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# Major Nationalist Movements in India

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KASHISH KHANNA<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

*India's population began to experience a sense of nationalism in their hearts as a result of the Indian National Movement. The Indians' sense of nationalism encouraged them to voice out. Indians began to rebel against the British as a result. Beginning in 1850s, the Indian National Movement saw increasing-sized uprisings, which aided India's quest for independence.*

*The Nationalistic feeling aided India in gaining its freedom. Indians were aided in their revolt against the British by the advent of the Indian National Movement, which served to further amplify nationalism throughout the nation. After living under British rule for two hundred years, India could become independent.*

*The sense of nationalism was the only thing that made it feasible. Indian National Movement was sparked by a nationalistic sentiment. Consequently, the Indian National Movement is crucial to the nation of India's independence.*

*The struggle for Indian independence was a protracted one that spanned almost two centuries. People from all walks of life joined the movement because they shared a desire to be free from British colonial control. The fight for independence was a defining moment in India's history and had a profound effect on shaping the country's political and social landscape.*

*Role of Gandhiji and various other leaders has been unmatched in the success of freedom struggle. Both the deed of being patriotic and having patriotic feelings contributed to the strength of the country. One will be able to connect with others more easily because of one's shared passion for this nation, and the more people who show their patriotism, the more united and powerful our nation will be.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### (A) Incidents which led to the nationalist movements after 1857:

#### 1. Rowlatt Act, 1919

The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, also referred to as the "Rowlatt Act," was enacted by the British Legislative Council in February 1919. A person suspected of plotting to topple the British empire could be held for up to two years without a trial under this Act

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<sup>1</sup> Author is a student at IILM University, Gurugram, India

before being executed without a jury.<sup>2</sup>

The Rowlatt Commission (1918) recommended that the Defense of India Act (1915), which had been passed during the First World War, be replaced with a permanent law that would give the British government more authority over Indians.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

The Rowlatt Act, which was referred to by Mahatma Gandhi as a "Black Act" or "Black Bill," triggered the terrible Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. People gathered on April 13, 1919, to demonstrate against these arrests in Amritsar's Jallianwala Bagh, a small park. Men, women, and kids all gathered in the quiet place. The only entrance to the park was guarded by a regiment of soldiers when General Dyer, a British military officer, deemed the meeting unlawful and abruptly commanded his troops to open fire. Ten minutes of continuous shooting followed, until all the ammo was used. Over 2,000 people were injured, and over a thousand people were slain. The slaughter, which should have been classified as genocide, shocked the entire nation. Rabindranath Tagore relinquished his knighthood on May 30, 1919. Gandhi surrendered the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold medal.<sup>4</sup>

### (B) The Revolt of 1857 (First War Of Independence)

#### a. Causes of the revolt

A sepoy rebellion started the Revolt of 1857. Despite making up more than 87% of the British forces in India, Indian sepoys were viewed as being underside British soldiers. A European sepoy of equal status earned more money than an Indian sepoy did. There was a rumor that the new Enfield gun cartridges were greased with pig and cow fat. The sepoys had to bite off the cartridge paper before loading these weapons. They were rejected by Hindu and Muslim sepoys alike.

#### b. The Revolt

On May 10, 1857, the sepoys in the Meerut cantonment erupted in rebellion late in the afternoon. It started in the lines of the indigenous troops, quickly spread to the cavalry, and then reached the city.

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<sup>2</sup> Rowlatt act (no date) *Oxford Reference*. Available at: <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100431140> (Accessed: 16 May 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Lobo, C. (2021) *Rowlatt act: The 'black act' and how it backfired*, *PeepulTree*. Available at: <https://www.peepulTree.world/livehistoryindia/story/eras/the-rowlatt-black-act> (Accessed: 16 May 2023).

<sup>4</sup> 2, S.A. (2021) *Champaran satyagraha- India's first Civil Disobedience Movement*, *Jagranjosh.com*. Available at: <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/champaran-satyagraha-india-first-civil-disobedience-movement-1529493459-1> (Accessed: 16 May 2023).

The town's common citizens and those from the nearby villages enlisted the sepoys. The sepoys attacked white people, looted and burned their bungalows, and destroyed their property after taking control of the bell of arms where the weapons and ammo were stored.

The record office, jail, court, post office, treasury, and other government facilities were destroyed and pillaged. Delhi's telegraph connection was severed. A party of sepoys rode away toward Delhi as night fell. Early in the morning, the sepoys landed at the Red Fort's gates.

It was Ramadan, the Muslim sacred month of fasting and prayer. Before the sun rose and the fast started, the ancient Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah had just completed his prayers and meal. He could hear the noise at the entrances.

"We have come from Meerut after killing all the Englishmen there," the sepoys gathered beneath his window told him. "They ordered us to bite bullets that were coated with the fat of cows and pigs with our teeth. Both Muslims and Hindus have had their faiths perverted by this. The common citizens of Delhi accompanied a second group of sepoys as they entered the city. Numerous Europeans were slain, and the wealthy of Delhi were attacked and pillaged. It

Was clear that the city of Delhi was not in British control anymore. Some sepoys entered the Red Fort via their horses without adhering to the formal courtesies that were required of them. They requested the emperor's blessing, which was granted. Bahadur Shah was surrounded by sepoys and had no choice but to obey. Due to the fact that it could now be carried out in the name of the Mughal emperor, the rebellion thereby gained some legitimacy.

They looted the assets after seizing the bell of arms. They then attacked and burned all the documents in the jail, the treasury, the telegraph office, the record room, and the bungalows. Targets were set for anything and everyone associated with the white guy. In the cities, announcements in Hindi, Urdu, and Persian were posted urging the populace, including Muslims and Hindus, to unify, rise, and eliminate the firangis.

As more common people joined the uprising, the attack's objectives grew. Rich people and moneylenders in important cities like Lucknow, Kanpur, and Bareilly fell under rebel wrath. They were viewed by the populace as both British friends and oppressors.

Their homes were typically looted and demolished. Although the British were successful in suppressing the revolt, it spread widely in different states of India and was joined by other great leaders like Rani Laxmi Bai, Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah, Shah Mal, Nana Sahib and Kunwar Singh.

It was considered as an important aspect which led to arousal of nationalist feelings in the hearts

of Indians for the first time.

### **(C) Satyagraha, 1917**

**a. Causes:** Zamindars and landowners took advantage of poor farmers to the point where many of them were forced to work as bonded laborers on farms. Their pay was disgracefully poor, their hours were excruciatingly long, and they were denied even the most basic sense of dignity. The colonial rulers meticulously crafted laws that favored the already wealthy. Moneylenders and landowners were intended to be protected and to gain from them. The colonial period had some of the highest tax rates in history. The farmers were still required to pay taxes even if their harvests failed. Many people sold their kids to pay the taxes.<sup>5</sup>

#### **b. The satyagraha movements**

**Kheda:** Farmers' harvests in Gujarat's Kheda failed in 1919 as a result of drought-like circumstances. They were nonetheless required to pay taxes even then. Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel joined forces to advance the cause of farmers. The government complied with the main requests made by farmers.

**Champan:** Farmers in Bihar's Champan were cruelly exploited, according to the Champan Satyagraha. They did not receive a just reward for their labor. On at least 3/20 of their farmland, they were compelled to grow indigo, for which they got little compensation. After returning from South Africa in 1917, Mahatma Gandhi arrived there and stayed in the village until the requests of the farmers were met. In May 1918, the Champan Agrarian Act was enacted, exempting farmers from paying high taxes. Gandhiji's nonviolent philosophy was violated when the campaign abruptly turned violent. Nevertheless, it is regarded as a crucial farmer movement in the fight for freedom.

**Bardoli Movement:** Even after a crop failure, the British government continued to collect taxes and even increased land income by 30% during the Bardoli Movement (1928). Agitated farmers banded together, and British forces' efforts to put down the movement were ineffective. In the event, the tax payment for that year was skipped, and the increase in inland revenue was only reduced to 6%.<sup>6</sup>

### **(D) The Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movement, 1920**

Gandhiji instructed all his followers to not cooperate with the British. Lawyers stopped going

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<sup>5</sup> Fazal, D. Abul, and Abul Fazl. "MUSLIMS AND THE ROWLATT ACT SATYAGRAHA." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 63 (2002): 733–40. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44158141>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://unacademy.com/content/upsc/study-material/sociology/peasants-and-farmers-movements/> Last Visited On 11.03.2023

to courts, government officials shut down government offices and even children stooped going to schools. Khadi cloth made using the charkha was promoted and all imported clothes and goods were burnt down. The incorporation of khilafat movement in the noncooperation movement after consent of Shaukat Ali (leader of the khilafat movement) increased popularity of the movement. The middle class led the movement. The movement was supported and strengthened by women, peasants and businessmen. Women even offered to give up their jewelry to fund the movement. In response to the movement, Britishers reacted by declaring Congress as an illegal organization. Public meetings could not take place any more. Many of the major leaders got arrested. Some protestors were shot to death. Despite these efforts the movement had to be withdrawn because of spread of violence at Chauri Chaura in UP. Twenty policemen were assassinated by the violent outrage of people. Gandhiji, a man who believed in satyagraha, wanted the movement to be non-violent. He expressed grief for whatever happened and he went on to withdraw the movement.<sup>7</sup>

#### **(E) The civil disobedience movement, 1930**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> march Gandhiji sent a letter to Lord Irwin stating eleven demands, which if not fulfilled would lead to a protest march. Irwin as expected rejected to fulfill these demands.

On March 12, 1930, he led a gathering of people from his ashram in Sabarmati through the villages of Gujarat.

When he arrived in the coastal community of Dandi, he extracted salt from saltwater, breaking the salt act. Initiating the march with 80 of his followers was Gandhiji. They were under strict instructions not to use violence of any kind.

Thousands of people crowded the road from Sabarmati Ashram to Ahmedabad to watch the historic event.

At the conclusion of the day, Gandhiji spoke before a large crowd and criticized the government. This march from Sabarmati Ashram to Ahmedabad was a very important component of the freedom struggle and came to be known as the 'dandi march' or the 'salt march.' Similar marches were lead in other parts of the country by different leaders. The soldiers detained about 60,000 individuals, including Gandhiji.

The public engaged in a lot of civil disobedience. Other unpopular tax regulations, such as the chowkidar tax, land tax, and others, were disobeyed in addition to the salt tax.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.toppr.com/ask/question/why-did-gandhiji-decide-to-launch-a-nationwide-satyagraha-against/> Last Visited On 11.03.2023

The government sought to stifle the movement by enacting more laws and imposing restrictions. The Congress Party was referred to as unlawful. But this did not stop the satyagrahis from continuing their crusade.

This movement led to the Gandhi Irwin Pact. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact stipulated that in return for putting an end to the civil disobedience movement, Indians would be allowed to produce salt for domestic use. The Indians who were detained will be released, according to Lord Irwin. Gandhiji attended the Second Round Table Conference in London as an "equal."<sup>8</sup>

### **(F) The Quit India Movement and demand for 'Purna Swaraj'**

On the banks of Ravi in Lahore, under the presidentship of the "passionate and resolute" young Nehru, the Congress adopted the resolution on Complete Independence or *Purna Swaraj* on January 1, 1930.<sup>9</sup>

#### **a. Cause:**

Cripps Mission led by Sir Stanford Cripps wanted support of India in the war in return of self-governance to India. Although it promised mere dominion status.

#### **b. The Movement:**

Initial strength of the movement was in urban areas, but soon it was the people in rural areas who maintained the rebel flag flying for a longer period of time.

In essence, the movement received a strong reaction from the citizens of Bombay, Andhra, UP, Bihar, Gujarat, Orissa, Karnataka, Bengal, and other states. As a result, public trust in the government experienced a significant decline. This also demonstrated how pervasive nationalism had become. The 'Do or die' slogan was adopted.

In cities and villages, there were hartals, protests, and processions. The movement was started by the people, not the Congress leadership, who made the decision. Later, the government's oppressive policies were what incited the populace to violence.

## **II. THE ROLE OF GANDHIJI AND THE COMPILED SUCCESS OF ALL THE MOVEMENTS; INDEPENDENCE OF INDIA IN 1947**

Gandhi was essential to India's fight for independence. He is renowned for his numerous Satyagrahas against the British government's unfair laws. Champaran Satyagraha for indigo planters, Ahmedabad Mill Satyagraha for an increase in mill workers' wages, Kheda Satyagraha

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<sup>8</sup> <https://directionelearning.com/civil-disobedience-movement/> Last Visited On 19.03.2023

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.competitionreview.in/blogs/2021/03/16/demand-for-purna-swaraj/> Last Visited On 19.03.2023

for Patidar peasants, Satyagraha against Rowlett Act, Salt Satyagraha against the tax imposed on salt, and Quit India movement for India's freedom are a few of the well-known movements led by Mahatma Gandhi. As a result, we can draw the conclusion that Mahatma Gandhi's movement had a substantial impact on India's struggle for independence, and as a result, he can be regarded as the movement's architect. Gandhi was a patriot, anti-colonialist, and lawyer. He organized a nonviolent mass uprising against British rule in India, which eventually led to the country's freedom. In India, Mahatma Gandhi is regarded as the nation's founding father.

Gandhi lived a simple lifestyle and Gandhi Ji thought that leading an active lifestyle, eating fresh fruits and vegetables, abstaining from sugar and alcohol, and keeping the surroundings as clean as possible are the cornerstones of a healthy lifestyle.<sup>10</sup> He urged the Indians to start a cottage industry of cotton spinning so that India could stop relying on British clothing made from India cotton. Thousands of bonfires were lit after he urged Indians to burn their clothing manufactured abroad, and Indians threw their Manchester-made, Indian-cloth clothing into them. Gandhi thought that Indians would not require the British or textiles imported from British mills if they could spin and utilize their own cloth. He also promoted use of the charkha.

Gandhian Era is the name given to the final stage of the Indian National Movement. The National Movement's undeniable head was Mahatma Gandhi. His nonviolent and Satyagraha principles were used to overthrow the British administration. The nationalism movement became widely popular thanks to Gandhi. Gandhi traveled throughout India for a year after his 1915 return at Gokhale's request. To settle his Phoenix family, he later founded a monastery in Ahmedabad. He first championed the abolition of indentured labor in India and continued the battle there in South Africa. Gandhiji was against the division of India based on religion. While the Muslim league called for dividing and leaving India, he and Congress insisted that the British leave India. Gandhi made numerous attempts to assist Congress and the Muslim league in coming to a corporate and achieving freedom, but all of these failed. Gandhiji urged for peace among his countrymen rather than celebrating the country's independence and the end of British control. Never did he support the division of the nation. Millions of people all over the globe were inspired by Gandhi's philosophy.

Nelson Mandela and other notable world leaders adopted Gandhiji's principles and way of life. Consequently, his influence is still felt very strongly on a worldwide scale. Additionally, he published a number of works, among them his autobiography "The Story Of My Experiments

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gigadocs.com/blog/learning-from-mahatma-gandhi-jis-views-on-lifestyle-fitness-and-healthcare/>  
Last Visited On 19.03.2023



with Truth." <sup>11</sup>

### **III. BRIEF ANALYSIS**

Political repression and the denial of fundamental freedoms to Indians were hallmarks of British colonial control.

Numerous factors, such as economic exploitation, political repression, and cultural oppression, contributed to the Indian freedom fight.<sup>12</sup>

The Indian farmer's movement after the 1900s was extremely important to the broader nationalist movement. Poor peasants were educated about their rights and their participation in the fight for freedom. They fought back against the British government's unjust tax laws and policies. They brought the British to their knees through non-cooperation and non-violence, ultimately winning.

To ensure that Indians could live freely in their country, freedom fighters endured the hardships, suffering, and torture imposed by the British.<sup>13</sup>

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Patriotism spread in India. The sentiment of love and attachment to one's nation is known as patriotism. It includes a strong sense of commitment to the country. A patriot is someone who respects and maintains the flag of their nation flying high. The development of our land depends heavily on our love and devotion to it.<sup>14</sup>

Patriotism entails making sacrifices for the nation in order to preserve its dignity. It entails recognizing and comprehending the values that the country upholds. Patriotism is the respect and adherence to the governance structure established by the framers of our constitution, not the support for a specific political group or leader. Patriotism does include having a feeling of pride in and responsibility for the country.

A large number of our freedom warriors sacrificed their lives for freedom. Only a few people gave the ultimate effort for India: Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekar Azad, Rani Laxmi Bai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Sukhdev. To regain our country's identity and independence, our freedom fighters organized people from all over the nation. Each day, soldiers risk their lives in order to defend the country. When necessary, they defend our nation's honor while defending our

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<sup>11</sup> <https://englishsummary.com/-freedom-fighters-in-english/> Last Visited On 19.03.2023

<sup>12</sup> <https://school.careers360.com/indian-freedom-struggle-essay-essy> Last Visited On 19.03.2023

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.firstcry.com/intelli/articles/essay-on-freedom-fighters-10-lines-short-and-long-essay-for-children/> Last Visited On 19.03.2023

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.aplustopper.com/importance-of-patriotism-essay/> Last Visited On 19.03.2023

boundaries. They bravely guard us day and night. One's identity comes from the country he belongs to. Thus one should always respect the fact that he is a citizen of one of the largest democracies in the world; India.

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