

**Introduction to Modern Indian Political Thought**  
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**Modern Indian Political Thought**  
**Lecture – 01**  
**Introduction**

Hello everyone, I welcome you all for this introductory lecture to this course which is the first lecture for this course on Modern Indian Political Thought and I am Mithilesh Kumar Jha and I teach Political Science in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences IIT, Guwahati. This introduction is basically, about the difference between political theory and political thought and what is so distinct about modern Indian political thought and in what ways, it can help us to understand Indian politics and society better.

So, that is something, we are going to discuss today and then also, what is the method to study Indian political thought? What are the thinkers we are going to study and why we have included some thinkers and why there are some thinkers which are also absent from the course? So, we will discuss about that issue and then we will discuss about the challenges, the kind of problematics that these modern Indian thinkers were facing and in what ways, they were trying to respond to such challenges not just particularly to India but also about the global world problem or world challenges of their time.

And finally, we will discuss the focus of this course and also why should we study it? In what ways should we study modern Indian political thought? In what ways, it can also contribute to Indian political theory that is the emerging discipline, I hope in Indian academia. So, these are some of the things, we are going to discuss today in this lecture.

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> **Modern Indian Political Thought:** Emerged in the context of formation of nation and state in modern India; and in making of the 'idea of India' i.e. Gandhi & his views on *Swaraj* & critique of modern civilization; Nehru & his views on secularism and statecraft; Ambedkar, social reforms movements & his views on caste and liberal democracy; they were all engaged in this project of making modern India.

It may be said that they were all engaged in one similar project of constructing the 'idea of India' but in actuality they represented various shades of opinion and ideologies and differed from each other quite substantially.

**Periodization of IPT:** Ancient  
Medieval  
and Modern

**Continuity with Change**  
**Orientalist challenges and nationalist responses**

As you know, the modern Indian political thought emerged in the context of formation of nation and state in modern India and in the making of the 'idea of India'. So, the beginning of modern Indian political thought, it's with the emergence of the idea of nation, nationalism and the way modern political thinkers in India began to theorize or conceptualize this idea of nation. And what kind of India they were going to build? Therefore, the idea of India becomes very crucial to understand Indian political thought.

So, thinkers like Gandhi and his views on *Swaraj* and his critique of modern civilization help us to understand in what ways, they began to theorize or conceptualize about Indian nation and Indian civilization, which is distinct from say western civilization or modern civilization. Similarly, Nehru and his views on secularism and statecraft; Ambedkar's social reforms movement and his views on caste and liberal democracy are the ideas which helped in shaping the modern political discourse in India. And it seems that they were all engaged in this project of the making of modern India. So, modern Indian political thought emerged simultaneously, with the emergence of nation and state in modern India.

However, many people may argue that all these thinkers were engaged in one similar project of constructing the idea of India. I wish to emphasize this point *one* similar project. So, many people will argue that all these modern thinkers were basically, engaged in one similar project of constructing the idea of India. But actually, if you understand and study, and as we move on this course, we will come to realize that they

actually represented various shades of opinion and ideologies and also differed from each other quite substantially.

So, it is not that they were just engaged in one similar project, in fact, their ideas were very different from each other representing all kinds of ideologies and opinions. So, that we have to keep in mind where there are these ideas of nation or modern state in India, they also differed and represented different sets of opinions and ideologies in their thoughts and articulations.

Now, comes the periodization of IPT; that is Indian Political Thought. So, as this discipline evolved, there is this division of Indian political thought into ancient political thought, which is also regarded as the Hindu political thought; then medieval political thought, which is also called Islamic thought; and then, modern where there is the kind of reconstruction or somewhat revival of ancient Indian political thought. So, this is the kind of classificatory division or a kind of understanding of linearity in the evolution of political thought in India, beginning from the ancient to the medieval and the modern but it is not really, very helpful.

As we know, that modern Indian political thought has emerged in a particular context of colonialism and then there is a kind of break from our pre-colonial past, but also, there is a continuity. So, in many thinkers like Ambedkar, Nehru or to some extent in Lohia, you will find a kind of substantial break from the Indian past but also a kind of continuity, more so and explicitly in the thoughts of Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore and also Gandhi. So, there is a kind of continuity and change that we see in Indian political thought in modern times. So, the better way to approach this political thought is not this periodization of history but, the continuity and change that happens over a period of time, historically.

Now, the other point that we need to understand is the emergence of modern Indian political thought which was the result of orientalist challenges; that means, when they began to produce knowledge about India. Their claim was Indians do not have political thought because their thought, conceptualization or intellectual tradition is oriented towards the *other-world*. But, that is not the case, and the beginning of modern Indian political thought was responding to such kind of orientalist challenges and that we can certainly, see after the finding of *Arthashastra* by Haraprasad Shastri, when they claim

that, from the very beginning, from the period of ancient time, you have different tradition of political thought in India, including *Dharma Shastra*, *Niti Shastra* and so on and so forth. So, the beginning was from this response to the orientalist challenges.

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➤ **Political 'Theory' and 'Thought'**

'Political theory' and 'political thought' is intimately connected to the issues and concerns related to politics

In comparison to 'theory' which is broader, systematic and generalized statements that help in understanding or explaining politics in a country or society i.e. concepts like freedom, equality, democracy, justice; Political 'thought' is narrow and limited to 'articulation' and 'reflection' of structure and functioning of politics usually done by Individual or a group of individual.

Now, comes the question, what is the difference between political theory and thought? Now, as you know, political theory and political thought is intimately connected with the issues and concerns that is related to politics. So, there is some kind of overlapping, some kind of ambiguity, when it comes to differentiate between what is political theory and what is political thought. And also, because both are connected to the issues or concerns which is related to politics.

But one can also make some differentiation between political theory and thought, where in comparison to political thought, theory is more broader, also, systematic and generalize statements that help in understanding or explaining politics in a country or society. So, concepts like freedom, equality, democracy and justice help us to understand the society and community in a better way and not just a particular community.

Whereas, political thought is considered to be more narrow and limited to articulation and reflection of a structure and functioning of politics, and it is usually, done by individual or a group of individuals. So, there is a kind of differentiation between political theory and thought. But this differentiation is not really the compartmentalization of political theory the one hand and political thought on the other.

If we look at the disciplinary evolution of political science, for a very long time, political theory has derived its concepts and ideas from political thinkers beginning from Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. From their thoughts, we have derived certain concepts and normative terms; there is also the historicism and other kinds of development in political theory.

So, there is a dependence on political thought also, but political theory, tends to be more broader, more systemic and a kind of generalized statements which helps in the understanding of politics; that is the working kind of differentiation between political theory and thought. So, thought may help theory in terms of increasing its vocabulary, making it more reflective and applicable to understand and explain a society better.

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➤ **'Indian Political Thought' or 'Indian Political Theory'**

**Eurocentric Views:** Western 'thought' or 'philosophy' and eastern 'tradition' or 'culture'; **Response:** '*Swaraj in Ideas*' – K C Bhattacharya; How it should be applied? Not with some kind of narrow nativist approach; But, by avoiding binaries: 'Tradition' and 'Modernity'; 'Indian'/'Indigenous' and 'Foreign'; Need is to focus on **dialogue or Samvad**

*"from India may come influences which will widen the horizons of Western political thinkers and which will give political ideas a sounder foundation of philosophical and metaphysical speculation" – Norman D Palmer*

Indian political thought and its study can well pave the way for the growth of Indian political theory and can also contribute to the corpus of existing concepts in political theory in general

So, when it comes to Indian political thought or Indian political theory, we can begin with the Eurocentric views which, for a very long time, dominated Indian academy. And many of you may be asking this question, that is, why is it so necessary to understand Indian society or Indian polity using the concepts that is completely borrowed or derived from a context or a history which is very far from India.

So, why do we have to worry about Marx, Hobbes and Rousseau to understand Indian society and Indian politics or to explain Indian politics? So, there is a kind of Eurocentric domination or hegemony, where for a very long time, it was believed that there is only western thought or philosophy, whereas in Eastern or Asian and African societies and

community, there is only tradition or culture and no philosophy. So, this binary of west which produce philosophy and thought but eastern society which produced tradition and culture is now deeply, problematic and many responses have come up. One such response in India came very early in 1950's by K. C. Bhattacharya. He talked about *Swaraj in Idea*. So, this *Swaraj in Idea* is like we should look for the concepts and categories, or ideas which are rooted in Indian tradition or Indian society, or so to say, the cognitive freedom from the Western or Eurocentric viewpoints or concepts.

Now, the task for us is, should we in response to the Eurocentric views, use a narrow nativist or kind of an indigenous approach, to understand thought or theory, or we should avoid any binary between East or West; tradition or modernity; or indigenous and foreign; and focus more on dialogue, which in the Indian language is also called *Samvad*. Now, this point, we have to emphasize. So, for a very long time, when a society studies other society using its own vocabulary, then the knowledge that is produced is not the result of a dialogue or *samvad*, because, its knower or the producer of knowledge is always superior in the hierarchy of the whole structure of knowledge production. But when we or in comparison to that, we cannot also have very exclusive, narrow, nativist approach to study politics or ideas, and concepts in any other tradition.

So, now, the point is to focus more on dialogue where there is a give and take process, there is accommodation, plurality, a kind of inclusiveness in the approach and articulation as well. So, I would like to quote that how for a very long time, western theories remained impoverished because the knowledge produced was not really, the result of a fruitful dialogue between the two traditions, but it is actually was some kind of export of ideas from one tradition to understand and explain the society in other tradition.

So, Norman D Palmer, one of the political scientists, Palmer say that from India may come some influences which will widen the horizons of western political thinkers and which will also give political ideas a sounder foundation of philosophical and metaphysical speculation. So, when you really, think about dialogue or *samvad*, then this possibility of a sounder foundation for philosophical or metaphysical speculation is possible and not when there is a kind of export of ideas and no import of ideas from the other traditions. So, the dialogue remains very crucial to understand the political thought in a broader sense and not in a narrower sense of indigeneity or nativist kind of approach.

Now, what will happen, if we study Indian political thought in this way? The chances are, we can pave the way for the emergence of Indian political theory. So, many people argue should we focus more on Indian political theory or political thought and which is more desirable? The answer to such kind of questions is that the political thought, the kind of method that I am going to explain in the next slides, is more helpful in terms of paving the way for the growth of Indian political theory and also, in the corpus of existing concepts in political theory in general.

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Methods of Studying Modern Indian Political Thought

Conventional Method

- Thinker Centered Approach
  - As a result of this- individual figures were treated as icons and lesser known thinkers remain obscure

Contemporary Method

- Themes Based Approach ✓
  - It offers a comparative analysis of many thinkers under one theme
  - Makes the study of MIPT more accommodative

So, what is the method? How should we study Indian political thought? One is very conventional, that is about the thinker centric approach. So, we pick up certain thinkers or certain number of thinkers and we study, the political thought in that community or in that society, or in that nation or a state by studying the individuals and their ideas, through their writings, through their treatises and other works.

So, this is very conventional. When it comes to the political thought, be it western political thought or Indian political thought, we have been for a very long time have used this thinker centric approach to study political thought and we reduced the thought to individual or set of individuals only. Now of course, I will in the next point, explain how we need to move beyond that. Now, the drawbacks of such approach is, some individual figures get prominent space in the political discourse of that country and some other

thinkers remain obscure; that happens when you study political thought by reducing it to the thinker or some individuals.

Now, we need to shift away from this thinkers centric approach to more thematic or theme based approach, where we are using one theme, where one can study a number of thinkers, a number of words in a comparative perspective and that gives a more inclusive, more accommodative or broader understanding of political thought and ideas in any tradition. So, this is the approach, we are going to take in this course, where we will study the political thinkers. But we will also, study the themes and we will see that how thinkers are situated in the larger body of thinkers or ideas, in their contemporary times.

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**Modern Indian Political Thinkers: Their Significance**

- Their ideas emerged in the context of colonialism in response to orientalist thinking. They have metaphysical and epistemological assumptions that differ sharply from those of the west.
- Their ideas are future oriented but deeply embedded in the present context. They speak in many ways to the concern of the present.
- Combination of political activism and theoretical reflection is peculiar to these thinkers such as Gandhi, Ambedkar, or Nehru.
- Through them, one can understand two centuries of Indian history, its various ups and downs as seen and interpreted by the men and women who themselves helped shape and define these most interesting times of our country.
- Greater diversity of the thinkers within the Indian political tradition.

Now, who are modern Indian political thinkers and what is their significance? First, as I was saying in the beginning, that their ideas emerged in the context of colonialism, in response to the orientalist thinking and they have metaphysical and epistemological assumptions that differ sharply from those of the west. So, that is the beginning of modern Indian political thought that was there in response to the colonialism.

In their metaphysical and epistemological approach and assumptions, they differ from the western approach, also. So, one of the classical ways or conventional ways of looking at western epistemology is the binary between the modern - pre-modern, rational - irrational, material - spiritual. In Indian approach, you will see more of a kind of



synthesis or evolution of one stage to the other, rather than the dichotomy between modern - non-modern, rational - irrational. In the Indian approach, you see a kind of synthesis and especially so, in Gandhi, where you will see the binding or even when Tagore is arguing about *Home and the World*, or east and the west. So, there is a kind of synthesis which is present there in Indian epistemological and metaphysical approaches.

These thinkers and their ideas, were future oriented, but there were also deeply embedded in their immediate context. It means that when they were so, these thinkers in a way was actually, deeply, actively engaged in the politics of their time, and they were responding to the concerns of their time but they also had a vision for the future. So, many political thinkers that we are going to discuss in this course, also, thought or had a vision about future of India.

So, they were future oriented, but deeply embedded in the present or in the contemporary issue of their time and they were also, as I was saying, that they were political activists and they combined theoretical reflection with engagement in the politics of their time. So, be it Gandhi, Ambedkar or Nehru, they were all deeply engaged in the politics or in the challenges of their time at the same time, while they were reflecting about the society, politics, state and nation in India.

So, through them, one can then understand the two centuries of Indian history, its various ups and downs as seen and interpreted by the men and women who themselves helped shape and define those most interesting periods of our country. So, in a way, this course will allow you to understand various trends of thought in Indian political tradition and also, its ups and downs, over two centuries, which is actually seen and interpreted by these thinkers and they helped in shaping and defining such ups and downs in Indian tradition.

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### **Their Concerns:**

- To harmonise between urban and rural; national unity and religious diversity or discord; advancement of the rights of the lower castes and women; individual freedom and social equity; material prosperity and spiritual accomplishments; nationalist ideals and global approach
- The orientation of some of these thinker-activists was outward as well as inward; in seeking to unite their country and make it more democratic, they also looked at the most productive ways in which India could engage with other nations in an increasingly interconnected world.
- Several Indian political thinkers had the whole of humanity and not just the Indians as their audience. They offered theories for the resolution of not merely Indian predicaments or problems but of world historical problems or issues: During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War Congress Draft on world problems; Anti-imperialist movements in other parts of Asia and Africa; Upholding or strengthening world organisations such as UN.

Now, what are their concerns? Their concern, first, was to harmonize between seemingly opposite or contradictory forces that were operating in the society, particularly, between urban and rural India. So, remember Gandhi talking about Indian soul resides in the village and Ambedkar or Nehru having more urban outlook. For them, village is the domain of superstitions, untouchability or irrational practices and customs, and scientific rational method or approach was needed to cure such irrational practices, customs and etcetera.

So, they were trying to harmonize this urban and rural divide, and also the other major challenges that we faced for a very long time and that continue to challenge our contemporary politics is the question of national unity with the religious diversity or religious discourse that we have. So, in India, as we all are aware of is a home of different religions or many religions, and these religions and identity construction on the basis of this very religion, which also deeply influence our politics, or certainly, when these thinkers were articulating about the vision of India, vision of a state, there was a polarization on the basis of religion too.

So, how to harmonize or combine this religious diversity or discord on the one hand and national unity on the other remained one of the greatest challenges for most of these thinkers, including Gandhi, Nehru, Tagore and many others whom we will come to know when discuss further. The other challenges before them were the advancement of rights of the lower castes and the women. All these thinkers were also not just engaged in getting the political independence or liberation from the British rule but also were

concerned about the upliftment of the lower castes and the women who were historically, marginalized and suppressed in Indian society. So, the question of women education, removal or abolition of caste, removal of untouchability; all these things were part of such discourse, bringing about social reforms along with political reforms and political freedom, and we will come to know more about it when we will discuss on Ambedkar and Lohia and many other thinkers.

The other challenge for them then was the individual freedom along with social equity. Many modern Indian political thinkers were western educated also and they realized the significance of individual or individual as a unit, to understand the society, but they were also aware of the existence of community life or social life in India. So, for them, to harmonize between these individual freedom and social equity was also a challenge and many thinkers did reflect on this problem.

Other challenge was the question of material prosperity and spiritual accomplishments. So, thinkers like Aurobindo Ghosh, Tagore and Gandhi to some extent actually, deeply reflected upon this question of western or material prosperity along with the spiritual quest of individual and community. They were also deeply influenced or helped in constituting the nationalist ideals at the same time they had global approach too.

So, one of the example, I can give you is Aurobindo Ghosh. So, Aurobindo was a nationalist and he was a very radical nationalist and he actively, engaged himself in the radical politics between 1904 to 1909 or 10 for few years. But his approach to nationalism or nation was deeply guided by the spiritual urge of human beings which they thought that after the nationalism, there will be the growth or eventual development of cosmopolitan or international global ideas.

So, in many of these modern political thinkers, you will also find, where they were fighting for the national ideals or constituting national ideals, they were also having global approach at the same time: to deal with the national question in India and also, beyond India's boundary.

So, the orientation of these thinkers, as I said, was of a thinker activist and was both outward as well as inward looking. So, in seeking to unite their country and to make it more democratic, they also looked at the most productive ways in which India can engage with other nations in increasingly interconnected world.

So, these thinkers were not just concerned and bothered about India within its territory; within its geographical context; but also, what role India can play in the larger human civilization or in global politics. So, they were deeply engaged with the question of say, imperialism, First World War, Second World War, international organizations such as League of Nation or United Nation, etc.

So, several Indian thinkers had the whole of humanity and not just Indian as their audience. So, when they were writing or thinking about or reflecting about challenges they were not exclusively, bother about Indian concerns alone. They were having some broader or bigger canvas in their reflection about global peace, harmony or justice and etc. So, their theories or resolution that they gave for Indian problem or predicaments, that was applicable to the global problem as well. So, one of the example, one can think of this Second World War was when congress drafted a resolution, where the Anti-Imperialist movement in many parts of Asia and Africa was supported by the Indians.

So, Indian freedom struggle while they were fighting for their political independence from the British imperialism, at the same time, they were also extending their support to other countries fighting for their independence from the colonial powers. And in this draft basically, the reflection of the congress party shows that when they are discussing about India's role in World War Two, they were also reflecting about the question of democracy and imperialism.

So, they wanted India to join the War because British were claiming to fight for democracy or free world at the same time, denying freedom or democracy in their colonized country. So, many of the Indian political thinkers argued that one should not have this dual stand of fighting fascism in the name of democracy and denying democracy, or extending democracy in one's own colonized territory.

So, India can very well be a part of the democratic struggle in any other parts of the world but it cannot join those forces, when it has a dual characteristic of fighting fascism in the name of democracy and justifying imperialism by the denial of democracy in its own colony. So, that kind of understanding reflected the deeper engagement of these thinkers with the global problems and global challenges. Similarly, when the UN was constituted Indian thinkers were engaging in it as well.

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**Three categories of thinkers:**

- One group of thinkers favoured imitative reproduction of the modern western modes of political action and organisation.
- Second group of thinkers believed in the revival of and admiration for India's classical tradition of social and political thought and ideas.
- Third Group of thinkers attempted to create a blending of the traditional Indian and the modern western paradigms of politics. Tradition and Modernity and the combination of both.

Gandhi, Tagore

So, what do you see about the engagements, and as I was saying, what are the different strands of thought in these thinkers? Broadly, one can divide Indian thinkers into three categories. One group of thinkers favored the imitative reproduction of modern western modes of political action and organization. So, they thought they were, in a sense, modernizers also. They wanted to modernize India but they wanted that modernization to happen by themselves and not by the colonial or outside forces, as the imperial power like British was claiming, that they were here to civilize the people. But these thinkers were actually saying that we want to be modern but will modernize by ourselves. We don't need outside forces to modernize or civilize us.

So, they wanted some kind of reproduction to suit the local interests by modifying the concepts or the ideas here and there to suit the local circumstances and then construct a modern India. So, they were a kind of supporter of imitation and reproduction of modern western modes of political action and organization. Then, there are second group of thinkers, who were talking about revival of and admiration for India's classical traditions. So, they were basically the revivalists. During the first few decades of Indian renaissance, you will find a lot of thinkers or activists talking about revival of India's glorious past or ancient past. Then, you have the third group of thinkers, which tries to blend traditional Indian and modern western paradigms of politics and Gandhi is one such example of this and also to some extent, Tagore and many others.

So, when we will discuss about these thinkers, we will come to engage with this three categories of thinkers that we have in modern Indian political thought. The other

question is to discuss the idea of tradition and modernity, and the dichotomy between the two. So, for a very long time, many westerners and western scholars including some Indians believed India to be a traditional society and west as a modern society, and this tradition and modern or dichotomization, actually, does not help in explaining or understanding any society because in most of the society, no matter how much economic or materially advanced that society is, there is a combination of both tradition and modernity as many scholars have argued.

So, correct way to understand a society is this combination of tradition and the modern. In many thinkers, we will see this simultaneous presence; or continuity with change; or change with continuity in their thoughts and articulations as well.

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**Absence and Presence of Thinkers**

**Major Absence:** B. G. Tilak, G. P. Gokhale, Dadabhai Naoroji, S. C. Bose, D. D. Upadhyay

- Objective of this course is to include those thinkers who are representatives of various ideological strands in modern Indian political thought.
- Inclusion of these figures such as Gandhi and Ambedkar for example, who have helped in the shaping the founding values of Indian republic and continue to influence Indian politics and society even today.
- Individuals dealing with both theory and practice or what is also called praxis.

Now, I would like to say something about the presence and absence of some thinkers. So, if you look at the syllabus, they are remarkable and very explicit or the startling absence from the list like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dadabhai Naoroji, Subhash Chandra Bose and Deendayal Upadhyay.

So, I have been very selective in terms of choosing the thinkers and their themes for this course and that excludes a number of thinkers, which I could have included given their contributions in the thought or their influences in shaping modern India. But I have been very particular, in selecting some of the thinkers and excluding some, but I request you

all to look at their works and ideas as well. I had some criteria to include certain thinkers and not to include many others and I used some objective for that purpose.

So, first, I wanted to include those thinkers who are representatives of various ideological strands in modern Indian political thought. So, some thinkers who are more or less talking from the same kind of ideological or intellectual tradition, I tend to include only one or those who are representative or key figures of that ideology and not all.

The second was that these figures like Gandhi or Tagore has helped in shaping the founding values of Indian republic and those values continue to influence Indian politics and society even today. So, their contributions in terms of founding the values of Indian republic and in what ways, it shaped and continue to influence modern politics as well. So, certainly, thoughts of Gandhi, Ambedkar, Nehru, Lohia and their thoughts were very powerful not in their own time but also, in our contemporary times, too.

So, I have used those criteria to include some individuals and exclude few. The other point was these individuals were both dealing with theory that means, they were very reflective, they were articulating the challenges of India and how to resolve those challenges. At the same time, they were engaged in the politics. So, they combined both their theory and practice which is also called the praxis. So, those thinkers who were not just reflecting but also engaged in Indian situation, or Indian challenges, I have included them. So, this presence and absence is actually, determined by some of these criterias.

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### Focus of the Course

- Both individual thinkers and themes they dealt with.
- To enable the students to historically situate the thinker in their personal, political as well as in their ideological domains.
- To make the students familiar with various strands of modern Indian political thought.

So, the focus of this course is both individual thinkers which I have selected depending upon their articulation and also, engagement with the politics of their time. So, we will have individual thinkers and themes that they have dealt with. For instance, suppose Gandhi, his notion of Swaraj or Jawaharlal Nehru, his ideas on socialism or statecraft.

Similarly, we have many thinkers and their themes. The other objective of this course is to enable the student to situate these thinkers historically, in their personal and political as well as ideological domains. So, one of the objective of this course is not just to understand a thinker and their ideas, but also the ideological domains in that which help in shaping or constituting their ideas and their approach to politics.

The other objective of this course is to make the student familiar with the various strands of modern political thought. So, this point, I wish to re-emphasize that there is no one similar hegemonic construct that was happening through this modern political thought, if we closely and deeply engage with some of the issues and ideas they were engaged with that will unpack lots of possibilities that can help us to understand our modern society in a better way.



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### Conclusion

- Modern Indian political thought is a rich repository of ideas and concepts which emerged in response to colonialism and simultaneous with the formation of nation and state in modern India
- A broader and thematic study of thought can substantially contribute to the corpus of existing concepts to understand Indian society and politics better. It may also pave the way for the growth of 'Indian Political Theory' still marginal discipline in Indian academia
- Such thought emerged in various *Bhashas* such as modern Bengali, Marathi, Assamese, Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi spheres as well; and their specific and comparative study will further open-up and enrich the understanding to Modern Indian Political Thought
- However, this course is more about the key thinkers and their ideas/themes that led to the founding of modern Indian republic and continue to reverberate in our contemporary politics

Now, in conclusion, I would like to say that modern Indian political thought is a rich repository of ideas and concepts which emerged in response to colonialism and simultaneously, with the formation of nation-state, and nation and state in modern India, as I was discussing in the beginning. So, that is the emergence of modern Indian political thought.

Now, a broader and thematic and not limiting the political thought to some individuals or few individuals. But in a broader thematic way, if we study Indian political thought, it can substantially, contribute to the corpus of existing concepts to understand Indian society and politics better.

So, if we unpack these thinkers, their ideas and concepts in a broader way, more thematically, doing some kind of comparative study and locating them in the larger body of ideas and literature, then perhaps, we can better understand and it can help us better understand and explain Indian society. It may also pave the way for the growth of Indian political theory which is a marginal discipline in Indian academia, as I was saying in this lecture that the political thought, the Indian political thought has the potential to help in contributing not just Indian political theory but theory in general, as we have seen through the example of Norman D Palmer.

Now, the other point which is the prospect of this kind of thinking, is that these thoughts which we call modern Indian political thought were simultaneously, emerging in various

Bhashas, Bhasha is the different linguistic sphere like modern Bengali, Marathi, Assamese, Tamil or Malayalam or Hindi spheres. So, these ideas, concepts were articulated and it effectively, shaped the political discourse in this spheres, also.

So, I believe, that there is specific as well as the comparative study will further open-up and enrich the understanding of modern Indian political thought. So, once, we unpack or expand the understanding, or study of political thought from thinkers to themes and then, we try to study these themes not just among the thinkers but also in different literary spheres, that may further expand and enrich the modern Indian political thought and certainly, different vocabulary and ideas that we use to understand Indian politics as well.

However, this course is more about the key thinkers and their ideas or themes that led to the founding of modern Indian republic and continue to reverberate in our contemporary politics. So, our study will be focused more towards those thinkers and their ideas which we have selected to study as they have really helped in the founding of Indian republic and continue to influence or reverberate in our politics.

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So, we have that on outline, I will request you to go and find out these readings to understand whatever I have presented in today's lecture. So, first reading is by P. K. Datta and Sanjay Palshikar edited; *Political Science, Volume 3: Indian Political Thought* which is published by ICSSR and OUP India in 2013.

So, this book and particularly, the introduction will help you to understand in a better way, what is the difference between theory and thought, what are the new methodological challenges or methodological approaches to understand Indian political thought and in what ways, it can broaden our understanding of Indian society or Indian politics in particular, and the corpus of concepts and ideas in theory, in general.

The other text you should look at is by Ramchandra Guha, *Makers of India*. From the introduction, again you will get to know about the powerful ideas of some of these thinkers and how they used their reflections or articulations not just to solve Indian problem, but also the global challenges.

The other text is by Pantham and Deutsch; *Political Thought in Modern India*. Introduction from this text, again, help you to understand the different approach in Indian political thought and western political thought, and how a possible dialogue can perhaps, enrich the whole corpus of theory and thought in general. So, from this, you can also read such approach. Other text, you should look at is by V. R. Mehta, *Foundation of Indian Political Thought* and M.P. Singh and Himanshu Roy edited, *Indian Political Thought: Themes and Thinkers*. So, this is all for today's class. I just wish to say a thing or two about the way political thought is done now and the way, it was done by these key thinkers.

So, you see historically, the individual engaged in political thinking or theorization especially, in modern times, we are deeply engaged as I was saying that they were activist thinkers, they were engaged in the politics and at the same time, they were reflecting about the politics, theorizing the politics and providing solution to the existing challenges which was not limited to their time but it has relevance in our contemporary times, as well.

But now in contemporary times, you see the domain of political thinking and theorization is in academia or in universities. So, the scholars, as they reflect about the society, write about the society, writers, and activists as they do it. But for us, the fortunate part is all these thinkers were also deeply, engaged with the politics of their time and faced the challenges and were providing solutions to such challenges.

So, I hope, this course will be very interesting to all of you and in the next lecture, we will be discussing Raja Rammohan Roy and his views on religious reforms. So, that is all for today.

Thank you.