

## Second Phase of the Indian National Movement

The Indian National Congress initially sought self-government within constitutional limits. However, after 1905, a new group of nationalists emerged, advocating complete independence from British rule. These assertive nationalists promoted active resistance, mass mobilization, and self-sacrifice to overthrow British imperialism.

### **Causes for the Rise of Assertive Nationalism**

1. **Recognition of British Exploitation:** Economic exploitation and repressive political measures, such as the Vernacular Press Act and the reduction of Indian members in the Calcutta Corporation, convinced Indians that the British would never act in their interest.
2. **Failure of Early Nationalists:** Young Congress members criticized early nationalists for being loyal to the British crown and ineffective in achieving meaningful reforms.
3. **Deteriorating Economic Conditions:** Recurrent famines (1896–1900) caused massive deaths, while British rulers ignored relief efforts. The grand Delhi Durbar of 1877 further fueled resentment.
4. **Influence of International Events:** Japan's victory over Russia (1904–05) and the Boer resistance against the British in South Africa inspired Indians to believe in the possibility of defeating European powers.
5. **Nationalist Thought:** Leaders like Rajnarain Bose, Ashwin Kumar Dutt, and Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar advocated complete independence.
6. **Repressive Policies of Lord Curzon:** The Indian Universities Act (1904) and Calcutta Corporation Act further alienated Indians.
7. **Partition of Bengal (1905):** Seen as a divide-and-rule strategy, the partition fueled protests, which were brutally suppressed, leading to a rise in assertive nationalism.

### **Methods of Assertive Nationalists**

1. **Swadeshi:** Promotion of indigenous goods and industries to achieve self-reliance and economic independence.
2. **Boycott:** Rejection of foreign goods to weaken British economic interests and promote Indian industries.
3. **National Education:** Establishment of Indian-run schools, independent of British control, to educate in vernacular languages.
4. **Passive Resistance:** Non-violent resistance, including boycotts of British institutions, courts, and services.
5. **Cultural Revivalism:** Tilak revived Shivaji and Ganpati festivals to inspire nationalism through religious and cultural pride.

## Government Repression and Response

- British authorities cracked down on assertive leaders. Tilak was imprisoned in Mandalay (1908), and Lala Lajpat Rai was deported to Burma without trial.

## Achievements of Assertive Nationalists

1. **Exposed British Injustice:** Discredited British claims of fairness and justice.
2. **Mass Mobilization:** Inspired a broader base for the nationalist movement.
3. **Spread of Vernacular Education:** Fostered nationalism through local languages.
4. **Economic Self-Reliance:** Swadeshi and boycott movements laid the foundation for economic independence.
5. **Demand for Complete Independence:** Assertive nationalists shifted the goal from self-rule to total independence.
6. **Formation of National Institutions:** The National Council of Education (1906) later developed into Jadavpur University.
7. **Success of Swadeshi Movement:** Strengthened nationalist sentiment, leading to the reversal of Bengal's partition (1911).

## Prominent Assertive Nationalists

- **Bal Gangadhar Tilak:** Known as the 'Father of Assertive Nationalism.' He declared, "Swaraj is my birthright, and I shall have it." He started newspapers (*Kesari*, *Mahratta*), launched the Home Rule League (1916), and revived cultural festivals.
- **Bipin Chandra Pal:** 'Father of Revolutionary Thought' in India. A journalist and social reformer who promoted national education and indigenous industries.
- **Lala Lajpat Rai:** 'Punjab Kesari,' an advocate of workers' rights and social reform. He founded *Young India* and participated in the anti-Simon Commission protests, where he sustained injuries leading to his death (1928).

Assertive nationalists laid the foundation for future independence movements by promoting active resistance, self-reliance, and the ultimate goal of complete independence.