

## **NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT (1920-1922)**

### **Launching of the Non-Cooperation Movement**

With the Congress support to the Khilafat movement, Hindu-Muslim unity was achieved which encouraged Gandhi to launch his non-violent, non-cooperation movement. When the British refused to fulfill the demands of the Congress, a programme of boycott of government schools, colleges and law courts was approved in an all-party joint conference held in Allahabad in June 1920. At Kolkata, the Congress organized a special session in September 1920, and resolved in favour of the non-violent, non-cooperation movement, and defined Swaraj as its ultimate aim. The movement envisaged (i) surrender of titles and honorary officers; (ii) resignation from nominated offices and posts in the local bodies; (iii) refusal to attend government darbars and boycott of British courts by the lawyers; (iv) refusal of members of the public to join military and other government jobs; (v) boycott of government schools, colleges, courts and election process as per the Act of 1919 and (vi) boycott of foreign goods.

This led to the foundation of national schools and educational institutions and panchayats (which acted as private arbitration courts) throughout India. Swadeshi and Khadi became popular and domestic hand-spinning and hand-weaving industry began to grow. Nationwide programmes began for the removal of untouchability and for the upliftment of 'Harijans' and women. Participation of Muslims and other minorities helped in developing a sense of national unity.

### **Significance of the Movement**

This was the first truly nationalist movement of India which brought together almost all working strata of the society such as peasants, teachers, students, women and merchants. It acquired a real mass base as it gained momentum and spread across the length and breadth of the country. The Congress

also got a face lift with this movement, gaining recognition as an organization for action instead of a mere deliberative assembly. The development of national unity and willingness of people to make sacrifices for the cause of national independence also emerged from this movement.

### **Phases of the Movement**

#### **PHASE I (JANUARY – MARCH 1921)**

Gandhi, along with the Ali brothers undertook a nationwide tour, addressing hundreds of meetings and a large number of political leaders. In the initial weeks itself, thousands of students left schools and colleges and joined more than 800 national schools and colleges that sprang up all over the country. The educational boycott was especially successful in Bengal, with Punjab too responding under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai. Other areas that were active were Mumbai, United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Chennai. Apart from educational boycott, there was a boycott of law courts which saw major lawyers such as Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, C. Rajagopalachari, Saifuddin Kitchly, Vallabhbhai Patel and Aruna Asaf Ali, give up their lucrative practices, inspiring thousands of followers.

**PHASE II (APRIL – JUNE 1921)** Operation Tilak Swaraj Fund was organized throughout the country by which common people were enrolled in the Congress. The aim was to raise a fund for organizing the Congress activity on a larger platform. The Congress succeeded in creating a fund of more than crore from the donations. It installed spinning wheels throughout the nation to mark the success of the Tilak Swaraj Fund.

#### **PHASE III (JULY – SEPTEMBER 1921)**

The non-cooperation movement also saw picketing of shops selling foreign cloth and boycott of foreign cloth by the followers of Gandhi. Another dramatic event during this period was the visit of the Prince of Wales. The day he landed in Mumbai, 17 November 1921, he was greeted with empty streets and downed shutters wherever he went.

**PHASE IV (NOVEMBER 1921 – FEBRUARY 1922)** The non-cooperation movement had other indirect effects also, it led to the Kisan movement throughout the country, Akaji movement in Punjab, strikes in steamer service and Assam – Bengal Railways and many other local movements. There was a mood of civil mass disobedience throughout the country. The unrest and defiance of authority engendered by the non-cooperation movement contributed to the rise of many local movements in different parts of the country, movements which did not often adhere strictly to the programme of the non-cooperation movement or to the policy of non-violence. In December 1921, at the annual session of Congress at Ahmedabad under the presidentship of C. R. Das, a resolution was passed affirming the fixed determination of the Congress to continue the programme of non-violent, non-cooperation till the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and Khilafat wrongs were redressed and Swarajya was established.

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