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Q3

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?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · GS I · 10 marks · The Freedom Struggle

The Freedom Struggle - its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country.

Core demand of the question

- 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?
- Cover methods, social base, goals, and the rise of a more militant mood
- Keep the explanation within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Moderate goals were council seats, ICS, and drain critique, not immediate independence.

Methods were petitions and annual sessions that missed peasant and mill-hand life.

The social base was presidency professionals speaking English public language.

1892 reforms were too small to prove the method worked.

By the century's end a hotter nationalist mood found them unconvincing.

Flow diagram

Moderates -> Petitions councils loyalty

Wider political public -> Famine drain dignity

Petitions councils loyalty -> Gap of conviction

Famine drain dignity -> Gap of conviction

Thin 1892 reforms -> Gap of conviction

Conclusion

- Explain failure as a gap between elite constitutionalism and a growing political public, not as personal cowardice.
- Note that Moderate work still built the Congress platform, **drain theory**, and a trained leadership that later phases used.

Moderates failed to carry conviction because their goals stayed within Empire, their methods stayed in the petition hall, and their social reach stayed urban and English. By 1900 a larger political nation wanted proof of power, not another memorial.

Facts & figures

Dadabhai Naoroji

Moderate leader whose drain of wealth argument framed Congress economic critique.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale

Moderate who trusted constitutional work and later mentored **Gandhi**, still within reform politics.

Indian Councils Act, 1892

Limited expansion of legislative councils that disappointed Congress hopes.

Surendranath Banerjea

Presidency politician and journalist who exemplified petition-and-public-meeting Moderate practice.

Drain theory

Argument that British rule transferred Indian surplus to Britain through home charges and unrequited exports.

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