

I: NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

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Mahatma Gandhi was the main force behind the non-cooperation movement. In March 1920, he issued a manifesto declaring a doctrine of the non-violent non-cooperation movement. Gandhi, through this manifesto, wanted people to:

1. Adopt swadeshi principles
2. Adopt swadeshi habits including hand spinning & weaving
3. Work for the eradication of untouchability from society

Gandhi travelled across the nation in 1921 explaining the tenets of the movement.

Features of the Non-Cooperation Movement

- The movement was essentially a peaceful and non-violent protest against the British government in India.
- Indians were asked to relinquish their titles and resign from nominated seats in the local bodies as a mark of protest.
- People were asked to resign from their government jobs.
- People were asked to withdraw their children from government-controlled or aided schools and colleges.
- People were asked to boycott foreign goods and use only Indian-made goods.
- People were asked to boycott the elections to the legislative councils.
- People were asked not to serve in the British army.
- It was also planned that if the above steps did not bring results, people would refuse to pay their taxes.
- The INC also demanded Swarajya or self-government.
- Only completely non-violent means would be employed to get the demands fulfilled.
- The non-cooperation movement was a decisive step in the independence movement because, for the first time, the INC was ready to forego constitutional means to achieve self-rule.
- Gandhiji had assured that Swaraj would be achieved in a year if this movement was continued to completion.

Causes of Non-Cooperation Movement

- **Resentment at the British after the war:** Indians thought that in return for the extensive support of manpower and resources they had provided to Britain during the First World War, they would be rewarded by autonomy at the end of the war. But the Government of India Act 1919 was dissatisfactory. In addition, the British also passed repressive acts like the Rowlatt Act which further angered many Indians who felt betrayed by the rulers despite their wartime support.
- **Home Rule Movement:** The Home Rule Movement started by Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak set the stage for the non-cooperation movement. The extremists and the moderates of the INC were united and the Lucknow Pact also saw solidarity between the

Muslim League and the Congress Party. The return of the extremists gave the INC a militant character.

- **Economic hardships due to World War I:** India's participation in the war caused a lot of economic hardships to the people. Prices of goods began to soar which affected the common man. Peasants also suffered because the prices of agricultural products did not increase. All this led to resentment against the government.
- **The Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre:** The repressive Rowlatt Act and the brutal massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar had a profound effect on the Indian leaders and the people. Their faith in the British system of justice was broken and the whole country rallied behind its leaders who were pitching for a more aggressive and firm stance against the government.
- **The Khilafat Movement:** During the First World War, Turkey, which was one of the Central Powers, had fought against the British. After Turkey's defeat, the Ottoman caliphate was proposed to be dissolved. Muslims regarded Sultan of Turkey as their Caliph (religious head of the Muslims). The Khilafat movement was launched under the leadership of Ali Brothers (Maulana Mohammed Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali), Maulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, and Hasrat Mohani. It got the support from Mahatma Gandhi to persuade the British government not to abolish the caliphate. The leaders of this movement accepted the non-cooperation movement of Gandhiji and led a joint protest against the British.

Why was the Non-Cooperation Movement suspended?

- Gandhiji called off the movement in February 1922 in the wake of the Chauri Chaura incident.
- In Chauri Chaura, Uttar Pradesh, a violent mob set fire to a police station killing 22 policemen during a clash between the police and protesters of the movement.
- Gandhiji called off the movement saying people were not ready for revolt against the government through ahimsa. Several leaders like Motilal Nehru and C R Das were against the suspension of the movement only due to sporadic incidents of violence.

Significance of Non-Cooperation Movement

- Swaraj was not achieved in one year as Gandhiji had told.
- However, it was a truly mass movement where lakhs of Indians participated in the open protest against the government through peaceful means.
- It shook the British government who were stumped by the extent of the movement.
- It saw participation from both Hindus and Muslims thereby showcasing communal harmony in the country.
- This movement established the popularity of the Congress Party among the people.
- As a result of this movement, people became conscious of their political rights. They were not afraid of the government.
- Hordes of people thronged to jails willingly.
- The Indian merchants and mill owners enjoyed good profits during this period as a result of the boycott of British goods. Khadi was promoted.
- The import of sugar from Britain reduced considerably during this period.

- This movement also established Gandhiji as a leader of the masses.

II: CIVIL DISOBEDIANCE MOVEMENT

The Lahore Congress of 1929 had given the mandate to launch civil disobedience movement along with the non-payment of taxes. Mahatma Gandhi presented his 11 demands to the Viceroy Lord Irwin and gave him the ultimate of January 31, 1932 to accept these demands. His 11 point demands were

Issues of general welfare

- Abolition of salt tax and Monopoly of the government to manufacture salt.
- To reduce the expenses on the civil administration and army by 30%.
- To reform the criminal investigation department CID.
- Total prohibition of intoxicants and alcohol.
- Amendments in the arms act to allow licenses of arms to citizens for self-protection.
- To release all the political Prisoners.
- Acceptance of Postal reservation bill.

Demands specific to bourgeois

- To change the Rupee Sterling exchange ratio to 1s 4d.
- To impose custom duty on import of foreign clothes.
- The reservation of coastal shipping for Indians.

Demands for the interests of peasants

- Reduction of land revenue by 50 percent.

The government did not give any positive response to these demands. In February 1930, the Congress working Committee gave full powers to Mahatma Gandhi to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement at a place and time of his choice. By end of February 1930, Gandhiji began to talk about the salt tax and made it the main issue to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Reasons for selection of salt as the central formula

1. Salt was universally used by all the sections of the society and hence it did not had any social divisive implications like no rent campaign.
2. As Mahatma Gandhi had said, there is no article like salt outside water by taxing which the state can reach even Starving millions, the sick the maimed and the utterly helpless. This tax is the most inhuman poll tax the ingenuity of man can device.

3. The salt formed a meager amount of income for poor, it had an important psychological effect. As in case of khadi, the salt again provided the urban adherents the opportunity to link with sufferings and pain of masses.

Launch of Dandi March

On 2nd March 1930 Gandhi wrote his historic letter to Lord Irwin, firstly, he explained why he regarded the British raj in India as the reason for the misery of people of India. Then he informed Lord Irwin about his plans about breaking the salt law. He wrote in his letter that the government can arrest him, but after his arrest thousands of his followers will follow him in the act of disobeying the salt law.

Mahatma Gandhi along with his 78 followers was to march from Ahmedabad through the different villages of Gujarat for about 240 miles to reach the coast of Dandi. But, even before the launch of Dandi March, several thousand of his followers reached his Ashram. He gave following directions for the future course of action:

- To start the breaking of salt law wherever possible.
- The foreign cloth shops and liquor shops can be picketed.
- He allowed for the refusal of payment of taxes if there is sufficient strength.
- The lawyers can give up their practices and the public can boycott the law Courts and refrain from litigation.
- Gandhiji prescribed only one condition for the above i.e. truth and nonviolence as the only means to attain Swaraj.
- In case of his arrest by the government. He called for obeying the local leaders.

Gandhiji launched his Dandi march on March 12, and he reached Dandi on 6th April. He broke the salt law by picking up a handful of salt and with this the civil disobedience movement began which saw countrywide mass participation. The progress of his march and his speeches were covered by the newspapers all over the country. In answer to his appeal 300 government officials resigned in Gujarat. The Congress workers looked after the organisational work and broadcasted the speeches of Gandhi, throughout the country.

Once Mahatma Gandhi completed the ritual of breaking the salt law, similar marches and defiance of salt law started all over the country. In Tamilnadu, C.Rajagopalachari led a similar movement from Tiruchirapalli to vedaranniyam and broke the salt law. In Assam, the satyagrahis marched from Sylhet to Noakhali (Bengal) to manufacture salt. In Andhra, several *sibirams* (military style camps) came up in the different districts and served as the headquarters of Salt Satyagraha.

Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested on 14th April for breaking the salt law. This led to huge demonstrations and protests in Madras, Calcutta and Karachi. On May 4, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi was arrested after his announcement about his intentions to lead a raid to Dharasana Salt works. His arrest led to massive protests, demonstrations, and hartals in Bombay, Delhi, and Calcutta etc. Sholapur, saw the fiercest response, where the mill workers and other residents burnt and attacked liquor shops and government symbols.

After Mahatma Gandhi's arrest, the Congress working committee sanctioned:

- For the non payment of land revenue in the ryotwari areas.
- Campaign for no chowkidara tax by refusing to pay this tax.
- The violation of the different forest laws in Central provinces.

Chittagong:

In Chittagong, the Surya Sen s Chittagong Revolutionary group raided the two armouries of government and took its control. Surya sen took salute of the national flag and announced the establishment of the provincial government.

Peshawar:

In Peshawar, Abdul Gaffar Khan, also known as Badshah Khan and Frontier Gandhi led the struggle. He organised a volunteer group called Khudai khidmatgars or red shirts , who pledged to work for the freedom struggle through the means of nonviolence. Abdul Gaffar Khan had started political monthly Pukhtoon and worked for the social and educational reforms among the pathans. After the arrest of Congress leaders on 23rd April 1930, Peshawar saw huge mass demonstrations and protests and the City was virtually in the hands of crowd till may 4 till order was restored. Martial law was imposed to control the situation. Here a section of soldiers of Garhwal Regiment refused to fire on the unarmed crowd. The upsurge in this province, where 92% of population was Muslim left the Britishers nervous.

The areas of **Maharashtra, Karnataka and Central provinces** saw the defiance of forest laws. The people defied the forest laws such as restrictions on grazing and timber and publicly sold the illegally acquired forest products. This kind of movement was more visible in areas with large tribal populations.

Manipur and Nagaland also saw the effect of civil disobedience movement. In Nagaland, Rani Gaidinliu at the young age of 13 years led the Revolt against the British. She was arrested in 1932 and given the sentence of life imprisonment.

The mass mobilization was done with the help of Prabhat fairies, Vanar senas, secret patrikas, and Manjari senas which had girls as their members. Magic Lantern shows were organised to create awareness among the masses against the British.

Impact of the movement

During this movement, the import of foreign goods such as foreign clothes and other items were reduced sharply. Due to picketing of liquor and other intoxicants, the government revenue from these sources reduced. Further, the legislative assemblies were also boycotted.

Participation of women

Civil disobedience movement saw large scale participation of women as Gandhi had asked the women to take a leading part in the movement. Women participated in large numbers in picketing outside liquor shops, opium dens and around the shops selling foreign goods. The civil disobedience movement was the most liberating experience for the women, which truly marked their entry in public sphere point

Student and youth participation was also significant especially against boycott of foreign clothes, against liquor shops etc. Their demonstration and protest against Cunningham circular in Assam was also significant.

Government response

The government response was ambivalent as it did unnecessary delay in arresting Gandhi. It played the card that nonintervention of government would make Gandhi's plan a failure, but the opposite happened. The government faced the dilemma as if it applied force then its image suffered and the Congress cried repression and if it did not do much, the Congress cried victory. Thus in both ways, the hegemony of British Indian government was getting eroded.

But once it began repression, the ordinances were used to acquire draconian powers to repress civil liberties, press and for banning civil disobedience organisations. The police did Lathi charge and firings on the Peaceful and nonviolent crowd. Several people were killed and injured, while around 90000 people were arrested during the movement.

III: ROUND TABLE CONFERENCES

FIRST ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

Participants in the First Round Table Conference

- 58 political leaders from British India.
- 16 delegates from the native princely states.
- 16 delegates from the three British political parties.
- The Indian National Congress decided not to participate in the conference. Many of the INC leaders were imprisoned due to their involvement in the civil disobedience movement.
- Among the British-Indians, the following representatives attended the conference: Muslim League, Hindus, Justice Party, Sikhs, liberals, Parsis, Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans, landlords, labour, women, universities, Sindh, Burma, other provinces, and the representatives from the Government of India.

ISSUES ARE DISCUSSED

- Federal structure
- Provincial constitution
- Provinces of Sindh and NWFP
- Minorities
- Defence services
- Franchise
- Executive responsibility to the legislature
- Dr B R Ambedkar demanded separate electorates for the 'untouchables'.
- Tej Bahadur Sapru moved the idea of an All-India Federation. This was supported by the Muslim League. The princely states also supported this on the condition that their internal sovereignty is maintained.

SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

The Second Round Conference opened on September 7, 1931. Gandhi represented Indian National Congress and Sarojini Naidu represented Indian women. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Ghanshyam Das Birla, Muhammad Iqbal, Sir Mirza Ismail Diwan of Mysore, S K Dutta and Sir Syed Ali Imam were other people that attended the conference. This conference saw an overwhelming number of Indian delegates. These included loyalists, communalists, careerists, big landlords, representatives of the princes etc.

Due to wide scale participation, the Government claimed that the Congress did not represent the interests of All India. But, Gandhi claimed that Congress Represented India. Gandhi iterated the need of a partnership between Britain and India as between two equal nations. His demands were :

1. A responsible government must be established immediately and in full, both at the centre and in the provinces.
2. Congress alone represented political India
3. The Untouchables were Hindus and should not be treated as a "minority",
4. There should be no separate electorates or special safeguards for Muslims or other minorities.

But these claims of Gandhi were rejected by the other Indian delegates. The conference was deadlocked on the minorities' issue for; separate electorate was now being demanded by the Muslims, Dalits, Christians, Anglo Indians, and Europeans etc.

The result was that the Conference ended on December 11, 1931 and Gandhi came back to pavilion without any score.

With the advent of the coalition Government in England, the whole atmosphere of the Second Round Table conference got changed and the sole outcome of this session was the widening of the gap between the Congress and the minorities. Except Sikhs, all of the minorities (including Dalits) wanted to get their own separate electorates.

So, on the one side, Minorities were in opposition, who wanted to reach at an agreement among them. On the other side, it was the antagonistic British Government, which was for anything opposite to the Indian aspirations. Result? Gandhi came back, disappointed, without any achievement.

THIRD ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

Third Round Table Conference (November 1932– December 1932)

The third Round Table Conference took place between 17 November 1932 and 24 December 1932.

Participants of the Third Round table conference

- Only 46 delegates in total took part in this conference.
- The INC and the Labour Party decided not to attend it. (The INC wasn't invited).
- Indian princely states were represented by princes and divans.
- British Indians were represented by the Aga Khan (Muslims),
- Depressed classes
- women, Europeans, Anglo-Indians and labour groups.

IV: QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT, 1942

- Also known as the India August Movement or August Kranti.
- It was officially launched by the Indian National Congress (INC) led by Mahatma Gandhi on 9 August 1942.
- The movement gave the slogans 'Quit India' or 'Bharat Chodo'. Gandhi gave the slogan to the people – 'Do or die'.
- In line with the Congress ideology, it was supposed to be a peaceful non-violent movement aimed at urging the British to grant India independence.
- The Quit India Resolution was passed by the Congress Working Committee on 8 August 1942 in Bombay. Gandhi was named the movement's leader.
- The resolution stated the provisions of the movement as:
 1. An immediate end to British rule over India.
 2. Declaration of the commitment of free India to defend itself against all kinds of imperialism and fascism.
 3. Formation of a provisional government of India after British withdrawal.
 4. Sanctioning a civil disobedience movement against British rule.
- Gandhi's instructions to various sections of the public:
 1. **Government servants:** do not resign your job but proclaim loyalty to the INC.
 2. **Soldiers:** be with the army but refrain from firing on compatriots.
 3. **Peasants:** pay the agreed-upon rent if the landlords/Zamindars are anti-government; if they are pro-government, do not pay the rent.
 4. **Students:** can leave studies if they are confident enough.
 5. **Princes:** support the people and accept the sovereignty of them.
 6. **People of the princely states:** support the ruler only if he is anti-government; declare themselves as part of the Indian nation.

Causes of Quit India Movement – Why was it launched?

- The Second World War had started in 1939 and Japan, which was part of the Axis Powers that were opposed to the British in the war were gaining onto the north-eastern frontiers of India.
- The British had abandoned their territories in South-East Asia and had left their population in the lurch. This act did not garner much faith among the Indian population who had doubts about the British ability to defend India against Axis aggression.
- Gandhi also believed that if the British left India, Japan would not have enough reason to invade India.
- Apart from hearing news about British setbacks in the war, the war-time difficulties such as high prices of essential commodities fostered resentment against the British government.
- The failure of the Cripps Mission to guarantee any kind of a constitutional remedy to India's problems also led to the INC calling for a mass civil disobedience movement.

Response to Quit India Movement

- The British government responded to the call of Gandhi by arresting all major Congress leaders the very next day. Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, etc. were all arrested. This left the movement in the hands of the younger leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia. New leaders like Aruna Asaf Ali emerged out of the vacuum of leadership.
- Over 100000 people were arrested in connection with this movement. The government resorted to violence in order to quell the agitation. They were mass floggings and lathi charges. Even women and children were not spared. About 10000 people died in police firing in total.
- There was no communal violence.
- The INC was banned. Its leaders were jailed for almost the whole of the war. Gandhi was released on health grounds in 1944.
- The people responded to Gandhi's call in a major way. However, in the absence of leadership, there were stray incidences of violence and damage to government property. Many buildings were set on fire, electricity lines were cut and communication and transport lines were broken.
- Some parties did not support the movement. There was opposition from the Muslim League, the Communist Party of India (the government revoked the ban on the party then) and the Hindu Mahasabha.
- The League was not in favour of the British leaving India without partitioning the country first. In fact, Jinnah asked more Muslims to enlist in the army to fight the war.
- The Communist party supported the war waged by the British since they were allied with the Soviet Union.
- Subhas Chandra Bose, was by this time, organizing the Indian National Army and the Azad Hind government from outside the country.
- C Rajagopalachari, resigned from the INC since he was not in favour of complete independence.
- In general, the Indian bureaucracy did not support the Quit India Movement.
- There were strikes and demonstrations all over the country. Despite the communist group's lack of support to the movement, workers provided support by not working in the factories.
- In some places, parallel governments were also set up. Example: Ballia, Tamluk, Satara.

- The chief areas of the movement were UP Bihar, Maharashtra, Midnapore, and Karnataka. The movement lasted till 1944.

Importance of Quit India Movement – Significance/What it achieved?

- Despite heavy-handed suppression by the government, the people were unfazed and continued their struggle.
 - Even though the government said that independence could be granted only after the end of the war, the movement drove home the point that India could not be governed without the support of the Indians.
 - The movement placed the demand for complete independence at the top agenda of the freedom movement.
 - Public morale and anti-British sentiment were enhanced.
-