

Context

""In 1857, British rule witnessed the biggest challenge to its existence. Initially, it began as a mutiny of Bengal presidency sepoys but later expanded to the other parts of India involving a large number of civilians, especially peasants. The events of 1857–58 are significant for the following reasons: 1. This was the first major revolt of armed forces accompanied by civilian rebellion. 2. The revolt witnessed unprecedented violence, perpetrated by both sides. 3. The revolt ended the role of the East India Company and the governance of the Indian subcontinent was taken over by the British Crown.

(a) Causes

1. Annexation Policy of British India

In the 1840s and 1850s, more territories were annexed through two major policies: The Doctrine of Paramountcy. British claimed themselves as paramount, exercising supreme authority. New territories were annexed on the grounds that the native rulers were inept. and the Doctrine of Lapse. If a native ruler did not have male heir to the throne, the territory was to 'lapse' into British India upon the death of the ruler. Satara, Sambalpur, parts of the Punjab, Jhansi and Nagpur were annexed by the British through the Doctrine of Lapse.

2. Insensitivity to Indian Cultural Sentiments

In 1806 the sepoys at Vellore mutinied against the new dress code, which prohibited Indians from wearing religious marks on their foreheads and having whiskers on their chin, while proposing to replace their turbans with a round hat. It was feared that the dress code was part of their effort to convert soldiers to Christianity. Similarly, in 1824, the sepoys at Barrackpur near Calcutta refused to go to Burma by sea, since crossing the sea meant the loss of their caste. The sepoys were also upset with discrimination in salary and promotion. Indian sepoys were paid much less than their European counterparts. They felt humiliated and racially abused by their seniors.

(b) The Revolt of 1857

The precursor to the revolt was the circulation of rumors about the cartridges of the new Enfield rifle. There was strong suspicion that the new cartridges had been greased with cow and pig fat. The cartridge had to be bitten off before loading (pork is forbidden to the Muslims and the cow is sacred to a large section of Hindus). On 29 March a sepoy named Mangal Pandey assaulted his European officer. His fellow soldiers refused to arrest him when ordered to do so. Mangal Pandey along with others were court-martialled and hanged. This only fuelled the anger and in the following days there were increasing incidents of disobedience. Burning and arson were reported from the army cantonments in Ambala, Lucknow, and Meerut. ""

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""Bahadur Shah Proclaimed as Emperor of Hindustan

On 11 May 1857 a band of sepoys from Meerut marched to the Red Fort in Delhi. The sepoys were followed by an equally exuberant crowd who gathered to ask the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II to become their leader. After much hesitation he accepted the offer and was proclaimed as the Shahenshah-e-Hindustan (the Emperor of Hindustan). Soon the rebels captured the north-western province and Awadh. As the news of the fall of Delhi reached the Ganges valley, cantonment after

cantonment mutinied till, by the beginning of June, British rule in North India, except in Punjab and Bengal, had disappeared.

Civil Rebellion in 1857

The mutiny was equally supported by an aggrieved rural society of north India. Sepoys working in the British army were in fact peasants in uniform. They were equally affected by the restructuring of the revenue administration. The sepoy revolt and the subsequent civil rebellion in various parts of India had a deep-rooted connection with rural mass. The first civil rebellion broke out in parts of the North-Western provinces and Oudh. These were the two regions from which the sepoys were predominately recruited. A large number of Zamindars and Taluqdars were also attracted to the rebellions as they had lost their various privileges under the British government. The talukdar-peasant collective was a common effort to recover what they had lost. Similarly, artisans and handicrafts persons were equally affected by the dethroning of rulers of many Indian states, who were a major source of patronage. The dumping of British manufactures had ruined the Indian handicrafts and thrown thousands of weavers out of employment. Collective anger against the British took the form of a people's revolt.

Prominent Fighters against the British in 1857

The mutiny provided a platform to aggrieved kings, nawabs, queens, and zamindars to express the anti-British anger. Nana Sahib, the adopted son of the last Peshwa Baji Rao II, provided leadership in the Kanpur region. He had been denied pension by the Company. Similarly, Begum Hazrat Mahal in Lucknow and Khan Bahadur in Bareilly took the command of their respective territories, which were once ruled either by them or by their ancestors. Another such significant leader was Rani Lakshmi Bai, who assumed the leadership in Jhansi. In her case Dalhousie, the Governor General of Bengal had refused her request to adopt a son as her successor after her husband died and the kingdom was annexed under the Doctrine of Lapse. Rani Lakshmi Bai battled the mighty British Army until she was defeated. Bahadur Shah Jafar, Kunwar Singh, Khan Bahadur, Rani Lakshmi Bai and many others were rebels against their will, compelled by the bravery of the sepoys who had defied the British authority."

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""Suppression of Rebellion of 1857

By the beginning of June 1857, the Delhi, Meerut, Rohilkhand, Agra, Allahabad and Banaras divisions of the army had been restored to British control and placed under martial law.

Causes of Failure of Rebellion of 1857

There is hardly any evidence to prove that the rebellion of 1857 was organised and planned. It was spontaneous. However, soon after the siege of Delhi, there was an attempt to seek the support of the neighboring states. Besides a few Indian states, there was a general lack of enthusiasm among the Indian princes to participate in the rebellion. The Indian princes and zamindars either remained loyal or were fearful of British power. Those involved in the rebellion were left with either little or no sources of arms and ammunition. The emerging English-educated middle class too did not support the rebellion. One of the important reasons for the failure of the rebellion was the absence of a central authority. There was no common agenda that united the individuals and the aspirations of the Indian princes and the various other feudal elements fighting against the British. In the end, the

rebellion was brutally suppressed by the British army. The rebel leaders were defeated due to the lack of weapons, organisation, discipline, and betrayal by their aides. Delhi was captured by the British troops in late 1857. Bahadur Shah was captured and transported to Burma.

India Becomes a Crown Colony

The British Parliament adopted the Indian Government Act, in November 1858, and India was pronounced as one of the many crown colonies to be directly governed by the Parliament. The responsibility was given to a member of the cabinet, designated as the Secretary of State for India.

Changes in the Administration

British rule and its policies underwent a major overhaul after 1857. British followed a cautious approach to the issue of social reform. Queen Victoria proclaimed to the Indian people that the British would not interfere in traditional institutions and religious matters. It was promised that Indians would be absorbed in government services. Two significant changes were made to the structure of the Indian army. The number of Indians was significantly reduced. Indians were restrained from holding important ranks and position. The British took control of the artillery and shifted their recruiting effort to regions and communities that remained loyal during 1857. For instance, the British turned away from Rajputs, Brahmins and North Indian Muslims and looked towards non-Hindu groups like the Gorkhas, Sikhs, and Pathans. British also exploited the caste, religious, linguistic and regional differences in the Indian society through what came to be known as "Divide and Rule" policy."""

""Indigo Revolt 1859-60

Before synthetic dyes were created, natural indigo dye was highly valued by cloth makers around the world. Many Europeans employed peasants to grow the indigo, which was processed into dye at the planters factories. The dye was then exported to Europe. The peasants were forced to grow the crop. The British planter gave the cultivator a cash advance to help pay for the rent of the land and other costs. This advance needed to be repaid with interest. The planters forced the peasant grow indigo, rather than food crops. At the end of the season, the planters paid the cultivators low prices for their indigo. Moreover, the small amount the peasant earned was not enough to pay back the cash advance with interest. So they fell into debt. However, the peasants again would be forced to enter into another contract to grow indigo. The peasants were never able to clear their debts. Debts were often passed from father to son. The Indigo Revolt began in 1859. The rebellion began as a strike, as the peasants of a village in Bengal's Nadia district refused to grow any more indigo. The movement quickly spread to the other indigo-growing districts of Bengal. The revolt then turned violent. The peasants, both Hindu and Muslim, participated in the revolt, and women—armed with pots and pans—fought alongside the men. Indian journalists in Calcutta wrote articles about the brutality of the planters. The 1860 play Nil Darpan ("Mirror of the Indigo") by Dina Bandhu Mitra, did much to draw attention in India and Europe to the plight of the indigo growers.

Deccan Riots 1875

Heavy taxation ruined agriculture. Famine deaths increased. The first recorded incident of rioting against the moneylenders in the Deccan was in May 1875, in Supa a village near Poona. Similar cases of riots were reported from close to 30 villages in Poona and Ahmadnagar. The rioting was directed mostly at the Gujarat moneylenders. Under British rule peasants were forced to pay revenue directly to the government. Also, under a new law moneylenders were allowed to attach the mortgaged land

of the defaulters and auction it off. This resulted in a transfer of lands from the cultivators to the non-cultivating classes. Trapped in the vicious cycle of debt and unable to pay the outstanding amount the peasant was forced to abandon cultivation."""

""Rise of Nationalism

The second half of the 19th century saw the emergence of national political consciousness among a new social class of English educated Indians. The Indian intelligentsia played a critical role in generating a national consciousness by exposing a large number of people to the idea of nation, nationalism and various democratic aspirations. The flourishing of print media both in the vernacular and in English played a significant role in circulating such ideas. Even though they were numerically small they had a national character and capacity to establish contacts on an all India scale. They were working as lawyers, journalists, government employees, teachers or doctors. They took the initiative to float political outfits, such as Madras Native Association (1852), East India Association (1866), Madras Mahajana Sabha (1884), Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (1870), The Bombay Presidency Association (1885) and many others.

Economic Critique of Colonialism

One of the most significant contributions of early Indian nationalists was the formulation of an economic critique of colonialism. Dadabhai Naoroji, Justice Ranade, and Romesh Chandra Dutt, played a significant role in making this criticism about colonial economy. They clearly understood that the prosperity of the British lay in the economic and political subjugation of India. They concluded that colonialism was the main obstacle to the Indian's economic development.

Objectives and Methods

The formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was intended to establish an all India organisation. It was the culmination of attempts by groups of educated Indians politically active in three presidencies: Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. A.O. Hume lent his services to facilitate the formation of the Congress. Womash Chandra Banarjee was the first President (1885) Indian National Congress. The first session of the Indian National Congress was held on 28 December 1885. The early objectives were to develop and consolidate sentiments of national unity; but also professed loyalty to Britain. The techniques included appeals, petitions and delegations to Britain, all done within a constitutional framework. Some of the key demands were creation of legislative councils at provincial and central level, increasing the number of elected members in the legislative council, separating judicial and executive functions, reducing military expenditure, reduction of Home Charges, extension of trial by jury, holding civil services exams in India as well as in England, police reforms, reconsideration of forest laws, promotion of Indian industries, and an end to unfair tariffs and excise duties.

Militant Nationalism

The methods of moderate leaders failed to yield any substantive change in the British attitude towards the moderate demands of early Indian nationalists. They were criticised by a group of leaders known as "extremists". Instead of prayers and petitions, these militants were more focused on self-help."""

""Partition of Bengal

Partition of Bengal in 1905 was the most unpopular of all. The partition led to widespread protests all across India, starting a new phase of the Indian national movement. The idea of partition was devised to suppress the political activities against the British rule in Bengal by creating a Hindu-Muslim divide.

Hindu–Muslim Divide

It was openly stated that the objective of partition was to curtail Bengali influence and weaken the nationalist movement. By placing Bengal under two administrative units Curzon reduced the Bengali - speaking people to a linguistic minority in a divided Bengal. Curzon assured Muslims that in the new province of East Bengal Muslims would enjoy a unity, which they never enjoyed since the days of the Mughals. Instead of dividing the Bengali people along the religious line partition united them. The growth of regional language newspapers played a role in building a sense of proud Bengali identity.

Anti- Partition Movement

With the failure to annul the partition moderate leaders were forced to rethink their strategy and look for new techniques of protest. The boycott of British goods was one such method. However, the agenda of Swadeshi Movement was still restricted to secure an annulment of partition and the moderates were very much against utilising the campaign to start a full-fledged passive resistance. The militant nationalists, on the other hand, were in favour of extending the movement beyond Bengal and to initiate a full-scale mass struggle.

The day Bengal was officially partitioned – 16 Oct 1905 – was declared as a day of mourning. Thousands of people took bath in the Ganga and marched on the streets of Calcutta singing Bande Mataram. ""

""Boycott and Swadeshi Movement in Bengal (1905–1911)

Boycott and swadeshi were always interlinked to each other and part of the wider plan to make India self-sufficient. Four major trends can be discerned during the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal were

1. The Moderate Trend
2. Constructive Swadeshi
3. Militant Nationalism
4. Revolutionary terrorism

Constructive Swadeshi

The constructive programmes largely stressed upon self-help. It focused on building alternative institutions of self-governance that would operate free of British control. Swadeshi shops sprang all over the place selling textiles, handlooms, soaps, earthenware, match and leather goods.

Passive Resistance

From 1906 the Swadeshi Movement took a turn. Under this new direction, the swadeshi programme included four points: boycott of foreign goods, boycott of government schools and colleges, courts, titles and government services, development of Swadeshi industries, national schools, recourse to armed struggle if British repression went beyond the limits of endurance.

Militant Nationalism

Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab, Bala Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra and Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal were three prominent leaders during the Swadeshi period and were referred to as Lal-Bal-Pal triumvirate. Punjab, Bengal, and Maharashtra emerged as the hotbed of militant nationalism during the Swadeshi Movement. In South India Tuticorin became the most important location of Swadeshi activity with the launch of a Swadeshi Steam Navigation company by V.O. Chidambaranar.

Swaraj or Political Independence

One of the common goals of the extremist leaders was to achieve Swaraj or Self Rule. However, the leaders differed on the meaning of Swaraj. For Tilak Swaraj was the attainment of complete autonomy and total freedom from foreign rule. ""

""Home Rule Movement (1916–1918)

The Indian national movement was revived and also radicalised during the Home Rule Movement (1916-1918), led by Lokamanya Tilak and Annie Besant. World War I and Indian's participation in it was the background for the Home Rule League. When Britain declared war against Germany in 1914, the moderate and liberal leadership extended their support to the British cause. It was hoped that, in return, the British government would give self-government after the war. Indian troops were sent to several theatres of World War. But the British administration remained non-committal to such goals. What was seen as a British betrayal to the Indian cause of self-government led to a fresh call for a mass movement to pressurise the British government.

Objectives of the Home Rule Movement

To attain self-government within the British Empire by using constitutional means.

To obtain the status of dominion, a political position accorded later to Australia, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand.

To use non-violent constitutional methods to achieve their goals.

Lucknow Pact (1916)

The Home Rule Movement and the subsequent reunion of moderate and the militant nationalists opened the possibility of fresh talks with the Muslims. Under the Lucknow Pact (1916), the Congress and the Muslim League agreed that there should be self-government in India as soon as possible. In return, the Congress leadership accepted the concept of separate electorate for Muslims.

British Response

As the demand for Swaraj was raised by Tilak and Annie Besant that gained popularity, the British used the same old ploy to isolate the leaders by repressing their activities. In 1919 the British government announced the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms which promised gradual progress of India towards self-government. This caused deep disappointment to Indian nationalists. In a further blow the government enacted what was called the Rowlatt Act which provided for arbitrary arrest and strict punishment. ""

""Mahatma Gandhi arrived in India in 1915 from South Africa after fighting for the civil rights of the Indians there for about twenty years. He brought with him a new impulse to Indian politics. He introduced satyagraha, which he had perfected in South Africa, that could be practiced by men and women, young and old. As a person dedicated to the cause of the poorest of the poor, he instantly gained the goodwill of the masses. In this lesson we shall see how Gandhi transformed the Indian National Movement.

Evolution of Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2 October 1869 into a well to do family in Porbandar, Gujarat. His father Kaba Gandhi was the Diwan of Porbandar and later became the Diwan of Rajkot. His mother Putlibai, influenced the young Gandhi. After passing the matriculation examination, Gandhi sailed to England in 1888 to study law. After becoming a barrister in June 1891 Gandhi returned to India as a firm believer in British sense of justice and fair play. On returning to India, Gandhi's attempt to practice in Bombay failed. It was during this time that a Gujarati firm in South Africa, sought the services of Gandhi for assistance in a law-suit. Gandhi accepted the offer and left for South Africa in April 1893. Gandhi faced racial discrimination for the first time in South Africa. On his journey from Durban to Pretoria, at the Pietermaritzburg railway station, he was physically thrown out of the first class compartment. Gandhi was determined to fight.

Gandhi called a meeting of the Indians in the Transvaal and exhorted them to form an association to seek redress of their grievances. He continued to hold such meetings, petitioned to the authorities about the injustices which were in violation of their own laws. Indians in the Transvaal had to pay a poll tax of £ 3, could not own land except in areas marked for them, and could not move outdoors after 9 p.m. without a permit. He launched a struggle against such unjust laws. Gandhi was introduced to the works of Tolstoy and John Ruskin. He was deeply influenced by Tolstoy's The Kingdom of God is Within You, Ruskin's Unto this Last and Thoreau's Civil Disobedience. Gandhi's ideas were formed due to a blend of Indian and Western thought. Despite being deeply influenced by Western thinkers he was highly critical of Western civilisation and industrialisation. Inspired by Ruskin, Gandhi established the Phoenix Settlement (1905) and the Tolstoy Farm (1910). Equality, community living and dignity of labour were inculcated in these settlements. They were training grounds for the satyagrahis.

Satyagraha as a Strategy in South Africa Gandhi developed satyagraha (devotion to the truth, truth-force) as a strategy, in which campaigners went on peaceful marches and presented themselves for arrest in protest against unjust laws. He experimented with it for fighting the issues of immigration and racial discrimination. Meetings were held and registration offices of immigrants were picketed. Even when the police let loose violence no resistance was offered by the satyagrahis. Gandhi and other leaders were arrested. Indians, mostly indentured labourers turned hawkers continued the struggle despite police brutality. Finally, by the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement the poll tax on indentured labourers was abolished.""

""Champan Satyagraha

In Champan in Bihar the tinkathia system was practiced. Under this exploitative system the peasants were forced by the European planters to cultivate indigo on three-twentieths of their land holdings. Towards the end of nineteenth century German synthetic dyes had forced indigo out of the market. The European planters of Champan, while realising the necessity of relieving the cultivators of the obligation of cultivating indigo, wanted to turn the situation to their advantage.

They enhanced the rent and collected illegal dues as a price for the release of cultivators from the obligation. Resistance erupted. Rajkumar Shukla, an agriculturist from Champaran who suffered hardships of the system, prevailed on Gandhi to visit Champaran. On reaching Champaran, Gandhi was asked by the police to leave immediately. When he refused he was summoned for trial. The news spread like wild fire and thousands swarmed the place in support of Gandhi. According to Gandhi, "The country thus had its first object-lesson in Civil Disobedience". He was assisted by Brajkishore Prasad, a lawyer by profession, and Rajendra Prasad, who became the first President of independent India. The Lieutenant Governor eventually formed a committee with Gandhi as a member which recommended the abolition of the tinkathia system, thereby ending the oppression of the peasants by the Indigo Planters.

The success of Champaran satyagraha, followed by his fruitful intervention in Ahmedabad mill strike (1918) and the Kheda Satyagraha (1918) helped Gandhi establish himself as a leader of mass struggle. Unlike earlier leaders, Gandhi demonstrated his ability to mobilise the common people across the country."""

""Rowlatt Satyagraha and Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

The Government of India Act 1919, however, caused disappointment, as it did not transfer real power to the Indians. Besides, the government began to enforce the permanent extension of war time restrictions. The Rowlatt Act was enacted which provided for excessive police powers, arrest without warrant and detention without trial. Gandhi called it a 'Black Act' and in protest called for a nation-wide satyagraha on 6 April 1919. It was to be a non-violent struggle with fasting and prayer, and it was the earliest anti-colonial struggle spread across the country. The anti-Rowlatt protest was intense in Punjab, especially in Amritsar and Lahore. Gandhi was arrested and prevented from visiting Punjab. On 9 April two prominent local leaders Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal were arrested in Amritsar.

General Dyer's Brutality

On 13 April 1919 a public meeting was arranged at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. As it happened to be Baisaki day (spring harvest festival of Sikhs) the villagers had assembled there in thousands. General Reginald Dyer, on hearing of the assemblage, surrounded the place with his troops and an armoured vehicle. The only entrance to the park that was surrounded on all sides by high walls was blocked, and firing took place without any warning. The firing lasted for ten minutes till the troops ran out of ammunition. According to official report 379 were killed and more than thousand injured. Unofficial estimates put the toll at more than a thousand. After the incident martial law was declared and many people in the Punjab especially Amritsar were flogged and forced to crawl on the streets. The brutality enraged Indians. Rabindranath Tagore returned his knighthood. Gandhi surrendered his Kaiser-i-Hind medal.

Khilafat Movement

The First World War came to an end in 1918. The Caliph of Turkey, who was considered the head of Muslims of the world, was given a harsh treatment. A movement was started called Khilafat Movement led by the Ali brothers, Maulana Mohamed Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali. Gandhi supported the movement and saw in it an opportunity to unite Hindus and Muslims. He presided over the All India Khilafat Conference held at Delhi in November 1919. Gandhi supported Shaukat Ali's proposal of three national slogans, Allaho Akbar, Bande Mataram and Hindu-Muslamanki Jai.

The Khilafat Committee meeting in Allahabad on 9 June 1920 adopted Gandhi's non-violent non-cooperation programme. Non-Cooperation was to begin on 1 August 1920."""

""Non-Cooperation Movement

The Indian National Congress approved the non-cooperation movement in a special session held in Calcutta on September 1920. It was subsequently passed in the Nagpur Session held on December 1920, Chaired by Salem C.Vijayaraghavachariar. The programme of non-cooperation included:

1. Surrender of all titles of honours and honorary offices.
2. Non-participation in government functions.
3. Suspension of practice by lawyers, and settlement of court disputes by private arbitration.
4. Boycott of government schools by children and parents.
5. Boycott of the legislature created under the 1919 Act.
6. Non-participation in government parties and other official functions.
7. Refusal to accept any civil or military post.
8. Boycott of foreign goods and spreading the doctrine of Swadeshi.

No-Tax Campaign and Chauri Chaura Incident

Gandhi announced a no-tax campaign in Bardoli in February 1922. These movements greatly enhanced Gandhi's reputation as a national leader, especially the peasants. Gandhi made a nation-wide tour. Wherever he visited there was a bonfire of foreign cloth. Thousands left government jobs, students gave up their studies in large numbers and the lawyers gave up thriving practices. Boycott of British goods and institutions were effective. The boycott of the Prince of Wales' visit to India was successful. On 5 February 1922 a procession of the nationalists in Chauri Chaura, a village near Gorakhpur in present-day Uttar Pradesh provoked by the police turned violent. The police finding themselves outnumbered shut themselves inside the police station. The mob burnt the police station 22 policemen lost their lives. Gandhi immediately withdrew the movement."""

""Swarajists

Meanwhile Congress was divided into two groups viz. pro-changers and no-changers. Some of the Congressmen led by Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das wanted to contest the elections and enter the legislature. They argued that the national interest could be promoted by working in the Legislative Councils under Dyarch and wrecking the colonial government within. They were called the pro-changers. Staunch followers of Gandhi like Vallabhbhai Patel, C. Rajaji and others, known as no-changers, wanted to continue non-cooperation with the government. Despite the opposition C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru formed the Swaraj Party on 1 January 1923, which was later approved by a special session of the Congress. Swaraj Party members were elected in large numbers to the Imperial Legislative Assembly and the various Provincial Legislative Councils. They effectively used the legislature as a platform for propagation of nationalist ideas. In Bengal, they refused to take charge of transferred subjects, as they did not want to cooperate with the government. They exposed the true

nature of the colonial government. However, the Swaraj Party began to decline after the death of its leader C.R. Das in 1925.

Dyarchy, a system of dual government introduced under the Government of India Act 1919, divided the powers of the provincial government into Reserved and Transferred subjects. The Reserved Subjects comprising finance, defence, the police, justice, land revenue, and irrigation were in the hands of the British. The Transferred Subjects that included local self-government, education, public health, public works, agriculture, forests and fisheries were left under the control of Indian ministers. The system ended with the introduction of provincial autonomy in 1935.

Constructive Programme of Gandhi

After the Chauri Chaura incident, Gandhi felt that the volunteers and the people had to be trained for a non-violent struggle. As a part of this effort he focused on promoting Khadi, Hindu-Muslim unity and the abolition of untouchability. He exhorted the Congressmen, "Go throughout your districts and spread the message of Khaddar, the message of Hindu- Muslim unity, the message of anti-untouchability and take up in hand the youth of the country and make them the real soldiers of Swaraj." He made it compulsory for all Congress members to wear khaddar. The All India Spinner's Association was formed."""

""Boycott of Simon Commission

On 8 November 1927, the British Government announced the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission. Composed of seven members headed by Sir John Simon it came to be widely known as the Simon Commission. It was an all-white commission with no Indian member. Indians were angered that they had been denied the right to decide their own constitution. All sections of India including the Congress and the Muslim League decided to boycott the commission. Wherever the Commission went there were protests, and black flag marches with the slogan 'Go Back Simon'. The protesters were brutally assaulted by the police. In one such assault in Lahore, Lal Lajpat Rai was seriously injured and died a few days later.

Nehru Report

The Simon boycott united the different political parties in India. An all party conference was held in 1928 with the objective to frame a constitution for India as an alternative to the Simon Commission proposals. A committee under the leadership of Motilal Nehru was formed to outline the principles on the basis of which the constitution was to be drafted. The committee's report, known as the Nehru Report, recommended,

Dominion status for India.

Elections of the Central Legislature and the Provincial Legislatures on the basis of joint and mixed electorates.

Reservation of seats for Muslims in the Central Legislature and in provinces where they are in a minority and for the Hindus in North-West Frontier Province where they were in a minority.

Provision of fundamental rights, and universal adult franchise.

Jinnah proposed an amendment to the reservation of seats in the Central Legislature. He demanded that one-third of the seats be reserved for Muslims. Tej Bahadur Sapru supported him and pleaded that it would make no big difference. However, it was defeated in the All Party Conference. Later he

proposed a resolution which came to be known as Jinnah's Fourteen Points. However, it was also rejected. Jinnah who was hailed as Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity thereafter changed his stand and began to espouse the cause of a separate nation for Muslims. ""

"" Meanwhile some congressmen were not satisfied with dominion status and wanted to demand complete independence. In the Congress session held in Lahore in December 1929 with Jawaharlal Nehru as the President, Poorna Swaraj was declared as the goal. It was also decided to boycott the Round Table Conference and launch a Civil Disobedience Movement. 26 January 1930 was declared as Independence Day and a pledge was taken all over the country to attain Poorna Swaraj non-violently through civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes. The Indian National Congress authorised Gandhi to launch the movement.

Salt Satyagraha Movement

A charter of demands presented to the Viceroy Lord Irwin with an ultimatum to comply by 31 January 1930 included:

Reduction of expenditure on army and civil services by 50%

Introduction of total prohibition of liquor

Release of all political prisoners

Reduction of land revenue by 50%

Abolition of salt tax.

When the Viceroy did not respond to the charter of demands, Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement. The inclusion of abolition of salt tax was a brilliant tactical decision. At the break of dawn on 12 March 1930 Gandhi set out from Sabarmati Ashram with 78 of its inmates. The procession became larger and larger when hundreds joined them along the march. At the age of 61 Gandhi covered a distance of 241 miles in 24 days to reach Dandi at sunset on 5 April 1930. The next morning, he took a lump of salt breaking the salt law.

In Tamil Nadu, C. Rajaji led a similar salt march from Tiruchirappalli to Vedaranyam. Salt marches took place in Kerala, Andhra and Bengal. In the North West Frontier Province Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan led the movement. He organized the Khudai Khidmatgar, also known as the Red Shirts. Gandhi was arrested at midnight and sent to Yeravada Jail. Jawaharlal Nehru, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and other leaders were swiftly arrested. Soon other forms of protests such as boycott of foreign cloth, picketing of liquor shops, non-payment of taxes, breaking of forest laws etc. were adopted. Women, peasants, tribals, students, even children and all sections participated in the nation-wide struggle. It was the biggest mass movement India had ever witnessed. ""

""Individual Satyagraha

In August 1940 Viceroy Linlithgow made an offer in return for Congress' support for the war effort. Hence Gandhi declared limited satyagraha which would be offered by a few individuals. Vinobha Bhave was the first to offer satyagraha on 17 October 1940. The satyagraha continued till the end of the year. During this period more than 25,000 people were arrested.

Cripps Mission

On 22 March 1942, the British government sent a mission under Cabinet Minister Sir Stafford Cripps. The negotiations between the Cripps Mission and the Congress failed as Britain was not willing to transfer effective power immediately. The Cripps Mission offered:

1. Grant of Dominion Status after the War
2. Indian Princes could sign a separate agreement with the British implying the acceptance for the demand of Pakistan.
3. British control of defence during the War.

Both the Congress and the Muslim League rejected the proposal. Gandhi called the proposals as a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank.

""Do or Die"" Call by Gandhi

The outcome of the Cripps Mission caused considerable disappointment. Popular discontent was intensified by war time shortages and steep rise in prices. The All India Congress Committee that met at Bombay on 8 August 1942 passed the famous Quit India Resolution demanding an immediate end to British rule in India. Gandhi gave a call to do or die. Gandhi said, 'We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery.' A non violent mass struggle under Gandhi was to be launched. But early next morning on 9 August 1942 Gandhi and the entire Congress leadership was arrested.

Subhas Chandra Bose who had left the Congress was now under house arrest. He wanted to strike British hard by joining its enemies. In March 1941, he made a dramatic escape from his house in disguise and reached Afghanistan. Initially he wanted to get the support of Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union joined the Allied Powers which included Great Britain, he went to Germany. In February 1943, he made his way to Japan on a submarine and took control of the Indian National Army. The Indian National Army Captain Lakshmi Sahgal headed it (Azad Hind Fauj) had earlier been organized by Gen. Mohan Singh with Indian prisoners of war with the support of Japanese in Malaya and Burma. Bose reorganised it into three brigades: Gandhi Brigade, Nehru Brigade and a women's brigade named after Rani of Jhansi. Subhas Chandra Bose formed the Provisional Government of Free India in Singapore. He gave the slogan 'Dilli Chalo'. INA was deployed as part of the Japanese forces. However, the defeat of Japan stopped the advance of INA. The airplane carrying Subhas Chandra Bose crashed bringing to an end his crusade for freedom. The British government arrested the INA officers and put them on trial in the Red Fort. The trial became a platform for nationalist propaganda. The Congress set up a defence committee comprising Nehru, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Bhulabhai Desai and Asaf Ali. Though the INA officers were convicted they were released due to public pressure. The INA exploits and the subsequent trials inspired the Indians. ""

""The Second World War led to the collapse of imperialism the world over. Consequent to financial crisis Britain lost its capacity to maintain colonies. Intensified freedom struggles in the continents of Asia and Africa on one hand and American and Soviet policy against colonialism on the other, forced the British to free India from their clutches. The new British government that came to power under the Labour party led by Clement Attlee, sympathiser to India, also expedited our independence from colonial rule. Meanwhile, the All India League under the leadership of Mohammed Ali Jinnah raised claims for a separate country called Pakistan. Following this, Lord Mountbatten was appointed as the

Viceroy of India to deliver freedom to India addressing the question of partition. He argued that freedom for India was impossible without partition and to support this argument he prepared a strategy called "' Mountbatten Plan'. His proposals were as follows:

To form a separate country in Muslim majority area as per the Muslims wish.

To divide Punjab and Bengal

To conduct a referendum to determine whether to add North West Frontier province to Pakistan or not

To appoint a commission to determine the borders in Punjab and Bengal

While the Congress and the All India League approved this plan the nationalists like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan vehemently opposed it. In 1947, when the British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act, two free nations - India and Pakistan- came into existence. Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister of independent India. So far we have discussed how Indian freedom struggle became a popular national movement. Gandhian ideas played a major role in this process. Alternatives to his method of struggle also significantly contributed to our independence. In short, the freedom we attained on 15 August, 1947 is the outcome of Indian National Movement inspired by various streams of ideas and ideologies."''''