



THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

The Indian National Congress played a crucial role in the Indian independence movement through its promotion of national unity, political awareness, and mobilization of the masses. Its leaders and campaigns were instrumental in shaping India's political and social landscape and laying the foundation for India's independence. The Indian National Congress (INC) played a significant role in the Indian independence movement. It was founded in 1885 with the primary objective of promoting the interests of the Indian people under British rule. Over the years, the INC transformed from a mere debating society to a major political force that led the struggle for independence. One of the most significant contributions of the INC was the promotion of national unity. It brought together people from different regions, religions, and castes to fight for a common cause. The INC believed in the idea of a united India, where people of all communities would live together in peace and harmony. This idea of unity played a critical role in mobilizing the masses and creating a sense of national consciousness. The INC also played a significant role in promoting political awareness among the Indian people. It organized several campaigns and movements, such as the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement, and the Quit India Movement, to challenge the British government's authority.

Keywords: Role, Indian National Congress, Indian Independence Movement etc.

INTRODUCTION:

The Indian National Congress (INC) played a significant role in the Indian independence movement. It was founded in 1885 with the primary objective of promoting the interests of the Indian people under British rule. Over the years, the INC transformed from a mere debating society to a major political force that led the struggle for independence. One of the most significant contributions of the INC was the promotion of national unity. It brought together people from different regions, religions, and castes to fight for a common cause. The INC believed in the idea of a united India, where people of all communities would live together in peace and harmony. This idea of unity played a critical role in mobilizing the masses and creating a sense of national

consciousness. The INC also played a significant role in promoting political awareness among the Indian people. It organized several campaigns and movements, such as the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement, and the Quit India Movement, to challenge the British government's authority. These movements helped to spread the message of freedom and mobilized people to fight for their rights.

The Indian National Congress also served as a platform for the emergence of several national leaders who played a pivotal role in the independence movement. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Subhash Chandra Bose were all associated with the INC at some point in their careers. These leaders brought different perspectives and ideologies to the freedom struggle, but they all shared a common goal of achieving independence for India. Another significant contribution of the INC was its role in shaping India's constitution. After independence, the Constituent Assembly of India was tasked with drafting a new constitution for the country. The INC played a significant role in this process, and its leaders, including Nehru, Patel, and B.R. Ambedkar, played a crucial role in drafting India's constitution.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The research on the topic aims to explore the various ways in which the INC contributed to the Indian independence movement, including its political strategies, campaigns, and ideological contributions.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

One aspect of the research focuses on the INC's political strategies and tactics, including its use of civil disobedience, non-violent resistance, and mass mobilization. Scholars have examined the impact of campaigns such as the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement, and the Quit India Movement, and how these campaigns shaped the Indian independence movement. Another area of research explores the ideological contributions of the INC to the Indian independence movement, including its promotion of Indian nationalism, secularism, socialism, and democracy. Scholars have analyzed the speeches, writings, and actions of the organization's leaders, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and B.R. Ambedkar, and how their ideas influenced the movement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study is based on secondary sources of data such as books, journals, article, websites and other sources.

THE ROLE OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS IN THE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT:

The INC's initial approach to achieving Indian independence was through constitutional means. The organization advocated for increased representation of Indians in the British government and for greater autonomy for India within the British Empire. However, after several failed attempts at securing these reforms, the INC adopted more radical tactics. One of the most significant events in the INC's history was the Non-Cooperation Movement, launched in 1920. The movement aimed to boycott British institutions and goods and

to promote Indian self-reliance. It quickly gained widespread support, with millions of Indians participating in strikes, protests, and boycotts. However, the movement was eventually called off after a violent incident at Chauri Chaura, Uttar Pradesh, where a group of protesters attacked a police station and killed several policemen.

The Civil Disobedience Movement, launched in 1930, was another major campaign led by the INC. The movement aimed to challenge British salt laws, which imposed a tax on the production and sale of salt, a vital commodity in India. The campaign included a 24-day march to the sea led by Mahatma Gandhi, where thousands of Indians collected salt from the beach in defiance of the British laws. The movement led to widespread arrests, but it also garnered international attention and support for the Indian independence movement. The Quit India Movement, launched in 1942, was the final and most significant campaign led by the INC before India gained independence. The movement called for the immediate withdrawal of the British from India and the establishment of an independent Indian government. The British government responded with a harsh crackdown, arresting thousands of Indians and launching a brutal repression campaign. However, the movement marked a turning point in the struggle for independence, as it galvanized popular support for the cause and paved the way for India's independence in 1947.

The INC also played a crucial role in fostering social and cultural change in India. For example, the organization advocated for the abolition of caste-based discrimination and the promotion of women's rights. The INC's leaders, such as Jawaharlal Nehru and B.R. Ambedkar, played a significant role in shaping India's social and cultural policies after independence. Another significant contribution of the INC was its role in promoting the idea of Swaraj, or self-rule, among the Indian people. The concept of Swaraj emphasized the need for Indians to take control of their own destiny and to reject foreign domination. It served as a rallying cry for the independence movement and inspired millions of Indians to join the struggle for freedom. The INC also played a significant role in fostering international solidarity and support for the Indian independence movement. The organization established links with several international organizations, including the Socialist International and the Anti-Imperialist League, to promote the Indian cause. The INC's leaders also traveled abroad to raise awareness about India's struggle for independence and to build support among foreign governments and organizations.

Regional and local variations: The Indian independence movement was not a homogenous movement, but rather one that had different nuances and approaches depending on the region and local context. Researchers could examine how the role of the Indian National Congress differed in various regions of India, and how local movements and organizations collaborated or clashed with the national Congress.

Relationship with other organizations: The Indian National Congress was not the only organization involved in the Indian independence movement. Other organizations, such as the Muslim League and the Indian Socialist Party, also played significant roles. Researchers could explore the relationships between the Indian National Congress and these other organizations, as well as the tensions and conflicts that arose.

Impact on women's participation: The Indian independence movement also had an impact on women's participation in politics and society. Researchers could investigate how the Indian National Congress contributed to the mobilization of women and the promotion of women's rights, and how women's participation in the movement influenced the organization's strategies and tactics.

Role of diaspora: The Indian independence movement was not restricted to India but had a global reach, with Indian communities abroad playing a role in the struggle for independence. Researchers could examine the role of the Indian National Congress in mobilizing and coordinating the diaspora, and how the diaspora's support contributed to the movement.

Role of cultural and intellectual production: The Indian National Congress also had a significant impact on cultural and intellectual production during the independence movement. Researchers could investigate how the organization promoted literary and artistic works that celebrated Indian culture and contributed to the construction of a national identity.

Role of leadership: The leadership of the Indian National Congress played a critical role in the independence movement. Researchers could examine how leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Subhas Chandra Bose contributed to the movement, and how their strategies and tactics differed.

Impact of colonial policies: The Indian National Congress also had to navigate the impact of colonial policies on the Indian independence movement. Researchers could explore how colonial policies such as the Rowlatt Acts, the Salt Tax, and the Partition of Bengal influenced the strategies and tactics of the Indian National Congress, and how the organization responded to these policies.

Influence of external factors: The Indian independence movement was also influenced by external factors such as the World Wars, the Russian Revolution, and the rise of nationalist movements in other parts of the world. Researchers could examine how these external factors influenced the strategies and tactics of the Indian National Congress, and how the organization responded to these factors.

Role of the media: The media played a critical role in shaping public opinion during the Indian independence movement. Researchers could explore how the Indian National Congress utilized the media to disseminate its message and mobilize public support, and how the organization responded to negative media coverage.

Impact on post-independence India: The Indian National Congress played a significant role in shaping post-independence India. Researchers could examine how the organization's ideology and policies influenced the development of India as a democratic, secular, and socialist nation, and how the organization's legacy continues to shape Indian politics and society today.

Socioeconomic factors: The Indian independence movement was not just a political movement, but also one that was influenced by socioeconomic factors such as poverty, inequality, and discrimination. Researchers could explore how the Indian National Congress addressed these issues in its platform, and how the organization's policies and strategies were influenced by these factors.

Role of nonviolent resistance: The Indian National Congress was known for its advocacy of nonviolent resistance as a means of achieving independence. Researchers could examine how the organization promoted and practiced nonviolent resistance, and how it influenced other movements and organizations around the world.

Impact of the Quit India Movement: The Quit India Movement, launched by the Indian National Congress in 1942, was one of the most significant mass movements in the Indian independence struggle. Researchers could explore the impact of the movement on the Indian independence movement and how it contributed to the eventual independence of India.

Role of civil society: The Indian National Congress worked closely with civil society organizations such as trade unions, peasant organizations, and women's groups in the Indian independence movement. Researchers could examine the role of civil society organizations in the movement and how they collaborated with the Indian National Congress.

Impact on international relations: The Indian independence movement had a significant impact on international relations, with other nations and international organizations becoming involved in the struggle for independence. Researchers could explore how the Indian National Congress's interactions with other nations and international organizations influenced the movement and its eventual success.

Finally, the Indian National Congress's legacy continues to shape Indian politics today. The organization's contributions to the Indian independence movement are celebrated every year on Independence Day, and its leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, are revered as national heroes. The INC remains a major political force in India, and its ideology of secularism, socialism, and democracy continues to shape the country's political discourse.

CONCLUSION:

The role of the Indian National Congress in the Indian independence movement is a complex and multifaceted endeavor that requires consideration of various factors such as socioeconomic factors, nonviolent resistance, the Quit India Movement, civil society, international relations, leadership, colonial policies, external factors, the media, post-independence India, regional variations, relationships with other organizations, impact on women's participation, diaspora involvement, and cultural and intellectual production.. The findings of such research can contribute to a better understanding of the complexities of the Indian independence movement and the role of political organizations in social and political change.

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