Home Rule League Movement 1916

Indian Home Rule League Movement was an Irish Home Rule Movement, a movement that campaigned for Self Government for Ireland within United Kingdom. Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak were the pioneers of Indian Home Rule League Movement.

BACKGROUND

Growth of Revolutionary Activities (Before & During First World War) –

Abroad

Revolutionary centers abroad to escape from government restrictions e.g.

Indian Home Rule Society and **India House** in London, a centre for radical Indian students by Shyamji Krishna Varma, a Nationalist Lawyer.

Gadar Party in North America by Lala Hardayal & others peasants and soldiers who migrated from India to USA for employment.

Berlin Committee for Indian Independence in Europe by Virendranath Chattopadhyay to mobilize Indian Settlers abroad.

Mutiny in Singapore by Punjabi Muslims & Sikh armed forces.

In India

Attempt on life of unpopular officials like Governor of Muzaffarpur, Magistrate Kingsford, Viceroy Harding etc on the line of **Russian Nihilists or Irish Nationalists.**

Revolutionary activities

Organized by **Bagha Jatin, Rashbehari Bose** and **Sachin Sanyal**

Propagated by Newspapers like **Sandhya, Yugantar.**

CAUSES

Severe Government Repression like ban on public meetings, press etc and **War time miseries** like high taxation, price rise made them realize that **self government** was essential for the sake of economic, political and cultural progress of the country.

"Divide & Rule" Policy through **Morley Minto Reforms 1909** that provided –

Separate Electorate for Muslims to divide Hindu - Muslim

Limited Self Government to win over Moderate Nationalists and suppress Militant Nationalist

International Influences

Revolutionary Movements to challenge despotic government in Ireland, Russia, Egypt, etc

Victory of Small Asian Country like Ethiopia, Japan over Europe exploded **Myth of European Superiority.**

Revival of Nationalist Movement –

Disappointed with Morley Minto Reforms, **Lokmanya Tilak**, a prominent extremist leader and **Annie Besant** an Irish Socialist & Theosophist formed **Home Rule League** on the line of **Irish Home Rule Movements** demanding **Self-Government in India.**

FOUNDATION OF THE LEAGUE

Two Home Rule Leagues were established with the common objective of achieving Self -Government in India.

In 1915, Annie Besant started All India Home Rule League as an independent political organization at Madras. George Arundale, B.W. Wadia, C.P.Ramaswamy Ayar were her associates.

In 1916, Tilak launched his Indian Home Rule League at Belgaum, Poona, headquarters in Delhi.

Tilak had 6 branches covering Maharashtra (except Bombay), Karnataka, Berar and the Central Provinces. Besant's league had 200 branches working in the rest of the country including Bombay.

Other Leaders – Motilal Nehru, J.L.Nehru, CR Das, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Jinnah, TB Sapru, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhulabhai Desai also joined later.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve **Self-Government** within the British empire. Tilak gave the popular slogan *"Home Rule is my birthright, and I will have it".*

To demand **Formation of Linguistic States and Education** in Vernacular Language.

HOW METHODS ADOPTED TO SPREAD THE MOVEMENT WERE DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS MOVEMENTS?

Public Meetings, organizing Reading Rooms with books on National Politics.

Unlike Swadeshi Movement's specific techniques like Bonfires, fairs or boycott, the league rather promoted Political Education to develop a sense of pride in the Motherland through all **CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS** like –

OUTCOMES

Tilak and Besant revived **Swadeshi Spirit.**

Strong Mass Base - A huge support from **Educated Indians,** organizational links between **town and countryside** especially to the **politically backward regions like Gujrat and Sindh.**

New Dimension to freedom movement i.e. **Focus from Educated Elite to Masses permanently.**

Influenced National Politics

Reunion of Moderates & Extremist.

The Muslim League members like Jinnah, G.S.Khaparde, Subramanya Iyer also joined the movement.

Lucknow Pact 1916 – Congress accepted Muslim League's position on Separate Electorate.

Pressurized Government

Montague, the Secretary of State announced administrative reforms under **The Government of India Act 1919** providing the development of self-governing institutions ultimately realizing **Responsible Governments** formation of Provincial and Central Government for India and the demand for home rule would no longer be considered sedition.

SEVERE GOVERNMENT REPRESSION

Annie Besant and her colleagues were arrested in June 1917 but soon released on acquire of **Nation-wide protest.**

A case was instituted against Tilak, **barred him from entering Punjab** and **Delhi** on the name of public security.

Students were prohibited from attending Political Meetings

Mrs. Besant **forfeited security** on her newspaper 'New India'.

WHY DID THE MOVEMENT FADE OUT BY 1919?

Limited to **Educated People and Students.**

Growth of Communal Tension as a result of Hindu-Muslim riot of 1917-18.

Lack of Support from all classes as home rule was misunderstood as a rule of the **Upper Caste Hindu Majority.**

Announcement of Constitutional Reforms of 1919 distracted moderates; they started discussion over August Declaration.

Leaderlessness as Tilak left for England in 1918 to pursue a libel case for his book 'Indian Unrest' and Besant oscillated between talks of reforms and pushing the Home Rule Movement forward.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

A concrete proposal of **Self-Government** was placed before the Government by Indians including **Muslim League, Extremist & Moderates.**

Witnessed the emergence of Ardent **Nationalists** who became the backbone of the Indian National Movement under **Gandhiji's leadership.**

VISIONIAS
THE VISION OF ASPIRANTS