

NATIONALISM IN INDIA

CHAPTER COVERAGE

- ◆ The First World War, Khilafat and Non Cooperation
- ◆ Differing strands within the movement
- ◆ Towards Civil Disobedience
- ◆ The Sense of Collective Belonging
- ◆ Important Terms & Dates



THE FIRST WORLD WAR, KHILAFAT AND NON-COOPERATION

- (1) The War created a new economic and political situation.
 - (2) It led to a huge increase in defense expenditure which was financed by War loans and increasing taxes, customs duties were raised and income tax introduced.
 - (3) Through the war years prices increased leading to extreme hardship for the common people.
 - (4) Villages were called upon to supply soldiers, and the forced recruitment in rural areas caused wide spread anger.
 - (5) Crops failed in many parts of India.
 - (6) According to the census of 1921, 12 to 13 million people perished due to famine and epidemic.
- (i) **The Idea of Satyagraha :**
- (1) Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in January 1915. He had successfully fought the racist regime with a novel method of mass agitation, which he called Satyagraha. It suggested that if the cause was true, if the struggle was against injustice, then physical force was not necessary to fight the oppressors.
 - (2) In 1916 Gandhiji travelled to Champaran (Bihar) to inspire the peasants to struggle against the oppressive plantation system.
 - (3) In 1917 he organised a Satyagraha to support the peasants of the Kheda district of Gujarat. Affected by crop failure & the plague epidemic, the peasants of Kheda could not pay the revenue.
 - (4) In 1918 Gandhiji went to Ahmedabad to settle the wage case of Cotton Mill Workers through Satyagraha.
- (ii) **The Rowlatt Act :** In 1919 Gandhiji decided to launch a Satyagraha against the proposed Rowlatt Act. This Act was passed hurriedly in spite of the opposition of Indian Members of the Council. It gave enormous powers to the government to repress Indian political activities. Gandhiji started non-violent Civil Disobedience against such unjust laws.
- (1) On April 6, a hartal was organised.
 - (2) Rallies were organised in various cities. British administration decided to clamp down on nationalists. Local leaders were picked up from Amritsar.

- (3) On April 10 police fired on a peaceful procession. People started attack on bank, police stations, post offices etc.
- (4) Martial law was imposed.

◆ **Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre :**

On April 13, people gathered in Jallianwalla Bagh for a protest meeting. General Dyer came and blocked the exit point and ordered his men to open fire. He wanted to create a state of terror in the minds of the people. Hundreds of people died and were wounded.

As the news of Jallianwalla Bagh spread, crowds took to the streets in many towns. There were strikes, clashes with the police and attacks on government property. The government responded with brutal repression, seeking to humiliate and terrorise people. Being angry, people started violence. So Gandhiji called off the movement.

◆ **Khilafat Movement :**

The after effect of this issue was that the Hindus and Muslims came together. Gandhiji felt that this is the time to join hands with the Khilafat movement. In Turkey, the British Government was not willing to accept the authority of 'Khalifa'. So the Khilafat movement was started in India by the Indian Muslims. Gandhiji started Non Cooperation Movement in Sept. 1920 in the support of Khilafat movement.

- (iii) **Why Non-cooperation ? :** It was decided that in case the government used repression, a full civil disobedience campaign would be launched. In 1921 Gandhiji and Shaukat Ali started the movement. It began with the surrender of titles that the government awarded and boycott of Civil Services, army, police, courts and legislative councils.



DIFFERING STRANDS WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

- (i) **The Movement in the Towns :** Thousands of students left government controlled schools and colleges. Lawyers gave up their legal practices. The council elections were boycotted in most of the provinces.
Foreign goods were boycotted, liquor shops picketed. Indian institutions had to be set up so that they could be used in place of the British one's.

(ii) **Rebellion in the Countryside :**

- (1) In Awadh-Peasants were led by Ram Chandra - a Sanyasi, who had earlier been to Fiji as an indentured labourer. Peasants had to do begar and work at landlord's farms without any payment.
- (2) The peasant movement demanded reduction of revenue, abolition of begar and social boycott of oppressive landlords.
- (3) In many places Panchayats organised farmers, washermen and asked them not to give services to the landlords.
- (4) In 1921 Gandhiji distributed land among the poor peasants.
- (5) In the Gudum Hills of Andhra Pradesh a militant guerrilla movement spread in the early 1920 s. The Colonial government had closed large forest areas, preventing people from entering the forests to graze their cattle or to collect Fuel Wood. This enraged the hill people. They felt that their traditional rights were denied. When government began forcing them to contribute begar for road building, the hill people revolted. They attacked police and killed British Officials. Their leader Alluri Sitaram Raju was captured and exiled in 1924.

- (iii) **Swaraj in the Plantations :** Workers too had their own understanding of Gandhiji and the notion of Swaraj. For plantation workers in Assam, freedom meant the right to move freely in and out of the confined space in which they were enclosed, and it meant retaining a link with the village from which they had come. Under the Inland Emigration Act of 1859, plantation workers were not permitted to leave the tea gardens without permission, and in fact they were rarely given such permission. When they heard of the Non Cooperation

Movement, thousands of workers defied the authorities, left the plantations and headed home. They believed that Gandhi Raj was coming and every one would be given land in their own villages. They however never reached their destination. Stranded in the way by a railway and steamer strike they were caught by the police and brutally beaten up.

➤ TOWARDS CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

◆ Formation of Swaraj Party :

In February 1922 Gandhiji decided to withdraw the Non-cooperation Movement. He felt the movement was running violent in many places and Satyagrahis needed to be properly trained before they would be ready for mass struggles. C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru formed the **Swaraj Party** within the Congress to argue for a return to Council Politics. But younger leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose pressed for mass agitation and for full independence.

◆ Demand for Purna Swaraj :

When the Simon Commission arrived in India in 1928. It was greeted with the slogan “Go back Simon.” The main cause of protest was that the commission had not a single Indian member. They were all British. Lord Irwin announced in October 1929, a vague offer of dominion status for India in an unspecified future and a Round Table Conference to discuss a future constitution. This did not satisfy the Congress leaders.

In December 1929, under the Presidentship of Jawaharlal, the Lahore Congress formalised the demand of ‘Purna Swaraj’. It was declared that 26 January 1930, would be celebrated as the Independence Day, when people were to take a pledge to struggle for Complete Independence.

- (i) **The Salt March and the Civil Disobedience Movement :** The most stirring demand was to remove salt tax. The tax on salt and government’s monopoly over its production, Gandhiji declared, revealed most oppressive face of British Rule.

Lord Irwin was unwilling to negotiate. So Gandhiji started his salt march accompanied by 78 of his trusted volunteers. The march was over 240 miles from Gandhiji’s ashram in Sabarmati to the Gujarati coastal town of Dandi. The volunteers walked for 24 days. On 6 April he reached Dandi and ceremonially violated the law. This marked the beginning of Civil Disobedience Movement.

The difference between the Non-cooperation Movement and Civil Disobedience Movement. People were asked not only to refuse cooperation with the British, but also to break colonial laws. Gandhiji was arrested. Industrial workers in Sholapur attacked police stations, government buildings law courts and railways stations. Government responded with a policy of brutal repression. About 100,000 people were arrested.

On March 5th 1931, Gandhi-Irwin pact was signed. Gandhiji was willing to participate in a Round Table Conference in London and the government agreed to release the political prisoners. But the negotiation broke down and Gandhiji came back to India. Gandhiji relaunched the Civil Disobedience Movement. But by 1934 it lost its momentum.

(ii) **The Participants and their varying Expectations :**

- (1) The poor peasants were not interested in the lowering of the revenue demand. Congress was unwilling to support ‘no rent’ campaigns in most of the places.
- (2) During the First World War, Indian merchants and industrialists had made huge profits and become powerful. They wanted protection against imports of foreign goods. The Indian (a) Industrial and commercial formed in 1920 & the Federation of the Indian. (b) Was organized for their business interests. Chambers of Commerce and Industries in 1927. Led by several Indian industrialists, the colonial control Indian economy was attacked and they supported the Civil Disobedience Movement when it was first launched.
- (3) The Industrial Working Classes did not participate in the Civil disobedience Movement in large number except in the Nagpur region. There were strikes by railway workers in 1930 and dock workers in 1932.
- (4) Another feature of the movement was the large scale participation of women. They participated in protest marches, manufactured salt and picketed foreign cloth and liquor shops.

(iii) Civil Disobedience did not Attract All :

- (1) Not all social groups were moved by the abstract concept of Swaraj. In 1930 the untouchables called themselves Dalit or oppressed. Gandhiji called them Harijan and organised to secure them entry into temples and access to public wells, tanks roads and schools. He himself cleaned toilets to dignity the work of the sweepers and persuaded to upper classes to change their heart. Civil disobedience Movement was therefore limited particularly in the Maharastra and Nagpur region where their organisation was strong.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar organised the dalits in to the Depressed Classes Association in 1930. He clashed with Gandhiji at the 2nd Round Table Conference by demanding Separate electorates for dalits. When the British government conceded Ambedkar's demand, Gandhiji began a fast untill death. He told that this demand will slow down the process of the Swaraj. The dalit movement however connected to be apprehensive of the congress led national movement.

- (2) Muslim organisations were also not so much interested in Civil Disobedience Movement. After the fall of the Non Cooperation-Khilafat movement, a large number of Muslims felt alienated from the Congress. Because of Hindu religious nationalist groups like Hindu Mahasabha, the relations between Hindu and Muslims worsened.

➤ THE SENSE OF COLLECTIVE BELONGING

The sense of collective belonging came partly through the experience of united struggles. But there were also a variety of cultural processes through which nationalism captured people's imagination. History and fiction, folklore and songs, popular prints and symbols all played a part in the making of nationalism.

(a) Image of Bharat Mata :

The identity of India came to be visually associated with the image of Bharat Mata. The image was first created by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. In the 1870s he wrote 'Vande Mataram' as a hymn to the motherland. Later it was included in his novel Anandamath and widely sung during the Swadeshi movement in Bengal. Ravindranath Tagore also painted image of Bharat Mata.

(b) Revival of Indian Folklore :

Idea of nationalism also developed through a movement to revive Indian folklore. In late 19th century India, nationalists began recording folk tales sung by bards and they toured village to village together folk songs and legends Natesa Sastri published a massive four volume collection of Tamil folk tales, "The Folklore of Southern India". He believed the folklore was national literature.

(c) Icons & Symbols :

As the national movement developed, nationalist leaders became more and more aware of such icons and symbols in unifying people and inspiring in them a feeling of nationalism. During the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, a tricolour flag was designed. It had eight lotuses representing eight provinces of British India and a crescent moon, representing Hindus and Muslims. By 1921, Gandhiji had designed the Swaraj Flag. It was a tricolour with a spinning wheel in the centre.

(d) Reinterpretation of History :

By the end of 19th century many Indians began feeling that to instill a sense of pride in the nation, Indian history had to be thought about differently. Indians began looking in the past to discover India's great achievements.

➤ IMPORTANT TERMS

1. Anti-partition Movement begun in Bengal in 7, Aug., 1905 A.D.
2. The partition of Bengal was implemented in 16 Oct., 1905 A.D.
3. 'National Education Council' was founded in 15 Aug., 1906 A.D.
4. After the Partition of Bengal Tilak was sentenced with two years imprisonment in 1908 A.D.

5. Attempt was made to assassinate Governor of BengalDec. 1907 A.D.
 6. Muslim league was formed in 1906 A.D.
 7. Congress split into two wings as Moderates and Extremists..... 1907 A.D.
 8. V.D. Savarkar found revolutionary organization named 'Abhinove Bharat' in..... 1909 A.D.
 9. The Morley-Minto Reforms passed in 1909 A.D.
 10. Hindu Mahasabha was found in 1909 A.D.
 11. Partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911 A.D.
 12. The paper 'al-Hilal' started by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad 1912 A.D.
 13. Turkey went to war against the Balkans in 1912-1913 A.D.
 14. First World War began in 1914 A.D.
 15. First session of Hindu Mahasabha held in 1915 A.D.
 16. The Home Rule League were founded in 1915-1916 A.D.
 17. Indian revolutionaries settled in America and Canada found the Ghadar Party in 1913 A.D.
 18. Ghadar Party had decided an armed revolt in Punjab in 21 Feb., 1915 A.D.
 19. Agreement was made between two wings of the Congress and the Muslim league in..... 1916 A.D.
 20. Anne Besant was made prisoner for initiating Home Rule Movement..... 1917 A.D.
 21. Constitutional reforms were put forward in 1918 A.D.
 22. Gandhiji returned from South Africa in 1915 A.D.
 23. Gandhiji undertook Champaran Satyagrah in 1917 A.D.
 24. Gandhiji intervened a dispute of mill owners and workers in Allahabad in 1918 A.D.
 25. The crops of the peasants of Khera district failed in 1918 A.D.
 26. Distressed UP peasants organised by Baba Ramchandra in 1918-19 A.D.
 27. Gandhian hartal against Rowlatt Act; Jallianwala Bagh massacre in April 1919 A.D.
 28. Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movement launched January 1921 A.D.
 29. Chauri Chaura; Gandhi withdraws Non-Cooperation movement in February 1922 A.D.
 30. Alluri Sitarama Raju arrested ending a two-year armed tribal struggle in May 1924 A.D.
 31. Lahore Congress; Congress adopts the demand for 'Purna Swaraj' in December 1929 A.D.
 32. Ambedkar establishes Depressed Classes Association in 1930 A.D.
 33. Gandhiji begins Civil Disobedience Movement by breaking salt law at Dandi in March 1930 A.D.
 34. Gandhiji ends Civil Disobedience Movements in March 1931 A.D.
 35. Second Round Table Conference in December 1931 A.D.
 36. Civil Disobedience re-launched in 1932 A.D.
-

GLOSSARY

1. **Nationalism** : Patriotism ; a feeling of collective belonging to one's nation; sharing common feelings of identity.
2. **Nation-state** : A state having common territory and inhabited by people sharing common language, race, culture etc.
3. **Influenza epidemic** : Extensive spread of influenza-an acute virus disease usually with fever, cold and body aches.
4. **Forced recruitment** : In colonies people were often compelled to join the army and fight war on behalf of the colonial rulers.
5. **Satyagraha** : A method of agitation and protest, based on truth and non violence. This was first introduced by Gandhiji in Indian National movement. The method was passive resistance consisting of defiance of laws, non payment of taxes, boycott of government institutions etc.
6. **Rowlatt Act** : An Act passed by British Government in India in 1919. It authorised the government to arrest and imprison a person without trial. The Act was against civil rights.
7. **Civil Disobedience** : Refusal to comply with certain laws as a method of peaceful protest.
8. **Hartal - (Strikes)** : A method of demonstrating protest.
9. **Martial law** : Law of military government. When Martial laws were imposed, ordinary laws are suspended.
10. **Jallianwalla Bagh** : A park in Amritsar in Punjab. It is well known in the history of India because the place is associated with massacre of Indians by the British.
11. **Khalifa** : The spiritual and temporal head of all muslim world. Khalifa was also the ruler of Turkey till 1922.
12. **Boycott** : A method of resistance used by Indian nationalists under which they refused cooperation with the British in every sphere. Stopping to use foreign goods by not attending British institutions.
13. **Picket** : A method of protest by which the people block the entrance of a shop, factory or office, one more person stand outside a place of work or shop to dissuade other from entering.
14. **Khadi** : Handspun handloom material.
15. **Begar** : Forced labour compelling people to work free without any remuneration.
16. **Plantation** : Estates or extensive area under cultivation of cash crops such as tea, coffee, cotton, tobacco etc.
17. **Gudem rebels** : The people who participated in the militant guerrilla movement in the Gudem hills of Andhra Pradesh. It was a resistance movement against the colonial government who prevented the people from entering the forest for grazing their cattle or collect firewood or fruits from the region.