

HOME RULE MOVEMENT (1915-1916)

The Home Rule Movement was launched by Dr. Annie Besant in 1916, who was inspired by the success of Irish rebellion. The movement expanded very fast and subsidiaries of the Home Rule League were opened across India. Bal Gangadhar Tilak worked for the movement wholeheartedly. He joined with Dr. Besant and convinced the Muslim League to offer their cooperation to the movement.

Champanan

The flots of Champanan, a district in Bihar, were carried out against the zamindari system. The zamindars sublet their leases to English planters who forced the reyots to grow Indigo on 3/20 of their land (the notorious Tinkathia System) and 'bought' it from them forcibly at absurdly low prices. In the 1860s, this practice had already led to the massive indigo riots in which most indigo-growing districts in Bengal and Bihar participated, and the memory of that uprising remained among the reyots. From the turn of the century, as the demand for Indigo in Europe declined in the face of competition from synthetic dyes, the planters passed the burden onto the peasants by charging sharahbeshi (rent enhancement) or (lump-sum compensation), not to mention over 40 other types of fines, cesses, rents and son, arbitrarily invented and collected. The result was an explosive situation. In the Motihari – Bettiah region of Champanan, widespread resistance developed during 1905 – 1908, over an area of 400 square miles. By 1917, nevertheless, the situation had become even more explosive. The World War I led to an even sharper drop in the indigo exports, and the planters made up their losses with such vicious enhancements that another major riot was in store. It was in such a situation that Mahatma Gandhi was to make his entrance into Indian politics by launching Satyagraha.

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