



# Sambhav

## Day 55

**Question 1.** What were the provisions of the Simon Commission. Do you think that it had provided a spark to the nationalist activities at a time of inactivity. (250 words)

**Question 2.** Illustrate how the Karachi and Lahore sessions of the Indian National Congress changed the direction of national movements. (150 words)

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## Approach / Explanation / Answer

### Answer 1

#### Approach

- Introduce briefly about the Simon commission.
- Discuss the provision of the Simon Commission and also analyses how it had provided a spark to the nationalist activities.
- Conclude suitably.

#### Introduction

As per the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1919, an all-white, seven-member Indian Statutory Commission, to study the progress of the governance scheme and suggest new steps, was set up by the British government under Stanley Baldwin's prime ministership on November 8, 1927.

#### Body

##### Provisions of the Simon Commission:

The Simon Commission published a two-volume report in May 1930.

- It proposed the abolition of dyarchy and the establishment of representative government in the provinces which should be given autonomy.
- Governor should have discretionary power in relation to internal security and administrative powers to protect the different communities.
- The governor general was to have complete power to appoint the members of the cabinet. And the Government of India would have complete control over the high court.

- It also recommended that separate communal electorates be retained but only until tensions between Hindus and Muslims had died down.
- There was to be no universal franchise. It accepted the idea of federalism but not in the near future.
- It suggested that the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan should get local legislatures, and right to be represented at the center. It favors that Sindh should be separated from Bombay, and Burma from India and Indianization of Indian army.

**The Simon Commission had provided a spark to the nationalist activities:** It had provided initiation to the various activities to all the stakeholders and ideologies like nationalists, moderates, revolutionaries and liberal intellectuals, like:

- The Indian response to the Simon Commission was immediate and nearly unanimous. Indians were angered by the exclusion of Indians from the commission and the basic notion behind the exclusion that foreigners would discuss and decide upon India's fitness for self-government. This notion was seen as a violation of the principle of self-determination, and as a deliberate insult to the self-respect of Indians.
- A significant feature of this upsurge was that a new generation of youth got their first taste of political action. Nehru and Subhas Bose emerged as leaders of this new wave of youth and students.
- New radical ideas of socialism reflected in the emergence of groups such as the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Workers' and Peasants' Parties and Hindustani Sewa Dal (Karnataka).

#### **Impact of Appointment of Simon Commission on the National Movement:**

- It gave a stimulus to radical forces demanding not just complete independence but major socio-economic reforms on socialist lines.
- The challenge of Lord Birkenhead to Indian politicians to produce an agreed constitution was accepted by various political sections, and thus prospects for Indian unity seemed bright at that point of time.

**Activities by the liberal intellectuals:** Nehru Report - as an answer to Lord Birkenhead's challenge- to draft a constitutional framework for the country.

- The report was finalised by August 1928. The issues were unanimous accepted except the "dominion status" as the basis of the Constitution, a section of it wanted "complete independence" as the basis, with the majority section giving the latter section liberty of action.

**Activities by Communal organisations:** Delhi Proposals of Muslim League, evolved four proposals for their demands to be incorporated into the draft constitution, known as the 'Delhi Proposals'. These were:

- Joint electorates in place of separate electorates with reserved seats for Muslims;
- One-third representation to Muslims in Central Legislative Assembly;
- Representation to Muslims in Punjab and Bengal in proportion to their population;
- Jinnah's Fourteen Points Jinnah went back to the Shafi faction of the Muslim League and in March 1929 gave 14 points which were to become the basis of all future propaganda of the Muslim League. These points inherited the conceptual birth of the Pakistan.
- Hindu Mahasabha demanded a strictly unitary structure.

**The younger section** of the congress regarded the idea of dominion status in the report as a step backward, and the developments at the All-Parties Conference strengthened their criticism of the dominion status idea. Nehru and Subhas Bose rejected the Congress' modified goal and jointly set up the Independence for India League.

#### **Activities by Liberal intellectuals:**

- Dr Ambedkar was appointed by the Bombay Legislative Council to work with the Simon Commission. He argued for 'universal adult franchise' for both male and female alike; for provincial autonomy in the provinces and dyarchy at Centre and safeguards rights of the depressed classes.

- He suggested no link between the depressed classes and the Hindu community and demanded that depressed classes should be regarded as a distinct and independent minority.

**Activities by the Revolutionary nationalist:** Saunders' Murder as a revenge of the death of Lala Lajpat Rai due to lathi blows received during a lathi charge on an anti-Simon Commission procession. Bhagat Singh and Shivram Rajguru shot dead Saunders.

- **Bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly (April 1929):** Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt were asked to throw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly against the passage of the Public Safety Bill and Trade Disputes Bill. b

## Conclusion

- Simon Commission was a controversial and divisive issue in India that fueled the nationalist movement and contributed to a sense of unrest and discontent in the country. Its lack of Indian representation and its perceived attempt to impose British policies on India were seen as major affronts to the country's sovereignty and self-determination.

## Answer 2

### Approach

- Introduce the Karachi and Lahore sessions of the Indian National Congress.
- Illustrate how these sessions changed the direction of national movements.
- Conclude suitably.

### Introduction

- At Lahore session of Congress (December 1929) Jawaharlal Nehru, popularize the concept of Purna swaraj, was nominated the president for the session due to Gandhi's backing to acknowledge the upsurge of youth which had made the anti-Simon campaign a huge success.
- Karachi Congress Session, in March 1931 a special session of the Congress was held at Karachi to endorse the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

### Body

- Lahore and Karachi sessions were the two ends of the continuum, which had number of activities that provided a guided and crystal-clear ideological direction to the national movements, like:

#### The following major decisions were taken at the Lahore session:

- Boycott the Round Table Conference, Complete independence as the aim of the Congress, Congress Working Committee was authorised to launch a programme of civil disobedience, January 26, 1930 was fixed as the first Independence (Swarajya) Day, to be celebrated everywhere.
- December 31, 1929 At midnight on the banks of River Ravi, the newly adopted tricolour flag of freedom was hoisted by Jawaharlal Nehru amidst slogans of Inquilab Zindabad.
- The ideological support provided by the Lahore session provided the national wide pan-India movement called Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM).

**Civil Disobedience Movement or the Salt Satyagraha:** The movement was started as a satyagraha on the issue of Salt duty. It had included several issues from each and every individual of the society and these things make it a national movement. The inclusive nature of this movement brought as per the spirit of the swaraj spelled at the Karachi session of the INC.

- Suspension of CDM and participation of INC in the second Round Table Conference provided the validity to the Gandhian strategy of struggle-truce-struggle which led to resume of the CDM after failure of the CDM.

## **Karachi Congress Session, in March 1931, was held at Karachi to endorse the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.**

- Congress Resolutions at Karachi the goal of purna swaraj was reiterated, Fundamental Rights and National Economic Program which made the session particularly memorable.
- This was the first time the Congress spelt out what swaraj would mean for the masses - "in order to end exploitation of masses, political freedom must include economic freedom of starving millions."
- Both the Karachi and Lahore sessions of the Indian National Congress marked a shift towards more radical demands for independence and self-rule.
- They signaled a departure from the Congress's previous stance of seeking gradual self-governance within the framework of the British Empire, and instead called for complete independence and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Indian state.

## **Conclusion**

- The Karachi and Lahore sessions of the Indian National Congress marked a significant shift in the direction of national movements and helped to shape the course of the struggle for independence.

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