

August Offer 1940

The then-Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow, proposed the August Offer to India in 1940 at Simla to gather the support of Indians in World War II. The offer was made in response to the criticism that the British government in India faced after World War I. The criticism was against the forced involvement of Indians in the war by the Britishers.

Lord Linlithgow made the August Offer and proposed the involvement of more Indians in the Viceroy's Executive Council. However, the offer was rejected by both the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League.

Offer Name	August Offer
Made By	Viceroy Linlithgow
Year	1940
Location	Simla
Aim	To gather India's support in World War II
Offer Proposal	To include more Indians in the Viceroy's Executive Council, To behold minority opinion on transfer of power, To establish an advisory war council.

August Offer 1940: Background

The "August Offer" was the offer that Lord Linlithgow made in 1940 to win India's support in World War II. Here, we have shared the background of the August Offer 1940 -

- During World War I, Lord Linlithgow declared India's participation in the war without the consent of Indians.
- Offended by this, Indians criticized the British government and refused to participate in World War II.
- As Indians had been demanding freedom from British imperialism, Linlithgow proposed the August Offer.
- This came at a time when Britain's ally, France, had fallen into Nazi occupation, and Britain desperately sought India's participation in the war.
- The August offer stated that Indians would get more representation in the Viceroy's Executive Council in exchange for their participation in the war.
- Since the representation of Indians in the British government was long due, and no promises for India's complete freedom were made, Indians rejected the August Offer made by Linlithgow.

Proposals Made in the August Offer

The August Offer 1940 proposed the following ideas -

- To grant India a Dominion status.

- To include more Indians in the Viceroy's Executive Council.
- To account for the minority opinion before any transfer of power.
- To establish an advisory war council consisting of Indian representatives.
- To recognize the right of Indians to frame their constitution after the end of the war.

August Offer 1940: Response of Indian Leaders

Viceroy Linlithgow's August Resolution received a bad response from the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. The British government had earlier announced India's participation in World War I without the consent of Indians. So, Indian National Congress and Muslim League rejected the August Offer and refused to participate in another war.

Moreover, the August Offer did not fulfil the desires of the Congress, which was complete independence from the British. As per August Declaration, the British government only offered a Dominion status to India. Here are the details about India's response to the offer -

- The August Offer of 1940 was rejected by the Congress because they wanted India to have full independence, but they were given Dominion status instead.
- The Muslim League's interest was the formation of a separate nation of Pakistan, and since the August Offer did not promise it, the League also rejected the offer.
- To protest against the offer, Mahatma Gandhi launched the Individual Satyagraha movement.

August Offer: Individual Satyagraha

The Individual Satyagraha movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1940 to protest against the August Offer made by Lord Linlithgow. Gandhi wanted the protest against the August Offer to be peaceful. Therefore, he launched Individual Satyagraha as a non-violent movement instead of mass Satyagraha.

Here are the details about this movement -

- Gandhi announced Individual Satyagraha after the August Offer 1940.
- This movement initially began with only three satyagrahis, who were all arrested by the British police.
- The first Individual Satyagrahi was Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the second was Jawahar Lal Nehru, and the third was Brahma Dutt.
- The Individual Satyagraha was joined by hundreds of Satyagrahis, many of whom were put into jail.
- In the later stages of the movement, the Satyagrahis also launched the Delhi Chalo Movement. However, this movement failed and was abandoned by December 1940.
- Since the Britishers needed India's participation in the war, the proposals mentioned in the August Offer were reconsidered.
- Subsequently, the British government then launched the Cripps Mission in March 1942.

August Offer: Evaluation

The British government reconsidered the terms proposed in the August Resolution after India rejected the offer. After its ally France had fallen into Nazi capture, Britain needed India's help in the war. Therefore, they made several changes to the August Offer to retry, gaining India's support. Here is what happened after the evaluation of the August Offer 1940 -

- To retry to win the support of Indians in the war, the British government launched the Cripps Mission in 1942.
- India's right to write its constitution was recognized.
- It was also clearly stated that India would be granted the status of Dominion.
- The Indian National Congress' demand for making a Constituent Assembly was granted.

August Offer 1940: Conclusion

The August Offer was rejected by the Indian leaders, and subsequently, the British government launched the Cripps Mission in 1942. As a result of the changes made to the August Offer, Britishers gained India's support in World War II. Here is what happened after -

- In July 1941, the Viceroy's Executive Council was expanded, and Indians were given a majority representation.
- Indians were given control over matters like education, but the control over the defence, home affairs, and finance of the country still remained with the Britishers.
- As promised, an advisory war council, the National Defence Council, was formed. The function of the council was to advise the government on matters relating to war.
- The groundwork for drafting the Constitution of India was formed after the August Offer.

