UNIT 12: INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT FROM 1919 TO 1939

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 Emergence of Gandhi in Indian Politics

12.4 Non Co-operation Movement

12.4.1 Rowlatt Act and Jallianwalla Bagh Tragedy

12.4.2 Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement

12.5 Civil Disobedience Movement

12.6 Government of India Act 1935

12.7 Let Us Sum Up

12.8 Further Reading

12.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.10 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- discuss the rise of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian Politics,
- analyse the Non Co-operation Movement,
- discuss the Civil Disobedience Movement,
- discuss the Government of India Act 1935.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you have already learnt about the partition of Bengal and the contribution of Home Rule movement to India's struggle for freedom. Rise of Gandhi in the national movement was an event of great significance in the history of national movement of our Country. This unit introduces you to India's struggle for freedom from 1916 to 1939.

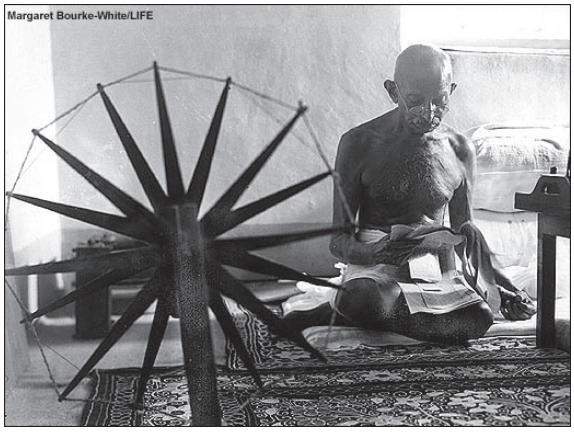
12.3 EMERGENCE OF GANDHI IN INDIAN POLITICS

SatyagrahIt is a technique of resistance based on non-violence and truth.

We all are familiar with the name of 'Mahatma Gandhi'. Aren't we? He is also known as '*Bapu*' or the 'father of our nation'. Do you know why is he called the father of the nation? It is because of his immense contribution to India's struggle for freedom.

In his early career, he served as a lawyer in Johannesburg in South Africa. Mahatma Gandhi began his political career in that country. As the leader of Indian emigrants he protested the discriminating treatment s of the 'white' rulers to the black people including the Indians in South Africa. You will be amazed to know that Gandhiji's only weapon in this movement was non-violence which is known as *Satyagrah.* Through this peaceful *Satyagrah* he compelled the rulers to accept the demand of the Indians.

Figure - 12.1



Mahatma Gandhi

Source : Google image

With his initial success in South Africa, Gandhiji returned to India in 1915. At that time India was charged with the anti-British feeling and Gandhiji decided to take active part in Indian politics. But before that he traveled throughout the country. He made a wide travel throughout the country. This travel made him familiar with the poverty and distress of the common Indian people. The misery of the rural people touched '*Bapu*' so much that removal of exploitation of the masses became one of the main agenda of his political philosophy.



LET US KNOW

It was in course of his travel that Gandhiji came to Santiniketan to meet Rabindranath Tagore whom he greeted as 'Gurudev' and Rabindranath welcomed Gandhiji with the honour 'Mahatma'.

Gandhiji's entry into Indian politics began with the Satyagraha in Champaran in Bihar in 1917. Here the British Indigo planters oppressed the Indian cultivators ruthlessly. Gandhi reached Champaran and forced the British government to appoint an enquiry committee. On the recommendations of that committee, the sufferings of the peasants were reduced to a large extent. Thus, he succeeded in his first struggle against oppression in India.

After his success at Champaran, Gandhiji successfully conducted worker's strike at Ahmedabad. In this instance also, he adopted nonviolent mode of protest. Here Gandhiji intervened in a dispute between workers and textile mill owner in 1918. Gandhiji undertook a fast unto death to force a compromise and finally the mill owners agreed to offer a raise of 35 per cent in wages to the workers.

His next move was to join the peasants at Kheda in Gujarat. The peasants lost their harvest due to excessive rainfall that year. Gandhiji led a no tax campaign there and finally was able to bring a compromise between the government and the peasants.

The success in the three local movements made Gandhiji immensely popular among the common masses. The secret of success of Gandhi was based on truth and non-violence. Further Gandhiji appealed for Hindu Muslim unity and emancipation of the oppressed classes and women. In this way, Gandhiji became an all India leader. By this time he joined Indian National Congress and it was his popular public image which for the first time brought Indian National Congress closer to the common people. It was under the able leadership of Gandhi that people of India came forward to join the national movement which in the long run brought freedom to our country.



ACTIVITY – 12.1

Locate the following places in the map of India

a. Champaran b. Ahmedabad c. Kheda



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Where did Gandhiji started his political career?

……

Q 2: In which year Satyagrah in Champaran took place?

……

12.4 NON CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

We have already discussed about emergence of Gandhi in Indian politics. In this section we will discuss about the Non Co-operation Movement. Gandhiji led this movement against the British and a large number of Indian people joined this movement. While launching this movement Mahatma Gandhi asked the Indian people not to co-operate with the British government until it fulfill their demands.

12.4.1 Rowlatt Act and Jallianwalla Bagh Tragedy

The First World War and its aftermath changed the course of Indian politics. The Indian national leaders supported the British in all their war efforts. They hoped that the British will fulfill their demand of autonomy within the framework of British Empire. But what was given to them by the British was the repressive Rowlatt Act (1919), which was against the wishes of the Indians. The real motive of the British in enacting this act was to deprive the Indians of their right.



LET US KNOW

The main provisions of the Rowlatt Act were - (a) Arrest or deportation of any person on mere suspicion. (b) Trial of all political cases by tribunals to be set up for the purpose. (c) Possession of seditious pamphlets was declared to be a punishable offence.

After the Bill was passed Mahatma Gandhi advised the people to observe *hartal* on 6th April 1919. Gandhiji had applied the weapons of non-violence and Satyagrah among the Indian people. However, in the face of police oppression the volunteers of Satyagraha could not remain non-violent everywhere. Particularly Gandhiji's arrest by the police was highly provocative.

However, the worst happened at Jallianwalla Bagh in Punjab where a protest meeting against deportation of Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew was held on the 13th April, 1919. On that very day about 10,000 peaceful crowds assembled at Jallianwalla Bagh (garden) in Amritsar. When the assembled crowd was listening to the speeches, Brigadier Dyer suddenly opened fire to the crowd without any prior warning. According to various sources about 1000 people were killed and a few hundreds injured in that tragic incident.

The Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy in 1919 had a far reaching impact on the Indian National Movement. The barbarous attack on the people by the British had no parallel in the annals of history. Thousands of Indian people were drawn into the freedom struggle after that historic event.

12.4.2 Khilafat and Non Co-operation Movement

After the First World War, the growing discontent of the Indians against the British rule led to a series of mass movement. Khilafat movement was started by the Muslims of India in 1919. The

main leaders of this movement were Maulana Muhammad Ali, Shaukat Ali etc. The main object of the Khilafat movement was to force the British government to change its attitude towards Turkey. Turkey had joined the First World War against Great Britain. After the defeat of Turkey in the War, the news leaked out that the Allies were thinking of dividing the Turkish Empire. Besides, the Sultan of Turkey, who was the Caliph or the religious head, was humiliated. This led to the Khilafat agitation. A Khilafat Committee was formed and a country wide agitation was organized. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak also joined the movement. They found it to be a good opportunity to bring the Hindus and Muslims together. In 1919, All India Khilafat Conference was held in Delhi where Gandhiji was elected its president. The Khilafat Committee launched Non Co-operation Movement on August, 1920. This was endorsed by the Congress. Finally the demands of the Khilafat committee and the Congress were merged and Gandhiji was asked to lead the movement.

Gandhiji asked the government to express regret on the happenings in Punjab, adopt a lenient attitude towards Turkey and bring about some new scheme of constitutional reforms. When the government did not listen to his demands, the Non Co-operation Movement was launched in 1921.

The people were advised to boycott foreign goods, courts, schools, government functions etc. It meant that Indian people will not co-operate with the government. Besides the people were advised to use Swadeshi goods, engage in spinning and attempt for removal of untouchability and emancipation of women. Gandhiji asked the people to remain non-violent during the course of the movement.

Thousands of people joined the movement. The government also adopted all sorts of repressive measures and the movement could not remain non-violent everywhere. The general mood of the people was quit rebellious. On 5th February, 1922, a Congress

procession at Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur of Uttar Pradesh was fired upon by the police. Angry crowd attacked and burnt the police station causing death of 22 police person. Gandhiji was afraid that the movement might take a violent turn and abruptly call off the movement in 1922.



LET US KNOW

The Khilafat movement took a different turn due to some national and international events. The movement lost its momentum when Kamal Pasha, the progressive ruler of Turkey, rose in revolt against the Sultan and captured power. Thus the Khilafat movement in India came to an end.

Significance of the Movement

- The Indian Nationalist Movement acquired real mass base for the first time with the participation of peasants, workers, students, lawyers, teachers etc.
- The Congress became the organizer and leader of the masses in the freedom struggle.
- It marked the height of Hindu-Muslim unity.



ACTIVITY – 12.2

Prepare a report on Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: In which year Rowlatt act was passed?

.....

Q 4: In which year Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy took place?

.....

Q 5: In which year the Khilafat movement was started in India?

.....

Q 6: Name two leaders of Khilafat Movement.

.....

Q 7: In which year Gandhiji called off the Non Co-operation Movement?

.....

12.5 CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

The Civil disobedience movement started a new era in the history of the national movement in India. When the political discontent was increasing in India, the British Parliament sent the Simon Commission to India on 8thNovember, 1927. The Simon Commission had to go into the question of further constitutional reforms and to submit a report about it. The Commission included only Englishmen and not even a single Indian. Naturally the Indians opposed the Commission vehemently.

In opposition to the appointment of the Simon Commission, all important Indian leaders and parties tried to evolve an alternative scheme of constitutional reforms. Ultimately Nehru Report was finalized on August 1929, chief architect of which was Motilal Nehru. The Nehru Report asked for Dominion Status. However, the All Party Convention held at Calcutta in December 1928, failed to pass the Report because some leaders belong to Muslim league and Sikh League opposed the report.



Purna Swaraj Complete Independ-ence.

It was in the Lahore Session of Congress in 1929 that a resolution was passed declaring *Purna Swaraj* to be the Congress Objective. The Lahore Congress had authorized the Working Committee to launch a programme of Civil Disobedience including the non-payment of taxes. The Congress working Committee authorized Mahatma Gandhi to start Civil Disobedience Movement. On March 12, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi started his famous Dandi March from his Ashram at Sabarmati (Ahmedabad) to Dandi,

a village on the sea coast on Gujarat to break the salt laws. The historic march took twenty five days.

The Movement spread very rapidly. In Bombay, Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madras, etc. illegal salt making started. In North West Frontier Province, Khan Abdul Gaffer Khan led the movement. He was popularly known as 'Frontier Gandhi'. Under his leadership society of '*Khudai Khidmatgars*' was organized. In the North East India Rani Gaidilieu raised the banner of rebellion against the foreign rule.

The British government resorted to merciless repression. The Congress was declared illegal. Thousands of Satyagrahis including Gandhiji and other Congress leaders were arrested.

Figure - 12.2



Dandi March

Source : Google image

Lord Irwin: Lord Irwin was appointed as Viceroy in 1926. During his Vice-royalty Simon Commission was appointed which was boycotted by the Indians. In 1931 Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed and Civil Disobedience Movement was suspended.

- **First Round Table Conference and Gandhi Irwin Pact :** Meanwhile the British government summoned in London in 1930 the First-Round Table conference to discuss the Simon Commission Report. But the National Congress boycotted the conference. The British government now made attempts to negotiate an agreement with the Congress so that they would attend the next Round Table Conference. Finally, Gandhi and Lord Irwin negotiated a settlement in March 1931, which came to be known as Gandhi- Irwin Pact. The Government agreed to release all the political prisoners. The Congress suspended the Civil Disobedience movement and agreed to take part in the Second Round

Table Conference. However, many congress leaders were dissatisfied with the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

- **Second Round Table Conference :** The Second Round Table conference was attended by Gandhiji. He was the sole representative of the Congress. This conference was held in England in September, 1931. Gandhiji was stunned when the British government refused to concede the basic nationalist demand for freedom on the basis of the immediate grant of dominion status. He returned empty handed to India. On his return to India in 1932, Mahatma Gandhi found that the Government had again embarked on its policy of repression. So he re-started Civil Disobedience movement. Once again Congress was declared illegal. Gandhi and other congress volunteers were arrested. Nationalist literature was banned. The government repression succeeded in the end. It created a division among the Indian leaders on communal and other questions. The Congress officially suspended the movement in May 1933 and withdrew it in May 1934.



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The government declared Macdonald award or the 'Communal Award' in 1932. This award was formally announced by the British Prime Minister Ramsay Mac-Donald. It aimed to divide the Hindus by which the depressed classes were to be given separate representation in legislatures.

Significance of Civil Disobedience Movement

- It had the objective of achieving complete independence
- There was wide participation of Women
- It involved deliberate violation of law and was evidently more violent
- It was not marked by the same Hindu- Muslim unity which was witnessed during non-co-operation movement



ACTIVITY -12.1

Locate the following places in the map of India

a. Dandi b. Ahmedabad c. Bombay d. Madras



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: In which year British Parliament sent Simon Commission to India?

.....

Q 9: Lahore Congress session passed the resolution of Purna Swaraj in which year?

.....

Q 10: Who was popularly known as 'Frontier Gandhi'?

.....

Q 11: In which year Gandhi Irwin Pact was signed?

.....

12.6 GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT 1935

On the basis of the discussions in the Round Table Conferences, the British Government prepared the White Paper proposals which formed the basis of the Government of India Act 1935. The Act served as the Constitution of India till it was replaced by the Constitution of Independent India in 1950. The important features of the Act are discussed below–

- **All India Federation:** The Act provided the establishment of an All India Federation made up of the British India provinces and those Indian states which would agree to accede to it. The Federal Government was consisting of Federal Executive and Federal Legislature.
- **Diarchy at Centre:** The Act established diarchy at Centre. The Federal subjects were divided into two parts-Reserved subjects and Transferred subjects, former consisted of Defence, External Affairs, Administration of Tribal areas and Ecclesiastical Affairs, rest of the subjects were known as Transferred subjects.
- **Provincial Autonomy:** The Provinces were to have independent and autonomous status of their own.
- **Division of Subjects:** The Act clearly demarcated the Federal and Provincial subjects. The Federal List embodied all those subjects

on those subjects on which Central Legislature could make laws. The Provincial List contained matters of provincial and local affairs. The Concurrent List contained those subjects on which both Central and Provincial Legislature could make laws.

- **Federal Court:** The Act provided for the establishment of a Federal Court.

Although the Government of India Act 1935 could not satisfy the Indian people, but it is important from the administrative point of view in the Indian history.



12.7 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit, you have learnt about–

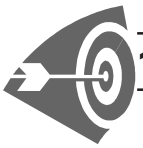
- The first phase of the Congress was dominated by the moderates who believed in constitutional means. Then the extremists came who believed in radical methods.
- the evil seed of Communism too was sown in the Indian soil and the All India Muslim League was formed to counterbalance the Congress party to crush the rising tide of nationalism in Bengal and to incite the feeling of communalism the Bengal was partitioned in 1905. To oppose it the Swadeshi movement was started.
- civil disobedience movement.
- the Government of India Act 1935.



12.8 FURTHER READING

1) Bandyopadhyay, Sekhara. (2004). From *Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India.* New Delhi, India: Orient Longman.
2) Chandra, B., Mukherjee, A., Panikkar, K.N. & Mahajan, S. (Ed.). (1988). *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947.* Delhi, India: Penguin.
3) Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudhuri, H.C. & Datta, K. (1978). *An Advanced History of India* (4th Ed.). New Delhi, India: Macmillan

India



12.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to the question No.1: South Africa

Answer to the question No.2: 1917

Answer to the question No.3: 1919

Answer to the question No.4: 1919

Answer to the question No.5: 1919

Answer to the question No.6: Maulana Muhammad Ali, Saukat Ali

Answer to the question No.7: 1922

Answer to the question No.8: 1927

Answer to the question No.9: 1929

Answer to the question No.10: Khan Abdul Gaffer Khan

Answer to the question No.11:1931



12.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions (Answer each question within 50 words)

Q.1 Why did Gandhi call off the Non Co-operation Movement?

Q.2 Why Simon Commission was opposed by Indians?

Q.3 Who was the chief architect of the Nehru Report?

Q.4 Who announced the Communal Award?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question within 150 words)

Q.1 Write about the significance of the Non Co-operation Movement.

Q.2 Write a short note on Government of India Act 1935.

Q.3 Write a short note on the First Round Table Conference.

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in between 300-500 words)

Q.1 Analyse the role of Gandhi in Indian National Movement.

Q.2 Discuss about the main features of the Government of India Act 1935.

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