



## Gandhi and various national movements

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### Abstract

Mohandas KaramChand Gandhi was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct,1869 at Porbandar in Gujarat. He did his schooling in Gujarat and then went to London where he joined the bar council in the year 1891. In 1893, Gandhi travelled to South Africa for a case but seeing the conditions of black people in South Africa he decided to stay there for next 21 years and kept fighting for the rights of the black people. Another great Leader, Gopal Krishna Gokhale visited South Africa in the year 1892 where he met Gandhi. After meeting Gokhale, Gandhi got so impressed that he decided to make Gokhale as his political Guru. Gandhi left South Africa in the year 1914. Gandhi played a pivotal role in the Indian freedom movement and gave to the country a novel method of opposing by the way of truth and nonviolence. He was undisputed leader of the national movement from 1919 onwards till the time of independence. His appeal worked to unite the country against the Britishers and his movements were able to encourage participation from almost all sections of the society.

**Keywords:** National movement, Apartheid, boycott, Swadeshi, Picketing

### Introduction

Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct,1869 at Porbandar in Gujarat. He did his schooling in Gujarat and then went to London where he joined the bar council in the year 1891. In 1893, Gandhi travelled to South Africa for a case but seeing the conditions of black people in South Africa he decided to stay there for next 21 years and kept fighting for the rights of the black people. Another great Leader, Gopal Krishna Gokhale visited South Africa in the year 1892 where he met Gandhi. After meeting Gokhale, Gandhi got so impressed that he decided to make Gokhale as his political Guru. Gandhi left South Africa in the year 1914 and reached India on 8<sup>th</sup> January,1915 via England and toured the whole country. Gandhi decided to fight for the independence of the country and used his tools of satyagraha and nonviolence to fight against the Britishers. During his tenure in the freedom movement, he launched various movements that helped him unite the country and raise voice against the colonial masters like Non-Cooperation Movement, Civil disobedience movement and Quit India movement. Let us take a look at these movements:

### Non-Cooperation Movement-

In the year 1920, the national movement of India adopted a phase of mass mobilization. Indians witnessed Khilafat movement and Non-Cooperation Movement with a common aim. The khilafat issue came to the forefront as during the first world war, Britishers had fought with Turkey and once the war was over, The Britishers removed the Khalifa from his power in Turkey. It was seen that Indian Muslims regarded the sultan of Turkey as their spiritual leader. Muslims demanded that Khalifa be reinstated to his position. For this purpose, a khilafat committee was constituted in Bombay. A meeting of All India Khilafat Conference was organized on 22<sup>nd</sup> November,1919 in which Hasrat Mohani gave a call to boycott British Goods, titles and Civil services. They also decided not to pay any taxes to the British Government. Khilafat committee again met from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> June,1920 in Allahabad. This meeting

witnessed number of Congress leaders attending it and added demands like Firstly, Nationalization of Education Secondly, Promotion of indigenous industries Thirdly, promotion of khadi Fourthly, schools, colleges and lower courts and other office institutions be boycotted Fifthly, surrendering of all titles and honors that were conferred by the Britishers to the Indians. This movement was launched in the year 1921 at that time country was already facing widespread unrest. In the first phase, significant development took place in the form of many prominent lawyers like Motilal Nehru, C R Das and others giving up their legal practice. The second phase of this movement started from April 1921 and in this phase the main objective was to collect funds for installing twenty lakh charkhas across the country. It is stated that successfully about Rs one crore was collected for the Tilak Swaraj fund. In the month of July third phase of the movement was launched by the way of boycotting foreign clothes and preparing ground for protecting ground for protesting against the visit of Prince of Wales in the year 1921. In November 1921 congress party launched Jail Bhara where voluntary arrests were given by Indians. It is stated that during this movement, the Indian business group came in support of Gandhi as the use of swadeshi products resulted in boom for textile industry. In educational institutions like Kashi Vidyapeeth, Jamia Millia Islamia and other educational institutions many students joined thereby leaving behind schools and colleges. Women members played an important role by becoming volunteers in this movement and even offered their jewellery for the Tilak Fund. In villages, many farmers revolted against landlords and traders. An untoward incident was witnessed when police opened fire at congress workers in chauri chaura in Uttar Pradesh that infuriated the people who in turn killed twenty-one police personnel and torched the police station. It was an unexpected turn for the movement as Gandhian tools were of truth and non-violence. He decided to suspend the Non-Cooperation Movement. In response he also initiated a five day fast. Gandhi was arrested and put in jail on 10<sup>th</sup> March,1922 and was awarded a six-year imprisonment. This brought non-cooperation movement to an end.

### **Civil Disobedience movement.**

In the year 1930, Gandhi launched his civil disobedience movement. The main objective of this movement was:

1. People should break the salt law.
2. Those who are in government service should resign.
3. Students should not attend schools and colleges run by the British Government.
4. Nonpayment of taxes by the people to the movement.
5. Liquor vends should be closed and women members should stage dharna at the liquor vends.

With these objectives, Gandhi started his march on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1930 from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi beach along with 78 other members who broke the salt law. It was stated that Gandhi had chosen this salt issue due to the universal appeal to the Indian as salt has no divisive social implication and salt was a necessity for the people of the country. Britishers had already ruined the indigenous salt production in the coastal areas. This movement by Gandhi gave a clear message

to the people as to how a nonviolent struggle can be launched thereby sharing disobedience towards the British Government. Government was also in puzzle as it dented their image of being poor savior. During this movement about 92000 people were sent to jail and courted arrests. Business community again supported this movement and merchants in India pledged to give up import of foreign goods for few months that led to drastic reduction in import of British clothes from 1248 million to 523 million yards within a span of two years from 1929-1931. A notable feature of this movement was widespread participation of women members. Gandhi's saintly image inspired the women members and at that time it was seen as the one joining the independence movements was more of a religious mission. This movement was temporarily suspended due to the two round table conference where Gandhi could not achieve the said goals as a result of which this movement was restored. British government undertook repressive action and 12,000 people were sent to jail within first three months of the movement. Gandhi was also sent to jail where in he decided to temporarily suspend civil Disobedience Movement in May 1933 and formally withdrew it in the year 1934.

### **Quit India Movement.**

As the second world war broke on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939, Britishers found themselves engulfed in war and having met strong opposition within and outside India, they started looking for an amicable settlement with India and obtain her active support in the war. Britishers decided to send Cripps mission to India with certain proposals like immediately after the second world war, the dominion status would be granted with the right to secede. Cripps mission also proposed that a constitution making body will be formed in India with British India members from the native states. Further mentioned that any Indian province if so, desires can directly negotiate with the Britishers and keep itself away from the Indian union. Lastly, it was also stated that actual control of military and defense operation will remain with the British government only. Gandhi ji was not satisfied with the proposal and almost all other political parties rejected the proposals of Cripps mission. It was stated that future promises are not needed but the action program is required with the demand for responsible government having full powers and a total control over the defense of the nation. Gandhi termed the proposal as "a

post-dated cheque on a crashing bank". Henceforth, a meeting of AICC was convened to dwell upon the future action and on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1942 AICC passed Quit India Resolution. He appealed to the Britishers to "leave India in the God's hand" and to the Indians he gave the message of do or die. Britishers took strong note of it and on 9<sup>th</sup> August, 1942 Britishers arrested Gandhi and all other prominent members of the Congress party. This arbitrary arrest shook the nation and people started gathering on the roads. Hartals, demonstration and processions were witnessed all over the country. While Gandhi had called for a nonviolent protest people devised their own ways of making an impact and started attacking police stations, government buildings and another establishment. Railway lines were sabotaged, telephone lines were cut and electric poles were brought down. Many workers also went on trike and disrupted road and rail traffic. Such was the impact of the movement that government lost all control in various areas and people established swaraj. Like in Satara in Maharashtra a parallel government was established, in Bengal taluka Jatiya Sarkar started working, Swaraj was established in Talcher in Orissa and many parts of eastern UP like Balia, Muzaffarpur and Azamgarh people took control of the police station. This movement was very effective in rural areas and got a massive response. Leaders like Aruna Asaf Ali and Usha Mehta played an active role. British government wanted to suppress the movement and undertook various measures like arresting 91,836 people by the end of 1943. In Midnapore, British govt officials burnt 31 congress camps and many private houses also. Mass rapes were committed by police personnel in village areas. Fines were also extracted from the residents in the various provinces and data suggest that only in UP alone Rs 28,32,000 was collected by the way of fines. Due to repressive measure of the Britishers, the Quit India movement collapsed but gave a wakeup call to the Britishers about determination of Indians freedom fighters to get complete independence. Concludingly, it is stated that Gandhi played a pivotal role in the Indian freedom movement and gave to the country a novel method of opposing by the way of truth and nonviolence. He was undisputed leader of the national movement from 1919 onwards till the title of independence. His appeal worked to unite the country against the Britishers and his movements were able to encourage participation from almost all sections of the society. Gandhi made a social impact on the freedom struggle in India. One of the greatest actions undertaken by him was to unite the country for the freedom struggle. It is stated that while Moderates could not achieve their target as masses did not join them while extremists failed as elite section did not support them. The success of Gandhi lies in uniting the country and attaining freedom for the country.

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