



Nationalism In India

Chapter Outline

- ✧ 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 (1914-1918), 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. Resulted in food shortage.
 - (6) According to the census of 1921, 12 to 13 million people perished due to famine and epidemic.
- (i) **The Idea of Satyagraha :**



Fig.-Indian workers in South Africa march through Volksrust, 6 November 1913.

Mahatma Gandhi was leading the workers from Newcastle to Transvaal. When the marchers were stopped and Gandhiji arrested, thousands of more workers joined the Satyagraha against racist laws that denied rights to non-whites.



- (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. A satyagrahi could win the battle though non-violence.
 - (2) In 1917 Gandhiji travelled to Champaran (Bihar) to inspire the peasants to struggle against the oppressive plantation system.
 - (3) In 1918 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 and general Dyer took command.

Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre :

On April 13, 1919 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 :

- (i) Two brothers, **Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali**, Muslim leaders founded a Khilafat common in **March 1919**, to defend the Khilafat's rights.
- (ii) The **anti Rowlatt satyagraha** was limited to cities and towns. Gandhiji wanted to launch a more broad-based movement. This could only be done by bringing Hindus and Muslims together. He took up the khilafat issue.
- (iii) At the **Calcutta session** of the Congress in **September 1920**, he convinced other leaders of the need to start a non-cooperation movement in support of Khilafat as well as for swaraj.

Why Non-Cooperation :

In his famous book ***Hind Swaraj (1909)*** Mahatma Gandhi declared that British rule was established in India with the cooperation of Indians, and had survived only because of this cooperation. If Indians refused to cooperate, British rule in India would collapse within a year, and swaraj would come.

Gandhi proposed to begin the movement by asking the people to **surrender titles** and **boycott civil services**, army, police courts and legislative councils, schools, and foreign goods. However many congress members were against the boycott of council elections and feared the movement may cause violence. In the congress session at Nagpur in December **1920**, a compromise was worked out and the Non-Cooperation programme was adopted.



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.

Movement in the cities gradually slowed down :

- (i) **Khadi cloth** was often **more expensive** than mass-produced mill cloth and poor people could not afford to buy it.

(ii) Boycott of British institutions posed a problem. In the **absence of alternative Indian institutions**, students and teachers began trickling back to government schools and lawyers joined back work in government courts.

- (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 **Awadh**, peasants were led by **Baba Ramchandra**. The movement here was against talukadars and landlords who demanded from peasants exorbitantly high rents. The peasant movement **demanding reduction of revenue**, abolition of **begar**, and **social boycott** of oppressive landlords. In June 1920, Jawaharlal Nehru began going around the villages in Awadh, talking to the villagers, and trying to understand their grievances. By October, the Oudh Kisan Sabha was set up headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, Baba Ramchandra and a few others. The peasant movement, however, developed in forms that the Congress leadership was unhappy with. In many places local leaders told peasants that Gandhiji had declared that no taxes were to be paid and land was to be redistributed among the poor. The name of the Mahatma was being invoked to sanction all action and aspirations.

- (5) In the Gudem 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 under the leadership **Alluri Sitaram Raju**. 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 :



Fig. – The Dandi march. During the salt march Mahatma Gandhi was accompanied by 78 volunteers. On the way they were joined by thousands.

Mahatma Gandhi, on **31 January 1930**, sent a letter to the Viceroy Lord Irwin, stating eleven demands. Some of these were of general interest, some were specific demands of different classes, from industrialists to peasants. The most stirring of all was the demand to abolish the salt tax. He made the “Salt tax” his target and called it the most repressive Act of the British government. Mahatma Gandhi’s letter was, in a way, an ultimatum but Irwin was unwilling to negotiate. So, Gandhi started his famous “**Salt March**” on **March 12, 1930** from **Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi**, a small coastal village in Gujarat. He started with **78** followers and thousands joined him on his **240 miles** route. On **6 April** he reached Dandi, and ceremonially **violated the law**, manufacturing salt by boiling sea water.



Salt March marked the beginning of the **Civil Disobedience Movement**. People were now asked not only to refuse cooperation, but also to break colonial laws. Gandhiji's Salt March led to violation of salt law all over the country. It also led to boycott of foreign goods and picketing of liquor shops. Students and women played a significant role in this movement. Peasants refused to pay taxes, forest people broke forest laws and grazed their cattle, collected wood in prohibited forest areas. There was an uprising against the government every where in India.

British Reaction :

Worried by the developments, the colonial government began **arresting** the Congress leaders one by one. When Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a devout disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, was arrested in April **1930**, angry crowds demonstrated in the streets of Peshawar facing armored cars and police firing. Many were killed. A month later, when Mahatma Gandhi himself was arrested, industrial workers in Sholapur attacked police posts, municipal buildings, law courts and railway stations—all structures that symbolised British rule. A frightened government responded with a policy of brutal repression. Peaceful satyagrahis were attacked, women and children were beaten, and about **100,000** people were arrested.

Mahatma Gandhi once again decided to call off the movement and entered into a pact with Irwin on **5 March 1931**. By this **Gandhi–Irwin Pact**, Gandhiji consented to participate in a Round Table Conference in London and the government agreed to release the political prisoners.

(ii) How participants saw the movement :

In the countryside :

Rich peasant communities—like the Patidars of Gujarat and the Jats of Uttar Pradesh—were active participants. These rich peasants became enthusiastic supporters of the Civil Disobedience Movement. For them the fight for swaraj was a **struggle against high revenues**. But they were deeply disappointed when the movement was called off in 1931 without the revenue rates being revised. So when the movement was restarted in 1932, many of them refused to participate.

The poor :

The poorer peasantry were not just interested in the lowering of the revenue demand. They wanted the **unpaid rent to the landlord to be remitted**. Apprehensive of raising issues that might upset the rich peasants and landlords, the congress was unwilling to support 'no rent' campaigns in most places. So the relationship between the poor peasants and the Congress remained uncertain.

The Business Classes:

Indian industrialists and merchants had made huge profits during the First World War. They wanted **protection against imports of foreign goods**, and a rupee-sterling foreign exchange ratio that would discourage imports. They formed the Indian Industrial and Commercial Congress in 1920 and the Federation of the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries in 1927. The industrialists attacked colonial control over the Indian economy and supported the



Civil Disobedience Movement when it was first launched. Most businessmen came to see swaraj as a time when colonial restrictions on business would no longer exist and trade and industry would flourish without constraints. But after the failure of the Round Table Conference, they were apprehensive of the spread of militant activities, and worried about prolonged disruption of business, as well as of the growing influence of socialism amongst the younger members of the Congress.

The Industrial Working Classes :

The industrial working classes **did not participate** in the Civil Disobedience Movement in large numbers, some workers did participate, selectively adopting some of the ideas of the Gandhian programme, like boycott of foreign goods, as part of their own movements against low wages and poor working conditions. But the Congress was reluctant to include workers' demands as part of its programme of struggle. It felt that this would alienate industrialists and divide the anti-imperial forces.



Meeting of Congress leader at Allahabad, 1931

(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 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 until death. He told that this demand will slow down the process of the Swaraj. Dr. Ambedkar finally signed a pact with Gandhiji in **September 1932**, called the **Poona Pact**. It gave reserved seats in provincial and Central Legislative Councils to the Depressed Classes. They were to be voted in by the general electorate. 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.



Fig. – Bharat Mata, Abanindranath Tagore, 1905. Notice that the mother figure here is shown as dispensing learning, food and clothing. The mala in one hand emphasises her ascetic quality. Abanindranath Tagore, like Ravi Varma before him, tried to develop a style of painting that could be seen as truly Indian.

(a) Image of Bharat Mata :

The identity of India came to 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. Moved by the Swadeshi movement, **Abanindranath Tagore painted** his famous image of Bharat Mata. In this painting **Bharat Mata** is portrayed as a ascetic figure: she is calm, composed, divine and spiritual. Devotion to this mother figure came to be seen as **evidence of one's nationalism**.

(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 in Madras 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.





Who's Who?

Name	Description
Mahatma Gandhi	• Father of the nation, lawyer & anti-colonial nationalist • Spreaded ideas of Satyagraha & non-violence which became the spirit of nation • Led India to independence
Motilal Nehru	• Indian lawyer, independence activist & moderate Congress member • 1928, wrote Nehru report/India's First Constitution by Indian's • Formed Swaraj Party with C. R. Das
Jawaharlal Nehru	• Indian independence activist, first Prime Minister of India • Helped in writing Indian Constitution • Served Independent India for 15 years as its Prime Minister
Bal Gangadhar Tilak/ Lokmanya Tilak	• Indian nationalist, teacher, & independence activist
Lala Lajpat Rai	• Veteran leader of Indian Nationalist Movement, Indian independence movement & Hindu reform movements
Bhagat Singh	• Indian revolutionaries who founded HSRA
Sardar Vallabhbhai	• United India as Nation • Independence activist & member of Congress • First deputy prime minister of india
Alluri Sitaram Raju	• Local leader of Andhra Pradesh in undivided India • Claimed variety of special powers (astrological predictions, healing & survived bullet shots) • Executed in 1924
Abdul Ghaffar Khan/i Frontier Gandhi	• Disciple of Gandhi, independence activist • Went to Pakistan after Partition
Dr. B.R Ambedkar	• Lawyer, independence activist & Father of Indian Constitution • Fought for rights of Dalit Community • Established Depressed Class Association
Muhammad Ali Jinnah	• Member of Muslim League • Demanded separate Pakistan • First Prime Minister of independent Pakistan



Baba Ramchandra	• Led Awadh Peasant Struggle in 1920-21
Ali Brothers	• Muhammad Ali & Shaukat Ali • Khilafat movement activists
M.R. Jaykar	• Hindu Mahasabha Activist
Rabindranath Tagore	• Bengali poet, writer, composer, philosopher & painter • Awarded Noble Prize in Literature
Abanindranath Tagore	• Nephew of Rabindranath Tagore • Created an image of Bharat Mata
Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay	• Composed Vande Mataram (India's national song), originally in Sanskrit • Created an image of Bharat Mata • He wrote Anandmath
General Dyer	• English officer behind - Jallianwala Bagh Massacre
Sir John Simon	• British politician • Headed Simon Commission
Lord Irwin	• Indian Viceroy from April 1926 till 1931
Maulana Azad	• Independence activist • First education minister of India post-independence



Chronology

Date	Event
1859	Inland Emigration Act was passed
1909	Hind Swaraj was written by Gandhiji
1915	Mahatma Gandhi returned to India
1917	Champaran Satyagraha
1917	Kheda Satyagraha
1918	Ahmedabad Satyagraha
1919	• Rowlatt Act was passed • Khilafat Committee was formed in Bombay • Hartal against Rowlatt Act • Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre • General Dyer's crawling orders were passed • Government of India Act was passed & introduced provincial elections
1920	• Non-Cooperation movement • Oudh Kisan Sabha was organised • Indian Industrial & Commercial Congress was formed
1921	• British police in United Provinces fired at peasants near Rae Bareilly



1922	• Chauri Chaura Incident • Non-Cooperation Movement was called off
1927	• FICCI was formed
1928	• Bardoli Satyagraha • Simon Commission arrived in India • HSRA was formed • All India Parties Conference was organized
1929	• Lord Irwin's offer of Dominion Status • Demand of 'Purna Swaraj' or full independence for India • First Round Table Conference
1930	• Gandhiji's 11 demands to Irwin; Dandi March • Depressed Class Association was formed. • Civil Disobedience Movement was launched
1931	• Civil Disobedience movement was called off • Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed • Second Round Table Conference in London
1932	• Poona Pact between Ambedkar & Gandhi
1942	• Quit India Resolution passed • Gandhiji gave Do or Die speech