

Non-Cooperation Movement

[UPSC Notes]

What is the Non-Cooperation Movement?

The Non-Cooperation Movement was pivotal in India's struggle for freedom from British domination. The Non-Cooperation Movement (NCM) was officially launched in the Calcutta Congress session in September 1920, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The NCM was launched after the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre & Rowlatt Act with the hope of gaining Purna Swaraj.

The Khilafat movement was mobilizing Muslims against the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. Gandhi did support the Khilafat movement, and both the Khilafat movement and the Indian National Congress embarked on non-cooperation against British rule. Both these movements united Hindus and Muslims against a common cause and signaled the shift in Indian nationalism from being middle-class to becoming a form of mass movement. Mahatma Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920. Gandhi believed that if non-cooperation was carried out successfully and without bloodshed, India would be free in a year. Noncooperation was agreed to by the Indian National Congress at Calcutta in September 1920 and launched that December.

Non-Cooperation Movement Timeline

Go through the Non-Cooperation Movement date and associated events to better understand the NCM for the upcoming [IAS Exam](#). The Non-Cooperation Movement was started on 05 September 1920.

- 1918 - Rowlatt Act
- 1919- Khalifa (Caliph) lost power (All India Khilafat Committee was formed)
- 1920 - Non- cooperation Movement initiated
- September 1920 - Calcutta Session of Congress
- 5 February 1922 - Chauri Chaura Incident
- March 1922 - Mahatma Gandhi Arrested
- November 1922 - Khilafat Issue lost relevance

What led to the launch Non-Cooperation Movement?

There were several reasons why Mahatama Gandhi began the Non-Cooperation Movement. The details are mentioned below.

- **World War I:** Indian soldiers fought on the British side in World War I, forward-thinking that they would repay the service by granting India its independence.

- **Economic concerns:** Product prices were skyrocketing, while farmers could not obtain the required income for their agricultural produce, causing discontent towards the British government.
- **Rowlatt Act:** The Rowlatt Act took India's struggle for independence to a new level. According to this act, Britishers had the authority to arrest and detain someone without a fair trial. One of the key causes of the Non-Cooperation Movement was the result of this.
- **Jallianwala Bagh massacre:** The Jallianwala Bagh slaughter, which occurred on April 13, 1919, united and filled every Indian with wrath. The silver of trust in the British administration had been broken. Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer's instructions resulted in the deaths of 379 individuals and the injuries of 1200 unarmed civilians in the massacre.
- **Khilafat movement:** At the time, the Sultan of Turkey was considered the religious leader of Muslims. When the British defeated Turkey in World War I, a committee known as the Khilafat movement was founded, led by Maulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, and Hasrat Mohani. As the leaders of the Khilafat movement joined hands with the Non-Cooperation Movement, the movement United Hindus, and Muslims.

Non- Cooperation Khilafat Movement

The Muslims all over the world regarded the sultan of Turkey as their spiritual leader, Khalifa (Caliph). During the First World War, the Indian Muslims supported the British Government owing to the fact that the sacred places of the Ottoman Empire would be in the hands of Khalifa, and the British would not interfere. However, after the War, the Ottoman Empire was divided and the Khalifa was removed from power. This angered the Muslims.

Shoukat Ali and Mohammad Ali, better known as the Ali brothers, started the Khilafat Movement in 1919 against the British government, and it lasted till 1924. 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.

Though Gandhi was always in favor of launching Satyagraha and non-cooperation against the Government on the Khilafat issue, Congress was not of the same opinion. But later, seeing it as common ground for Hindu-Muslim Unity, Congress extended its support. The Muslim League also decided to give full support to the Congress

Features of the Non-Cooperation Movement

The Non-Cooperation Movement's most important aspect was to struggle against British rule in a non-violent and civilized manner. The Tilak Swaraj fund supported the finances of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

The Non-Cooperation Movement pushed for more use and production of goods and products manufactured in India while refusing to use British products.

The other important features include:

- Indians were asked to refuse to cast votes in the legislative elections. They were asked to give up their titles and prominent positions.
- Indians were asked to boycott legislative council elections and prohibit and withdraw from British educational establishments.
- Boycotts could be broadened to include widespread civil disobedience, such as tax evasion.
- It fought for more than the manufacturing of commodities and products made in India while discouraging the use of British products.
- To resolve disputes, panchayats were established.

Spread of the Non-Cooperation Movement

The Non-Cooperation Movement saw the coming together of people from different communities, sects, and classes and fighting against a common cause. The movement did spread to the urban areas as well as to the rural areas. The key aspects in the spread of the Non-Cooperation Movement were:

- Mahatma Gandhi and the Ali Brothers of the Khilafat movement embarked on a cross-country journey.
- C.R. Das, M.R. Jaykar, Motilal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, C. Rajagopalachari, Saifuddin Kitchlew, T. Prakasam, and Asaf Ali quit their law firms to enter congress politics on a full-time basis.
- Someshwar Prasad Chaudhary led the peasants in Bengal in a campaign against indigo farming.
- In October 1920, during the gathering of the Jamia Millia Islamia foundation committee in Aligarh, Maulana Mehrnud Hasan laid the foundation for the institution.
- Western education was completely boycotted in various provinces, including Bengal and Punjab.
- The Bihar Vidyapeeth was established. The pioneers of the Indian revolution began to teach in schools with just an Indian curriculum.
- The stores that offered clothing from abroad were picketed. The national movement adopted the symbols of Khadi and Charkha.
- The Bihar Tana Bhagat sect abstained from drinking.
- In Punjab, the Akali movement, which initially demanded Gurudwara reforms, became associated with the Non-Cooperation Movement. To protect Sikh gurdwaras from dishonest preachers, Akali Dal was established on December 13, 1920, following the establishment of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). Kartar Singh Jabbar, Master Tara Singh, and Baba Kharak Singh were the key founders.
- Alluri Sitarama Raju recruited the tribal people in Andhra Pradesh and collaborated with the non-cooperation campaign.
- The All India Khilafat conference was called in Karachi on July 21, 1921. 'No Muslim should serve the British army', the message was proposed by Maulana Mohammad Ali. The Ali brothers were consequently detained for treason.

- Birendra Nath Sasmal spearheaded a protest against the Union Board of taxes from the Bengali city of Midnapore. People from throughout the nation enthusiastically supported the “no tax to government” campaign.

Challenges in the Non-Cooperation Movement

The major challenges faced by the Non-Cooperation Movement were:

- The boycott of law courts by lawyers did not have the same impact as a boycott of schools.
- Unfortunately, the campaign in Kerala ended up taking a communal tone.
- The plantation workers in Assam staged a protest. When the fleeing labourers were shot at, the ferry service and the Assam-Bengal railway began protesting.
- The peasants had no security of tenure as tenants and were frequently dispossessed, preventing them from gaining any rights to the leased land. As a result, the Awadh Peasant Movement requested a concession in revenue, the elimination of ‘begar’, and a public boycott of oppressive landlords.
- Although the Non-Cooperation Movement was initially peaceful, it eventually developed into a violent fury of protest in some areas.

Withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement

The Non-Cooperation Movement was withdrawn after the Chauri Chaura incident. The Chauri Chaura incident occurred on February 5, 1922, in the district of Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. During the Chauri Chaura incident, the police fired upon a sizable crowd of non-cooperation movement demonstrators. In retribution, protesters assaulted and destroyed a police station, murdering everyone inside. Three civilians and 22 police officers were killed. As a result, the Non-Cooperation Movement was put down, and other leaders were thereafter taken into custody. Mahatma Gandhi was detained on February 12, 1922, despite having single-handedly put an end to the national uprising. On 18 March 1922, he was imprisoned for six years for publishing seditious materials.

Impact of the Non-Cooperation Movement

The NCM's most notable impact was elevating Gandhi to the forefront of Indian national politics. He was regarded as Bal Gangadhar Tilak's rightful heir. Mass incarceration reduced the fear associated with prisons, and going to prison came to be seen as a symbol of pride.

The national struggle now had new goals and objectives. Gandhiji outlined the purpose of Swaraj and defined Swaraj as the freedom of self-rule, both inside and outside the boundaries of the British Empire, during the congress session in Nagpur in December 1920.

The local public needed to be aware of their political rights and advantages. There was a complete lack of trust in the governmental system, and people could see that the only way India could hope to be free from British rule was through their efforts.

Significance of the Non-Cooperation Movement

The Non-Cooperation Movement was one of the major events in the history of India's struggle for independence. The significance of the movement had can be concluded from the following points:

- It was a non-violent movement that required self-control, sacrifice, and denial. It represented the commencement of independence. People from various spheres of life participated in the movement.
- Students avoided enrolling in schools and colleges, attorneys abstained from appearing in courts, and in addition to going on strike, the working class also stopped paying taxes.
- The common people's fear of British domination was vanquished when they turned out to take part in the national movement. They could physically witness the British's despair in the face of Gandhiji. Every Indian felt more secure.
- Because of the vast number of Indian women who responded positively to Gandhiji's call to join the anti-British struggle, the NCM was crucial in women's liberation. Their increased engagement in the national uprising set the stage for a shift in the societal perspective.

Non-Cooperation Movement Leaders

Non-Cooperation Movement moved the struggle for independence from an individual level to a mass movement. Hindus and Muslims came together to fight against the British. Below mentioned are some leaders who were associated with the Non-Cooperation Movement.

- Mahatma Gandhi - Led the movement to gain swaraj in 1 year through non-violent means.
- Jawaharlal Nehru - Supported the formation of Kisan Sabhas. J L Nehru did not support M Gandhi to withdrawal from the movement.
- Subhash Chandra Bose- resigned from the civil service
- Ali brothers (Shaukat Ali and Muhammad Ali) - Started the Khilafat Movement and the All India Khilafat Conference
- Motilal Nehru - Gave up his legal practice.'
- Lala Lajpat Rai, C R Das, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel were also part of the movement.