

Gandhian Phase

Background:

- Champaran is a district in the state of Bihar where tens of thousands of landless serfs, indentured laborers, and poor farmers were forced to grow indigo and other cash crops instead of food crops.
- The European planters had forced the peasants to grow indigo on 3/20 of the total land area (called tinkathia system).
- When German synthetic dyes replaced indigo at the end of the nineteenth century, European planters demanded high rents and illegal dues from the peasants in order to maximize their profits before the peasants could switch to other crops.
- Furthermore, the peasants were forced to sell their produce at European-determined prices.
- These items were purchased from farmers at a very low cost.
- They were oppressed by the landlords' brutal militias and were given negligible compensation, leaving them in extreme poverty.
- Even though they were in the grip of a devastating famine, the British government imposed a heavy tax on them and insisted on raising the rate.
- Without food and money, the situation became increasingly unbearable, and peasants in Champaran revolted against the government in indigo plant cultivation in 1914 (at Pipra) and 1916 (Turkaulia).

Features:

- Gandhi was asked by Rajkumar Shukla, a local, to investigate the problems of farmers in the context of indigo planters in Champaran, Bihar.
- When Gandhi arrived in Champaran, accompanied by Rajendra Prasad, Mazharul- Haq, Mahadev Desai, Narhari Parekh, and J.B. Kripalani, the authorities ordered him to leave immediately.
- Gandhi defied the order and chose to face the consequences. This method of passive resistance or civil disobedience in the face of an unjust order was novel at the time.

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- Finally, the authorities relented and allowed Gandhi to conduct an investigation.
- Gandhi was able to persuade the authorities to abolish the tinkathia system and compensate the peasants for the illegal dues extracted from them.
- As a compromise with the planters, he agreed to compensate them for only 25% of the money taken.
- Within a decade, the planters had abandoned the area.
- Gandhi had won India's first battle of civil disobedience.
- Brajkishore Prasad, Anugrah Narayan Sinha, Ramnavmi Prasad, and Shambhusharan Varma were also prominent leaders associated with the Champaran Satyagraha.

Ahmedabad Mill Strike:

Background:

- In the dispute between Ahmedabad Mill owners and workers, the mill owners desired to take the bonus.
- Workers demanded a 50% wage increase in order to cope with wartime inflation (which doubled the prices of food grains, cloth, and other necessities) brought on by Britain's involvement in World War I.
- The mill owners were only willing to offer a 20% wage increase. The employees went on strike.
- The mill owners' relations with the workers deteriorated, with the striking workers being arbitrarily dismissed and the mill owners deciding to bring in weavers from Bombay.
- The mill workers turned to Anusuya Sarabhai for assistance in their fight for justice.
- In March 1918, Gandhi intervened in a dispute between Ahmedabad cotton mill owners and workers over the cessation of the plague bonus.

Features:

- Anusuya Sarabhai, a social worker and the sister of Ambalal Sarabhai, one of the mill owners and president of the Ahmedabad Mill Owners

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Association (founded in 1891 to develop the textile industry in Ahmedabad), was asked for assistance in fighting for justice.

- Anusuya Behn approached Gandhi, whom the mill owners and workers respected, and asked him to intervene and help resolve the impasse between the workers and the employers.
- Despite the fact that Gandhi was Ambalal's friend, he took up the workers' cause.
- Gandhi called on workers to go on strike and demand a 35% rise in wages rather than a 50% increase.
- While on strike, Gandhi advised the workers to remain nonviolent.
- When negotiations with mill owners failed, he embarked on his first fast unto death in order to strengthen the workers' resolve.
- However, the fast had the effect of putting pressure on the mill owners, who eventually agreed to refer the matter to a tribunal.
- The strike was called off. In the end, the tribunal awarded the workers a 35% wage increase.

Kheda Satyagraha, 1918:

- The farmers of Kheda district in Gujarat were in distress because of the failure of crops.
- The government refused to remit land revenue and insisted on its full collection.
- As part of the experiment, Mahatma Gandhi advised the peasants to withhold payment of revenue till their demand for its remission was met.
- The struggle was withdrawn when it was learnt that the government had issued instructions that revenue should be recovered only from those peasants who could afford to pay.
- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel became the follower of Gandhiji during the Kheda movement.
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Rowlatt Satyagraha:

Introduction:

- The British Legislative Council passed the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, widely known as the ‘Rowlatt Act,’ in February 1919.
- This Act gave the government the power to imprison any person accused of conspiring to overthrow the British empire, for up to two years without trial and to execute them without a jury.
- The act was prepared on the recommendation of the Rowlatt Commission (1918) replacing the old Defense of India Act (1915), which was enacted during the First World War, with a permanent statute that granted the British government additional control over Indians.
- Mahatma Gandhi called the Rowlatt Act a “Black Act” or “Black Bill,” which sparked the horrific Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in April 1919, as a reaction to which the Non-Cooperation Movement was launched by INC.
- British Government on March 1922, abolished the Rowlatt Act, the Press Act, and twenty-two other laws after adopting the recommendations of the Repressive Laws Committee.

Rowlatt Commission:

- The commission was appointed in 1918 by the British Government.
- The commission was headed by Sir Sydney Rowlatt other members of the commission were J.D.V Hodge, Basil Scott, Verney Lovett, PC Mitter and CV KumaraswamiSastri.
- The purpose of the commission was to investigate the revolutionary movement in India and also to prepare a detention policy.

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- The commission recommended detaining or imprisoning the revolutionaries without any trials.

Rowlatt Act 1919 Provisions:

- Rowlatt Act was passed in February 1919.
- The act empowered the police to search the house, and detain or arrest any suspected individual as well as political activists without any warrant or trial.
- A special tribunal was established solely for the trial of the arrested individuals.
- The three high court judges will preside over the tribunal.
- There was no provision for any legal aid with the arrested individual and he will be trialled in secrecy.
- Any judgement held by the judges will be final with no court of appeal.
- Tribunals can accept all sorts of evidence even which are invalid under Indian Evidence Act.
- The British Government was also empowered to exercise strict control over the press and the ongoing revolutionary activities.

Rowlatt Satyagraha:

- Rowlatt Satyagraha was the first complete all-India uprising against British Rule (as the Revolt of 1857 failed to grab all Indian sentiment).
- Rowlatt was opposed by the nationalist leaders as well as the commons.
- There were anger and resentment against the British government across India regarding this law.
- The resignation was handed over by the Indian elected representatives of the Legislature as Mazhar Ul Haq along with Madan Mohan Malviya and Md Ali Jinnah resigned from the council after voting against the bill.
- Mahatma Gandhi initiated Rowlatt Satyagraha against this demonian act and in February 1919, he founded Satyagraha Sabha.
- He called for a mass protest at the Pan India level and asked the peasants and artisans for their political support.
- In several parts of the country, the anti-colonial demonstration was started even before the Satyagraha was launched.

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- Punjab during a similar demonstration witnessed the inhuman massacre of Jallianwala Bagh which shook the entire nation resulting in a movement on a bigger scale was launched in 1920 the Non-Cooperation Movement which merged with Khilafat Movement giving tremendous momentum to the Indian freedom struggle.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre:

- On the Ground of Rowlatt Act provisions two nationalist leaders Dr Satyapal and Saifuddin Kitchlew were arrested on 9th April 1919 when they were addressing a meeting, it was an alarming situation in Punjab as there were riots and protest opposing the Rowlatt act.
- Martial Law was imposed in Punjab, as per which it will be unlawful if more than 4 people assemble at a place.
- On 13th April 1919 on the day of Baisakhi, a crowd of non-violent protesters gathered in a public garden at Amritsar.
- Michael O' Dwyer with his troops blocked the only entrance of the garden and fired on the unarmed crowd without warning which included children's as well, killing thousands of innocent people and destroying the faith of Indians in the British system of Justice.
- To inquire about this heinous massacre British Government setup a commission named Hunter Commission.

Hunter Commission:

- British Government to investigate the wrongdoings of the Jallianwala Bagh incident appointed a commission named Hunter commission on 14th October 1919.
- It was a 7 membered commission under the chairmanship of Lord William Hunter.
- The commission submitted its final report on March 1920, in which it condemned the act of General Dwyer.
- However, it did not impose any penalty or took any disciplinary action against General Dwyer.

Khilafat & Non-Cooperation Movement:**Introduction:**

- **Mass Movements:** Two mass movements were organized in 1919-1922 to oppose the British rule in India are the Khilafat movement and the Non-Cooperation movement.
- The movements, despite having different issues, adopted a unified plan of action of non-violence and non-cooperation.
- This time period saw the unification of Congress and the Muslim League. Many political demonstrations took place with the joint effort of both these parties.
- **Causes of the Movements:** The following factors served as the background to the two movements:
- **Government Hostilities:** The Rowlatt Act, the imposition of martial law in Punjab and the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre exposed the brutal and uncivilised face of the foreign rule.
- The Hunter Commission on the Punjab atrocities proved to be eyewash.
- The House of Lords (of the British Parliament) endorsed General Dyer's action.
- **Discontented Indians:** The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms with their ill-conceived scheme of Dyarchy failed to satisfy the rising demand of the Indians for self-government.
- **Economic Hardships:** The economic situation of the country in the post-War years had become alarming with a rise in prices of commodities, decrease in production of Indian industries, increase in burden of taxes and rents etc.
- Almost all sections of society suffered economic hardship due to the war and this strengthened the anti-British attitude.

Khilafat (Caliphate) Issue:

- **Turkey's Alliance against British:** The Muslims all over the world, including India, regarded the sultan of Turkey as their spiritual leader, Khalifa (Caliph).
- During the First World War, Turkey had allied with Germany and Austria against the British.
- **Discontented Indian Muslims:** The Indian Muslims supported the government during the First World War with an understanding that the sacred places of Ottoman Empire would be in the hands of Khalifa.
- However, after the War, the Ottoman Empire was divided, Turkey was dismembered and the Khalifa was removed from power.
- This angered the Muslims who took it as an insult to the Khalifa. The Ali brothers, Shoukat Ali and Mohammad Ali started the Khilafat Movement against the British government.
- This movement took place between 1919 and 1924.
- **Khilafat Committee:** In early 1919, the All India Khilafat Committee was formed under the leadership of the Ali brothers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Ajmal Khan and Hasrat Mohani, to force the British Government to change its attitude to Turkey.
- Thus, the grounds for a country-wide agitation was prepared.
- An All India Khilafat Conference was held in Delhi in November 1919 and the call was made to boycott the British goods.
- **Demands of Indian Muslims:** In India, the Muslims demanded from the British that:
 - The Khalifa's control over Muslim sacred places should be retained.
 - The Khalifa should be left with sufficient territories after territorial arrangements.
- **Congress' Initial Stand:** The support of the Congress was essential for the Khilafat movement to succeed.

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- Although Mahatma Gandhi was in favour of launching Satyagraha and non-cooperation against the Government on the Khilafat issue, the Congress was not united on this form of political action.
- The Congress, later, felt inclined to provide its support as it was a golden opportunity to unite the Hindus and Muslims and to bring Muslim participation in such mass movements.
- The Muslim League also decided to give full support to the Congress and its agitation on political questions.

Role of Mahatma Gandhi:

- **Beginning of the Gandhian Movements:** The Non-Cooperation Movement was the beginning of the Gandhian Movement against the British.
- Mahatma Gandhi returned to India in 1915 and started organising peasants and labourers protests, such as those in Kheda, Champaran and Ahmedabad, against the atrocities that were being inflicted upon them.
- **Beginning of Non-Cooperation:** By the repressive measures of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the denial of justice, Gandhi observed that “the only effective means to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of the wrongs in future is the establishment of Swaraj”.
- Consequently, the non-co-operation campaign was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi on 1st August, 1919.
- The Movement was initiated in support of the Khilafat Movement.

During the Movement:

- **Spread of Non-violence Message:** Millions of the countrymen stopped their work on that day as a mark of their support to Gandhi and as antipathy towards the Government.
- Gandhi along with Ali-brothers made extensive tours to preach the message of national unity and non-cooperation with the government.

- **Boycott of British Titles and Goods:** The programme of non-cooperation consisted of a surrender of British titles and honours, boycott of British Courts, Legislatures and educational institutions as well as the boycott of foreign-made goods.
- People lit public bonfires of foreign cloth. The imports of foreign cloth fell drastically between 1920 and 1922.
- **Promotion of Swadeshi:** The boycott led to the promotion of Swadeshi goods especially hand-spun and hand-woven Khadi cloth, the removal of untouchability, the promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity and abstention of alcoholic beverage.

People's Response to the Movement:

- **Students:** Students in thousands left schools and colleges established by the Government and joined the movement in large numbers.
- **Middle Class People:** They initially led the movement but later showed a lot of reservations about Gandhi's programme.
- **Businessmen:** The economic boycott received support from the Indian business group because they had benefited from the nationalists' emphasis on the use of swadeshi.
- **Peasants:** There was a massive participation by the peasants. However, it further led to the confrontation between the 'lower and upper castes'.
- The movement gave an opportunity to the toiling masses to express their real feelings against the British as well as their Indian masters and oppressors.
- **Women:** Women participated in large numbers, gave up purdah and offered their ornaments for the Tilak Fund.
- They took active part in picketing before the shops selling foreign cloth and liquor.
- The Tilak Swaraj Fund was announced by Mahatma Gandhi after one year of the beginning of the Non-Cooperation movement.

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- The Fund was a homage to Bal Gangadhar Tilak on his first death anniversary, aimed at collecting Rs 1 crore to aid India's freedom struggle and resistance to the British rule.
- **Government's Response:** The police resorted to firing which took the lives of a number of people.
- Congress and Khilafat Volunteer Organizations were declared unlawful and illegal.
- Public meetings were banned and most of the leaders barring Gandhi were arrested.

Important Personalities Involved:

- Eminent persons like C Rajgopalachari, Vallabhbhai Patel, Gopabandhu Das, Ajmal Khan, Subhash Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru joined the movement.
- Motilal Nehru and Chitranjan Das also joined the movement by giving up their legal profession.
- **Withdrawal of Non-Cooperation Movement:** In February 1922, at Chauri Chaura, Uttar Pradesh, twenty two policemen were brutally killed by the violent mob after the conflict between the mob and the policemen of the Thana.
- The news shocked Gandhi too much. Not happy with the increasingly violent trend of the movement, he immediately announced the withdrawal of the movement.
- Most of the nationalist leaders including C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Subhash Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru, however, expressed their disagreement at Gandhi's decision to withdraw the movement.
- In March 1922, Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to six years in jail.

Causes of Failure of the Movement:

- **No Negotiations by Government:** The movement began showing signs of fatigue as it was not possible to sustain any movement at a high pitch for very long.
- The Government seemed to be in no mood for negotiations.
- **Loss of Relevance of Khilafat Issue:** The central theme of the agitation, the Khilafat question, dissipated soon.
- In November 1922, the people of Turkey rose under Mustafa Kamal Pasha and deprived the Sultan of political power. Turkey was made a secular state.
- A European style of legal system was established in Turkey and extensive rights were granted to women.
- Education was nationalised and modern agriculture and industries developed.
- In 1924, the Khilafat was abolished.
- **Lack of Active Response:** In places like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, which were centres of elite politicians, the response to Gandhi's call was very limited.
- The response to the call for resignation from the government service, surrendering of titles, etc., was not taken seriously.
- **No Abstinence from Violence:** People had not learnt or fully understood the method of non-violence.
- The Chauri-Chaura incident marred the spirit of the movement leading to the withdrawal of Non-Cooperation movement.

Impact of Non-Cooperation Movement:

- **Maximum Extent of the Movement:** With the Non-Cooperation Movement, nationalist sentiments reached every nook and corner of the country and politicised every strata of population: the artisans, peasants, students, urban poor, women, traders etc.

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- **Establishment of Swaraj and Swadeshi Institutions:** National institutions like Gujarat Vidyapith, Kashi Vidyapith, Bihar Vidyapitha, the Bengal National University, Jamia Milia Islamia and the National Muslim University were established.
- It gave birth to the strongest idea of having Swaraj, the love for the use of Khadi and becoming a Swadeshi.
- **Instilling Unity among Indians:** The country had been united by specific anti feelings, grievances against the British projecting Gandhi as the only unchallenged leader of the century.
- The Khilafat issue was not directly linked to Indian politics but it provided the immediate declaration to the movement and added advantage of cementing Hindu-Muslim unity against the British.
- **Impacts on the Economic Front:** Foreign goods were boycotted and the import of foreign cloth halved between 1921 and 1922.
- In many places merchants and traders refused to trade in foreign goods or finance foreign trade.

Some Important Events:

- The Treaty of Sevres with Turkey was signed in May 1920 which completely dismembered Turkey.
- In June 1920, an all-party conference at Allahabad approved a programme of boycott of schools, colleges and law courts, and asked Mahatma Gandhi to lead it.
- On August 31, 1920, the Khilafat Committee started a campaign of non-cooperation and the movement was formally launched.
- In September 1920, at a special session in Calcutta, the Congress approved a non-cooperation programme till the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs were removed and swaraj was established.
- In December 1920, at the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress; the programme of non-cooperation was endorsed.

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- **Some important organisational changes were made:** a Congress Working Committee (CWC) of 15 members was set up to lead the Congress from now onwards.

