

Ch 2 Nationalism in India

Introduction

- Modern nationalism was associated with the formation of nation-states.
- In India like many other colonies, the growth of modern nationalism is connected to the anti-colonial movement.

The First World War, Khilafat and Non-Cooperation

- The First World War (1914-1918) created a new political and economic situation.
- India faced various problems during war period:
 - Increase in defense expenditure.
 - Prices increased through the war years.
 - Forced recruitment in rural areas.
- During 1918-19 and 1920-21, crops failure in many parts of India.
- Hardships did not end after the war was over.

The Idea of Satyagraha

- Satyagraha is a noble way of fighting the colonial rule in India.
 - It is a non-aggressive, peaceful mass agitation against oppression and injustice.
- Satyagraha means insistence on truth.
- It is a moral force, not passive resistance.
- In January 1915, Mahatma Gandhi returned to India.
- Gandhiji organised Satyagraha Movements in Champaran, Bihar (1916), Kheda district of Gujarat (1917) and amongst cotton mill workers in Ahmedabad (1918).

The Rowlatt Act (1919)

- This act gave the government enormous powers to repress political activities and allowed detention of political prisoners without trial for two years.

Jallianwala Bagh massacre

- On 13th April 1919, a huge crowd gathered in the enclosed ground of Jallianwala Bagh.

- Dyer entered the area, blocked the exit points, and opened fire on the crowd, killing hundreds.
- As the news spread, strikes, clashes with the police and attacks on government buildings started.
- The government responded with brutal repression.
- Gandhi called off the Rowlatt satyagraha as the violence spread.

Khilafat Movement

- Khilafat Movement was led by two brothers Shaukat Ali and Muhammad Ali.
- Khilafat Committee was formed in Bombay in March 1919 to defend the Khalifa's temporal powers.
- Gandhiji convinced the Congress to join hands with the Khilafat Movement and start a Non-Cooperation Campaign for Swaraj.
- At the Congress session at Nagpur in December 1920, the Non-Cooperation programme was adopted.

Differing strands within the movement

- The Non-Cooperation-Khilafat Movement began in January 1921.

The Movement in the Towns

- It started with middle class participation in cities.
- Students, teachers, lawyers gave up studies, jobs, legal practices and joined movements.
- Council elections were boycotted.
- Foreign goods were boycotted.
- Liquor shops were picketed.

Movement in the countryside

- Peasants and tribals took over the struggle which turned violent gradually.

Peasant Movement in Awadh

- The peasants were led by Baba Ramchandra in Awadh against landlords and talukdars.
- In 1920, the Oudh Kisan Sabha was set up headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, Baba Ramchandra and a few others.

Movement of Tribals in Andhra Pradesh

- Alluri Sitaram Raju led the guerrilla warfare in the Gudem Hills of Andhra Pradesh.
- The rebels attacked police stations.
- Raju was captured and executed in 1924.

Swaraj in the Plantations

- For the plantation workers, Swaraj means moving freely.
- They protested against the Inland Emigration Act (1859) which prevented them from leaving the plantation without permission.
- Each group interpreted the term swaraj in their own ways.

Towards Civil Disobedience

- In February 1922, Mahatma Gandhi decided to withdraw the Non-Cooperation Movement.
- Many leaders such as C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru formed the Swaraj Party within the Congress to argue for a return to council politics.
- Younger leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose pressed for more radical mass agitation and for full independence.

Factors that shaped Indian politics towards the late 1920s

- The Worldwide Economic Depression
- Agricultural prices collapsed after 1930 as the demand for agricultural goods fell and exports declined.
- **Simon Commission**
 - It was constituted by the Tory government of Britain to look into the demands of the nationalists and suggest changes in the constitutional structure of India.
 - The Commission arrived in India in 1928.
 - The Congress protested against this commission.
- In December 1929, under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Lahore session of Congress formalized the demand of “Purna Swaraj”.

The Salt March and the Civil Disobedience Movement

- Gandhiji chose salt as the medium that could unite the nation as it is consumed by all the sections of society.

Salt March

- Salt or Dandi March began on March 12, 1930.
 - On 6th April 1930, Gandhiji reached Dandi, a village in Gujarat and broke the Salt Law by boiling water and manufacturing salt.
 - Thus, the Civil Disobedience Movement began.
- It was different from Non-Cooperation Movement as people were now asked not only to refuse cooperation but also to break colonial laws.
- Boycott of foreign goods, non-payment of taxes, breaking forest laws were its main features.
- The British Government followed a policy of brutal repression.
- British government arrested all the leaders including Gandhiji and Nehru.
- Mahatma Gandhi called off the movement.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact

- On 5 March 1931, Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, signed a pact with Gandhi.
- In December 1931, Gandhiji went to London for the Second Round Table Conference but returned disappointed.
- Gandhi relaunched the Civil Disobedience Movement but by 1934 it lost its momentum.

How Participants saw the Movement

Rich peasants

- Rich peasant communities expected the revenue tax to be reduced, when the British refused to do so, they did join the movement.
 - They did not rejoin the movement as the movement was called without revising the revenue rates.

Poor Peasants

- The poor peasants wanted rents of lands to be remitted.

→ The Congress was unwilling to support the “no rent” campaigns due to the fear of upsetting the rich peasants and landlords.

Business Classes

- After the war, their huge profits were reduced, wanted protection against import of foreign goods.

→ The spread of militant activities, worries of prolonged business disruptions, growing influences of socialism amongst the young Congress forced them not to join the movement.

Women

- Women also participated in protest marches, manufactured salt, and picketed foreign cloth and liquor shops.

→ Congress was reluctant to allow women to hold any position of authority within the organisation.

Limits of Civil Disobedience

- The Dalits or the Untouchables did not actively participate in the movement, they demanded reservation of seats, separate electorates.

- Dr B.R. Ambedkar, the leader of the Dalits, formed an association in 1930, called the Depressed Classes Association.

- He clashed with Gandhiji.

- Poona Pact between the Gandhiji and B.R. Ambedkar (1932) gave reserved seats in Provincial and Central Councils but were voted by general electorate.

- The leader of the Muslim League M.A. Jinnah wanted reserved seats for Muslims in Central Assembly.

→ Large sections of Muslims did not participate in the Civil disobedience movement.

The Sense of Collective Belonging

- The sense of collective belonging came partly through the experience of united struggles.

- History and fiction, folklore and songs, popular prints and symbols, all played a part in the making of nationalism.

- By 1921, Gandhiji had designed the Swaraj flag. It was again a tricolor (red, green and white) and had a spinning wheel in the centre.