

Nationalism in India

The Nationalist Movement of India – An Introduction

Rise of nationalism in India was linked with opposition of colonialism.

The First World War created a new political and economic situation in India.

The Indian freedom movement geared up momentum once again with the coming of Mahatma Gandhi in 1915.

Satyagraha – Satyagraha – Ideals and Implementation

Satyagraha was a method of mass agitation founded on the sound belief of non-violence as a tool of protest.

Mahatma Gandhi knew that India could never match the British in military strength so he adopted the concept of Satyagraha.

Mahatma Gandhi successfully organized Satyagraha Movements in Champaran in Bihar, and Kheda and Ahmadabad in Gujarat.



Rowlatt Act and Jallianwallah Bagh Massacre

The Rowlatt Act aimed to curb the political activities in the country and it equipped the courts with the power to detain.

In opposition to the Rowlatt Act Mahatma Gandhi initiated a civil disobedience movement.

Several people were killed in Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre in Amritsar. This incident had happened under the command of General Dyer.

Launch of Non-Cooperation Movement

Mahatma Gandhi believed in Swaraj. He suggested that if Indians resolved not to cooperate with the British, the British rule would get abolished.

Mahatma Gandhi proposed a stage by stage strategy for the successful implementation of the Non-cooperation Movement.

After a lot of debates Congress confirmed the Non-cooperation movement to attain Swaraj.

Non-cooperation Movements in Towns and Countryside

The Non-cooperation movement got an active response from all sections of the society.



In towns, people boycotted British goods and British Institutions.

The movement slowed down in the towns because there were no alternative Indian Institutions solutions to counter the British.

The movement spread to the rural areas where it coincided with the struggle of the oppressed peasants and tribal.

The peasants and the tribal movements digressed from Mahatma Gandhi's ideals and developed a violent streak.

Non-Cooperation Movement in Plantations

Non-Cooperation movement started as a non-violent resistance of the British rule but over the time it became violent.

The plantation workers ascribed their own meaning to Swaraj and the Non-Cooperation Movement.

The plantation workers worked under very strict rules and regulations and were seldom allowed to visit their homes.

Inspired by the Non-Cooperation Movement thousands of workers disobeyed the British authorities and left the plantations to go back to their homes.

The workers were caught by the police and beaten mercilessly.

Simon Commission and the Civil Disobedience Movement

In February 1922, Mahatma Gandhi decided to take back the Non-cooperation Movement due to widespread violence.



The Simon Commission was a statutory Commission which aimed at looking into the constitutional system of India and suggests changes.

Congress and other parties protested against the Simon Commission.

Mahatma Gandhi viewed the tax on salt and the monopoly of the Government on its production as downright oppressive.

Mahatma Gandhi launched a Civil Movement a salt March from Sabarmati Ashram to the coastal town of Dandi.

On reaching Dandi on 6th April, Mahatma Gandhi broke the salt law and the Indians began manufacturing their own salt.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact and Round Table Conference

The British Government clamped down on the Congress Leaders and protestors in the Civil Disobedience Movement.

In 1931, Mahatma Gandhi decided to call off the Civil Disobedience Movement and entered into a pact with Lord Irwin.

Mahatma Gandhi attended the Round Table Conference but the negotiations failed in the Conference.

Mahatma Gandhi re-launched the Civil Disobedience Movement but by 1934 the movement died out.



Attitude of Different Sections of Society

The rich peasants participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement to protest against revenue, when their demands were not taken up by the Congress they took back their support.

Congress was hesitant to support the No-rent campaign of tenants for the fear of alienating the rich peasants.

The industrial working class adopted a few Gandhian ideas selectively to support their movements against low wages and poor working condition.

The failure of the Second Round Table Conference and the growth of socialist ideas in Congress disappointed the business class who had supported the movement.

Personification of Indian Nationalism

People of different regions of India felt a collective belonging because they had participated together in freedom struggles against the common aggressor – The British.

In the 20th century, Indian nation was conceptualized visually as Bharat Mata. Over the years, this representation went through a lot of changes.

Revival of the Indian Folklore and interpretation of history also contributed to the growth of nationalism.

Indians explored glories from the past and viewed the Colonial British era as an opposition to it.

