Modern History · GS - I

Why did the ‘Moderates’ failed to carry conviction with the nation about their proclaimed ideology and political goals by the end of the nineteenth century?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2017	GS - I	Modern History

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Moderate nationalism; constitutional methods; petitions and prayers; limited social base; economic critique of colonialism; slow reforms; younger nationalists; rise of assertive nationalism

Model Answer

Introduction

The Moderates dominated the early Indian National Congress from 1885 to the early twentieth century. They sought constitutional reforms and greater Indian participation in administration, but their methods increasingly faced criticism.

Reasons for Declining Influence

1. Limited Methods: Their reliance on petitions, resolutions and appeals to British liberal opinion produced few immediate political concessions.

2. Faith in British Justice: Their belief that British rulers would gradually accept Indian demands appeared unrealistic as colonial exploitation continued.

3. Narrow Social Base: Moderate leadership largely comprised educated urban professionals, limiting its connection with peasants, workers and other social groups.

4. Limited Political Objectives: Early demands focused on administrative reform, legislative representation and civil-service opportunities rather than complete independence.

5. Economic Hardships: Poverty, famines, high taxation and the drain of wealth intensified public dissatisfaction with colonial rule.

6. Emergence of Assertive Nationalism: Leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai advocated stronger mobilisation and more confrontational methods.

7. Growing Political Awareness: Newspapers, public associations and wider nationalist debates encouraged demands for more decisive action.

Conclusion

The Moderates laid the intellectual and organisational foundations of Indian nationalism. However, their gradualist strategy and limited mass mobilisation became increasingly inadequate as political aspirations grew.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP