Bombay*, from 9<sup>th</sup> February to 8<sup>th</sup> April 1864.

<sup>4</sup> *Bengal Hurkaru*, 18 February 1865, *Friend of India*, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 6<sup>th</sup> April 1865.



Madras (1864) and Bombay (1867), and what was more significant, in 1866 Sen established in Calcutta his new 'Brahma Samaj of India' (Bharatvarshiya Brahma Samaj).<sup>1</sup>

With all their differences, the people of India had far more in common with each other than with their foreign rulers. And occasions were not wanting when the 'Natives' were united in common opposition to the 'Feringhees'. 'It is a mistake to suppose', W.C. Bonnerjee<sup>2</sup> later to become the first president of the Indian National Congress, told a meeting of the East India Association in 1867, 'that the natives of India have no points of union and common feeling among them. They are doubtless very jealous of one another. As a recent writer truly remarks, "the Muhamedan will fight against the Hindu, the Maratha against the Bengali, the Sikh against the Hindustani, with as much animosity as the English against the French". But there were causes which would unite all these contending parties, and make a common and harmonious and homogeneous whole of them, and they would fight together. Their antagonism to Christianity would seem to be one of these. Besides, in times of national trouble or calamity they would all unite and make joint demonstrations. Even in political matters they were able to, and had made common cause, as was exemplified in the personnel of the misguided rebels of 1857.'<sup>3</sup>

The British had been able to conquer India mainly because the country was divided. They knew that their 'raj' would last only as long as India remained divided. 'Depend upon it', wrote Wood privately to the Viceroy, Lord Elgin,<sup>4</sup> in 1862, 'the natural antagonism of races [amongst Indians] is no inconsiderable element of our strength. If all India was to unite against us how

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<sup>1</sup> T.E. Slater, *Keshab Chandra Sen and the Brahma Samaj* 1884, Bombay, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> President of Indian National Congress 1885, 1892, Member of Bengal Legislative Council, 1893.

<sup>3</sup> W.C. Bonnerjee, "Representative and Responsible Government for India", *Journal of the East Indian Association (JEIA)*, vol. 1 no.2, 1867, p.173.

<sup>4</sup> Eighth earl of Elgin (1811-63). Governor-General of Canada 1847-54; Envoy to China 1860-1; Viceroy of India 1862-3.

long could we maintain ourselves<sup>1</sup> James Geddes<sup>2</sup> remarked publicly in 1871; ‘The strength of the English dominion in India lies in native disunion. A positive power of its own it has only two-hard cash and sharp bayonets.’<sup>3</sup> Reflective Britons and Indians realized that nature itself had set a limit to the duration of British rule in India, for a vast and populous country like India could not be governed that once the people of India had developed sufficient sense of national unity, not all the material and moral superiority claimed or actually possessed by the British would suffice to enable them to hold down the country. By subjecting the population of the entire subcontinent to a common yoke, the British themselves aided, however unwittingly, the development of a sense of national unity in India. A common yoke imposed common disabilities and occasioned common grievances. Common disabilities and grievances, in their turn, created common interests and sympathies, and served to unite the mixed population of India in a common hatred of its foreign rulers.

There was another aspect of British rule which aided the growth of Indian nationalism. The British came to India not only as traders and rulers but also as bearers of an alien religion and culture. We have already seen how repeatedly during the 1830s, ‘40s and ‘50s various parts of India were thrown into a state of great alarm because of some action of missionaries or of the government which was interpreted by the Indian people as an attack on their ancient religions and customs, and how the common dread of Christianity tended to unite not only the Hindus, Muslims and Parsis of a particular province but also the people of one province with that of another.<sup>4</sup> We have also seen how the feeling that their religion was at stake lay at the root of the revolt of 1857.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wood to Elgin, 19 May 1862, Wood Papers, MSS, Eur F. 78/L.B.10.

<sup>2</sup> Entered Indian Civil Service, 1861.

<sup>3</sup> *Englishman*, 22 March 1871.

<sup>4</sup> Mehrotra, S.R., *The Emergence of Indian National Congress*. London, 1971, pp. 33-50.

<sup>5</sup> Oddie, G.A., *Social Protest in India: British Protestant Missionaries, and Social Reforms 1850 - 1900*, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 9-14.

The great fear of forcible conversion to Christianity decreased after the revolt. The guarantee of religious toleration contained in the Queen's proclamation of 1858 proved extremely reassuring to the Indian people. British officials in general, having learnt the lesson of the revolt only too well became more cautious than ever before in aiding missionary efforts or in interfering with Indian religions and customs. But missionaries and their friends, both in India and in Britain, refused to be enlightened or depressed by the revolt. They maintained that, far from having been caused by their indiscreet zeal for the conversion of Indians, the revolt of 1857 was a 'visitation of Jehovah's displeasure' on the British for the latter's shameful and criminal negligence in the performance of their Christian duty. They pointed to the loyalty of the 'native Christians' in the North-Western Provinces during the revolt and argued that had the government not secluded the Sepoys from missionary preaching the latter would not have mutinied.<sup>1</sup>

Almost unaffected by the revolt of 1857 missionaries and their close associates continued their violent and abusive denunciation of Indian religions. They kept on insisting that the great end of British dominion in India was the Christianization of her teeming millions and that, though it might take a century or more, it was bound to be fulfilled. They did not relax their pressure on the authorities for the adoption of measures, such as the introduction of the Bible into government schools, which would aid the spread of Christianity in India. They never ceased to assert despite historical precedents elsewhere and even current indications in India itself to the contrary, that Christianity meant loyalty, and to warn the British government that its possession of India could not be secure until Indians were all converted to the faith of their rulers. They continued to insist that 'the one thing'<sup>2</sup> which India needed, and without which everything else must fail, for her regeneration was Christianity. They

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<sup>1</sup> Metcalf, T.R., *The Aftermath of Revolt: India, 1858-70*, Princeton, 1965, pp. 99-100.

<sup>2</sup> *Bengal Hurkaru*, 17<sup>th</sup> October 1861.

repeatedly told the Indian people that the latter could never hope to become 'civilized' or to gain political rights unless and until they exchanged their 'false religions' for 'the only true religion' or Christ.

The activities of the 'missionary party' were not only a constant source of alarm and irritation to the people of India; they also aroused the smouldering embers of religious fanaticism in the country. Professor Wordsworth noted in 1876 how the proceedings of missionaries were tending to widen the existing branch' between the rulers and the ruled, and remarked: 'No theology or mythology, let apologists say what they may, ever has succeeded, or ever will succeed, in establishing a claim to more than a relative value; and all intemperate assertions of the absolute worth of anyone simply strengthen the case of its antagonist, besides exasperating those who feel the charm of their own legends and the dogmas associated with them as no alien can ever feel it'.<sup>1</sup> Partly in opposition to missionaries, and partly in emulation of them, the votaries of Indian religions adopted tactics which served only to poison the stream of social life in the country. The task of the Indian religious and social reformer was made extremely difficult.

The missionaries continued to work overtly and covertly and indeed registered success in certain backward pockets of Hindustan or otherwise. As the criticism of the 'missionary party' was directed mainly against Hinduism, it was Hindu society which felt most threatened in the nineteenth century. For a very long time Hindu society remained almost entirely on the defensive. Both Christianity and Islam continued to gain converts at its expense. The growth of heterodox sects like the Brahma Samaj made it a house divided against itself. The prospect was indeed grim for Hindu society in the nineteenth century, and there were many who predicted its early disintegration and demise. But Hindu society managed to survive. The frankly hostile attitude of the 'missionary

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<sup>1</sup> *Bombay Gazette*, 29<sup>th</sup> August 1876.

party' helped it in containing its internal schisms while the growth of education and of the means of communication gave it a greater unity of action in repelling external attacks than it had possessed ever before. By the 1870s there were clear signs that Hinduism had developed a good deal of self-confidence and was no longer content to remain merely on the defensive. The lecture of Rajnarain Bose<sup>1</sup> at Calcutta in 1872 on the superiority of Hinduism over other religions<sup>2</sup> and the establishment of the Arya Samaj at Bombay in 1875 by Swami Dayanand<sup>3</sup> were symbolic of the new self-assertive phase of Hinduism. It was this phase of Hinduism which received encouragement from the writings and utterances of western orientalists like F. Max Muller<sup>4</sup> and of western Theosophists like Henry S. Olcott.<sup>5</sup>

The impact of western culture did create a profound disquiet in Indian society. It even made a number of English – educated Indians dissatisfied with the existing state of their religious and social institutions. But no people can, even if it wishes, turn its back on its past. Nor can they live on borrowed culture alone. To be ashamed of one's past is often the surest way to commit suicide. Moreover, what India had been 'during these four thousand years' was not entirely a matter of shame to her children. If the British were proud of their culture, so were Indians of their own, even while admitting the excellence of British culture in certain respects. It is probably not in human nature to accept total and permanent inferiority to others. Even in the first half of the nineteenth century it had been clear that the people of Indian were too deeply attached to their traditional culture to exchange it for that of their new rulers. The vast majority of English – educated Indians, who had imbibed many western ideas

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<sup>1</sup> Teacher: 'Conservative' Brahma.

<sup>2</sup> *National Paper*, 18, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1872, *Friend of India*, 3 October 1872.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> In a letter to Dr. Ramdas Sen of Berhampore Max Muller gave the following advice; 'what I want to see in India is the rising of a national spirit, and honest pride in our past history, a discriminating love of your ancient literature...Take all that is food from Europe, only do not try to become Europeans, but remain what you are, sons of Manu, *Native Opinion*, 15<sup>th</sup> July 1877, *Bengali*, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1881.

<sup>5</sup> Founded, with H.P. Blavatsky, Theosophical Society 1875; arrived in India 1879.

and manners and were dissatisfied with the existing state of Indian society, were unwilling to leave the ancestral fold. Even those Indians who had renounced the faith of their fathers and accepted Christianity were conscious of their national origins. The Reverend Lal Bihari Dey<sup>1</sup> averred in 1861 that he had not ceased to be Indian because he had become Christian and that he had ‘as passionate longings after national liberty as any of our countrymen can have.’<sup>2</sup> Gyanendramohan Tagore was proud of the fact that he was ‘a Brahmin – Christian’. The severe criticism of the racial exclusiveness of his European colleagues by the reverend Goloknath<sup>3</sup> at the Lahore missionary conference in 1863 made even the friend of India remark that ‘with the Hindu, loyalty to England is not the invariable accompaniment of the reception of Christianity.’<sup>4</sup> It was a Bengali Christian who told a gathering of Maharashtrians at Poona in 1877:

“I must say I feel proud that I am a fellow – countryman of the natives of Poona. It is simply impossible for anyone rejoicing in the Indian name to reflect on the hallowed associations of this historical city, without feeling himself ennobled in the company of its inhabitants<sup>5</sup> have had”.

J.T. Zorn<sup>6</sup> disclosed at a meeting of the East India Association in London on 25 July 1867, “converted Mahomadans and Brahmins and Parsees in my house, and I have found that they have all the same national pride, to make Indian one nation...<sup>7</sup>”

British rule also encouraged in India the growth of what is called economic nationalism. Complaints about the increasing pauperization of India, the ruination of her manufactures and trade, the inordinate expensiveness of

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<sup>1</sup> Baptized; Teacher and Journalist.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Reformer*, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1861; *Bombay Times and Standard*, 28<sup>th</sup> January 1861.

<sup>3</sup> First Brahman convert of American Presbyterian Church in India 1835, head of Jullunder mission.

<sup>4</sup> *Friend of India*, 12<sup>th</sup> March 1863.

<sup>5</sup> Banarji, K.C., *National Unity*, Poona, 1877, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Assistant Secretary and Treasurer of East India Association.

<sup>7</sup> Journal of the East India Association, 1867, vol. I, No. 2, p. 179.

foreign civil and military establishments, the enormity of the ‘home charges’, the steady drain of Indian capital, the saddling of India with unjust economic burdens, the selfish manipulation of Indian currency and tariffs, and the sacrifice of India’s economic interests in order to satisfy British capitalists, had begun to be made early in the nineteenth century. With the passage of time they only grew in volume and intensity. Those who made these complaints were not always Indians. In fact, some of the earliest and most vehement critics of British economic and financial policies in India were Anglo – Indians themselves.<sup>1</sup> Nor were these complaints confined to Indians who were ignorant or irresponsible agitators. Men like Bholanath Chandra,<sup>2</sup> Dadabhai Naoroji and Mahadev Govind Ranade,<sup>3</sup> who knew what they were talking about and who were otherwise fully appreciative of the manifold benefits of British rule to India, were convinced that the economic and financial policies pursued by the British in India were extremely unjust and deleterious to their country.<sup>4</sup>

While experts produced facts and figures in support of their complaints, the press indulged in general and loud lamentations over the economic exploitation of India at the hands of the British. India, before the coming of the British, was a prosperous country; her arts, industries and manufactures were the envy of the whole world. Her soil was rich and her peasants lightly taxed and happy. British rule had impoverished India. Manchester had ruined Indian handicrafts. British economic and financial policies were designed to drain India of her life blood. The country was steadily being drained of her wealth. Her trade was declining and her agriculture languishing. India was becoming increasingly dependent on foreign made goods and a prey to recurrent

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<sup>1</sup> Geddes, J. C., “Our Commercial Exploitation of the Indian Populations”, *Calcutta Review*, 1872-3, vols. Iv-vi, nos. 110-12, pp. 340-81, 139-70, 352-82.

<sup>2</sup> Businessman.

<sup>3</sup> Entered Bombay judicial service 1871; author and social reformer; member of Bombay legislative Council 1885-7, 1891-2; Judge of Bombay high court from 1893.

<sup>4</sup> Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. 1, Calcutta, 1971, pp.309-310.

famines<sup>1</sup>. There was widespread and heart-rending misery on all sides. While all sections of the Indian population were adversely affected, it was the middle classes who suffered most. These and similar other complaints had, by the 1860s and 70s, become the stock-in-trade of the Indian press. They were encouraged by an increased awareness of poverty, the lack of employment opportunities for a steadily growing educated class, the decay of certain old families and professions, a series of severe famines and natural calamities in various parts of the country during the 'sixties and 'seventies, Manchester's ill-concealed jealousy of the nascent cotton industry of Bombay and its attempts to influence the economic and fiscal policies of the government of India, the writings of western economic nationalists such as Frederic List and Matthew Carey, and the protectionist policies pursued by western countries like France and America<sup>2</sup>. Lamentations over the economic plight of the country in the Indian press were often coupled with demands that the government of India should encourage and protect Indian industries and provide facilities to Indians for technical education, and with patriotic appeals to fellow-countryman to patronize home-made goods in preference to foreign-made goods, to take to trade and commerce as a vocation instead of hankering after ill-paid government jobs, and to go abroad to acquire modern technical skills.<sup>3</sup>

Attempts were simultaneously made to translate the ideas of economic nationalism into action. The promotion of indigenous arts and manufactures was one of the objectives for which a band of patriotic men in Calcutta, headed by Navgopal Mitra,<sup>4</sup> inaugurated in 1867 an annual 'Mela' and in 1870 a 'National Society'.<sup>5</sup> In 1873 a student of the local college took the lead in

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<sup>1</sup> Chandra Bipan, *Indian's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947*, New Delhi, Penguin Books Pvt., 1988, pp. 91-101.

<sup>2</sup> Chandra Bipan, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, New Delhi, 1966, pp.22-31.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Editor of National paper.

<sup>5</sup> *National Paper*, 20 March, 10, 17 April, 19 June 1867, 11 March, 15 April, 19 August 1868, 25 August 1869, 23 February, 2, 9, 16 March, 26 October, 16 November 1870, 10 May, 2 August 1871, 7, 14 August, 11, According to the *Englishman*, 15 January 1870, the original inspiration for



organizing a 'Swadeshi Sabha' in Lahore for the same purpose.<sup>1</sup> The western presidency witnessed in the 1870s the birth of a popular and organized movement which foreshadowed the Swadeshi movement of later years. Beginning with Poona in 1872, thanks mainly to the zealous efforts of G.V. Joshi, the movement soon spread to other parts of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Societies for 'the revival and encouragement of native arts and industries' were established in many large towns, whose members took an oath not to use European articles where the corresponding indigenous ones could be procured without any marked difference of price. Some enthusiastic members of these societies, of whom G.V. Joshi was one, even 'vowed not to use any foreign-manufactured article under any conditions'. Shops upon the co-operative or joint-stock principle were opened in many towns to sell indigenous goods. The manufacture of simple articles like ink, candles, and soap etc. was encouraged. Exhibitions of indigenous arts and manufactures were organized. Joshi and his friends made excellent use of popular lectures and songs to spread the message of *Swadeshi* amongst the people.<sup>2</sup> The main purpose of the efforts put in by Indian leaders was to infuse into them the sense of unity and love for the indigenous products rather than foreign goods for use. Such nationalistic ideas whether in economic sector or in industrial sector was to promote nationalism among the Indians.

The immediate economic results of the *Swadeshi Movement* in India were not very remarkable. The movement owed its inception to and derived most of its support then and in later years from English-educated classes whose patriotic ardour was matched only by their lack of material resources and vocational skill. But the vague and general ideas which gave birth to the *Swadeshi Movement* in India were calculated to appeal to the popular

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the Mela (variously called 'National', 'Chaitra' or 'Hindu') came from the agricultural exhibition organized by the government at Alipur, Calcutta, in 1864.

<sup>1</sup> *Tribune*, 24 October 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of M.G. Ranade to the editor, *Times of India*, 20<sup>th</sup> October 1875, giving a history of the movement. Also *Indian Statement*, 21 May, 1873.

imagination and they provided a powerful stimulus to Indian nationalism by giving it an economic edge. The nascent indigenous industrial community in India especially that of Bombay was not the product of the *Swadhshi* Movement and did little to encourage that movement, but it developed a sullen resentment to foreign rule, due mainly to the current *Swadeshi* ideas which imbibed and its own experience of the step motherly treatment from the government of India.

What made the exclusion particularly galling to Indians was the fact that it was practiced by a government which solemnly and repeatedly professed that it made no distinction, in the matter of employment, on grounds of race, colour, or creed. It is true that from 1853 onwards, appointments to the Indian civil service were, in theory, thrown open to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, who were all invited to compete for the privilege.<sup>1</sup> But the conditions of the competition were such as practical to exclude Indians there from altogether. The examination for the civil service was held in London and the sacrifices and expense of sending Indian youths to appear that were such as not one man out of a million would think it wise to incur. This palpable injustice did more than anything else to weaken the moral basis of British rule in India. Here at least was a point on which the British could not claim superiority over the Mughals or the Marathas, the Russians of the Austrians. It provided Indians with one of their most potent, persistent and popular demands in favour of which they could easily mobilize public opinion all over the country.<sup>2</sup> The fact that what Indians demanded was not patronage or favour but equality of treatment and a fair field, that is the holding of the civil service examinations simultaneously in India and in Britain, only served to increase the efficacy of their demands as a rallying point of Indian nationalism.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sharma, M., *Indianization of the Civil Service in British India (1858-1935)*, Manak Publication, 2001, pp. 16-28.

<sup>2</sup> Mehrotra, S.R., *The Emergence of Indian National Congress*. London, 1971, pp.147-223.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Probably the greatest contribution of British rule to the growth of Indian nationalism lay in the encouragement which it gave to the dissemination of English education in the country. A good deal has been written about the numerous ways in which English education stimulated the growth of national consciousness in India in the nineteenth century. Dr. B.T. McCully has examined the whole subject in great detail in a fair-sized volume.<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, necessary for us confine ourselves here to noticing very briefly some of the most salient ways in which English education aided the cause of pan-Indian nationalism.

Those whose minds had been nurtured on the writings of Milton, Mill and Mazzini, read about the War of American Independence, the French Revolution, the development of constitutional freedom in England and her white colonies and the struggles for national independence and unity in Europe, could not but be encouraged to cherish aspirations for the ultimate emergence of an independent and united India. These aspirations had begun to be expressed even in the first half of the nineteenth century. They were only more frequently and generally expressed in the second half of the century. They were encouraged by the pronouncements of some liberal-minded British statesmen themselves about the ultimate result of their rule in India. In 1871 the *Indian Daily News* of Calcutta noted; ‘The political aspirations of the English-speaking natives on both sides of India seem insensibly drifting towards a common hope, or daydream. They are qualifying for a place in that strange European society of extremists who preach an universal republic’.<sup>2</sup> In Bombay and Bengal the tendency of the English-speaking natives is away from the English. They have imbibed the most exalted notions of their intellectual capacity, and resent with secret bitterness the practical superiority of the

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<sup>1</sup> McCully, B.T., *English Educational and the Origins of Indian Nationalism*, Calcutta, 1940, pp.38-40.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Daily News*, 16<sup>th</sup> September 1871.

English race further, this same class professes a sort of Indian patriotism.<sup>1</sup> They claim a right to act as interpreters of the feelings, hopes, and wishes of India ‘While the paper taunted the Indian patriot on the cautious fact that ‘his aspirations for native freedom are couched in a foreign language’ it blamed ‘the vain and absurd theories of Englishmen themselves’ for encouraging ‘native patriotism’. ‘The exquisite dream’, added the *Indian Daily News*, ‘which represents England after having carefully educated Indian to the point of a perfect capacity for unity, self-government, and a high progressive civilization, magnanimously abandoning all her capital invested in India, and withdrawing, to leave India to the Indians and the tears and blessings of grateful millions, and the awe-struck admiration of a world long before convened of English folly, has been seized upon by the educated Bengali, and made the basis of his political creed.’<sup>2</sup>

English education not only enabled Indians to absorb European ideas, it also provided them with new and powerful means of inter-regional solidarity. The system of English education was more or less uniform throughout India, and it imposed a common set of standards and a common cultural discipline. English-educated Indians in the different provinces thus came to possess a common stock of ideas and aspirations. They also had a common medium of intercourse.<sup>3</sup> English steadily replaced Sanskrit, Persian, or Hindustani as the *lingua franca* of the educated classes in India. When Lal Bihari Dey visited Bombay in early 1860, he could communicate with his fellow-countrymen of that presidency only in English.<sup>4</sup> The *Bombay Guardian* remarked at the time:

“We have had an illustration this last week of the extent to which the English language is becoming a medium of communication between the natives

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<sup>1</sup> Majumdar, R.C. (Ed.), *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, part 1, Bombay, 1963, p.513.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Daily News*, 16 September 1871.

<sup>3</sup> McCully, B.T., *English Educational and the Origins of Indian Nationalism*. Calcutta, 1940, pp.38-40.

<sup>4</sup> Sen, S.N., “Education in Ancient and Medieval India”, *Indian Journal of History of Science*, (*IJHS*), vol. 23, 1998, pp.1-32.

of the different Presidencies. A representative of Bengal was among us, and as there was a considerable desire to hear him speak on some topic of general interest, he delivered a lecture; but the only language in which he could communicate with a Bombay audience was the English”.<sup>1</sup>

Commenting on K.C. Sen’s recent ‘mission’ to Madras and Bombay, the *Hindu Patriot* wrote on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1864:

“English education has opened a new tie of fellowship between the different races of India. The Bengalese, the Maharathas, the Madrasedes, the Parsees, the Hindustanis and the Sikhs are united in one common brotherhood by the free masonry of English education. They now all breathe the same breath of life and regeneration and share in one common feeling for the good of their common country.”<sup>2</sup>

The growing consciousness of national solidarity brought about by English education, which became increasingly visible in the decidedly uniform tone of the Indian press and in the sympathy and pecuniary assistance extended to the people of any province afflicted by famine by those of the other provinces, found an impressive demonstration in the agitation over the civil service question in 1877-78. The spirit of cooperation and united action manifested by educated Indians throughout the country during the agitation made the *Hindu Patriot* write:

“Englishmen who saw India twenty years ago on return can scarcely recognize what they had seen before – there have been so many changes English education is binding the whole population of India with a golden chain. It is breaking down provincial jealousies, tribal exclusiveness and caste antipathies.”<sup>3</sup> The natives of the different provinces are visiting each other and

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<sup>1</sup> *Bombay Guardian*, 8<sup>th</sup> February 1860.

<sup>2</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 9<sup>th</sup> May 1864.

<sup>3</sup> Sen, S.N., “Education in Ancient and Medieval India”, *IJHS*, vol.23, 1998, pp.1-32.

interchanging each other's thoughts and feelings.... We have had a most splendid manifestation of this united feeling of the civil service question. From one end of the country to the other the people, Hindus, Mahomedans, Jains, Buddhists and Christians, have to a man echoed the cry from Calcutta".<sup>1</sup>

S.N. Banerjee, who took a leading part in organizing the agitation over the civil service question and travelled all over India in that connection, was speaking from personal experience when he told a Calcutta audience in 1878:

'English education has uplifted all who have come under its influence to a common platform of thoughts, feelings and aspirations. Educated Indians, whether of Bengal, Madras, Bombay or the North-Western Provinces, are brought up under the same intellectual, moral, and political influences. Kindred hopes, feelings, and ideas are thus generated. The educated classes of India are thus brought nearer together.'<sup>2</sup>

The growth of a national feeling in India was a fact of which even some of the Anglo-Indians were beginning to be aware in the sixties and seventies. An ex-judge on the high court of Agra, William Edwards, wrote in 1866 that 'a feeling of nationality has sprung up in India'.<sup>3</sup> 'The result of long years of internal tranquility and good order, under a powerful government,' he added, 'has been to fuse into a whole the previously discordant elements of native society, and to bind together by a bond of common country, colour, and language, those whom we have been in the habit of considering as effectually and forever separated by diversity of race and religion, and the insurmountable barrier of caste. We ought also to bear in mind that as facilities for communication by post and telegraph, and for personal intercourse by railway, increase in India, the people will become still more united and the feeling of

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<sup>1</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 7<sup>th</sup> January 1878.

<sup>2</sup> Palit, R.C. (ed.), *Speeches of Babu Surendra Narth Banerjee, 1876-80*, Calcutta, 1880, p.55.

<sup>3</sup> Majumdar, R.C. (ed.), *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, part 1, Bombay, 1963, pp.516-20.

nationality and dislike to the conquering race will certainly increase and be more deeply rooted in the minds of the people of that vast continent.<sup>1</sup> William Knighton, the late Assistant commissioner in Avadh, observed in 1867; ‘The educated Bengalee and the educated Sikh, the educated alumnus of the Canning College in Lucknow, and the educated native of Travancore, all alike regard themselves as natives of India, and are all ready to make common cause against foreigners. It is entirely a new feature, and will lead in the future to great results.’<sup>2</sup> Writing confidentially to the government of India in 1878, then commissioner of Berar, W.B. Jones, remarked; ‘Within the 20 years of my own recollection, a feeling of nationality, which formerly had no existence, or was but faintly felt has grown up now. We are beginning to find ourselves face to face, not with the population of individual provinces, but with 200 millions of people united by sympathies and intercourse with which we have ourselves created and fostered. This seems to me to be the great political fact of the day.’<sup>3</sup>

These were sometimes of a local or regional character; but most often they were of national significance. The new associations demanded, among other things, Indian representation in the legislative council, separation of the executive and judicial functions of the government, Indianisation of the civil service, and for that purpose simultaneous Indian Civil Service examination in India and England, imposition of import duties on cotton goods, reduction of expenditure on ‘home charges’ and costly foreign wars, like the Afghan wars of 1878-79, rationalization of the financial relations between Indian England, and the extension of the Permanent settlement to other parts of British India. They also protested against the imposition of income tax, the draconian Vernacular Press Act and the Racist Arms Act. Apart from raising such public issues, which concerned all Indian across the regions, these associations also

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<sup>1</sup> W. Edwards, *Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian*, London, 1866, pp. 308-9.

<sup>2</sup> W. Knighton, *The Policy of the Future in India*, London, 1867, pp.20-1.

<sup>3</sup> Copy of Correspondence between the Government of India and the Secretary of State for Indian on the Subject of Act no. ix of 1878, ‘An Act for the Better Control of Publications in Oriental Languages’, Parliamentary papers, 1878, vol. vii, pp. 66-7.

took interest in the affairs of the peasantry. Their involvement in the Indigo riots in Bengal, in the Deccan riots in Poona and in the protests against water tax in the Chenab Canal Colony in Punjab are a few examples of this nature. Some of these organizations, like the Poona Sarvajanic Sabha, were involved in a variety of social work among the peasantry, like mobilizing famine relief or organizing arbitration courts. Through such mediation, the Indian peasants, so far locked away in their localized existence, were being gradually connected to a wider national contest with colonial rule. These associations were, of course, not overtly anti-British, as many of them sent messages of loyalty to Queen Victoria on the occasion of the Delhi Durbar. They were fighting for limited reforms, but nevertheless, they exhibited a new public awareness. They were demanding equality and representative government – above all, a share in the administration of their own country – and this is where the new politics differed from the earlier phase of landlord – dominated politics.

The educated professional leadership of new politics suffered from a few dilemmas, which originated from the social composition of the class. As observed earlier, they came mostly from the priestly and literary castes which previously held a monopoly control over proprietary right in land. In a way, English education and new professions provided for the extension of the sphere of dominance for essentially the same dominant classes; it was only in Bombay that we witnessed the emergence of a commercial bourgeoisie.<sup>1</sup> So, the professionals in most parts of the country retained a connection with land and therefore also fought for landlord interests. This was revealed in the united Indian opposition to the Bengal Tenancy Bill in 1885<sup>•</sup>, which proposed to protect the occupancy rights of the peasants and to restrict right of the landlord

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<sup>1</sup> Desai, A.R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Mumbai, Popular Prakashan Ltd., 2012, pp.162-204.

• The Bengal Tenancy Act 1885 was an enactment of the Bengal government that defined the rights of zamindars and their tenants in response to a widespread peasant revolt that threatened the stability of the British Colonial Government.



to raise rent arbitrarily; the bill was passed by official majority.<sup>1</sup>The colonial government in the late nineteenth century recognized the political importance of the new educated class. Particularly, liberal viceroys like Lord Ripon realized that it was essential to provide a fair field for their legitimate aspirations and ambitions and convert them into friends of the Raj. But his more conservative successor Lord Dufferin took a different view and contemptuously called them “Babu” politician, representing only a “microscopic minority”.<sup>2</sup> After the Indian Councils Act of 1892, which introduced in a limited form the principle of election to constitute the legislative councils, the new professional class in terms of political prominence superseded the landed aristocracy; but they could never completely ignore the landed managers. The colonial state, therefore, could confidently claim itself to be the real champion of the interests of the masses.<sup>3</sup>

The limitations and contradictions of early nationalism were however visible in various areas as many of these high – caste Hindu dealers could not totally overcome their social conservatism. Their attempts to construct a nationalist ideology premised on the notion of a golden Hindu past instantly inspired a wide range of people; but this also alienated some others<sup>4</sup>. The social debates brought a schism in the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha between the two leaders and their followers – the more conservative B.G. Tilak on the one hand and the liberal reformist G.K. Gokhale on the other. The controversy over the Age of Consent Act (1891), which proposed to raise the age for the consummation of marriage for women from ten to twelve, centered on the argument that the British had no right to interfere in Hindu social and religious

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<sup>1</sup> S. Bhattacharya, *The Cambridge Economic History of India, vol. ii*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, Pvt. Ltd., 1983, pp.263-65.

<sup>2</sup> Bayly, C. A., *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire (The New Cambridge History of India)*, Cambridge and London, 1990, pp. 78-80.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Malik, S.G., *Dissent, Protest and Reforms in Indian Civilization*, Simla, Indian Institute of Advance Studies, 1977, pp.188-90.

life.<sup>1</sup> Indian nationalism thus came to be associated with the defense of Hindu religion against foreign interference and the patriotic literature both in Bengali and Marathi started defining Indian nationalism in terms of Hindu imageries norms symbols and cultural ethos.<sup>2</sup> These developments certainly alienated the Muslims from this stream of nationalism, as a new consciousness was developing among them as well. They too were defining their own self-interest in opposition to those of the Hindus and colonial policies further encouraged such Hindu – Muslims schism. As the Arya Samaj started the Cow Protection Movements, this communal conflict began to acquire a mass dimension. Large scale communal riots rocked northern Indian from the 1870s, constituting certainly a new phenomenon in Indian history.<sup>3</sup> The eighteenth century concept of Hindustan being equally shared by the Hindus and Muslims alike was gradually receding in the face of an emerging communal exclusivism in the nineteenth century, paving the way for a violent contest for territory in the twentieth century. Both the communities began thinking on safeguarding the interests of their communities in the fast changing environment of India.<sup>4</sup>

The communal estrangement in north Indian society had another important dimension. The Brahmans and the other high-caste Hindus, who dominated new education, professions and new associations, did not do anything to enlist the support of the lower castes and the untouchables.<sup>5</sup> Yet, despite this apathy and indifference, there were unmistakable signs of enlightenment and social awakening among these lower castes, resulting from colonial educational policies, Christian missionary philanthropy as well as their own initiative. This inspired them to construct alternative political ideologies

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<sup>1</sup> W. Jones, Kenneth, *The New Cambridge History of India, Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, Cambridge, 2006, pp.139-141.

<sup>2</sup> Chandra Bipan, *India's Struggle for Independence*, London, Penguin Publishers, 1989, pp. 82-90.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, W. Roy, *Nationalism and Reform in India*, Port Washington, N.Y., Kennikat Press, 1973, pp. 120-22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Desai, A.R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Mumbai, Popular Prakashan Ltd., 2012, pp.162-204.

based on anti-Bhahman sentiments, around which powerful movements were organized by the untouchables and the non-Bhahman castes in Maharashtra and Madras, aiming primarily at their own advancement. They looked at the emerging nationalist movement as a conspiracy to establish Brahmanic hegemony over the new colonial institutions and viewed colonial government as their patron and liberator.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the political project of imagining an Indian nation from the top had to confront from the very beginning the difficult issue of diversity and difference. Such conflicts and contradiction often went to the British advantages, which also left no stone unturned in augmenting and fomenting these as can be evidenced from a mass of literature on such an issue. The purpose of Britishers seems to have been to create more impediments for the budding Indian nationalists who, in spite of all their weaknesses and limitations, were raising some unpleasant questions for the Raj.<sup>2</sup> It was in this context that Indian National Congress was born in 1885 (with a small number of the Muslim representation) and during the subsequent years it dominated Indian nationalist movement, trying with mixed successes to resolve these contradictions.

### **3.2 EMERGENCE OF NATIONALISM AND RENAISSANCE MOVEMENTS IN SRI LANKA**

The renaissance Movements were finding its roots in Sri Lanka almost on the paradigm of Indian Renaissance Movements as both the colonies were groaning under the rigours of British imperialistic rule. True that the Renaissance Movements in Kandyan Kingdom started a bit late as compared India however movements had common agenda of freeing the countries from the colonial occupation. Here we need to analyze the connection between the tradition of resistance and the emergence of modern nationalism in Ceylon. What needs emphasis is the complexity of this connection. Some clues to

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<sup>1</sup> Mehrotra, S. R., *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, London, Vikas Publications, 1971, pp. 146-50.

<sup>2</sup> Bandyopadhyay, S., *From Plassey to Partition*, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2009, pp.205-218.

understanding these slight historical processes and some interesting analogies appear to be provided by recent historical research on similar movements of resistance in Africa and the emergence of African nationalism.<sup>1</sup> It was fashionable a few years ago to dismiss these African resistance movements as “romantic, reactionary struggles against the facts, the passionate protests of societies which were shocked by a new age of change and would not be comforted” and to underline the merits of those movements which planned “to reform their personalities and regain their powers by operating in the idiom of the Westerners”<sup>2</sup> and which alone deserved to be categorized as nationalism. More recently students of African nationalism have demonstrated the shortcomings of this line of analysis, and have gone on more positively to suggest as viable alternative hypotheses a scheme of three stages in the development of nationalism: primary resistance movements, secondary resistance movements and modern nationalism.<sup>3</sup>

The first of these consists of the resistance of traditional societies and tribal organizations. A variant of this first step would be the traditional resistance movements, the almost permanent hostility to the intrusion of foreigners in many parts of Asia and Africa. Secondary resistance movements comprise the more sophisticated resistance organized through trade unions,<sup>4</sup> political associations and the sort. Millennial movements could also be categorized in many instances as variants of secondary resistance. The third stage would be nationalism organized and manipulated through modern political parties. These three stages, it would appear are not necessarily always consecutive: they could be telescoped together, or could operate as parallel

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<sup>1</sup> Owen, E.R.J., Sutcliffe R.B. (ed.), *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, London, chapter 5, 1972, pp.82-110.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson, R.E. and Gallagher, J., “The Partition of Africa”, *The New Cambridge Modern History*, Chap. XXIII, Cambridge, 1962, p. 640.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 642.

<sup>4</sup> Gallagher, J. & Robinson, R., “The Imperialism of Free Trade”, *Economic History Review*, <sup>second</sup> series, 1953, pp.1-15.

movements.<sup>1</sup> This analysis, it must be emphasized, is a simplification of an argument of considerable subtlety and complexity. Can this analytical framework be applied to the South Asian situation in general and to Ceylon in particular?

The general length of time over which the process of Kandyan resistance to the westerners continued, and its connection remote or proximate with an even older tradition of resistance to the foreigner going back over several centuries<sup>2</sup> lifts it well above the level of ‘primary’ resistance (or its variant of ‘traditional’ resistance) movements, to that of proto-nationalism or “traditionalist” nationalism. Two things are very striking about resistance movements in Ceylon: first, there is a perception of a clear territorial unit with well-defined boundaries – Ceylon is a small island; secondly, the ‘ideological’ content bestowed by Buddhism and its connection with the island and the Sinhalese people – the belief in a divine mission, as it were, which stemmed from the conception of the Sinhalese as a “chosen” people. Both these points to the existence of a sense of national consciousness and national identity long before the emergence of modern nationalism.<sup>3</sup>

Nationalism is not easily defined in the context of a plural society like Ceylon, with diverse racial and religious groups. Indeed there is no agreement among political scientists on the precise mixture of ingredients that would constitute modern nationalism. Among these elements is a common possession of territory – a territorial base – a shared historical experience, a strong sense of kinships, a common language, culture and religion. Yet some people have become nations though they may have lacked one or more of these. The point

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<sup>1</sup> Lonsdale, J.M., “Some Origins of Nationalism in East Africa”, *Journal of African History*, vol. ix, 1969, pp. 119-146. Stokes, E. ‘*Traditional Resistance Movements and Afro-Asian Nationalism*’, in *Past and Present*, No. 48, 1970, pp. 100-118.

<sup>2</sup> DeSilva, K.M., “Nineteenth Century Origins of Nationalism in Ceylon”, *UCHC*, vol. iii, chapter viii, 1973, pp.245-272.

<sup>3</sup> DeSilva, K.M., “Nineteenth Century Origins of Nationalism in Ceylon”, *UCHC*, vol. iii, chapter viii, 1973, pp.245-272.

to be emphasized is that many of the ingredients of modern nationalism were present in Kandyan<sup>1</sup> times and while they contributed positively to the emergence of a sense of national consciousness, the resistance to the westerner served to strengthen this, and to give it a cutting edge which it may not otherwise have developed. Thus this “traditionalist” nationalism had a pronounced ‘negative’ aspect – the rejection of an alien power and the forces and institutions that power sought to introduce. The nationalism which emerged in the Maritime provinces of Ceylon in the twentieth century,<sup>2</sup> though it shared features of this “traditionalist” nationalism, nevertheless was distinguished by the consistency and greater coherence it derived from the operation of new ideological forces concerned not merely with opposition to British rule but the forging of a new national entity on modern lines.

The national consciousness of the Kandyans was the most formidable political problem that confronted the British in Ceylon during the three decades which followed the cession of the Kandyan Kingdom in 1815. Edward Barnes’s network of roads had placed the military control of the Kandyan provinces firmly in British hands.<sup>3</sup> In 1833 the existence of a separate administrative structure for the ceded Kandyan territories came to an end. The basic aim of this process of amalgamation, it has been shown<sup>4</sup> was to weaken the national feeling of the Kandyans. This policy was carried out with wholehearted enthusiasm by the colonial administration in Ceylon in the 1840s. Thus when the North Western Province was created in 1845 the same guiding principles were in operation. It was openly stated that among the reasons for the creation of this province was: “the Expediency, on political grounds of

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva Colvin R., *Ceylon under the British Occupation 1795-1833*, Colombo, Apothecaries Co. Ltd., 1953, 292-295.

<sup>2</sup> Mendis, G.C., *Ceylon under the British*, Colombo, Apothecaries Co. Ltd., 1952, pp.13-24.

<sup>3</sup> DeSilva, K.M., ‘The Kandyan Kingdom and the British the last phase 1796-1818’, *UCHC*, vol. iii, ed. by K.M.D. Silva, Peredeniya, University Press, 1973, pp.32.

<sup>4</sup> Mendis, G.C. Edited, *The Colebrook-Cameron Papers*, vol. ii: *Documents on British Colonial Policy in Ceylon 1796-1833*, Oxford, 1956, p.80-82.

separating the Kandyan provinces from one another and breaking up their political unity.”<sup>1</sup>

While on one hand, attempts were made to break up the political unity of the Kandyan provinces, at the same time the impact of British rule there was considerably softened by a conscious effort to treat the Kandyan region as a separate administrative unit in which there would be as little disturbance as possible with the traditional patterns of life of the people.<sup>2</sup> But with the Colebrooke Cameron reforms there came a deliberate change in this policy: assimilation of the Kandyan people with the Sinhalese of the Maritime Provinces, and a positive encouragement of change, ‘innovationism’ in religious and social policy, became integral features of the new response to the Kandyan problem. And with the penetration of coffee planters into the region in increasing numbers after the late 1830s the pressures of western civilization on Kandyan society became more vehement.<sup>3</sup> In raising the pitch of resentment against the foreign rulers, all sections of the Kandyan with diverse socio-religio-cultural background showed solidarity vis-à-vis nationalism.

The appearance of a pretender or pretenders to the Kandyan throne and a scare of rebellion in 1842-43 brought the Kandyan problem into the limelight.<sup>4</sup> There were in those years’ incipient messianic movements giving unclear expression to the resistance of the indigenous population to the intrusion of the forces of social and economic change, and calling for a reversion to the traditional society as it existed before the emergence of challenge from the new. The opportunity this presented for re-appraisal and re-assessment of existing policies and attitudes was missed. The events of 1842-43 when a

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<sup>1</sup> Vijaya Samaraveera, *The Colebrooke Cameron Reforms*, UCHC, vol. iii, University of Peradeniya, 1973, p.98.

<sup>2</sup> Peris Ralph, *Sinhalese Social Organization: The Kandyan Period*, Colombo, University press, 1956, p.52.

<sup>3</sup> Ameer Ali, A.C.L., ‘Peasant Coffee in Ceylon during the Nineteenth Century’, *CJHSS*, vol. 2, no.1, 1972, pp. 98-108.

<sup>4</sup> C.O. 54/197, Campbell to Stanley, 9<sup>th</sup> May 1842, C.O. 54/199, Campbell’s private dispatch to Stanley, 10 April 1843, and C.O. 54/205. Campbell to Stanley 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1843.

threatened outbreak was nipped in the bud as a result of the leakage of information should have provided ample evidence of the widening gap between the administration and the people. But even if the implications of this dawned on the more intelligent civil servants, little heed was paid to these symptoms.<sup>1</sup> This was almost inevitable given the concentration of the energies of officials on planting activity, and the reluctance of the great bulk of the civil servants to gain any semblance of proficiency in the indigenous languages.

In 1848 the Kandyan region became once more the scene of a rebellion.<sup>2</sup> There were two centers of disturbance in 1847-48, one – on a minor scale – in Colombo, and the other in the Kandyan Provinces at Matale and Kurunegala. All they had in common was a spirited opposition to the new taxes imposed in 1848 – the shop tax, the gun tax, the dog tax and the Road Ordinance. In 1847-48 a comprehensive review of the colony's tax system was attempted and a radical transformation of the tax structure was envisaged with the emphasis shifting decisively in favour of direct taxation from a dependence on export and import duties.<sup>3</sup> The turn of the new tax system was to be a general land tax. A drastic reduction of import and export duties, and an equalization of duties on British and foreign products in 1847 were to be the prelude to the introduction of the land tax, but the depression of 1846-48 was so severe in its impact on the island's economy that the government considered it imprudent to impose the general land tax. Instead they proceeded to impose a series of taxes which bore heavily on the local population, chiefly the peasants.<sup>4</sup>

Opposition to the taxes was widespread and eventually erupted in violence in the Kandyan Provinces. The fact that the 'rebellion' occurred in

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<sup>1</sup> Kannangara, P.D., *The History of the Ceylon Civil Service 1802-1833: A Study of Administrative Change in Ceylon*, Dehiwala, 1966, pp.28-30.

<sup>2</sup> De Silva, K.M. (ed.) *Letters on Ceylon, 1846-50, The Administration of Viscount Torrington and the 'Rebellion' of 1848*, Colombo, 1965, pp. 5-31.

<sup>3</sup> Geoge Wall *Ceylon: Her Present Condition: Revenues, Tax and Expenditure*, Colombo, Colombo Observer Press, 1868, pp. 58-60.

<sup>4</sup> De Silva, K.M., "The Abortive Project of a Land Tax for Ceylon 1846-1848: Study in British Policy in Ceylon", *JRAS (CB)*, vol.77, pp.11-13.



regions where plantation activity was widespread prompted many contemporary observers to suggest a causal connection between the spread of plantation agriculture and the outbreak of the “rebellion”.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the impact of the plantations on the Kandyan region, a theme which had hitherto been ignored, became – in the wake of the ‘rebellion’ – a matter of serious concern among officials, and along with it the innovationist tendencies inherent in a policy that placed so much emphasis on plantation agriculture to the neglect of peasant agriculture. Thus the earliest leaning of the leaders of Sri Lanka were more attached towards the problem of peasants who suffered heavily at the hands of imperial forces and officials.

But the fact, however, was that the stresses created by the rapid development of plantation agriculture could not by themselves have caused the eruption which occurred in 1848. It has been argued that the plantations and the British land legislation of the 1840s<sup>2</sup> resulted in the equivalent of an enclosure movement, and that their consequences – the disintegration of the peasant economy, landlessness among the peasantry<sup>3</sup> – culminated in the ‘rebellion’ of 1848. This hypothesis has a facile plausibility about it which up to very recent times has given it a currency and standing which it hardly deserves. The impact of the plantations at this time was less destructive of the traditional economy than the ‘orthodox’ theory would have us believe; the land legislation of this period was not entirely lacking in constructive aspects and did not lead to any great expropriation of peasant landholdings; besides, landlessness was not a great problem of this period.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva, K.M., “The Rebellion of 1848 in Ceylon”, *CJHSS*, vol.7, no.2, 1964, pp.144-170.

<sup>2</sup> De Silva, K.M., “Studies in British Land Policy in Ceylon the Evaluation of Ordinance and 9 of 1841”, *CJHSS*, vol.7, no.1, 1964, pp.28-42.

<sup>3</sup> Ariya A. beysinghe, *Ancient Land Tenure to Modern Land Reform in Sri Lanka*, volume 2, Colombo, Center for Society and Religion, 1978, pp.12.22.

<sup>4</sup> Van Den Driesen, I.H., “Land Sales Policy and Some Aspects of the Problem of Tenure: 1836-1888”, *University of Ceylon Review*, vol.14, part 2, 1856, pp. 18-22.

If coffee had thrived on the mud lands required for paddy cultivation, if plantation agriculture had succeeded in establishing itself in the lowlands of the densely populated Southern and Western Provinces, the confrontation between the planters and the peasants might well have been both prolonged and violent. But coffee failed in the latter regions, and established itself eventually in the hills of the more sparsely populated regions of the Central Province where it was planted on the hill sides away from the mud lands in the valleys.<sup>1</sup>

There was indeed some friction between the peasants and the planters in the Kandyan region, but this was with regard to village cattle trespassing on plantations and also over the use and sale of waste land in the periphery of villages. Perceptive observers had noted the gradual disintegration of the traditional society in many parts of the old Kandyan Kingdom, after the consolidation of the British rule there and undoubtedly the disintegration was accelerated after the 1830s with the combination of the commercial economy of the plantations and the traditional subsistence economy of the peasants.<sup>2</sup> One of the symptoms of the resultant malaise was an increase in crime, and equally significant was the fact that a great deal of the crime and lawlessness was due to low-country labourers (and to a much lesser extent, Indian immigrant labourers)<sup>3</sup> who had been attracted there by the economic opportunities provided by the plantations. A contributory factor to this disintegration and one which attracted considerable notice, was the excise policy of the British government which encouraged the opening of taverns and tubs in the Kandyan areas, especially in the planting districts, a region noted for the social disapproval accorded to drunkenness. But the plantations did no more than aggravating more material grievances which accounted for the very significant

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<sup>1</sup> Van Den Driesen, I.H., "Coffee Cultivation in Ceylon", *CHJ*, vol.3, no.1 and vol.3, no.2, 1953, pp.78-87, 56-65.

<sup>2</sup> Perera, A.B., "Plantation Economy and Colonial Policy in Ceylon", *CHJ*, vol.1, 1952, pp.34-35.

<sup>3</sup> Stark Justice, "On the State of Crime in Ceylon", *JRAS (CB)*, vol. I, 1845, pp. 61-78.

fact that so few plantations were attacked by the Kandyan in 1848 though they offered such tempting and vulnerable targets.<sup>1</sup>

The people had moved substantial grievances against the Buddhist policy of the British government, the attempts to dissociate the state from its formal connection with Buddhism, served to alienate the aristocracy and the Sangha, the two most influential groups in Kandyan society. The leaders of Kandyan were of the opinion they looked upon this sort of intervention as a gross betrayal of a solemn undertaking given at the cession of the Kandyan Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> The estrangement of the upper classes might have been less harmful to British interests at a time of crisis if the people at large had been satisfied with British rule, however, the British had done little or nothing for the peasants in the Kandyan areas, a neglect which stemmed from an excessive concentration of interest (if not attention) on plantation agriculture. The result was that every segment of the Kandyan population either nursed a sense of grievance against the British administration, or had no positive reason to give it their support.<sup>3</sup>

The Kandyan problem had always been a source of confrontation between the British administration on one hand, and the peasants on the other. Seen in their perspective, a small group of men again sought to channelize the widespread discontent over the taxes into a foolhardy attempt to drive the British out of Kanday. These men, however, did not belong to the traditional elite but were of peasant stock, some of them hailing from the low-country. Their aim was a return to the traditional Kandyan pattern of things,<sup>4</sup> which, somewhat naively perhaps, they aspired to cherish by making one of their

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<sup>1</sup> Jayawardena, V.K., *The Rice of the Labour Movement in Ceylon*, Durban, 1972, pp. 18-222.

<sup>2</sup> Pieris, Ralph, *Sinhalese Social Organization: The Kandyan Period*, Colombo, University press, 1956, pp.56-60.

<sup>3</sup> Malalgoda Kithsiri, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society 1750-1900: A Study in Revival and Change*, California, University of California Press, 1976, pp.166-169.

<sup>4</sup> Robinson Margueite, S., *Political Structure in a Changing Sinhalese Village*, Cambridge, Cambridge University press, 1975, pp.21-24.

members asking. The force that inspired these men was the traditionalist nationalism of the Kandyans, a form of nationalism poles apart from that of the twentieth century, but none the less nationalism for that,<sup>1</sup> Torrington himself, curiously enough, was one of the few contemporaries to recognize both the existence and the strength of this force; he explained that; “By (Kandyan) nationality I mean the feelings, the habits, the associations and the customs which still obtain among a people who only 34 years ago were for the first time subjected to our authority, and whose amalgamation with the Maritime Provinces never appears to have made much progress”.<sup>2</sup>

As already referred in the fore going pages religion once again was a vital factor in the refurbishing of tradition, which the adherents of the old society attempted, as part of their resistance to the British. One of their leaders gave forceful expression to this when he declared; “the religion of Buddha has degenerated on account of the improper conduct of the British government. I in conjunction with all the Headmen and the people must expel the ‘low-caste English. We must then improve our religion and when we die we shall inherit blessing”.<sup>3</sup>

At every stage in the organization of the rebellion the leaders tended to search for the only universe of knowledge available to them – their own tradition. To them the refurbishing of tradition meant a restoration of the Kandyan dynasty and the revival of its intimate connection and association with the traditional religion.<sup>4</sup> It was this which conferred certainty on a situation characterized by doubts. They gave their movement legitimacy by rooting it in the norms of traditional society; and the quest for tradition gave it such coherence as it had. To the many Kandyans, the past was still a living

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<sup>1</sup> Pieris Ralph, “Some Neglected Aspects of the British Colonial Policy in Ceylon”, *CHJ*, vol. 1, 1951, pp.18-22.

<sup>2</sup> R. De Silva, *Colvin, Ceylon under British Occupation 1795-1833*, Colombo, 1953, pp.129-131.

<sup>3</sup> C.O. 54/263, Enclosure in Torrington’s confidential dispatch to Grey, of 14<sup>th</sup> November 1849.

<sup>4</sup> Roberts Michael, “Various on the theme of Resistance Movement: The Kandyan Rebellion and Latter day Nationalisms in Ceylon”, *Ceylon Studies Seminar*, no.9, 1970-1972, pp.18-28.

memory and a living reality, the refurbishing and reviving of traditional values had a potent appeal on the people across spectrum.<sup>1</sup>

Two points about the 1848 rebellion need emphasis. One of these is the contrast with the Great Rebellion of 1817-18. The latter was the nearest that developed to a ‘post-pacification’ revolt, a great crisis of commitment which affected the community at large. The ‘rebellion’ of 1848, on the other hand, was confined to a much narrower region of the country and never involved the community at large to anywhere near the same extent as the Great Rebellion.<sup>2</sup> This might be explained partly at least by the swiftness with which it was put down, and this in turn to the roads which had been originally built for precisely a contingency such as this. The second point is even more interesting. The riots of 1848 were by no means confined to the Kandyan region. There was an urban disturbance in Colombo and there occurred for the first time a deliberate attempt to introduce to Ceylonese society the current ideas of European radicalism.<sup>3</sup> It is curious, however that it is precisely such a fusion – ‘Sinhalese traditionalism’ and radical ideology borrowed from Europe – that made the mass nationalism of the years around 1856 so potent a force. It was to take a century before the fusion was attempted, and when it succeeded few turned back to memories of 1848 where the two forces had appeared together for the first time, as parallel movements without connection with each other.<sup>4</sup>

The Kandyan resistance to the British petered out in the two or three decades after the suppression of the ‘rebellion’ of 1848, and disappeared for ever thereafter. In the wake of the ‘rebellion’ some of the more discerning officials saw potential advantages to the British in a reappraisal of the policy of

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<sup>1</sup> Pieris Ralph, “Society and Ideology in Ceylon during a Time of Troubles 1795-1850”, Part i and ii, *UCR*, vol. ix, 1951, pp.171-185 and pp.266-269.

<sup>2</sup> De Silva, K.M., “Nineteenth Century Origins of Nationalism in Ceylon”, *UCHC*, vol. iii, Part-ii, Chapter viii, 1973, pp.315-322.

<sup>3</sup> De Silva K.M. ‘The 1848 Rebellion in Ceylon: The British Parliamentary Post Mortem’, *Modern Ceylon Studies 1974*, vol. v, part ii, pp.177-137.

<sup>4</sup> Bandara Ashoka, *Colonialism in Sri Lanka*, Colombo, Lake House Investment Ltd.1982, pp.316-321.

amalgamating the Kandyan provinces with the low country regions. Thus an official committee reviewing the island's fixed establishments in 1849/50 argued that; the nationality of the Kandyans must be looked upon as a fact and as such must be directly met and provided for by such governmental and administrative machinery as may suit the peculiar requirements of the Kandyan country.<sup>1</sup>

In 1850 Torrington himself came out in support of these criticisms of the old policy. The theory of attempting to break up the so-called nationality of the Kandyans by annexing different portions of the Kandyan country to the adjacent districts of the maritime provinces had in reality proved a failure and as such it was better to meet and provide for the remnant of the Kandyan nationality, if it could be called, than to be voluntarily blind to the fact of its existence.<sup>2</sup>

But the old prejudices died hard. There were influential advocates of the old policy. Thus P.E. Woodhouse in his evidence before the Committee on fixed establishments could urge that:

There should be no such things as Kandyan; every efforts should be made to amalgamate the people of the upper and lower country if the country is to be governed with any degree of uniformity, all distinctions between the Sinhalese themselves must be avoided as much as possible in the Sinhalese portion of the island<sup>3</sup>

The policy of amalgamation at political and administrative levels seemed to have a compelling logic of its own which was more than sufficient to withstand the doubts raised about its validity in the changed circumstances of the Kandyan Provinces after the facile suppression of the abortive rebellion of

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<sup>1</sup> DeSilva, K.M., 'The Private Correspondence of the Third Earl Grey and C.J. Maccarthy the letters on the Rebellion of 1848 in Ceylon', *JRAS (CB)*, vol. x, pp.29-88.

<sup>2</sup> De Silva *Colvin Ceylon under British Occupation, 795-1833*, Colombo, 1953, p78.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

1848. Besides, economic factors – the rapid expansion of the network of roads and the emergence of rail transport – proved to be much more effective than the policy of tinkering with provincial boundaries as a means of consolidating the political and administrative unification that came with the Colebrooke – Cameron reforms in 1832.<sup>1</sup>

However, there was a fresh look at the policy ‘innovation’ in religious affairs and social policy which had been a notable feature of government activity in the Kandyan region since the implementation of the Colebrooke – Cameron reforms.<sup>2</sup> After 1848 there was a greater awareness of the need to pay heed to the sensibilities of the Kandyans in these matters, and this took the form of a far-reaching re-appraisal of Buddhist policy almost immediately after the “rebellion” when the government recoiled from the Evangelical zeal which pervaded its Buddhist policy in the years preceding the outbreak on the ‘rebellion’.<sup>3</sup> The retreat from innovationism was continued in other fields of social policy relating to the Kandyan Provinces. Thus despite the loathing in which British officials held Kandyan polyandry, the initiative in the preparation of Ordinance 13 of 1859; “to amend the laws of marriage in the Kandyan Provinces,”<sup>4</sup> came not from the government but from a group of Kandyan chiefs. Indeed, the preamble to the ordinance explained that the reform was attempted because, the Marriage custom of the Kandyans had become a grievance and an abuse, within the meaning of the (Kandyan) convention, and

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<sup>1</sup> Mendis, G.C., (ed.) *The Colebrook-Cameron Papers, vol.1: Documents on British Colonial Policy in Ceylon 1796-1833*, ( CCP), vol. ii, Oxford, 1956, p.78.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Dieter, E., *Buddhism and British Colonial Policy in Ceylon 1815-1875*, Asian Studies, 1964, pp.60-63.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Nadaraja Tambyah, *The Legal System of Ceylon in its Historical Settings*, Netherland, 1972, pp.181-190

large persons of the Kandyan people had desired wished<sup>1</sup> for the redress and the reform of the same.<sup>2</sup>

Other issue pertaining to Kandyan Kingdom was regarding tenural practices. When the service tenure issue became a matter of public discussion again in 1869-70, Governor Hercules Robinson, despite the cogently argued case – made by E.L. Mitford on broadly humanitarian grounds – for the immediate and compulsory abolition of the tenural system, would agree to nothing more drastic than a purely permissive measure.<sup>3</sup> The revival of the Gamsabhava (Village Council) was further proof of the question of taxation. As late as 1877 Governor Gregory urged as a serious objection to the introduction of a land tax that it would be imposing a direct tax on the people “a very serious matter, the consequences of which no one can foretell”.<sup>4</sup> By the 1870’s the retreat from assimilation began to have its impact on administrative policy as well, especially in relation to the role of native headmen in the administration. Though there is evidence of a change in the government’s attitude to the native chiefs within a decade of the failure of the “rebellion” of 1848, it was Gregory who boldly reversed the trend discernible since the Great Rebellion of 1817-18 of being wary of the Chiefs.<sup>5</sup> He began a policy of aristocratic resuscitation which was continued by men like Gordon and McCollum and given added impetus in an attempt to build up an aristocratic bloc of loyalists as a counterweight to the more assertive sections of the

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<sup>1</sup> The initiative taken by the Kandyan chiefs in this matter was indicative of the diffusion of individualism among them; they wanted a reform of the Law of Marriage because the traditional system caused considerable confusion when matters relating to ownership of land and property and to be determined by the courts.

<sup>2</sup> Peris Ralph, *Sinhalese Social Organization: The Kandyan Period*, Colombo, University Press, 1956, p.52.

<sup>3</sup> E.L. Mitford’s Memoranda on Serfdom I (December 1868) and II (January 1869) and Robinson’s minute of 24 August 1869.

<sup>4</sup> Bastiampillai, B., *The Administration of Sir William Gregoary: Governor of Ceylon 1872-1877*, Colombo, Thisara Publishers, 1968, pp.58-72.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



emerging elite who were brashly demanding a share of political power in the country.<sup>1</sup>

Gregory's administration was notable for one more development in administrative policy – a reversal of the older policy of using changes in provincial boundaries to break up the unity of the Kandyan provinces. When the North Central Provinces was created during his administration, the reasons Gregory gave for its establishment seem in retrospect a damning condemnation of the principles behind Colebrooke's re-drawing of the boundaries in 1833. The reasons were; "The wretched state of this huge extent of country; it's totally neglected condition;<sup>2</sup> the impossibility of a Government Agent residing at Jaffna, the northern part of the island, being able to supervise the immediate improvement necessary; and last, but not least, the fact that this portion of the Northern Province was Kandyan in its population whereas to the north it was Tamil, and generally ruled by a Government Agent who was more conversant with Tamils than with Sinhalese".<sup>3</sup>

The completion of this policy came with the creation of two more Kandyan Provinces, Uva in 1886 Sabaragamuwa in 1889. These changes in provincial boundaries stretching over the years 1873 to 1889 gave expression to the fact that the Kandyan problem in the sense of a 'traditional' nationalism guided by an aristocratic leadership had ceased to be a serious threat to the continued stability of British rule. Thus the policy that had prevailed since 1833 was abandoned only because the political factor on which it was based had lost its validity.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva, K.M., *History of Ceylon*, Colombo, Vijitha Yapa Publishers, 2003, pp.315-325.

<sup>2</sup> Mendis, G.C., *Ceylon under the British*, Colombo, Apothecary Co. Ltd., 1952, pp.122-128.

<sup>3</sup> Bastiampillai, B. *The Administration of Sir William Gregory: Governor of Ceylon 1872-1877*, Colombo, Thisara Publishers, 1968, pp.58-72.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

By the last quarter of nineteenth century the long history of Kandyan resistance had come to an end. Instead the Maritime Provinces had emerged as the centre of a more sophisticated response of the indigenous society to the pressures of British rule – religious revival, the formation of political associations and incipient trade union activity. Together these formed integral elements of an acute process of rejection of the more dynamic aspects of the intrusions of British institutions and practices; of subtle accommodation to change and of the absorption of change informs seldom anticipated by those who initiated change in the first place; and above all of a complex resistance to western rule which formed a half – way house between the traditionalist nationalism of the Kandyans, and the ideologically coherent nationalism of the twentieth century. They provide, in fact, examples of the “secondary” resistance movements, precursors of modern nationalism.<sup>1</sup>

The “secondary” resistance movements that emerged in the late nineteenth century developed into a force of no little political influence. But they had no support from the Kandyans who, between the 1880s and the attainment of independence mostly remained associated with the British, and proved a counterweight to the reform and nationalist movements dominated by the western educated elite of the Maritime Provinces.<sup>2</sup> The leaders of Kandyan opinion seldom showed much sympathy for the political aspirations of these movements. They stood aloof and indeed remained hostile. Nevertheless the memory of Kandyan resistance and of the Kandyan Kingdom as the last independent Sinhalese kingdom persisted to provide some inspiration for the more forward looking “reformers” and those amongst the latter who came to form the nucleus of a genuine “nationalist” movement.

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva Colvin, R., *Ceylon under the British Occupation*, Colombo, vol. ii, Apothecaries Co. Ltd., pp.292-298.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.298-302.

It was in the form of a revival of Buddhism, and a rejection of the efforts of missionary organizations to convert people to Christianity,<sup>1</sup> that the secondary resistance movement manifested itself as its first and in retrospect, most profoundly effective expression. Initially the response of the people to evangelization had been one of polity indifference. But by the late 1840s there were signs that a more marked resistance to evangelization was emerging, sporadic and localized by resistance nevertheless.<sup>2</sup> The resistance was originally more pronounced in the Kandyan region, where the missionaries had in fact made little headway. There the people demonstrated a more positive commitment to the traditional faith, and the “rebellion” of 1848 had its regions, overtones to the extent that some of the rebel leaders articulated the resentment wide spread among the people that the British had endeavored to abrogate their undertaking to continue the traditional association of Buddhism with the state.<sup>3</sup> More important however, resistance to Christianity had emerged in the Maritime Provinces in regions not affected by the “rebellion.” Whether this resistance was systematically organized, and how widespread it was, are matters on which there is no firm evidence. But there is clear evidence that it spread along the south-west coast from the vicinity of Colombo to beyond Kalutara, and that the leadership was provided at the village level by monks. By the 1860s Buddhist resistance to Christianity was more articulate and self-confident than ever before. Indeed the events of the last quarter of the nineteenth century mostly related to the recovery of Buddhism can only be understood in the context of a continuing tradition of resistance to evangelization.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Enment, E., *Christianity in Ceylon*. New Delhi, Asian Education Service, Reprint, 1998, 76-90.

<sup>2</sup> Peebles, J.M., *Buddhism and Christianity Face to Face with Introduction and Annotations*, Colombo, 1955, pp. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup> De Silva, K.M., ‘Religion and the State in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *UCHC*, vol. iii, 1973, pp.66-76.

<sup>4</sup> Vimalananda Tennakoon, *Buddhism in Ceylon Under the Christian Powers and the Educational and Religious Policy of British Government in Ceylon 1797-1832*, Colombo, M.D. Gunasena, 1963, pp.98-114.

The Buddhist revival developed into something more than this. In Ceylon as in many parts of Asia, ‘religious’ nationalism, preceded and inspired political nationalism, providing as it did an ideal basis for the rejection of the West. In the first phase in the emergence of nationalism in Ceylon, the years 1870 to 1915, religious revivalism was the spur to the growth of national consciousness and the recovery of national pride.<sup>1</sup>

But before any attempt could be made to direct this stream of religious “nationalism” into political channels – indeed before anyone thought of such a possibility, two of the most energetic and ‘liberal’ governors of Ceylon, Gregory and Gordon sought to channel it into a conservative mould. One cannot remain oblivious to the fact that certain individuals of British bureaucracy tried to show liberalism towards the Sri Lankan people. Thus Gregory initiated a policy of active interest in and sympathy for the Buddhist movement. This he did by according a measure of judicious patronage to the movement as well as by consciously seeking to emphasize the neutrality of the government in religious affairs.<sup>2</sup> Gordon not only continued this policy, but endeavored to underscore the principle of a special obligation towards Buddhism; he hoped thereby to make the Buddhist movement a conservative force, something that would revitalize the traditional society.<sup>3</sup>

The attempts to use Buddhism as a force to cement the traditional society and as a countervailing force – against movements for change and reform which carried with them the prospect of a disturbance of the political balance which the British were seeking to maintain – did not succeed. The Buddhist movement under the given conditions could not be continued. Indeed, by the turn of the century a sustained temperance movement gave it added

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<sup>1</sup> Wikkremarathna, L.A., ‘Religion Nationalism and Social Change in Ceylon 1865-1885’, *JRAS (BGI)*, no. 2, 1969, pp.127-150.

<sup>2</sup> Bastiampillai, B., *The Administration of Sir William Gregory: Governor of Ceylon 1872-1877*. Colombo, Thisara Publishers, 1968, pp.58-72.

<sup>3</sup> Patric Peebles, *Social Change in Nineteenth Century Ceylon (Governor Sir Arthur Gordon and the Administration of Sri Lanka)*, New Delhi, 1995, pp.243-246.

momentum. The temperance movement became at one time an integral part of the Buddhist revival and an introduction, tentative and astutely restrained, to political activity.<sup>1</sup>

The manufacture and distribution of arrack and toddy were controlled by Sinhalese capitalists many (if not most) of whom were Karawe Christians, though there were also Buddhists of the same and other castes who had large investments in the liquor industry. By a curious irony some of these Buddhists were to divert part of the wealth they had amassed in this industry to the support of Buddhist causes, and temperance agitation as well.<sup>2</sup>

The Temperance Movement became the rallying point of the recovery of national consciousness. By the first decade of the twentieth century temperance agitation had spread far and wide especially in the Sinhalese areas of the Western and Southern Provinces and the response it evoked had sufficient passionate zeal in it to sustain the hope that it had great potential for development into a political movement.<sup>3</sup> There were occasions when temperance agitators indulged in criticisms of the government by associating it with the evils of intemperance – diatribes against foreign vices and Christian values, were cleverly scaled down into more restrained and subtle criticisms of a ‘Christian’ movement. Nevertheless it is of real significance that no attempt was made to channelize the mass emotions that the temperance campaign generated into a sustained and organized political movement.<sup>4</sup> The politicization of the movement, once its appeal to the people became evident,

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<sup>1</sup> Gunawardena, R.D., “The Reform Movement and Political Organization in Ceylon with Special Reference to the Temperance Movement and Regional Associations 1900-1930”, (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis), University of Peradeniya Sri Lanka, pp.14-55.

<sup>2</sup> Fernando Tissa Arrack, ‘Toddy and Ceylonese Nationalism: Some Observation on the Temperance Movement 1912-1921’, *Ceylon Studies Seminar*, no.9, 1969-1970 series, pp.10-28.

<sup>3</sup> Jayasekera, P.V.J., “Social and Political Change in Ceylon, 1900-1919 with Special Reference to the Disturbance of 1915, (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, London, 1970) pp. 189-246 and Jayawardena, V.K., *The Rise of the Labour Movement in Ceylon*, Duke University Press, 1972, pp. 86-87, 112-116.

<sup>4</sup> Wimalarathna, K.D.G., *Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka*, Maharagama, Sathara Publication, 1985, pp.78-82.

seemed the logical and inevitable next step, but this was never taken. Equally significant was the fact that the grassroots support on a mass basis which the temperance agitation generated was achieved without the assistance of such political associations as existed.<sup>1</sup>

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, two such organizations had emerged. In 1882 the Ceylon Agricultural Association was formed at the instance of C.H. de Soysa, the wealthiest of the Karawe entrepreneurs, primarily to safeguard the interests of Ceylonese planters, and it was converted in 1888 into the Ceylon National Association.<sup>2</sup> The background to this development was significant. The formal political activity of the Ceylonese elite – of the traditional as well as the emerging groups – was confined at this time to periodic campaigns on behalf of aspiration to nomination to the Sinhalese seat in the Legislative Council whenever there was a vacancy. In 1888 the Sinhalese seat was once again vacant, but the political activity that emerged was altogether more purposeful when the emerging elite<sup>3</sup> spearheaded by the affluent Karawes sought to give greater momentum to their pressure for recognition by institutionalizing. It is a distinctly political organization which was something more than a merely temporary platform for advancing the claims of an individual. But the political ambitions of the emerging elite were as narrowly limited as those of the traditional elite whom they sought to convert the Ceylon National Association into a body modelled on the Indian National Congress the resolute respectability of the leaders – many of whom were hostile to the adoption of the name ‘National Congress’ – was proof against any such initiative.<sup>4</sup> However, the Ceylon National Association had one positive achievement to its credit – its notable contribution to the campaign for

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<sup>1</sup> Wimalarathna, K.D.G., *Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka*, Maharagama, Sathara Publication, 1985, pp.78-82.

<sup>2</sup> Peeble Patric, *The Transformation of a Colonial Elite*, Chicago, 1973, pp.231-303.

<sup>3</sup> Samaraweera Vijaya Elite formation and Elite, 1832-1931, *UCHC*, vol.iii, University of Peradeniya, 1973, pp.246-247.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

the abolition of the grain taxes. By 1895, nevertheless, the controlling influence in the Ceylon National Association was in the hands of men who had no interest in political reform. Nor would they associate themselves with the temperance agitation.

The other association was a regional one, but it was more articulate and venturesome. This was the Chilaw Association composed largely of wealthy landowners, organized and led by the Corea brothers. The impetus to its formation stemmed from the agitation to extend the railway to Puttalam in the heart of the coconut belt, and from a campaign against the Waste Lands Ordinance of 1897.<sup>1</sup> The agitation against this later ordinance demonstrated certain hostility to the government; its avowed purpose was the defense of the interests of the peasants against what were regarded as the reprehensible features of this piece of legislation.<sup>2</sup> At the same time while the Ceylon National Association scrupulously avoided involvement in political activity, the Chilaw Association made political agitation the central feature of its activities in its attempt to focus attention on the need for the introduction of the elective principle for representation of native interests in the Legislative Council.<sup>3</sup> But even this agitation was restrained, narrowly elitist in conception, and bore no comparison to the broad based temperance movement which drew its remarkable vitality from its appeal to the people at large.

The Colonial authorities in Ceylon instinctively got their priorities right. They could safely ignore the Ceylon National Association. The studied contempt with which they treated the Chilaw Association and the hostility to the Coreas reflected a visceral antipathy to a political group whose aspirations were regarded both as an affront and a mild threat to the British position in the

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<sup>1</sup> CO 56/14 Ceylon Acts 1896-1899 Ordinance 1 of 1897, "An Ordinance relating to Claims to Forest, Chena West land Unoccupied Lands", 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Sir Charls Jeffrie, *Ceylon, the Path to Independence*, London, 1963, pp.21-25.

island.<sup>1</sup> But the British had a different view from the beginning about the temperance agitation, and they viewed the proliferation of temperance societies with the utmost suspicion, in recognition of the fact that the Buddhist revival and the temperance movement had generated a feeling of hostility against the colonial regime which could, potentially, disturb the placid political life of Ceylon.<sup>2</sup>

More dramatic in its impact and in the eyes of the colonial administration and of British commercial interests in the island, possibly even more hazardous, was the increasing tendency for groups of working people in Colombo to resort to strike action against their employers. At the turn of the century there was evidence in abundance of industrial strife in Colombo. When this culminated in a strike of carters in 1906 not few among the British officials in Ceylon thought they saw in this incipient trade union agitation, evidence of the transference of 'Indian sedition' to Ceylon.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century secondary resistance movements had succeeded in contributing to a noticeable quickening of the pace of political life in the island. The political activities of the first two decades of the twentieth century were the culmination of trends which had their origin in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The Ceylonese variant of Asian nationalism has several distinctive features of its own and one of the most notable of these is the prominent part played by the 'reform' movement within the wider theme of 'nationalist' agitation. 'Constitutionalist', 'moderate' and 'conservative' are some of the terms used to describe the 'reformers' and their political attitudes.<sup>4</sup> Each of these had its uses. What is common to them all is the emphasis on constitutional reform as the major goal of political endeavor; the rejection of

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<sup>1</sup> Peebles Patrik, *The History of Sri Lanka*, America, Green Wood Press, 2006, p.74.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Jayawardene, V. K., op. cit., pp. 120-132; on the carters' strike of 1906, see also Dep. A. C. A., *History of the Ceylon Police*, vol. ii, 1866-1913, Colombo, 1969, pp. 430-437.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Charls Jeffrie, *Ceylon: The Path to Independence*, London, 1963, pp.21-25.



techniques of agitation based on the participation of the masses in campaigns for constitutional reform; an insistence on the need to reconcile Ceylonese patriotism with loyalty to Britain and the belief that these were complementary and not inherently incompatible. It is a point worth noting that though the endeavors of the men in the reform movement contributed to the eventual transfer of power from British hands to Ceylonese, many of these individuals were not consciously motivated by a desire to shake off the bonds of colonial rule.<sup>1</sup>

Crucial to the understanding of Ceylon's nationalist movement was the role played in it by the elite, the groups among Ceylonese which enjoyed positions of leadership and esteem. The politics of nationalist activity in all its various phases and forms had been dominated by them and moulded, if not actually in their own image, still largely to suit their own interests to a much greater extent than had been the case with nationalist agitation in many parts of India.

Social changes in operation in the second half of the nineteenth century resulted in a steady increase in the number of the elite,<sup>2</sup> and taken as a whole this built up increasing power behind their political demands. They were united only in the desire to gain greater power for themselves as representatives of the people and from the outset it was possible to see a division among them into two 'wings', 'nationalist, and 'constitutionalist', with the latter standing for a very limited program of political action which would leave undisturbed the main features of the structure introduced by the British, while the 'nationalist' endeavored to accord greater prominence to the cultural patterns and religious traditions of the country. Some of the more articulate 'nationalists' demonstrated a precocious commitment to the cause of 'swaraj' but they were not very many and not representative even of the 'nationalists' in general.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Charls Jeffrie, *Ceylon: The Path to Independence*, London, 1963, pp.21-25.

<sup>2</sup> Patric Peebles, *Social Change in Nineteenth Century Ceylon* (Governor Sir Arthur Gorden and the Administration of Sri Lanka), New Delhi, 1995, pp.243-246.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 247-50.

But while ‘nationalist’ and ‘constitutionalist’ are useful ideal types one need to remember that the actions of any individual or group show, when analyzed a mixture of both types. And there were issues which brought the ‘nationalists’ and ‘constitutionalists’ together for a common purpose. Among the most notable of such issues was the temperance movement.<sup>1</sup>

The first two decades of the twentieth century were characterized by the growth of ‘secondary’ resistance movements in the country’s political associations (both regional and national), trade unions, welfare associations and the like. But the concept of secondary resistance was demonstrated most astutely in the recovery of Buddhism and the first sustained temperance movement which was closely associated with it. These too had their centers of activity mainly in the low-country; and within these confines they demonstrated some of the characteristics of modern mass nationalism.

The temperance movements posed a challenge to the position and authority of the traditional elite, the chief headmen in the rural areas, the government’s men on the spot who were regarded as the natural leaders of the people. The confrontation demonstrated the fact that the chief headmen had lost their touch in grass-roots politics’. Clearly the erosion of the influence of the chief headman would affect the position of the British civil servants as well. The government realizing the potential dangers of the movement to its own position and interests, sought to contain the infection by discouraging native officials in the administration,<sup>2</sup> in particular the village level headmen, from association with temperance activity. It is curious, however, that a movement as powerful as this and one which affected not merely the elite but the people at large should have had so little of an impact on the formal political activities of

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<sup>1</sup> DeSilva, K. M., *History of Sri Lanka*, Colombo, Vijitha Yapa Publishers, 2003, pp.333-338.

<sup>2</sup> Kannangara, P. D., *History of the Ceylon Civil Service 1802-1833, A Study of Administrative Changes in Ceylon*, Dehiwal, 1966, pp.18-21.

the elite at this time. No consistent attempt was made to channel the enthusiasm it evoked and the discontent it generated into a movement of real significance.<sup>1</sup>

Part of the explanation for this development lay in the fact that the most militant and charismatic of the ‘nationalist’ leader, Anagarika Dharmapala, was out of the island for a considerable periods of time. But even when he was in the island, the ‘nationalists’ diffused their energies over a whole range of religious, social, cultural and educational issues and made little effort of consistently focus their attention on any clearly defined political objectives.<sup>2</sup> Though Dharmapala and some of his close associates saw the political implications and potential of the forces that were emerging Dharmapala was among the first to advocate ‘swaraj’ – they received no encouragement from those who played a prominent role in Buddhist activity, in these attempts to politicize the Buddhist revival and the temperance movement.<sup>3</sup> The temperance movement itself was not a monolith, and despite his missionary zeal in its support Dharmapala was suspect to many of the Buddhist temperance leaders and they refused to accept his leadership. If the efforts to outline a political objective for the Buddhist revival and the temperance movement had so little support from the Buddhist themselves, these efforts were anathema to the bulk of the elite especially to the Christians and Burghers who dominated the political life of the country in to the sense of the establishment. They would have to truck with a political movement of this sort, especially one which showed so much potential for development into a vehicle for religious-Buddhist-‘Nationalism’.<sup>4</sup>

What is of significance to know is the fact that the Buddhist movement lacked the institutional apparatus which might have facilitated the conversion of religious enthusiasm into political energy effectively and on a sustained

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<sup>1</sup> Patric Peebles, *Social Change in Nineteenth Century Ceylon* (Governor Sir Arthur Gorden and the Administration of Sri Lanka), New Delhi, 1995, pp.243-246.

<sup>2</sup> Karunarathna, S. S., *Anagarika Dharmapala: Glorious Life Dedicated to the Cause of Buddhism*, Mahabodi Society of India, 1999, pp.40-43.

<sup>3</sup> Karunarathna, d. *Anagarika Dharmapala*, Colombo, Gunasena and Company, 2002, pp.35-38.

<sup>4</sup> Guruge, A., *Return to Righteousness*, Colombo, Government Press, 1965, pp.28-30.

basis. At the same time there was by the beginning of the twentieth century a growing rift between the political leadership in the island and the Theosophical movement.<sup>1</sup> The Theosophical movement with its cosmopolitan outlook and comparative freedom from sectarian loyalties might well have become the driving force behind the development of a Buddhist political organization to channel religious enthusiasm into more secular fields, had it not lost a great deal of its influence with the Buddhist movement. The result was that the few efforts that were made to establish an ideological link between religion and political nationalism were doomed to failure.<sup>2</sup>

The political demand was the claim for a greater but still very modest share for the educated elite in the administration of the colony. As late as 1907 E. W. Perera\*, one of the most articulate of the ‘constitutionalists’, set out their aims with a moderation that would have seemed out of date to all but the most conservative of the leaders of the Indian national movement of the day; “An eminently loyal people, deeply sensible of the benefits of British rule, the Ceylonese are aspiring to win the full measure of British citizenship”. Perera outlined a series of very modest proposals for reform and reconstruction, and claimed that their adoption would “crown the splendid monument of administration which a century of British statesmanship has raised in Ceylon.”<sup>3</sup>

Though the increasing pressure from the elite for a share in administrative power was seen as basically a challenge to the position of the British officials, there was a recognition of the fact that the real and more immediate threat lay in the fact that elected representatives were likely to enjoy

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<sup>1</sup> Malalasekara, G. P., *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir of the Buddhist Theosophical Society 1880-1940*, Colombo, 1940, pp.4-18.

<sup>2</sup> Malalgoda, K., *Sociological Aspects of Revival and Change in Buddhism in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ceylon*, (Un-published D. Phil. thesis, Oxford 1970), pp. 388-392.

\* E.W. Perera was a Ceylonese Barrister and freedom fighter. He was known as the “Lion of Kotte” and was a prominent figure in the Sri Lankan Independent Movement and a Senator.

<sup>3</sup> Perera, Rita E.W., *Perera-portrait of a True Patriot of Sri Lanka*, Colombo, S. Godage, 2005, pp.10-15.

a higher standing in public life than the native headmen,<sup>1</sup> in all their various grades, who formed part of the subordinate bureaucracy. Far from watching complacently the displacement of the traditional elite from the positions of influence which they enjoyed, McCollum (and his able Colonial Secretary, Hugh Clifford) gave renewed strength to the policy of propping them up as a conservative countervailing force.<sup>2</sup>

There could be no doubt about the fervid hostility prevalent among British officials in Ceylon in the first two decades of the twentieth century to any demands for political and constitutional reform. Even the movement for constitutional reform led at this time by men like James Peiris, H.J.C. Pereira, and E.W. Perera, who were deeply attached by sentiment and political inclinations to British institutions and the British Empire, was only slightly less suspect to them than the ‘nationalist’ agitation centered on Buddhism and the temperance movement.<sup>3</sup> At best this reflected a guardian’s reluctance to accept the fact that a ward had come of age; at worst the visceral opposition of a long entrenched ruling group to any attempt at a reduction of its powers (an instinct rendered keener in this instance by the easy assumption of racial superiority).

The first contest for the special seat for educated Ceylonese as an extraordinarily lively one in which Ponnambalam Ramanathan defeated Marcus Fernando in a campaign in which caste rivalry loomed large. As McCollum so self-righteously described it: the goyigamas “were not of sufficient strength to secure the educated Ceylonese seat for one of their own caste by election ... as a body they supported Mr. P. Ramanathan rather than accord a vote for Dr. H.M. Fernando, a Sinhalese who belongs to the Karawe castes.”<sup>4</sup> This exploitation of caste sentiment in the first contest for a constituency specially designed for educated Ceylonese became one more in

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<sup>1</sup> Samaraweera Vijaya, ‘Elite formation and Elite, 1832- 1931’, *UCHC*, vol. iii, University of Peradeniya, 1973, pp.246-247.

<sup>2</sup> MacCollum, Dispatch to the Earl of Crewe 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1909.

<sup>3</sup> De Silva K.M. *History of Sri Lanka*, Colombo, Vijiyha Yapa, 2003, pp.383, 384.

<sup>4</sup> C.O. 54/750, McCollum’s confidential dispatch of 24 January 1912.

the catalogue of criticisms which unsympathetic British officials hurled at the reform movement.

The emergence and persistence of labour strife at this time was a real index of social and political change in Ceylon. A recent study of the trade union movement in Ceylon notes that this labour unrest, in particular the discontent on the railways between 1912-15 reflected the extent to which the more skilled groups of daily paid workers were influenced by the 'radical' tone of the political activity of the 'nationalist' elite, and were willing to defy authority.<sup>1</sup> The leadership in these labour disputes was taken by the elite especially those who were most active in the temperance movement and political agitation. Nevertheless there appears to have been some difference in outlook between the "constitutionalists" who were themselves disturbed by the tone of defiance and the solidarity demonstrated by the workers: the "nationalists" on the other hand, looked upon strikes and the spirit of defiance of authority which they generated, as a manifestation of national awakening.<sup>2</sup>

Despite such movements of national concern, there had also been an animosity of one class against the other class. Seen in this perspective the riots of 1915<sup>3</sup> were in essence communal disturbances directed against the Muslims but more especially at the section of the Muslim community called the Coast Moors, who were the recent immigrants from South India. The ubiquitous activities of the Coast Moors in retail trade brought them in contact with the people at indigent levels – they were reputed to be readier than their competitors to extend credit but sell at higher prices and earned them the hostility alike of the people at large, and of the competitors about exploiting religious and racial sentiments to the detriment of their well-established rivals. Since the low country Sinhalese traders were a powerful driving force within

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<sup>1</sup> Jayawardena, V. K., *The Rise of the Labour Movement in Ceylon*, Durban, 1972, pp. 133-165.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The effective peak period of the riots was 22 May to 5 June 1915. For discussion of the riots of 1915 and their historical significance, Kearney, R.N., "The 1915 Riots in Ceylon: A Symposium", *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. xxix, 1970 pp. 219-266.

the Buddhist movement, religious sentiment gave a sharp ideological focus and a cloak of respectability to sordid commercial rivalry.<sup>1</sup> The rivalry became more pronounced because the Coast Moors were not only tenacious in the protection of their trading interests but were also more vociferous than the indigenous Muslim community in the dogged and truculent assertion of their civic rights, which stemmed no doubt from their familiarity with such matters in India. This streak of obduracy and their insensitivity to traditional rites and customs of other religious groups brought them, at a time when there was a resurgence of Buddhism, inexorably into conflict with the Sinhalese Buddhist masses.<sup>2</sup>

It was only when the British authorities in Ceylon after initially treating the riots as communal disturbances pure and simple, came to regard them as part of an organized conspiracy against the British by the Sinhalese that these events began to take on a different complexion. Though there was little or no evidence to support the sedition or conspiracy theory the origins and nature of the riots, it gained wide currency among British officials and became the impulse behind a series of panic measures of inexplicable harshness taken against the alleged leaders of the conspiracy – Sinhalese Buddhists.<sup>3</sup> A situation which would easily have been handled by the bureaucracy and the Police was dealt with by the military who acted in a manner which showed that they did not understand “the distinction between civil commotion and ‘war’”.<sup>4</sup>

Sinhalese Buddhist leaders, especially those associated with the temperance movement immediately came under suspicion and were the first to be arrested and jailed notwithstanding the fact that many of them had used their influence in the restoration of order, and in protecting the lives and property of

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<sup>1</sup> Abyewardena, K., “Economic and Political Factors in the 1915 Riots”, *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 29, no.2, 1970, pp.223-233.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Blackton, C. S., ‘The Action Phase of the 1915 Riots’, *JAS*, vol.29, no.2, 1970, pp.235-254.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

potential victims of mob violence. The detainees included the Senanayake brothers, F.R. Senanayake, D.S. Senanayake, D.B. Jayathilaka, W.A. de Silva, C. Batuwantudawe, and Dr. C.A. Hewavitharane (brothers of the Anagarika Dharmapala).<sup>1</sup> The colonial administration seemed determined to detain any Sinhalese who had shown the slightest inclination to challenge authority in the past. The railway workers particularly the militant trade unionists in the locomotive workshops in Colombo were as much suspect in this respect as the Buddhist temperance leaders – twenty-eight railway workers (including nineteen from the locomotive workshops) were arrested and at the end of June, ‘deported’ to the Eastern Province. The Young Lanka League also came under suspicion and its active members, of whom A.E. Goonasinha was prominent, were arrested and detained.<sup>2</sup>

All sort of preventive measures were taken against the various categories of the people with their affiliations with different organizations and movements by the British administrations under the garb of establishing peace and maintenance of law and orders in the country. Therefore, the methods employed for dealing with the disturbances gravely embittered the Sinhalese against the British authorities in Ceylon, and their sense of grievance was aggravated by the persistent refusal of the colonial rulers to investigate charges of excesses committed by the military and other during the suppression of the riots.

In the Legislative Council Ponnambalam Ramanathan rose to the defense of the Sinhalese leaders in a series of impassioned speeches notable for their fearless condemnation of the manner in which the disturbances were

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<sup>1</sup> Fernando, P. T. M., ‘The British Raj and the 1915 Communal Riots’ *Ceylon Studies Seminar Paper*, 1969/70 series, pp.18-27.

<sup>2</sup> Jayawardena, V. K., ‘*The Rise of the Labour Movement in Ceylon*, Durban, 1972, pp. 165-70 and Fernanadu, P. T. M., ‘The 1915 Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon: A Study of the Campaign for Justice’ *Ceylon Studies Seminar Paper*, 197, no.6, pp.32-34.



suppressed and the cogently argued refutation of the conspiracy theory.<sup>1</sup> He opposed both the Act of Indemnity which placed civil and military authorities beyond the reach of the law, and the Riots Damages Ordinance which imposed collective retribution in the form of a levy of compensation on all members of the Sinhalese community with no regard to the question whether they had participated in the riots or not.<sup>2</sup> More important, he attempted to secure the appointment of a Select Committee of the Legislative Council to inquire into complaints made against the colonial administration in Ceylon for the manner in which they put down the riots. Ramanathan succeeded in mustering the strong support on these from Harry Creasy, the European representative in the Legislative Council one of the oldest and most respected English residents in Ceylon at that time. The failure of these efforts was inevitable given the composition of the Legislative Council, and the refusal of the Sinhalese representative to lend Ramanathan and Creasy any support. Indeed S.C. Obeysekera chose this occasion for a forthright condemnation of the “half a dozen misguided designing villains who have been trying to pose as leaders of the Buddhists” at whose doors he laid the responsibility for the riots.<sup>3</sup> He fulminated against the “nobodies” who belonged to the “lower section of the Sinhalese community” who hoped in this manner “to make somebody’s of them”.<sup>4</sup> Even at this hour of grave national crisis, Obesequera could not rise above the parochial sectional interest of the exclusive social group to which he belonged.

For two years or more Ramanathan combined his public condemnation of the excesses committed under martial law with persistent though fruitless

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<sup>1</sup> Vythilingam, M., *The Life of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan*, vol.2 (1910-1930), 1977, Chunnakam, Ramanathan Commemoration Society Chapter10 (Riots 1915, pp.229-250), Chapter 11(Riots Speeches, pp. 251-320), Chapter 12 (Ramanathans Mission to England- His Return, pp.321-330.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

appeals for redress of grievances. In the meantime E.W. Perera left for England late in 1915 in an attempt to rouse British public opinion in favour of the aggrieved Sinhalese,<sup>1</sup> and to secure the appointment of a team of commissioners from Britain to inquire into the incidents connected with the riots and their suppression. For four years he (and D.B. Jayatilake for three years) remained in Britain on this mission but the Imperial government was in no mood to let inquiries of this nature hamper British morale then keyed to the war effort.<sup>2</sup>

The riots of 1915 – or rather the methods adopted in suppressing the riots – resulted not unnaturally in embittering the Ceylonese elite, ‘nationalist’ and ‘constitutionalist’ alike against the colonial administration in Ceylon. That both sections of the elite should have placed greater emphasis thereafter on the building up of a more sophisticated apparatus of political activity and that they should have devoted more attention to the constructive planning of a more thoroughgoing reform of the constitution was a natural and perhaps obvious expectation. But surprisingly the immediate effects of the riots of 1915 were to numb an evolving political situation before its potential was fully realized and to postpone any fresh development for a few years.

The prevailing mood of restraint and excessive caution in politics, affected other issues as well. The conservatism of the ‘constitutionalist’ elite was so overwhelmingly pervasive that even the harsh treatment that many of them were subjected to in the aftermath of the riots of 1915 proved to be inadequate as a stimulus to the formation of a larger and more effective political organization than the Ceylon National Association which was paralyzed by its resolute respectability.

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<sup>1</sup> Vythilingam, M., *The Life of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan*, vol.2 (1910-1930), 1977, Chunnakam, Ramanathan Commemoration Society Chapter 10 (Riots 1915, pp. 229-250), Chapter 11 (Riots Speeches, pp.251-320), Chapter 12 (Ramanathans Mission to England - His Return, pp.321-330).

<sup>2</sup> Fernando, P. T. M., ‘The Post Riots Campaign for Justice’, *JRAS (CB)*, vol. xxix, no. ii, 1970, pp. 255-266.

There was a setback, though only a temporary one, to the movement for establishing a Ceylon National Congress in the lines of the Indian National Congress.<sup>1</sup> Not that this movement or restrained agitation had any strong support, even before the riots, from the ‘constitutionalist’ leadership who controlled the Ceylon National Association. On the contrary there was undisguised opposition to the formation of a Ceylon National Congress which stemmed both from the conservatism of the constitutionalist’ elite, perturbed by the potential consequences of agitation politics and fearful associations, and from the fear of minorities – racial, religious and caste – at the threat of an effective challenge to their position and privileges which a National Congress as the vehicle – potentially – of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism, held out.<sup>2</sup>

In the foregone pages it has become to a fair extent clear that certain ideological foundation introduced by the Britishers keeping into view their mercantilist consideration and other national interests, nonetheless, created an intellectual climate among the Indian and Sri Lankan elite to espouse and promote the cause of their degenerated society, in a more democratic and rational ways. The introduction of press, education, means of communication and transport, railways though meant for augmenting the resources of rulers against the ruled, in due course succeeded in bringing about religious, cultural, political, economical etc consciousness among the Indian and Sri Lankan first the elite followed by later on the commoners who stood to represent the national aspirations and desires. This also created an element of patriotism among the people in general and elite in particular towards their land for which they made later on all sorts of sacrifices for the noble cause of seeing the closure of the British rule in India.

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva, K. M., “The Formation and Character of the Ceylon National Congress”, 1917-1919, *CJHSS*, vol. x, pp. 70-102.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

#### **4.1. ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT AND ROLE OF REFORM ORGANIZATIONS IN INDIA**

In the wake of the occupation of lands across continents, there is scarcely any subjugated country which did not experience any change in various spheres of the life. Since the introduction of liberal and democratic ideas emanating from the Western world, hardly was there any country which had not come under its all pervasive influence. Seen in this perspective the civil reform organizations spread many parts in India and Sri Lanka due to the efforts of some individuals well versed with the history and culture of the regions, succeeded in creating an awareness among the people of the two countries towards reformation and revivalism in which the support of some liberal minded English was also sought. In this chapter a humble effort has been made to highlight some of the associations and their role in ameliorating the abysmal conditions of the people and made them conscious of the utility of some age old customs, practices and superstitions with a view to glorify the cultural, social and religious traits of their past.

Many changes in the field of socio-political, religious and the cultural background of India took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of liberal ideas that began spreading in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was during this period that various social, religious, cultural and political organizations originated viz. Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Prarthana Samaj and movements like Ramakrisna Mission among the Hindus, the Wahabi Movement, the Farazi Movement, the Aligarh Movement, the Devband and many other less influential Muslim Movements.

Forming associations for various purposes was something new to Indians. The caste system that was entrenched in society prevented people from joining new associations that called for political change. The history of Sikhs or Marathas showed their patriotism on more than one occasions and inculcated the same among the Indians. The new associations although did nothing to

liquidate the old caste and joint family, however made people to think in order to despise the cast system.<sup>1</sup>

The study of associations is very vital in order to understand its impact on politics.<sup>2</sup> In India the earliest associations were limited by language and interest and they drew support from students or professional men, landholders or merchants in a limited geographical area. But the unities provided by British rule allowed more ambitious organizations to extend beyond their sphere of influence. There were the provincial associations which began to search for ways and means of working together in India as a whole, a trend which later on culminated in the Indian National Congress. It seems clear that the origin of national organizations was to study two simultaneous processes. First is the development of the regional associations and the second is their efforts to work together on an all Indian basis.

The Indians who joined these associations were the men who owed their changed status to the British rule and had learnt the language and the political idioms of their rule. Some of these men planned to demand for a new education system and to challenge the missionary system in it. The alumni of the new schools who were encouraged to group together both by the mystique of the syllabus they shared and by the expulsion they suffered at the hands of orthodox society. Young Bengalis were known to have debated subjects of the most general kind like free will, fate, truth and virtue. Persuaded by such lively and unconventional teachers as Henry Derozio and David Hare they awakened

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<sup>1</sup> Many of these old unities themselves adopted the new techniques of association once it became necessary for the defense of their caste interests in the competitive circumstances of the nineteenth century. Examples of such groupings sometimes transcended the boundaries of locality. They were the Kayasath Association of North India and the Prabhua Association of Bombay.

<sup>2</sup> A handful of examples from English history make the point. The associations of the nineteenth century the general Unions the Anti-Colonial Law Language and the chartists were pressure groups casting around for a mass basis. In the previous century operations were not so open. The Yorkshire Association the society for the defense of the Bill of Rights and the countless literary and debating clubs were pressure groups of course but their crucial importance was that by banding together people with common interests they began to transcend the old regional groupings of English politics.

Calcutta in the late 1820s,<sup>1</sup> showing their rejection of orthodox Hindu society.<sup>2</sup> While its members interpreted the rights of man and asked for free and compulsory education for all, more sober Bengalis began to shape local politics concentrating on specific grievances and remedies (Another typical aspect of general knowledge formed in 1831). By 1843 it had 200 members including many leaders of early Bengali politics such as Ram Gopal Ghose, Pery Chandar Mitra and Debendranarth Tagore. With the clubs came the journals; Hindu College students produced more than half a dozen different journals between 1828 and 1843.<sup>3</sup> In this activity Rammohan Roy had set a brilliant example. His organizational capacity and talent gave Calcutta its leading schools, first Indian newspapers and the Brahma Samaj, which played an important part in Bengal's renaissance.

As compared to Calcutta, Bombay developments were slower. In 1827 its inhabitants found the Elphinstone Institution which was deliberately modelled on Hindu College but not until 1854 did the college obtain buildings, professors and students. In 1848 a student's 'Literary and Scientific Society' was established which brought Parsis, Gujaratis and Marathas together. Two years earlier a native General Library gave evidence of new interests and in 1851 the fortnightly *Rast Gofdar* (Truth Teller) was founded. This was a paper which was to have great influence on the people of Bombay. It was edited by Dadabhai Naroroji, himself a Parsi and the leader of Elphinstone's students who describe the ferment in Bombay at that time like this:

The six or seven years before I eventually came to England in 1855 were full of all sorts of reforms, social, educational, political,

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<sup>1</sup> Majumdar, B.B. *History of Political Thought from Rammohan to Dayananda (1821-1884)*, Bengal, vol. i, 1934, pp.81-91; and Gupta, A.(ed.) *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance*, Jadavpur, 1988, pp.16-31.

<sup>2</sup> It was rumored that the college boys recited the Iliad instead of their mantras; others refused in court to swear by the holy waters of the Ganges and met at Derozio's house to eat beef and drink beer. One won by joining the Brahma Samaj but kept in step by celebrating the event with sherry and biscuits, Rajnarain Bose, *Atmcharit Autobiography in Bengali*, Calcutta, 1909, pp.61-62.

<sup>3</sup> Majumdar, B.B., *History of Political Thought from Rammohan to Dayananda (1821-1884)*, Bengal, vol. i, 1934, pp.87-89.

religious etc. female education, free association of women with men at public and other gatherings, infant schools, students literary and scientific societies, societies for the diffusion of useful knowledge in the vernacular Parsi reform, abolition of child marriage, remarriage of widows among Hindus and Parsi religious reform society were some of the problems tackled, movements set on foot and institutions inaugurated by a band of young men fresh from college, such were the first fruits of the English education given by Elphinstone College.<sup>1</sup>

Since the Company Charter was due to expire in 1853 this was the obvious time for Parliament to take stock of Indian developments. This was equally the suitable time for Indians to start new political ventures. They petitioned to Westminster to influence the legislature in making up their minds. Hence the discussions commenced which were to dominate the politics of Bengal, Bombay and Madras for the quarter of a century.<sup>2</sup> Until 1870 Indian politics was in the hands of these new associations in the Presidencies. After 1853, they established a harmonious routine of memorials and petitions to London and at the same time submitted more frequent representations to the local authorities in India. Since the emphasis was on persuading Parliament rather than pressing the Provincial Governments the wide differences between the presidencies did not hamper the convening of a common demand. Until the mutiny the associations repeated their burden in unison.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Brahma Samaj**

The *Brahma Samaj* literally denotes communities of men who worship Brahman. In practice, a Brahma Samaj is an assembly of all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction, meeting publicly for the sober,

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<sup>1</sup> 'A Chapter in Autobiography' *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naroji*, Madras, Natesan, 1910, p.656.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently of fourth the Deccan Association was formed perhaps as a branch of the British Indian Association, but it was still-born.

<sup>3</sup> Each Association sent its petitions independently, but there was some contact between Calcutta and Bombay.

orderly religious and devout adoration of “the (nameless) Unsearchable, Eternal, Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe”.<sup>1</sup> The most important result of the impact of Western culture on India was the replacement of blind faith in current traditions, beliefs, and convention – characteristic of the Medieval Age by a spirit of rationalism which seeks to inquire and argue before accepting anything. The revolt of the mind against the tyranny of dogmas and traditional authorities, beliefs and customs, was the first requisite for freedom of thought and conscience which lied at the root of progress in social, religious and political spheres of life. Indeed, this is the reason why progress in all these different spheres is inter- dependent to a certain extent. In Bengal the rationalizing effect of English education at first manifested itself more in religious and social ideas, but it was not long before it profoundly affected also the political consciousness of the people. It would perhaps be more correct to say that all there were the results of the same rationalistic urge which was created by Western culture. In any case, it is impossible to deny that these movements were linked together to a certain extent, and it was therefore necessary to give some account of the transformation of social and religious ideas before we go into details of the evolution of political ideas.<sup>2</sup>

Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) was the first and the best representative of this new spirit of rational inquiry into the basis of religion and society. He challenged the current religious beliefs and social practices of the Hindus as not being in consonance with their own scriptures. He tried to show that the belief in multiplicity of gods and worship of images, which formed the essence of the current and popular Hindu religion, was opposed to the teaching of the Vedas. What really mattered was his open and public protest against the blind acceptance of whatever was considered as acceptable on the authority of

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<sup>1</sup> Sastri Sivanath, *History of the Brahma Samaj*, Calcutta, vol. i, 1911, p.2. “The name is usually spelt as ‘Brahmoo Samaj’ by its followers. But the actual Bengali name should, according to modern usage, be written as ‘Brahma Samaj’”.

<sup>2</sup> Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Calcutta, vol. i, 1971, pp.260-263.



priesthood or its interpretation of scriptures. The standard of revolt thus rose by him against the medieval tyranny of dogmas unleashed force which created what might be called Modern India, and made him worthy to rank by the side of Bacon and Luther.<sup>1</sup> The first phase of Brahma Samaj history is intimately linked up with the career of its founder Rammohan Roy. The Brahma Samaj which was launched into its eventful career on August 20, 1828, gave a concrete expression to Rammohan's concept of universal worship.<sup>2</sup> Tarachand Chakravartione of the leaders of the "Young Bengal" group was appointed as the secretary of the organization. It consisted of three successive parts, viz. recitation of the Vedas by Telegu Brahmins in the closed apartment exclusively before the Brahmin members of the congregation, reading and exposition of the Upanishads for the general audience, and singing of religious hymns. This would correspond exactly to the reading of the Bible, the sermon and the hymns of Christian worship and on this point Rammohan's previous unitarian contacts had certainly been of considerable help by providing him with a model of congregational worship which was alien to the spirit of Hinduism.<sup>3</sup> The reading of the Vedas exclusively before the Brahmin participants did not apparently accord well with the universal and non-sectarian ideals of the new church as set forth in its Trust Deed.

The fact that Rammohan and his fellow-organizers of the congregation had no objection to the reading of the sruti texts before the general audience becomes clear from their arranging to have the Upanishads read and explained before the entire body of worshippers which besides non-Brahmins, sometimes even included Christians and Muslims. This task was entrusted to learned Bengali Brahmin pundits like Ramchandra Vidyavagis, Utsabananda Vidyavagis, Iswarchandra Nyayarata and others, who were free from

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<sup>1</sup> Farquahar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movements of India*, Delhi, 1915, pp.29-31.

<sup>2</sup> Sastri, Sivanath, *History of the Brahma Samaj*, Calcutta, vol. i, 1911, pp.1-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

prejudices unlike their orthodox Telegu counterparts.<sup>1</sup> After the departure of Rammohan Roy for England (November 1830) and his death there (September 1833), the Brahma Samaj as an organization gradually reached a moribund condition though its name, theology and social ideals continued to prosper among certain groups near Calcutta. The munificence of Rammohan's friend Dwarkanath Tagore and the single-minded devotion of Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyavagis enabled it however to tide over the period of crisis and paved a way for infusing a new life into the Brahma movement. Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905), Dwarkanath's eldest son who was to be reckoned with as the second great leader of the Samaj. He joined the Samaj in 1842 and was formally initiated into Brahmanism by Ram Chandra Vidyavagis, along with twenty other young men on December 21, 1843, a memorable day in the cultural history of Bengal, still celebrated annually at Shantinikaten.<sup>2</sup>

The Tattwabodhini Sabha soon grew into a common platform for the intellectual and cultural elite of mid-nineteenth century Bengal. Its membership came to exceed eight hundred, a remarkable figure for those days. The core was no doubt formed by the group of devout Brahmins with the young Debendranath at their head and the declared objective of the body was "the propagation of the Brahma Dharma in various ways". But at the same time there had assembled under the banner of the Sabha reformers and educationists like Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, rationalists and free-thinkers like Akshay Kumar Datta, Rakhaldas Haldar, Anangamohan Mitra, Kanailal Pyne and Durgacharan Banerjee, poets and litterateurs like Iswarchandra Gupta, Pyarichand Mitra, Kaliprasanna Sinha and Madanmohan Tarkalankar, Hindu College radicals like Tarachand Chakravarti, Chandra Sekhar Deb, Sib Chandra Deb, Ramgopal Ghosh, Ramtanu Lahiri and Hara Chandra Ghosh, scholars like Rajendralal Mitra and others.

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<sup>1</sup> Rammohanvali Cited, *The Collected Works of Rammohan Roy*, (ed.) Ajith Kumar Ghosh, Calcutta, 1973, p.460-465.

<sup>2</sup> Sastri Sivanath, *History of the Brahma Samaj*, Calcutta, vol. i, 1911, pp.30-35.

All of them were with a common ideal and programme in harmony with the religious and social ideas of Rammohan Roy. The unification of these diverse elements of national life on a common platform was certainly an organizational achievement which only smacked the foresight and earnestness of the young Debendranath.<sup>1</sup> Initiated Brahma was a new phenomenon in the history of the faith. Along with initiation came the special status of membership system a compulsory subscription for the initiated was introduced. Rationalists like Akshay Kumar Dutta within the fold of the Samaj, found themselves unable to believe in any *apaurusheyasastra* (infallible scripture).<sup>2</sup> It was decided and formally declared that the basis of Brahmanism would henceforth be no longer any infallible book, but “the human heart illumined by spiritual knowledge born of self-realization”.

Hindu scriptures however continued to be respected without being considered infallible and Debendranath compiled the two volumes the Brahma Dharma, a selection of suitable passages from the Hindu sastras and wrote the *Brahma Dharma Vijam* (the Essence of Brahmanism) consisting of four short aphorisms for the use and guidance of worshippers.<sup>3</sup> The next phase of the Brahma movement was dominated by the dynamic personality of Keshub Chandra Sen (1838-84) who joined the Samaj in 1857<sup>4</sup> and became for sometime the right-hand man of Debendranath Tagore in the field of mission work. Debendranath loved the young man like his own son and appointed him an “Archarya” of the Samaj. Keshub was the first non-Brahmin to be elevated to that position. He at once imparted a new vigor to Samaj work and generated so much apostolic zeal that its message rapidly spread to the remotest corners of Bengal.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sastri Sivanath, *History of the Brahma Samaj*, Calcutta, vol. i, 1911, pp.40-44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.48,49.

<sup>3</sup> Majumdar, R. C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Calcutta, vol. i, 1971, pp.261, 262.

<sup>4</sup> Sundar Basu Prem, *Life and Work of Brahamanada Keshab*, Calcutta, 1940, pp.3-25.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

The Brahma movement certainly gained momentum at this stage through the young Keshub's endeavors and even Rev. Alexander Duff, one of its arch rivals had to admit that "the Brahma Samaj is a power and a power of no mean order".<sup>1</sup> But with the passage of time serious differences regarding creed, rituals and the attitude of the Brahmas to the social problems of the day, had arisen between Debendranath and Keshub, who were men of radically different temperaments and the Samaj soon split up into two groups- the old conservatives rallying round the cautious Debendranath and the young reformists led by the dynamic Keshub.<sup>2</sup> The division came to the surface towards the close of 1866 with the emergence of two rival bodies, the Calcutta or Adi Brahma Samaj consisting of the old adherents of the faith and the new order (inspired and led by Keshub) known as the Brahma Samaj of India.<sup>3</sup> A second Indian tour of Keshub Chandra Sen in 1868 like the previous one four years ago, did much to foster the sense of spiritual and national unity in India and his visit to England in 1870 carried the message of the Brahma Samaj to the West. The *kirtan* or devotional music after the manner of the Bengal *vaishnavas* was introduced in the Brahma Samaj for the first time by Keshub who was largely helped in this matter by Vijaya Krishna Goswami, a descendant of the celebrated medieval Vaishnava saint Advaitacharya, who had joined the Brahma Samaj. Finally, Keshub's doctrine of "God in conscience" helped to build up the moral life of the community in harmony with the new spirituality removing a contradiction that existed previously between profession and practice.<sup>4</sup>

During the last phase of his life Keshub's attitude of reverence towards faiths ultimately led him to a rich and colourful synthesis of religions which he

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<sup>1</sup> Kopf David., *The Brahma Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1979, pp. 82-84.

<sup>2</sup> Mozoomdar, P.C., *The Life and Teaching of Keshub Chunder Sen*, (3<sup>rd</sup>ed.), Calcutta, Nababidhan Trust, 1931, pp.450-490.

<sup>3</sup> Borthwick Meredith, *Keshub Chandra Sen: A Search for Cultural Synthesis*, Calcutta Minerva, 1977, pp.28-30.

<sup>4</sup> Kopf David, *The Brahma Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1979, pp. 82-84.

proclaimed under the title of “New Dispensation (*Navavidhan*) on January 25, 1880.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the dynamic progress of the Brahma movement under Keshub, the Samaj had to go through a second schism on May, 1878 when a band of Keshub Chandra Sen’s followers left him to start the Sadharan Brahma Samaj in view of their earnest demand for the introduction of a democratic constitution in the church which unfortunately was not conceded; secondly because they could not see eye to eye with Keshub on the doctrine of *adesha* or Divine command; and thirdly on the ground of their objection to the marriage of Keshub’s daughter with the prince of Cooch Bihar allegedly in violation of the provision of the Indian Marriage Act of 1872.<sup>2</sup> The body led by the veteran Derozian Shib Chandra Dev consisted of some of the most brilliant and talented young men of the time including Sivnath Shastri, AnandaMohan Bose, Dwarkanath Ganguli, Nagendranath Chatterjee, Ram Kumar Vidyaratna, Vijay Krishna Goswami and others. They were all staunch democrats and promptly framed a full-fledged democratic constitution based on universal adult franchise, for the new organization.<sup>3</sup> This was mainly due to the earnest endeavours of the England-returned Cambridge wrangler and lawyer Ananda Mohan Bose who received unflinching support of his colleagues. According to Bipan Chandra Pal<sup>4</sup>, this democratic experiment had been intended by the founders to serve as a model for the independent Indian democracy of the future. The Sadharan Brahma Samaj now revised the tradition of Rammohan’s time Samaj was about to establish a ‘World Wide Republic’ by replacing inequality by equality and the power of the king by the ‘power of the people’ and all comprehensive outlook will be a special attraction of the Samaj.<sup>5</sup> Quite a number of its leading figures took a prominent part in the activities of the Indian League (1878), the Indian Association (1878) and the Indian National

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<sup>1</sup> Sastri Sivanath, *History of the Brahma Samaj*, Calcutta, vol. i, 1911, pp.35-48.

<sup>2</sup> Ghosh Benoy, *Awakening in Bengal in Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Calcutta, 1964, pp.90-97.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Pal Bipinchandra, *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance*, Bengal, 1958, p.78.

<sup>5</sup> Bose, S.N., *The Indian Awakening and Bengal*, (3rd ed.), Calcutta, Frima Publications, 1969, pp.60,61.

Congress. But this did not belittle the importance and vitality of the Brahma Samaj of India. However, there was little clash of interest between these two wings of the Brahma Samaj, i.e. the Brahma Samaj of India and the Sadharan Brahma Samaj, but both of them tried to accommodate to the needs, spiritual and otherwise, of all members of the entire Brahma community in India.

### **Prarthana Samaj**

Prarthana Samaj, or the “Prayer Society” in Sanskrit, was a movement for religious and social reform in Maharashtra that is based on previous reform movements and traditions of Maharashtra. The direct antecedent of the Prarthana Samaj in Mumbai was the Paramahansa Sabha, a secret society for the furtherance of liberal ideas that was formed in 1849 by Ram Balkrishna Jaykar and others in Mumbai. The meetings were arranged for discussions, the singing of hymns, and the sharing of a communal meal prepared by a low-caste cook were some of the activities of Samaj. Members of this community ate bread baked by Christians and drank water brought by Muslims.<sup>1</sup> The members of the Prarthana Samaj followed the great religious tradition of the Maratha Saints like Jenandeva, Namdev, Tukaram and Ramdas (the guru of Shivaji). The Prarthana Samaj founders went through many world religions including ancient Vedic texts, which consequently were not accepted to be infallible or divine. They drew their sustenance from the Hindu scriptures and used the hymns of the old Marathi “poet-saints” in their prayers. Their ideas dated back to the devotional poems of the Vitthalas as part of the Vaishnava Bhakti devotional actions of the thirteenth century in southern Maharashtra. But, beyond the religious concerns, the prime focus of the Prarthana Samaj was on the social and cultural reform.<sup>2</sup> Some of them include the improvement of the status of women and dejected classes, an end to the caste system, elimination of child marriages and infanticide, educational opportunities for women, and

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<sup>1</sup> Faquhar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, Delhi, 1967, p.76.

<sup>2</sup> W. Jones Kenneth, *The New Cambridge History of India, Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, Cambridge, 2006, pp.139-141.

remarriage of widows.<sup>1</sup> To worship and pray to images and other idols was not a true mode of divine adoration. God did not incarnate himself and all men were his children; therefore they should have affection towards each other without distinction.<sup>2</sup>

The Vitthalas or Varkari Panth, (pilgrim`s path), was the sect of Vitthala, the Vaishnava Bhakti devotional movement that arose in the thirteenth century and was centered on Pandharpur in close proximity with river Bima in the far south of Maharashtra.<sup>3</sup> In 1872 Brahmo personality, Pratap Chandra, stayed there for six months at the invitation of the Prarthana Samaj. During his visit it was planned to have more Prarthana Samaj considering it as a branch of Brahmo Samaj. This was prevented by Mahadev Ranade pointing out the splits among the Brahmins of Bengal, which might be spread all across in Bombay. The consideration of the Prarthana Samaj was meant that there had never been groups of missionaries as in the Brahmo Samaj. The Samaj ran the Young Theists Union, the Postal Mission to send religious literature, the Subodh Patrika, Night Schools, and a Ladies Association.<sup>4</sup>

In 1875 the Prarthana Samaj faced its first crisis and a resulting split among its members. Swami Dayananda Saraswati visited Gujarat and Maharashtra with the result that a new ideology of exposed truth, fundamental change, and open conflict provided a dramatically different species of a religious movement.<sup>5</sup> A section of the Prarthana Samaj membership was involved in Aryan ideology and was excited by Dayananda. They wanted to have the Prarthana Samaj to openly reject all caste rules and restrictions. Kelkar`s Brahmo Samaj however failed after eight years, and in 1882 he

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<sup>1</sup> W. Jones Kenneth, *The New Cambridge History of India, Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, Cambridge, 2006, pp.139-141.

<sup>2</sup> Faquhar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, Delhi, 1967, pp.78-80.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Jones Kenneth, W., *The New Cambridge History of India, Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, Cambridge, 2006, pp.139-141.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Tucker, *Ranade and the Roots of Indian Nationalism, Bombay*, 1977, pp. 58-61.

returned to the Prarthana Samaj and became one of their few missionaries. Although the Prarthana Samaj did not support image-worship, in practice members followed the ceremonies of Hinduism though regarding them as of no religious importance. Thus Samaj members could still practice image-worship in their homes and be part of the caste system. However, their own services use hymns of the old Maratha poet-saints, especially Tukaram. The Prarthana Samaj maintained various institutions, namely a free reading room, a library, night schools for workers, and an orphanage in Pandharpur.<sup>1</sup> Prarthana Samaj, or the “Prayer Society” in Sanskrit, was a movement for religious and social reform in Maharashtra that is based on previous reform movements and traditions of Maharashtra. The Samaj also contributed immensely towards the political consciousness among its adherents some of whom later on became the stalwarts of the Indian National congress.

### **The Arya Samaj**

Arya Samaj was a powerful religious movement in India during the nineteenth century. The movement was led by Swami Dayanand Saraswati originally named Mool Chand. He was born in 1824 in an orthodox Brahman family of Morvi State in Kathiawar Peninsula. He lost his faith in traditional religion while a boy of 14, took to an ascetic life, and wandered all over India. In 1875 he established the Arya Samaj in Bombay.<sup>2</sup> During the remaining eight years of his life Dayananda devoted himself to preach his new gospel wrote books embodying his teachings and to organize Arya Samajas throughout India. His mission proved very successful in Panjab and to a certain degree also in Uttara Pradesh, Rajputana and Gujarat. But at the time of his death in 1883, the total membership of the AryaSamaj did not probably exceed twenty thousand.

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<sup>1</sup> Jones Kenneth, W., *The New Cambridge History of India, Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, Cambridge, 2006, pp.139-141.

<sup>2</sup> Faquhar, J. N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, Delhi, 1967, pp.101-109



Arya Samaj had similarities with the Brahmo Samaj in its ideology and the mode of operations. Dayanand Saraswati was a ‘Sanyasi’, who believed in the flawless authority of the Vedas. He advocated the doctrine of Karma and reincarnation and also emphasized on the ideals of Brahmacharya (chastity) and Sanyas. Swami Dayanand Saraswati became a disciple of Swami Virajananda in 1840 and it changed the way of his life.<sup>1</sup> He accompanied Virajananda for nearly three years and emerged with a new set of goals. His main objective was to purify Hinduism which had reached the lowest ebb. For accomplishing these objectives he devised his own methodology.<sup>2</sup> He believed that all truth was to be found in the Vedas by anyone who used the proper analytical and grammatical tools needed to understand Vedic Sanskrit. Dayanand separated all Hindu scriptures into two categories namely Drsba and Un- drsba. While, the former included the Vedas and any text based on a proper understanding of the Vedas, the latter were the products of the post-Mahabharata period of history when true Vedic knowledge was lost and ignorance prevailed. Dayanand travelled extensively here and there and visited the major cities like Calcutta, Gujarat, Bombay, Punjab, etc. After wandering for a few years, he established the Bombay Arya Samaj (Noble Society) on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1875. The Arya Samaj became the first successful organizational expression of his ideas. He strongly opposed the evil practices of Hinduism like idolatry, child marriage, elaborate rituals, etc. The Arya Samaj soon started to spread into the other parts of India and branches of the Samaj were established in the prominent cities like Punjab, Lahore, Delhi, Madras, etc. and also in Rajasthan and Maharashtra. After the death of Swami Dayanand Saraswati in 1883, the members of Arya Samaj took the responsibility to spread his ideas.<sup>3</sup> They established schools and other institutions to spread the ideas, out of

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<sup>1</sup> Faquhar, J. N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, Delhi, 1967, pp.107, 108.

<sup>2</sup> Upadhyaya Ganga Prasad, *The Origin, Scope and Mission of the Arya Samaj*, Allahabad, 1954, pp. 22-37.

<sup>3</sup> Bilas Sarda, *Her Life of Dayananda Saraswati World Teacher*, Ajmer, 1946, pp.505-521.

which, the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic Trust and Management Society was one of the most prominent.

What is important to know is the fact that the tenets preached by Dayanand created a wedge between the Muslims and Hindus especially in Punjab to such an extent that it could not be bridged. The publication of ‘Satyarth Prakash’ a controversial book, in which he made a scathing attack to the leading religions of the world included Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism etc. The author spoke ill of Prophet Muhammad and other Prophets including Christ. The polemical literature produced by the leaders of the Samaj created an ill will and animosity between the followers of the major communities of India and in the final analysis served as one of the contributory factors for the partition of the Indian sub-continent.

**The Doctrines of the Samaj are Summed-up in Ten Principles:**

1. God is the primary cause of all true science and of all that can be known through it.
2. God is Existent, Intelligent and Blissful. He is Formless, Almighty, Just, Merciful, Unborn, Infinite, Unchallengeable, Beginning less, Incomparable, the Support and Lord of all, Omniscient, Imperishable, Immortal, Fearless, Eternal, Holy and the Maker of the universe. To Him alone worship is due.
3. The Vedas are scriptures of true knowledge. It is the duty of all Aryans to read them, hear them being read and recite them to others.
4. All persons should be ready to accept the truth and give up untruth.
5. All action should be performed in conformity with Dharma, that is, after due consideration of the right and wrong.
6. The primary aim of the Arya Samajis is to do well for all, that is to promote physical, spiritual and social well-being.

7. All people should be treated with love, fairness and due regard for their merit.
8. One should aim at dispelling ignorance and promoting knowledge.
9. One should not only be content with one's own welfare, but should also care for the welfare for others.
10. One should regard oneself under restriction to follow altruistic rulings of society, while all should be free in following the rules of individual welfare.<sup>1</sup>

According to the first constitution of Arya Samaj the members "shall regard the Vedas alone as independently and absolutely authoritative" Two years later, in 1877, the creed was changed, and it was simply laid down that 'the Vedas are the books of true knowledge which the members should study'. Dayananda's interpretation, which is supposed to contain all the truth, differs in many cases fundamentally not only from that of modern scholars but also from the old commentaries of Sanya and Mahidhara, all of which he rejected and did not consider as binding on his followers.<sup>2</sup> According to Burton Stein, "the Arya Samaj suffered a division that was becoming general in reform movements over whether to concentrate on achieving better educational and economic opportunities or to engage in muscular form of religious contestation".<sup>3</sup>

### **Theosophical Society**

The Theosophical Society was founded in late 1875, in New York City, by Russian noblewoman Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and American Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, along with attorney William Quan Judge and a number of other individuals interested in the philosophy expounded by Madame

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<sup>1</sup> Upadhyaya Ganga Prasad, *The Origin, Scope and Mission of the Arya Samaj*, Allahabad, 1954, pp. 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement of India*, Calcutta, vo.1, 1971, pp.264-266.

<sup>3</sup> Stein Burton, *A History of India*, Oxford 1998, p.277.

Blavatsky.<sup>1</sup> Madame Blavatsky was the first Russian woman to be naturalized as an American citizen. As a young woman, she travelled all over the world in search of wisdom, about the nature of life and the reason for human existence. Eventually, Blavatsky brought the spiritual wisdom of the East and that of the ancient Eastern mysteries to the modern West, where they were virtually unknown. Her writings became the first exposition of what is today known as modern Theosophy.<sup>2</sup> Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, a prominent lawyer and journalist, became the first President of the Society. He was a veteran of the Civil War, during which he had been a special investigator into corruption in the armed services and after which he was a member of the commission appointed to investigate the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Olcott related the timeless wisdom of Theosophy to the cultures of both East and West, applied it to everyday life, and built the Society into an international organization.<sup>3</sup> In 1878 the colleagues left for India and resided for some time in Bombay. Col. Olcott inspired the first exhibition of Indian manufactured products, urging Indians to use their own goods in preference to foreign ones. At the first convention of The Theosophical Society in India, the Swadeshi movement was first proclaimed, and at a latter Convention the Indian National Congress was formed. The prestige which Col. Olcott enjoyed in the USA was a great help in launching Theosophical work in India, as the authorities were suspicious of the good intentions of the Theosophists when they landed at Bombay in 1879. They were at first subjected to police surveillance, but on Col. Olcott's producing copies of recommendations from United State President Hayes and the Secretary of State, the annoyance ceased. Later he gave up healing and concentrated on propagating the Divine Wisdom.

It was in 1882 that the Founders bought a beautiful estate in Adyar, near Madras (now Chennai), where they established the headquarters of The

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<sup>1</sup> Majumdar, A.K. and Ghose, D.K., *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, part ii, Bharathiya Vidaya Bhawan, 1981,p.131.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopedia Britanika* (11<sup>th</sup> Edition), 1910-1911, vol. iv, p.48.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Theosophical Society. He now travelled all over the world engaging in ceaseless and strenuous activity, encouraging, advising, organizing — and always joyfully returning to his beloved Adyar, to rest and recuperate.<sup>1</sup> Many difficulties had confronted this lion-hearted man but he worked unwaveringly through good report and evil report. He endured his last prolonged sufferings in the form of physical illness bravely and patiently, facing death as steadfastly as he had faced life, and cheered in the last weeks of his life by the visits of the great Indian Sages to whom he had given the strength of his manhood and the devotion of his life. Col. Olcott also contributed much to Zoroastrianism and Hinduism, and his most valuable written work, especially for the Theosophical world, is *Old Diary Leaves*, without which little would have been known about the history of The Theosophical Society.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Land Holders Society**

Although the Society under reference is pertaining towards economic history of modern India however the purpose of the researcher is to highlight the societal implications of this society. It was on the advice of Theodore Dickens\* an eminent British Barrister and Planter in India that the principal Zamindars residing in and around Calcutta met on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1837 to form an association called the Landholders Society “to defend and promote the landed interests of the country, in the same manner as the Chamber of Commerce had been instituted for the commercial interests”.<sup>3</sup> A Provisional committee consisting of Raja Radhakant Deb, Bhawanicharan Mitra,

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<sup>1</sup> Majumdar A.K. and Ghose, D.K., *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, part ii, Bharathiya Vidaya Bhawan, 1981, pp.132-34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

\* On the eve of Dickens’s departure for Britain in January 1842, the Landholder’s society presented him with an address which praised his service to the society and said that your personal labour and liberal pecuniary assistant have been mainly instrumental to its establishment. In his reply to the address Dickens wrote to the secretaries of the society: You notice with approbation the active part I look in the formation of the society. I believe the original conception was mine, but without your zealous and disinterested aid, Sirs, as honorary secretaries, and without the cordial corporation of my excellent friends Dwarakanath Tagore, Raja Radhakant Deb, Ramcamal Sen and many other worthy and public spirited Hindu Muhamadan gentlemen any efforts of mine must have proved abortive. For the text of the address and Dickens reply to it; see *Bengal Hurkaru*, 26 January 1842.

<sup>3</sup> Reformer, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1837, *Englishman*, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1837.

Ramkamal Sen and Prasanna Kumar Tagor was elected to draw up a prospectus for the society. The Provisional Committee was told that while preparing the prospectus, they should keep in mind the fact that the Society was intended to embrace people of all hues and colours without reference to caste, country or complexion and rejecting all exclusiveness, was to be based on the most universal and liberal principles; the only qualification necessary to become its member being the possession of interests in the soil of the country”.<sup>1</sup>

According to the prospectus prepared by the Provincial Committee the objects of the Society were:

- (a) To promote the general interests of the landholders in a cordial and friendly communication between all classes interested in land without distinction of colour, caste, birth, places or religion,
- (b) To diffuse information on all subjects connected with the interests of the soil,
- (c) To settle differences and disputes amongst the landholders,
- (d) To make representations to the Government if any law passed is injurious to their interests,
- (e) To ask for the enactment of legislation in the interests of the landholders
- (f) To ask for the repeal of all existing laws prejudicial to them,
- (g) To assist landholders living at a distance in the business with the courts and public offices of the presidency and generally to furnish them with advice on all matters connected with the object of the Society.<sup>2</sup>
- (h) Each member of the Society was required to pay an entrance fee of Rs.5 and an annual subscription of Rs.20.

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<sup>1</sup> Reformer, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1837.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The Bengal Landholders Society was formally inaugurated on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1839 by Theodore Dickens at Calcutta. It was attended by more than 200 Zamindars and a few Anglo Indians. While inaugurating the Society, Dickens observed; “I congratulate you gentlemen on formation of the first society for political objectives which had ever been organized by the natives of India with large and liberal views without exclusiveness and with end aims of extensive unity. “I see in it the germ of great things and I am satisfied that the care and prudence which will be required to conduct these beginnings to fitting ends, will not be wanting” remarked by Dickens.<sup>1</sup> There was a mixed reception to the new Society. The *Bengal Hurkaru* welcomed it “as placing before the eyes of the population in some shape that form of domestic polity which had conferred such inestimable benefits in England and in America.<sup>2</sup> “The *Englishman* wrote: “Government have the choice between association and conspiracy if they put down the one they cannot prevent the other.<sup>3</sup>” The *Friend of India* advised the authorities not to get alarmed because the Bengalese had not “one element of political resistance among them.” To quote, “this is no Canadian Assembly with a Papineau\* to breathe hostility into council. It is a large association of great Baboos, most of whom are too unwieldy for any treasonable views. It is a Society composed of the successors of those same landholders, from whom Moorshid Kooly\* Khan more than a hundred years ago took away all their lands by one stroke of the pen.<sup>4</sup>”*The Calcutta Courier* wrote “The Hindus have at last made the discovery that union is power.” This association we look upon as a political association. During the first two years of its existence, the Society was very active. The Society got from the Government the permission to address the Government: in the same

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<sup>1</sup> *Bengall Hurkaru*, 26 January, 1842

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 March, 1838.

<sup>3</sup> *Englishman*, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1849.

\* Louis-Josep Papineau, (1786-1871), Leader of unsuccessful French-Canadian revolt against British Government in Lower Canada 1837.

\* Appointed Governor of Bengal by Emperor Aurangzeb 1705; transferred capital from Dacca to Murshidabad, 1727.

<sup>4</sup> *Friends of India*, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1838.

manner as is done by the Chamber of Commerce. Persons from all walks of life joined the society. The society appointed John Crawford as its agent in London on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1838 and provided him with the necessary funds. To begin with, the attitude of the Government was not helpful however ultimately it yielded.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that the main object of the Society was to safeguard the interests of the Zamindars but actually it did something more than that. The Society took up several questions which were concerned with the use of Bengali in courts the reduction of stamp duties, the grant of subsistence to witnesses in criminal cases etc. The Bengal landholders Society was the only medium through which the grievances of the people could be brought to the notice of the authorities of the members of the Society for redress also it wanted to disprove the accusation that they were concerned only with their selfish interests and nothing else.<sup>2</sup>

With the passage of time, the members of the Society lost their initial zeal for their work. In 1842 Dwarkanath Tagore and Theodore Dickens left for England and their departure also gave a set-back to the society. The society had a new life in 1843 when Dwarkanath Tagore came back to Calcutta along with George Thompson the Scottish agitator. George Thompson was appointed the agent of the society in England in place of John Crawford. In 1844, Thompson set up an office of the Bengal Landholders society in London<sup>3</sup> and it served as a depository of information concerning India and a place of resort for persons interested in the objectives of the society. In 1848-49 an attempt was made to make the society “a less aristocratic and consequently more popular association” than the past but without much result.

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<sup>1</sup> For the Proceeding of the Society during 1838-39, *Bengal Hurkaru*, 3, 21, 30 March; 9, 20, 27 April; 4, 10, 17 May, 7, 30 June; 13, 31 July, 11 August, 7, 12 September; 10 October; 1 November; 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Englishman*, 11<sup>th</sup> July 1844; the office was located at 6 Waterloo Place, Pall Mall, London, and was called The East India Landholders Society's Office.



It is to be pointed out here that the difficulties of carrying on constitutional agitation in India at that time were very great. The people were backward both economically and educationally. Moreover the people were indifferent towards such political associations as the Bengal Landholders Society. The Government was also able to win over many of its active members by offering them jobs and no wonder the society became fragile. In December 1839, a separate Indigo Planters' Association was set up<sup>1</sup> in Calcutta and thus a division was created among those who had an interest in land. It is true that the Bengal Landholders Society achieved nothing spectacular during its period of existence, but it deserves prominent mention in the history of the country as it was the first attempt at organizing a political association in India on Western lines. In 1868, Rajeendralal Mitra called the Society as "the pioneer of freedom in this country." To quote him: 'It gave the people the first lesson in the art of fighting constitutionally for their rights and taught them how to meaningfully assert their claims and give expression to their opinions'.<sup>2</sup>

### **British Indian Association**

The British Indian Association was established on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, 1851 in Calcutta. Its formation was a major event of 19<sup>th</sup> century India. Its establishment meant Indians had come together and could no longer be ignored. It developed enormous hopes amongst the Indians about their future. The first committee of the association was composed of<sup>3</sup>: Raja Radhakanta Deb (President), Raja Kalikrishna Deb, (Vice-President), Debendranath Tagore (Secretary), Digambar Mitra, (Assistant Secretary), members, Raja Staya Saran Ghosal, Harakumar Tagore, Prasanna Coomar Tagore, Ramanath Tagore, Jay Krishna Mukerjee, Asutosh Deb, Hari Mohan Sen, Ramgopal Ghosh, Umesh

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<sup>1</sup> *Bengal Hurkaru*, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1840.

<sup>2</sup> *Englishman*, 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1843.

<sup>3</sup> Report of the Annual, Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of the British Indian Associations, Calcutta, 1851-85.

Chandra Dutta (Rambagan), Krishna Kishore Ghosh, Jagadananda Mukhopadhyay, Peary Chand Mitra and Sambhunath Pandit.<sup>1</sup>

The British Indian Association directed its attention to almost every important question, political, social or economic affecting Bengal in particular and the country in general. Even a bare enumeration in India or in Britain of these demanding certain specific reforms in the administration would make a long and impressive list<sup>2</sup>. No sooner was the draft of any bill published, whether related to land, education, municipal affairs, additional taxation, the procedure of the courts or the administration of justice and police, than the British Indian Association forwarded to the proper authorities its well-considered views on the proposed legislation. In 1863 the *Englishman* complained that the British Indian Association ‘snaps and snarls at every measure emanating from the government.’<sup>3</sup> Five years later the *Indian Daily News* was making the same complaint. The ‘humble memorials of the British India Association’ it wrote in 1868 “are becoming as plentiful as blackberries” the association ventured an opinion in the shape of a memorial upon almost every bill that is brought before the Council.<sup>4</sup> At a time when Indians were either not represented or inadequately represented in the Legislative Council, the British Indian Association by thus gratuitously but ably reviewing officials’ legislation performed a most useful function and occasionally elicited the reluctant tribute of even its hostile Anglo-Indian critics.<sup>5</sup>

Its memorials served as much to enlighten the government as to educate the public. Some of the principal reforms for which the British India Association petitioned the authorities in India or in England were:

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Annual, Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of the British Indian Associations, Calcutta, 1851-85.

<sup>2</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 6, 16, 24 September 1895.

<sup>3</sup> *Englishman*, 9<sup>th</sup> November, 1863.

<sup>4</sup> *Indian Daily News*, 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1868.

<sup>5</sup> Outledge, J., *English Rule and Native opinion in India*, 1874, Calcutta, pp.219-22

- (a) The reconstitution of the Legislative Councils on a wider and more liberal basis,
- (b) The increased employment of Indians in the higher services,
- (c) The holding of the Indian Civil Service examination simultaneously in India and in England,
- (d) A Parliamentary inquiry into the affairs of India,
- (e) The reduction of government expenditure and the injustice of imposing on India the cost of the Afghan War (1878-79).
- (f) Reducing the duties on cotton goods,
- (g) The extension of the permanent settlement of the land revenue to the other provisions of British India,
- (h) The separation of the judicial and the executive functions,
- (i) Increased grants for education;
- (j) A separate Legislative Council and governor for Bengal,
- (k) The necessity of giving sufficient publicity to the legislative measures of the government,
- (l) The propriety of establishing a consultative council for advising the government on financial matters,
- (m) The submission of the Indian budget to parliament in the early part of the session and not at the fag-end of the session as was the custom enable to a fair discrimination of Indian affairs
- (n) The elimination of racial superiority in the administration of justice
- (o) The disestablishment of the Anglican Church in India, discrimination a low rate of postage for newspapers,

- (p) The prevention of famines and epidemics the removal of the grievances of railway passengers,
- (q) The promotion of agricultural exhibitions and improvements in the administration of police, justice and municipal affairs.

Nothing could be more loyal, moderate and sensible than the proceedings of the British India Association and they were generally so regarded by the highest authorities, though this did not prevent the Anglo Indian newspapers of Calcutta from frequently denouncing the Association as being ‘anti British and silly’.<sup>1</sup>

The inadequacy of the British India Association to provide effective leadership in a political campaign was further revealed in 1870 during the agitation against the decision of the government to withdraw from the field of higher education. On 15 December 1870 the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* published a letter from an apparently influential correspondent in Dacca which recounted the failure of his attempts made some years ago and emphasized the inability of the British India Association to give coherence to the scattered elements for political agitation all over the country. The letter went on to add; ‘if another association had been formed at Calcutta with men of respectability at its head such as Vidyasager or so, as was once proposed its branches should be established at different places. In the absence of such a central body at Calcutta the difficulties of having political organizations in the Muffasil are very greatly increased.’<sup>2</sup> It, however, suggested that a few district associations should be established first followed by compelling the British Indian Association to give more popular character to it.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Bengal Hurkaru*, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1863; *Englishman*, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1858; *Friends of India*, 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1864.

<sup>2</sup> *Amitra Bazar Patrika*, 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1870.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

## **The Bombay Association**

The Bombay Association was founded on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1852. Its inaugural meeting represented people of various shades of the city like Jews and Portuguese, Hindus, and Parsi contingent.<sup>1</sup> Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, the first Parsi baronet, was elected the Honorary President; both Vice Presidents were also Parsis, and the resolution pertaining to the establishment of Association was proposed and seconded by two Parsi alumni from Elphinstone.<sup>2</sup> The meeting decided that the Bombay Association should be the representative of the people of the Presidency, and that its members were to pay an annual fee of twenty five rupees. Its first task was to petition the parliament about the Company Charter.

Like their counterparts in Calcutta and Madras, the leaders of the Bombay Association publicly condemned the rebellion of 1857 and manifested their loyalty to the British government in many ways. But, under the then existing state of affairs, when even such a distinguished and loyal Bombay person as Jagannath Shankarseth was suspected of treason by many Anglo Indians, the leaders of the Bombay Association deemed it prudent to abstain themselves from such kind of activities.<sup>3</sup> The first important question which attracted the attention of the Bombay Association after the revolt was that of the recent enormous and continuing rise in taxation, especially the proposed levy on professions and trades. The public feeling against the so-called License Bill was as strong in Bombay as elsewhere in India, but the leaders of the Bombay Association were rather hesitant and slow in giving a lead for fear of courting official displeasure. It was not until 8<sup>th</sup> October 1859, when the Licence Bill had already passed its second reading in the Legislative Council and long after Calcutta and Madras had formally registered their protests against it, that the Bombay Association, held a meeting at the house of

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of Proceeding of the Bombay Association 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1852, pp.1-25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The Report of a General Meeting of the Association held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1860 in Bombay, *Times and Standard*, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1860.

Jagannath Shankarseth under great pressure from the local press and public. Some of the younger and more radical members of the Association led by Dr. Bhau Daji, urged the need for speedy action and for sending a separate and more comprehensive petition to Parliament, similar to those sent from Calcutta and Madras, but all in vain.

On 19<sup>th</sup> January 1860, the Bombay Association held its annual meeting which had not been held since 1856.<sup>1</sup> The report of the committee of management for the fourth, fifth, and sixth years read out at the meeting revealed a steady decline in the activity and prosperity of the Association and this decline had become more marked in the years which followed.<sup>2</sup> But for an occasional meeting or memorial on its behalf, one finds a few notices of the Bombay Association in the contemporary press during 1860-65. After the death of its President, Jagannath Shankarsseth, in August 1865, the Bombay Association virtually ceased to function. In view of the changed political climate of India new associations began to emerge and tried their best to attain all India status however failed in achieving its objective.

The causes of the rapid decay of the Bombay Association in the early 1860s are to be found in the apathy and lack of harmonious cooperation on the part of its members and the absence of public spirited men like Dadabhai Naroji and Naoroji Fardunji from Bombay. To these must be added the cotton boom in Bombay, following the outbreak of the American Civil war I in 1861, when ‘everyone was for himself and Mammon was for us all’<sup>3</sup> almost became the motto of most Bombayites. The members of the Bombay Association, many of whom were businessmen anyway, became obviously too busy with cotton to care for the country. The cotton boom ended in 1865, leaving behind a trail of financial disasters. Bombay was, as it were rudely awakened from its

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<sup>1</sup> For the Proceedings of the meeting, *Bombay Times and Standard*, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 1860.

<sup>2</sup> Majumdar, B.B., *Indian Political Associations and Reform of Legislature 1818-1917*, Calcutta, 1965, pp.38-45.

<sup>3</sup> Mehrotra, S.R., *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, Delhi, 1971, p.171.

dream but some time was to elapse before it returned to normal life. It was not until the end of 1867 that the Bombay Association was revived.

The immediate stimulus for the revival of the Bombay Association appeared to have been provided by the recent formation of the East India Association in London.<sup>1</sup> One of the important planks in the programme of the East India Association was to establish contact with the existing local associations in India and to promote the growth of new associations there in order to secure funds and information for its activities in London. In late 1860s Naorojo Fardunji, who along with Dadabhai Naorijo, had taken a prominent part in establishing the East India Association in London, returned to Bombay. It was probably at Naorojo Fardunji instigation that a meeting of the members, supporters and friends of the Bombay Association was convened by Vinayakrao Jagannath Shankarseth at the house of Mangaldas Nathubhai on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1867 for the purpose of re-establishing the Bombay Association.<sup>2</sup> He referred to the taunts of the local public about the lethargy of the Bombay Association and to the energy and activity displayed by the British Indian Association of Calcutta, and appealed to the audience to wipe away the blot upon our patriotism.<sup>3</sup> Vinayakrao Jagannath Shankarseth resigned the office of Honorary Secretary which he had held for the last fifteen years, but agreed to become one of the four Vice Presidents of the Association. Naroji Fardunji, was selected as Secretary and Mangaladas Nathubhai became president of the Association.

### **Poona Sarvajanik Sabah**

The impact of the associations could be seen in many surrounding areas. Thus Poona was the first city in Western India to follow the lead of the British Indian Association of Calcutta. But the Poona Deccan Association, founded

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<sup>1</sup> Mehrotra, S. R., *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, Delhi, 1971, p.171.

<sup>2</sup> Proceedings of a Meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1867 at the Residence of the Honorable Mangaladas Nathubhai, for the Purpose of Re-establishing the Bombay Association, 1868, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

early in 1852, never got off the ground. Fifteen years were to elapse before Poona made another serious attempt to act as political organization. The stimulus for this latest attempt was obviously provided by the recent establishment of the East India Association in London. Poona once again stole a march on Bombay and in the spring of 1867 more than six months before the resuscitation of the Bombay Association organized a political body called the Poona Association or (in Marathi) the Poona Sarvajanik Sabah.<sup>1</sup> The avowed objectives of the Association were:

- (a) To communicate to the government the wishes and opinions of the people regarding the laws passed or proposed to be passed by the government;
- (b) To suggest ways and means of improving the functioning of the local municipality;
- (c) To interpret the acts and policies of the authorities to the public;
- (d) To promote amity and understanding between the rulers and the ruled and to attend to various other matters of public interest.<sup>2</sup>

The office bearers of the Association were, Ramachandra Ganesh Natu, President, Vasudev Ramchandra Dhamdhare and Badurao Krishna Gokhale, Vice Presidents Kashinath Parashuram Gadgil and Naro Appaji Godbole, Secretaries of work in Marathi and Vishnudas Harkrishnadas, treasurer.

The Poona Association did not thrive the way it was expected. Addressing a meeting of the Association early in 1868 on the subject of the reform of the Poona municipality, Baburao Krishna Gokhale remarked that, though the Association had done some useful work in the beginning it had been so inactive during the last three or four months that people had begun to enquire whether it was alive or dead. He hailed and grabbed the occasion for

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<sup>1</sup> *Native Opinion*, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1867.

<sup>2</sup> Mehrotra, S.R., *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, Delhi, 1971, p.190.



making the revival of the Association. But the attempt to revive the Poona Association could not come to fruition. Not only did we have no information about the activity of the Association in the months which followed but also a report of the managing committee of the Bombay Association, dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 1869, even tells us that several native gentlemen of Poona have joined the (Bombay) Association.<sup>1</sup> This would suggest that by the middle of 1869 the Poona Association was already dead.

Undaunted by their repeated failures, the public men of Poona once again made a fresh attempt to revive a political association of the name of Poona Sarwajanik Sabah. The Sabah was intended to be a mediating body (between the government and the people) which may afford to the latter the facilities for knowing the real intentions and objectives of Government as well as provided adequate means for securing their rights by making a true representation of the real circumstances in which they were placed.<sup>2</sup> In order to make it more coherent and binding on individuals a member of the Sabah was required to produce a power of attorney signed by at least fifty adults, authorizing him to speak and act on their behalf in all public matters.<sup>3</sup> Within four months of its launching, the Sabah had about 100 members who had acquired power of attorney from about 7,000 people.<sup>4</sup> By June 1871 the number of the members of the Sabah had risen to about 140 these who had given them powers of attorney to about 17,000.<sup>5</sup> Each member of the Sabah was also required to take an oath that he would impartially and according to the best of his judgment and abilities perform the duties of the Sabah which might be assigned to him.<sup>6</sup> The Sabah was debarred by its constitution from taking up any matter involving the interest or injury of any individual or individuals or

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of Proceedings of the First Annual General Meeting of the Bombay Association; together with the Report of the Committee of Management, 1869, p.28

<sup>2</sup> The Constitution of the Poona Sarwajanik Sabah and its Rules, 1870, p.5.

<sup>3</sup> Jubilee Number of the Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarwajanik Sabah, April, 1920, pp.68-75.

<sup>4</sup> The Constitution of the Poona Sarwajanik Sabah and its Rules, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 1871, pp.1-5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

any religious subject disputes. To defray the expenses of the Sabah each member was required to pay annually an average one day's income. The affairs of the Sabah were to be managed by an elected committee. A meeting of all the constituents of the Sabah that were the electors of power of attorney was to be held annually.<sup>1</sup>

An examination of the available list of members and office bearers of the Poona Sarwajanik Sabah during the first ten years of its existence reveals some interesting facts.<sup>2</sup> The Sabah represented the wealth and intelligence of the local community. It was composed of landholders, businessmen, retired government servants, lawyers and teachers. Most of the members of the Sabah were Hindus. Expectedly, as Hindus formed the bulk of the local population. But the Sabah also had a fair number of Parsi, Muslim, and Christian members. Of the Hindu members of the Sabah majority were Brahmans. This too was to be expected as Brahmans were steeped in traditions as well as the modern life of Poona and of the Deccan.

The arrival of Mahadave Govinda Ranade in Poona in November 1871, a subordinate judge, proved of immense significance and he appeared to have infused new life and vigour into the Sabah. Ranade is probably the greatest name in the history of India in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. He was a versatile man, a scholar, an educationist, a religious and a social reformer, an economist and a politician. One of the earliest and most illustrious products of Bombay University, Ranade had already made his marks in Bombay as a religious and social reformer.<sup>3</sup>

Ranade had also been an active member of the Bombay Association and of the Bombay Branch of the East India Association. In August 1871, he had

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<sup>1</sup> The Constitution of the Poona Sarwajanik Sabah and its Rules, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 1871, pp.1-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1874, *Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarwajanik Sabah*, July 1878, April 1880.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Tucker, *Ranade and the Roots of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay, 1977, pp. 58-61.

projected a new political body in Bombay called the Town Association.<sup>1</sup> He was soon to establish himself as the leading moderate and liberal thinker of his time in India. Though a government servant but he took a keen interest in public affairs. Indeed Ranade enjoyed the prestige of being a judge of Bombay High Court. He founded both the Widow Remarriage Association in 1861, which sought an implementation of an act of permitting widows to marry.

Hardly thirty years of age when he arrived in Poona late in 1871, had Ranade soon become the mentor of the Poona Sarwajanik Sabah. While Ranade was the brain behind the Poona Sarwajanik Sabah and its life and soul was Ganesh Vasudev Joshi the real founder of the Sabah, who was a Secretary for many years. Joshi was a leader in the local court. He was not very highly educated but he was a born agitator and leader. Like the clothes which he always wore Joshi wore homespun. The devotion and zeal with which he exerted himself on behalf of the Sabah earned him the sobriquet of the 'Sarwajanik Kaka' (Uncle of the people). Joshi evolved a style of political agitation which was a curious amalgam of the old and the new of the indigenous and the foreign and was later followed by many other Maratha politicians notably Bal Gangadhar Tilak.<sup>2</sup> In December 1873 the *Indian Statesman* of Bombay wrote, "The Poona Sarwajanik Sabah is the leading Association of the progressive party in Western India. Among the programme it thought it prudent to think painfully and talk about the recollections of its interminable memorials on every subject that could be made an excuse for asserting rights or remonstrating against wrongs".<sup>3</sup>

### **East India Association**

The East India Association was founded in London on October 1866 "for the independent and specific advocacy and promotion of the public interests and welfare of the inhabitants of India generally." The basic purpose

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<sup>1</sup> *Jubilee Number of the quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarwajanik Sabah*, April, 1920, p.173.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Tucker, *Ranade and the Roots of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay, 1977, pp. 58-61.

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Statesman*, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1873.

of the Association was to provide the British public and members of parliament “information and assistance on all Indian subjects within its power”.<sup>1</sup> The membership of the association was open to all officials or non-officials, Indians or Europeans, on payment of an annual subscription of Rs.10.00. There were Anglo-Indians who wanted to promote their interests or just wanted to air their views. There were British public men who were in search of a cause or a constituency. In March 1867, it was 125 but it rose to 1,000 in 1871. However, most of its members were from India. In London also only a few members were of fiery spirits and their numbers also fell after the student members gradually started coming back to India.<sup>2</sup>

Dadabhai Naoroji did all that he could to make the East India Association speak for India as a whole. He declared in 1867 that British rule had injected a “new political life” into India. Its educated classes were becoming the natural leaders of the masses. A common language among them was forging strong bonds of nationality. To quote him:

“The nation is now becoming gradually assimilated for a political purpose.”

Dadabhai Naoroji emphasized the fact that all the political work in India must be directed from a London centre because local Indian Associations where “efforts have parochialism about them”, could not effectively rally British opinion. Their role was to supply London with both information and funds, to briefly watch the activities of the local Governments in India and to train the people in their political rights so that in course of time they would be ready “for that great end of a Parliament or parliaments in India”.<sup>3</sup>

Perozeshah Mehta was elected one of the Honorary Secretaries and the committee members included men like Ranade, Mandlik and R.G. Bhandarkar.

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<sup>1</sup> Home News, 18<sup>th</sup> September 1866.

<sup>2</sup> “Summary of the Operations of the East India Association from its Foundation”, *Journal of the East India Association*, 1875-76, vol. ix, no.3, pp.180-183.

<sup>3</sup> Naoroji, D., “On the duties of Local Indian Association in connection with the London Association”, Appendix to *Journal of the East India Association*, 1886, vol.ii, no.4, p.9.

Lawyers, doctors, government officials and graduates joined the association and by the end of 1869, there were 628 members.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, it did not flourish because of many reasons especially the Vernacular Press Act, the abolition of cotton duties and the expenses of the Afghan War. By 1879, most of the subscriptions were still unpaid. It was partly due to the divergence between London and Bombay. The Bombay branch was only a local appendage of the headquarters in London which retired British civilians and army officers were controlling.<sup>2</sup>

To begin with, the East India Association gave a stimulus to political life in India both by its example and activity. Hundreds of prominent Indians from all parts of India became its active members. However, many experienced public men in India were skeptical about its success or usefulness. The *Hindu Patriot* wrote on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1867:

“The field of operations before the East India Association is as wide as India. We fairly enquire where there are elements in it possessing that varied knowledge of the wants and wishes of all classes of the Indian community which is so essential to its usefulness. One great drawback to its success is the absence of an efficient native element in the Managing Committee, and we fear that for years to come will not be supplied. Military officers cannot be expected to know much about the natives of India. We wish that such provision were made affairs of the association”.<sup>3</sup>

The East India Association failed to have its branches all over the country. This had a great demoralizing effect on the members of the East India Association. The Association was weakened when Dadabhai Naoroji came back to India in

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<sup>1</sup> “Rules of the Bombay Branch of the East India Association”, *Journal of the East India Association*, 1869, vol. iii, No.3, p.76.

<sup>2</sup> “Annual Report of the East India Association”, *Journal of the East India Association*, 1873, vol. vii, no.2, p.118.

<sup>3</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1867.

1873 on his appointment as Diwan of Baroda.<sup>1</sup> In 1875, the East India Association complained that it had not received from the people of India “that degree of support which it had reason to expect and to which it may honestly lay claim.” The reply given was that the Association had as a rule ignored those questions in which the people of India were interested.<sup>2</sup> In 1878 the *Indian Mirror* wrote: “what has the East India Association done? It is a convenient platform from which ex-civilians now and then endeavour to enlighten the world with the exploded notions about Indian Government. But certainly East India Association does not represent the people of India.”<sup>3</sup> In 1883, the *Indian Mirror* declared that the East India Association had “Proved a decided failure.” The East India Association appeared in its true colours when it came out strongly against the Ilbert Bill. Robert Elliot used it as a platform to attack “Baboo politicians” and to warn the British against the “danger of losing sight of the material and general interests of those silent masses on whom the stability of the Empire really rests... in our haste to gratify the very natural ambition of the educated classes”.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Indian Association**

The Indian Association started at a very largely attended meeting in the Albert Hall, Calcutta, on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1876.<sup>5</sup> Its aims were ‘to represent the people, and promote by every legitimate means the political, intellectual and national advancement of the people’. An executive committee of twenty eight, consisting mainly of lawyers, journalists and teachers was appointed, with A.M. Bose as secretary and A.C. Sarkar<sup>6</sup> and J.N. Vidyabhushan<sup>7</sup> as assistant

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<sup>1</sup> “Report of the East India Association”, *Journal of the East India Association*, 1873, vol. vii, no.2, p.118.

<sup>2</sup> “Summary of the Operation of the East India Association from its Foundation”, *Journal of the East India Association*, 1875-76, vol. ix, no.3, p.179.

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Mirror*, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1878.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1883.

<sup>5</sup> For the Proceeding of the Meeting, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1876, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1876 *Bengalee*, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1876, and *Hindoo Patriot*, 31<sup>st</sup> July 1876.

<sup>6</sup> Mehrotra, S.R., *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, Delhi, 1971, p.165.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

secretaries. Later M.M. Gose<sup>1</sup> a leading barrister was elected President of the Association. Speakers at the inaugural meeting tried to establish another association in Calcutta saying that none of the existing associations represented the aspirations of the common masses. Thus the oppressed sections of Indian society like coolies had their own organization capable of keeping up and stimulating public opinion.

The leaders of the British Indian Association looked upon the Indian Association with feelings of benevolent neutrality. The Assistant Secretary of the British India Association, K.D. Pal, attended the inaugural meeting of the Indian Association. He welcomed the formation of the new Association in his paper and gave it friendly advice. The list of the committee (of the Association), wrote the *Hindu Patriot*, contains the names of some of our well-educated young countrymen, and if they conduct their operations with judgment and moderation, they may both deserve and command success. They could not have a better model than the East India Association, which generally invited thoughtful men to discuss important questions, published the discussions for general information, and thus helped in the moulding of public opinion on those questions, and dispatched petitions to parliament or Her Majesty's Government on exceptional occasions.<sup>2</sup> But the young leaders of the Indian Association, whom a critic described as 'England returned, hated, coated gentlemen'<sup>3</sup>, had their own ideas on politics. Their prophet was Mazzini and they took Young Italy for their model of a political organization. As S.N. Banerji, one of the leading promoters of the Indian Association wrote later the idea that was working in our minds was that the Association was to be the centre of an all India movement. For even then the conception of a united India, derived from the inspiration of Mazzini, the leader, or at any rate, of

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<sup>1</sup> Mehrotra, S.R., *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, Delhi, 1971, p.165.

<sup>2</sup> For the Proceeding of the Meeting, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1876, *Hindoo Patriot*, 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1876.

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Daily News*, 17<sup>th</sup> March 1877.

bringing all India upon the same common platform, had taken firm possession of the minds of the Indian leaders in Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

The two most active and prominent leaders of the Indian Association were S.N. Banerji and A.M. Bose. Both Banerji and Bose had first-hand knowledge of European public life. Their outlook was broad and they were full of patriotic zeal and missionary spirit. Their objective in launching the India Association was, as we have already noted, to make it the head and centre of a national movement in the country. Branches of the association were established at several places in Bengal and elsewhere in Northern India with the main purpose of bringing awakening among the Indians. Banerji<sup>2</sup> and Bose made a determined effort to teach patriotism and politics to the younger generation through their speeches and writings and through the organization of 'Students' Associations'. Its membership was small probably not more than 200-300 and its annual income, during the first ten years of its existence, did not exceed Rs.2, 000.<sup>3</sup>

The Indian Association in its seventh annual report was shocked to see less progress and it often found itself powerless to act from want of funds".<sup>4</sup> But the greatest weakness of the Indian Association lay in the fact that the people of Calcutta looked upon it, not entirely without justification, as neither a national nor a regional but a secular organization, dominated by a few young and ambitious men with advanced views on the political and social question of the day. Even if the Indian Association had not suffered from these drawbacks and was the sole representative organization of Bengal, with all the requisite resources at its disposal, it is extremely doubtful whether it could have succeeded in establishing itself as the national organization of India. The country was too vast and regional interests too strong and varied to allow even

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<sup>1</sup> Banerji, S.N., *A Nation in Making*, Delhi, 1925, p.41.

<sup>2</sup> Speech by Surendra Nath Banerjee at the inaugural meeting of the Indian Association, Albert Hall, Calcutta, 26<sup>th</sup> July 1876, *Bengalee*, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1876.

<sup>3</sup> *Seventh Annual Report of the Indian Association*, 1883, p.3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.



the English educated people of the other provinces of India accept a Calcutta based Association as their leader and spokesman. The very idea that inspired the leaders of the Indian Association namely that of a central organization in the metropolis of India having branches all over the country and directing a national movement, was impracticable in India of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

Consciously or unconsciously, the leaders of the Indian Association tried to imitate the model of the British administration in India. They did not realize that even though operated by an extremely small, homogeneous, integrated and efficient body of men, the centralized machinery of the British *raj* produced tremendous complications and frictions, and that it was, slowly but surely, moving towards federalism in order to suit Indian conditions.

### **Madras Mahajana Sabah**

There is scarcely any part of India directly under the British rule which did not witness the emergence of one or the other kind of association representing the feeling and aspiration of the people at large though initially confined to the elite and upper casts of the society. The first organization in the Madras Presidency to agitate for the rights of Indians was the Madras Native Association which was established by publicist Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty in 1849.<sup>2</sup> This organization did not survive for long and was eventually disbanded.

The Madras Mahajana Sabah was inaugurated at a meeting held in Madras on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1884 under the President ship of Rangiah Naidu. Viraraghavachari and Ananda Charlu became its Secretaries.<sup>3</sup> Rangiah Naidu declared at the inaugural meeting that the Madras Mahajana Sabah, unlike the Madras Native Association would consist of non - officials alone who would represent fearlessly the wishes of the public, a complete departure from the

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<sup>1</sup> Mehrotra, S.R., *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress*, Delhi, 1971, p.168.

<sup>2</sup> *Madras Times*, 25<sup>th</sup> July 1862.

<sup>3</sup> Proceeding of the First Conference of Native Gentlemen, held at Patcheappa's Hall under the auspices of the Madras Mahajana Sabah in January 1885.

tenets and ideas of Madras Native Association. He also suggested that the Sabah should be connected with institutions of a similar nature in sister Presidencies. The object of the Sabah was declared to be to endeavour to promote the interests of the people of this country. Any Indian who was more than twenty- one years of age could become a member of the Sabah by paying an annual subscription of not less than one Rupee. The management of the Sabah was vested in a committee of 25 people who were elected every year.<sup>1</sup> The Madras Mahajana Sabah made rapid progress. Under the sweeping influence of this Association the Madras Native Association disappeared from the field and left the same for Madras Mahajana Sabah. Within a year the Sabah had as many as 205 members. Its leaders were able to secure the cooperation of the Mofussil Associations. The Sabah arranged many meetings at several places in the Madras Presidency at which addresses and other memorials were presented to Lord Ripon. In order to present those address to Lord Ripon, a deputation of the Sabah went to Bombay in December 1884.

While in Bombay the member of the Sabah exchanged their views with the Bombay leaders on subjects of common interest. One of the subjects discussed was the desirability of holding an annual conference<sup>2</sup> of representative men from all parts of India. It is said that K.T. Teleng suggested to the members of the Sabah that they should take the lead in holding the first such National Conference in Madras but the representatives of the Sabah refused the suggestion on account of their limitations.

The Madras Mahajana Sabah held a conference in Madras from 29<sup>th</sup> December 1884 to 2nd January 1885 and it was attended by more than 70 delegates most of whom came from the Mofussil. Both the Tamil and Telugu district were represented at the conference. The main subjects discussed thread

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<sup>1</sup> Proceeding of the First Conference of Native Gentlemen, held at Patcheappa's Hall under the auspices of the Madras Mahajana Sabah in January 1885.

<sup>2</sup> Proceeding of the Second Conference of Native Gentlemen, held at Patcheappa's Hall under the auspices of the Madras Mahajana Sabah in December 1886.

bare at the conference were the reform of the Legislative Council, the separation of the judiciary from the executive, the changes desired in the structure of the Indian Government and the condition of the agricultural classes.<sup>1</sup> The Madras Mahajana Sabah held its second annual conference from 22nd to 24th December 1885. It was attended by not less than 45 delegates from the Mofussil representing almost all the districts in the Madras presidency and even including some peasants. The Madras Mahajana Sabah also sent a strong contingent to the Congress session held in December 1885 at Bombay.<sup>2</sup> Thus the Indian National Congress which was founded in 1885 represented by individuals of repute in their own right in religion they hailed, as a result of which the Indian National Congress assumed the national status and character.

### **Wahabi Movements**

A number of socio-religious organizations took place among the Muslims and the earliest one was the Wahabi Movement of India. The movement in its early days was a purely religious one, confined to a section of Muslims, particularly the lower middle class. However, it was due to its militant role that the movement enlisted the sympathies and support of the average Muslim. Interestingly Muslims of various denominations supported it. The Hindus were suspicious of the movement. It was directed at removing the Indian influence in Islam and attacking the Sikhs to restore Muslim power. However, the Wahabis did manage some Hindu support. Unlike subsequent Islamic movements in India, it never came in direct conflict with Hindus. The movement assumed the role of a class struggle in some places like Bengal.<sup>3</sup>

What is important to know that in the aftermath of the revolt of 1857 the British came down heavily upon the Muslims and made their condition pitiable. Sir Syed Ahmad, founder of the Aligarh movement, in fact was so

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<sup>1</sup> Proceeding of the Second Conference of Native Gentlemen, held at Patcheappa's Hall under the auspices of the Madras Mahajana Sabah in December 1886.

<sup>2</sup> Madras Mahajana Sabah, Annual Report for 1885-85, Madras.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmad Qeyamuddin, *The Wahabi Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1966, pp.27-29.

depressed with the condition of his Muslim brethren, that at one time he contemplated leaving India. The reform movement started by Siayid Ahmad and his pupils gained momentum after the mutiny and manifested itself in different forms. There was a group of religious thinkers influenced by the Wahabi ideology started preaching new ideas and gaining support.<sup>1</sup>

However, the majority of Indian Muslims were adherents of the Hanafi School with strong leanings towards Sufism and could not be won over by the soulless and rigid Wahabhi discipline. The more the Wahabis pushed the closer people went to the Sufi fold. Thus, during this period we found that both the Chishtiya and Naqshbandiya, the two main Sufi Schools in India were flourishing. However, there was a reaction against the superstitions and blind saint-worship (at the hands of unscrupulous pirs) in the minds of the sensible and thoughtful Muslims.

The foundation of Dar-al-Ulum at Deoband in 1867 was the greatest achievement of the Wahabi school of thought in India where as Farangi Mahal established during the reign of Aurangzeb continued to represent the old Hanafi School<sup>2</sup>, maintaining a via media between the extreme and diametrically opposed Wahabi and Sufi doctrines. A third important institution with a distinctly religious bias and an ideology not very different from that of Farangi Mahal was founded in 1898 in Lucknow by Shibli Numani. It was called Nadwat al-Ulama, showed a more progressive outlook and had produced scholars of repute.

Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan was in charge of the madrassa at Deoband from 1888 to 1920. He imbibed from his teacher Maulana Qasim, the qualities of selflessness and complete devotion to Islam. He tried to establish friendly relations between the modern Aligarh and orthodox Deoband schools. The

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<sup>1</sup> M. Zarabozo Jamaal al Din, *The Life, Teachings and Influence of Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab*, 2003, Daw'ah, pp.26-30.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Qeyamuddin, *The Wahabi Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1966, pp.27-32.

Nadwat al-Ulama tried to bridge the gap between Aligarh and Deoband and various groups of Ulama. It wanted to reform the Logic-ridden Nizamiyya system of religious education by putting greater emphasis on Islamic history and religious subjects, also introducing modern sciences and English as secondary subjects. The institution has produced many renowned Islamic scholars.<sup>1</sup>

Shariatullah equally an important leader of Bengal criticized the corruptions in Islamic society, later on declared the British to be enemy territory i.e. Dar-ul-Harb. His achievement was that the apathetic and careless Bengali peasant was roused into enthusiasm. His son Mushin organized the movement and gave it a strong anti Zamindari feel. He made an attack on the levying of illegal taxes by the Zamindars and declared that all land belonged to Allah so no taxes. As a result of these teachings people began to gradually accept the teachings of Saiyid Ahmad of Rai Barielly.

With this digression with a view to understand immediate impact on the Muslim of Indian sub-continent from the subject under review, Saiyid Ahmad around 1820 began to preach the doctrines of religious reforms similar to those held the sect of Wahabis in Arabia.<sup>2</sup> He started preaching his doctrines in Rohilkhand. In 1820 he visited Patna and got a very good response. Since the number of disciples swelled he created an organization and appointed four khalifas or spiritual vice-gerents'. Ahmad undertook tours to different districts and enrolled a large number of disciples. Like his teacher, he too declared India as Dar-ul-Harb or enemy territory, thus making it incumbent on Muslims either to wage jihad against non-Muslim rulers or to migrate to some other country. For this purpose he made efforts to train his followers in the use of arms, and himself, in a soldier's kit, held military parades. With this objective and due to political exigencies he proceeded to the North West Frontier province and

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Qeyamuddin, *The Wahabi Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1966, pp.27-32.

<sup>2</sup> Mohiuddin Ahmad, *Saiyid Ahmad Shahid: His Life and Mission*, Lucknow, 1975, pp.43-45.

Afghanistan, accompanied by Patna Maulvis, to enlist the support of the tribes in his holy war against the Sikhs. In his pamphlet 'Targhib-ul-Jihad' he called the Sikh rulers oppressors who had killed thousands of Muslims and did not allow the call to prayer from mosques and the killing of cows.

By 1830 Syed Ahmed established a government in Peshawar with 80,000 Wahabi soldiers. Now he took the Sardars. The British were only too happy to see the Muslims fight the Sardars and destroy Punjabi power. Alas! Maharaja Ranjit Singh had different ideas. Not only did he defeat the Wahabis but Syed himself died in the Balakot battle in 1831.<sup>1</sup> Syed Ahmad died at the battle of Balakot in 1831. The movement initiated by Syed Ahmad had not died but continued to keep the embers of Jihad alive on the frontier region and beyond.

### **Faraizi Movement**

Bengal was a well-secured stronghold of the Muslims. But the Battle of Plassey 1757 brought the introduction of British rule into Bengal. As a result the Muslim society shrank in the frequent troubles and they lost their socio-economic, political and educational prosperity with the discriminative and oppressive policies of British colonial rule. In the days of socio-cultural decline, several movements were born. The Faraizi movement of Haji Shariatullah was the most formidable.<sup>2</sup> The movement wanted to refrain Muslim society from superstitions. It also gave stress on the justice, social equality, and the universal brotherhood of Muslims.<sup>3</sup> The Faraizi Movement spread rapidly in Bengal particularly in those places where the Muslim farmers were depressed under the oppressive domination of Hindu zamindars (landlords) and European indigo planters. This reform movement gradually

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Qeyamuddin, *The Wahabi Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1966, pp.27-32.

<sup>2</sup> Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan, *History of the Faraidi Movement in Bengal, 1818-1906*, Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1965.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

developed into a socio-economic revolt.<sup>1</sup> After the death of Haji Shariatullah in 1840, the movement was headed by his only son DuduMiyan. He organized the oppressed peasantry against the landlords. The reform movement then turned into a socio-economic agitation on various aspects of the society.<sup>2</sup> It developed into an agrarian movement to protect the rights of the oppressed Muslim cultivators. It gave the courage and the confidence to the farmers and made them aware of their rights. The movement was an example in the history that the seething dissatisfaction and sense of deprivation among the people in a society could cause a revolution if they were not given their rights. The movement according to the demand of society turned into rebellious mood which was a reform movement. Thus freedom, justice and social equality became the cardinal characteristics of Faraizi movement. What is noteworthy that such movements paved way for the Muslims of Bengal to secure their interests in the changed political climate of India.

### **Aligarh Movement**

The contribution and significance of Aligarh Movement for the revival and regeneration of the Muslims of Sub-Continent were appreciated even by the arch enemies of the very idea of the establishment of the Madrasat-ul-Ulum. Aligarh developed as the most important centre of the intellectual development for the Muslims of South Asia and the students who studied at Aligarh College came from all over India. In a way it had become a focal point for the Muslims of South Asia for their education. In addition to this there was a lot of intellectual stimulation which was provided by the Aligarh Movement such as publication of books formulating a Scientific Society. The very establishment of Aligarh College was to give a new direction to the Muslims – who were in a state of despair and disillusionment after their defeat at the lands

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<sup>1</sup> “Between the puritan Islamic and syncretism in Bengal; An ecological perspective on the Faraizi Movement”. Iqbal Iftekhar, *Bangladesh e Journal of Sociology*, vol. 8, no.1 January, 20011, pp.64-71.

<sup>2</sup> Muin-ud-Din Ahamd Khan, *History of the Faraidi Movement in Bengal, 1818–1906*, Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1965, pp.28-39.

of the Britishers as well as the Sikhs in the North Western Frontier region (1831) to safeguard their cultural ethos and identity in the fast changing political scenario of India subcontinent.

By this movement students were combined to different traditions. They learned modern knowledge, English language, and modern western philosophy and acquired the Islamic knowledge. This was a significant feature of the College that while giving modern education to the students they should not be de-linked from their roots and if they were de-linked from their roots they became rootless. In order to deal with the criticism that western education would alienate to young people from its teachings and principles Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and his colleagues proved that the modern education and Islamic education could be brought together.<sup>1</sup>

The 3<sup>rd</sup> major achievement of the Aligarh Education System was that it brought forward a group of students who were very inquisitive of what was happening in India and outside India. This educated class developed in India was instrumental in promoting Muslim identity and also advocating the Muslim cause to the government and to others as on the one hand this educated class could communicate with the rulers as they knew the language and modern knowledge, philosophy and the thinking that had developed there.

The last major contribution of this movement was that the Mohammedan Educational Conference that was created by these Muslim leaders had become a kind of a forum where Muslims from different parts of India would come together and they would discuss not only education but all those issues which were of great concern to Muslims and since the meetings of Mohammedan Educational Conference were being held in different places it was able to communicate the message of the Aligarh Movement all over India.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul Rashid Kahn, "All India Muhamadan Educational Conference and the Foundation of the All India Muslim League", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society (JPHS)*, vol.55, 2007, 65-83.

<sup>2</sup> Jain, M.S., *The Aligarh Movement its Origin and Development 1856-1908*, Agra, 1965, pp.20-30.



Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and his colleagues advised the Muslims in the given conditions to avoid active politics. He was not inherently opposed to politics. But the point he presented was that they should stay away from active politics and concentrate only on the education. That is why he used to say that at that time Muslim needed only education, education and education. The facts and the data that was available at that time about the education of Muslims and others in India made us understand why Sir Syed was so particular about education. From 1859 to 1875 only 20 Muslims were able to get graduation degree from the educational institutions which the British colonial administration had set up in India. Against this during the same period 715 Hindus got the graduation degrees, and was the figure 20 verses 715.<sup>1</sup>

The concern at that time was that if they got involved in active politics and they didn't pay attention to acquiring modern education they would be left behind and the gap between the Muslims and others would widen and ultimately the Muslims would suffer. He wanted that over a period of time, there should be a group of Muslims who had modern education and who could fit into the modern system which the British had introduced, "The Modern State System" the administration which was set up by the British and they could only fit in this system if they got jobs and they had an interaction with this system only if they could get modern education and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan thought that if Muslims had an education then they become relevant to the changed conditions and they would be able to meet with the challenges of the time.<sup>2</sup>

Aligarh Movement was a religio-political Movement which contributed a lot for the regeneration and revival of the Muslims of the Sub-Continent.<sup>3</sup> Sir Syed and his colleagues by their combined efforts tried to equip the Muslims

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul Rashid Kahn, "All India Muhamadan Educational Conference and the Foundation of the All India Muslim League", *JPHS*, vol. 55, 65-83.

<sup>2</sup> Aligarh Institute Gazette, June 12, 1897.

<sup>3</sup> Jain, M.S., *The Aligarh Movement its Origin and Development 1856-1908*. Agra, 1965, pp. 20-32.

community of Sub-Continent with modern knowledge and English language. He was a visionary leader who envisioned that without acquiring modern knowledge the Muslims couldn't compete with the Hindus. That's why he advised the Muslims to acquire modern language to regain their lost glory in the Sub-Continent. With these appeals, admonitions and exhortations Syed Ahmad succeeded in creating a group of educated Indian Muslims who later on took the mantle of responsibility of the despaired and dejected Muslims, on their shoulders and it subsequently became a movement to be reckoned with.

#### **4.2 ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT AND ROLE OF REFORM ORGANIZATIONS IN SRI LANKA**

The lands which remained under the occupation and hegemony of imperialist rulers continued to suffer economically, politically, culturally, religiously and so on. However, under the dissemination of liberal ideas emanating from the Western world in particular from the outbreak of the war of American Independence and French Revolution, the leaders of such lands began thinking of creating political consciousness among the subjugated people. It was in this context that in the first decade of the twentieth century there was a perceptible quickening in the pace of political activity in the island after the near- immobility in formal politics in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Again, there was Japan's victory over Russia, hailed with almost as much enthusiasm by sections of the elite in Sri Lanka (especially the Buddhist activists) as it was in other parts of Asia. Secondly-and perhaps more important in a practical sense was the great victory of Liberals in the British general election of 1906, marking the end of nearly twenty years of Tory rule and arousing hopes of colonial reform, largely because of the 'pro-Boer' stand taken by an influential section of the Liberal party. As a result of these developments, the years from around 1905 to 1919 were characterized by the growth of secondary resistance movements in the low-country-in such forms as

political associations (both regional and national), trade unions and welfare associations.<sup>1</sup>

The concept of secondary resistance was demonstrated most acutely in the resurgence of Buddhism and the sustained temperance agitation closely associated with it. While nationalist sentiments were deeply intertwined with the reassertion of Buddhist values, and despite a persistently anti-Christian tone, one of the most interesting features of the Buddhist revival in the early twentieth century was the extent to which the Buddhist movement in the hands of men like Anagarika Dharmapala, appeared almost the mirror-image of Protestant Christianity in its organizational apparatus.<sup>2</sup> It was never vehement in its propaganda techniques and the morale was upheld as an integral part of the current Buddhist culture. The new Buddhist revivalist was indeed having the same missionary spirit as those of Christians. Dharmapala grasped, as few of his contemporaries did, the political implications of the Buddhist resurgence, and he never lost sight of the need to set this within the wider framework of the rise of nationalism in Asia. But he was at the same time an unabashed advocate of a Sinhalese-Buddhist domination of the island.<sup>3</sup> His propaganda bore a remarkable similarity with Mr. Tilak who was the great champion of the Hindu resurgence in Western India. For few parts of the ex-colonial world Anthony Low's comment that 'Empire was as much religious problem as a political or economical or ideological problem.'<sup>4</sup> The wealthy and the English educated people who were socially linked to them were also influenced. They started forming organizations to get their educational, economic and occupational requirements fulfilled. This was happening in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even though they built these organizations initially centered on some common problems affecting them, subsequently they tried to interfere in

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<sup>1</sup> Fernando, T. and R.N. Kearney, *Modern Sri Lanka: A Society in Transition*, Syracuse, 1978, pp.10-12.

<sup>2</sup> Obeyesekere, G., "Religious Symbolism and Political Change in Ceylon", *Modern Ceylon Studies*, vol. i, 1970, pp. 43-63.

<sup>3</sup> De Silva, K.M., *History of Sri Lanka*, Vijitha Yapa Publication, Colombo, 2003, pp.375.

<sup>4</sup> Low, D.A., *Lion Rampant: Essays in the Study of British Imperialism*, London, 1973, p.14.

matters of political and social nature. The organizations established and movements started for these activities were of a different nature and in them the Buddhist agitation movements had the backing of the majority of people. The cultural nationalism and anti-western nature in those movements were not evident here. They were engaged in an agitation which was fostering liberal democratic political values. They were in fact trying to show their allegiance to the British rulers and gain some legislative concessions. The nationalistic concept of theirs was contrary to the philosophy presented by Sinhalese nationalism. This group who opted to work as Ceylonese in matters relating to religion or national problems tried to do so without having any ethical or religious prejudice. The significant feature seen in the organization of this group was that they did expect participation of huge masses in their activities.<sup>1</sup>

Sri Lankan businessmen were producing to meet the demands of the market, and they also had to focus their attention on the demands prevailing in the market. This is the reason that Plumbago producers, owners of cinnamon plantations and subsequently also owners of coconut plantations faced problems in the market. At the import - export market controlled by the European companies and banking system no attention was focused on their needs. Sri Lankans also didn't have the necessary strength to seek assistance from them. It also had to face the difficulties arising out of this situation while developing their business activities.<sup>2</sup> In between there were also other social problems which the Sri Lankan English educated people and indigenous wealthy people had to face. The people of the new rich elite occupied a high position in the local society because of their wealth, imitating the Western culture and education. With the development of their economic strength they broke through the traditional bonds

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<sup>1</sup> Jayasekara, P.V.J., *Social and Political Change in Ceylon 1900-1919*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1970, pp. 125-130.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

and proceeded forward. These groups were subsequently able to win back the patronage which was shown towards the high class Goigama caste.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, the educated intelligentsia who were following social and political problems with interest demanded that the Legislative Council should be subjected to democratic reforms. They thought that the Legislative Council which was made up of a few members appointed by the Governor should be broadened. They demanded the inclusion into the legislative council of members who would be selected by the vote of people. Their other demand was to allow only the rich and educated class of people the right to vote. Even though Sri Lankans expected the reforms and entry into the Legislative Council in this manner the European hegemony was not ready to accept these. They seemed to maintain the opinion that only members of 'Mudali' families who were the traditional leaders in society should be allowed into the Legislative Assembly. The basic purpose of such views expressed by Europeans was only to create dissensions within the Sri Lankan communities for their own ulterior motives.

A considerable number of people who were among the leaders of the new wealthy class were from the Karawe caste. In the traditional caste system they were not holding the leading position. Therefore the traditional Goigama leaders related to Mudali families didn't like to allow these 'Karawe' people to extend their status up to political leadership.<sup>2</sup> They were in close association with the colonial rulers in Sri Lanka for a long time and were able to have good relationships with the European power. There emerged also the very importance of the Karawe before the local British officers. The latter tried to interpret the protests of the Sri Lankans as a clash between castes and declared

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<sup>1</sup> Patric Peebles, *Social Change in Nineteenth Century Ceylon* (Governor Sir Arthur Gordon and the Administration of Sri Lanka), New Delhi, 1995, pp. 243-246.

<sup>2</sup> Samaraweera Vijaya, *Elite formation and Elite, 1832-1931*, UCHC, vol.iii, University of Peradeniya, 1973, pp.246-247.

that behind the demand of Sri Lankans there were no national interests.<sup>1</sup> Therefore the educated Sri Lankans joined various movements to establish their leadership socially.

### **Buddhist Movements**

Last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed the closure of the long history of Kandyan Resistance Movement. It was now the turn of the Maritime regions and in particular the Western Province where the resistance of the indigenous society to the impact of British rulers took the form of religious revival, formation of political associations and incipient trade union activity.<sup>2</sup> Together these constituted a process of holding off the intrusive pressures of British rule and of accommodating to change and absorb it in forms seldom anticipated by those who initiated them in the first place; above all it was a complex and sophisticated response to Western rule which was somewhere between the traditionalist nationalism of the Kandyans and the ideologically coherent nationalism of the twentieth century. But they had no support from the Kandyans who between the 1880s and the attainment of independence mostly took satisfaction in a new role as associates of the British and a counter weight to the reform and nationalist movements dominated by elite groups from the Maritime Provinces. Initially the response of the people to evangelization had been one of polite indifference. By the late 1840 there were signs that a more marked resistance to it was emerging in a sporadic and localized manner.<sup>3</sup>

The most profound resistance to the spread of Christianity was discernible in the South West from the vicinity of Colombo to Kalutara and beyond in regions that had not been affected by the rebellion. The leadership in opposition to evangelization came largely from *bhikkhus*. Whether this

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<sup>1</sup> Samaraweera Vijaya, 'Elite formation and Elite,1832-1931', *UCHC*, vol.iii, University of Peradeniya, 1973, pp. 246-247.

<sup>2</sup> Nawarathna Bandara, A.M., *National Movements in Sri Lanka under the British Rule*, Colombo, 2007, pp.305-308.

<sup>3</sup> De Silva, K.M., *Social Policy and Missionary Organizations in Ceylon 1840-1855*, London, 1965, pp.64-137.

resistance was systematically organized and how widespread it was were matters on which there were no firm evidence but there was a perceptible change in the people's attitude to missionary enterprise from courteous indifference to positive though still somewhat muted opposition and a more explicit commitment to their traditional faith.<sup>1</sup>

By the 1860s the Buddhists' opposition to Christianity was much more self-confident and vocal than it had been before and nothing illustrated the change in mood and tempo better than their response to challenges from missionaries to public debates and verbal. These would often become places of confrontation among the different communities and would also create an ill-will besides creating impediments to the political leadership for addressing their fundamental problem of imperialism and the occupation under which they had been living for decades together. Such disputations had been staged from the mid-1840 and in general the missionaries had used their debating skills to the obvious discomfiture of some diffident and not very erudite representatives of the traditional religions.

In 1860 the technique of the public debate which the missionaries had used so effectively in the past only succeeded in providing Buddhist spokesmen with a platform for a vigorous reassertion of the virtues of their own faith. Between 1865 and 1873 there were five debates between Christians and Buddhists and on every occasion the Buddhists faced up to their opponents with verve and assurance that had hardly been evident before.<sup>2</sup> Of the five debates the first and second at Baddegama and Varagoda (both in 1865) were conducted and concluded in writing. The Udanvita (1866), Gampola (1871)

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva, K.M., *The Government and Religion: Problems and Policies 1832 to 1910*, UCHC, Peradeniya, pp.197-98.

<sup>2</sup> Malalgoda, K., *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900: A Study in Revival and Change*, University of California Press, 1976, pp.166-169.

and Panadura (1873) controversies were public debates. The Panadura Debate of 1873 was the most notable of them all.\*

Migettuwatte Gunananda proved himself a debater of a very high skill and the acumen witty and eloquent if not especially erudite. A contemporary described him as the terror of the missionaries... more wrangler than ascetic the boldest most brilliant and most powerful champion of Sinhalese Buddhism the leader of the present revival.<sup>1</sup> His triumph at Panadura set the seal on a decade of quiet recovery of Buddhist confidence. In retrospect the establishment of the 'Society for the Propagation of Buddhism' at Kotahena and of the Lankopakara Press at Galle (both in 1862) would seem to mark the first phase in this recovery. There was at the same time a parallel development independent of the theme of Buddhist-Christian confrontation which nevertheless contributed greatly to sustaining the self-assurance of Buddhists. This was the establishment in 1865 of the *Ramanna Nikaya* an offshoot of the *Amarapura Nikaya* and the foundation of the two centers of Oriental learning: the Vidyodaya Pirivena in 1872 and the Vidyalankara Pirivena in 1876. The *Ramanna Nikaya* laid even greater stress than the *Amarapura* on vows of poverty and humility; its establishment was in fact a conscious attempt to cleanse the *Sangha* and to return to a purer form of Buddhism free from the influence of Hinduism.<sup>2</sup> Newspapers reports of the Panadura debate reached the United States of America where they attracted the attention of Colonel H.S Olcott, the founder (in 1875) of the Theosophical Society.

Olcott began a regular correspondence with Migettuwatte Gunananda and sent him a mass of pamphlets and tracts all deeply critical of Christianity. Migettuwatte Gunananda in turn translated these letters as well as extracts from the books, pamphlets and tracts into Sinhalese and distributed them throughout the island. Through these translations, the names of Olcott and his Russian

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\* See Appendix-III

<sup>1</sup> Olcott, H.S., *Old Diary Leaves*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, Madras, 1928, p.157.

<sup>2</sup> De Silva, K.M., *History of Sri Lanka*, Delhi, 1981, pp. 340-341.



associate Madame Blavatsky became familiar to Buddhists; their arrival in the island in 1880 caused great excitement and they were received amid extraordinary scenes of religious fervour. By this time the Buddhist revival was well under way. Because of their familiarity with the rationalist and scientific critique of Christianity the Theosophists gave more positive intellectual content to the movement against the Christian forces in Sri Lanka. Above all they gave the Buddhists what they lacked most, a lesson in the techniques of modern organization to match the expertise in this sphere of the missionaries and in doing so they contributed enormously to the self-confidence and morale of the Buddhists. With the help of leading *bhikkus* and laymen Olcott started the Buddhist Education Movement; an education fund and a Buddhist national fund were established; the celebration of the *Vesak* festival (commemorating the birth, attainment of enlightenment and demise of the Buddha) was revived and an agitation was started (from 1881) to have *Vesak* day declared an official holiday; and he was instrumental also in the design and adoption (in 1885) of a distinctive Buddhist flag.<sup>1</sup> The presence in Sri Lanka of a group of Westerners openly championing Buddhism had a deeply significant psychological effect on the Buddhist movement.

### **Theosophical Society**

For two hundred years or more the Buddhists of Ceylon had struggled to maintain their religion under Western Christian overlords, learning to accept the hardships clinging to their ancient faith. In 1880 Col. Olcott, and Heleina Blavatsky went to Galle (Sri Lanka), where they were received very warmly. They are represented to have embraced Buddhism there by taking Panchasila. Col. Olcott writes,<sup>2</sup> ‘Our Buddhism was that of the Master-Adept Gautama Buddha, which was identically the Wisdom-Religion of the Aryan Upanishads, and the soul of all the ancient world-faiths. Our Buddhism was, in a word, a

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva, K.M., *History of Sri Lanka*, Delhi, 1981, pp.340-341.

<sup>2</sup> Siriwardana, P.K.W., *Buddhism and Christianity*, Thisara Press Colombo, 1955, p.11.

philosophy, not a creed'.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter, Olcott entered upon one of the most important phases of his life in espousing the Buddhist cause. His contribution towards the revival of Buddhism in Ceylon is one of great significance as also his movement for popular education. The reason for the warm welcome to Olcott and Blavatsky was that a leading member of the Sangha, a brilliant speaker, Bhikku Migettuwatte Gunananda, who had been in correspondence with Blavatsky in New York, had received a copy of the debates unveiled from her and had translated passages from it into Sinhalese.<sup>2</sup>

Col. Olcott, accompanied by an interpreter, travelled in bullock carts to remote villages where thousands crowded to listen to him. Finding no book which gave the teachings in simple terms, he compiled *The Buddhist Catechism*<sup>3</sup> whose Sinhalese and English versions appeared on 24 July 1881, the Esala Full Moon Day. The publication through hand presses found it difficult to meet the demand. The book had undergone many editions in a number of languages and was still in demand. Thus ushered an era of the great Buddhist revival in Ceylon. Col. Olcott then designed the Buddhist flag which is used all over the world as a symbol of religious unity. The flag consists of 'the six colours' said to be in the aura of the Buddha.<sup>4</sup> He sponsored Dharmapala to go to the first world Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893. This brought the teachings of the Buddha to the notice of the Western world. He was also instrumental in the foundation of the Maha Bodhi Society and helped to organize Buddhism in India, besides several other countries.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Malalasekara, G.P., *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir of the Buddhist Theosophical Society, 1880-1940*, p.04.

<sup>2</sup> Siriwardana, P.K.W., *Buddhism and Christianity*, Thisara Press Colombo, 1955, p.11.

<sup>3</sup> *The Buddhist Catechism*, 44<sup>th</sup> editions (1938), translated into 20 languages, an internationally used textbook.

<sup>4</sup> Buddhist Theosophical Society, *Diamond Jubilee of the Buddhist Theosophical Society, 1880-1940*, pp.17-18.

<sup>5</sup> Siriwardana, P.K.W., *Buddhism and Christianity*, Thisara Press Colombo, 1955, pp.32-34.

## **Ceylon Agricultural Association**

This association was established in 1882 under the leadership of C.H. de Soysa who was a business tycoon at that time. The main objective at the beginning was to mediate in the problems of cinnamon traders. The traders who exported cinnamon had to face certain difficulties caused by the authorities of London harbour and brokers in the Mineen Street of London.<sup>1</sup> Therefore the necessity of an organization to meditate in this matter became an urgent issue. A short time before this association was established (in 1881) the position of representative in the Legislative Council for the low country Sinhalese had become vacant. At that time the Karawe caste lawyers S.R. Fonseka and S. Dharmaratne opted for this position.<sup>2</sup> But the Governor ignored them and continued to appoint persons from Govigama high ranking families. This became an important point for the wealthy Sri Lankan to form an association for applying pressure on the British Colonial rulers to accept their social leadership. As Patric Peebles notes; it seemed that the Ceylon Agricultural Association was formed parallel to the Ceylon Agricultural Society formed with the participation of 'Mudliyors'.<sup>3</sup> The Ceylon Agricultural Association formed in 1882 mediated on behalf of cases not directly associated with trade matters. And when there were questions about the grain tax, they held protest demonstrations demanding to invalidate it.<sup>4</sup> In 1887 this organization held protest demonstrations regarding the extension of railway lines in the Uva, Northern and Southern provinces and also about the taxes levied for imports.<sup>5</sup> From 1882 up to 1888 the Ceylon Agricultural Association had C.H. de Soysa as President. When the Duke of Edinburgh visited Sri Lanka in 1870 he enjoyed the honour of being able to arrange a feast for him.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Ceylon Standard*, Supplement, 13<sup>th</sup> Oct., 1906.

<sup>2</sup> Jayasekara, P.V.J., *Social and Political Change in Ceylon, 1900-1919*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1970, p.125.

<sup>3</sup> Peebles Patrik, *The Transformation of a Colonial Elite*, Chicago, 1973, pp. 231-303.

<sup>4</sup> *The Ceylon Standard*, Supplement, 13<sup>th</sup> Oct., 1906.

<sup>5</sup> *The Ceylon Observer*, Over Land Edition, 1<sup>st</sup> Oct., 1888.

## **Plumbago Merchants Union**

The production and export of plumbing were the main investments areas of Sri Lankan businessmen as they had a bigger influence on this trade. Thus in 1888 the Plumbago Dealers Association was formed and the main objective the association claimed was to protect the interests of dealers engaged in mining activities through collective action.<sup>1</sup> This association was active for a long time protecting the interests of miners and in 1905 its name was changed to Plumbing Merchants Union.<sup>2</sup>

## **Ceylon National Association**

The establishment of Ceylon National Association could be pointed out as an occasion which clarifies the way how the wealthy and the English educated people in Sri Lanka started to get interested in political and social problems. The association originated in 1888 by changing the name of the former Ceylon Agricultural Association. The founder members included a few lawyers of the Karawe caste who were significant among the English educated Sinhalese and a few educated Tamils including Ponnambalam Ramanathan who had a high esteem in society. When the Ceylon National Association was established the position of the Sinhalese representative of the Constitutional Council was vacant and the educated Sri Lankans were engaged in various ways to get this post. The names submitted as candidates for this post by *Ceylon Observer* newspaper were A. De A. Senarathne, A.C. Obeysekera and Walter Perera.<sup>3</sup> Other names submitted were James Pieris, Jeroms Pieris and E.T. De Sampayo. These three were not of Govigama Caste.<sup>4</sup> Walter Perera belonged to the Durawa caste. He had returned from the United Kingdom after serving there as a lawyer and was by that time serving as a lawyer in Sri

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<sup>1</sup> Wright Arnold, *Twentieth Century Impression of Ceylon, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1999*, p.588.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.588.

<sup>3</sup> *The Ceylon Observer*, Over Land Edition, September 26, 1888.

<sup>4</sup> Jayasekera, P.V.J., "Social and Political Change in Ceylon, 1900-1919" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1969), p.149.

Lanka.<sup>1</sup> James Pieris was a graduate of Cambridge University and he was the first Asian to become President of the Student Association of Cambridge University.<sup>2</sup>

The majority of new educated people who were participating in the activities of the Ceylon Agricultural Association were of Karawe caste. People of this caste had acquired a fairly strong position among the pioneers of the wealthy section of society. In 1888 the young members in this association proposed to change its name to Lanka National Association at the 6<sup>th</sup> annual conference. They actually wanted to transform it into an association which discusses political issues more openly. The President of the association objected to this. He informed the association by letter that changing of the name in such a manner would transform it into a political association and he was totally against it.<sup>3</sup> Even though it was once stressed on the importance of selecting members of the Constitutional Council by vote he didn't consider it necessary to have public protests about it. Some members like him thought in a conservative manner<sup>4</sup> and they didn't want to mediate directly in political problems.

A Burgher member of the association Dorn Gorst proposed to change the name of the organization to 'Ceylonese Association'.<sup>5</sup> Ponnambalam Ramanadan spoke in favour of establishing the National Association. He further said that there is an urgent necessity to transform this association into a more useful one with power to influence, and address the Sri Lankans' different interests rather than the Europeans; an association of this type is of great importance to represent those interests according to him. He further said

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<sup>1</sup> Wright Arnold, *Twentieth Century Impression in Ceylon*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1999, p.105.

<sup>2</sup> Hulugalla, H.A.J., *Life and Time of D.R. Wijewardana*, The Associated News Papers of Ceylon, Colombo, 1960, p.11.

<sup>3</sup> *The Ceylon Observer*, Over Land Edition, 1<sup>st</sup> Oct., 1888.

<sup>4</sup> Nawarathna Bandara, A.M., *National Movements under the British Period in Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 2007, p.317.

<sup>5</sup> *The Ceylon Observer*, Over Land Edition, 1<sup>st</sup> Oct., 1888.

“Our expectations may appear like going against our European brothers. We all accept the great service rendered by them to our country. We only want to represent our own specific interests.<sup>1</sup> He also didn’t forget to stress that the efforts undertaken were not meant for forming an anti-British political campaign. He in fact wanted to dispel any doubts about the possibility of being accused of treason. “I can assure that we are not going to launch a revolution here. We would like to offer our respect and honour to the British Government now as well as in the future as we did in the past,” said Ramanathan. He added that perhaps later we may also have to speak about reforms to the Constitutional Assembly in addition to our agricultural needs.<sup>2</sup> Ponnambalam Ramanathan was selected as the President.

It is noteworthy that even though such a National Association was formed, it was only limited to a small group. The total number who voted for and against this proposal was nineteen.<sup>3</sup> In 1891 the local division of the Civil Service was established due to its agitation. In 1895 A. de A. Seneviratne became its President and, since then up to 1906 it couldn’t hold a single meeting.<sup>4</sup> In 1906 efforts were undertaken to reorganize the activities of the National Association under the leadership of Ponnambalam Ramanadan. One reason for this effort to originate was the increasing interest in politics of the youth who were becoming part of the English educated elite. English educated people belonging to various religious and national groups participated in this occasion. Among the participants were G.H. Thomas, E.W. Vangihsil, E.N. Shockman, Hector Vanculanberg, Charles Pieris, James Pieris, Charles Batuwantudawe, John de Silva, Jacob de Mel, Saint V. Jayawardena, N.A. Arulanandan, S.C.K. Ratnam, N. Ratnasabhpathi, Sarawanamuttu, T.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Ceylon Observer*, Over Land Edition, 1<sup>st</sup> Oct., 1888.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *The Ceylon Standard*, Supplement 13<sup>th</sup> Oct., 1906.

Muthukumaraswamy, C.A. Hewawitharana, Donald Obesekera, E.W. Perera, and Hector Jayawardena.<sup>1</sup>

### **Temperance Movement**

The first attacks on the reprehensible features of the government's excise policy the proliferation of taverns in all parts of the country in a sordid pursuit of revenue without heed to the social evil of drunkenness, which spread even more rapidly than the taverns had come from the missionaries and other Christian organizations in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They were joined in this enterprise by Buddhists, who by the beginning of the twentieth century were the most vocal if not the most enthusiastic advocates of temperance; within a decade they had succeeded in taking over the leadership of the movement and, more significantly, in giving it a distinct Buddhist identity. Although Christian groups continued their association with temperance agitation, their role was now clearly that of a junior partner whose moral position in the campaign was being cleverly undermined by the success with which Buddhist temperance enthusiasts linked consumption of liquor with westernization and 'Christianization'.<sup>2</sup>

The temperance agitation of the first two decades of the twentieth century-it reached two distinct peaks, one in 1903-5 and a more important one in 1911-14 linked the elite, and particularly its Buddhist segment, with the masses in a common purpose which, though primarily religious in form and content, was never without political overtones. Disparagement of Christianity and attacks on Christian values could be, and were, adroitly extended to cover the British government as well; the fact that some influential officials were articulate Christians was deftly used to *bring* the government itself-as a 'Christian' administration within the scope of these

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<sup>1</sup> *The Ceylon Observer*, Over Land Edition, 1<sup>st</sup> Oct., 1906.

<sup>2</sup> R. D. Gunawardesia, 'The Reform Movement and Political Organizations in Ceylon with Special Reference to the Temperance Movement and Regional Associations, 1900-1930', (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, 1976), pp. 14-73.

criticisms.<sup>1</sup> For the elite who moved into the leadership of the temperance agitation the first decade of the twentieth century this was a consolation prize, a surrogate for participation in the government of the country for which they yearned but which lay beyond their grasp; it introduced them to the mechanics of organizing public opinion through the network of temperance societies which sprang up in and around Colombo and other parts of the country.<sup>2</sup> Again, with this temperance activity a stratum of society which had hitherto been quiescent if not inarticulate -namely the lower rungs of the rural elite consisting largely of notaries, schoolteachers and small traders made its presence felt as an indispensable link between the rural masses and the leadership of the movement. The Hapitigam complex of temperance societies was perhaps the most efficient and effective in the network built up in 1903-05.<sup>3</sup> It drew crowds of 20, 000 or more to its meetings this rural area at a time when the population of the Colombo district (excluding the municipality of Colombo) was a little over 600, 000. The man behind it was Don Stephen Senanayake who had made his fortune in Plumbago among other things, and who was the D. S. and D. C. Senanayake, all of whom made their into public life through the temperance movement. It provided them take off point into national politics for the Senanayake family.

When this first phase in temperance agitation petered out after 1905, its organizational apparatus was not dismantled but survived to be used for other purposes, mainly religious ones. With the revival British administrators would have used the ward recrudescence of temperance agitation in 1911, this network of village and urban units was revamped and extended to cover most parts of the low-country, and beyond temperance work narrowly defined

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<sup>1</sup> R. D. Gunawardesia, 'The Reform Movement and Political Organizations in Ceylon with Special Reference to the Temperance Movement and Regional Associations, 1900-1930', (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, 1976), pp. 14-73.

<sup>2</sup> Roberts Michal Elite, *Nationalism and the Nationalist Movement in British Ceylon*, Colombo, Department of National Archives, 1977, pp. 23-28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30,31.



(which continued to be the main focus of activity) it spread to the wider aspects of rural regeneration and welfare.<sup>1</sup> Between the temperance agitation of 1903-5 and that of 1911-14 there were substantial differences. The campaigns 1911-14 covered a much wider area, and the response they evoked at the grass roots level was, if anything, even more enthusiastic.<sup>2</sup> There was greater sophistication in the organizational techniques adopted, and above all it came as near as ever in the early twentieth century to a politicized movement. With the formation of the Total Abstinence Central Union, the temperance agitation grew in strength between 1913 and 1914, and assumed the proportions of a popular movement with distinct potential for transformation into a political struggle with wide mass support.<sup>3</sup> Some temperance leaders, among them F. R. and D. S. Senanayake, visualized the network of temperance societies as a viable basis for a nationwide political organization. But this promise was to remain unfulfilled.

### **Jaffna Association and Chilaw Association**

The Jaffna Association was formed in 1904.<sup>4</sup> It was an area where English education was established. The missionaries established English schools there. There was to some extent progress as far as English education was concerned. With the beginning of the British rule the trade activities between Jaffna and India came to a halt. Colombo harbour became the main trade centre. The result was that this area neither developed as a trade centre nor any private business established there. Therefore the educated people of this area couldn't get a job in the Government sector. The Jaffna Association could be categorized as a unity formed among the educated Tamils to achieve these objectives. The Ceylon National Review magazine of Ceylon Social

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<sup>1</sup> Fernando P.T.M. Buddhist Leadership in the Nationalist Movement of the Ceylon, The Role of the Temperance Campaign, *Social Copass*, vol. 20, no.2, 1973, pp. 333-336.

<sup>2</sup> Blactor Charles, 'The 1915 Riots in Ceylon', *CJHS*, vol.10, 1967, no.1/2, pp.27-69.

<sup>3</sup> Roberts Michal Elite, *Nationalism and the Nationalist Movement in British Ceylon*, Colombo, Department of National Archives, 1977, pp.30,31.

<sup>4</sup> Russal, Jane, *The Ceylon Tamils under the Donoughmore Constitution*, (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sri Lanka, 1970, p.01.

Reform Association started to get the political and economic requirements of the people of Jaffna.<sup>1</sup> The Chilaw Association was formed under the leadership of the wealthy Corea family which owned extensive coconut land. Because of the strong objections they showed against the Land Act of 1897, this association was subjected to the anger of colonial authorities.<sup>2</sup>

### **Ceylon Social Reform Society**

This society, formed in July 1905, showed how the nationalistic influences motivated by the religious reawakening movements have reached the English educated people. The first president of this association was a profound scholar by the name of Ananda Coomaraswamy. Hulugalla Disawa, James Pieris and E. R. Gunaratne were Vice-Presidents and the Joint Secretaries were Museus Higgins, Charles Batuwantudawa and Peter de Abrew.<sup>3</sup> Ananda Coomaraswamy who was the President of this association had studied science and had a good educational record. He was confident that a nationalistic awakening should be brought about for initiating a movement to protect the indigenous languages and to develop local arts and handicrafts.<sup>4</sup> Coomaraswamy was also earlier an associate of the Parama Vignanarta Buddhist Society (Buddhist Theosophical Society). The speech he delivered to the Reforms Committee in 1905 was published in the December edition of the magazine of this Society:<sup>5</sup>

“I hereby declare the objectives of the society. They are encouraging for Sri Lankans to reform the existing social customs and taking the lead in such matters, discouraging the blind imitation of European customs which are not suitable for our society, ensuring the national

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<sup>1</sup> *Ceylon National Review*, no.3, 1906, Supplement.

<sup>2</sup> De Silva, K.M., *Nineteenth Century Origins of Nationalism in History of Ceylon*, Vol.iii, pp. 249-261.

<sup>3</sup> *Ceylon National Review*, no.3, 1906 Supplement.

<sup>4</sup> Crouch James, “Ananda Coomaraswamy in Ceylon: A Bibliography”, *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, July-December, 1973, no.2, pp.54-56.

<sup>5</sup> Quinn William, W., “Hendry Steel Olcott Impact and Influence on the Buddhism of Ceylon”, *Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, June-December, 1978, no.2, pp.17-37.

supremacy within the cultural field and promoting respect and co-operation among communities”.<sup>1</sup>

The committee of this association included the foreign volunteer Musaeus Higgins and F.L. Woodward and the local leaders D.B. Jayatillaka, W.A. de Silva, Charles Batuwantuduwe, C.A. Hewavitharana, Martinus C. Perera, J.P. Obeyssekera, G.L. Cooray, John de Silva, W.C. Dias and H.S. Pereraetc.<sup>2</sup> Through the Reform Society based on the Sinhalese Buddhist communal basis it accepted as “National” all the customs of Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims. Some rich Buddhist businessmen who helped in Buddhist activities were associated with the production and distribution of arrack. Some rich Buddhists who were closely associated with the business of arrack included H.M. Salgado, the Jeramius Dias family at Panadura, Thomas Amarasuriya at Galle, Sri Chandrasekera at Moratuwa and D.S. Senanayaka at Mirigama.<sup>3</sup> The Lanka Social Reform Society was active in matters concerning National Culture to suit the multi-racial and religious set-up which prevailed among the English educated. The President of the society Ananda Coomaraswamy said, “Our social system has deteriorated, wealth and power have gone away from the hands of those who held it once, what is necessary now is a change and in fact a basic change.”<sup>4</sup> The 1st annual conference of this society was held in 1906. They discussed about encouraging children for Sinhalese education and to the attention of Director of Public Education to focus on it.<sup>5</sup> Addressing the annual conference of the society in 1907 he said, “It is true that Indian National Congress is basically a political organization. We are proud to remain independent from the Indian politics. But this may not be a very wise

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<sup>1</sup> De Silva, W.A., “Public Policy and National Progress in Ceylon”, *The Ceylon National Review*, No.2, supplement July, pp. 210-213.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Jayasekera, P.V.J., “Social and Political Change in Ceylon: 1900-1919”, (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1969), pp.92-93.

<sup>4</sup> Mel, F.J., “Reform of the Ceylon Legislative Council”, *Ceylon National Review*, No. 4, July 1907, pp.32-38.

<sup>5</sup> *Ceylon National Review*, Supplement, 1906, pp.8-10.

position”.<sup>1</sup> The magazine of the organization was the mouthpiece of the people with published articles showing the national and cultural pride of the East and other articles accusing the blind imitation of the Western customs as well as articles revealing the indigenous arts, literature and history.<sup>2</sup> Some of the articles showed how Japan has acquired a position equal to the Western countries by staying immune to the influences of western customs and religions.<sup>3</sup>

### **Low Country Product Association**

In 1907 the Low Country Product Association was formed and its main objective was to facilitate the needs of coconut plantation owners. At first the leadership of this association was in the hands of James Pieris, Markus Fernando, H. L. De Mel and N.D.B. De Silva who had become leaders’ among the wealthy and educated in the Karawe caste.<sup>4</sup> Even though it was originally founded to safeguard the interests of coconut land owners, with the passage of time they started working for the interests of all Sri Lankan Producers.<sup>5</sup> This association could be introduced as an association formed on the examples of Ceylon Planters’ Association of European Land Owners and Ceylon Chamber of Commerce of European businessmen. Land owners and businessmen of Karawe caste dominated this association.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Ceylon Reform League**

The Ceylon Reform League was formed on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 1917. Ponnambalam Ramanadhan was appointed as the first president. Among its major objectives was to impress upon the administration and its apparatus to

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<sup>1</sup>De Mel, F.J., “Reform of the Ceylon Legislative Council”, *Ceylon National Review*, No. 4, July 1907, pp.32-38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.78-80.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Nawarathna Bandara, A.M., *National Movements in Sri Lanka under the British Rule*, Colombo, 2007, pp. 305-360.

<sup>5</sup> Jayasekera, P.V.J., “Social and Political Change in Ceylon: 1900-1919”, (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1969), p.149.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.149.

study the political, economic and social problems of the people.<sup>1</sup> Though the new league was proclaimed to be established to bring the agitations for constitutional reforms under a better organized basis only 18 people participated in the meeting organized to establish the new league. An effort was made to restrict the membership as the organizers thought that a delicate small group would be able to function with great enthusiasm. The membership fee was fixed 10 rupees per month.<sup>2</sup> During the first year there were 40 members in the league. Organizations affiliated the league were from Kandy, Galle, Kalutara, Kurunegala, Negombo, Kegalle, Matara and Ratnapura. D.B. Jayatilake and E.W. Perera who were in England at that time to agitate about the incidents in 1915, were appointed as representatives of the league resident in London. The new league sent a dispatch to London in June 1917 which contained its proposals for constitutional reforms.<sup>3</sup> The proposals included among others abolishing the communal representation done through nominations, admission of a majority comprised of representatives elected at provincial level, provision of an elected president or a speaker, reducing the number of official in the executive committee and the recruitment of Ceylonese to civil service.<sup>4</sup>

Fifteen out of the nineteen proposed to be selected by vote will be from provincial electorates and the remaining four will be reserved for Europeans, Muslim and Burghers. A service of qualifications based on factors like education, ownership of land and income was formulated to confer franchise.<sup>5</sup> Not only fluency in English language but also the ability to read and write Sinhala as well as Tamil was included regarding educational qualification. This

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<sup>1</sup> Bandaranayake, S.W.R.D. (ed.), *The Hand Book of the Ceylon National Congress*, (HBCNC), Colombo, H.W. Cave and Co., 1028, pp.98.

<sup>2</sup> Jayasekera, P.V.J., "Social and Political Change in Ceylon, 1900-1919" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1969), p.456.

<sup>3</sup> Bandaranayake, S.W.R.D, edited, *HBCNC*, Colombo, H.W. Cave and Co: 1028, pp.98, 108.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Sir Ivor Jennings, *The Constitution of Ceylon*, Indian Branch, Oxford University Press, 1953, pp.27-35.

plan including unified proposals wouldn't be taken for discussions with the Ceylon authorities due to the untimely death of Governor John Anderson.<sup>1</sup>

Though this matter came to a halt all the unity which was formed between the National Association and the Reform league became a foundation for unifying the overall agitations of Ceylonese for reforms. Because of the new enthusiasm which had sprung up vis-à-vis politics after 1916 as many new organizations were formed all over the country. The upcountry association formed in 1917 and the associations established at Galle, Matara, Ratnapura, Sabaragamuwa and Kalutara, the young Muslim league and Ceylonese Indian Association were some of these organizations. Because of this situation the necessity to hold discussions with representatives from various organizations arose for continuing the agitations organized by different organizations on a better foundation. It was evident to them that if various organizations come up with their own proposals separately the effect would be very much less.<sup>2</sup>

The result of this was the decisions taken to summon conference about constitutional reforms for preparing a common plan taking the proposals for constitutional reforms. Arunachalam pointed out that a conference of this type was necessary for discussing about the possibility of organizing a unified program or any other more advanced plan of action.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the leaders of this organization stressed on maintaining the indigenous cultural, educational institutions, religious establishments, cultural boundaries, ideological institutions besides political organizations that would look after the overall interested of the population of Sri Lanka. All the above mentioned organizations created a climate of political awakening among the Sri Lankans through the writings and speeches of the leaders of these organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Ivor Jennings, *The Constitution of Ceylon*, Indian Branch, Oxford University Press, 1953, pp.27-35.

<sup>2</sup> Nawarathna Bandara, A.M., *National Movements under the British Period in Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 2007, pp.317-20.

<sup>3</sup> Bandaranayake, S.W.R.D. (ed.), *HBCNC*, Colombo, H.W. Cave and Co; 1028, pp.98.

## 5.1. INDIA

### 5.1.1. Introduction

The nineteenth century in Indian and Sri Lankan history witnessed the emergence of many intellectual currents for national regeneration in almost all sphere of life be it social, religious cultural economic or political. However, one cannot deny the fact that socio-religious – cultural reforms formed the major plank of the nineteenth century Indian intellectual movement. In the forgoing pages an attempt has already been made to portray the basic features of the civil reform movements during the nineteenth century and the subsequent impact of these on individuals towards bringing about simultaneously political consciousness among the general masses of the countries of India and Sri Lanka. It is equally significant to point out the criticism and condemnation the founding fathers of movement received at the hands of orthodoxy and conservatives who never desired any change or tinkering with the established social and religious norms to the extent of ostracization and banishment from the social and religious groups. The conservatives were opposed to any change in the Hindu religion and social customs, for they looked upon them as hallowed by ancient tradition and enjoyed by sacred books. The attacks of the missionaries and others only confirmed them in their resolve to preserve them intact. They argued that their religious practices were divinely ordained and possessed deep spiritual significance, however ugly their features might appear outwardly. The Conservatives made all efforts and resisted all attempts of the reformers.<sup>647</sup>

Although it is true that all classes were affected by the establishment of British hegemony over India and Sri Lanka, however, the changes in different strata of society were not the same nor in different parts of India and Sri Lanka. And so far on the civil reform movements were concerned, these did not lead to any drastic or radical change in the social customs and or religious attitudes

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<sup>647</sup> Tara Chand, *History of Freedom Movement in India*, vol. ii, New Delhi, 1974, pp.241-242.

and these could in no way be considered as mass movements in view of the fact that general masses could not be brought under its influence. The masses were invariably illiterate and the intellectual currents of the time left them largely untouched.

The renaissance of the intellectual movement in India and Sri Lanka invariably was an urban phenomenon. The leaders of the movements by and large hailed from urban centers thus these ideas of reformation as a result of which originated and operated in urban centers resultantly a thin slice of population came under its influence. The majority of the population belonging to rural areas remained altogether uninfluenced by such reformative ideas. True that the reformative tenets remained confined to certain urban pockets, a few leaders however with their broad vision and intellectual capacity desired to extend its influence to many regions and the country as a whole.

The ideas and activities of the intellectuals of the renaissance movements were directly or indirectly related to the task of building and reconstructing of a nation to which they could be proud of. Thus the social and religious reform movements were not an isolated phenomenon but were loaded with wider national, political and economic considerations. As already pointed out in case of the struggle for independence, many kinds of social reforms had taken place along with cultural and religious movements against the British imperialism in India. For this, the national and public consciousness or the awareness of Indian masses became much powerful to bring the movement to the forefront.

It is noteworthy that local level movements played a vital role in developing individual consciousness among rural intelligence. At the same time, liberal ideas of Indians on sovereignty grew rapidly. Because of this very reason, the movements got the chance of enhancing the national scope of the program of reconstruction in the social and religious spheres. India is a nation of multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-caste systems which



had a multi-social stratum. Bringing the public under one umbrella became a great strength to the leaders of the movements. A very strong inter-relationship sometimes could be seen among the reformers of the same religious denominations to achieve the desired goals. The leaders, who were the pioneers of the national movement, therefore had to launch initially the reformations in the social and religious sectors later on brought in its ambit economic and political sectors of India. As a result, the Movement for the Indian Independence was definitely a mass-based one representing all the strata of the Indian society. The movement had to deal with a series of constant ideological evolutions. It was not only an evolution of anti-colonial nature but also a struggle of overcoming the barriers for freedom in politics, economics and social environment.

As made clear in the previous chapters the various organizations which were formed in India during the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries played a great role in liberating the country from the British domination and gaining civil rights of the people. The contribution provided by those organizations for bringing about renaissance to the sub-continent has been classified under the following sub headings:

- i) The role of the organizations in social welfare.
- ii) The role of the organizations in national economy.
- iii) The role of the organizations in political freedom.

### **5.1.2. The Role of the Organizations in Social Welfare**

The purpose of all the civil reform organizations was to work for the material prosperity and the social advancement of people at large. The intellectual awakening was not necessarily related to religion but had social orientation, this is the reason issues of social concern rather than religion gained pre - eminence in the programme of reformers throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Again, evaluating the issue of Zamindar is not in any way a digression

from the main of social concern. As landholders' society in India, 'Zamindars' is the most important and powerful indigenous social class. The word 'Zamindars' is derived initially from the Persian 'Zamin', i.e. Earth or 'Land' and the suffix 'dar' means 'holders'. It means 'Landowners'.<sup>648</sup> In the Indian society there had been a great influence from the landholders' society. There was a growing influence from the landholders to the British-Indian Society in England with whom there had been an alliance. This situation created some inconvenience among certain sections of Anglo-Indians in India. As the landholders' society had a great power in the Indian society, they had a link with the Indian local administration. Therefore, they enjoyed the administrative power in society since medieval times. 'The Friend of India' had understood this very clearly and warned the government of the danger. What is most likely to arise against the metropolis and to give other parts of the country same recognition to the privileges and the advantages that the metropolis enjoyed. They were enjoying a general education system with the medium of vernacular languages.

To have an encouragement on the local associations, the landholders formulated municipalities through which the reanimating of the country was expected by making a loud voice that could be heard and felt by all.<sup>649</sup>

As aforesaid landholders, were a prominent lot in Colonial India, their system was a way of ensuring the collection of taxes from peasants. As the

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<sup>648</sup> Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1526-1707*, for the meanings of *zamindar*, Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 140.

<sup>649</sup> *Friends of India*, 5 December 1839; An organization of Zamindars the landholders were typically the hereditary aristocrats and had an enormous ownership of land and held the control over their peasants from whom the landholders had the right to collect tax for especially military purposes. Very often they were the Indian princes who lost their sovereignty with the invasion of British rulers. During the Mughal Empire, Zamindars were titled as nobles and belonged to the ruling class. The truth was that the Zamindars' rights had originated in several different ways. They were descendants of officials to whom in lieu of a salary the emperor had given the right to collect the king's share of the tax. However, most of the representations made to the government and the solutions received with much attention were on questions affecting the interests of landholders. They did not work as a narrow minded and self-interested group. It never claimed any privilege for its constituents but took up several concerns on the welfare of the public on a large scale. They stressed the need for the use of Bengali in the courts, the reduction of stamp duties, the granting of subsistence to the witnesses in criminal suits and the emigration of Coolies to Mauritius.

landholders were the leaders of Indian society they were the representatives and spokesmen for the rulers to some extent. The landlords' society automatically became the agents or the means of the public grievances that must be taken to the authority because they were the only well-organized indigenous political body in Bengal at that time. Some of the Calcutta landlords that led the public were leaders having liberal thoughts. Though they did not seem as good Zamindars, their education and contacts had broadened their outlook and widened their sympathies. They were very anxious of disproving the accusation that some Anglo-Indian cities were already being busy to make. The society represented was only a particular selfish one.<sup>650</sup> For this, a very close and active association of many Britons, especially the lawyers, joined hands with the Landholders' society to ensure the liberal character of it.

In view of wide spread illiteracy in the country there were certain individuals and organizations that played a crucial role in creating consciousness among the masses towards social advancement and prosperity. Thus apart from the Landholders Society, the British India Society played a vital role in the sector of social welfare. When we view the work of British India Society, it is noticed that it didn't confine its attention completely to administrative and political issues. It had an open and detailed investigation into the condition of the 'Raiyats'<sup>651</sup> in lower Bengal. Before being made public, a printed questionnaire was sent to those who were responsible in the 'Mosfussil'.<sup>652</sup> Then the information presented by the latter along with the suggestion of remedial measures was examined and analyzed by a sub-committee of the society. The accord of the teachers in the government schools

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<sup>650</sup> For example, the remarks of Dwarakanath Tagore at a public meeting of the Society held on 7 December 1839, in *Bengal Hukaru*, 16 December 1839.

<sup>651</sup> "**Ryot** (alternates: **raiyat**) was a general economic term used throughout India for peasant cultivators but with variations in different provinces. While Zamindars were landlords, Raiyats were tenants and cultivators, and served as hired labour."

<sup>652</sup> "Originally, the regions of India outside the three East India Company capitals of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras; hence, parts of a country outside an urban centre; the regions, rural areas."

in Bengal and of the ‘Ticca’<sup>653</sup> bearers in Calcutta was the cynosure of the society advocating the cause of the masses as well as technical and female education. Not only that, it also raised its voice against the prevailing practices of ‘Kulin’ polygamy and the constant widowhood among the Hindus. The majority of the society had favoured to have a legislative action to put down such evil practices. Meanwhile, a section of Anglo-Indian press never had a kind look at the Bengal British India Society. As a result of this the government had grabbed some of the prominent figures away from the society and they had been appointed as deputy magistrates.<sup>654</sup> The older and more conservative leaders of the Indian society in Calcutta would like to have aloofness from the society. The inquiry led by the society into the situation of the ‘Raiyats’ in lower Bengal could not have made it popular with the landholders. The view of the rational thinkers among members of the society deeply concerned the education of the girls and the remarriage of the widows.

The complete abolition of system of polygamy must have offended orthodox Hindus. As a result, in 1845 William Theobald took a firm decision on the situation and warned members of the society not to give any prominence to themselves either by the nature or number of the subjects undertaken and asked them to wait for improvement in Hindu society without having any legislative meddling with its customs.<sup>655</sup> Through the Calcutta petition it was suggested that each province should have its own governor, selected from

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<sup>653</sup> This is applied to any person or thing engaged by the job, or on contract. Thus a ticcaagarry is a hired carriage; a ticca doctor is a surgeon not in the regular by government. From Hind thika, thikah, hire, fare, fixed, price. A rule ordinance and Regulation for the good order and civil Government of the settlement of Fort William in Bengal, and for regulating the number and fare of Teeka Palankeens and Teeka Bearers in the Supreme Court of Judicature, on the 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1827 Bengal Regulations of 1827.

<sup>654</sup> Between 1843 and 1846 at least three members of the Society Chandrasekhar Deb, Shivachandra Deb and Kishorichandra Mitra were appointed deputy magistrates. On 13 February 1845 the *friends of India* noted that the ‘exaggerated statements and inflammatory address of *Young Bengal* had died into an echo’ and remarked that ‘a few Deputy Magistracies, judiciously bestowed, will doubtless prevent their revival’.

<sup>655</sup> *Bengal Hurkaru*, 12 May 1845.

amongst the oldest civil officers.<sup>656</sup> It further suggested that the higher salaries paid to the high officers must be reduced and the money saved from this cut down must be applied to the public works and to the allowances of the low paid assistant officials. Indicating a serious indictment in the 'Hailey bury system' it demanded that it should be uprooted by making public offices available for public competition by British youths in the United Kingdom and by native youths in India. While evaluating petitions these aimed at drawing out various improvements in the judicial, police and revenue systems of the country. The petitioners wanted to make a demand to increase the expenditure used for the public works and the public utility with the removing of the salt and opium monopolies and the exercise and stamp duties. By the petition they accused that no sufficient amount of money had been allocated for education and that the education of the public had still been neglected by the authority. The petition seriously proposed that the need for widely spreading the education all over the society through the medium of their own tongue must be done while demanding for the establishment of a University for each province. The petition of British India society was against the maintenance of the establishment of Christian churches in India going beyond the general revenues of the country.<sup>657</sup>

The Bombay Association in its petition as the British India Society had made a complaint about the coastal areas of the British administration in India. The petition said that the higher salary paid to British officials should be cut off. The weak point of Haileybury system was to the exclusion of Indians from higher employment. They demanded the abolition of the prevailing civil and judicial system. The petition read that the time for giving the Indians a much larger share in the administrative body of their country had arrived. Lords

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<sup>656</sup> Petition to Parliament from the Members of the British India Association, 1845, Public Records of National Archives in India, File No. 57, pp.19-28

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.45-47

Ellenborough,<sup>658</sup> Elphinstone<sup>659</sup> and others<sup>660</sup> had suggested that the councils of the local governments should be open for matter of general policy and legislation so as to enable natives of India to take part in the discussions of matters of general importance for the country.

‘The Bombay petition’ grieved on ‘the extreme poor means of internal communication in this presidency’. It pointed out that five percent of the amount of the revenue came from land must be spent in the district where it was levied in making roads, bridges, tanks and other works of public utility. It was proved that ‘all the improvements sought for or in the power of your Honorable House to make, are only secondary in importance in comparison with the necessity of introducing a complete system of education for the public’. Therefore, it recommended an increased expenditure for educational purposes and the establishment of a university in each presidency.<sup>661</sup> By the petition of Bombay Association it was asked from the Parliament to limit the period of existence of any future government of India to ten years so that the interest of so many people may be more frequently brought under the consideration of Parliament.

While evaluating the impact of the organizations on government, the Bombay Association could bring to the attention of the Bombay government some questions of public importance. It spoke of the reduction of trains between Bombay and Poona, on the Cotton Frauds Act,\* the charges over certain public ferries and of the ‘Civil Procedure Code Bill’. There it further read the presidency Magistrates Bill, the Indian Railway Bill, the heavy stamp duty, the ban on vessels of less than 300 tons from carrying salt and the

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<sup>658</sup> Edward Law, First Earl of Ellenborough (1790-1871), President of Board of Control 1828-30, 1834-35, 1841-1858; Governor General of India 1842-1844.

<sup>659</sup> John, Thirteenth Baron Elphinstone, Governor of Madras 1837-42 and Bombay 1853-60.

<sup>660</sup> Petition to Parliament from the Members of the Bombay Association, and other native inhabitants of the Bombay Presidency, related to the British Indian Government 1852, public Records of Indian National Archives, File no. 22, pp.11.

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.20-23.

\* An Act for the prevention of adulteration of cotton and the better suppression of frauds in the cotton trade of the presidency of Bombay.

condition of Indian immigrants in Mauritius.<sup>662</sup> It sent a congratulatory address to the Queen on her assumption of the title of “Empress of India” in 1876.<sup>663</sup> Taking the movement of Bengal and the North-Western province as examples the Bombay Association summoned a public gathering of the inhabitants of Bombay on 15<sup>th</sup> December in 1877 in the Framji Cowasji Institute Hall to address the civil service question. The meeting was chaired by Sir Mangaldas Nathubhani and the leaders of all of the Indian communities in Bombay were together here to talk about the question. There a petition to the House of Commons was drawn up demanding the raising of the maximum age limit for the Indian Civil Service examination from 19 to 22.

The prevalent Indian Association was one of the most dedicated associations that worked for the reformation of the Indian society. It was the association that presented the idea of holding an annual conference of all the associations in India which worked for gaining a complete and meaningful independence to India. This idea of an annual conference of representatives of various types of associations in India had been attracting the attention of the Indian public for a long time. Led by the Hindus of Madras there had been a reawakening of the project of a national fund. Annual conferences of selected members from all over the country were held. These annual meetings would have had the priceless effect of harmonizing the local feelings, spreading of the public spirit and motivating the native public in backward provinces into action with the gained experience and the knowledge<sup>664</sup> of the advanced.

Once A.M. Bose had issued a letter to the prominent figures of the public and to the association saying for holding of a conference on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of December, 1883 on the Christmas week at Calcutta would prove to be a great success. It is because many visitors would arrive at the station from

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<sup>662</sup> Minutes of the proceedings of the Annual general meeting of the Bombay Association and in Eight, Ninth, and Tenth Annual report of the committee of Management for the years 1875-1877, pp.3-5

<sup>663</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.5-20.

<sup>664</sup> *Hindoo Patriot*, 8, 15 January 1877.

various parts of the country and then the discussion on the questions could be initiated there. Then very important views could be taken into account. The conference held, was a grand one with the welcoming speech made by A.M. Bose who pointed out the importance of holding such conferences in the future too. Prominent attention was paid for dispatching Indian youths abroad for industrial education. On the second day, the talk was on simultaneous holding of the examination of civil service in India as well as in Britain on a fixed day for both countries. The age limit should be twenty two and the appointment must be done after an intelligence test. Apart from the above talks very important questions were taken into consideration and the meeting was over on the third day. The judicial matters, the raising of a national fund, the repealing of Army Act etc. were among the topics of the talks.<sup>665</sup>

Similarly, Poona Sarvajanik Sabah was also involved in the social welfare activities of the oppressed Indian masses. The leaders of the Sabah they were demanding the introduction of the social welfare facilities from the British Government. These were the government gazette in which all the bills, regulations and acts were published, circulars and rules that were in force or might come into force, the passing of such bills acts, and regulations essential for the welfare of the people, the supervision of the municipalities, the management of *devathians* (religious endowments) and such matters relevant for the public welfare. It was prohibited to the Sabha by its own constitution to take part in religious disputes, private matters and clashes. For the expenses of the continuation of duties of the Sabah each member had to pay one day's income annually.<sup>666</sup> An elected committee had to manage the work of the Sabah. The meeting of all the constituents of the Sabah was to be held annually.

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<sup>665</sup> The Seventh Annual Report of the Indian Association, 1883, *Amrita Bazar Patrik*, 1833, January 5.

<sup>666</sup> Annual Report of the Managing Committee of the Poonah Sarwajanik Sabah for the 1794, *Native Opinion*, 11 May 1873.



During the first two years the Sabah had talks on various subjects mostly of local importance.<sup>667</sup> The members were to represent such matters as recovering the costs in revenue cases, reduction of liquor shops in Poona, the management of the Parwati temple's endowment, the responsibility of fund contributed by the Deccan chief in honour of the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh for the establishment of law class in Poona, etc. They were to inquire into matters like conflicts between European soldiers and Indians, formulating of regulations for maintaining relations between Indian Chiefs and their subjects and the Indian chiefs and the British government.<sup>668</sup> However, the Poona Sabah took the leadership of organizing a Swadeshi movement in Deccan. As a result the Sabah could win the approbation of the people and the Government<sup>669</sup> in 1872 and in 1876 by organizing a famine relief movement.

The major revivalist-reformist movement in India, the Arya Samaj was a society which rose against the corrupted religions and social practices in India. It was quite different from the Hindu society in which the beliefs were based on many gods and goddesses and followed the Vedic belief that only one god is there. They rejected the false beliefs, superstitions and trustless customs and practices. The true path of worshipping and following the sacraments (*sanskars*) was presented by the Arya Samaj. Their guide was the Vedas and Arya Samaj took the pioneering work of awakening the truth of Dharma which had been destroyed by the practicing of many faiths and customs of many religious groups. As a result of rejecting the principles of the religious unity the society was scattered into many groups.<sup>670</sup> Society was also divided with the practices of the caste system. Even eating from the other caste was banned and it was considered as a great violation of their customs. Thus the Hindu society was divided into many sub groups forgetting the fact that all Hindus belonged

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<sup>667</sup> Annual Report of the Managing Committee of the Poonah Sarwajanik Sabah for the 1794, *Native Opinion*, 11 May 1873.

<sup>668</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>669</sup> Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarwajanik Sabah, July 1878, April, 07.

<sup>670</sup> Prasad Upadhyaya, Ganga *The Origin, Scope and Mission of the Arya Samaj*, Published by Arya Samaj, 1954, pp. 60-65.

to one group. It was the Arya Samaj that worked to create a united society out of a shattered group. There was another grave problem of child marriage and the marriage of too young girls to aged persons thus leaving them widows at a very young age. These girls were not allowed to remarry. Arya Samaj took the leadership of revolutionizing the women to gain their rightful place in society. A new concept of 'Niyoga' came into being with the purpose of providing a better place to a widow by allowing her to marry one again after the death of her husband, and for the procreation of children this concept of 'Niyoga' was seen with disdain by many educated Hindus across India as the latter believed it had no sanction in original scriptures. Arya Samaj was not corrupted claimed by Arya leaders by the European culture and Arya Samaj was much powerful to keep up the self-respect and the spirit of the Indian culture while some Hindus were forgetting their religion and losing their identity. The was powerful enough to restore the rightful position of the Vedic Dharma and showed to the world that it was the fountain of righteousness.<sup>671</sup>

The main reasons for the degradation of Hinduism were the practice of caste system and untouchability. By the name of religion they had accepted these practices over thousands of years. Swami Dayanand, out of the many reformers and great people who had strongly spoken against these practices, was the first person who tried to have these practices completely erased with the help of Vedas. He pointed out that According to the Vedas every person was the child of God and there could be no differences as high caste or low caste.<sup>672</sup> Dayanand said that the Vedic class system of society (Varna System) and the caste system had nothing in similar. He strongly objected and totally rejected the discrimination of persons on the grounds of caste, creed, language and colour. In the Hindu society the disgusting practice of untouchability was more harmful than the caste system. Dayanand fought against the evil practice

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<sup>671</sup> Spear Percival, *The Oxford History of Modern India 1740-1947*, Oxford, 1965, pp.18.

<sup>672</sup> Farquhar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, Delhi, 1967, pp.406-407.

of untouchability as well. The movement of Swami Dayanand paved the way for Mahatma Gandhi to fight against the untouchability<sup>673</sup> in later years.

The leaders of reformation laid too much of stress on acquiring education. They were of the opinion that it was not birth, status or material comforts but education on scientific lines that would bring about revolutionary changes in society and would widen his/her intellectual horizon. The spiritual development of a person was dependent on the system of the education given to him or her. Not only that, the building of the future generation was also dependent on the principles of education and the educational system of a country. The westernized thinking had changed the whole principles of human society today. Swami Dayanand wanted to change this thinking and said that all should develop spiritual knowledge.<sup>674</sup> To gain this, he highlighted the importance of the practice of celibacy (*Brahmacharya*), self-discipline and meditation as the basics. Based on these thinking his followers started educational institutions in India.

There was a strict rule that women and low caste people must not be given any education. It is because there was a belief that women and persons of low caste had no right to education. They did not have any chance of learning Sanskrit or reading books and if they were caught doing so, they were punished. Then Dayanand expressed that it was the human right of all persons including women to be educated in all areas of learning and the way for them to learn the teachings of the Vedic religious books should be open.<sup>675</sup>

In order to buttress his views Dyanand tried to seek the support of scriptures for reforms. The scriptures had been reinterpreted only to legitimize and justify the ideas and reform he advocated.

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<sup>673</sup> Farquhar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, Delhi, 1967, p.48.

<sup>674</sup> Shantipriya, Pandit Saraswati, *A Critical Study of the Contribution of the Arya Samaj to Indian Education*, Delhi, 1975, pp. 25-30.

<sup>675</sup> Desai, A.R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Mumbai, Popular Prakashan, 2012, pp.125-130.

The Hindu as well as the Muslim intellectuals in India laid great stress on knowledge. The degeneration, degradation and ignorance was viewed as a curse and considered it the root cause of the prevailing obscurantism, superstitions, darkness, customs and traditions all deviations from the original sources of religion. Illiteracy in general and among women in particular was held responsible for national degeneration and backwardness. Thus the spread of education was accorded a primary position in the scheme of reform. Nearly all the intellectuals held education to be the panacea for all problems. The role of Syed Ahmad Khan in the spread of education among the Muslims on modern lines made them conscious of the role they later on had to play in safeguarding the interests of their community in the changed political conditions of India. Thus knowledge came to be recognized as the most effective agent of social transformation and national regeneration and it was indeed a significant feature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>676</sup>

The intellectual reformers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century articulated for the extinction of privileges of the higher castes in the existing educational arrangement. They opposed tooth and nail to the monopoly of learning by certain upper castes and classes and often voiced through their speeches and writing the spread of knowledge to all segments of society. It had been their sustained effort to bring all shades of people under education.<sup>677</sup>

It was Rammohan Roy, who brought forth the matter of abolition of Sati, the burning of the widow with the dead body of her husband. The agitation had been going on for some time and he himself was the key soul of it. He wrote pamphlets in order to prove that this inhuman rite was not approved by the Hindu scriptures. But when the Governor General, Lord William Bentinck, decided against overwhelming opposition to pass legislation

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<sup>676</sup> Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1974, pp.391-402.

<sup>677</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.430-438.

abolishing the Sati rite, Rammohan did not support him nor did he approve of his action. He preferred a steady pursuit of persuasive methods to any sudden change by legislation. He expressed the opinion that the practice might be suppressed quietly and in an unobserved manner by increasing the difficulties to perform it and by the indirect agency of the Police.<sup>678</sup> On the other hand, Keshab who was a member of Brahma Samaj induced the Government to pass the Native Marriage Act popularly known as the Civil Marriage Act in 1872 for legalizing marriages which were not valid according to the Hindu law.

Under the inspiration and leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen, the Brahma Samaj launched a comprehensive programme of social reform which formed a vital aspect of Indian renaissance. Some ideas among these may be from the Indian Reform Association which was founded by Keshab on his return from England in 1870. The program of the Association was carried out in five sections. They were:

- i) Female improvement, (ii) Education of the working Classes, (iii) Cheap Literature, (iv) Temperance, (v) Charity.<sup>679</sup>

The purpose of reformation was to provide an honorable place to the women who had suffered untold miseries at the hands of male dominated Indian history. Thus the concern of these intellectuals was towards female education which seems to be the root of all reform at least among the Hindus. The female education was also considered a way for social advancement. As pointed out a significant contribution of the intellectuals lay in the realm of female education. There had been an ever increasing number in female schools which itself indicates the onset of the trend of women emerging out of social seclusion imposed upon them. Female education was no longer deemed dangerous by the increasing number of people. The fact can also not be ignored that there was a stiff opposition against the female education from

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<sup>678</sup> Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol 1, Calcutta 1971, p.270.

<sup>679</sup> Pal, B.C., "The Brahma Samaj and the Battle of Swaraj in India", Calcutta, 1903, pp. 13-14.

conservatives and orthodox sections of people belonging to both the Hindu and the Muslims community.

The Prarthana Samaj followed a more moderate policy in social reform under the leadership of Mahadave Govinda Ranade. He said, “We do not want to break up with the past and cease all connection with our society. We do not desire to give up our hold on the old established institutions”. He said he would abandon his society because it tolerates what seemed to them to be great evil” The result was that the members of the Prarthana Samaj remained within the pale of Hinduism. But they rendered yeoman service by the organization of social reform movement under the guidance of M.G. Ranade who was the leading member of the Samaj.<sup>680</sup>

Many English educated people who did not belong to it had fully imbibed the rational and liberal spirit of the age and became ardent reformers of social reform. They were inspired by small groups of Englishmen in India who were eager to remove some of the most shocking and brutal social practices in India like the Sati which was later on abolished under legislation.

The cruel practice, which disgraced the name of the Hindu, was that of killing a girl almost immediately after her birth. Although the practice was declared illegal in 1705 and 1804, the difficulty of detecting this criminal practice carried out in utmost privacy baffled all efforts to check it. It was not till the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that strenuous exertions of the British officials backed by a general awakening of a rational spirit among the Indians through English education bore fruit and the crime steadily declined in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>681</sup>

As early as 1837, agitation for the remarriage of widows was carried on in Calcutta and Bombay. Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagara, a scholar and

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<sup>680</sup> Faquhar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movements in India*, Delhi, 1967, p.76.

<sup>681</sup> W. Jones, Kenneth, *The New Cambridge History of India: Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*, Cambridge, 2006, pp.139-141.

Principal of the Sanskrit College, headed this agitation and it was mainly due to his efforts that the Hindu Widows Remarriage Act, legalizing such marriage, was passed in 1856.<sup>682</sup> Ishwar Chandra in Bengal and Vishnu Sastri in Western India put their heart and soul in the propagation of this reform. A Widow Marriage Association was started in Bombay. An earnest but unsuccessful effort was also made by the English educated Indians in Bengal to abolish by legislation, the practice followed by Kulin Brahman of marrying 50, 60 or even more wives, most of whom he never met again after nuptial ceremonies were over.

The issue of legislation versus elevation of popular morals as the main instrument of social reforms divided Rammohan Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen, continued to agitate and divide the Hindu society for the next fifty years, and both sides could count on eminent men as their supporters. The question came to the fore again when Brahma Malabari sought to secure legislation against child marriage and a Bill was introduced, raising the age of consent from 10 years to 12. There was a strong protest by Tilak and many other eminent men, but the Act was passed in 1891.<sup>683</sup>

Like Hindu reformers, the Muslim reformers also espoused the cause of the Muslims and safeguard their interests in the wake of the occupation of India by foreign troops. The movements of reform among the Muslims too had urban phenomenon. Thus Bengal was a well-secured stronghold of the Muslims. But the battle of Plasay 1757 brought the introduction of British rule into Bengal. As a result the Muslim society got into frequent troubles and they lost their socio-economic, political and educational prosperity with the discriminative and oppressive policies of the British colonial rule. In the days of socio-cultural decline, several movements were born. The Wahabi Movement and Faraizi

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<sup>682</sup> Carroll Lucy, "[\*Law, Custom, and Statutory Social Reform: The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act of 1856\*](#)". In Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar (editors), *Women and Social Reform in Modern India: A Reader*, Indiana University Press, 2008, p.78.

<sup>683</sup> Cranenburgh, D. E., *Unrepeated Acts of the Governor-General in Council*, vol. iii, contains Acts from 1883 to 1893. Calcutta, Law Publishing Press, 1894 pp. 864.

movement of Haji Shariatullah were the most formidable.<sup>684</sup> The movements wanted the Muslim society to refrain from superstitions. These also gave stress on the justice, social equality, and the universal brotherhood of Muslims.<sup>685</sup> The Faraizi movement spread rapidly in Bengal particularly in those places where the Muslim farmers were depressed under the oppressive domination of Hindu Zamindars (landlords) and European Indigo planters. This reform movement gradually developed into a socio-economic revolt.<sup>686</sup> After the death of Haji Shariatullah in 1840, the movement was headed by his only son DuduMiyan. He organized the oppressed peasantry against the landlords.<sup>687</sup> It developed into an agrarian movement to protect the rights of the oppressed Muslim cultivators. It was an example from the history that a seething dissatisfaction and a sense of deprivation among the people in a society could cause a revolution if they were not given their rights. He organized the movement and gave it a strong anti Zamindari feel. He made an attack on the levying of illegal taxes by the Zamindars and declared that all land belonged to Allah, so no taxes.

The contribution and significance of Aligarh Movement for the revival and regeneration of the Muslims of the Sub-Continent were appreciated by Muslims of all hues and colours except a group of conservatives who opposed the ideas of Western education among the Muslims however later on after a generation or so too conceded and accepted the line followed by Syed Ahmad. Aligarh developed as the most important centre of the intellectual development for the Muslims of South Asia and those who studied at Aligarh College came from all over India. In a way it had become a focal point for the Muslims of South Asia for their education. In addition to this there was a lot of intellectual

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<sup>684</sup> Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan, *History of the Faraizi Movement in Bengal, 1818-1906*, Karachi, Pakistan Historical Society, 1965, pp.810.

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>686</sup> "Between the puritan Islamic and syncretism in Bengal: An Ecological Perspective on the Faraizi Movement". Iqbal Iftikhar, *Bangladesh e Journal of Sociology*, vol. 8, No.1 January, 2001, pp. 64-71.

<sup>687</sup> Muin-ud-Din Ahmad Khan, *History of the Faraizi Movement in Bengal, 1818-1906*, Karachi, Pakistan Historical Society, 1965, pp.28-39.



stimulation which was provided by it such as publication of books and formulating a Scientific Society.

By this movement students were made familiar with different traditions. They gained new knowledge, English language and modern Western philosophy and acquired a thorough knowledge about Islamic religion. In order to deal with the criticism that western education would alienate young people from its teachings and principles Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and his colleagues proved that the modern education and Islamic education could be reconciled together.<sup>688</sup>

Another major achievement of the Aligarh Education System was that it brought forward a group of students who were very inquisitive of what was happening in India and outside. This educated class that developed in India was instrumental in promoting Muslim identity and also advocating the Muslim demands to the government and to others because on one hand this educated class could communicate with the rulers as they knew the language and on the other, they had the new knowledge, philosophy and the thinking that would create a sense of unison among them.<sup>689</sup> A further contribution of this movement was that the Mohammedan Educational Conference which was created by these Muslim leaders had become a kind of a forum where Muslims from different parts of India would come together discuss not only education but all those issues which were of great concern. Since the meetings of Mohammedan Educational Conference were being held in different places across India it was able to communicate the message of the Aligarh Movement all over India.<sup>690</sup>

As is true of other movements after their evaluation, the Aligarh movement too had membership from well to do families especially families

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<sup>688</sup> Abdul Rashid Kahn, "All India Muhammadan Educational Conference and the Foundation of the All India Muslim League," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. 55, 2007, pp. 65-83

<sup>689</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>690</sup> Jain, M.S., *The Aligarh Movement Its Origin and Development 1856-1908*, Agra, 1965, pp. 20-30.

having mostly Zamindar background. The message also initially remained confined to upper middle class and middle class and could not trickle down to the common mass in view of number of reasons. The middle class was growing up in the new economic and intellectual environment initially among the Hindu. Its younger members were increasingly taking to English education and new ideas were fast pouring into their receptive minds. New sentiments which were unknown in the medieval times began to germinate and the ways of thinking and feeling began to alter.<sup>691</sup> Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and his colleagues advised the Muslims to avoid active politics. He was not inherently opposed to politics. But the point he presented was that they should concentrate more on the education. That is why he used to say that at that time Muslims needed only education. The facts and the data that were available at that time about the education of Muslims and others in India made us understand why Sir Syed was so particular about education. From 1859 to 1875 only 20 Muslims as printed out earlier were able to get graduated and obtain a degree from the educational institutions which the British colonial administration had set up in India. Against this during the same period 715 Hindus were graduated.<sup>692</sup>

Apart from the above, also some other reasons deeply believed that the Muslims must be educated before engaging in politics. Aligarh Movement was a religio-political movement which contributed a lot for the regeneration and revival of the Muslims of the sub-continent.<sup>693</sup> He along with his colleagues by their combined efforts tried to equip the Muslim community of Sub-Continent with modern knowledge and English language. Being a visionary leader, he envisioned that without acquiring modern knowledge the Muslims couldn't compete with the Hindus. That's why he advised the Muslims to learn modern languages to regain their lost glory in the sub-continent.

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<sup>691</sup> Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol.ii, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1974, p. 582.

<sup>692</sup> Abdul Rashid Kahn, "All India Muhammadan Educational Conference and the Foundation of the All India Muslim League," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. 55, pp. 65-83.

<sup>693</sup> Jain, M.S., *The Aligarh Movement Its origin and Development 1856-1908*, Agra, 2007, pp. 30-32.

It should be pointed out here that the British came down heavily upon the Muslims making their condition pitiable. Sir Syed Ahmad in fact was so depressed with the condition of his Muslim brethren, that at one time he contemplated leaving India. Earlier he was highly influenced by the Wahabi ideology.<sup>694</sup>

Since the majority of Indian Muslims were adherents of the Hanafi School with strong leanings towards Sufism and as such could not be won over by the teachings of Wahabhis. The rigidity of the Wahabis pushed closer to the people to the Sufi fold. Thus during this period we found that the ideas of both the Chishtiya and Naqshbandiya, the two main Sufi schools in India, were flourishing. But these ideas unfortunately degenerated into superstition and blind saint-worship in the hands of unscrupulous peers, which in turn produced a strong reaction in the minds of some of the Muslims who were despised with the role of traditional Muslim religious elite.

In a bid to gain more adherents, the leaders of various Muslim religious denominations tried to give solidity to their religious leanings through the formation of their own identities. The purpose of forming such groups was to increase its members susceptible to fall under the influence of other newly emerging sects like the 'Nechriyas' Deobandes, Wahhabis, Ahl-i-Hadith, Ahl-i-Quran etc. Thus the foundation of Dar-al-Ulum at Deoband in 1867 was the greatest achievement of the Wahabi school of thought in India whereas Farangi Mahal established during the reign of Aurangzeb continued to represent the old Hanafi School,<sup>695</sup> maintaining a link between the extreme and diametrically opposed Wahabi and Sufi doctrines. A third important institution with a distinct religious basis and an ideology not very different from that of Farangi Mahal, was founded in 1898 in Lucknow by Shibli Numani. It was called Nadwat al-

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<sup>694</sup> M. Zarabozo, Jamaal-al-Din, *The Life, Teachings and Influence of Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhaab*, Daw'ah, 2003, pp.26-30.

<sup>695</sup> Ahmad Qeyamuddin, *The Wahabi Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1966, pp.27-32.

Ulama, that showed a more progressive outlook and had produced scholars of repute.

Maulana M. Hasan was in charge of the Madrassa at Deoband from 1888 to 1920. He imbibed from his teacher Maulana Qasim, the qualities of selflessness and complete devotion to Islam. He tried to establish friendly relations between the modern Aligarh and orthodox Deoband schools. The Nadwat al-Ulama on the other hand, tried to bridge the gap between Aligarh and Deoband and various groups of Ulama. It wanted to reform the logic-ridden Nizamiyya system of religious education by putting greater emphasis on Islamic history and religious subjects, also introducing modern sciences and English as secondary subjects. The institution had produced many renowned Islamic scholars.<sup>696</sup>

### **5.1.3. The Role of the Organizations vis-à-vis National Economy**

The major consequence in the economy of India of the first decades of British rule had been the ruin of cotton manufactures on account of Manchester's competition, a diversion of labor from industry to agriculture and within agriculture itself from rising of food crops to the cultivation of commercial crops. The necessity to pay land tax in cash had begun to force the ryots to market a large proportion of his yearly crop in order to procure silver to pay his revenue.

The new agrarian organizations introduced by Britishers were actually meant for the benefit of the foreigners, rulers, industrialist, investors though a small group of Indian richer class like money lenders, those associated with trade (internal as well as foreign) also got benefitted.<sup>697</sup> The changes brought by the company in the urban sector were even more revolutionary in nature. The indigenous artisan class and the rural mercantile community were ruined

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<sup>696</sup> Ahmad Qeyamuddin, *The Wahabi Movement in India*, Calcutta, 1966, pp.27-32.

<sup>697</sup> Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. ii, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1974, p.279.

by the destruction of Indian handicraft and the extinction of Indian's export trade.<sup>698</sup>

This kind of destruction and ruination of indigenoes handicrafts forced the artisan class either to switch over agriculture or because of burden on agriculture made them idle. However the consciousness was growing among the Indians for safeguarding the interest of the artisan class. This led to the formation of various association organizations across Indian landscape. As a result, the landholders were the first to come forward and through the Land Holder's Society in 1838 a long and a well- prepared reasonable petition were produced before the authorities taking twenty thousand signatures incorporated in the petition. There was a large gathering of people around five thousand on the occasion of the presentation of petition in Calcutta. It was against the restarting of rent free lands to the authorities in India.<sup>699</sup> The main points of the petition were the securing a halt to the resumption of rent free tenures and extending the permanent settlement of land all over India including the grant of lease of wasteland to their occupants.

Another main activity of the landholder's society had been to establish contact with the British India Society a coalition of Manchester manufacturers and humanitarian quakers formed in British to encourage the development of India as source of non-slave – grown cotton.<sup>700</sup>

The role played by Dadabai in exposing the exploitative nature of the British rule was of paramount importance. In his celebrated work "Poverty and un-British Rule in India" he made all efforts to awaken Indians about the drain of Indian wealth through a number of methods adopted by the British officials. Such efforts of Dadabai gave British to a number of organizations who stood to safeguard the interests of the Indians. The Bombay Association was a

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<sup>698</sup> Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. ii, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1974, p.281.

<sup>699</sup> *Friend of India*, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 1839.

<sup>700</sup> Maccoby, S., *English Radicalism 1853-1886*, London, 1938, pp.16-17.

movement which fought against the exploitative nature of the British rule. There had been a protest against the imposition of the license tax on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 1878 in Bombay. The Bombay government didn't allow the meeting to be held in the town hall. Then under the American flag with the American speakers at the American Circus Pavilion<sup>701</sup>, they totally criticized the taxation policy of the Indian government and demanded for a representative government. However, it was a successful meeting. It was not only a protest meeting but really a public demand for the need of a representative government.<sup>702</sup> While the *Times of India* was reporting such an idea the *Poona Observer* reported that the meeting created a great shocking and an awakening situation in the dry bones of the public of India. They were now on the thought of having the demand of regaining the freedom of education, peace, common justice and the rights that a British subject was enjoying.<sup>703</sup>

A commercial crisis started in Bombay at the later part of 1878 and it was a great blow to the Bombay Association. On 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1879, it organized a protest meeting against the abolition of the import duties on cotton. Sir Mangaldass Nathubhai was very sad about the quietness of Bombay Association and emphasized the strong need for an efficient movement in Bombay reminiscent of the success of Sarvajanic Sabah of Poona.<sup>704</sup> However, Bombay had to wait until a really powerful and efficient organization was established in January 1885. During this time of gap the Bombay branch of the East India Association was to take part in the political activities in the city. Poona Sarvajanic Sabah decided to have a subcommittee to handle a wide inquiry into the condition of the agricultural clashes in Deccan. The members went into deep interior and met people, collected plenty of information on prices, wages, indebtedness, the effect of the land revenue and the increasing of

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<sup>701</sup> For the Proceedings of the Meeting, February, 1878; *Times of India*, 20 February 1878.

<sup>702</sup> *Times of India*, 20 February 1878.

<sup>703</sup> *Poona observer*, 28 February 1878.

<sup>704</sup> *Times of India*, 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1879.

taxation, and how the forest law was enforced.<sup>705</sup> Then the collected details were published and as the *Times of India* reported it brought out a sound judgment, and the trustworthiness of the committee.<sup>706</sup> In 1873 the Sabah joined the Bombay Association and sent a delegation to present evidence before the Parliament Committee on Indian finance. The Poona Sarvajanik Sabah, like other political associations, played its tribute to Henry Fawcett for rendering a great service to India.<sup>707</sup> The Sabah was raising funds for the relief for the famine-stricken public in Bengal.<sup>708</sup> Thus in view of the above facts the civil organization played a key role in awakening the people who also in the due course of time showed complete solidarity with the ongoing movement aiming at freeing India from foreign rule.

#### **5.1.4. The Role of the organizations in the Political Freedom**

Having produced various petitions to parliament in 1852 the British India Association commenced to working for the reformation and not yet for the independence of India. The petition addressed the British rulers showing a great loyalty, sincerity and fidelity to Her Majesty saying that they enjoyed the British rule as subjects of the Crown of Great Britain. They explained that they were with the desire of being under the British supremacy in India. Through the petition they stated the need for full freedom with peace and harmony and a stable and improved systematic government. They expressed their need to be a prosperous nation.<sup>709</sup> The petition referred to the Charter Act of 1833 and showed the disappointment that the Indians had as crucial necessities like the relaxation from the pressure of the revenue system, the promotion of public works, the encouragement of the local industries and commerce of the country, the prohibition of monopolies, the establishment of judiciary and police, the

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<sup>705</sup> Report from the Sub-Committee of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, Appointed to collect information to be laid before the East Indian Finance Committee on Matters relating to India, 1873.

<sup>706</sup> *Times of India*, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1873.

<sup>707</sup> *Times of India*, 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1873.

<sup>708</sup> *Times of India*, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 1874.

<sup>709</sup> Petition to Parliament from the Members of the British India Association, 1852, Public Records of National Archives in India, file no. 67, p.02.

education of people, the appointment of qualified people as the higher officers, who had the experience, capacity, knowledge of languages and laws of the country were not carried out. The petitioners further requested the admission of the natives to participate in the approval of constitutional governments thus qualifying them to enjoy the benefits of a free institution at a future period. The petition had spoken about the injustices that took place when British officials were appointed to higher posts leaving Indians for the lower ranking posts.<sup>710</sup>

A number of petitions could be seen placed before the British authorities for implementation and these were the only tools with the leaders to give vent to their feelings. One of the petitions indicated strongly that the government which was remote from the empire was generally liable to be ill conducted. The parliament must, as it suggested, had the ability of reviewing such eventualities. The government should not have a life-span exceeding ten years. The dual government was completely rejected by the petition, and proposed to establish a one bodied government with 12 members and out of that 6 were nominated by the Crown and the other half elected by a popular body. It expected a supreme Government in India governing the management of political and military affairs, controlling several presidencies ruled by separate governors and having the power of veto on the laws and regulations prepared by a legislative council.<sup>711</sup> Through the petition, they demanded the union of political or executive power with the legislative power so as to match with the interests of the people. It further continued that “the legislature of India should be a body not only distinct from the people in whom the political and executive powers are vested but also possessing a popular character”. The petition accused that currently a minor share of the administration of the affairs of their country were given to them.

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<sup>710</sup> Petition to Parliament from the Members of the British India Association, 1852, Public Records of National Archives in India, file no.67, p.02.

<sup>711</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.10-18.



The Calcutta petition pointed out how the arrangements of the present Legislative Council continued secretly. It further said that the government paid no attention to the opposition of the general public. It pointed out some instances of turning a deaf ear to their grievances. It pointed out that the positive benefits of legislature of British India in an open door policy should be established and that it would be more beneficial for the people to get much knowledge of the practice and they would have an assurance of their wants and interests would never be neglected. The petition spoke of the formation of the legislature, suggesting that the constitution must consist of 17 members from whom 12 should be Indians and the rest should be Europeans. For each presidency 3 members must be selected from the natives while 4 must be from the provincial governments being appointed by the Crown.<sup>712</sup>

The petition said that the native members might be nominated by the government with the agreement of the Governors of the several presidencies. But it proposed that some rules might be formed which would enable the people of the presidencies or the provinces to have the right of objecting to any appointments that were made. It presented that the Legislative Council must be framed on the principle of proposing, making and cancelling of laws which are already vested in the Governor General and four ordinary members or council and should be submitted to the supreme government for confirmation.<sup>713</sup> The petition demanded that an act must be declared for enabling the use of peoples' religious laws and naming the institutions to be guaranteed to the natives. Then the petition said that no authority can pass any kind of law without inquiring into the feelings and thoughts of the natives.

The petition mentioned above had deeper political implications and indeed paved way for other political development. However, when we turn to

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<sup>712</sup> Petition to Parliament from the Members of the British India Association, 1852, Public Records of National Archives in India, file no.67, pp.10-18.

<sup>713</sup> *Ibid.*

the political movements, Bombay Association didn't have much success because of having much indifference and official antipathy. But on the other hand, Madras Mahajana Sabha of Madras was carrying out its actions more successfully than the Bombay Association. Mahajana Sabha decided to hold a provincial conference towards the end of December in 1884. By this the Sabha wanted to coincide the Madras fair and annual accord of the Theosophical Society. It was expected to bring many leaders to the metropolis and Mahajana Sabha notified the *Mofucial* Association to this effect.<sup>714</sup> The talks took place at Pacheappa's Hall in Madras from 29<sup>th</sup> December in 1884 to 2<sup>nd</sup> January in 1885, attended over by 70 delegates and most of them were from Bangalore. The main subject of the talks was the representation of legislative councils, the separation of the judicial from the executive function, the changes in the structure of the Indian government and the condition of the agricultural classes.<sup>715</sup>

The establishment of the Indian Association aimed at the representation of the people by legitimate means for the political and national advancement of the people. It was this association that was holding a public meeting against the Vernacular Press Act. Several political associations in the country had wished success to the meeting. It was held with the participation of more than 4,000 people including students on 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1878 in Calcutta. The resolution adopted at this meeting said, the British Government had conferred the freedom of the press as one of the greatest blessing to pave the way for the political, moral and intellectual advancement of Indian people. The legitimate freedom of discussion was greatly enjoyed because the vernacular press had now been given the freedom.<sup>716</sup> A memo against the Act was forwarded to Gladstone and it was presented to parliament along with the same memoirs from Poona and

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<sup>714</sup> *Daily News*, 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1884.

<sup>715</sup> Proceedings of the (first) Conference of Native Gentlemen, held at Pacheappa's Hall under the auspices of the Madras Mahajana Sabha in January 1885.

<sup>716</sup> Report of the proceedings of the public meeting on the Vernacular Press Act, held in the Town Hall on Wednesday, the 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1878, p.2.

Bombay. The opposition of the Parliament forced the government to publish the papers connected with the passing of the Act.<sup>717</sup> It presented many objections against the Act. In the House of Common on 23rd July 1878, a very important debate had taken place. It had deeply criticized the secrecy maintained in passing of the act. Through the memoirs it attempted to get the matter aroused in the British parliament with the help of sympathetic members of parliament. J.M. Tagore was the only Indian representative in the Legislative Council when the act was passed.<sup>718</sup> The failure of British India Association to cooperate with the India Association in working against the act brought discredit to the British Indian Association in the eyes of the public. Indian Association earned a very big popularity on the brave stand it held against the Act.<sup>719</sup> It was an indication of the prominent leadership of Calcutta which included the upper class and educated middle class.

It becomes abundantly clear that it was the upper and educated middle class that aroused consciousness among the Indians about various frauds and fraudulent practices carried out by the British officials in almost in all sectors of life be it economy or polity. Without the cooperation of Zamindars and having no consideration of the opposition the educated middle class had organized a meeting of their own in Calcutta.<sup>720</sup> It was a very popular one at that time. Rosbihari Ghose was the key speaker of the meeting. Later he became the president of the Indian Congress. He greatly regretted the absence of some leaders such as Maharaja and Rajas on the occasion. The Brahmo public opinion of 25<sup>th</sup> April in 1878 pointing out its views said that “the fact that such an influential and crowded meeting could be called and rendered successful without the help of Zamindars, is a matter for sincerely congratulating to the people at large and this fact makes the social and political history of

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<sup>717</sup> *Hansard*, Third Series, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1878, vol. ccxxxvii.

<sup>718</sup> *Hansard*, Third Series, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1878, vol. ccxlii.

<sup>719</sup> *Times of India*, 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1878.

<sup>720</sup> Benerji, S.N., *A Nation Making Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Public Life*, London, 1925, p.62.

Bengal.”<sup>721</sup> The Rajas, Maharajas and other potentates continued to offer wholehearted support to the British with the sole purpose of keeping their cushions intact. The same support for the survival of the British rule could be seen during the great mutiny of 1857.

The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha in 1875 produced a petition to the House of Commons complaining that they were badly in need of direct representation of Indians in parliament.<sup>722</sup> The petition accused the parliament that it paid little attention to India and the officials worked being on partially favoured for the Indian questions. It spoke of the presence of the representatives in the French and Portuguese assemblies in India. They asked for 16 persons from British India elected by the tax payers who pay at least Rs. 50 per year as direct taxes must be in parliament (one each from Bengal, Bombay and Madras, and 2 from the North western Province and the Panjab.

It was the Western India where the political activities were stimulated by the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha. As a result, many political associations grew up speedily in the province especially in Deccan. This association followed the model of the Sabha. The leaders of Sabha worked for the purpose of motivating the patriotic thoughts and feelings of the public. The members worked hard throughout the country addressing the public with the help of educated men among native Indians to persuade the people to grow patriotic feelings and thoughts. They used to sing songs composed by the educated elite in the movement. Many writers came forward to pen their thoughts and ideas on more important matters of political social and economic issues of those days, before the ‘Sabha’.<sup>723</sup> The writers wanted to disseminate the ideas into the masses. The organization of such sabhas created a political climate in India in which the impact of one area had its influence on other areas.

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<sup>721</sup> Benerji, S.N., *A Nation Making Being the Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Public Life*, London, 1925, p.62.

<sup>722</sup> For the text of the petition, *Times of India*, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 1875

<sup>723</sup> Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, July 1878

From 1876, Sabah referred above worked for the private settlement of civil disputes, organizing arbitration courts in Deccan. By that it was expected to prevent going to the ordinary courts of justice.<sup>724</sup> Through such action it was expected to refuel the ancient Panchayat and to avoid the evil grabbing of poor people by the expensive litigations. On January 1<sup>st</sup> of 1877 at Delhi a grand ‘darbar’ was announced to be held by Lord Lytton the Viceroy of Queen Victoria to mark new title of ‘Empress of India’.

The leaders of the Poona Sabah took this chance to gain a nationally important advantage. A circular letter was sent to the princes, chiefs and the gentlemen inviting them to the great assembly to be held at Delhi. India as a nation got this opportunity as an advantage for forming a strong unity. The letter said, the honor that has been paid to you in your personal or representative capacity is regarded as an honour to the nation to which you belong and we have no doubt that the gathering of so many representative men from all parts of India is an event of national importance and that...” the message of the letter continued throughout the country. The letter ended saying, ‘you are the great of the land, the first parliament of the united Indian nation, and the first congress of the representatives of the diverse states and nationalities which make up the body of the politics of India’.<sup>725</sup>

The letter brought some suggestions to be considered at the assembly as follows:

1. We pray that you will make it a point of duty to see each other individually during your stay in Delhi, and bid welcome to each other, foregoing all reservations and petty misunderstandings, which have separated us long enough to our ruin.
2. We propose further that you will all meet together in private gatherings, and discuss with each other our present situation and future prospects.

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<sup>724</sup> *Poona Observer*, 4<sup>th</sup> March, 1876.

<sup>725</sup> *Poona Observer*, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 1876.

3. The great act of condescension on the part of our most Imperial Majesty in taking a purely Indian title, and in bringing all India together, demands loyal recognition, and we propose accordingly that a united address from all India, may be presented by you at the foot of the throne in humble but hearty response to the gracious Proclamation which His Excellency the Viceroy will issue on this occasion.
4. We request that you will, independently of the invitation you have received from Government secure from the inhabitants of the town or district to which you belong, the necessary written authority, empowering you to present the address in the name of the millions who will not be able to attend in person at the gathering.<sup>726</sup>

In 1876 at the end of December a group of members of the ‘Sabha’ including two secretariats named Ganesh Vasudev Joshi and Sadashiv Ballal Govad<sup>727</sup> went to Delhi. The delegates tried to canvass support for holdings for the supporting of the periodical conferences of the representatives of Indians. As things went on like this, nine years later the establishment of the Indian National Congress took place. With the idea of holding an annual conference, the representatives of the native press and political association were to meet together. By considering the views of all on the political issues, it was decided that the first conference was to meet in Calcutta. In the conference, the areas and the subjects needing attention were listed as follows:

1. The Indian Civil Service question, upon which a general expression of native opinion has been secured by the efforts of Babu Surendranath.
2. The question of the income tax, which is likely to be imposed to meet famine relief expenses.
3. The question of demanding a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the causes of the frequent occurrence of famines of late years, and of the

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<sup>726</sup> Poona Observer, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 1876.

<sup>727</sup> Retired from Bombay Judicial Service 1874.

success of the preventive and remedial measures adopted by the government.

4. The question of the liberty of the native press, about which it is rumoured that the Government is seriously thinking of passing exceptional laws to curb its alleged license.
5. The question of the extension of the permanent settlement of land revenue with suitable modifications to other presidencies.
6. The policy pursued of late in regard to schools and colleges for higher education.
7. The proposal to levy excise duties from cotton yarn produced in native mills.
8. The question of how far the reduction in public expenditure can be practically suggested as advisable.
9. The question of the withdrawal of State support from the Christian Ecclesiastical Establishment.
10. The question of the enlargement of the Legislative Council by the admission of more non-official native members.
11. The question of the extension of the elective franchise in the municipalities of the larger cities in the mofussil.

According to the "*Indian Mirror*" apart from the above, some other similar questions would be suggested and would be discussed and the principles of the action would be determined.<sup>728</sup> In addition to the questions that paid much attention in Calcutta conference, in the forthcoming conference at Bombay the following questions were to be discussed were the Vernacular Press Act, the admission of representatives from India into the British parliament, the relationship of British Indian Political Agencies to the native

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<sup>728</sup> Indian Mirror, 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1878.

states, general customs tariff, the army expenditure organization and reform, the arms Act and the formation of a representative Indian Direct of several heads of political societies in India.<sup>729</sup>

## **5.2. SRI LANKA**

### **5.2.1. Introduction**

Like in India, The history of Sri Lanka did not remain immune to the currents and cross currents of developments of various natures in particular political taking place across Continents. Thus towards the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were several movements as mentioned earlier which came forward for regaining the educational, economical and occupational rights for the people of Sri Lanka. What is important to know that the initial movements did not speak of the foreign rule. The cultural nationalism and anti- Western sentiments were conspicuous by its absence in such agitations. No visible tendency was there that worked against existing authority. But it was seen that harmony was maintained with the authorities and much respect was paid for the existing environment. Instead, they only wanted to gain liberal and democratic political evolutions. Paying much loyalty to the British rulers, the leaders of the organizations expected to have some advantages from the constitution. However, the fact cannot be ignored that it was a very clear that there was a complete difference between their nationalistic attitudes and the philosophical attitudes in the Sinhalese Buddhist Nationalism. They only brought forward the religious or national problems but didn't want to have any favoritism for ethnic or religious matters.

There were many civil reform organizations which existed in Sri Lanka before the establishment of the Ceylon National Congress. They had been contributing immensely towards bringing forth the ideas of independence of Sri

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<sup>729</sup> Indian Mirror, 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1878.



Lanka and safeguarding of human and civil rights. These reform organizations can be discussed under the following three sub headings.

- (i) The role of the organizations in social Welfare.
- (ii) The role of the organizations in national Economy.
- (iii) The role of the organizations in political Freedom.

### **5.2.2. The Role of the Organizations in Social Welfare**

Keeping into consideration the larger issue of national interest the Reform Society consisting of Sinhalese Buddhists accepted the national customary culture belonging to all including the Tamils and Muslims. All the educated people in the three communities got together to have a Ceylonese culture for the nation. Under the influence of Westernization the English educated people scarcely thought of preserving national customs and there were demonstrations against the blind following of European customs. The Lanka Social Reform Society actively participated in these and was devoted to a National Culture in a multi-racial and religious society. Being the president of the society, Ananda Coomaraswamy pointed out the need to have necessary basic changes<sup>730</sup> in education, the use of language and establishment of public education system.<sup>731</sup> As the changes went on, in 1908 Annie Besant visited Sri Lanka and she addressed the members of the society as a prominent member of Theosophical Society. She said that the Western people wanted to find a very successful market for their trade. She further said that the Westerners tried to get every benefit from their colonies by the powers of guns and swords. According to her, the Western culture might easily be embedded into the indigenous culture. That is why she insisted on teaching children in their mother tongue and to give priority to national needs<sup>732</sup> of the people. The most

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<sup>730</sup> De Mel, F.J., "Reform of the Ceylon Legislative Council", *Ceylon National Review*, No. 4, July 1907, pp.32-38.

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>732</sup> Besant Annie, "National Reform: A plea for a return to the simpler Eastern life", *The Ceylon National review*, Vol. ii No.5, 1908, pp.97-110.

important thing about her was that being a British person she contributed to the development of schools in Sri Lanka. Ananda Coomaraswamy, F.L Wood Wards, Musaeus Higgins and the leaders of the reform society, had an attempt to have anti-Western thoughts in the much circulated magazine *Ceylon National Review*. They wanted to prevent the origination of two classes in society as lower class speaking Sinhala and upper class speaking English.

At the time of establishing the Buddhist Theosophical Society in 1880 in Sri Lanka there were four English schools owned by Buddhists. In 1868 Venerable Dodandoowe Priyaratana Thera established the 'Lokartha Sadhaka' Society. The first Buddhist school was established under this with the aim of providing an English education in a Buddhist environment. An English educated Sinhalese Christian who later embraced Buddhism was the principal. In 1872 it was given government subsidies.<sup>733</sup> In this period the government officials didn't show any opposition to the movement of building Buddhist schools. According to Kumari Jayawardana, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the officials seemed to have a satisfaction of Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims being loyal to the crown than to have some disloyal Christian movement.<sup>734</sup> Even in the Musaeus College the method of teaching was so as to be able to create citizens devising self-rule, self-government etc. The teachers who worked in the school were Europeans and their teaching was aimed at moulding of real Sinhala cultured children while making them disloyal to the Crown. As a result, indigenous culture was re-awakened. Instead of British history, Buddhism and Sinhala language were taught. At a time when things went on as stated above, Colonel Olcott came forward to assist Sri Lankans. In 1884 the Buddhist Protection Committee was organized under his leadership. He himself came forward for the Buddhists and struggled for justice to be done and there were very positive results from the British. That was how the Vesak day became a

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<sup>733</sup> Malalgoda, K, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society 1750-1900*, California, pp.1978, pp.234-235.

<sup>734</sup> Jayewardene Kumari, *The Rise of the Labour Movements in Ceylon*, Duke University press, 1972, p.29.

public holiday.<sup>735</sup> The first Buddhist newspaper “*Sarasavi Sadaresa*” was published and through it the opinions of the Buddhists were presented. Some thoughts against Christianity were highlighted through the newspaper. To counter these Christians said that the Buddhism was a religion that promoted the worshipping of statues.<sup>736</sup> Thus one finds a conflict between the age old religious traditions and the exotic being planted in Sri Lanka by Christian missionaries.

The activities of the Buddhist Peoples’ Society laid the basic foundation among the Buddhists for an organized movement. The primary purpose of the society was to launch an agitation in 1904 and getting the Buddhist attention focused on the land dispute at Anuradhapura. The struggle began in 1903 over the ownership of the land in which the Buddhist places of worship had been built. It had been undertaken through the efforts of Walisinghe Harischandra and this resulted in severe clashes.<sup>737</sup> During the course of this agitation many pilgrims gathered at the Anuradhapura station as an old woman was overrun by the vehicle of a Mudliyar of the Kachcheri. Finally, this demonstration turned violent. The crowd burnt down a Catholic Church the priest was severely beaten and subsequently sixty seven people including Harischandra were arrested.<sup>738</sup> The police reported that the thugs of the city and the low country Sinhalese and not the worshippers should be blamed. This incident showed how Sinhalese were advancing in an aggressive manner. In 1905 a situation erupted where the Buddhists and Catholics were about to clash. The police reported that Dharmapala and Harischandra led a movement to agitate the Buddhists. Dharmapala accused that the police sergeant had been drunk.

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<sup>735</sup> Jayewardene Kumari, *The Rise of the Labour Movements in Ceylon*, Duke University press, 1972, p.29.

<sup>736</sup> *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, March 4, 1881.

<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.*, March 11

<sup>738</sup> *The Ceylon Standard*, 14<sup>th</sup> January.

Meanwhile Inspector General of Police requested the Attorney General to find out whether it was possible to file a case against Dharmapala.<sup>739</sup>

In 1904 the government declared that their assistance would never be given to schools built within 2 miles of an existing school. The Buddhists started a strong protest against this and another protest was held against the state acquisition of land belonging to the Mihintale temple. A vast crowd was present in the meeting called to protest against this. The speakers who spoke at this meeting about the loyalty of Sinhalese pleaded for an immediate halt to attacks on them by the security forces.<sup>740</sup>

In fact the main leaders of the Buddhist movements who helped to organize the first ever strike of the Ceylon Labour Movement and establish the first Trade Union came from among the Buddhist agitators. There were also a few other people who were against the worshipping of god and challenged the existence of established Christian institutions. A.E. Bultjens who introduced the idea about trade unions to the Sri Lankan Labour Movement was an indigenous Buddhist leader in the 1890s.<sup>741</sup> He wrote an article entitled 'Trade Unions' to the July edition of the Independent Catholic Newspaper in 1893, in which he appealed that there was a need for Sri Lankan workers for significance of establishing trade unions. He carried out a comparison between the standards of the workers of Sri Lanka with workers of other countries. He said. "The worker in other countries is a trade unionist. He is aware of his independent nature and is always ready to fight for his rights. But the Sri Lankan worker is not a trade unionist. He is an independent person. But he thinks like a slave and sometimes even when his not so kind employer kicks him, he is ready to bow down his head in obedience".<sup>742</sup>

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<sup>739</sup> Dep, A.C., *The History of the Ceylon Police*, Colombo, 1969, pp.395-397

<sup>740</sup> *Sinhala Bauddaya*, February, 1911.

<sup>741</sup> Jayewardene Kumari, *Rise of the Labour Movements in Ceylon*, Duke University Press, 1972, p.32

<sup>742</sup> *The Independent Catholic*, July, 1893.

It further pointed out that salaries were unbelievably low and the profits surpassed the levels in England and stressed the need for the workers to take up the initiative. Bultjens proposed in that article that if anyone had to take the lead in this matter, they should be the press workers and he was always ready come to their assistance and personally willing to meet the active members of the press.<sup>743</sup>

An immediate response was received.<sup>744</sup> Commenting on this the *Ceylon Independent Newspaper* accused Bultjens of trying to create a chaotic situation among workers who were maintaining a good relationship with their employers.<sup>745</sup> What is important to know that the Sri Lankan history during the period under review did not produce as large a number of social reform movements as witnessed in India. The reason could be obvious that Sri Lanka is a small Island with a small population most of whom followed Buddhism. Most of the social, religious or political movements had the support and backing of the Buddhists, a fact which would become more clear in the pages ahead.

In the middle of positive and negative responses the printing workers under the support of Buddhist leaders formed a trade union in 1893. The workers of Cacher Company decided to strike on the delaying of salary payments. The strike lasted six days and the six workers who organized the strike were dismissed. The other workers were allowed to work under certain conditions and had to apologize for joining the strike.<sup>746</sup> This strike became a significant event in the history for the establishment of the first ever trade union in Sri Lanka. The Ceylon Printers Society which was the first trade union in Sri Lanka was established at a meeting held in Colombo, immediately after

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<sup>743</sup> *The Independent Catholic*, July, 1893.

<sup>744</sup> Nawarathna Bandara, A.M. *National Movements in Sri Lanka Under the British Rule*, Colombo, 2007, p.28.

<sup>745</sup> Jayewardene Kumari, *Rise of the Labour Movements in Ceylon*, Duke University Press, 1972, p.88.

<sup>746</sup> *Ibid.*

that a strike began. A detailed report about this was published in the September edition of the *Independent Catholic newspaper*. At the beginning there were 500-600 people in the meeting and they included lawyer H.J.C. Perera, lawyer Bartolamuez, Charles Jayatillake, Martinus C. Perera, Doctor Lisbo Pinto, Dadabhoi, Vincent Perera, A.T. Bultjens, Don Bastian Walter Silva, Kotelawala etc. Martinus C. Perera announced that the chairperson was H.J.C. Perera and after the speech by the president the principal of the Buddhist School Bultjens addressed the assembly.<sup>747</sup>

Bultjen's position became significant as he joined this as a leader of the Buddhist Movement. Ceylon Printers' Association also published a monthly newspaper called the *Ceylon Printer*. But by about 1894 it gradually deteriorated. Kumari Jayewardene shows<sup>748</sup> the reasons for the breakdown of the society to be the determination of employers to cripple the infantile trade union, lack of interest among workers to maintain the movement and non-receipt of broad support for this movement.

Both the president and the secretary of the printers association had studied abroad and it was a special feature here that both of them had revolted against the influence of the Catholic Church. They were people who had gained experience about European trade unions while studying abroad. Lisbo Pinto was an independent thinker and he openly clashed with the Catholic Church. He carried out a movement to attack the Pope and the Catholic Church. He requested the Sri Lankan rich and educated classes to come forward to assist the oppressed workers. He said, "The Sri Lankan worker has only a very few friends. In fact he badly needs friends. They claim him to be lazy, stubborn, uneducated and dishonest. Sometimes it can be so. But he does not have an

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<sup>747</sup> *The Independent Catholic*, September, 1893

<sup>748</sup> Jayewardene Kumari, *Rise of the Labour Movements in Ceylon*, Duke University Press, 1972, Ibid, p.89.

ability to become better. Our nature is mostly formed by conditions which affect us”.<sup>749</sup>

The strikes launched by the Sri Lankan under the clandestine help from the Buddhist leaders, were the main methodologies followed by the people of Island. Thus in 1906 another strike was staged to protest against a decree of the town council which prohibited carters from riding seated in the cart. They refused to transport goods and caused a huge disturbance by blocking the streets and travelling all over the streets. Other workers in Colombo supported this strike. Several violent incidents were reported from Colombo. The strike successfully concluded after 3 days as the decree of the Town Council was revoked<sup>750</sup> John Kotelawala was the main leader who supported the carters. Venerable Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangla who was a pioneer in the Buddhist reawakening, maintained personal relations with him.<sup>751</sup> He had thoroughly demonstrated his physical strength while serving in the Police Department and was notorious for harassing the Europeans who disgraced him. Anagarika Dharmapala used to encourage Sinhalese to physically attack white people following the brave example of John Kotelawala.<sup>752</sup> Kotelawala was a member of the British Theosophical Society and was an active member of the Temperance Movement in 1904 together with other famous personalities like Dharmapala and Martinus C. Perera. Kotelawala encouraged carters to act with a fighting spirit. He even corresponded with the Secretary in charge of Colonies on behalf of the carters. When the strike ended the carters held a meeting under the leadership of Kotelawala. A fund was established on behalf of the carters.<sup>753</sup>

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<sup>749</sup> Jayewardene Kumari, *Rise of the Labour Movements in Ceylon*, Duke University Press, 1972, p.91.

<sup>750</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>751</sup> *Ibid.*, p.93.

<sup>752</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>753</sup> Nawarathna Bandara, A.M., *National Movements in Sri Lanka under the British Rule*, Colombo, 2007, p.114.

It was at the Railway Strike in 1912 where the activities of the Buddhist leaders were seen much more than in the earlier instances. They demonstrated the dissatisfaction of the railway workers for not getting paid in proportion to the increased cost of living. As the engine workers from Colombo, Kandy and Nawalapitiya joined the strike the railway activities in the whole island was adversely affected. It became a severe problem for the government and they couldn't turn a blind eye towards the railway strike as the influence of the contemporary politics was reflected by it.<sup>754</sup>

The railway strike of 1912 became an important political problem as several factors like the warmth of the Temperance Movement of 1912 and the awakening of people caused by the long term agitations of Buddhists were having their effects on the contemporary political environment in which Dharmapala and Walisinha Harischandra 'the radical fighters of the Buddhist agitation' were the leaders. The strike that started with a collection of workers on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1912 continued until the 30<sup>th</sup> of August at the compound of the Mahabodhi Society. This was attended by about 3,000 railway workers and among the dignitaries present were Buddhist leaders Anagarika Dharmapala, Walisinha Harischandra, F.R. Senanayake and Martinus C. Perera and other prominent people like Hector Van Culenbergh, Emmanuel Jayewardene and A.J.R. de Soyza.<sup>755</sup> Out of these the last three mentioned were Ministers of parliament. They were the Burgher Minister of Parliament in the Legislative Council, Urban Minister of Parliament in the Maradahana division and Sinhala Minister of Parliament in the Legislative Assembly. In fact a committee of representatives including Dharmapala, Harischandra, Soyza and Jayewardene also went to meet the General Manager of Railways and he intimated to them that a commission would be appointed as already told by the Secretary in

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<sup>754</sup> Nawarathna Bandara, A.M., *National Movements in Sri Lanka under the British Rule*, Colombo, 2007, p.119.

<sup>755</sup> Sugathadasa, R.B.S., *Biography of Anagarika Dharmapala*, Colombo, Anagarika Dhamapala Board of Trustees, 1986,p.64.



Charge of Colonies and requested the workers to be sent back to work.<sup>756</sup> A letter was read to the workers in that meeting requesting them to have confidence in the commission which comprised Van Culenbergh and Soyza as members and Emanuel Jayewardene, Dharmapala and Harischandra also had signed that document.<sup>757</sup>

The strike of 1912 was instrumental in the birth of the first trade union among the railway workers. Buddhist leaders carried out a yeoman service as officials of this trade union. A few Buddhist leaders that had come through the English educated group were engaged in these activities. This organization was called the Workers' Provident Society and Lawyer Charles Batuwantudawe was its president. He was also the president of the Buddhist Theosophical Society at that time and was a very active Buddhist temperance leader.<sup>758</sup>

The Temperance Movement of 1904 which was the first Temperance Organization, was started by Christian missionaries belonging to various sects. They issued pamphlets highlighting the repercussions of consuming alcohol. The *Lanka Alcoholic* magazine was one of these.<sup>759</sup> But their activities didn't come to the fore as an agitation. This temperance voice was also heard through the Buddhist reawakening during its initial stages. In 1889 the *Buddhist Theosophical Magazine* denounced the gradually increasing use of alcohol and focused the attention of all patriots to this fact.<sup>760</sup> Buddhist propaganda rather tried to show that alcohol consumption was a feature which came with the Western culture. They pointed out that missionary movements and alcohol consumption were inseparable things.

The Buddhist Temperance agitation continued to gain prominent position as a movement which caused a warm social awakening. Because of the

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<sup>756</sup> Malalgoda, K, *Buddhism in Sinhalese society 1750-1900*, California, pp.1978, pp.20.

<sup>757</sup> *Sinhala Bauddaya*, September, 7.

<sup>758</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>759</sup> Jayewardene Kumari, *Rise of the Labour Movements in Ceylon*, Duke University Press, 1972, p.146.

<sup>760</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

wide-spread consumption and sale of alcohol the temperance agitation that sprung up as a counter check to it became a social movement. The establishment of temperance organizations throughout the country, their rapid propagation at grassroots level and Buddhist newspapers providing all encouragement for the cause. The most important feature of the Temperance Movement of was the fact that it originated among ordinary Buddhist people as its founder members were ordinary Buddhists.<sup>761</sup>

A significant person among these was P.A de Silva. An organization called “Koggala Non-drinkers Association” was formed under his leadership. It in view of the development of means of communication and transport subsequently started spreading into other villages in the Southern province. The Societies of this nature were established at several locations in Matara and at Dodanduwe. Some of the ways adopted by the agitators to popularize their movement were to conduct meetings and to encourage people by organizing temperance processions which travelled far and wide. One such temperance procession left Ahangama and joined other processions which were organized in 13 villages and finally reached Galle.<sup>762</sup> One of its objectives was for the people living alongside the route of the procession to get to know about the temperance movement.

The Temperance Movement had wider ramifications on different segment of population. The arrack toll chargers realized that their trade in arrack is threatened because of the temperance agitation.<sup>763</sup> It was therefore reported that they were making an effort to go against the Temperance Movement. *The Sarasavi Sanderesa* newspaper which published an editorial about this said, “instead of opposing the temperance movement what these arrack brewers should do would be to request the Governor to close down the

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<sup>761</sup> Fernando, P.T.M., ‘Buddhist Leadership in the Nationalist Movement of the Ceylon, The Role of the Temperance Campaign’, *Social Compass*, vol.20, no.2, 1973.pp. 333-336.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>763</sup> Fernando Tissa, ‘Arrack Toddy and Ceylonese nationalism Some Observation on the Temperance Movement, 1912-1921’, *Ceylon Studies Seminar, 1969/70*, Series no.9, pp.13-14.

taverns which he deems are unnecessary”.<sup>764</sup> During this period the establishment of temperance societies and conducting of temperance processions were intensively carried out. A considerable participation was seen in these activities. *The Sarasavi Sandaresa* newspaper reported that 6000 to 8000 people had participated in a temperance procession conducted from Ahangama to Galle. The temperance leader P.A de Silva was warmly welcomed there. As stated at that time, in the temperance societies spread from Ahangama to Kottegoda and there to Ambalangoda there was a membership of around 15, 000.<sup>765</sup> *The Sarasavi Sandaresa* newspaper reported on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1904 that the losses incurred by the Temperance Movement on the arrack brewers were not significant when compared to the overall gains they had made. This newspaper further stated that, “It is a grave mistake for rich people to feed hot lava to unsuspecting people. A person who sells alcohol is not a Buddhist. I sincerely hope that the Buddhists who sell alcohol will abandon that trade”. The publicity given to this by the Buddhist newspapers was very effective. People were much interested in establishing temperance societies and even the village headmen were taking the lead to form them.<sup>766</sup>

This movement gained in momentum with the participation of Buddhist leaders in it. Walisnha Harischandra took the lead in the temperance activities in the Anuradhapura area. There had been efforts through the net work of Temperance Societies to bring many parts of Sri Lanka under its influence. This resulted spreading the movements to areas like Anuradhapura, Kosgoda, Ambalangoda, Gintota, Minuwangoda, Kurunegala and Beruwala and Kadugannawa.<sup>767</sup> The Temperance Society in Colombo had been formed on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July. About 3000 people participated in the meeting held in Pettah. In

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<sup>764</sup> Nawarathna Bandara, A.M., *National Movements in Sri Lanka under the British Rule*, Colombo, 2007, pp.287, 288.

<sup>765</sup> *Sarasavi Sandarasa*, 1904, June, pp. 20-21.

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>767</sup> Malalgoda, K., *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900: A Study in Revival and Change*, University of California Press, 1976, pp.166-169.

view of the influence of Temperance Movement the Buddhist Theosophical Society brought forward a proposal to form a Central Temperance Society.<sup>768</sup> It was Anagarika Dharmapala who joined this temperance movement and conducted a propaganda campaign. He travelled across the country with the slogan “The person who drinks toddy is an outcast”.

The arrack brewers panicked due to the spread of Temperance Movements. As they realized the threat posed to them by the temperance activities. They in order to safeguard their interests desired the intervention of government. The paramount consideration for government was to take care of imperial interests rather than the local of whatever nature they demanded that government should take some sort of action to put an end to the Temperance Movement. They had to incur so many losses in the Galle district that they were forced to reduce the number of workers drastically. The government auditor F.R. Elis asked them to be patient and to see what will happen next.<sup>769</sup> *The Ceylon Standard* and *Ceylon Observer* newspapers that were published in English language carried out a systematic campaign against the temperance agitation. Meanwhile the *Sandaresa* newspaper published editorials being critical of the conduct of these English newspapers. There were also pamphlets distributed against the Temperance Movement. Such pamphlets were distributed in Panadura in July and in August 1904 and subsequently in Kurunegala.<sup>770</sup> The *Ceylon Standard* newspaper reported in 1905 that this temperance movement was carried out by the Buddhists and its objective was to cause economic ruin to the arrack brewers. That newspaper further reported that this temperance movement earlier became a failure in 1904 as it had those ulterior motives and was thus not an honest movement.<sup>771</sup>

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<sup>768</sup> Malalgoda, K., *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900: A Study in Revival and Change*, University of California Press, 1976, pp.166-169.

<sup>769</sup> *Sarasavi Sandarasa*, 1904, July, 01-12.

<sup>770</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>771</sup> *Sarasavi Sandarasa*, August, 30.

The Temperance Movement turned into a complete Buddhist agitation. The idea that it was purely against the business activities of arrack brewers was also widespread. Buddhist newspapers had to point out the real cause behind the temperance movement was to make general masses aware about issues of societal significance and not restricted only to Buddhists.<sup>772</sup> The Movement clearly showed various evil influences sown among Buddhists during the three decades after the Buddhist reawakening. Hundreds of meetings and processions held throughout the country and scores of Temperance Societies established clearly showed the magnitude of the Buddhist enthusiasm and influence on the general masses. The government tried at its level to curb the activities of the Temperance activists through various coercive measures but the agitation succeeded in gaining foothold among the general masses and there was scarcely any major town of Sri Lanka which had not come under its influence. The movement proved a great loss to the British imperial interests. The Buddhist leaders became the backbone of the movement and intact the movement itself was associated as a Buddhist movement. Since the majority of the people in Sri Lanka professed Buddhism it was but natural that the Temperance movement had its adherents almost everywhere in the Island.

### **5.2.3. The Role of the Organizations in National Economy**

The various organizations sprang in various parts of Sri Lanka did not confine their activities towards issues of political, religious, cultural or social nature but these also took into consideration the issues of economic relevance. Seen in their perspective, the Ceylon Agricultural Association was formed in 1882. The aim of the association was not trade matters. It wanted to open the eye of the Governor on the payments for the military aid the government received. Whenever the grain tax was a trouble same to them, they had protest demonstrations to cancel<sup>773</sup> the tax system. An agitation was organized in 1887

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<sup>772</sup> *The Ceylon Standard*, 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1905.

<sup>773</sup> *The Ceylon Standard*, Supplement, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1906.

for extending the railway lines in Uva, Northern and Southern province.<sup>774</sup> The purpose of the extension of railway to the hinterlands was to seek raw material for their industries in England and thereby to have market for the consumption of finished goods.

James Pieris, addressing the Society in 1908 said that he would not participate in the activities of the Reform Society<sup>775</sup> because of certain reasons. There were some people who seemed to have not taken part in the activities saying that the society was trying to bring the influence of the Indian Nationalism to Sri Lanka. In 1908 a special general meeting was held by the Governor. Sri Lankan villagers were to be recruited as there had been a shortage of labour in the estates and Sinhalese villagers didn't like to come to work in the estates. Lists of the jobless villages were prepared and displayed at the Kachcheri for the planters to select suitable workers. With the authority of the governor it was decided to penalize everybody from those who would not come to work<sup>776</sup> in the estates. The social reform society including English educated lot became much irritated by the statement made by the Governor. Summoning a special meeting of the society they discussed the matter. On the other hand, the English educated lot understood the British economic interests in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile the employing of the Sinhalese villagers as the workforce in estates by force brought about an agitation. But they knew that estates were the sole means of wealth in the country and therefore it was decided to propose the rulers not to violate the conditions of free labour and salary agreements and to improve the facilities to attract the workers. D.B. Jayathilaka strongly stated that instead of forcing the people to work in the estates, it was better to popularize the work and the people didn't like to be

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<sup>774</sup> *The Ceylon Observer*, Overland edition, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1888.

<sup>775</sup> Besant Annie "National Reformer; A Plea for a return to the Simper Easten Life", *The Ceylon National Review*, vol. II, no.3, 1908, p.169.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 162-165.

forced to work and as the welfare of the country would depend on the success of the estate industry the freedom of making agreements must be protected.<sup>777</sup>

Apart from this even in education sector the English always had their own interests in the introduction of western education. It spread through the establishment of provinces the missionary school system. It was this system that brought the English education to a better level. With the formation of the Jaffna Association<sup>778</sup> the English education of the youth in Jaffna area became very popular and it was a great help for them to enter into the government sector because they didn't have any chance get jobs as the trade activities between India and Jaffna had stopped after the British rule started. Therefore the educated lot in Jaffna area had no means of earning living. The fact however cannot be denied that English education played a crucial role in awakening the people of Island.

Many educated and prominent figures in the society commented on the prevailing situation. Some were of the opinion said that the Governor expected to develop the country with the help of the European planters and ultimately it would become the property of the country.<sup>779</sup> W.A. Silva once said that the workers must be encouraged by facilitating them in a better way better and free trade must be enforced in Sri Lanka.<sup>780</sup> Pieris stated that it was a very good investment of the Europeans in the country and it brought prosperity to Sri Lanka and the planters of foreign and local origin were with the same interests.<sup>781</sup> There had always been a conflicting opinion among the Sri Lankan elite as one group believed the prosperity of Sri Lanka in view of the investment made by foreigners where as other group considered such an

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<sup>777</sup> Besant Annie "National Reformer; A Plea for a return to the Simper Easten Life", The *Ceylon National Review*, vol. II, no.3, 1908, p.166.

<sup>778</sup> Russal Jane, *The Ceylon Tamils under the Donough more Constitution*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sri Lanka, 1970, p.01.

<sup>779</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>780</sup> Besant Annie "National Reformer; A Plea for a return to the Simper Easten Life", The *Ceylon National Review*, vol. II, no.3, 1908, p.168.

<sup>781</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

investment on the part of foreign investors nothing other than the exploitation of the Sri Lankan resources as a principle of their mercantilist policy.

#### **5.2.4. The Role of the Organizations in Political Freedom**

There were various organizations which contributed immensely towards making people conscious politically. The president of the Ceylon Agriculture Society C.H. De Soysa addressing the Society in 1898 said that it was better to be selected by elections rather than nominated by the Governor to the Legislative Council. C.H de Soyza sending a letter to the meeting held in Moratuwa pointed out that if there was a right to select the members of parliament through elections there wasn't any necessity to be engaged in difficult efforts like this.<sup>782</sup>

The Ceylon National Association of which the majority was from the Karawe caste decided to change the name as Lanka National Association at the 6<sup>th</sup> annual meeting held in 1888. At that time the Karawe was the most educated and wealthy group in the society. They understood that the government had no idea and desire to give them political recognition though they were the most suitable lot in society. Therefore they wanted to transform the association to a group for discussing political issues more openly.<sup>783</sup> Ponnambalam Ramanathan said that the reforms must be done regarding not only agricultural needs<sup>784</sup> but also the Constitutional Assembly. Ponnambalam Ramanathan was selected as the president and even though the Lanka National Association was formed it was limited to a small group. In 1906 the Association got involved in politics and most of the activists were the English educated youths.

The Reform Society published a magazine and it became the mouthpiece of the people. Through articles the national and cultural pride were

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<sup>782</sup> *The Ceylon Observer, Overland Edition*, 29<sup>th</sup> September, 1888.

<sup>783</sup> *Ibid. Edition*, 01<sup>st</sup> October, 1888.

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid.*



presented in it. It rejected the imitation of Western customs. Further it revealed the validity of indigenous arts, literature and history.<sup>785</sup> It emphasized the need for National progress in Ceylon and reformation of the Constitutional Assembly. For raising issues of political nature the impact of the political movement of India could not be underestimated, rather could be discerned from the writings and speeches of Sri Lankan political leaders. The later desired too glorify the past history of Sri Lanka with the objective of inculcating the spirit of patriotism and enthusiasm among the masses for achieving their political goals.

The Theosophists were appointed for the first time for fulfilling the need of having a Buddhist representative in the constitution. The Buddhist magazine pointed out that they wanted not a Christian to represent them in the Legislative Assembly but a real educated religious Buddhist. In the case of declaring Vesak as a public holiday there was a discussion and Ponnambalam Ramanathan of the Hindu faith spoke on behalf of Buddhists and presented a letter sent by Ven. Hikkaduwe Sumangala at the Assembly. As a result “Vesak” was declared as a public holiday in 1885.<sup>786</sup>

The Temperance Agitation of 1911-14 had one other special feature. It began primarily as a movement of resistance to reforms which the government proposed to make in the excise laws. Directed at protecting the government’s revenue from this source, these reforms were also designed to break the hold which small elite groups (mainly capitalists of the *karavacaste*) had on the liquor industry. Consequently, among the most vociferous critics of the government’s projected reform of the excise laws were those who stood to lose financially if and when these reforms were introduced.<sup>787</sup> One needs therefore to distinguish between the strident opposition of the vested interests to excise

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<sup>785</sup> De Silva W.A. “Public Polices and National Progress in Ceylon” The Ceylon National Review, no. 2, July 1902, pp.210-213.

<sup>786</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>787</sup> Gunawardesia, R. D., ‘The Reform Movement and Political Organizations in Ceylon with special reference to the Temperance Movement and Regional Associations, 1900-1930’(unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, 1976), pp. 20-78.

reforms, and the more disinterested Temperance Agitation of the Buddhists. Between them there existed merely a common objective of opposition to the new excise policy, but no identity of interests or indeed a common purpose. These vested interests were as suspicious of, and perturbed by, the Buddhist Temperance Agitation as the government itself,<sup>788</sup> whose response to the temperance movement was one of unconcealed hostility. In the rural areas this agitation posed a threat to the position and authority of the chief headmen, the government's men on the spot in the lower rungs of the administration, who were regarded as the natural leaders of the people.

The confrontation that followed between the temperance leaders and these chief headmen showed that the latter had lost their touch in grass-roots 'politics'.<sup>789</sup> The government was apprehensive of this for fear that it would also affect the position of British civil servants, and reacted to the presumed dangers presented by the movement to its own position and interests with an ill advised attempt to contain the infection by discouraging native officials in the administration, particularly the village-level headmen, from association with temperance activity. This was especially so in 1911-14 when the government viewed the revival of temperance societies with the utmost suspicion, especially because of the tendency to use temperance platforms for criticism sardonic more than trenchant of government policies on other issues as well. In the hope of checking the expansion and exuberance of temperance societies, an order was issued prohibiting village headmen from joining temperance societies; other public servants wishing to join such societies were required to obtain prior permission from the government.<sup>790</sup> These directives proved a costly blunder. They provoked public Criticism in the island and in Britain, as a result of which the government was compelled to rescind them. The withdrawal

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<sup>788</sup> Jayasekera, P.V.J., "Social and Political Change in Ceylon, 1900-1919", (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1969), Chapter III.

<sup>789</sup> Roberts Michal Elite, *Nationalism and the Nationalist Movement in British Ceylon*, Colombo, Department of National Archives, 1977, pp. 30-32.

<sup>790</sup> De Silva, K.M., *History of Ceylon*, Vijitha Yapa, Publications, Colombo, 2003, pp.270-271.

of the orders was hailed as a notable success for the Temperance Movement and contributed greatly to boosting its leaders' morale and self-confidence.

It is remarkable, however, that such a powerful movement, which affected not merely the elite but the people at large, should not have had an invigorating influence on the formal political activities of the elite at this time.<sup>791</sup> No consistent attempt much less a systematic one was made to channel the enthusiasm and discontent it generated to a political force of real significance. To explain this development the fact that the most militant and charismatic of the 'nationalist' leaders, the Anagarika Dharmapala, was out of the island for considerable periods, is to leave many questions unanswered.

What is important to know that when Dharmapala was in the island, the 'nationalists' diffused their energies over a whole range of religious, social, cultural and 'educational issues and made little effort to focus their attention consistently on any clearly defined political objective or objectives.<sup>792</sup> Although Dharmapala and some of his close associates saw the political implications and potential of the forces that were emerging. Dharmapala was, however, among the first to advocate '*swaraj*' or national independence. Such ideas unfortunately did not receive any encouragement from those who played a prominent role in Buddhist activity however miserably failed in their attempts to politicize the Buddhist revival and the Temperance Movement.<sup>793</sup> The Temperance Movement itself was not monolith, and despite his missionary zeal in its support, Dharmapala was suspect to many of the Buddhist temperance leaders and they refused to accept his leadership. While the moves to outline a political objective for the Buddhist revival and the Temperance Movement had so little support from the Buddhists themselves, they were anathema to the bulk of the elite, especially the Christians and Burghers who dominated the political

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<sup>791</sup> Roberts Michal Elite, *Nationalism and the Nationalist Movement in British Ceylon*, Colombo, Department of National Archives, 1977, pp. 23-28.

<sup>792</sup> Karunaratna, D., *Anagarika Dharmapala*, Colombo, Gunasena and Co., pp.35-38.

<sup>793</sup> *Sinhala Baudddhaya*, 1911, September, 09, October 04, 1912, February 24, June 15, August 12.

life of the country. They would have no truck with a political movement which showed so much potential for development into a vehicle for religious Buddhist ‘nationalism’.<sup>794</sup>

The Constitutional Reform Conference along with the National Association and the Ceylon Reform League was held in the month of December 1917 in Colombo.<sup>795</sup> 144 representatives participated in this. The biggest number of representative participated from the National Association was 35. The Ceylon Reform League and Chilaw Association were represented by and 15 members respectively. The Jaffna Association which joined the Reform Demanding Moment in 1911 had sent only 2 representatives. The other organization which had sent representatives included the associations from Galle, Matara, Kurunegala, Negambo, Kalutara and Rathnepura, the Young Muslim League, up country association, Ceylon Indian Association and the Sabaragamuwa Association.<sup>796</sup>

Before participating in the conference conflicting ideas had already sprung up among the educated Tamils in Jafna. The reason for this was the allocation of only 3 seats for among the 15 seats reserved for selection through elections. They were convinced that this proposal included a plan to facilitate 3 Tamil Ministers and 12 Sinhalese Ministers. The Hindu Organ newspaper which was a leading newspaper published in Jafna stated that “if Tamil leaders give their consent to this proposal it would amount to committing suicide”. It pointed out that according to the prevalent proportions of Communities in the constitutional set up when the Sinhalese had 9 seats, Tamils should get 6 seats.<sup>797</sup> It further stated that “if the imbalance regarding the number of seats is

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<sup>794</sup> Guruge, A., *Return to Righteousness*, Colombo, Government Press, 1965, pp.28-30.

<sup>795</sup> Bandaranayake, S.W.R.D., *The Hand Book of the Ceylon National Congress*, H.W. Cave and Co., Colombo, 1928, pp. 109, 111-113.

<sup>796</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>797</sup> *The Hindu Organ*, 03<sup>rd</sup> December, 1917.

eliminated the Tamil leader won't be able to offer their cordial co-operation to this movement'''.<sup>798</sup>

The "Morning Star" newspaper of the Jaffna Protestant Christian Movement supported this idea. It further stated that even though it accepted the more suitable nature of representation than the communal wise representation. The main attention should be focused on the representation of the interests of the communal groups.<sup>799</sup> The committee of the Jaffa Association which met subsequently decided to participate in the Constitutional Reform Association and to send its representatives there. It was also decided to support the common movement currently continuing in its activities and to propose to increase the number of seats in the Constitutional Assembly to get the same ratio as the ratio of Sinhalese and Tamil seat in it.<sup>800</sup>

The reform proposals formulated in October (1917) by the National Association and the Reform league were distributed among the delegates who participated in the Constitutional Reform Association held in December 1917.<sup>801</sup> A new set of proposal were formed and submitted to the conference. Ponnambalam Arunachalam who became the chairperson of the Conference declared like this.

"Our objective is to gain a full scale responsible government. To achieve this objective we must shun our petty difference and form a united front".<sup>802</sup>

A unified dispatch was prepared by the Reform League and National Association on the basis of the decisions taken at the conference. This dispatch was subsequently disputable to the state secretary in charge of Colonies in England and been written to express the loyalty to the British Empire and the

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<sup>798</sup> *The Hindu Organ*, 03<sup>rd</sup> December, 1917.

<sup>799</sup> *The Morning Star*, 05<sup>th</sup> December, 1917.

<sup>800</sup> *The Hindu Organ*, 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1917.

<sup>801</sup> Bandaranayake, S.W.R.D., *The Hand Book of the Ceylon National Congress*, H.W. Cave and Co., Colombo, 1928, pp. 109-110.

<sup>802</sup> *Ibid.*

benefits gained by Ceylon because of the British rule. This dispatch demanded a constitutional council consisting of 33 members. This included 21 selected representatives and 12 officers. It also proposed to nominate 4 representatives for Europeans, Burghers and Muslims. In fact it included not only proposals for reforming the constitution but also demanded an increase the number of Ceylonese recruited to fill the vacancies in the Government Service.<sup>803</sup> However, the government in England took no action about this dispatch. The Assistant Secretary for State reply to a question in the Parliament of England about the actions being taken about the dispatch stated that no final decision had so far been taken about the matters concerned and no proper opportunity had yet come to state the decisions to be taken regarding this matter. As soon as they learned about this answer the Ceylonese agitators for reforms were displeased. The National Association and the Reform League expressed their displeasure and sent a telegram regulating the immediate declaration of the reforms intended to be implemented in Ceylon. There two organizations sent also a cable message to England on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1918. This additional request was done because it was reported that the English Parliament had done a declaration to policy regarding the Indian constitutional reforms.<sup>804</sup> This declaration had made it clear that the ultimate objective of these reforms to be implemented in India was to enable the country to share the powers to self-rule. Ceylonese organization also demanded such a policy declaration regarding Ceylon. Among other demands they put forward the prominent ones were a constitutional course, admission the majority of nominated Ministry of Parliament to the legislature, appointment of non-official Minister of Parliament to the Executive Council, appointing Ceylonese Minister of Parliament to be in charge of department and founding the provincial government system on people's franchise. The Montegu-Chemesford report about the reforms to the Indian governing system was published in August

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<sup>803</sup> Bandaranayake, S.W.R.D., *The Hand Book of the Ceylon National Congress*, H.W. Cave and Co., Colombo, 1928, 153.

<sup>804</sup> Ibid. pp.109-110.

(1918). With the publication of report the Ceylonese realized the need to build a strong and a fast implementing movement achieving their demands. Many Ceylonese newspapers published this report various parts of Island showed how much attention was paid to it by the Ceylonese.<sup>805</sup> This report proposed to assign some powers of the provincial governments to ministers responsible to a constitutional council and keep some other powers in the hands of Colonial authorities.

Local government, public health, education etc. were shown as powers to be assigned to indigenous ministers and finance, revenue from lands, police service etc. were to be held in the hands of the Colonial authorities.<sup>806</sup> While viewing the Indian reforms the Ceylonese leaders realized the need to summon another constitutional reform conference. It was Arunachalam who was contemplating on the need to establish a Ceylon National Congress that brought forward this requirement.<sup>807</sup> Through convening this conference he wanted to create the necessary background to establish a National Congress. Later he said that in fact as the majority were not prepared to name it as National Congress the name conference on Constitution Reforms had been used in 1917. The reason for this was their belief that introducing it as National Congress would give the idea that the Indian treason also existed in Ceylon.<sup>808</sup>

On 13<sup>th</sup> September 1918 D.R. Wijewardane issued a notice to summon another conference on constitutional reforms to be held on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of December.<sup>809</sup> The organizing committee of this conference included Arunachalam, James Pieris, E.J. Samarawickera, A. St. V. Jayawardena, D.R. Wijewardana, Francis De Soysa, M.A. Arulanandan, Amadoris Mendis etc. In

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<sup>805</sup> *Ceylon Daily News* October 02, 03, 1918, *The Hindu Organ* August 05, 1918.

<sup>806</sup> Desai, H.R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Popular Publication Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, 1976, p.343.

<sup>807</sup> Arunachalam, P., *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam*, vol. i, H.W. Cave and Co., Colombo, (undated), pp.162,163.

<sup>808</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>809</sup> Nawarathna Bandara, A.M., *National Movements in Sri Lanka under the British Rule*, Colombo, 2007, pp.417, 418.

his letter summoning the conference, D.R. Wijewardena had requested members of the public who were not members of any organization to join either the National Association or the National League.<sup>810</sup> An application form common to both organizations was also issued with letter. As Arunachalam says this conference was to be called Ceylon National Conference.<sup>811</sup> Though there was no consensus to use the word “congress” by that time the objection for using the word national had faded away. Organizers had given two reasons for this conference. The first one was to adapt proposals reconfirming the demands and basic principles included in the cable message sent on 28<sup>th</sup> of August. The second was to make the necessary fixed arrangements for holding such a conference annually.<sup>812</sup>

The Second Reform conference which started on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 1918 was again able to get together the various organizations in the country on one stage. All other main Ceylonese organizations except the Burgher Union participated in this. Reporting on the conference the “Daily News” newspaper which called this meeting an important juncture in the Ceylonese political history strengthened a common objective. The paper stated that. “It created a feeling of united among fellow citizens”.<sup>813</sup> The delegates who had been present to this conference included the members from National Association Reform league, Chilaw Association, Jaffna Association, Up country Association, Ceylon Indian Association and organizations from Kalutara, Panadura, Matara, Sabaragamuwa, Kegalle and Kurunegala.<sup>814</sup> The “Hindu Organ” reported this as a political get-together of unprecedented nature which never happened before<sup>815</sup>. Ponnambalam Arunachlem who presided the first

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<sup>810</sup> Nawarathna Bandara, A.M., *National Movements in Sri Lanka under the British Rule*, Colombo, 2007, pp.417, 418.

<sup>811</sup> Arunachalam, P., *The Speeches and Writings of Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam*, vol. i, H.W. Cave and Co., Colombo, (undated), pp.162, 163.

<sup>812</sup> Bandaranayake, S.W.R.D. *The Hand Book of the Ceylon National Congress*, H.W. Cave and Co., Colombo, 1928, pp.117.

<sup>813</sup> *Ceylon Daily News*, 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> December, 1918.

<sup>814</sup> *Ibid*, 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1918.

<sup>815</sup> *The Hindu Organ*, 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1918.



conference, was also unanimously proposed to be the president for the second conference. Delivering his speech he stated:

“The Central powers are facing defeat; freedom and peace are protected and imperialism, and capitalism are subject to lethal attack. Now we are in a better world.” He further points out “the need to make use of this occasion as the foundation to produce a stable organization which is capable of continuing in the Ceylonese constitutional reforms while a good environment conducive for confirming the rights of nations for their own decisions has come up”.<sup>816</sup>

When the conference started the world war had already ended. The conference commenced work after passing a resolution congratulating the British Monarch for the victory. The resolution follows:

“We offer his Majesty the King of Britain our respectable congratulation on this occasion of the victory in the war which was achieved confirming the British ideals of self-development and freedom of people of all the nations”.<sup>817</sup>

The most important achievement in the second conference was the decision taken to establish a stable central organization for conducting agitation for reforms. It also made it clear that everybody in the conference should accept this central organization as a precursor for the establishment of a National Congress. The conference appointed a committee for establishing this central organization and for formulating its constitution and objectives. This was called “the congress committee”.

It has become abundantly clear that the majority of the people of Island were through and through against the nefarious designs of the British imperialism and always desired to free Country from its rule. The Buddhist

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<sup>816</sup> Bandaranayake, S.W.R.D., *The Hand Book of the Ceylon National Congress*, H.W. Cave and Co., Colombo, 1928, pp. 119-120.

<sup>817</sup> *Ibid.*, p.119.

leaders who took lead had a cherished desire of safeguarding the overall interest of people the majority of whom professed Buddhism and the religious traditions and cultural ethos. This is the reason that the religious elite of Sri Lanka often provided guidance and leadership to the various organizations and in fact gave its own programme through such organizations<sup>818</sup>.

It is true that Karawe caste remained associated with the British administrators for a long time mainly in view of safeguarding their economic interests as these people for ages indulged in trade and commerce and often resided in the coastal areas of Sri Lanka. However in the changed political scenario of Island the Karawe caste too had to change its policy of loyalty towards the British and got themselves involved in the general cause of the people of that is the freedom from foreign rule<sup>819</sup>.

The most significant movement as already pointed out was the emergence of Temperance Movement of the Buddhist. The leaders like Dharmapala criticized the exploitative nature and highhandedness of the British rule and made exhortations to the general masses not to get trapped under the pernicious influence of the rule<sup>820</sup>. The Temperance movement succeeded not only making people conscious about their duties towards nation but also made the movement as a mass movement, a fact which had even been admitted by the officials belonging to the ruling dispensation. In the final analysis it was in the year 1914 that Buddhist organizations and Temperance Movement worked shoulder to shoulder along with communities paved a way for organizing a political movement which later on came to be known National Congress of Sri Lanka<sup>821</sup>.

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<sup>818</sup> Malalgoda, K., *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900: A study in Revival and Change*, University of California Press, 1976, pp.166-169.

<sup>819</sup> Patric Peebles, *Social Change in Nineteenth Century Ceylon* (Governor Sir Arthur Gordon and the Administration of Sri Lanka), New Delhi, 1995, pp.243-246.

<sup>820</sup> Karunarathna, D., *Anagarika Dharmapala*, Colombo, Gunasena and Co., pp.35-38.

<sup>821</sup> Nawarathna Bandara, A.M. *National Movements in Sri Lanka under the British Rule*, Colombo, 2007, pp. 312,13.

**T**he father of Indian renaissance Raja Ram Mohan Roy established Atmiya Sabha which was a forerunner of Brahma Samaj. This step on the part of Ram Mohan Roy was bound to evoke criticism on the part of the Conservatives who never wanted to make any change or enter into compromise to their Hindu religion and social customs rather looked down upon them as hallowed by ancient traditions and enjoined by sacred books. The proselytizing efforts and attacks of missionaries and their insidious collusion with the government only confirmed the conservatives in their resolve to preserve the Hindu scriptures and religion. Considering their religious practices divinely ordained and indeed possessed deep spiritual and religious foundations and thus any tinkering with them the conservatives were of the opinion would threaten the whole fabric of faith.

However, the fact cannot be denied that the conservatives were orthodox vis- a vis religion and religious practices and in matters related to education, politics or economy, they were progressive. The radicals, on the other hand, imbibed the rationalist thought, studied philosophers, social thinkers, scientist, English historians, romantic poets and their minds as such got moulded on Western rationalistic thinking. The spirit of free enquiry and free thinking caused revulsion in their minds and they started protesting against conservatism and orthodoxy as is manifested in their literature. One conclusion came fairly be drawn that the kind of scathing criticism against Sati, idolatry, superstitions and other social evils led the conservatives to examine their beliefs hence revulsion in their thought. The Derozians in particular lamented India's ignominious present touched the deepest chord in their hearts.

The reform movements should be seen as a response to the challenge posed by the colonial intrusions. Through these movements most of the Indian leaders tried to create consciousness among the Indian masses. Thus the purpose of various leaders was not only to rejuvenate the society but also inculcate enthusiasm among the Indians about their glorious past and not past

as a "bleak" argued by some British writers as to them India did not make any progress nor was there any concept of India as a nation. Thus the very introduction of revivalism was nothing other than a tendency to harp back on India's past and to defend Indian culture and civilization. Almost all reform movements played an important role in creating cultural consciousness and confidence among the people and there seems to be considerable similarity in their aims and perspectives.

There was a literary renaissance not only in India but also in Sri Lanka though belatedly in case of latter. The History of social, political, cultural, religious and intellectual transformation during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was portrayed in literature in various languages across India particularly Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu etc. Since the general masses were illiterate the intellectual current of the time left them largely untouched. This is the reason that the appeal of movement remained confined only to a thin slice of population and also confined to a particular region except the Wahabi Movement of Syed Ahmad of Rai Bareli which had a pan Indian influence at least among the Indian Muslims including the Muslim religious elite.

The new liberal, rational and democratic ideas were pouring into the receptive minds of the Indians. The literature produced in different languages by the Indians portrayed the life of society, the yearnings, aspiration, wishes and vows of people. The Bengali language was first to show the impact of the Western ideology, rationalistic and liberal thought. Gradually all other languages became exposed to the same influences and underwent similar developments. Apart from the production of literature associated with certain Hindu and Muslim reform movements, the Christian missionaries in particular of Serampur were another agency in the evolution of literature in India. The educational and cultural societies for propagating Western knowledge and safe guarding indigenous cultural ethos also contributed in the production of literature. This literature reflected the currents of new feeling and thought and

spreaded in the country and implanted them in the consciousness of society. The Indian languages received new impetus and were making new advances under the urge of new conditions.

Through various organizations the leaders tried to make Indian believe of the racial, cultural and political superiority of the British who were always keen conscious of their national interest. Such a kind of cultural differences were bound to accentuate discord between the people of India and the rulers, however created a sense of belongingness to the former to meet the challenges of the rulers boldly and bravely. Seen in this perspective some reform movements emerged for the sake of political advantage and social comfort. The reform perspective of the movements were characterized by a recognition of interconnection between religion, politics and social issues. The leaders attempted to make use of religious ideas to bring about changes in social institutions and practices apart from making people conscious politically.

The first resistance movement of the Wahhabis aiming at driving the British out of the Indian soil failed nonetheless gave a strong impetus to separatist tendencies in Indian society. The rejection of all the unislamic customs, habits, traditions and practices of Hindu import and reversion to purely Arab tradition of the Prophet's time indeed widened the gulf between the two major Indian communities and led to a greater extent isolationist tendencies and exclusiveness. There is a huge list of reform movements however the fact of the matter is that almost every such movement was confined to a particular region barring a few with their influence beyond their places of origin. These movements also emerged at different periods of time in different parts of country. For example in Bengal reform efforts were afoot at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but in Kerala they came up only towards end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The message of reform unfortunately did not percolate down the general masses rather remained confined to the growing educated middle

class, the greatest flaw of reformation. The leadership of the reformation / revivalism also came from the so called elite of the society.

The new elite it appeared at first would abandon its traditional ways in favour of way of foreigners. This did not happen rather there was a discovery of the truth of the past of India, and a revival of creative activity in many fields. The result was a broad movement of regeneration, which invariably is called Indian renaissance. The social movements by and large focused on caste abolition, equal rights to women, banning child marriage and eliminating social and legal inequalities and the prohibition imposed on widow remarriages. In the field of religion these movements tended to combat religious superstitions and attacked idolatry, polytheism and heredity priesthood. What is important to know is that the position and privileges of the so called traditional religious elite got undermined mainly in view of the fact that these reform movements sought to eliminate privilege from social and religion fields with the purpose of democratizing them for the national unity.

The common administration introduced by the British made it easier for people to conceive of the country as a nation. Initially India had failed to develop nationalism on account of her political fragmentation into numerous states, social fragmentation into myriads of self-sufficient and autonomous village communities and primitive communication which impeded the flow of goods and travelers from one part of the country to another. In view of centralized administration, building railways, highways, telegraph lines and post office, the isolation of the medieval India was broken which in turn promoted economic integration that ultimately contributed to national integration.

It has been shown in the thesis how through the adoption of local legislation, the British succeeded in penetrating deep into the social, cultural, educational, political, religion and other factors of Indian life and always tried to justify and legitimize their imperialistic designs in India and Sri Lanka

through legislation seeking the intervention of British Parliament. The latter also succeeded in undermining in a gradual manner the influence of East India Company and finally under the provisions of the government of India Act 1858, the Company rule came to an end and Indian Colony came under the direct control of British Parliament.

Like in other colonies, Sri Lanka as a colony of the British also underwent many change of far reaching consequence. Its ideological and spiritual foundation began to be challenged in the wake of British conquest of Island. The Buddhist religion had been, during the days of the Sinhalese kingdom, identified totally with the affairs of state. During the era of Portuguese and Dutch rule in the maritime Provinces however, it had suffered severe setbacks. And, with the subjugation of the whole Island by the British it soon became apparent that contrary to the pious hopes embodied in the Kandyan Convention, Buddhism was neglected as "heathen idolatry" and facilities were provided for the spread of Christianity. As in India, Christian missionaries were often backed by the British officials rather were hand in glove in spreading Christianity in the Island.

This naturally, created a sense of despair and brought about eventually a militant flavour to the religious activities of the Buddhists. At the forefront of this movement was the new bourgeoisie which had come into being as a result of the modernization and expansion of the economy during the 19th century. Also there appeared a militant type of Buddhist monk namely Migettuwate Gunananda who was to be the preceptor and guide to the all movements of British reformation.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the metamorphosis of the Buddhist monks from a world-renouncing religious ascetic to a religio-nationalist-political leaders. The fiery speaker Migettuwatte Gunananda (1823-1890) and the scathing pamphleteer Batteramulle Subhuti (1854-1915) were two notable embodiments of this tendency. Guided by this type of leadership and financed by the upward

mobile bourgeoisie, a vigorous counter offence was launched against the rising tide of Christian proselytization which was being carried out through the missionary school system and patronage in government employment. The Buddhist reassertion received a strong impetus from the involvement of Col. Henry Steel Olcott an American, and the Buddhist Theosophical Society founded by him which established consequently an effective counter force to the Christian missionary school system.

In order to stop the onslaught of the Christianity on Buddhism, a couple of leaders in particular Migettuwathe Gunananda came forward to enter into polemics with the leaders of the Christian faith. Such debates happening for the first time in the modern Sri Lankan history and venues of debates began to be attended by people of various shades of opinion and often hailed the leaders of their faith for their arguments and vast knowledge of religion. This kind of atmosphere created enthusiasm among the people to know more and more about the strength and foundations of their respective religious traditions.

The sporadic waves of the 19th Century revivalism were to receive, during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an organizational framework in the Temperance Campaign. The Temperance movement was directed against the policy of the colonial government which began to open liquor shops everywhere with the adoption of the Excise Ordinance of 1912. It provided an opportunity for organizing a mass protest against a regime that was heedless of the moral traditions of the people. Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) who was at the forefront of the campaign compared the present with the past. "The Buddhist kings never gave the Sinhalese opium, arrack, or whisky and from the revenues of the land the people derived manifold advantages. What do we see today? Drunkenness, poverty, an increases of crime and increase of insanity. The British are giving the Sinhalese poisons in the opium and alcohol which are destructive for the continuance of the Sinhalese race"



Being an issue on which the sympathy of all sections, religious as well as communal, could be mustered the temperance campaign gave the elitist class an unprecedented opportunity to identify themselves with the masses and to organize them in a campaign against the colonial government. Although the temperance campaign had as its aim a common cause cutting across religious and communal boundaries in composition and flavour it was markedly Sinhalese-Buddhist oriented. At the forefront of the campaign besides the leaders like Anagarika Dharmapala also included D.B. Jajattillaka, F.R. Senanayake, Piyadasa Sirisena and John de Silva who comprised the Sinhalese-Buddhist leadership of the day. Moreover, the movement had in essence an anti-imperialist flavour.

The British in the garb of developing trade links with Sri Lanka in the coastal lowlands in the course of time sought the subjugation of the Kandyan Kingdom and began ousting the Dutch from the trade relation from the Kingdom. The Britishers in order to prolong their rule in Sri Lanka helped one community against the interests of the other communities. Thus the Karawa caste began to be financially helped by the Britishers and later on this community became the collaborators of the British Rule in Sri Lanka.

Another important conclusion the researcher has been able to draw is the fact that the Western education after it percolated down the general masses changed the very social structure in Sri Lanka. A Karawa caste in view of its acquisition of Western education also began obtaining the benefits from the administration and also came close to the Britishers for various reasons. This caste in view of their trade dealings especially in coastal areas not only offered them opportunities of developing links with the rulers but also with the Sri Lankan elite hence brought about structural changes.

During the period under review, the government was forced to abolish some of the cruel customs including Rajakariya, mainly due to the fierce agitation launched by the people against such abominable customs at the behest

of the Buddhist leaders. The purpose to abolish such a custom was also to keep intact the glorious cultural heritage and to preserve and foster it in the face of the advances of European religion, customs and values.

Another conclusion drawn that some wealthy low caste people in coastal areas of Sri Lanka formed their own organizations. Their intention was mainly commercial in nature and to achieve the end they collaborated with the Britishers to a certain extent. These organizations included Plubago, Merchants Union, Association Jaffnaand Chilaw Association and Low Country Product Association.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century nationalist agitation had reached a point where the demand came *swarajyaya* - self-government. The elite leadership had found the key to successful politics in political organizations. Several such organizations, namely The Ceylon Reform Society, The Ceylon Reform League, Ceylon National Association and the Ceylon National Congress had come into being. Moreover, the working class had emerged as a potential factor and the organization of trade unionism had appeared on the scene. These Unions had succeeded in swelling its members from across the social spectrum and later on became a major force in the Sri Lankan politics to be reckoned with. The establishment of the foreign rule in India and Sri Lanka brought about drastic changes in political, social, and religious, economic, cultural and on ideological spheres. A very alien Administrative system brought the Indian and Sri Lankan society into very great difficulties however it at the same time brought unity among the people of the two countries to fight against the alien rule.

Another fact which unfortunately has not been taken into account by modern scholars of Sri Lanka is that there had been a spurt of missionary activities between 1805 and 1824 as is evidenced by the very establishment of dozens of missionary schools across Sri Lanka. The missionaries succeeded to some extent in bringing about demographic change in Sri Lanka. The massive

entry of Tamils in several pockets of Sri Lanka also changed the demographic profile of the Island.

The caste system was not entrenched in Sri Lankan society, the way one finds it in Indian society as some of the reform movements could be seen in India espousing the cause of some castes against other castes in the beginning of the twentieth century.

It is noteworthy that the reform movements had their own limitations as the message of reform or revivalism remained confined to the upper rung of the society and commoners as such were far away from its influence at least during the formative phase of reformation and revivalism.

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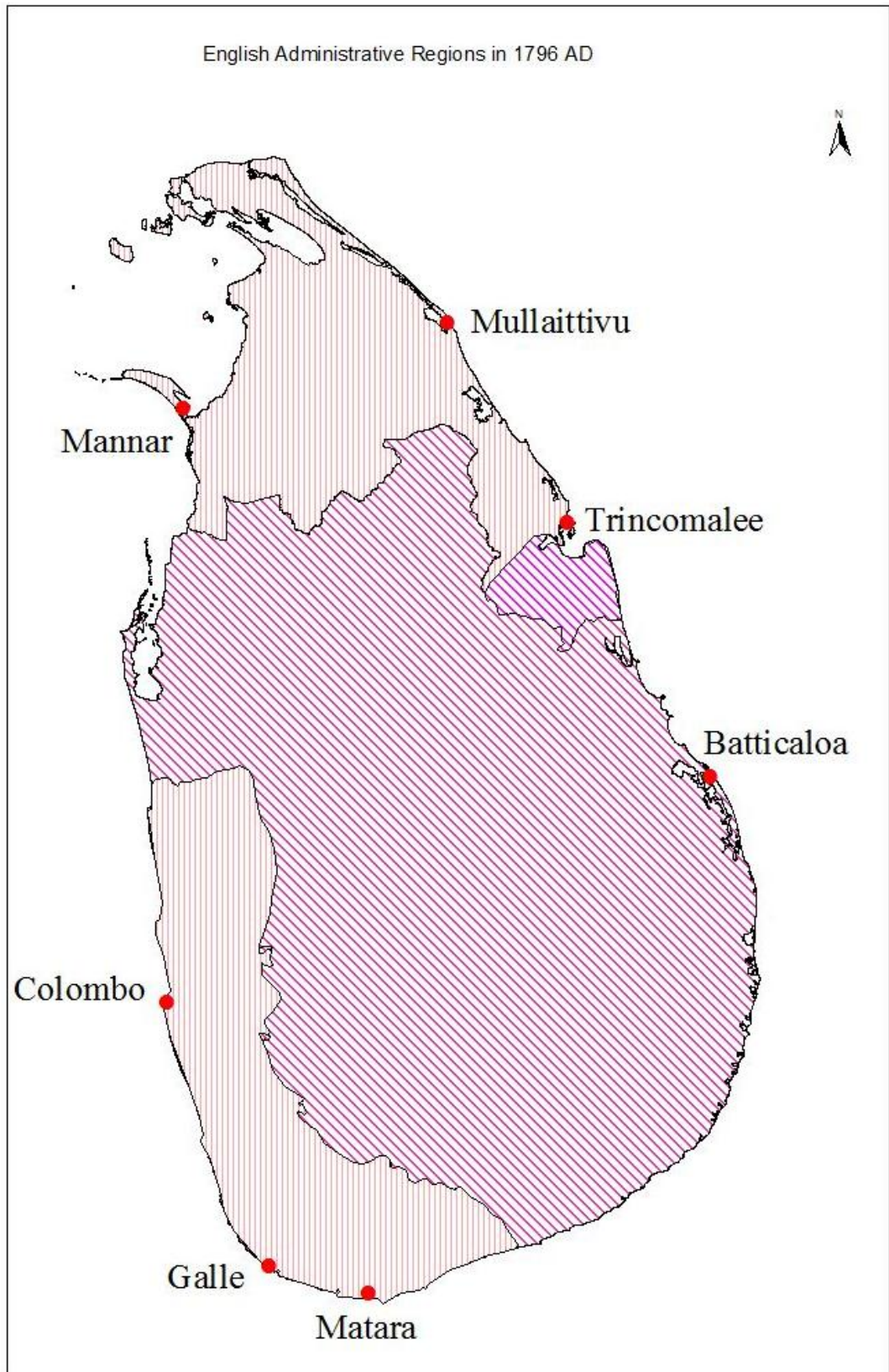
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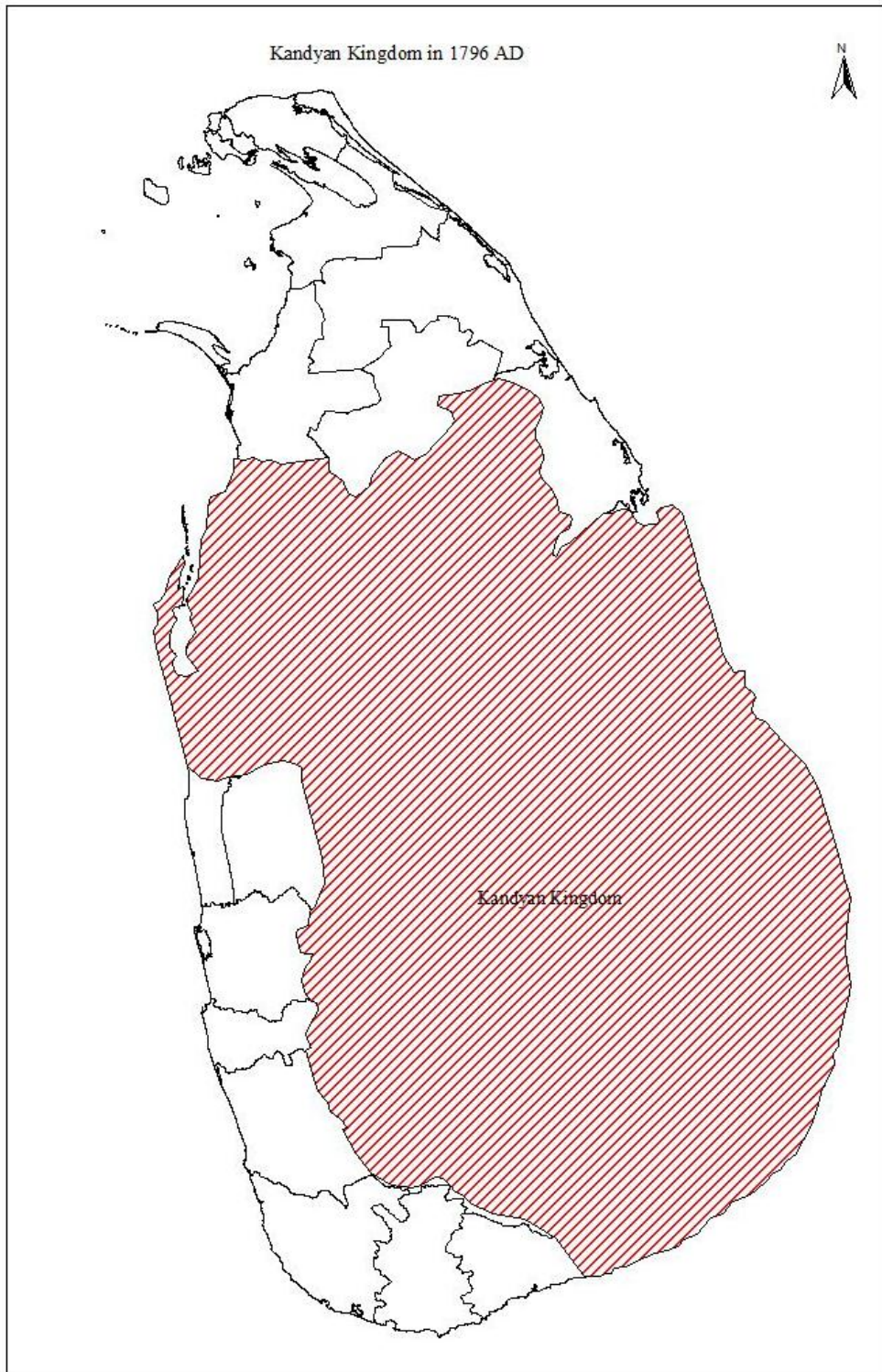
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**APPENDIX – I**



## APPENDIX - II



### APPENDIX - III

Places of the Five Debates between Buddhist and Christians from 1865-1873.

