

Course Name- B.A.L.L.B. IIInd Sem.

Subject- History

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Topic Non-Cooperation Movement

Non- Cooperation Movement

The non-cooperation movement was launched on 1st August 1920 by the Indian National Congress (INC) under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. It signified a new chapter in the history of Indian freedom struggle.

Non-Cooperation Movement and Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi was the main force behind the non-cooperation movement. In March 1920, he issued a manifesto declaring a doctrine of the non-violent non-cooperation movement. Gandhi, through this manifesto, wanted people to:

1. Adopt swadeshi principles
2. Adopt swadeshi habits including hand spinning & weaving
3. Work for the eradication of untouchability from society

Gandhi travelled across the nation in 1921 explaining the tenets of the movement.

Features of the Non-Cooperation Movement

- The movement was essentially a peaceful and non-violent protest against the British government in India.
- Indians were asked to relinquish their titles and resign from nominated seats in the local bodies as a mark of protest.
- People were asked to resign from their government jobs.

- People were asked to withdraw their children from government-controlled or aided schools and colleges.
- People were asked to boycott foreign goods and use only Indian-made goods.
- People were asked to boycott the elections to the legislative councils.
- People were asked not to serve in the British army.
- It was also planned that if the above steps did not bring results, people would refuse to pay their taxes.
- The INC also demanded Swarajya or self-government.
- Only completely non-violent means would be employed to get the demands fulfilled.
- The non-cooperation movement was a decisive step in the independence movement because, for the first time, the INC was ready to forego constitutional means to achieve self-rule.
- Gandhiji had assured that Swaraj would be achieved in a year if this movement was continued to completion.

Causes of Non-Cooperation Movement

- **Resentment at the British after the war:**
- Indians thought that in return for the extensive support of manpower and resources they had provided to Britain during the First World War, they would be rewarded by autonomy at the end of the war. But the Government of India Act 1919 was dissatisfactory. In addition, the British also passed repressive acts like the Rowlatt Act which further angered many Indians who felt betrayed by the rulers despite their wartime support.
- **Home Rule Movement:**
- The Home Rule Movement started by Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak set the stage for the non-cooperation movement. The extremists and the moderates of the INC were united and the Lucknow Pact also saw solidarity between the

Muslim League and the Congress Party. The return of the extremists gave the INC a militant character.

- **Economic hardships due to World War I:**
- India's indirect participation in the war caused a lot of economic hardships to the people. Prices of goods began to soar which affected the common man. Peasants also suffered because the prices of agricultural products did not increase. All this led to resentment against the government.
- **The Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre:**
- The repressive Rowlatt Act and the brutal massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar had a profound effect on the Indian leaders and the people. Their faith in the British system of justice was broken and the whole country rallied behind its leaders who were pitching for a more aggressive and firm stance against the government.
- **The Khilafat Movement:**
- During the First World War, Turkey, which was a German ally, had fought against the British. After Turkey's defeat, the Ottoman caliphate was proposed to be dissolved. The Khilafat movement was launched by Muslims in India to persuade the British government not to abolish the caliphate. The leaders of this movement accepted the non-cooperation movement of Gandhiji and led a joint protest against the British.

Why was the Non-Cooperation Movement suspended?

- Gandhiji called off the movement in February 1922 in the wake of the Chauri Chaura incident.
- In Chauri Chaura, Uttar Pradesh, a violent mob set fire to a police station killing 22 policemen during a clash between the police and protesters of the movement.

- Gandhiji called off the movement saying people were not ready for revolt against the government through ahimsa. A lot of leaders like Motilal Nehru and C R Das were against the suspension of the movement only due to sporadic incidents of violence.

Significance of Non-Cooperation Movement

- Swaraj was not achieved in one year as Gandhiji had told.
- However, it was a truly mass movement where lakhs of Indians participated in the open protest against the government through peaceful means.
- It shook the British government who were stumped by the extent of the movement.
- It saw participation from both Hindus and Muslims thereby showcasing communal harmony in the country.
- This movement established the popularity of the Congress Party among the people.
- As a result of this movement, people became conscious of their political rights. They were not afraid of the government.
- Hordes of people thronged to jails willingly.
- The Indian merchants and mill owners enjoyed good profits during this period as a result of the boycott of British goods. Khadi was promoted.
- The import of sugar from Britain reduced considerably during this period.
- This movement also established Gandhiji as a leader of the masses.