

14. Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movements

During 1919-22, British were opposed with two mass movements-

1. Non- Cooperation Movement
2. Khilafat Movement

1. Non-Cooperation Movement:

Causes:

a. 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 passed in 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.

b. Home Rule Movement: The Home Rule Movement started by Annie Besant and BalGangadhar Tilak set the stage for the non-cooperation movement.

c. 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.

d. Economic hardships due to World War I:

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.

e. The Rowlatt Act and the JallianwalaBagh Massacre:

The repressive Rowlatt Act and the brutal massacre at JallianwalaBagh, 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 firmer stance against the government.

2. The Khilafat Movement:

- During the First World War, Turkey, which was a German ally, had fought against the British. After Turkey's defeat, the Ottoman caliphate was proposed to be dissolved. Muslims in India to persuade the British government not to abolish the caliphate launched the Khilafat movement. The leaders of this movement accepted the non-cooperation movement of Gandhiji and led a joint protest against the British.
- In 1919, a khilafat committee was formed under the leadership of Ali brothers (Shaukat and Muhammad), Maulana, Ajmal khan. Gandhi headed all India khilafat committee. The All-India Khilafat Conference held at Delhi in November 1919, decided to withdraw all cooperation from the Government if their demands were not met.
- The Muslim League, now under the leadership of nationalists, gave full support to the National Congress and its agitation on political issues.
- In June 1920, an all-party conference met at Allahabad and approved a program of boycott of schools, colleges, and law courts.
- The Khilafat Committee launched a non-cooperation movement on 31 August 1920.
- The Congress met in special session in September 1920 at Calcutta. Only a few weeks earlier it had suffered a grievous loss— Lokamanya Tilak had passed away on 1 August at the age of 64.
- The Congress supported Gandhi's plan for non-cooperation with the Government till the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs were removed and Swaraj established.
- "The British people will have to beware," declared Gandhiji at Nagpur, that if they do not want to do justice, it will be the bounden duty of every Indian to destroy the Empire.

Why Gandhiji and other congress leader supported Khilafat Movement:

- The Congress leaders, including Lokamanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi, viewed the Khilafat agitation as a golden opportunity for cementing Hindu-Muslim unity and bringing the Muslim masses into the national movement.
- The Congress leaders realized that different sections of the people—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, capitalists and workers, peasants and artisans, women and youth, and tribes and peoples of different regions—would come into the national movement through the experience of fighting for their own different demands and seeing that the alien regime stood in opposition to them
- The congress was aware that masses were eager to give expression to their discontent.
- Gandhiji had belief that issue raised by Khilafat leader has element of truth.

Features of Non-cooperation Movement:

- Essentially a peaceful and non-violent protest against the British government in India.
- Treaty of Sevres with Turkey completely dismembered Turkey.
- People were asked to resign from their government jobs, withdraw children from government schools, boycott foreign goods, boycott election, not to serve in British army.
- The INC also demanded Swarajya or self-government.
- 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.
- In Bengal, a movement was started against Union board taxes
- No tax campaign was started in Andhra Pradesh
- The movement aroused popular resentment among the Moplah against their Hindu landlords
- Akali movement was also started as a part of this movement

- labour in tea plantations of Assam also went on strike during this movement
- Gandhiji had assured that Swaraj would be achieved in a year if this movement was continued to completion.
- The *Tilak Swarajya Fund* was started to finance the non-cooperation movement and within six months, over crore of rupees were subscribed.

1920 Nagpur session of congress:

1. NCM movement endorsed.
2. Attainment of swaraj through peaceful and legitimate means, thus committing for extra constitutional mass struggle.
3. Congress working committee of 15 members were set up to lead the congress. Provincial on linguistic basis, ward committees were also formed.
4. Congress membership was thrown open to all men and women of the age of 21 or more on payment of 4 annas as annual subscription. However, in 1921, the age limit for membership was reduced to 18.

People's response:

Movement was led by middle class, business class supported as nationalist emphasized on swadeshi, massive participation of peasants, students and women played a dominant role. Communal unity was at its zenith.

Last phase:

Gandhi was under increased pressure to launch CDM. Gandhi threatened to launch CDM on Feb 1922, if political prisoners were not released and press controls were removed. It was abruptly brought to end with Chauri-Chaura incident.

Chauri-Chaura incident (Feb 5):

- In Chauri-Chaura, Uttar Pradesh, police had allegedly beaten up the group of volunteers who were protesting against liquor sale and high food prices. 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*.
- 1922 Gandhi was arrested and sentenced in jail for 6 years.

▪ **Analysis of the NCM movement:**

- The movement was not successful in achieving Swaraj.
- It was a mass movement where lakhs of Indians participated in the open protest against the government through peaceful means, it reached nooks and corner of the country.
- The Indian merchants and mill owners enjoyed good profits during this period as a result of the boycott of British goods. Khadi was promoted.
- This movement also established Gandhiji as a leader of the masses.
- It drew many Muslims towards the movement
- Although most Congress leaders remained firmly behind Gandhi, the determined broke away. The Ali brothers would soon become fierce critics.
- Regional trend of the movement
- Except Karnatka in all southern linguistic state it was highly successful.
- Forest Satyagraha was initiated under this.
- In assam tea gardens were major centre of activity.
- In Bengal non-payment of chowkidari tax was also started.

▪ **Swarajist and no-changers:**

- After the call off non-cooperation movement there was a debate over what to do during the transition period.
- One section led by C.R.Das, Motilal Nehru and Ajmal Khan wanted to end the boycott of legislative councils. They demanded for entry into councils. These groups are to be called as **Swarajists**.
- Other section led by the Rajagopalachari, Vallabhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and M.A. Ansari came to be known as '**No-changers**'.

Swarajists	No-Changers
Entering the councils would not negate the non-cooperation programme	Parliamentary work would lead to neglect of constructive work
It would enthuse masses and keep up their morale at a time of Political vacuum.	Council entry would lead to political corruption and loss of revolutionary zeal.
Councils can be used as an arena of political struggle.	Constructive work would prepare for the next phase of civil disobedience.

- Swarajists were further divided into responsivits and non responsivits. Lala Lajpat Raj, Madan Mohan Malviya, kelkar advocated for cooperation with government and holding office, and also protect the Hindu interest.
- Finally, in 1930 they walked out as a result of Lahore congress session resolution and beginning of CDM.

Achievements of swarajist:

Powerful speech, Vithalbhai Patel speaker of central legislative assembly, defeat of public safety bill 1928 (Government could deport undesirable and subversive foreigners, etc.

Drawbacks of swarajists:

Coalition partners break down, failed to resist praks and privileges, failed to support peasant cause.

Constructive work by No changers:

Ashrams sprang up empowering tribals and low castes, HinduMuslim unity, removing untouchability, boycott of foreign cloth and liquor, flood relief. Promotion of charka and Khadi, national schools and colleges were set up.