

## ANSWER WRITING FOCUS GROUP 2024

TEST #19 - SOLUTIONS

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**Q.1) How far do you agree with the view that British conquest of India was accidental rather than the result of a deliberate policy and design?**

**Answer:**

The British arrived in India as traders and ultimately ended up ruling India for about two centuries. The process of British conquest of India has resulted in a long-standing debate around intentions of British strategy, whether British were responding to the emerging situations that resulted in Conquest or the conquest was a deliberate design.

**British conquest as accidental:**

1. The **British East India Company was formed for trading rather than conquest**, which is evident from the Charter of the company which solely gave it a privilege to trade, and not to rule;
  - as per Seeley, British arrived only with intentions to trade + reluctantly drawn into the Indian political conflicts and felt compelled to acquire territories;
  - early interactions with Indian rulers were commercial, with focus on trade privileges only.
2. **Local Scenario:** (a) the decline of the Mughal empire was beyond the control of the British, they just exploited the political vacuum + factionalism created by it;
  - Additionally, Battle of Plassey (1757) and the Battle of Buxar (1764) were responses to threats to EIC interests.
3. **Policies:** (a) close observation of early British policy reveals a sense of ad-hocism rather than premeditated strategy in British policies; (b) Doctrine of Lapse (1848) was developed as pragmatic solutions to immediate problems rather than parts of a long-standing plan for conquest.

**British conquest as a result of deliberate policy and design:**

Although historians agree that the initial British policy focused on trade, they opine that it was a ruse to hide their true intentions of conquest;

1. **Policy:** as per historians, the British eventually saw the strategic and economic importance of India and set about to conquer it;
  - Regulating Act of 1773 and Pitt's India Act of 1784 [for greater government oversight and control over the EIC] clearly indicated a shift towards a more deliberate imperial policy.
2. **Conquests:** (a) key treaties [e.g. Treaty of Allahabad (1765)] were designed to create scope for British political dominance in India; (b) British policy of alliances and diplomacy + systematic use of military advantages clearly reflects a deliberate and coherent strategy over time.
3. **Imperial Ambitions:** the British belief in their racial superiority + the belief in the 'white man's burden' gives away the core of the British imperial ambitions;
4. Establishment of **British educational and legal systems, infrastructure projects, and economic policies** were part of a deliberate effort to integrate and control India.

**Q.2) "The revolt of 1857 was not only a product of military grievances, but also the result of widespread dissatisfaction with British rule among various sections of Indian society." Comment.**

**Answer:**

The revolt of 1857 was a **violent uprising** against **hundred years of East India Company's** rule. The revolt is also referred as 'Sepoy Mutiny' due to the major role played by Indian soldiers of the company in genesis of the revolt. Traditionally the British administration and colonial historians have highlighted

the military nature and immediate reasons for the revolt while ignoring the grievances of other sections of society.

**Military grievances:**

1. Modernization of army ignored caste privileges + pecuniary benefits;
2. New service conditions in General Service Enlistment Act, 1856 led to conflict with religious beliefs, drop in salary, and abolishment of extra allowance for service abroad;
3. Sepoys were essentially a 'peasant in uniform' and declining conditions of peasant affected them gravely;
4. Missionaries' activities + Enfield rifle issues created a fear of threat to local religions.

**Economic dissatisfactions:**

1. **Dispossession of landlords:** (a) due to direct revenue settlements with occupiers, the Talukdars of Awadh lost their status and power; (b) Inam Commission (1852) deprived the landlords of their property in case they failed to produce proof of documented ownership; (c) the Zamindar status under the Permanent Settlement came with a sunset clause, leading to auction of Zamindari rights after a time, hence creating huge dissatisfactions.
2. **Unfair tariffs:** (a) the combination of high tariff impose on Indian exports (b) the flooding of Indian markets with British goods destroyed the local artisans (c) One-way free trade
3. **Suppression of peasants:** (a) the peasants were subject to high revenue demands, leading to back-breaking indebtedness; (b) British introduced a new legal system which was out of touch local values and systems + out of reach of the peasants leading to widespread dispossession of lands; (c) due to destruction of indigenous industries, artisans moved towards agriculture which increased pressure on land and consequently reduced productivity.

**Social + Political dissatisfactions:**

1. **Top-Down social reforms:** (a) Sati was abolished (1829) + Hindu Remarriage Act (1856) allowed remarriage of widows + western education of girls, etc. led to severe resentment among the society, especially orthodox sections; (b) the Lexi Loci Act (1850) allowed Christian converts to inherit ancestral property which created suspicion regarding the missionary mission of the British; (c) taxation of erstwhile tax-exempt institutions [mosques + temples] also created discontent.
2. **British racialism:** (a) self-imposed responsibility of civilizing the Orient + Britisher's arrogant attitude towards locals + their policy of social exclusiveness hurt the sentiments of local Indians, eventually creating deep-seated discontent; (b) Charter Act of 1813 permitted the entry of Missionaries into India, who ridiculed Hindu gods + criticised Islamic tenets and way of life.
3. **Political:** annexation policies and the arbitrary deposition of rulers [e.g. Awadh] alienated the traditional aristocracy and their subjects.

**Q.3) How did the adoption of Gandhian politics affect the nature of the Indian quest for freedom?**

**Answer:**

Mahatma Gandhi arrived in India in 1915 after two decades of political activism in South Africa. India Freedom Struggle was at cross-roads after the bitter split in the Congress between moderates and extremists. Gandhi harmonized the paths of these two groups to work constantly towards attainment of India's independence.

**Nature of Indian Freedom Struggle before Mahatma Gandhi:**

1. **Prayers and Petitions:** activities of the Indian National Congress (INC) were limited to demands for political reforms and concessions for Indians. Their most significant contribution was highlighting the exploitative character of the colonial economy.
2. **Political extremism:** the trio of Lal-Bal-Pal within the INC advocated mobilization of masses against British colonial rule. Their contributions include the Swadeshi Movement, advocating boycott of foreign goods, and national education.
3. **Revolutionary activism:** (a) effect of Italian nationalism was visible on individuals like Aurobindo Ghosh and Veer Savarkar. The latter penned an account of the 1857 revolt describing

it as the 'first war of independence'; (b) under-ground organisations like Anushilan Samiti and Abhinav Bharat organized attacks on British officials [e.g. Muzaffarpur Conspiracy Case].

4. **Internationalism:** individual expatriate Indians supported the freedom struggle in India through supplies of arms + literature or instigation of political revolt [e.g. the Ghadar movement, Hindu-German conspiracy, Nasik Conspiracy Case etc.]
5. **Home rule movement:** it was an attempt at political revival under the leadership of Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, with a demand for dominion status within the British empire.

The differences between moderates and extremists within INC ended in the bitter split in organization at Surat (1907). Political repression by the colonial government put an end to activities of revolutionary strands. Petitions of moderates for reforms were simply ignored.

**Mahatma Gandhi changed the nature of Indian freedom struggle in the following ways:**

1. **Reforms in congress:** he reorganized the Congress [through reduced membership fees, more branches, changes in working committee etc.] to make it a party capable of leading the masses.
2. **Satyagraha:**
  - a. The ideals of truth and nonviolence given by Gandhiji changed the nature of freedom struggle towards peaceful protests.
  - b. The moral character of Gandhian protests helped to free the minds of people from hegemony of fear created by the British.
3. **Harijan welfare:** Mahatma Gandhi oriented Congress workers towards constructive work for welfare of suppressed castes, calling them Harijans, or "children of God", which helped create a cadre of dedicated, socially aware, and trained workers.
4. **Swaraj:** Mahatma Gandhi popularized, developed, and expanded the concept of freedom into ideas of self-governance, **satya, ahimsa, karmayoga, ramarajya** [e.g., promotion of Khadi and village industries].
5. **Class-struggle to mass-struggle:** He had faith in the masses and believed the salvation of the country lay in the hands of masses and not the elite.

**Q.4) Bring out the causes of the rise and progress of revolutionary movements in India from 1905 to 1931.**

**Answer:**

According to the "Sedition Committee Report" indications of a revolutionary movement were first observed in Western India, and from there, it spread to Bengal and other parts of India. Unlike the moderates and extremists who believed in Constitutional struggle and Passive Resistance respectively, the revolutionaries believed in Active Resistance or Armed struggle.

**Causes behind rise and progress of revolutionary movements during 1905-31:**

1. **Partition of Bengal (1905):** (a) it was perceived as an attempt to divide the population along religious lines to weaken the nationalist sentiment, leading to a rallying point; (b) The arrest of extremist in aftermath, frustrated the youth, who took to active resistance.
2. **Illiberal legislations** [e.g. Rowlatt Act, 1919 (allowed the British to detain political activists without trial), censorship, and deportations led to severe discontent among the masses;
3. **Jallianwala bagh massacre** when unprovoking Indians were victims of Brigadier-General Dyer, this event motivated youth to join the revolutionary movement.
4. **International events:** (a) success of the Russian Revolution (1917) inspired Indian revolutionaries, demonstrating that it was possible to overthrow a powerful regime; (b) WW-1 created economic hardships + soldiers who had fought for British brought new military skills and ideas.
5. **Charismatic leaders:** (a) Tilak's advocacy for Swaraj (self-rule) + call for direct action inspired many young revolutionaries such as Chapekar brothers (b) leaders such as Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad became symbols of resistance through their daring actions and sacrifices.

6. **Moderate politics:** (a) failure of moderate leaders to secure significant concessions [such as during Swadeshi Movement or Non-Cooperation Movement] led many young nationalists to adopt more radical methods; (b) limited constitutional reforms [such as the Morley-Minto Reforms (1909) and Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919)] only strengthened the resolve for more direct action.
7. **Intellectual awakening:** (a) nationalist literature and the writings of leaders like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Aurobindo Ghosh kindled revolutionary thought; (b) efforts were made to revive India's martial traditions + instill a sense of pride and readiness for armed struggle [e.g. formation of RSS in 1925]; (c) works like "Bandi Jiwan" by Sachindra Nath Sanyal and the writings of Bhagat Singh inspired many (d) Swami Vivekananda restored a pride in India's past and mobilized the youth.
8. **Withdrawal of NCM (1922):** (a) immediate suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement after the Chauri Chaura incident disappointed many radicals who sought and supported such direct action; (b) the Gandhian politics of non-violence was misunderstood by many as politics of weakness. Thus, revolutionaries who had given up path of violence on Gandhi's request restarted their efforts in a more organized form.
9. **Rise of revolutionary organisations:** (a) secret societies formed in Bengal that engaged in armed resistance against the British [e.g. Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar], they carried out several dacoities and assassinations; (b) the Ghadar Party (1913) aimed to instigate a rebellion in India by sending arms and revolutionaries; (c) Hindustan Republican Association (1924), founded by Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqulla Khan, aimed to establish a Federal Republic of the United States of India
10. **Surya Sen's Indian Republican Association** was probably the most successful revolutionary organization with mass participation of women. It's members carried out acts of sabotage such as Chittagong Armoury Raid, attack on Pahartali European Club, attempted assassination of governor of Bengal. The arrest and hanging of Surya Sen in 1934 marks the effective end of Revolutionary activities.

**Q.5) Critically examine the contributions of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Dayanand Saraswati in socio-religious reform movement of the country in 19th century.**

**Answer:**

Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Dayanand Saraswati were two pivotal figures in the socio-religious reform movements of 19th century India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is known as the 'Father of Modern India', while Swami Dayanand Saraswati is identified as 'Chief architect of modern India'.

**Contributions of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dayanand Saraswati:**

Raja Ram Mohan Roy	Dayanand Saraswati
1. Sati: Due to the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, this practice was outlawed by William Bentinck in 1829.	1. He emphasised a return to the purity and simplicity of the Vedas, rejecting idolatry and ritualism in contemporary Hinduism.
2. He condemned child marriage and polygamy, while promoting ascetic widowhood.	2. He condemned child marriage, polygamy and promoted widow-marriage.
3. He was critical of idol worship and observance of meaningless rituals.	3. He was critical of priests who acted as intermediaries between god and devotee.
4. He founded Brahmo Samaj in 1828, to reform Hinduism.	4. He founded the Arya Samaj in 1875 as a reform movement to revive Vedic teachings and practices
5. He stressed on the Monotheism of Vedanta and considered the Upanishad as a fully rational system.	5. He criticized the Caste system, while supporting the Chaturvarna system.
6. Scientific Approach: He advocated the learning of English language, literature, scientific	6. He wanted to establish a Classless and Casteless society with a common Aryan



<p>advancement and technology to modernize India [e.g., he opened Vedanta College in 1825 as he believed that the introduction of modern education will guide Indians towards a scientific and rational approach to life].</p> <p>7. He followed a top-down approach of reform, i.e. appealing the British to pass legislations to end social ills.</p> <p>8. His message was generally for the English educated elite.</p>	<p>religion. For this purpose he started the 'Shuddhi' movement.</p> <p>7. He emphasized on self-reliance + gave a call for Swaraj and Swadeshi.</p> <p>8. He believed in a bottom-up approach, i.e. convincing the masses to eradicate the social ills.</p> <p>9. His message was for the masses and instilled a proud self-confidence among them.</p>
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**However, their roles have also been criticized:**

1. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's advocacy for English education and conviction about moral superiority of monotheism was a product of contemporary coloniality.
2. Ram Mohan Roy's reformist ideas were heavily influenced by Western thought, which sometimes alienated him from traditional Indian society + confined his thoughts to urban elite.
3. Dayanand Saraswati's strict adherence to Vedic teachings was somewhat orthodox and did not accommodate the diverse and evolving nature of Indian society.
4. Some of the Arya Samaj's practices and rhetoric could be seen as exclusionary towards non-Vedic traditions and other religions. His actions led to rise in national consciousness, along with communal consciousness.

**Q.6) In what aspects was the Quit India Movement different from the previous mass movements of the Indian Independence struggle?**

**Answer:**

On August 8th August 1942 at Gowalia Tank, Bombay, Gandhiji delivered a powerful speech and gave the slogan "Do or Die" initiating yet another mass movement against the British imperialism. The Quit India Movement of 1942 was different from rest of the movements of freedom struggle.

**Some unique characteristics of Quit India Movement:**

1. **Lack of organized leadership:** On the night just before the launch of the movement all the major leaders were arrested. The Quit India Movement (QIM), unlike other movements, was actually not led by Mahatma Gandhi, or by any other central leader. It was completely decentralized and became a true people's movement.
2. **Emergence of underground networks:** Major part of the movement was based on underground activities like underground radio network by Usha Mehta + spreading of news through pamphlets, posters etc. where students acted as couriers.
3. **Parallel governments** set up in Satara, Ballia, Talcher, Midnapore etc. were also newly found feature during the movement. Jayaprakash Narayan formed Azad Dasta in Nepal; a militant outfit specialized in guerrilla warfare.
4. **Different forms of protest:** Deviating from the peaceful forms of protests [such as strikes, hartals, disobedience, non-cooperation, etc.], Quit India movement witnessed masses destroying governmental properties such as police stations, posts office, etc. Electricity was cut and transports (railway tracks) and communication (telegraph) lines were removed. National flags were hoisted on public buildings.
5. **Woman leaders:** Though Women participation as a feature of all Gandhian movements. Women rose to take leadership roles in an unprecedented manner. Women leaders like Aruna Asaf Ali, Usha Sharma, Matangini Hazra etc. In the absence of leadership, Aruna Asaf Ali presided over the AICC session on August 9th, and hoisted the flag. She came to be known as 'Queen of the 1942 Movement'.
6. **Fierce repression:** Crowds faced police, army, aerial firings, which resulted in death of thousands and arrest of about one lakh Indians.

7. **Erosion of loyalty:** Due to the intensity of struggle, loyalty of the major forces [such as government officers, police forces etc.] was eroded; The officials especially the lower rung, liberally donated to the cause of struggle.

**Q.7) Do you think that the Indian National Movement was a 'multi class movement' which represented the anti-imperialist interests of all classes and strata? Give reasons in support of your answer.**

**Answer:**

Indian National Movement was an organised political mass struggle to gain Independence from the colonial regime. However, besides being a struggle for political freedom, Indian national movement encompassed constructive programmes and social regeneration, which included many classes of the Indian society.

**Contribution of Different Classes in the National Movement:**

1. **Capitalist class:** (a) although they joined the movement late, however, by the end of 1920s, they began to realize that fighting imperialism is in their own interests in the long-term; (b) during the Civil Disobedience movement, they were largely in support of the anti-British sentiments; (c) FICCI, established in 1927, was founded with the understanding that economics and politics are deeply intertwined, and it encouraged Indian businessmen to support the freedom fighters;
2. **Women:** (a) women were active participants from 1857 onwards [e.g. Rani Laxmibai became a symbol of resistance; Begum Hazrat Mahal fiercely defended the sovereignty of her minor son; (b) many women were leaders in the political sphere – Annie Besant led the Home Rule League, Sarojini Naidu provided vital leadership during the Dharsana Salt March, Rani Gaidinliu fought to drive out the British from Manipur; (c) women were also active participants in revolutionary activities – Pritilata Waddadar and Kalpana Dutta took part in the Chitagong Armoury raid; (d) women also took up social welfare issues – Sarla Devi Chaudhurani promoted women education through Bharat Stree Mahamandal; Ramabai Ranade founded the Ladies Social Conference; Pandita Ramabai Saraswati founded Arya Mahila Samaj.
3. **Communist:** (a) Communists were crucial in developing a leftward trend in the national movement + they brought to light the importance of socio-economic structural transformation needed; (b) USSR's renouncing of its colonies + declaration of support for nationalist causes had an electrifying impact on nationalist movements; (c) main form of political work undertaken was to organize workers and peasants.
4. **Working Class:** (a) They organized themselves towards the end of 19th century [e.g. GIP Railways Signallers' strike (1899) was most prominent]; (b) Swadeshi Movement was the most important phase of worker's movement, as per Bipan Chandra [e.g. strikes in prominent sectors - railways and jute]; (c) post-1925, communist influence increased, thus, there was significant growth in militancy and radical nature; (d) during Quit India Movement, though communists stayed away, workers individually participated in the forefront [e.g. RIN Hartal at Bombay in support of the RIN mutiny].
5. **Dalits and Tribals:** (a) tribal groups participated in several regional uprisings – Santhal Rebellion (1855-56) led by Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu + Munda Rebellion (1899-1900) led by Birsa Munda, etc. (b) All India Adivasi Mahasabha was established in the early 20th century to address tribal issues and promote their rights; (c) tribal communities participated in the Quit India Movement [e.g. Gond tribes of central India took part in the resistance]; (d) Dalit movement focused on abolishing untouchability and caste discrimination; (e) Dr. Ambedkar founded the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha (1924) to promote education and socio-political awareness + All India Scheduled Castes Federation (1942) to champion the political rights.
6. **Peasants:** (a) They were one of the first groups to feel the adverse effects of British Colonialism since the grant of diwani in 1765. (b) Gandhi started his political journey in India with Champaran Satyagraha (1917) and Kheda Satyagraha (1918) (c) Movements such as Eka movement and Awadh Kisan Movement coincided with NCM.