

## 7. Non-co-operation Movement

In the Indian national movement the period from 1920 to 1947 is known as the 'Gandhian era'. After the death of Lokmanya Tilak in 1920, the reigns of national movement went into the hands of Mahatma Gandhi. He gave a new direction to the freedom movement with the principles of Truth, Non violence and Satyagraha. Due to the influential leadership of Mahatma Gandhi the national movement became more comprehensive. This led to the beginning of a new era in the freedom movement of India.

### Role of Gandhiji in South Africa :

Mahatma Gandhi went to South Africa for some legal work in 1893. South Africa was a colony of the British. Many Indians had settled there for business, trade and such other work. The Indians in South Africa were treated as criminals and humiliated at all times. In 1906, the Government declared that it was compulsory for the blacks to carry an identity card and their freedom was restricted as well. Gandhiji followed the path of Satyagraha against the injustice and gained justice for the people.



**Mahatma Gandhi**

**Gandhiji arrives in India :** On 9th January 1915, Gandhiji returned to India from South Africa. As suggested by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, he made a tour of the entire nation. He became sad looking at the misery and poverty of the people. He took up the vow of service to the nation. He stayed at the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. He followed a new technique

of Satyagraha to gain justice for common people.

**Philosophy of Satyagraha :** Gandhiji brought in a novel technique of Satyagraha in the popular movement. Satyagraha means insistence of truth. The main objective of Satyagraha is through patience and Satyagraha an unjust person is made aware of truth and justice and also bring transformation in his views. A person following satyagraha should never use violence and untruth means, was the teachings of Gandhiji.

Later, not only in India but in many parts of world people adopted the path of Satyagraha to fight against injustice. Gandhiji's path of Satyagraha made an impact on Martin Luther King who was struggling for the rights of the Blacks in America, as well as on Nelson Mandela in South Africa.

**Champaran Satyagraha :** In Bihar, the farmers of Champaran region were forced to cultivate indigo. The cultivators suffered economically since they received fixed amount from the planters. Gandhiji went to Champaran in 1917. He organised the farmers in Champaran and launched agitation by following the way of Satyagraha. Gandhiji's first war of independence in India became successful and the farmers were given justice.

**Kheda Satyagraha :** Due to constant famines in Kheda district, Gujrat, the crop had failed. Still land tax was forcibly collected by the Government. Gandhiji suggested that the farmers should refuse to pay the tax. The farmers began the movement for scrapping of tax at Kheda in 1918. Gandhiji accepted the leadership of this movement. Within a short period of

time, the Government suspended the tax.

### **Workers movement at Ahmedabad :**

During the first world war there was great inflation. Mill workers demanded for rise in salary. But the mill owners rejected this demand. As per Gandhiji's advice, the workers went on hunger strike. Finally, the mill owners had to back off and the salary of workers was increased.

### **Satyagraha against Rowlatt Act :**

In the first world war, the Indians had helped the British. The Indians felt that after the world war is over there will be a system of governance for taking decisions for well being of the Indians. There was growing unrest among the Indians regarding the increasing prices, taxes etc.

To suppress this discontent and to suggest measures about it, a Committee was appointed under Sir Sydney Rowlatt. According to recommendations of this committee a new law was passed without considering the opposition of Indian members in Central Legislative Assembly on 17 March 1919. This law came to be known as 'Rowlatt Act'. This Act gave the right to the government to arrest anybody without any warrant or imprison without any trial. Appeal was prohibited against the punishment given through this act. The Indians called this act as 'Black Act' and a tide of anger arose all over India against this act. Gandhiji launched a Satyagraha against it. On 6th April 1919, he appealed to the Indians to follow Hartal all over India against the Act. Indians responded to this appeal on a large scale.

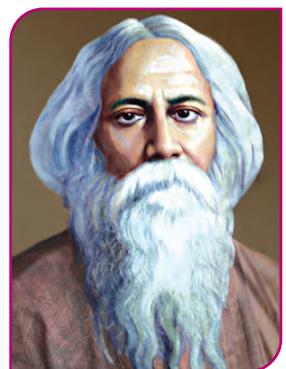
**Jallianwala Baug Massacre :** The movement that aroused against the Rowlatt Act took over a fierce form in the province of Punjab. Amritsar became the main centre of this movement. The Government had started the spate of suppression. Gandhiji was prohibited from

entering the province of Punjab. General Dyer issued orders of ban on public meetings in Amritsar. Important leaders like Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Kitchelu were arrested for their involvement in Amritsar Hartal case.

As a protest against this, on 13th April 1919, on a Baisakhi day, the people of Amritsar assembled at a place named Jallianwala Baug. General Dyer arrived with armed force. The place was enclosed from all sides and had only one small gate. General Dyer positioned his army and closed down the only gate. Without giving any prior notification to the disarmed innocent people, he ordered his soldiers to fire. 1660 rounds, had been fired. The army continued firing until the ammunition was over. In this massacre about 400 people including men and women were killed. Many people were wounded. After firing curfew was announced and hence immediate treatment to the injured could not be made available. In entire Punjab, military law was enforced and many were sent to jail by the government.

General Michael O'Dwyer, Governor of Punjab, was responsible for this massacre. All over India there was protest against this act. As a protest against this

massacre, Rabindranath Tagore gave away the title of 'Sir' bestowed on him by the British Government. Later



Indians demanded for enquiry of this **Rabindranath Tagore** massacre, hence the British government appointed the Hunter Commission.

**Khilafat Movement :** Muslims all over the world regarded the ruler of Turkey

as their religious leader. During the first world war Turkey fought against the British. To get the support of the Indian Muslims in the war, the British had assured that after the end of the war, Khalifa's empire will not be harmed. But after the end of First World War England did not stick to its assurance. A tide of great discontent aroused among the Muslims. The movement started by Indian Muslims to support the Khalifa was called 'Khilafat Movement'. Gandhiji thought that on this problem if the Hindus and Muslims come together and start a national movement then the government can surely be brought to its senses. Therefore Gandhiji supported the Khilafat Movement. The Khilafat Committee accepted Gandhiji's proposal of following non-co-operation to the government. Hindu-Muslim unity was seen especially during this period.

**Non-co-operation Movement :** The concept behind the Non-co-operation movement was that, the British government in India is dependent only on the co-operation of the Indians. If the Indians adopted complete non-co-operation then the British government will completely collapse. With this intention he evoked the people of India to take part in this movement.

In 1920, the Indian National Congress session was held at Nagpur. The resolution of Non-co-operation movement put forth by Chittaranjan Das was accepted. All reigns of the movement were given in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi. According to this resolution, a programme was framed to boycott Government offices, courts, foreign goods, Government schools and colleges.

**Progress of Non-co-operation Movement :** On the background of Non-co-operation movement, many eminent lawyers like Motilal Nehru, Chittaranjan

Das etc. boycotted the court by giving up their practice. During this period, with the boycott of schools and colleges, the scheme of national education was run. Many National schools, colleges and universities were established. There was boycott of coming elections, boycott and bonfire of foreign clothes. Due to this the import of foreign clothes decreased.

In 1921, during the visit of Prince of Wales, he was welcomed by organising hartal. Lonely roads and closed shops welcomed the Prince. The movement spread from the planters in Assam to rail workers in Bengal. To bring the movement under control the British government undertook suppressive measures.

In February 1922, the Police opened fire on a peaceful procession at Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh. The people were angry and set fire to the police station in which along with one officer, 22 policemen were killed. Due to this incident, Gandhiji was hurt. On 12 February 1922, Gandhiji suspended the Non-co-operation Movement.



#### Do you know ?

**Mulshi Satyagraha :** During the non-co-operation movement, the farmers of Mulshi Taluka in Pune district launched satyagraha against the government. Senapati Pandurang Mahadev Bapat led the Mulshi satyagraha, for which he was punished with six years of imprisonment.

Gandhiji was arrested in March 1922 for writing three anti-national articles in 'Young India'. Special court was set up at Ahmedabad and Gandhiji was sentenced six years of imprisonment.

Later, on grounds of ill health, Gandhiji was released from the jail. Gandhiji, along with non-co-operation movement, took up constructive programmes which mainly

included spread of Swadeshi, Hindu-Muslim unity, prohibition of alcohol, removal of untouchability, popularise use of Khadi, national education etc. Due to these constructive programmes, the national movement became more comprehensive in rural areas.

**Swaraj Party :** The members of Indian National Congress such as Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru put up the idea of contesting elections and obstructing the work of the British government. In 1922, the Swaraj Party was established. In 1923, many members of Swaraj Party were elected in the Central Legislative Assembly and Provincial Legislative Council, mainly including Motilal Nehru, Madan Mohan Malviya, Lala Lajpat Rai and N.C.Kelkar. When the political movement in the country calmed down, then the fight in the Legislative Assembly was strengthened by the Swaraj Party. They severely opposed the unjust policies of British. They demanded that Responsible Government should be given to India in future. They made a resolution to be passed in the Legislative Assembly for the release of political leaders from prison, to call for the Round Table Conference. The government rejected most of the resolutions.

**Simon Commission :** The reforms introduced by the Montague Chelmsford Act of 1919 were unsatisfactory. Hence there was discontent among the Indian people. On this background, the British appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon. In this commission, none of the Indian member was included. Hence the Congress decided to boycott the commission.

In 1928, the commission arrived in India. Wherever it travelled, the people made demonstrations against them, by



**Simon Go Back**

shouting the slogans like ‘Simon Go Back’.

There was lathi charge on the demonstrators. At Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai was leading the demonstration against the Simon Commission. The police lathi charged the demonstrators. Saunders, a police officer, attacked Lalaji with a lathi. After the attack, in a protest meeting, Lalaji said, “Every blow on my body will prove a nail in the coffin of the British Empire”. Within few days of the attack Lalaji died.



**Lala Lajpat Rai**

**Nehru Report :** Berkenhead, Secretary of State of India, criticised that the Indian leaders cannot draft a unanimously accepted constitution. This challenge was accepted and an all party Committee was formed. Pandit Motilal Nehru was the Chairman of this Committee.

To establish self government in the colonies of India, implement Adult Franchise system, linguistic division of provinces such proposals were put up in this report. This report was known as ‘Nehru Report’.

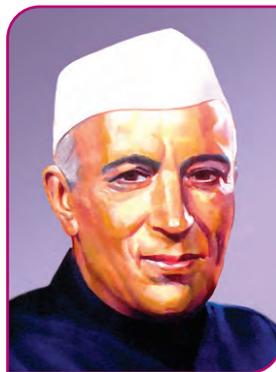
By the end of 1929, an indication was given that if the Nehru report is not accepted

by the government then the civil disobedience movement will be started. On this background, in December 1929, the Lahore session presided by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became memorable in history.

**Demand for Poorna Swaraj :** The objective of Indian National Congress of Dominion status was not acceptable to many young members. Young leaders like Pandit Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose were demanding complete independence. i.e. poorna swaraj. Due to the influence of this young group, in the Lahore session of Indian National Congress, resolution of attainment of complete independence was passed. Through this resolution Indian national Congress gave up the objective of dominion status. From here onwards, the

objective of National movement was complete independence of India.

On 31st December 1929, Pandit Nehru unfurled the tri colour flag and a resolution was passed in which 26 January was



**Pandit Nehru**

declared to be celebrated as Independence Day. On 26 January 1930, people all over the country took pledge for carrying out the freedom movement with non violent means for attainment of independence of India. Everywhere in the country, the atmosphere was charged with a new spirit.

### Exercise

#### 1. Rewrite the statements by choosing the appropriate options.

- Gandhiji began his career from the country of ..... .  
(a) India (b) England  
(c) South Africa (d) Myanmar
- The farmers started the no-tax movement in the district of ..... .  
(a) Gorakhpur (b) Kheda  
(c) Solapur (d) Amravati
- As a protest to Jallianwala Baug massacre, Rabindranath Tagore returned the title of ..... bestowed upon him by the British Government.  
(a) Lord (b) Sir  
(c) Raobahadur (d) Raosaheb

#### 2. Answer the following questions in one sentence.

- Which restriction were put up on the Blacks in South Africa according to the declaration of 1906?
- Where did Gandhiji launch the first satyagraha in India?
- Which officer gave orders of firing in the Jallianwala Baug?

#### 3. Answer the following questions in 25-30 words.

- Explain the philosophy of Satyagraha.
- Why was the Swaraj Party established?

#### 4. Explain the following statements with reasons.

- Rowlatt Act was opposed by the people of India.
- Gandhiji suspended the Non-co-operation Movement.
- The Indians boycotted the Simon Commission.
- Khilafat Movement was started in India.

#### Project

Trace out the pledge of independence that was taken on 26th January 1930 and read it aloud collectively in the classroom.

