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Q5(d)

Analyze the Marxist perspective of the nature of Indian National Movement.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · PSIR GS 1 · 10 marks · Indian Nationalism

Indian Nationalism: Political Strategies of India's Freedom Struggle; Perspectives on Indian National Movement; Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru, Ambedkar, and the socialists.

Core demand of the question

- **Answer the following in about 150 words:** Analyse the Marxist perspective of the nature of Indian National Movement. (10 marks)

Revision summary

Marxists read the national movement through colonial political economy and class leadership.

Congress is cast as a national-bourgeois formation that feared a full social revolution.

Mass campaigns are moments of popular entry and elite restraint.

1947 is a transfer of power, not Marx's social emancipation.

Gramsci, caste, and communal politics qualify a reduction to class alone.

Introduction

Marxist analysis reads the Indian National Movement as a class project inside a colonial economy, not as a pure spiritual awakening. The movement is real; its leadership and limits are explained by bourgeoisie, landlords, and later a working class that never fully led.

Body

The reading

- Colonialism is a structure of surplus drain and deindustrialisation, in the Marx-inspired economic histories of **R. P. Dutt** and the early Communists.
- The Congress, on this view, was led by a national bourgeoisie that wanted a share of the Indian market, not an end of class rule.
- Mass phases-Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, Quit India-are analysed as when peasants and workers entered, and as when leadership pulled back to bargain.
- **M. N. Roy**, the CPI, and later historians in a Marxist idiom stressed that 1947 was a transfer of power, not a social revolution.

Analysis, not caricature

- The perspective correctly ties nationalism to political economy and notices landlord and capitalist interests in the settlement.
- It understates **Gandhi's** religious idiom, **Ambedkar's** caste question, and the relative autonomy of political ideas.

- **Gramsci's** hegemony is a refinement: Congress led by consent across classes, which is more than a simple bourgeois puppet show.
- Partition and communal mobilisation sit awkwardly if class is the only motor.

Flow diagram

Marxist perspective -> Colonial drain

Marxist perspective -> Bourgeois Congress leadership

Marxist perspective -> 1947 transfer not social revolution

Gramsci -> Hegemony across classes

Conclusion

The Marxist perspective treats the national movement as anti-colonial yet bourgeois-led, with incomplete social revolution in **1947**. It is strong on political economy and weak if it erases caste, religion, and **Ambedkar**. **Gramsci's** hegemony is the more supple Marxist tool.

Facts & figures

R. P. Dutt

India Today stated a classical Marxist account of colonialism and Congress.

M. N. Roy

Early communist critique of **Gandhi** and of a purely nationalist strategy.

Gramsci

Hegemony explains cross-class nationalist consent better than puppet-bourgeoisie talk.

1947

Independence with property and civil service continuity, which Marxists call incomplete revolution.