

“Non-Co-operation Movement”

*A project report (Dissertation) submitted to the Deptt. of
History Nilamani Mahavidyalaya Rupsa in partial fulfillment
of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in History*

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DECLARATION

We the following students of +3 Final Year Arts (History) bearing Roll number mentioned against the names do hereby declare that the thesis/project report entitled "**Non-Co-operation Movement**" being submitted to the Department of History, Nilamani Mahavidyalaya, Rupsa, Balasore, Odisha for the award of Bachelor of Arts in History is an original piece of work done by us and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for any other academic degree or diploma to this college or any other college/university.

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ABSTRACT / SYNOPSIS

Non-cooperation Movement launched in 1920 was the first large scale movement in the freedom struggle of India. The Nationalists and the public had set their minds to show a sense of non-cooperation against the British supremacy and autocracy. Factors that led to formation of this movement were the oppressive policies of Rowlatt Act and the Jalianawala Bagh incident in Amritsar. It aimed to resist British rule in India through non-violent activities means "Satyagraha". This Non-cooperation Movement was launched by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on 12th August, 1920. It was a peaceful and non-violent protest against the British Government with the aim of self-governance and obtaining full independence. It was planned to persuade all the Indians to withdraw their labour from any activity that sustained the British Government and to promote self-reliance towards self-rule and Swadeshi. Millions of people participated in this movement and started boycotting foreign goods and made their own goods. But this movement did not last long and was called off in 1922 after a large number of police officers were murdered as well as the police station was put on fire at Chauri Chaura in Uttar Pradesh. Non-cooperation Movement was no doubt a stepping stone for the Indians to be encouraged and inspired.

INTRODUCTION

The Non Co-operation Movement (Asahayog Andolan) was the next major event in the Indian struggle for freedom after the first war of Independence in 1857. This movement started in 1920 and lasted through 1922, supported all along by the Indian National Congress.

Under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, the movement aimed at resisting British rule through non-violence. Activists refused to buy British goods, used only local handicrafts and picketed liquor shops. The goal was to uphold Indian honour and integrity in a peaceful manner. Thousands of common citizens rallied for the cause and it was the first large scale movement in the history of Indian's independence. Boycott of British institutions was also included in the Programme of the movement.

The intensity of the Non Co-operation Movement created terror in the minds of the British. So, the government tried its best to suppress the movement by hook or by crook. The government tried to suppress the movement by resorting to firing and Lathi charges. Non Co-operation movement was withdrawn after the Chauri Choura incident.

Despite some of the negative impacts of the Non Co-operation Movement, it opened a new chapter in the history of India so far as struggle for independence was concerned. A tremendous sense of self-confidence was created in the minds of the people.



CHAPTER-I

Causes of Non Co-operation Movement

Till the outbreak of the First World War, Gandhiji had complete faith in the justice and honesty of the English Government. Therefore, he made an appeal to the people of India for cooperation during the First World War but just



after the end of this war some such events occurred in the political sphere of India which made Mahatma Gandhi doubt the integrity of the British Government and he declared a non-violent movement against it. Really, it was strange even that a person like Mahatma Gandhi who was a staunch supporter of the British raised his voice against them. Actually, the following reasons were responsible for launching a movement against the British Government.

(i) Rowlatt Act:

During the First World War, the British government had passed the India Defence Act in order to crush the Revolutionary Movement in India. But as they failed to get any success through this Act., so the Rowlatt Act Committee was formed in 1917 A.D. by the British government which submitted its report in 1918 A.D. According to this report the Rowlatt Act was passed. Under this Act anybody could be arrested on mere suspicion for an uncertain period. The Act was severely

opposed by the Indians. According to Pandit Motilal Nehru, this Act ended the system of Appeal, Vakil and Dalil. However, the government passed this bill in 1919 A.D. Gandhi arranged an All India Strike against this Act and after attaining success he decided to launch a movement against it.

(ii) **The Massacre of Jalianwala Bagh:**

The people of Punjab also opposed the Rowlatt Act vehemently. Consequently, Sir Michael O'dyer arrested Dr. Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kichlu, the two leaders of Punjab without giving the reason of their arrest and sent them to some unknown place. Seeing the opposition of

the people against this action of O'dyer, the defence and security of the town was handed over to General Dyer, On 13th April, 1919 on the occasion of Baisakhi



festival, a function and general meeting was being organized at Jalianwala Bagh but in order to show his authority General Dyer ordered the soldiers to shoot at the people who were assembled there. Consequently, a large number of people were killed. The military rule was also imposed in Amritsar in order to stem the opposition of the people. However, this massacre of Jalianwala Bagh was vehemently criticized and condemned throughout the country. Thomas and Garrett have written that the incident of Amritsar was a macabre event in the

relations between the people of India and England. It was similar to that of the revolt of 1857 A.D. As a result of the report of Hunter Commission which declared General Dyer innocent inspite of the unprovoked massacre he had ordered, the feelings of Gandhi were extremely hurt and he decided to withdraw his cooperation from the British. Hence his outlook changed and he began to oppose them.

(iii) Khilafat Problem:

During the First World War, Turkey supported Germany against England, so the Muslims of India were afraid of the English who might take a revengeful attitude towards them. Although the English Government had assured the Muslims of India that it was not going to take one such step as could be harmful to the interests of the Muslims, in the treaty of 1920 A.D., which was concluded between Turkey and England, some restrictions were imposed on Turkey. Turkey being a Muslim country, these restrictions were opposed by the Indian Muslims. Gandhi endeavoured to establish Hindu-Muslim unity in India on the basis of the Khilafat problem. He started non-cooperation movement in order to get the support of the Muslims.

(iv) Change in the Political of the Congress:

Gandhiji, the earlier supporter of the English government said, presenting the proposal of non-cooperation in the Calcutta session, "The English Government is Satan. Cooperation is not possible with it. He is not sad of his shortcomings, so we have to adopt a progressive non-violent, non-cooperation policy for the fulfillment of our demands." This

proposal was passed by the majority and it was fully endorsed in the Nagpur session of the Congress. Pattabhi Sitaramaya has remarked about the Nagpur session that a new era was ushered in the History of India from Nagpur session of the Congress. Weak and earnest prayers were replaced by responsible and self-dependent spirit.

CHAPTER-II

Non Co-operation Movement (1920-1922)

At a special session of the Congress held in Calcutta in 4th September, 1920 a special resolution was adopted accepting Non-cooperation Movement as the only option left open for the people of India. The regular session of the Congress at Nagpur in December, 1920 ratified this resolution.

(i) Objective of the Movement:

Non Co-operation means withdrawal of all support and cooperation and its target was the British Government. Its only object was to render the Government crippled and paralyzed to create such problems of the administration that would make it realize that it could not work or survive without the willing co-operation of the Indian people. It was also to make it known to the British that they could not run the administration of the country even for a day unless the Indian people cooperative with them.

(ii) Method and Programmes of the Movement:

Gandhiji, Ali Brothers and other leaders toured the country. They roused enthusiasm among people, laid stress on Hindu-Muslim unity. They made efforts to popularize the programme of Non-cooperation. Mahatma Gandhi launched the movement in 1920 by returning all the titles and honours bestowed by the British Government. Many educated Indians returned degrees, titles, awards and honours. People boycotted all Government functions. Thousands of Indians left the Government

jobs. The lawyers gave up their legal practice. Students left their schools and colleges. Teachers also resigned in large numbers. National College like the Jamia Millia Islamia and the Kashi, Bihar and Gujrat Vidyapeeths were set up. The people boycotted the election to the Assemblies and the provisional councils. They resigned from the nominated seats in local bodies. The people began to use Swadeshi and boycotted foreign goods which were burnt at crossroads. Women gave up purdah to join the struggle, offered their jewellery for the Tilak Fund and gladly went to jail. Many labourers also joined the movement and observed strikes. The people refused to pay taxes. People refused to obey Government orders. The movement had thoroughly roused the country. A wave of unparalleled enthusiasm swept the whole country.

(A) ACTIVITIES DURING THE MOVEMENT:

Non Co-operation Movement received overwhelming support from the people of India. The people were ready to practice non-cooperation with the government in every field.

(i) Establishment of National Schools and College:

It was during this period the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Kashi Vidyapeeth, Banaras Vidyapeeth, Lahore National College, Jamia Millia Islamia University were established. Students were encouraged to study in these schools, colleges and universities. Teachers who were inspired by the national movement during this period were Acharya Narendra Dev, Lala Lajpat Rai, Dr. Zakir Hussain and several other.

(ii) Boycott of Courts:

Another vital step of the Non Co-operation Movement was the boycott of courts. Desbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru, Ballavbhai Patel and other notable barristers gave up their legal profession. Concern for their nation was dearer to them than earning a livelihood in British dominated courts.

(iii) Repudiation of titles:

Indians who had served the British loyalty had been conferred with glamorous titles by the British. But even these Indians supported the Non Co-operation Movement and repudiated their titles. Gandhiji gave up his title Kaiser-e-Hind, Subhas Chandra Bose gave up the I.C.S. and Ravindra Nath Tagore too relinquished his title. Many Indian officers under the British resigned from their posts.

(iv) Boycotting Foreign Goods:

Moving along the title of Non Co-operation, Indians boycotted foreign goods. Congress workers moved from city to city and village to village and collected foreign clothes and made huge bonfires. Picketings and demonstrations became a common feature in front of foreign liquor shops and shops selling foreign goods. People were advised not to buy foreign goods.

(v) Fondness towards Swadeshi Goods:

The Non-cooperation Movement awakened a feeling of fondness for home-made goods among Indians. During this period more than 10,000 spinning wheels were made. Spinning cotton and weaving clothes were thus accelerated. This helped in popularizing

Khadi. Later, the spinning wheel became the symbol of the Congress flag was accepted as the symbol of the freedom struggle. Hereafter demand for Khadi increased manifold and people evinced a keen interest in wearing home-made clothes.

(B) REPRESSIVE MEASURES BY THE GOVERNMENT:

The Government took severe measures to suppress the movement. In the Malbar region of Kerala, the Mopala Muslim peasants rebelled against the exploitation of Hindu Zamidars. The British crushed them firmly. Towards the end of 1921, the British Government arrested all the top of leaders of the Congress and more than 3,000 workers were put behind the bars. The firing on peaceful demonstrations during prince of Wale's visit to India created strong revulsion against the government. This helped in spreading the movement to all parts of India. The government was forced to adopt stern measures and arrested people indiscriminately. The police in every province were to arrest the revolutionaries and pack them in jails. Motilal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad were a few of the many leader arrested.

(C) CHAURI CHOURA INCIDENCE:

The tragedy at Chauri Chaura, a village in Gorakhpur district in Utter Pradesh, occurred on 5th February, 1922. A procession of about 3,000 peasants



marched to the police station to protest against the police officer who had beaten some volunteers picketing a liquor shop. The police fired at the peasants. This infuriated the demonstrators and they set the nearby police station on fire, killing 22 police men who were inside the police station. There were a few violent incidents in other parts of the country. Gandhi, a believer in Ahimsa, was greatly shocked at these incidents and he withdraw the Non-cooperation Movement on 12th, February, 1922.



CHAPTER-III

Impact of the Non Co-operation Movement

Non Co-operation Movement had far reaching impacts. For the first time every nook and corner of India was kindled by the fire of nationalism. The youth and the old supported the movement in words and deed. An undercurrent of fear of Englishmen in the minds of Indians was removed for ever. Enchanted by the spirit of nationalism Indian prepared to challenge the British face to face.

(i) **National Movement became a Mass Movement:**

The Indian national movement for the first time in history acquired, a real mass base with the participation of different sections of Indian society such as peasants, workers, students, teacher and women. However, the big industrialists, capitalists, and zamidars still remained hostile.

(ii) **Instilled confidence among the people:**

It generated a desire for freedom and inspired people to challenge the colonial rule. Renowned historian Bipin Chandra has rightly said, "our of the experience of this attempt to defy openly the foreign rulers and the Government they had set up, was born a new sense of self-confidence and self-esteem."

(iii) **The Congress became a Revolutionary Movement:**

It transformed the Indian National Congress from a deliberative Assembly into an organization for action. It became the organizer

and leader of the masses in their national struggle. Thus, the congress became a force to reckon with.

(iv) **Fostered Hindu-Muslim Unity:**

It fostered Hindu-Muslim unity which could be seen in the merger of the Khilafat issue with this movement. It provided an opportunity to the congress to bring the urban Muslims into the National Movement by convincing them that the nation was equally concerned with the problems affecting them.

(v) **Promoted Social Reforms:**

As a consequence of the Non Co-operation Movement several steps were taken in the direction of prohibition and removal of untouchability. Many national schools and colleges were set up in the different parts of the country. The boycott of the foreign goods led to the promotion of Indian handicrafts and industries. 'Khadi' became the symbol of the National Movement.

(vi) **Spread of Nationalism to every part of the Country:**

The movement gave a new boost to nationalism in India. At its annual session at Nagpur in December, 1920, changes were made in the constitution of the congress. Provincial congress committees were recognized on the basis of linguistic areas. The congress was now to be led by a working committee of 15 members including the president and secretaries. This would enable the congress to function as a continuous political organization and would provide it with the machinery for implementing resolutions. The congress organization was able to reach down to villages. Its membership

fee was reduced to four annas per year to enable the rural and urban poor to become its members.

(vii) **Popularised the Calf of Swaraj:**

The goal of the Non Co-operation Movement was to attain Swaraj within the British Empire, if possible and outside, if necessary. The congress realized the nature and value of the popular support and though the movement failed immediately to Swaraj, it definitely came nearer to it.



CHAPTER-IV

Response of the Non Co-operation Movement in Orissa

With Gopabandhu Das, the 'Gem of Utkal', the Non Co-operation Movement gained momentum in Orissa. For the first time, he launched this movement in Orissa. Other leaders like Gopabandhu Choudhury, Jadumani Mangaraj, Harekrushna Mahatab, Dr. Ekra Rasool and women leader like Rama Devi and Malati Devi came forward to make it a grand success. Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Orissa also galvanized this movement in this land.

(i) **Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Orissa:**

Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Orissa gave a spark to the Non Co-operation Movement in Orissa. On 23rd March, 1921, he addressed a Mammoth



gathering on the sands of Kathajuri River. The people were attracted towards the use of Khadi, Charkha (spinning wheel) and Swadeshi goods. The women were influenced by Gandhi so much so that they donated their ornaments for the 'Tilak Swaraj Fund' which became the highest collection for a state in India. Gandhiji was welcomed in Berhampur, Puri and Bhadrak with joy and jubilation. They cheerfully shouted 'Gandhiji Ki Jai'. The very presence of Mahatma Gandhi in Orissa gave a spark to the Non Co-operation Movement in Orissa.

(ii) **Non-Cooperation Programme in Orissa:**

Many programmes for the Non Co-operation Movement were taken up in Orissa. Those steps created a fear psychosis in the mind of the British Government.

(iii) **Boycott of Educational Institutions:**

As the first step, the Government Schools were boycotted. Inspired the student leaders like Laxmi Narayan Mishra, Jagannath Mishra and Nrusingha Guru of Sambalpur Zilla School many students left their study and joined the Non Co-operation Movement. Gradually, students from undivided Cuttack, Puri and Balasore boycott school and joined the Non Co-operation Movement. Many important leaders like Harekrushna Mahatab, Nabakrishna Choudhury, Nityananda Kanungo, Jadumani Mangaraj and many other also left their studies. Gopabandhu Das established 'Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya' at Sakshigopal in Puri and his friends like Krupasindhu Mishra, Acharya Harihar, Godabarish Mishra and Pandit Nilakantha Dash, famous as 'Pancha Sakhas' (five celebrities) of Modern Orissa devoted themselves to educate the students in this National School. Many national schools were established at Cuttack, Balasore, Basta, Soro, Paralakhemundi and Chakradharpur to educate the students. Gopabandhu published 'Samaj' and 'Utkal Deepika' to make the public aware about the autocratic British rule.

(iv) **Establishment of Ashrams:**

To prepare the workers for the Non Co-operation Movement many training centers or Ashrams were established in different parts of

Orissa. At Cuttack, Swaraj Ashram was established. Gopabandhu Choudhury established Alaka Ashra at Jagatsinghpur. H.K. Mahatab established Swaraj Mandir at Balasore. Several such Ashrams were established at Bhadrak, Soro, Sakshigopal and Puri. The Swaraj Sevak Sangh was established at Cuttack to co-ordinate the activities of the students who participated in movement.

(v) **Resignation from Government Service:**

Many Government servants resigned from their posts. Pandit Lingaraj Mishra resigned from the post of Professor and Sanskrit from Muzafarpur Government College, Pandit Nilakantha Das resigned from the post of Professor Odia, Gopabandhu Choudhury resigned for the post of Deputy Magistrate of Baragarh, Surendra Nath Das left his post as Sub-inspector in Balasore, Mohammad Hanif resigned from the post of Excise Sub-inspector. Purna Chandra Das and Raghunath Mishra resigned from teachership from Government Schools. Similarly Kshetra Mohan Mohanty and Hari Charan Mohanty left the post of Government Clerks. This has created an atmosphere surcharged with nationalism.

(vi) **Boycott of Courts:**

Another programme of the Non Co-operation Movement in Orissa was the boycott the courts. Gopabandhu Das had left the practice earlier. Bhagirathi Mohapatra of Cuttack, Achutananda Purohit and Mahendranath Verma in Sambalpur left their legal practice. Gour Mohan Das of Srijung of Balasore and Banchhanidhi Mohanty of Bhadrak set up their own private legal chambers and

administered justice in their locality. Many private legal courts were established to impart justice to the people.

(vii) Boycott of Foreign Goods:

The Non Co-operation Movement promoted the people of Orissa to boycott the foreign goods. The cloth merchant of Sambalpur, Cuttack and Balasore stopped importing the foreign textile. At Calcutta, the Oriya labourers refused to carry the cloth bundle to the shops. Thus on 11 and 14 August, 1921 bonfire to these cloth bundle were made in Calcutta. Foreign liquor was boycotted in different parts of Orissa. People were advised not to consume any foreign goods.

(viii) Prohibition:

Prohibition was another great part of the Non Co-operation Movement. Picketing was made in front of foreign liquor shops. Even consumption country made liquor was prohibited. The liquor shops were closed. People became watchful about this prohibition.



CHAPTER-V

Critical Estimate of the Non Co-operation Movement

The people of India did not want that the movement should be suspended at the critical stage. Hence they opposed the suspension. Even Lala Lajpat Rai and Pandit Motila Nehru who were under confinement at that time declared this step of Gandhi to be improper and Subhas Chandra Bose commented that the time when the enthusiasm and courage of the people of India was at its zenith, it was an unfortunate step to command them to leave the ground. After the suspension of Non Co-operation Movement, the confidence of the people of India came to an end and various shortcomings began to be visible. V.P. Menon has also remarked in this connection that if the movement of Gandhi had not been suspended at this critical movement when it was becoming a significant subject of worry to the government then it was certain, the government must have taken some steps to satisfy the people of India.

Undoubtedly, the Non Co-operation Movement of Mahatma Gandhi was turning point in the direction of getting freedom for the country which was based on truth, love and nonviolence. During this movement for the first time a sense of courage and sacrifice was discernible in the people. Consequently, the spirit of nationalism was strengthened. Therefore, Subhash Chandra Bose said that no doubt, Gandhi showed a new path to the congress. Similar slogans were given out in different parts of the country and everywhere similar feelings seemed to be erupting. The significance of the English language diminished because the congress adopted Hindi language to be their national language.

To sum up, we may quote the views of Coupland who explained the importance of Non Co-operation Movement of Gandhi. He said that the deeds which were performed by Mahatma Gandhi, were not at all performed by Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He taught the people to advance towards the goal of independence and for this he led the country towards the sacred message of non-violence in place of legitimate pressures, discussions and pacts.

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Conclusion

Non Co-operation Movement was a mass movement which involved participation from the nationalists as well as the public. A wave of unprecedented enthusiasm swept over the country affecting the high and low, the men and women. Rowlatt Act and Jalianwala Bagh massacre were the most important issues behind the Non Co-operation Movement in 1920. In this situation, Gandhiji began Non-cooperation Movement against the British. Programmes like boycott of election, court, schools, foreign goods and adoption of Swadeshi were undertaken during the movement. This was the first mass movement in India based on the principles of truth and non-violence. Much against the wishes and instructions, the movement led to a serious mob violence at Chauri Chaura in U.P. where a Police Station was burnt and a number of Police officials were killed. Non Co-operation Movement was suspended thereafter. Principles of Satyagraha were not followed strictly. Gandhiji thought the indiscipline of the Indians to be a Himalayan blunder. Whatever may be the case, it is an admitted fact that Non Co-operation Movement could not last long but it was the first mass movement in India freedom struggle creating much more zeal and enthusiasm among the Indian minds.

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