

## Indian National Movement (1917-1947)

### Emergence of Gandhi in India

M K Gandhi returned from South Africa (where he had lived for more than 20 years) to India in 1915. There he had led a peaceful agitation against the discrimination meted out to Indians and had emerged as a respected leader. It was in South Africa that he developed his brand of Satyagraha. In India, he first used this tool against the British government at Champaran in Bihar.

### Champaran Satyagraha (1917)

- The first civil disobedience movement by Gandhi in the freedom struggle.
- Persuaded by Rajkumar Shukla, an indigo cultivator, Gandhi went to Champaran in Bihar to investigate the conditions of the farmers there.
- The farmers were suffering under heavy taxes and an exploitative system. They were forced to grow indigo by the British planters under the tinkathia system.
- Gandhi arrived in Champaran to investigate the matter but was not permitted by the British authorities to do so.
- He was asked to leave the place but he refused.
- He was able to gather support from the farmers and masses.
- When he appeared in court in response to a summons, almost 2000 locals accompanied him.
- The case against him was dropped and he was allowed to conduct the inquiry.
- After peaceful protests against the planters and landlords led by Gandhi, the government agreed to abolish the exploitative tinkathia system.
- The peasants also received a part of the money extracted from them as compensation.
- Champaran struggle is called the first experiment on Satyagraha by Gandhi.
- It was during this time that Gandhi was given the names 'Bapu' and 'Mahatma' by the people.

### Ahmedabad Mill Strike (Feb-March 1918)

- The next scene of Gandhiji's activity was in 1918 at Ahmedabad where an agitation had been going on between the labourers and the owners of a cotton textile mill for an increase of pay.
- While Gandhiji was negotiating with the mill owners, he advised the workers to go on strike and to demand a 35% increase in wages.

- Having advised the strikers to depend upon their conscience, Gandhiji himself went on a "fast unto death" to strengthen the workers resolved to continue the strike.
- The mill owners gave away and a settlement was reached after 21 days of the strike. The millowners agreed to submit the whole issue to a tribunal.
- The strike was withdrawn and retrieval later awarded the 35% increase that the workers had demanded.
- Ambalal Sarabhai's sister, **Anasuya Behn**, was one of the main lieutenants of Gandhiji in this struggle in which her brother and Gandhiji's friend was one of the main advisories.

### **Kheda Satyagraha (March 1918)**

- 1918 was a year of failed crops in the Kheda district of Gujarat due to droughts.
- As per law, the farmers were entitled to remission if the produce was less than a quarter of the normal output.
- But the government refused any remission from paying land revenue.
- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, under Gandhi's guidance, led the farmers in protest against the collection of taxes in the wake of the famine.
- People from all castes and ethnicities of the district lend their support to the movement.
- The protest was peaceful and people showed remarkable courage even in the face of adversities like confiscation of personal property and arrest.
- Finally, the authorities gave in and gave some concessions to the farmers.

### **Rowlatt Act (1919)**

- In 1917, a committee was set up under the presidentship of Sir Sydney Rowlatt to look into the militant Nationalist activities
- Rowlatt Act was passed in March 1919 by the Central Legislative Council
- As per this Act, any person could be arrested on the basis of suspicion.
- No appeal or petition could be filed against such arrests.
- This Act was called the Black Act and it was widely opposed.
- An all-India hartal was organized on 6 April 1919.
- Meetings were held all over the country.
- Mahatma Gandhi was arrested near Delhi.
- Two prominent leaders of Punjab, Dr Satya Pal and Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew, were arrested in Amritsar.

## **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (13 April 1919)**

- The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre took place on 13 April 1919 and it remained a turning point in the history of India's freedom movement
- In Punjab, there was unprecedented support to the Rowlatt Satyagraha
- Facing a violent situation, the Government of Punjab handed over the administration to the military authorities under General Dyer.
- He banned all public meetings and detained the political leaders
- On 13 th April, the Baisakhi day (harvest festival), a public meeting was organized at the Jallianwala Bagh (garden)
- Dyer marched in and without any warning opened fire on the crowd
- The firing continued for about 10 to 15 minutes and it stopped only after the ammunition exhausted
- According to the official report, 379 people were killed and 1137 wounded in the incident.
- Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood as a protest
- The Jallianwala Bagh massacre gave a tremendous impetus to the freedom struggle.

## **Khilafat Movement (1920)**

- The chief cause of the Khilafat Movement was the defeat of Turkey in the First World War.
- The harsh terms of the Treaty of Sevres (1920) were felt by the Muslims as a great insult to them.
- The whole movement was based on the Muslim belief that the Caliph (the Sultan of Turkey) was the religious head of the Muslims all over the world
- Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, M.A. Ansari, Saifuddin Kitchlew and the Ali brothers were the prominent leaders of this movement.
- Mahatma Gandhi was particularly interested in bringing the Hindus and the Muslims together to achieve the country's independence.
- The Khilafat Movement merged with the Non-Cooperation Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920:

## **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-1922)**

- Non-Cooperation Movement was a sequel to the Rowlatt Act, Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the Khilafat Movement
- It was approved by the INC at the Nagpur session in December 1920.
- The programmes of the Non-Cooperation Movement were:
  - Surrender of titles and honorary positions

- Resignation of membership from the local bodies.
- Boycott of elections held under the provisions of the 1919 Act
- Boycott of government functions.
- Boycott of courts, government schools and colleges.
- Boycott of foreign goods
- Establishment of national schools, colleges and private panchayat courts.
- Popularizing Swadeshi goods and khadi.
- National schools such as the Kashi Vidyapeeth, the Bihar Vidyapeeth and the Jamia Millia Islamia were set up.
- No leader of the Congress came forward to contest the elections for the Legislatures
- In 1921, mass demonstrations were held against the Prince of Wales during his tour of India.
- Most of the households took to weaving cloths with the help of charkhas.
- But the whole movement was abruptly called off on 11th February 1922 by Gandhi following the Churi Chaura incident
- In the Gorakhpur district of U.P. Earlier on 5 th February an angry mob set fire to the police station at Churi Chaura and twenty-two policemen were burnt to death

### **Significance of the Non-Cooperation Movement**

- It was the real mass movement with the participation of different sections of Indian society
- such as peasants, workers, students, teachers and women.
- It witnessed the spread of nationalism to the remote corners of India.
- It also marked the height of Hindu-Muslim unity as a result of the merger of the Khilafat movement.
- It demonstrated the willingness and ability of the masses to endure hardships and make sacrifices.

### **Swaraj Party**

- The suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement led to a split within Congress in the Gaya session of the Congress in December 1922.
- Leaders like Motilal Nehru and Chittaranjan Das formed a separate group within the Congress known as the Swaraj Party on 1 January 1923.
- The Swarajists wanted to contest the council elections and wreck the government from within
- The Swaraj Party gained impressive successes.
- In the Central Legislative Council Motilal Nehru became the leader of the party whereas in Bengal the party was headed by C.R. Das.

- It demanded the setting up of responsible government in India
- With the necessary changes in the Government of India Act of 1919.
- The party could pass important resolutions against the repressive laws of the government.
- After the passing away of C.R. Das in June 1925, the Swaraj Party started weakening.

### **Simon Commission**

- In November 1927 the British Government appointed the Simon Commission to look into the working of the Government of India Act of 1919 and to suggest changes.
- The Commission consisted of Englishmen without a single Indian representative
- The Commission arrived in India in Feb 1928 and was met with countrywide protests.
- Even the majority of the members of the Central Legislative Assembly boycotted the Commission.
- Anti-Simon Committees were formed all over the country to organize demonstrations and hartals wherever the Commission went.
- Peaceful demonstrators were beaten by the police in many places. Lala Lajpat Rai was assaulted and soon after died.

### **Nehru Report (1928)**

- In the meanwhile, the Secretary of State, Lord Birkenhead, challenged the Indians to produce a Constitution
- The challenge was accepted by the Congress, which convened an all-party meeting on 28 February 1928
- A committee consisting of eight was constituted to draw up a blueprint for the future Constitution of India.
- It was headed by Motilal Nehru

### **The Report favoured:**

- Dominion Status as the next immediate step
- Full responsible government at the centre.
- Autonomy to the provinces
- Clear cut division of power between the centre and the provinces.
- A bicameral legislature at the centre.

- Mohammad Ali Jinnah regarded it as detrimental to the interests of the Muslims
- Jinnah convened an All India Conference of the Muslims where he drew up a list of Fourteen Points as Muslim League demand.

### **Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-1934)**

- In the prevailing atmosphere of restlessness, the annual session of the Congress was held at Lahore in December 1929.
- During this session presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru the Congress passed the Poorna Swaraj resolution
- Moreover, as the government failed to accept the Nehru Report, Congress gave a call to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement.
- The Congress had also observed January 26, 1930, as the Day of Independence.
- The same date later became the Republic Day when the Indian Constitution was enforced in 1950.

### **Dandi March**

- On 12th March 1930, Gandhi began his famous March to Dandi with his chosen 79 followers to break the salt laws.
- He reached the coast of Dandi on 5 April 1930 after marching a distance of 200 miles
- On 6 April formally launched the Civil Disobedience Movement by breaking the salt laws.
- On 9 April, Mahatma Gandhi laid out the programme of the movement which included making of salt in every village in violation of the existing salt laws;
- Picketing by women before the shops selling liquor, opium and foreign clothes;
- Spinning clothes by using charkha fighting untouchability;
- Boycotting of schools and colleges by students and resigning from government jobs by the people
- Soon, the movement spread to all parts of the country. Students, workers, farmers and women, all participated in this movement with great enthusiasm.

### **Round Table Conferences**

#### **First Round Table Conference**

- Held in November 1930 at London and it was boycotted it by the Congress.

- In January 1931 in order to create a conducive atmosphere for talks.
- The government lifted the ban on the Congress Party and released its leaders from prison.
- On 8 March 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed.
- As per this pact, Mahatma Gandhi agreed to suspend the Civil-Disobedience Movement and participate in the Second Round Table Conference.
- In September 1931, the Second Round Table Conference was held at London
- Mahatma Gandhi participated in the Conference but returned to India disappointed as no agreement could be reached on the demand for complete independence and on the communal question.
- In January 1932, the Civil-Disobedience Movement was resumed.
- The government responded to it by arresting Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel and by reposing the ban on the Congress party

### **Communal Awards**

- The Communal Award was announced by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, in August 1932.
- This was yet another expression of the British policy of divide and rule.
- The Muslims, Sikhs and Christians had already been recognised as minorities.
- The Communal Award declared the depressed classes also to be minorities, and entitled them to separate electorates'.

### **Poona Pact (1932)**

- By 1930, Dr Ambedkar had become a leader of the national stature championing the cause of the depressed people of the country.
- While presenting a real picture of the condition of these people in the First Round Table Conference, he had demanded separate electorates for them.
- On 16 August 1932, the British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald made an announcement, which came to be as the Communal Award.
- Mahatma Gandhi protested against the Communal Award and went on a fast unto death in the Yeravada jail on 20 September 1932.
- Finally, an agreement was reached between Dr Ambedkar and Gandhi.
- This agreement came to be called the Poona Pact. The British Government also approved of it.
- Accordingly, 148 seats in different Provincial Legislatures were reserved for the Depressed Classes in place of 71 as provided in the Communal Award.

### **Third Round Table Conference (1932)**

- Congress again did not take part in it.
- Nonetheless, in March 1933, the British Government issued a White Paper.
- Which became the basis for the enactment of the Government of India Act, 1935.

### **Government of India Act, 1935**

*Government of India Act of 1935 was passed on the basis of –*

- the report of the Simon Commission
- the outcome of the Round Table Conferences
- the White Paper issued by the British Government in 1933

### **Main features of this act were -**

- Provision for the establishment of an All India Federation at the Centre, consisting of the Provinces of British India and the Princely States
- It did not come into existence since the Princely States refused to give their consent for the union
- Division of powers into three lists viz. Federal, Provincial and Concurrent.
- Introduction of Diarchy at the Centre
- The Governor-General and his council administered the “Reserved subjects”
- The Council of Ministers were responsible for the “Transferred” subjects
- Abolition of Diarchy and the introduction of Provincial Autonomy in the provinces.
- The Governor was made the head of the Provincial Executive but he was expected (not bound) to run the administration on the advice of the Council of ministers.
- Provincial Legislatures of Bengal, Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar and Assam were made bicameral.
- Extension of the principle of Separate Electorates to Sikhs, Europeans, Indian Christians and Anglo Indians
- Establishment of a Federal Court at Delhi with a Chief Justice and 6 judges.

### **Second World War & National Movement**

- In 1937 elections were held under the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935
- Congress Ministries were formed in seven states of India.
- On 1 September 1939, the Second World War broke out.

- The British Government without consulting the people of India involved the country in the war.
- As a mark of protest the Congress Ministries in the Provinces resigned on 12 December 1939
- The Muslim League celebrated that day as the Deliverance Day
- In March 1940 the Muslim League demanded the creation of Pakistan.

### **August offer**

During the course of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, in order to secure the cooperation of the Indians, the British Government made an announcement on 8 August 1940, which came to be known as the 'August Offer', which proposed –

- Dominion status as the objective for India.
- Expansion of viceroy's executive council & setting up of a constituent assembly after the war consisting of Indians to decide their constitution according to their social, economic and political conceptions subject to fulfilment of the obligation of the Government regarding defence, minority rights, treaties with states & all India services
- No future constitution to be adopted without the consent of minorities.

### **India's Reaction to August offer**

- The Congress rejected the August Offer
- Nehru said, "Dominion status concept is dead as a doornail"

### **Individual Satyagraha**

- In order to secure the cooperation of the Indians, the British Government made an announcement on 8 August 1940,
- The August Offer envisaged that after the War a representative body of Indians would be set up to frame the new Constitution.
- Gandhi was not satisfied with is an offer and decided to launch Individual Satyagraha.
- Individual Satyagraha was limited, symbolic and non-violent in nature. It was left to Mahatma Gandhi to choose the Satyagrahis.
- Acharya Vinoba Bhave was the first to offer Satyagraha and he was sentenced to three months imprisonment.
- Jawaharlal Nehru was the second Satyagrahi and imprisoned for four months.
- The individual Satyagraha continued for nearly 15 months.

## Cripps Mission (1942)

- In the midst of worsening wartime international situation, the British Government in its continued effort to secure Indian cooperation sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India on 23 March 1942. This is known as Cripps Mission

The main recommendations of Cripps were:

1. The promise of Dominion Status to India
2. Protection of minorities
3. Setting up of a Constituent Assembly in which there would be representatives from the Princely States along with those of the British Provinces
4. There would be provision for any Province of British India not prepared to accept this Constitution,
5. Either to retain its present constitutional position or frame a constitution of its own.
6. Gandhi called Cripp's proposals as a "Post-dated Cheque".
7. The Muslim League was also dissatisfied as its demand for Pakistan had not been conceded in the proposal.

## Quit India Movement (1942-1944)

- The failure of the Cripps Mission and the fear of an impending Japanese invasion of India led Mahatma Gandhi to begin his campaign for the British to quit India.
- Mahatma Gandhi believed that an interim government could be formed only after the British left India and the Hindu-Muslim problem sorted out.
- The All India Congress Committee met at Bombay on 8 August 1942 and passed the famous Quit India Resolution.
- On the same day, Gandhi gave his call of 'do or die'
- On 8th and 9th August 1942, the government arrested all the prominent leaders of the Congress.
- Mahatma Gandhi was kept in prison at Poona.
- Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, and other leaders were imprisoned in the Ahmednagar Fort.
- At this time, leadership was provided by Ram Manohar Lohia, Achyuta and S.M. Joshi.
- The role of Jayaprakash Narain in this movement was important.
- A large number of students also left their schools and colleges to join the movement.
- The youth of the nation also participated in this movement with patriotism.

- In 1944 Mahatma Gandhi was released from jail.
- Quit India Movement was the final attempt for the country's freedom.
- The British Government ordered for 538 rounds of firing. Nearly 60,229 persons were jailed.
- At least 7,000 people were killed.
- This movement paved the way for India's freedom. It aroused among Indians the feelings of bravery, enthusiasm and total sacrifice.

### **Rajgopalachari Formula**

- Rajagopalachari, the veteran Congress leader, prepared a formula for Congress-League cooperation, accepted to Gandhi.
- It was a tacit acceptance of the League's demand for Pakistan.
- Hindu leaders led by Vir Savarkar condemned the CR Plan.

### **The main points in CR Plan were**

- Muslim League to endorse Congress demand for independence.
- League to cooperate with Congress in forming a provisional government at the centre.
- After the war, the entire population of Muslim majority areas in the North-West & North-East India to decide by a plebiscite, whether or not to form a separate sovereign state.
- In case of acceptance of partition, agreement to be made jointly for safeguarding defence, commerce, communications, etc.
- The above terms to be operative only if England transferred full powers to India.

### **Jinnah's Objections**

- Jinnah wanted Congress to accept the two-nation theory.
- He wanted only the Muslims of North-West and North-East to vote in the plebiscite and not the entire population.
- He also opposed the idea of a common centre.

Hence, while the Congress was ready to cooperate with the League for the independence of the Indian Union, the League did not care for the independence of the Union. It was only interesting in a separate nation.

## Desai-Liaqat Pact

- Bhulabhai Desai, leader of the Congress with Liaqat Ali Khan, leader of the Muslim drafted a proposal for the formation of an interim government at the centre, consisting of —
  - an equal number of persons nominated by the Congress & League in the central legislature
  - 20% reserved seats for minorities
- No settlement could be reached between the Congress and the League on these lines
- But the fact that a sort of parity between the Congress and the League was decided upon, which had far-reaching

## Wavell Plan

- A conference was convened by the viceroy, Lord Wavell; at Shimla in June 1945
- Aimed to reconstruct the governor general's executive council pending the preparation of a new constitution.

## Main Proposals

- With the exception of the governor-general and the commander-in-chief, all members of the executive council were to be Indians.
- Hindus and Muslims were to have equal representation.
- The reconstructed council was to function as an interim government within the framework of the 1935 Act (i.e. not responsible to the Central Assembly).
- Governor- General was to exercise his veto on the advice of ministers.
- Representatives of different parties were, to submit a joint list to the viceroy for nominations to the executive council.
- If a joint list was not possible, then separate lists were to be submitted.
- Possibilities were to be, kept open for negotiations on a new constitution once the war was finally won.

## Indian National Army

- During the course of the Second World War, armed revolutionary activities continued to take place.
- The role of Subhas Chandra Bose towards such activities is incomparable.
- On 2 July 1943, Subhas Chandra Bose reached Singapore and gave the rousing war cry of 'Dilli Chalo'

- He was made the President of Indian Independence League and soon became the supreme commander of the Indian National Army.
- The names of the INA's three Brigades were the Subhas Brigade, Gandhi Brigade and Nehru Brigade
- The women's wing of the army was named after Rani Lamiae
- The Indian National Army marched towards Imphal after registering its victory over Kohima.
- After Japan's surrender in 1945
- The INA failed in its efforts. Under such circumstances, Subhas went to Taiwan.
- Then on his way to Tokyo, he died on 18 August 1945 in a plane crash
- The trial of the soldiers of INA was held at Red Fort in Delhi
- Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai and Tej Bahadur Sapru fought the case on behalf of the soldiers

### **Cabinet Mission (1946)**

- After the Second World War, Lord Atlee became the Prime Minister of England.
- On 15 March 1946 Lord Atlee made a historic announcement in which the right to self-determination and the framing of a Constitution for India were conceded.
- Consequently, three members of the British Cabinet - Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A. V. Alexander - were sent to India. This is known as the Cabinet Mission.
- The Cabinet Mission put forward a plan for the solution of the constitutional problem.
- Provision was made for three groups of provinces to possess their separate constitutions.
- The Cabinet Mission also proposed the formation of a Union of India, comprising both British India and the Princely States.
- The Union would remain in charge of only foreign affairs, defence and communications. leaving the residuary powers to be vested in the provinces till a new government was elected.
- Both the Muslim League and the Congress accepted the plan.
- Consequently, elections were held in July 1946 for the formation of a Constituent Assembly.
- The Congress secured 205 out of 214 General seats.
- The Muslim League got 73 out of 78 Muslim seats.
- An Interim Government was formed under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru on 2 September 1946.

## Mountbatten Plan (1947)

- On 20 February 1947, Prime Minister Atlee announced in the House of Commons the definite intention of the British Government to transfer power to responsible Indian hands.
- Thus, to effect the transference of that power Atlee decided to send Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy to India.
- Lord Mountbatten armed with vast powers became India's Viceroy on 24 March 1947.
- The partition of India and the creation of Pakistan appeared inevitable to him.
- After extensive consultation, Lord Mountbatten put forth the plan of partition of India on 3 June 1947.
- The Congress and the Muslim League ultimately approved the Mountbatten Plan. Indian Independence Act, 1947.
- The British Government accorded formal approval to the Mountbatten Plan by enacting the Indian Independence Act on 18 July 1947.
- The partition of the country into India and Pakistan would come into effect from 15 August 1947.
- The British Government would transfer all powers to these two Dominions.
- A Boundary Commission would demarcate the boundaries of the provinces of the Punjab and Bengal.
- The Act provided for the transfer of power to the Constituent Assemblies of the two Dominions, Which will have full authority to frame their respective Constitutions.
- The Radcliff Boundary Commission drew the boundary line separating India and Pakistan.
- On 15th August 1947 India, and on the 14th August Pakistan came into existence as two independent states.
- Lord Mountbatten was made the first Governor-General of Independent India.
- Whereas Mohammad Ali Jinnah became the first Governor-General of Pakistan.
- The most tragic incident occurred on 30 January 1948, when Mahatma Gandhi - the father of the nation on his way to a prayer meeting was assassinated by Nathuram Godse.

## Demand for Pakistan

- In 1940 at the Lahore session of the Muslim League, the demand for a separate state of Pakistan was made. It was based on the two-nation theory.
- The Muslim League demanded that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute the Independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

- The demand for a separate state was opposed by large sections of Muslims who were against any separatist demand.
- Many nationalist leaders like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who had always been in the forefront of the national movement opposed the demand for a separate state and fought against communal tendencies and for the freedom of the Indian people.
- Of these the more prominent were the Khuda Khidmatgar in the North-West Frontier Province organized by the Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Watan party in Baluchistan, the All-India Momin Conference, the Ahrar Party, the All India Shia Political Conference and the Azad Muslim Conference.
- These organizations along with Congress-led a large number of Muslims in the struggle for independence.
- The Muslim League was encouraged by the British government to press its demand for a separate state and played the game of British imperialism which had the effect of disrupting and weakening the movement for independence.
- When the Congress withdrew from the provincial governments in protest against British attitude to the demand for independence, the Muslim League celebrated the event by observing Deliverance Day and tried to form ministries in the provinces although they did not have a majority in any provincial legislature.
- Jinnah was alarmed at the results of the elections because the Muslim League was in danger of being totally eclipsed in the constituent assembly.
- Therefore, Muslim League withdraws its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan on Jul 29, 1946.
- It passed a 'Direct action' resolution, which condemned both the British Government and the Congress (Aug 16, 1946).
- It resulted in heavy communal riots.

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