

Contemporary India --15

The Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22)

Mahtama Gandhi started the non-cooperation movement in India after three major incidents like Khilafat Movement, Rowlatt Act of 1919 and the Jaliwanawalabagh Massacre which had stirred the people of India. He started the non-cooperation movement in August 1920, in which he appealed to the people not to cooperate with the British government. At this time, the Khilafat movement started by the Muslims and the Noncooperation movement led by Gandhi merged into one and both Hindus and Muslims fought against the British.

Programmes of Non-Cooperation Movement

For this Gandhi laid down an elaborate programme-

- (1) Surrender of titles and honorary offices as well as resignation from nominated seats in local bodies;
- (2) refusal to attend official and non-official functions;
- (3) gradual withdrawal of children from officially controlled schools and colleges;
- (4) gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants;
- (5) refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia;
- (6) boycott of elections to the legislative council by candidates and voters;
- (7) boycott of foreign goods
- (8) boycott of schools and colleges by the students and teachers.

Later, it was supplemented with a constructive programme which had three principal features: (1) promotion of 'Swadeshi', particularly hand-spinning and weaving;

- (2) Removal of untouchability among Hindus;
- (3) promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity;
- (4) Opening of national school.

Suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement

At the call of Gandhiji, a large number of people, dropping their differences, took part in this movement. Over two-thirds of the voters abstained from taking part in the elections to the Council, held in November, 1920. Thousands of students and teachers left their schools and

colleges and new Indian educational centers were started by them. Lawyers like Moti Lal Nehru, C. R. Das, C. Rajagopalachari and Asif Ali boycotted the courts. Legislative Assemblies were also boycotted. Foreign goods were boycotted and the clothes were put on bonfire. When the movement was in full swing, an unfortunate incident occurred in the form of mob violence took place on February 9, 1922, at Chauri Chaura village, in Gorakhpur district of UP, which disheartened Gandhiji. This was followed by more violence at Bareilly. So, Gandhiji suspended the noncooperation movement on February 14, 1922. He was arrested at Ahmadabad on March 18, 1922, and sentenced to six years simple imprisonment. Although, the non-cooperation movement failed to achieve success, yet it succeeded to prepare a platform for the future movements.

Constructive activities after Non-Cooperation Movement

After the Non-Cooperation movement, Gandhiji and his followers were busy in constructive activities in village areas of the country. By this he gave the message to the people to remove the caste based hatred. In 1922, he suspended his non-cooperation movement after Chauri Chaura incident, even when the movement was on its peak. Many people criticized the decision of Gandhiji. .