

Moderate Phase

The moderate phase of the Indian National Movement started in 1885 and lasted until 1905. During the initial years of the moderate phase of the Movement, it was dominated by prominent leaders like D. E. Wacha, W. C. Bonnerjee, and Dadabhai Naoroji. These Moderate leaders have an ideology of politics and liberalism, along with the British sense of integrity, justice, and fair play. Because of the moderate politics, these leaders were called moderates, and thus, the phase was called the moderate phase of Indian National Congress.

Moderate Phase of Indian National Congress

The Indian National Congress (INC) was formed by a retired English servant, A.O. Hume, in 1885, along with two prominent Moderate leaders of India - Dinshaw Wacha and Dadabhai Naoroji. The primary aim of the formation of the Indian National Congress was to discuss problems and challenges faced by Indians without discrimination based on language, religion, creed, or caste.

The first session of the Indian National Congress was held in December 1885 under the leadership of Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee in Bombay after Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy of India, permitted Hume to conduct the first session. This session was attended by 72 prominent delegates from all over the country. Later, the second session of the Congress was held in 1886 in Calcutta, followed by the third session of the INC in 1887 in Madaras. After that, the Indian National Congress sessions were held every month.

Moderate Leaders

The prominent **moderate leaders** of the Indian National Movement were Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozshah Mehta, Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee, Surendranath Bannerjee, G Subhamania Aiyer, Justice M. G. Ranade, Rash Behari Ghosh, P. Ananda Charlu, William Wedderburn, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. The contribution and role of moderates in the Indian National Movement are as follows:

Dadabhai Naoroji:

Dadabhai Naoroji, titled the Grand old man of India, was the first Indian who became a member of the British House of commons and acted as the unofficial ambassador of the country. He, along with A.O. Hume and Dinshaw Wacha (other moderate leaders), established the Indian National Congress and successfully conducted its first three sessions. He was aware of the British exploitation of India and explained this exploitation through one of his famous books, 'Poverty and UnBritish rule in India. Along with this, he put forward the "Drain theory."

Pherozshah Mehta:

Pherozshah Mehta became the president of the Indian National Congress in 1890. He was entitled as the lion of Bombay for his incredible contribution during the moderate phase. Later in 1910, he started an English weekly newspaper called Bombay Chronicle. Because of his exceptional service in law, Pherozshah Mehta was knighted by the British.

Surendranath Bannerjee:

Surendranath Bannerjee, popularly known as Rashtraguru, was another prominent moderate leader who founded the Indian National Association in 1876, intending to bring about political reforms in the country. Not only he founded the Association, but he also started a newspaper called The Bengalee. He intended to join the Indian Civil services and cleared the examination in 1869 and 1871. However, he was barred from examination in 1869 because of the dispute on age. In 1871, racial discrimination became the reason for his dismissal from the Indian Civil Services. He also contributed to the nation by proposing the [Civil disobedience movement](#).

Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee:

Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee was an Indian barrister and founder of the Indian National Congress along with Dadabhai Naoroji and A. O. Hume. Apart from being the co-founder of the Congress, he became the first president of the Indian National Congress. Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee became the first Indian citizen to contest elections in the House of Commons of Britain.

Justice M. G. Ranade:

Justice M.G. Ranade, known as the Rao Bahadur, was one of the famous moderate leaders who founded the Ahmednagar Education Society, Prarthana Samaj, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, and Indian National Congress. One of his significant foundations was the Widow Marriage Association, which worked to improve widows in India.

G Subramanian Aiyer:

G Subramanian Aiyer founded the Madras Mahajana Sabha along with the other members. He was an extremely enthusiastic and active member of the moderate phase of the Indian National movement. He stated two newspapers, Swadesamitran and The Hindu, in Tamil and English, respectively.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale:

Gopal Krishna Gokhale was a moderate political leader of the Indian National Movement who founded the Servants of India Society. He served the country and campaigned for the self-rule of Indians in the country. Both Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak became the front-ranking leaders of the country in the early 20th century.

Major Demands of Moderates - Aims and Objectives

The objectives and the significant demands of Moderates of Indian National Movement are as follows:

- **Civil Rights Demands** - The moderate leaders demanded the right to form associations and a free press and the demand to introduce freedom of speech and expression in the country.
- **Administrative Demands** - Along with the civil rights demands, moderates demanded changes in the country's administration. It includes the simultaneous conduction of the Indian Civil Service Examination in England and India. They demanded better treatment of the labours from India abroad and improved plantation workers' working conditions. They wanted the spread of primary education. The separation of the judiciary and

executive, along with repealing the License act and the arms act of 1878, was suggested.

- **Economic Demands** - The economic demands put forward by the leaders of the moderate phase of the Indian National movement include the abolition of sugar duty and salt tax, reduction of land revenues to reduce the burden over the shoulders of the cultivators, and the reduction of the expenditure on the army. They also demanded the encouragement of modern industries aided by the government.
- **Constitutional Demands** - The Constitutional demands include expanding the legislative houses in provinces and at the centre. Moderates wanted a proper representation of the Indians in the Viceroy's executive council. Since Indians were given poor treatment and posted at lower levels, they demanded the appointment of Indians at higher posts. Also, they wanted them to control the budget.

Programmes of Moderates

The moderate leaders had a significant role in the Indian struggle for freedom. The method employed by the Moderates of the Indian National Movement includes the following:

- The moderates believe in peaceful and constitutional procedures.
- They used the 3P process, which includes Prayers, Petitions, and Protests.
- They used delegations, memoranda, pamphlets, resolutions, meetings, and petitions to voice their demands.
- They followed the Justice System of the British.
- They did not employ masses.
- They focused on self-government but under British dominion.

Moderates Achievements

The Moderate leaders successfully achieved the following-

- The formation of the Indian Council Act of 1892 expanded the size of the members of the Legislative Councils.
- People became motivated, and there was an ignition of nationalism among them.
- The moderate leaders of the Indian National Movement popularised the ideology of equality, liberty, and democracy.
- They formed various religious and social reforms that successfully opposed evil practices like child marriage in India. Also, they imposed widowhood, leading widows to live respectful life in society.
- They made Indians notice the draining economic policies of the British government.

Limitations of Moderates

Though the leaders of the moderate phase successfully brought changes required for the Indian freedom struggle, they had certain limitations. The limitations of Moderates are as follows-

- Though it had a massive impact on Indians, it excluded the masses. Only a few elite educated people participated in the struggle.
- The moderates did not demand complete independence.
- The moderate leaders were unaware of the change the mass movement could create.
- They were greatly inspired by Western political thinking.