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Mains Practice Questions

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Q. Why were people dissatisfied with British rule in the 1870s and 1880s? (150 words)

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Approach:

- Highlight the immediate reasons for dissatisfaction in 1870s-80s.
- Highlight how such dissatisfaction gave rise to moderate led INC.
- Highlight how overall dissatisfaction gave rise to radicals.

Introduction

Post-1857 revolts period marked the rise of nationalism as people got increasingly aware of British control over resources and their lives. The dissatisfaction intensified in the 1870s and 1880s.

Body

- **Arms and Vernacular Press Act of 1878:** disallowing Indian from possessing arms and allowing the government to confiscate newspaper printing assets if anything objectionable was printed against the government.
- **Ilbert Bill, 1883:** White people's opposition to equality in the trial of Europeans and Indian prisoners. The racial attitude of the British in India was highlighted. These events made educated Indians aware of the need of an all Indian organisation, resulting in the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885 in Bombay with early leadership of Dadabhai Naroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, WC Banerjee etc.

The congress raised several demands in the 1880s:

- Greater voice of Indians in administration and government.
- Indianisation of the administration.
- Separation of Judiciary from Executive, repeal of Arms Act, freedom of speech and expression.
- Economic issues: famines, cut in military expenditure.

Conclusion

The dissatisfaction eventually led to the rise of radicals by the 1890s like Tilak, Rai, Pal. It also gave rise to the demand for Indianisation of the administration, as people became more aware of the discrimination. The radicals criticised the Moderates for their "politics of prayers", and emphasised the importance of self-reliance and constructive work. The dissatisfaction expressed at this time was significant as it eventually led to the Swadeshi movement.