

The Mass Movement: Gandhian Era (1917-1925)

Early Life

- ☞ Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2 October, 1869 at Porbandar, Gujarat. His father was the Diwan of Porbandar. He left for his higher studies to London in 1888. His subject of specialisation was Law.
- ☞ After the completion of education, he went to Natal in South Africa in order to take job in a law-firm in 1894.
- ☞ His ideologies began to change and took a definite shape during his stay in South Africa.
- ☞ He faced severe racial discrimination just like other fellow Indians and Africans at the hands of Europeans or the Whites.
- ☞ Gandhi's visit to Pretoria finds a specific mention. Despite having a first class ticket, he was asked to move to a third class compartment owing to his race, where he was ejected from the train in Pietermaritzburg on his refusal to comply. The incident happened on the night of 7 June, 1893.

Gandhi's Struggle in South Africa

- 1893 Pietermaritzburg Station Incident
- 1894 Formation of Natal India Congress.
- 1899 Anglo-Boer War, Ambulance Corps, Participation
- 1901 First Participation in a Congress Session
- 1903 Indian opinion published
- 1904 Phoenix Ashram was established
- 1910 Tolstoy Farm was established
- 1913 Protest against Poll tax and Invalidation of Marriages Act.
- ☞ These instances inspired him to take a cause of justice for those who were silent bearers of such brutal treatment.
- ☞ Gandhi ji founded the Natal Indian Congress in 1894 and founded a paper called Indian opinion (1903)
- ☞ This platform provided a voice for the grievances of Indians and Africans which gradually gained popularity and transformed into a

political force.

- ☞ Indian opinion (1903) was published in Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil and English. The newspapers helped him to coin Satyagraha for passive Resistance Campaigns.
- ☞ Gandhi's Phoenix Ashram (1904) was founded on a Communal system inspired by John Ruskin's Unto This Last that emphasized on self reliance and value of labour.
- ☞ It was in Phoenix that Gandhi published his first book, Indian Home Rule (in English), while Hind Swaraj (in Gujarati) was penned on a sea voyage from London to Cape Town.
- ☞ Gandhi's Cottage in Phoenix was called Sarvodaya.
- ☞ Satyagrah against Registration Certificates, 1906.
 - A legislation that made it binding for all the Indians staying in South Africa to carry certificates of Registration with their fingerprints.
 - Gandhi formed Passive Resistance Association to conduct mass campaign in dissent, burning their registration certificates.
 - Gandhis political involvement and growing influence among the masses, irked the whites, making him to shift his business to Johannesburg.
- ☞ Transvaal Immigration Act, August 1908
 - The legislation ought to impose restrictions on Indian migration.
 - Gandhi protested against it, illegally migrating from Natal to Transvaal.
- ☞ Champaign against Poll Tax, 1913 and Invalidation of Indian Marriages.
 - A poll tax of 3 pounds was imposed on all exindentured Indians.
 - Also court's decision to invalidate marriages not conducted by Registration as in case of Christian marriages.

Note: On 17 October, 1899 (a few days after the outbreak of Anglo-Boer War in South Africa) Gandhi convened a meeting to persuade Indians to sign up to be a member of ambulance corps. Gandhi and other members of Ambulance corps received war medals for their

loyalty to the Empire. Gandhi was conferred with Kaiser-I-Hind.

- ☞ After completing his law education in England he went to South Africa as a practising Barrister.
- ☞ He witnessed the discrimination in worst forms against the blacks by the white inhabitants of South Africa.
- ☞ He played an active role in launching struggle against such inhumane discrimination known as the apartheid in South Africa.
- ☞ He participated in rallies, demonstrations, delivered speeches in every possible way in which he could eradicate such inhumane and unjust practices against a particular race or community. It was in South Africa, where for the first time he used the methods of Satyagraha and Ahimsa(non-violence) as a means to achieve political and social justice.

Gandhi's Arrival in India

- ☞ Arrival of Gandhi from South Africa marked a new era in the history of freedom struggle in India.
- ☞ By the time he returned to India, he already had the reputation of leading activist, theorist and a community organiser.
- ☞ His arrival in India heralded the era of mass politics which was hitherto being carried out by the educated middle class under the patronage of the Indian National Congress (INC)
- ☞ He emerged as the popular leader of the masses as his simple way of life strongly appealed the general public.

Arrival of Gandhi in India

1915	Arrival of Gandhi in India
1917	Champaran Satyagrah
1918	Ahmedabad Mill Strike & Kheda Satyagrah
1919	Satyagrah Sabha & All India Khilafat Committee
1920	Non Cooperation Movement
1923	All India Khadhi Board
1924	Presidentship of INC session at Belgaum

- ☞ He initiated what is known as the mass participation in the struggle for Independence. his participation and leadership united the Indians from every corner of India, making him a popular leader with whom the masses acquainted.
- ☞ Gandhi's first active participation in a movement was the Champaran Satyagrah of 1917.

Champaran Satyagrah of (1917)

- ☞ The European planters were compelling the peasants of Champaran (Bihar) to grow indigo on at least 3/20th of their land, known as the Tinkathiya System and to sell their produce (indigo) on a fixed price determined by the planters.
- ☞ This way the European planters were oppressing the peasants by exploiting them at dictated terms.
- ☞ This was similar to the case of bengal in 1859-61 where peasants rebelled against teh indigo planters and won their rights.
- ☞ Following this, Raj Kumar Shukla on behalf to people of Champaran after hearing about Gandhij's activism in South Africa invited him to deal with this situation.
- ☞ Consequently, Gandhiji reached Champaran along with Rajendra Prasad-ul-Haq, J.B. Kripalani, Narhari Parekh and Mahadev Desai in order to examine the conditions of the peasantry. The infuriated district officials ordered all them to leave Champaran.
- ☞ Gandhiji defied the British orders and refused to leave till the British officials were forced to withdraw its earlier order and thereafter appointed a committee of inquiry of which Gandhi served a member.
- ☞ This exposed Gandhi to the feeble conditions of the peasants and abject poverty in which most of the Indians were living.
- ☞ Champaran Satyagrah was Gandhi's first Civil disobedience movement in India. After winning this battle, Gandhiji went to Ahmedabad (Gujarat) to take a glimpse of the conditions in which Ahmedabad mill workers were working.

Ahmedabad Mill Strike (1918)

- ☞ In 1918 Gandhiji intervened in a dispute between the textile workers and mill-owners of Ahmedabad.
- ☞ The textile workers of Ahmedabad were demanding a 35 percent hike in their wages owing to the inflation.
- ☞ Gandhiji insisted the workers to go on a strike using Satyagraha instead of violence, to get their demands accepted.
- ☞ Gandhiji himself undertook a fast unto death to strength the workers' demand. It was Gandhi's first hunger strike in India.
- ☞ All these things, put pressure on the mill authorities who finally accepted the workers' demand for a wage hike of 35% on the fourth day of their strike.
- ☞ Gandhiji now turned his attention towards the farmers of Kheda (Gujarat) in 1918.

Kheda Satyagrah (1918)

- ☞ The peasants of Kheda (Gujarat) were demanding the suspension of revenue tax in the wake of a major crop failure in Kheda. But the government refused to remit land revenue and demanded its full collection from the peasants.
- ☞ Gandhiji supported the peasants on this, advising them to withhold the payment of revenue till the demand for its remission was met.
- ☞ Consequently, the government issued new instructions that revenue should be recovered from only those peasants who could afford to pay.
- ☞ After this, the farmers withdraw their Satyagraha when they heard about this remission.
- ☞ Here, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel became one of his followers who joined Gandhiji in further movements.
- ☞ Soon after, Gandhiji emerged as teh symbol of poor people, his simplicity attracted a large number of followers.
- ☞ Apart from this, he advocated three causes which were very dear to him:

- (i) Hindu Muslim Unity
- (ii) Fight against Untouchability
- (iii) Raising the social status of women in India.

Note: Gandhiji founded the Sabarmati Ashram at Ahmedabad (Gujarat) in 1917.

- ☞ On the other front, the leaders of the Indian National Congress were demanding reforms in the governance structure and policies especially in the provinces.
- ☞ The Indian National Congress was supporting the British in the First World War (1914-1918) hoping that their demands would be accepted once the World War ends.
- ☞ This act was formulated by the Secretary of State for India, Lord Montague and the Indian viceroy Lord Chelmsford.
- ☞ The act proposed the following changes.
 - Bicameral Legislature- The Central Legislature was replaced by two houses:
 - (i) Imperial Legislative Assembly
 - (ii) Council of States
- ☞ Members of the Executive Council would not be responsible to the Legislature.
- ☞ This act introduced dual government or dyarchy in provincial administration.
- ☞ The subjects (topics or issues on which laws are formed) under the jurisdiction of the provinces were divided into two lists:
 - (i) Reserved
 - (ii) Transferred.
- ☞ Under Dyarchy, the Governor (appointed by the British government) would make laws on the reserved subjects which included police, external affairs, finance etc. and welfare concerning departments like health, education, sanitation were transferred to the ministers responsible to the Legislature.
- ☞ The Provincial Legislative Councils were enlarged and majority of their members were now chosen by election.

- ☞ More autonomy was given to the provincial governments thus, the administrative system began to be based on a federal principle.

Montague Statement (August 1917)

The Government policy is of an increasing participation in every branch of administration and gradual development of Self governing Institutions with view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an Integral part of the British empire.

Rowlatt Act (March, 1919)

- ☞ The Government of India Act could not satisfy the demands of the nationalist leaders.
- ☞ This led to the large scale protest, demonstrations, rallies and meeting in different parts of India.
- ☞ This situation alarmed the British government which passed the Rowlatt Act in 1919. This act authorised the government to imprison any person without trial and conviction.
- ☞ This act empowered the police authorities to arrest anyone and put in jail on the bases of mere suspicion.
- ☞ Consequently, this act was widely criticised by the Indian leaders since it was plainly designed to curb the dissent and suppress the demands of the nationalists.
- ☞ By using the provisions under this act, the government put hundreds of freedom fighters into the jail. Many of them were directly executed by the government.

The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (1919)

- ☞ The Rowlatt Act angered the nationalists along with Gandhiji who found the act, completely unjust.
- ☞ As a result, Hartals and protest meetings were held all over the country opposing the Rowlatt Act.
- ☞ In February 1919, Gandhiji established the Satyagraha Sabha whose members decided to disobey the Act.
- ☞ The technique of Satyagraha took the nationalist struggle to a next

level who were hitherto confined to the method of popular agitation.

- ☞ However, the British government was firm on suppressing this agitation. The government officials mercilessly lathi-charged the agitators and shot unarmed people.
- ☞ Gandhiji protested against this by calling a hartal on 6 April 1919, to which people reciprocated by assembling in large numbers. The form of protests to be observed were nationwide hartal, fastings and civil disobedience.
- ☞ Gandhiji got arrested on the same day followed by the arrest of Dr. Satya Pal and Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew in Punjab.
- ☞ On 13 April, 1919, the festival of Baisakhi, a peaceful public meeting was held at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, to protest against the arrests of their popular leaders Dr. Satya Pal and Dr. Kitchlew.
- ☞ General Dyer, the military commander of Amritsar, led a group of soldiers to block the only exit of the park which was enclosed by the three other sides, he then ordered to open fire without any warning on the helpless men, women and children gathered there. The soldiers of Dyer, fired till their ammunition was exhausted.
- ☞ Thousands of people were killed while others were injured. The Jallianwala Bagh incident created a nationwide anger towards the British government. Dyer defended his action by terming it necessary to teach a moral lesson to Punjab.

Note: In protest against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood which was conferred on him by the British government.

- ☞ After this massacre, martial law was declared throughout Punjab. This was the most uncivilised atrocity unleashed on the people of Punjab.
- ☞ The violent reaction of the people compelled the British to hold an enquiry into the incident. The enquiry, conducted by Hunter Commission, justified the firing conducted by Hunter Commission, but Dyer was not forgiven by Indians for this brutal act.

Note: Michael O' Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab from 1912-1919, endorsed General Dyer and called the Jallianwala Bagh massacre as the correct action. Michael O'Dwyer was assassinated in London in 1940 for this by a revolutionary Udham Singh.

- ☞ Meanwhile, the Indian National Congress constituted a committee of enquiry to look into the Jallianwala Bagh massacre under the leadership of Madan Mohan Malviya. The committee also included Motilal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi and C.R. Das.

The Khilafat Movement (1920)

- ☞ A new wave started in the nationalist movement with the Khilafat movement.
- ☞ The common nationalist agitation against the Rowlat Act had brought different sections of the society together. The Hindus and the Muslims participated in this agitation alike.
- ☞ Under such conditions, the nationalist trend among the Muslims took the form of Khilafat movement which was later politicised by Gandhi against the British government.
- ☞ In 1919, a movement was launched to protect the Ottoman Empire of Turkey, which was on the verge of collapse after the First World War.
- ☞ The Sultan or the Caliph (Khalifa) of Turkey's position as the religious head of the Muslims was threatened as British partitioned the Ottoman empire.
- ☞ The educated and politically conscious Muslims were critical of the treatment towards the Ottoman empire by the British government.
- ☞ In 1920, the Ali Brothers, Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, launched the Khilafat Movement to pressurise the British to protect the Caliph.
- ☞ A Khilafat Committee was soon formed in 1919 under the leadership of the Ali Brothers, Maulana Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Hasrat Mohani and a national level protest was initiated. Gandhiji as a President of the All India Khilafat Committee perceived this as an opportunity to unite the Hindus and Muslims, against the British.

- ☞ Though Jinnah opposed the move since it would induce Religion into Politics, even after the support of Muslim league. In 1920, an alliance was made between Khilafat leaders and the Indian National Congress.

Non-Cooperation Movement (1920)

- ☞ In September 1920, the Indian National Congress (INC) held its Calcutta Session.
- ☞ Gandhiji launched the non-violent, Non-Cooperation Movement. The Congress supported gandhi's Plan for Non-Cooperation.
- ☞ People were urged not to cooperate with the British and defined Swaraj as the ultimate goal.
- ☞ The Non-Cooperation Movement had the following aims.
 - To redress the injustice done to Punjab and Turkey during the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and post Second World War respectively.
 - To attain Swaraj for the people of India by using legitimate & peaceful means. The physical violence was renounced as a wrongful mean to achieve one's goal.
 - To mobilise people against the wrongdoings of the British government. Further, it was aimed to aware the people of their exploitation on their own soil.
 - The Non-cooperation resolution was endorsed in the Nagpur Session of Congress, December 1920.

Methods of Non-Cooperation

- ☞ The Non-Cooperation Movement aimed to disrupt normal life and bring the British administration to a standstill.
- ☞ It was to proceed in stages, beginning with the renunciation of titles which Indians had received from the British.

Note: Gandhiji returned his prestigious Kaiser-i-Hind medal. Meanwhile, Rabindranath Tagore and G. Subramania Iyer returned their Knighthoods.
- ☞ People were asked to boycott foreign goods. Huge bonfires were lit to burn foreign goods.

- ☞ Gandhiji advocated the spinning and wearing of Khadi and boycotting of British made clothes. This was done to endorse the Swadeshi goods. Khadi cloth was also a sign of self-dependency. Students were asked to boycott educational institutes run by the British government.
- ☞ Indigenous educational institutions such as Jamia Millia Islamia in 1920 and Kashi Vidyapith was set up in 1921 along with Bihar and Gujarat Vidyapith.
- ☞ A campaign for non-payment of taxes was to start at the last stage of the movement. The employers were asked to give resignation from their jobs.
- ☞ The region of Bardoli (Gujarat) was chosen as the first place where taxes would not be paid. The Indian soldiers in the British army refused to serve in the army.
- ☞ This movement achieved great success. While schools and colleges were boycotted, the British government continued the suppression of mass civil non-cooperation by arresting nearly ,30,000 people.
- ☞ In its Ahmedabad session held in 1921, under Hakim Ajmal Khan, the Congress decided to continue the movement until Punjab and Khilafat grievances were redressed and Swaraj was achieved.

Note: • Provincial Congress Committees were reorganised on linguistic basis

• The Indian National Congress now established a Working Committee to be consisted of 15 members which included president and the secretaries.

- ☞ The non-cooperation movement changed the character of the Indian National Congress which now assumed the role of the organiser and the leader of the masses in their struggle against the colonial government.
- ☞ The national leaders like Acharya Narendra Dev, Dr. Zakir Hussain and Lala Lajpat Rai were among the distinguished faculties who taught at the indigenous universities.
- ☞ Many lawyers including Chittaranjan Das, (popularly known as

Deshbandhu) Motilal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Saifuddin Kitchlew, C.R.Ajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, T.Prakasam and Asaf Ali gave resignation to their jobs.

- ☞ Tilak Swaraj Fund was established to finance the Non-Cooperation movement.
- ☞ Boycott of foreign clothes was organised on massive scale. Khadi became symbol of Freedom women showed great enthusiasm offering their jewellery.
- ☞ Government took repressive measures declaring activities of Congress and Khilafat workers illegal. By the end of 1921, all important nationalist leaders except Gandhi were arrested.
- ☞ In November 1921, huge demonstrations greeted Prince of Wales during his tour to India. In Bombay, government tried to suppress the demonstration killing 53 people in this process.

Note: This was the same period when prominent leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah, G.S. Khaparde, Annie Besant and Bipan Chandra Pal left the Indian National Congress.

- ☞ On 1 February, 1922 Mahatma Gandhi announced that he would start mass civil disobedience, including refusal to pay taxes until all the political prisoners were released within the period of seven days.
- ☞ He also demanded that the press should be freed from government control.
- ☞ Since, the very beginning, Gandhiji was emphasizing that the entire movement should remain peaceful. However, the movement failed to remain non-violent because of the following two incidents.

Moplah Rebellion (Kerala) 1921

- ☞ Moplah Rebellion broke out as an armed rebellion in Malabar, Kerala. The Muslim Peasants of Moplah rose the banner of revolt against the exploitation by the Hindu landlords as well as British revenue officials.
- ☞ The Moplah attacked and took control of police stations and government treasuries.
- ☞ Though it started as a protest against the British government but it

soon took a violent turn which ended in the displacement and later killing of many Hindus, the clash between Muslim peasants and Hindu landlords turned it communal.

- ☞ It was also a reaction of the Khilafat campaign's suppression by the British government, which was meant to protect the seat of the Caliph in Turkey.
- ☞ Hundreds of people were killed in attack and retaliation. The rebellion disturbed and weakened the inter-communal harmony.

Chauri-Chaura Incident (1922)

- ☞ On 5 February, 1922 the police opened fire upon the Congress procession of 3000 peasants at Chauri-Chaura in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh.
- ☞ In retaliation, the angry crowd burnt down the police station which resulted in the death of nearly 22 policemen.
- ☞ Similar kind of violent protests were witnessed in different parts of the country. As a result were witnessed in different parts of the country. As a result of this, Gandhiji was forced to call off the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Note: Gandhiji declared his Satyagraha Campaign to be a Himalayan miscalculation because he had asked to pursue it by those people who could not afford to be non-violent.

- ☞ This drew mixed reactions among all the people. Jawaharlal Nehru and Sabash Chandra Bose resented this decision of Gandhiji.
- ☞ The Working Committee of the Congress met on 12 February 1922, at Bardoli, (Gujarat) passing a resolution stopping all activities that would lead to breaking of law and decided to concentrate their energies on the following matters:
 - Popularising the Charkha
 - Promoting Hindu-Muslim unity
 - Combating the practice of Untouchability.
 - Empowering Women and establishing national schools.

- ☞ On 10 March, 1922, Gandhiji was arrested and was sentenced to six

years imprisonment.

Importance of Non-Cooperation Movement in Indian National Movement.

- ☞ The movement for the first time saw nation-wide participation of the masses, integrating Peasants, artisans, labours, students, rural and the urban population.
- ☞ The Hindu-Muslim unity strengthened, except for a few instances. Women had been drawn into the movement.

The Constructive Programme

- ☞ After his release from prison in 1924, Gandhiji was involved in the Constructive Programme adopted by some Congress leaders like Vallabh bhai Patel, C. Rajagopalachari and Rajendra Prasad.
- ☞ Gandhiji's constructive programme aimed at multiple goals which included the following:
 - (i) It included sustainable development which implied that development would be carried out keeping the long term goals in mind.
 - (ii) It emphasised on the formation of local self-government as the first step to spread the idea of democracy at the grassroots level.
 - (iii) Moreover, it emphasised on the promotion and endorsement of hand -woven Khadi as a symbol of self-reliance.
- ☞ Gandhiji made it compulsory for every member of the Congress Committee to spin 2000 yards of yarn every month. He believed that spinning Khadi would make the poor self-dependent and would give them self-respect.
- ☞ An All India spinners' Association was set up in 1925. Prior to it, Gandhiji established, All India Khadi Board in 1923. As a result, many Khadi Bhandars were set up in different parts of the country.
- ☞ Gandhiji now turned his attention towards the upliftment of the depressed classes who were treated untouchables.
- ☞ He campaigned against the practice of untouchability and popularised a new term Harijan meaning children of god to denote all those who

were at the bottom of the Hindu social order.

- ☞ He even started a political weekly journal by the name Harijan on 11 February, 1933 from Yerwada jail of Pune.
- ☞ Gandhiji organised Harijan Sevak Sangh to remove the blot of impurity on the depressed classes.
- ☞ He initiated a Harijan movement, in which Harijan sevks were mobilised to take a cause for dalits (a term coined by Jyotiba Phule and Politically popularised by Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar denoting the depressed class).
- ☞ These Sevaks took all those works including sanitation, the public toilets which were undertaken by the members of the Dalit community on a routine basis.
- ☞ In this way Gandhiji tried to elevate the status of the untouchables by making their work look dignified.