

Political Organisations before Indian National Congress.

Indian Freedom Struggle is also seen as a successful Political Struggle led by the Indian National Congress(INC).The INC was the biggest and most well-known political associations of India. However, the Congress was not the First Political Association. There were quite a few Political associations before Congress which worked to achieve Political rights.

The organisations were dominated by the aristocratic people like the Zamindars. This was because the aristocratic class had received English, Modern Education. As a result, they were trained in the modern ideals and thoughts leading to a Political awakening. These Associations worked for the demands like

- Spread of Education
- Increasing the Indian representation in the Executive and Legislative councils
- Opposing discriminatory steps taken by British Administration towards Indian
- Reforms in Administration
- Freedom of Press

These organisations were in the 3 corners of India – Bengal, Bombay and Madras.

1) Bangabhasha Prakasika Sabha

- This was started by Associates of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1836.
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the first Politically active leader in the modern sense.
- He started agitations for demands like appointments of Indians to Higher Govt Offices, Freedom of Press, Prevent Zamindari Oppression of Ryots, etc.

2) Zamindari Association (Bengal Landholder's Society)

- It was formed in 1836 by Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Dwarkanath Tagore and Radhakant Deb.
- The main purpose of the organisation was safeguarding the interests of Landlords.
- They used constitutional methods of agitation to fulfil their demands.

3) British India Society

- The Organisation was set up in 1843 by William Adam, a friend of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, In England.
- The organisation's aim was to improve the situation of Indians by letting the people of England know of the dire condition in which the British were keeping the Indians.
- They used constitutional and Legal means to achieve this aim.

4) British India Association

- The Bengal Landholder's Society and British India Society merged together to form British India Association in 1851
- Post merger, they used to submit petitions for the grievances of common people as well.
- They had submitted a petition to British Parliament with suggestions for the new Charter Law of the company. The suggestions were – a separate legislative council of popular nature, Abolition of stamp, salt and abkari duties, reducing the salaries of British officers at higher posts, etc.
- In the Charter Act of 1853, one of the above suggestion was incorporated and the Governor General's Council for Legislative purposes was expanded by adding 6 new members.
- However, the organisation was not able to penetrate the country through its branches, mainly because of lack of a constructive political policy.
- Post 1857 revolt, the organisation supported the British in giving harsh punishments to the rebels.

5) Indian League

- In 1875, noted journalist Sisir Kumar Ghosh had started the Indian League in Calcutta.
- Its main aim was to develop the feeling of nationalism among the common people.

6) Indian Association of Calcutta (Indian National Association)

- Indian League was superseded by the Young Bengali Nationalists like Anand Mohan Bose and Surendranath Banerjee and Indian Association of Calcutta (Indian National Association) was formed in 1876.
- British India Association's pro landlord policies and conservative outlook was a source of discontent among young Bengali's, which led to the formation of this organisation.
- The demands of Indian Association of Calcutta were nationalist in nature, which makes it one of the most important pre-congress nationalist association.

- Reforming of civil services Examinations, generating and unifying a public opinion on political issues of national importance.
- They opened branches in different cities to expand its membership among the masses.
- Surendranath Banerjee was the first Indian to gain all India popularity when he travelled across India to gain support for the demands of the association.
- This organisation was later merged with the Indian National Congress.

7) East India Association

- Dadabhai Nawrojee started the East India Association in London in 1867.
- The association's main goal was to make the people of UK aware about the conditions in India and generate a popular support among British People for Indian Welfare.
- This association is also called the predecessor to the Indian National Congress.
- In 1866, the Ethnological Society of London, tried to prove Asian's were inferior to the Europeans. The East India Association's work also targeted to challenge this notion.
- The association had opened Branches in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta in 1869

8) Bombay Association (Bombay Native Association)

- In 1852, Jaggannath Shankershet started the Bombay Association along with Sir Jamshedji Jejbhai, Jagannath Shankarshet, Naoroji Fursungi, Dr. Bhau Daji Lad, Dadabhai Naoroji and Vinayak Shankarshet.
- This is also called as the first political party/organisation in Bombay Province.
- They too aimed to address public grievances through Legal agitational means.

9) Poona Sarvanajanik Sabha

- It was started in 1870 by Mahadev Govind Ranade and his associates in Pune.
- They aimed to be a connecting link between the Government and the common people.
- It also worked for the legal rights of the peasants.
- Many prominent leaders of Freedom struggle like, Lokmanya Tilak were member of this organisation.

10) Bombay Presidency Association

- The association was started in 1885 by Pheroshah Mehta, Badruddin Tayabji and KT Telang.
- It was formed in opposition to the Ilbert Bill and Lytton's other reactionary policies.

11) Madras Native Association

- Formed by Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty in 1849 in Madras Presidency.
- It was the First Political Organisation in Madras

12) Madras Mahajan Sabha

- It was formed in 1884 in Madras by B. Subramaniya Aiyar, P. Ananda-Charlu and M. Viraraghavachari.
- The organisation took moderate stance on opposing govt policies in the beginning.