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## REVOLUTIONARY TRENDS IN INDIAN HISTORY: IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND COLLECTIVE RESISTANCE

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### KEYWORDS

revolutionary trends, ideological diversity, motivations, organizational structures, collective resistance

### ABSTRACT

In this study an attempt has been made to explore the revolutionary trends in India, exploring their ideological diversity, historical contexts, motivations, organizational structures, impact and influence, and forms of collective resistance. The study employs an analytical and exploratory approach, combining historical, and qualitative research methods. It aims to give readers a thorough comprehension of the ever-changing character of Indian revolutionary movements by drawing on a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, as well as archival records. This study aims to chart the ideological terrain, place contemporary events in their proper historical context, examine organizational structures, evaluate the influence and effect of revolutionary movements, and investigate different types of collective resistance. The methodology involves a systematic analysis of scholarly works, historical records, and firsthand accounts. The findings reveal the diverse range of ideological frameworks adopted by revolutionary movements in India, the socio-political conditions shaping their emergence, the motivations behind participation, the organizational strategies employed, the transformative impact on society, and the various forms of collective resistance utilized.

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### INTRODUCTION

India's fight for independence from British control included a substantial contribution from the country's revolutionary movement (Griffiths, 2019). The trend began in the final decades of the nineteenth century and persisted into the early decades of the twentieth. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 served as an inspiration, as did the emergence of nationalism elsewhere and the public's perception of British Imperial weakness during World War I. Terrorism and bloodshed were hallmarks of the revolutionary movement. Its aim was the violent overthrow of British control. There were many factions inside the movement, each with its own set of beliefs and strategies. Some groups, such as the Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar, focused on assassinating British officials. Others, such as the Hindustan Socialist

Republican Association, sought to overthrow the British government through a violent revolution. The revolutionary movement was not without its successes. In 1907, a group of revolutionaries led by Madan Lal Dhingra assassinated Sir Curzon Wylie, a British official in London. In 1915, a group of revolutionaries led by (Bose & Sen-Den Han, 1934) attempted to assassinate Viceroy Charles Hardinge. In 1929, rebels under Bhagat Singh's and Sukhdev Thapar's leadership detonated a bomb in Delhi's Central Legislative Assembly. India's fight for independence included a substantial revolutionary movement. It publicized the plight of the Indian freedom fighters and encouraged the next generation to continue the fight (Hasan, 1993).

This research is significant as it examines the several revolutionary trends in India, including their ideologies, historical settings, motives, organizational structures, impacts, and modes of collective resistance. The study's findings shed light on these factors, adding to our knowledge of the fluidity of revolutionary movements and their capacity to effect profound change in Indian society (Cohn, 1978).

This study aims to map the ideological scene of revolutionary movements in India, analyzing historical contexts, understanding motivations, examining organizational structures, assessing impact and influence (Rajan, 1969), and exploring forms of collective resistance. By examining diverse ideological frameworks, contextualizing trends within socio-political conditions, and investigating motivations, organizational structures, and forms of resistance, this study seeks to provide insights into the revolutionary setting in India and its transformative potential.

## METHOD RESEARCH

The research methodology employed in this study is predominantly analytical and exploratory, drawing upon both descriptive and historical approaches. It calls for the examination of previously published works as well as primary, secondary, and archival research. The study intends to thoroughly explore the ideological diversity, historical contexts, motivations, organizational structures, impact and influence, and modes of collective resistance among revolutionary impulses in India by combining these research methodologies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Numerous internal and external factors that inspired the younger generation are responsible for the birth of revolutionary ideas in the final years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century. The religious renaissance of the late 19th century, which was accompanied by numerous international influences, stood out among these. Among these were the American Revolution, the Irish War for Independence, the Unification of Italy, the lives of Mazzini and Garibaldi, Japan's victory over Russia, and the Russian Revolution against the Tsarist Empire. These cumulative influences introduced a significant revolutionary component into the burgeoning nationalist struggle (Moffat, 2019). The Indian National Congress, established in 1885 by liberal politicians, succeeded in uniting educated, upper-class Indians on a common political front. Despite representing India's most progressive demographic, the Congress party failed to align with the tide of nationalism that was

enveloping India by the 19th century's close. A cultural renaissance led to the revival of India's ancient past, contributing to an invigorated respect for national traditions, strengthened by a religious awakening and the rise of Hindu revivalism. Politics and religion merged, with most revolutionary leaders of the era demonstrating deep religious convictions and a profound love for their homeland and all things Indian. This sentiment was accompanied by disdain for foreign rule and Western ideas, education, and lifestyle.

Maharashtra and Bengal became prominent centers for revolutionary activities. In Maharashtra, B.G. Tilak and V.D. Savarkar provided the necessary ideological foundation, organization, and leadership, paralleled in Bengal by (Chandra et al., 2016), Aurobindo Ghosh, and Swami Vivekananda. Tilak offered a political and revolutionary interpretation of the Gita, inspiring a series of political and militant activities (Purushotham, 2021). His teachings motivated the Chapekar brothers to form the Hindu Dharm Sanrakshini Sabha, leading to the assassination of several British officers. In response to the sacrifice and martyrdom of the Chapekar brothers, V.D. Savarkar established the Mitra Mela in Nasik in 1900, later transformed into the Abhinav Bharat Society in 1904 and relocated to Poona. The society played an active role in organizing meetings, publishing materials, and celebrating festivals. The revolutionary movement in Bengal found inspiration in Bankim Chandra Chatterji's works and Swami Vivekananda's teachings, complemented by contributions from Aurobindo Ghosh (Purushotham, 2021). In 1901, Pramathanath Mitra formed Anushilan Samiti, joined by prominent figures such as Aurobindo Ghosh, C.R. Das, Barindra Ghosh, and Jatin Bannerjee.

Bankim's 'Bande Mataram' (Hail Mother) from Anand Math became the battle cry of the extremist party in Bengal, giving religious significance to the notion of the motherland. The novel revolutionary doctrine, or the Shakti cult, urged Bengalis to retaliate against their oppressors. Despite its ability to generate contempt for imperialists and inspire a thirst for independence, this religious revival also inadvertently alienated a significant Muslim population (Maclean, 2016). External influences from international figures like Mazzini, Garibaldi, and various Irish revolutionaries, alongside significant events like Japan's victory over Russia in 1905, played a profound role in shaping the Indian revolutionary movement. B.C. Pal regarded Mazzini as a major source of a new nationalism in India, while Annie Besant drew parallels between Mazzini and Aurobindo, describing them as individuals of the same mold. V.D. Savarkar even translated Mazzini's autobiography into Marathi.

### **Early Developments**

As revolutionary ideologies began to take root under these influences, the partition of Bengal in 1905 served as a significant catalyst. Revolutionary groups saw through the façade of administrative efficiency, recognizing the age-old tactics of "divide and rule" and instigating indigenous factions against each other (Maclean, 2016). Consequently, they began to adopt strategies resonant with those used in Russia. An early manifestation of this was an assassination attempt on a former magistrate of Dacca on December 23, 1907. Subsequently, the revolutionary groups targeted Kingsford, the Muzaffarpur magistrate, known for his orders to whip several young men. A tragic incident ensued when Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki mistook two British women for Kingsford due to a similar carriage, resulting in their accidental bombing (Agrawal, 2008). This incident triggered a significant remark from Tilak,

who asserted that the advent of bomb usage in India had fundamentally altered the political landscape. He urged the Indian government to respond with political reform rather than repression.

During this period, Sachindranath Sanyal established the Anushilan Samiti at Benares in 1908, later rebranded as the Young Men's Association. Alongside him, Hardayal, Amir Chand, and Dinanath became increasingly active. However, with Hardayal's departure to the United States in 1911, the group's momentum ebbed until Rash Behari Bose's arrival. Under Bose's influence, the group started the magazine "Liberty," educating people about bomb-making. This led to an assassination attempt on Viceroy Lord Hardinge on December 23, 1912, which he survived (Maclean, 2016). The organizers of the attempt publically endorsed the act, citing religious scriptures to justify the attempted assassination. The proclamation from the group asserted that religious texts such as the Gita, the Vedas, and the Quran called for the elimination of the motherland's enemies, irrespective of their caste, creed, or color. Following this, Bose and his associates planned a simultaneous uprising involving Indian soldiers. However, the plan leaked prematurely, leading to the capture of most of the revolutionaries. Bose managed to evade arrest and continued his revolutionary efforts in Japan.

The repressive policies of the British government resulted in numerous conspiracy cases, leading to the elimination of several revolutionaries. This brought about a temporary pause in revolutionary activities. However, figures such as Gendalal Dixit of Mainpuri continued to champion the revolutionary cause until his arrest and subsequent death in tragic circumstances. Many leaders managed to escape arrest, continuing their struggles from foreign lands (Jerosch, 2007). America was a popular choice, seen as a land of freedom and opportunity. Among the exiled revolutionaries, Hardayal launched the "Ghadar" newspaper from San Francisco in May 1913, which later gave its name to the Ghadar party. The party's objective was the overthrow of the British Raj in India and the establishment of a Panchayat Raj (Republican State) founded on principles of freedom and equality (Heehs, 1998). The Ghadar spirit also spread to the Far East, with branches established in Japan, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. With the onset of the Great War, Kabul became a refuge for leading rebels, where Raja Mahendra Pratap established a provisional government of India, serving as its president with Barkatullah as the prime minister.

### **Early Founts of Ideological Inspiration**

The narratives, discourses, and public addresses of the revolutionaries during this era demonstrate a conspicuous religious inclination, romanticist tendencies, and pronounced emotionalism. Many firmly believed that political advocacy alone was insufficient and that spiritual preparedness was essential for the populace to face imminent challenges (Singh, 2009). However, the form of religion they subscribed to deviated from the mainstream beliefs of the majority. There was an element of puritanism in their approach, which they perceived as vital for a revolutionary's existence. Concurrently, they voiced their opposition to any form of parochialism and bias that could foster divisions among individuals.

Despite the prevalent religiosity, the revolutionary factions were not devoid of secular or even irreligious inclinations. Bhupendranath Dutta, for instance, refused to swear an oath solely on Hindu scriptures. Some initial revolutionaries expressed concern that Hindu rites

might alienate potential Muslim supporters (Pattanaik, 2005). The stance of Hemchandra Kanungo and his colleagues from Midnapore further reinforced the antireligious sentiments among several revolutionaries. Intriguingly, among the first four martyrs, Satyendranath Basu, Kanailal Dutta, and Khudiram Basu were skeptical of religion (Pattanaik, 2005). Without a doubt, the early revolutionary ideology had its shortcomings, and their reliance on religious doctrines to propel their revolutionary cause was inherently flawed. However, it is indisputable that for the committed revolutionaries, the liberation of India via armed struggle was the paramount objective, with religion serving merely as a tool towards this end. This perspective should not be overlooked or undervalued in evaluating the initial stage of the revolutionary movement.

The early revolutionaries pioneered the quest for a revolutionary ideology and a strategic plan, drawing insights from both Indian history and the revolutionary events in other nations (Mill, 1817). They did not advocate social reform per se but sought to dismantle long-standing traditional customs. They rebelled against any factor that posed a barrier to the advancement of the revolutionary movement. Their tendencies towards emotionalism and romanticism could only be mitigated by the acknowledgment that revolution is a socially dictated process, influenced by certain laws. This understanding emerged among the revolutionaries following the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

### **Beginnings of a New Revolutionary Spirit**

The global economic landscape experienced a severe downturn during the First World War. All warring nations witnessed a significant decline in their peacetime industries and agricultural sectors. The fiscal burden of the war led to the imposition of direct and indirect taxes on the working class and peasantry to refill depleted treasuries. The British administration was acutely aware of the brewing political sentiment in India during this period (Maclean, 2016). Expectations were set high by President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, wartime assurances, and the Montague Declaration of August 1917. Yet, these verbal affirmations failed to satisfy both the elite and the masses, who demanded concrete actions. However, any hope harbored about British intentions was soon disillusioned with the introduction of the Rowlatt Bill (Hutchins, 2015), designed to stifle freedom of speech and political engagement (Iyengar, 2001). As the Defence of India Act was set to expire half a year after the war's end, fears of revolutionary "terrorism" and the rise of Bolshevism drove the British to arm the Indian administration with powers of preventive detention. All political parties in India, including the Indian National Congress and moderates (Perumal & Thandavan, 1985), strongly opposed this action. (Kibriya, 1999) responded by calling for widespread demonstrations and strikes. As a result, on April 13, 1919, there was the infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar, which indirectly contributed to a considerable rise in national consciousness. (Kibriya, 1999), expressing his determination to challenge the culture that allowed such brutality, wrote to the Duke of Connaught in February 1921, stating, "We are determined to battle with all our might against that un-English nature which has made Dyerism possible."

Gandhi subsequently initiated the Non-Cooperation Movement and called for a boycott of British goods. Promising independence by the end of 1921, he appealed to the revolutionaries to refrain from violence for one year. The revolutionaries, in response, agreed

to suspend their activities. Young students, moved by Gandhi's call, abandoned their studies to fully engage in the fight for freedom. The concurrent economic and labor crises further intensified the struggle (Iyengar, 2001). However, the abrupt halt of the movement following the Chauri Chaura incident led to deep disappointment among Gandhi's young followers. Many, including figures like Chandra Shekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Manmathnath Gupta, and others, found it hard to reconcile Gandhi's blending of politics with morality, which they felt had undermined the popular movement. This led them to embrace more violent methods, reigniting revolutionary activities in India after the sudden containment of the mass movement.

### **Revolutionary Movements in India: Impact and Influence**

Revolutionary movements have had a tremendous and transformational impact on India's social, political, and cultural spheres, greatly influencing social change, legislative reforms, and the restructuring of power relationships. Socially, these movements have supported an inclusive, egalitarian, and just society. Movements like the Dalit Panthers and Self-Respect Movement challenged the oppressive caste system, promoting rights and representation for marginalized communities (Kaul, 2002). They encouraged socio-economic mobility and stimulated awareness about structural inequalities, ushering in a sea change in Indian society's attitude towards caste and class. Women's rights movements, particularly post-independence, have instigated changes in traditional gender norms and catalyzed legislation promoting women's empowerment and safety, influencing the status and roles of women in society.

Politically, revolutionary movements have precipitated essential policy reforms. The Indian National Movement, for example, was instrumental in India's struggle for independence from British rule, shaping the country's foundational democratic principles. Later, movements like the Nav Nirman Movement in Gujarat and the JP Movement nationally in the mid-1970s resulted in significant political realignments and policy changes. More recently, movements such as the Right to Information and Anti-Corruption Movements have highlighted government transparency and accountability, prompting essential policy modifications (Kaul, 2002). Culturally, revolutionary movements have influenced India's artistic, intellectual, and religious landscapes. The Bhakti and Sufi movements, for instance, left an indelible effect on Indian literature, music, and philosophy by questioning established religious norms and advocating for a more individual and inclusive form of spiritual expression. The Dravidian movement has also played an important role in the promotion and celebration of regional distinctions such as language and culture.

One significant effect of these changes is a shift in the balance of power. The destabilization of current power systems has historically resulted in power transfers toward previously marginalized or disempowered groups (Khan, 2017). For example, the land reform movements of the 1950s and 1960s sought to transform rural power systems by redistributing land from landed elites to landless peasants. Similarly, the 1990s Panchayati Raj reforms intended to devolve authority to regional governments and increase women's and minority groups' presence in politics. Revolutionary movements have had a transformative impact on India, shaping its social fabric, political landscape, and cultural expressions, often leading to power shifts and policy reforms. They have contributed to social change by advocating for

equality, justice, and representation, leading to more inclusive, democratic, and accountable societal structures.

### Forms of Collective Resistance in Revolutionary Movements

Revolutionary movements in India have utilized a vast array of strategies and methods for collective resistance, each aligning with their unique objectives and contexts. These methods range from protests and demonstrations to strikes, armed struggle, and the formation of underground networks. Cultural activism and the creation of alternative institutions have been prominent features of these movements. Protests and demonstrations have been a primary form of resistance (Tuck, 1998). These peaceful methods allow for large-scale public participation and have been crucial in movements like the Salt March led by Gandhi during the Indian independence struggle, the recent Farmers' Protests against agricultural reforms, and numerous other instances. These actions aim to communicate discontent, raise awareness, and pressure authorities into making policy changes (Marshall, 1997). Strikes, both general and specific, have been another popular form of collective resistance. Industrial workers, miners, and even government employees have used strikes to protest against unfair wages, poor working conditions, and unjust policies. For instance, the Railway Strike of 1974 was a significant moment in Indian labor history.

Some revolutionary movements have resorted to armed struggle, particularly in regions where state repression has been severe, or peaceful means have yielded little result. These movements, such as the Naxalite movement or the separatist movements in Kashmir and the Northeast, have employed guerilla warfare and insurgency tactics against the state machinery (Das, 1992). Underground networks have also been crucial, especially in movements operating under severe state repression. These clandestine networks often work towards disseminating information, mobilizing resources, organizing resistance, and providing safety to activists. The underground networks during the independence struggle against the British provide a notable example.

Cultural activism involves using cultural forms like music, literature, theater, and art to resist oppression, assert identity, and mobilize people. The IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association) during the freedom struggle and the Dalit Panthers' use of literature and poetry to voice caste oppression are key examples. Movements such as the Chipko movement have also used folklore and traditional songs to gather support and express dissent. The formation of alternative institutions has been a significant strategy to challenge existing power structures (Das, 1992). These may involve alternative governance structures, like the Gram Sabhas (village assemblies), or alternative economic systems, like cooperatives. The creation of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission as an alternative economic and development model during the freedom struggle is a prime example of this form of resistance. Thus, through an array of strategies ranging from protests to cultural activism and creating alternative institutions, revolutionary movements in India have adopted various forms of collective resistance to challenge and change oppressive systems and structures.

### CONCLUSION

The study has explored the revolutionary trends in India, delving into their ideological diversity, historical contexts, motivations, organizational structures, impact and influence,

and forms of collective resistance. Through an analytical and exploratory approach, combined with descriptive, historical, and qualitative research methods, we have gained a comprehensive understanding of these dynamic movements. The mapping of ideological frameworks, contextualization of historical trends, examination of motivations, analysis of organizational structures, and assessment of impact and influence have revealed the complex nature of revolutionary movements in India. The exploration of various forms of collective resistance has showcased the diverse strategies employed by these movements. The results highlight the crucial part revolutionary movements have played in developing India's political and social landscape. These protests are a direct reaction to historical wrongs such as racial discrimination, political repression, economic exploitation, and cultural exclusion. They have organized people into groups, taking on established authorities, and called for radical reform.

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