
UNIT 8 CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT OF 1930

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Civil Disobedience movement (1930-34) was the second mass movement, launched by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, after a gap of about eight years, when the last mass movement known as the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement was withdrawn in the wake of the famous Chauri-Chaura incident, which had taken place on 5th February 1922. After the withdrawal of this movement, the Indian National Congress in general and Gandhi in particular, were engaged in stemming the growing tide of communal problem in the country. During this period the Mahatma was also engaged in certain social questions such as eradication of untouchability, which he perceived as the scourge of the Indian society. However, there was not much of political activity involving the masses on a large scale and this opportunity came with the appointment of an all-white commission known as the Simon Commission, charged with the task of making an evaluation of the functioning of the Government of India Act 1919 also known as Montague-Chelmsford reforms and thereupon making recommendations to bring about possible amendments. However, the all-white composition of this Commission provoked the Indian political opinion across the board barring some exception. The slogan commonly heard in the streets was, 'Simon go back.' In the face of total disregard for Indian political opinion in constituting this Commission, it was resolved by the Congress that Indians themselves would formulate a constitution for which collaboration with other political parties was necessary and for this a mechanism was brought in place. Pandit Motilal Nehru became the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, which was also known as the Nehru Committee, with other members. This exercise of the constitution making could not take off due to internal wrangling among various groups on the grounds of better representation of communities and thus, a historic opportunity was lost. This loss of legal-constitutional opportunity was because of involvement of other political formations

whereas launching a nation-wide political movement was well within the control of the Congress and it resolved to do so in 1930.

Aims and Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand:

- The background to and beginning of the civil disobedience movement
- The varied responses to the movement and
- The consequent events that followed the movement.

8.2 RESOLUTION FOR PURNA SWARAJ

The launching of the Civil Disobedience movement took place in 1930, as a consequence of the resolution of the Indian National Congress passed at its session at Lahore that now onwards its main objective would be to seek *Purna Swaraj*, complete independence. It was for the first time the Congress had made this declaration in such an open manner. At midnight of 31 December 1930, it adopted the tricolour as the national flag of India. With the declaration of the *Purna Swaraj*, as its goal and adoption of a national flag, it geared up to prepare for a long haul of another round of struggle to seek independence. The Congress authorised the All-India Congress Committee to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement, while it asked its members in the central and provincial legislatures to resign their seats.

It was a landmark decision of the Congress to demand the complete independence. However, this demand alone was not going to produce an immediate result without a sustained campaign for it, which was to be launched under the leadership of Gandhi. Given the mood in the party, it would have seemed ideal for him to launch a movement straight away, which he did not do. Instead he retired to his Sabarmati *Ashram* to contemplate over the possibility of launching an agitation for which creating a moral climate of non-violence was a pre-condition. Another crucial step taken in this direction was to observe 26th January 1930 as Independence Day, for which series of meetings were organised not only in the urban but also in rural areas. On all such occasions the national flag was unfurled and proclamation for independence was made. Within a week of observing the Independence Day, Gandhi served a memorandum on the Viceroy, Lord Irwin on 31 January 1930, which did not even remotely mention the resolve to attain *Purna Swaraj*. This memorandum contained 11 points, which were as follows: 1. Total prohibition. 2. Reduction of exchange ratio to 1s. 4d. 3. Reduction of land revenue by 50%. 4. Abolition of the salt tax. 5. Reduction of military expenditure by fifty percent to begin with. 6. Reduction of salaries of the highest-grade services by half. 7. Protective tariff on foreign cloth. 8. Passage of the Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill. 9. Discharge of all political prisoners except those condemned for murder. 10. Abolition of the C.I.D. 11. Issue of licenses to use firearms, for self-defence. The attainment of *Purna Swaraj* was nowhere mentioned. Questions arose as to how Gandhi was going to get complete independence, if he did not even address this question in the memorandum to the Viceroy. Many took it as a kind of retreat from the stated position of the Indian National Congress. Yet it is possible to argue that these eleven points as enunciated by Gandhi in more ways than one concretised the national demand as they also pertained to specific grievances of different sections of the society. For instance demands such as 50% cut in army expenses and civil services salaries, total prohibition, release of political prisoners,

reforms or the abolition of the C.I.D., and the changes in the arms Act, allowing the popular control of issues of firearms licenses pertained to general interest of the common masses of Indians. There were three demands, which were quite specific to the interest of the capitalists. For instance, lowering of the rupee-sterling exchanger ratio to 1s 4d, textile protection and reservation of coastal shipping for Indians were such which would have benefited this class only. However there were still some other demands, which concerned the peasantry alone, such as 50% reduction in land revenue and the abolition of the salt tax and the Government monopoly on salt.

Following the serving of this memorandum, Gandhi waited for a positive response from the Viceroy to these demands; however the Government did not respond and Gandhi was left with no option but to think of a strategy to launch a movement. Gandhi seriously contemplated on the issue or symbol to mobilise the masses and zeroed on 'salt' which was taxed by the Government and reflected on this issue most imaginatively: 'There is no article like salt outside water by taxing which the state can reach even the starving millions, the sick, the maimed and utterly helpless. The tax constitutes therefore the most inhuman poll tax ingenuity of man can devise.' Apart from the reason of taxing an item of common use such as salt, there were other reasons for the choice of 'salt' as the symbol of an unfolding movement. For instance, the salt was a non-divisive issue and no community or social group could ever raise an objection to it being the rallying point. Another reason for the choice of salt was that with the help of an item such as this, the message of the freedom struggle could be taken right into the homes of the people across classes and the masses. The choice of the salt, therefore, was a cleverly crafted idea. Thereafter Gandhi addressed a letter to the Viceroy, informing him of his intention to launch an agitation on the question of salt, giving the justification for doing so; he regarded the British rule as a curse because, 'It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation...it has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture...it has degraded us spiritually.' Though Gandhi explained the historical consequences of the British rule, there were other reasons, the impact of certain other developments on the ordinary mass of the people. The worldwide economic slump since 1929 impacted India adversely. The prices of everything the peasant produced fell catastrophically until they were halved. It has to be recognised that the prices of items that peasant was to buy also came down, but it did not help him since his buying capacity was considerably limited.

The demand of the Congress for complete independence coincided with the immediate historical circumstances to produce a heady mixture for launching a movement, which Gandhi was contemplating ever since the Congress adopted the resolution to the same effect. Similar to earlier movements, this time too he proposed non-violence as a precondition for the movement and those who wished to join it. True to his conviction in Satyagraha, Gandhi did not wish to harm the enemy but to prove the point as emphatically as possible and the same lesson he was imparting to those *Satyagrahis*, who were to accompany Gandhi in his long march to Dandi. The *Satyagrahis* must not harbour any ill will towards the adversary. While the preparations for launching the movement were on, he addressed a letter to the Viceroy on the 2 March 1930 declaring his intention of launching the movement, which he did on 12 March 1930.

8.3 BEGINNING OF THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

Dandi March

Gandhi set out on a march to cover the distance of 200 miles to reach Dandi, a coastal town along with 78 of his chosen *Satyagrahis*, who came from all parts of the country and represented all sections of the society. About seventy-five thousand people had gathered at the Sabarmati *Ashram* to wish Gandhi and his disciples and all along the route thousands gathered to greet them. Along the route, Gandhi kept on addressing the people on issues of immediate and long-term concerns such as the importance of *ahimsa*, *Satyagraha* and other such issues. Practically everyday at the sunrise and sunset he conducted his daily prayer meetings under the open skies, addressed meetings in villages through which he passed, did his daily quota of spinning on *charkha*, wrote article for his journals and letters to his correspondents. The Dandi march took altogether twenty-four days to complete and throughout, the press was full of the stories about the march. The international press too keenly reporting the progress of the march and their stories were filled with descriptions of this 'ceremony of rebellion.' On 6 April 1930, after a night of fasting and prayer, the leader and his followers bathed in the sea at Dandi. Thereafter Gandhi bent down to pick up a handful of salt. With this act of defiance of the Salt Law began the Civil Disobedience movement. It was a signal for which masses were anxiously waiting for quite sometime. Wherever the sea was within reach, peasants and fishermen broke the law by making natural salt. Many people were arrested and in several cases the police resorted to *lathi* charge as freely as they could. Meetings were organised in innumerable towns to inaugurate the Civil Disobedience movement. The Government started using the coercive methods to suppress the Movement as many leaders were being arrested, starting with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the Indian National Congress.

In the course of the Civil Disobedience movement, while the question of breaking the salt law was central, however there were other issues too, which engaged the minds of the Congress leaders and accordingly strategies were planned. For instance village headmen were exhorted to give up their job and they overwhelmingly responded to this call of the Congress. In Gujarat, about 390 village headmen resigned their jobs. In many cases members of the legislatures too resigned their seats. In 1930, at the start of the Civil Disobedience movement, Vallabhbhai Patel wanted to launch a no-revenue campaign on a large scale particularly in Gujarat, to which Gandhi did not agree since he feared that such a step might result in confiscation of land, which he might not be able to regain. Gandhi's opposition to such a step was based on the logic that a campaign such as this should be waged on specific grievances rather than less easily fulfilled demands for *Swaraj*. However, despite Gandhi's disinclination, the no-revenue campaign was launched on a large scale after the arrest of Gandhi on 5 May 1930. With the launching of this campaign, the Government was excessively concerned, if the base of this campaign was to expand, '...if the people of Gujarat are successful in evading the payment of dues, we may expect a widespread extension of the movement. This would probably cause more embarrassment than any other single feature of the Civil Disobedience Movement.' In view of such a perception, the British decided to break the movement by coercion as in several cases *lathi*-wielding policemen were sent to villages to break into the peasants' houses, confiscate their property and farm animals and in some cases beat them up. In

order to escape such repressive measures, many peasant families chose to migrate to the neighbouring state of Baroda, while in other cases they suffered losses. The All-India Congress Committee had extended the scope of the Civil Disobedience movement by including the breach of forest laws, the non-payment of taxes in *ryotwari* areas and the boycott of foreign clothes, banks, shipping and insurance companies.

Though the Government intended to react rather harshly, it was wary of the impression of the Government using excessive measures. However, as the tempo of the movement picked up so did the Government's resolve to suppress the movement with force. Vallabhbhai Patel had already been arrested as early as 7th March 1930 under the orders of the local officials who had acted without the consent of even the Provincial Government. Early in April 1930, Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested in Allahabad. Among those who were convicted of the breach of the Salt Laws were C. Rajagopalachari, Madan Mohan Malviya, J. M. Sengupta, B.G.Kher, K.M.Munshi, Devdas Gandhi, Mahadev Desai and Vithalbhaji Patel. And finally, after a lot of dithering, the Government decided to arrest Gandhi on 5 May 1930 at Karadi, a village near Dandi, under the provision of Bombay Regulation XXV of 1827, where trial could easily be dispensed with.

Gandhi's arrest sparked a wave of protests. In Bombay cotton mills and railways workshops stood still as thousands of workers came out in streets. Cloth-merchants went on a six-day *hartal*. There were clashes and firing in Delhi and Calcutta. In the big textile towns such as Sholapur, the textile workers went on strike from the 7th May and along with others, burnt down liquor shops and attacked all symbols associated with the Government such as railway station, law courts and police stations and municipal buildings. They virtually established parallel government, which could only be dislodged with the imposition of the martial law after 16 May.

Dharasana Episode

The most interesting aspect of the Civil Disobedience movement was the use of non-violence as a method and the finest example of this was hugely manifested at Dharasana, where a Government salt manufacturing unit was in operation. Gandhi, just before his arrest, had stipulated some kind of raid, at this plant. However as a consequence of his arrest this responsibility fell on Sarojini Naidu, who became the first woman president of the Congress and others such as Imam Saheb, a close associate of Gandhi since the days in South Africa, Manilal, Gandhi's second son and others. It was planned that a band of 2000-2500 volunteers would raid Dharasana salt works. Before they advanced, Sarojini Naidu led them in prayers and appealed to them to be true to Gandhi's inspiration and abstain from violence. She said, 'You will be beaten, but you must not resist; you must not even raise a hand to ward off blows.' Round the depot a barrier of barbed wire had been erected and a ditch was dug. As the first picked column of the volunteers went forward, police officers ordered them to disperse but they advanced in silence. Soon scores of policemen swooped on them and started raining *lathi* blows on their heads. However, none of them resisted these blows and shortly, the ground was filled with injured bodies. After the first column of volunteers were beaten to pulp, came the turn of another column of volunteers and they proceeded to the designated spot with immense courage knowing fully well as to what awaited them. They too were struck with the same ferocity. After having gone through this experience of the police brutality, there was some change in the tactics as it was decided that a group of twenty-five men would advance and sit down and wait for the police to come. The police inflicted massive injuries and such brutality went on for hours.

NWFP

The experience of launching the Civil Disobedience and then suffering the police brutality was by and large much the same in Peshawar as in Dharasana. In the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) on 23rd April 1930, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and some Congress leaders were arrested, which resulted in unprecedented mass upsurge in Peshawar, with crowds confronting armoured cars and defying intensive firing, which killed about thirty people. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as the Frontier Gandhi had been politically quite active and raised a band of non-violent volunteers, known as *Khudai Khidmatgars*, who wore Red-Shirts, played an active role in this Movement. In the beginning some violent incidents occurred and the police abandoned the town to the Red Shirts, which was re-occupied after a while and then brutalities were unleashed on them, which was resisted by the Red Shirts with non-violence alone. In certain cases machine-guns were used. Even in this atmosphere of violent repression, there were stark examples of inter-community solidarity. One such example was the refusal of a platoon of the Garhwal Regiment, consisting of the Hindus only, to fire on the Muslims of the Frontier, while they were agitating. The British were able to restore order in Peshawar only ten days later on 4th May 1930 and a reign of terror was unleashed and the martial law was imposed. Ghaffar Khan's movement was largely limited to areas such as Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Hazara; however, there were series of tribal incursions in the later part of 1930, which could be controlled only with the help of aerial bombardment.

Chittagong emerged as another important centre of the Civil Disobedience, apart from Sholapur, Dharasana and Peshawar. Here, a group of revolutionaries headed by Surjaya Sen launched a spectacular campaign against the British. The local armoury was seized and an Independence Proclamation was made in the name of the 'Independent Republican Army' and fought a pitched battle on the Jalalabad hill on 22 April 1930 in which twelve revolutionaries lost their lives.

While the above discussed developments as regards the Civil Disobedience were mostly taking place in the urban areas, the rural areas too witnessed plenty of such activities in variety of ways. For instance those rural areas, which had already experienced some amount Gandhian rural constructive work through local ashrams—Bardoli and Kheda in Gujarat, Bankura and Arambagh in Bengal, Bihpur in Bhagalpur in Bihar emerged as strong centres of political activities during the movement. It is true that salt was the initial catalyst, but in due course of time it could be sustained in the coastal areas, but with the onset of monsoon, even this became difficult. The other activities, which kept the momentum of the movement, were picketing of the liquor shops and excise license auctions in small towns as well as villages. The refusal to pay Chowkidari tax was another form of protest during the movement, even at the cost of massive coercion and in some cases sale of property. The Congress tried to channelise the peasants and tribal grievances regarding forest laws in areas such as Central Province, Maharashtra and Karnataka. Training camps for 'forest *Satyagrahis*' were started in several areas, where Congressmen trained them. The activities that were carried out were the boycott of Forest Department auctions, peaceful mass violation of grazing and timber restrictions and public sale/auction of illegally acquired forest produce.

8.4 VARIED RESPONSES TO THE MOVEMENT

The Civil Disobedience was an all-India movement and yet not all parts and social groups responded to the call of the movement in the same manner. Bombay was the main citadel

of the movement throughout 1930. Two strands of leadership were in action, one, was the Gandhian type leadership and the other, socialist oriented leadership of K.F. Narima and Yusuf Meherally. The Congress volunteers made serious efforts to reach out for working class support and received overwhelming responses in Gujarat areas such as Anand, Borsad and Nadiad taluks, in Kheda, Jambusar in Broach and Bardoli in Surat.

The Civil Disobedience movement remained weak in Sindh, despite an initial mob-police clash on 16 April in Karachi. In Maharashtra, the movement was considerably strong because of the changed nature of leadership of the Congress, who had come close to non-Brahman Satya Shodhak Samaj radicals, for example, social groups such as Mahars, who were not attracted to the Congress, as they were closer to Dr. B.R.Ambedkar. The Central Provinces areas such as Chanda, Amraoti, Betul, Raipur, Bhandara and Seoni emerged as strong centres of the movement due to the forest *Satyagraha* as being a part of the Civil Disobedience movement. There were instances of the local tribal leaders emerging on their own and taking part in the movement, which on occasions involved violent methods as well. Violent attacks on forest guards and police parties were common in these regions.

In Tamilnadu, C. Rajagopalachari played an important role in the Civil Disobedience movement. He organised a march from Trichinopoly to Vedaranniyam on the Tanjore coast to break the salt law in April 1930, followed by picketing of foreign cloth shops and anti-liquor campaigns in towns such as Coimbatore, Madurai and Virudhanagar. Similarly in Malabar, Kelappan, who was a Nair Congress leader, organised the salt march. In Andhra, salt marches were organised in the East and West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur districts, in which cultivators, merchants and others took an active part.

In Orissa too, the Civil Disobedience movement received tremendous response under the leadership of Gopabandhu Chaudhary, particularly in the coastal districts such as Balasore, Cuttack and Puri. In Assam, the Civil Disobedience movement was not strong in view of the fact there were factional disputes among the leaders. For instance Tarunram Phookan was hostile to the movement as N.C.Bardaloi was unenthusiastic about it. Other reasons include social tensions, growing conflicts among the Bengalis and Assamese, Hindus and Muslims, and the tension developing from the inflow of the Muslim peasant immigrants from the densely-populated East Bengal. However there were students' protest and some activities in Sylhet and Kachar regions. In Bihar, the movement witnessed considerable participation in the rural areas where small landlords, small tenants took an active part in the movement. Salt *satyagraha* could not become that much popular due to physical conditions of it being landlocked. However, in due course of time due to shift from salt to no-*chowkidari* agitation, it was massively responded. There were instances when people in several districts refused to pay *chowkidari* tax, while foreign clothes and liquor sales also declined. Similarly, in Uttar Pradesh, the Civil Disobedience movement was more a rural rather than an urban phenomenon. Urban sections of the society were getting tired but the impetus for the movement came from the villagers since the Congress had reached out to such areas.

Though the Civil Disobedience movement was an all-India movement launched under the Gandhian leadership, there was no uniform pattern so far as responses of various social groups are concerned. In some cases strictly non-violent methods of protests were followed, while there were also instances of the participants resorting to violence. Unlike the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement, when the movement was withdrawn after the violent Chauri-Chaura incident, this time Gandhi had clearly stated that even though the

Civil Disobedience movement would be launched on the basis of non-violence, he would not withdraw it if some violence broke out in the course of the movement. Therefore it is observed that the Civil Disobedience movement progressed essentially on the principles of non-violence; in spite of occasional incidents of violence at different places, the movement was not withdrawn. And yet towards the closing months, the movement's response was considerably weak. The Indian capitalist class had for the first time participated in this movement as a class but with limited appetite to sustain this movement. As businessmen, they could not afford to antagonise the Government on permanent basis; hence attempts were made to bring about truce between Gandhi and the Government.

8.5 GANDHI-IRWIN PACT

The changing historical circumstances coincided with the efforts of men of liberal disposition such as Tej Bahadur Sapru and M.R. Jayakar and a few others. Their efforts were borne out of sympathetic readings of the Government's intentions. These people approached Motilal Nehru as well as Jawaharlal Nehru but any peace negotiation was not possible without Gandhi's presence and consent. And for this purpose a special train was arranged for Poona, where he was imprisoned at Yeravada jail in August. The discussions were attended besides Gandhi and Nehru, by Vallabhbhai Patel, Sarojini Naidu, Jairamdas Daulatram and Syed Mahmood. It was revealed that there was little common ground between the Congress and the Government. The Congress, in a letter dated 15 August 1930, made it abundantly clear that it was prepared to call off the Civil Disobedience movement, provided its basic assumptions in constitution-making were accepted and amends made for the policy of repression by releasing political prisoners, returning confiscated property and reinstating officials dismissed for participation in the Civil Disobedience movement.

Despite such opposition of the Congress, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin made conciliatory gestures towards the Congress. In a public statement in the Central Legislature he made kind reference to Gandhi's, 'spiritual force, which impels Mr. Gandhi count no sacrifice too great in the cause, as he believes, of the India he loves.' As an accompaniment to conciliatory statements, he released Gandhi and members of the Congress Working Committee on 25th January 1931—the eve of Independence Day on 26th January. Due to efforts of the peacemakers and conciliatory approach of the Viceroy, the dialogue between Gandhi and Lord Irwin started on 17 February 1931 and went on till 5th March when the two agreed to sign a pact known as Gandhi-Irwin Pact. It also came to be known as Delhi Pact. This Pact provided for the following conditions: 1. Discontinuation of the Civil Disobedience movement. 2. Revocation of the Ordinances and the release of the political prisoners except those who were convicted of open violence. 3. Making of salt by those living in coastal areas not for commercial purposes but for personal consumption. 4. Picketing of shops selling foreign clothes and other imported items and the liquor shops. 5. Return of the confiscated land, not yet sold to third parties. 6. Remission of all fines not yet collected. 7. Gandhi's insistence for inquiry into police excesses was recorded with the Government agreeing for it as such. 8. The Congress on its part agreed to participate in the Round Table Conference. This political clause of the Congress attending the Second Round Table Conference had an implied meaning that it would accept the outcome of the Round Table Conference, which came nowhere closer to the Lahore Resolution of the complete independence. Subsequently it was decided that Gandhi would represent the Congress at the Second Round Table Conference. Sarojini Naidu and Pandit Malaviya accompanied him. He was not too optimistic about the outcome of the

Conference, as he had stated, 'When I think of the prospects in London, there is nothing wanting to fill me with utter despair...There is every chance of my returning empty handed.'

8.6 THE SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

Gandhi sailed on board Rajputana, on 27 August 1931 for England. He travelled second class and kept up during the voyage his routine of early rising, spinning and prayer meetings. In London, on his arrival, he addressed a meeting at Friends' House. In London the venue of the Second Round Table Conference was St. James Palace, where delegates gathered, who were chosen not by the ordinary Indians but by the Viceroy and his officials. These delegates consisted of the Princes and Untouchables, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Parsees, spokesmen of landowners, Chambers of Commerce and Trade Unions. It was ironical that in the multitude of representative, there were not many willing to speak for India as whole and the peasantry, who consisted the vast majority of Indians. From such a Conference, no idea and no majority that reflected the national will could possibly emerge.

Gandhi's apprehensions were proved right and when the Conference was underway, he discovered that there was heavy concentration on resolving the minorities' issues rather than focusing on India's independence and transfer of power to Indians. In the light of his past experience as much as the contemporary one, he was convinced that it was the British rule, which had driven a wedge between India's creeds and classes. He was firm in his conviction that once the foreign rule was thrown away, Indians would solve their communal difficulties easily and amicably. But under the circumstances, Gandhi's hopes and conviction were quite unlikely to be translated into political reality due to hard-line approaches taken by the community leaders and clever manipulation of these people by the British Government in India as well as England. He returned to India on 28 December 1931 empty handed.

8.7 RESUMING THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

Within a week of Gandhi's return, he, along with other members, was arrested on 4 January 1932; a series of ordinances were promulgated. Not only the CWC but also several Provincial Congress Committees and innumerable local committees were declared illegal. Many organisations sympathetic to the Congress such as- Youth Leagues, National Schools, Congress Libraries and Hospitals- were also outlawed. The Congress funds were confiscated and buildings were occupied and every possible step was taken to ensure that Congress did not function at all. The civil liberties seemed suspended. Under these circumstances the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was shred to pieces and the Civil Disobedience movement was resumed. Lord Wellington, the Viceroy, who had replaced Lord Irwin, was a man of different disposition, who believed in a highhanded approach in dealing with nationalists. The friction between the congress and the Government had begun soon after the Pact was signed. The Congress received complaints that in Bardoli and Borsad, all prisoners had not been released, forfeited land had not been restored nor village officials reinstated. Tensions were mounting in Bengal, where the Pact did not, in any way, cover thousands of young men who had been detained without trial. In North-West Frontier Province, the repression against the Red Shirts was continuing with great zeal so much so that Gandhi was denied permission to enter the Province. The agrarian unrest was quite visible in the United Provinces.

The second Civil Disobedience during 1932-34 was launched in a political climate of total distrust of the Government as even the Government was determined to suppress it by using wanton coercion to the maximum, as the civil liberties were totally suppressed and even ordinary political act had become illegal. The forms of defiance included picketing of cloth and liquor shops, closing of markets and boycott of white or loyalist business concerns, symbolic hoisting of Congress flags, holding of illegal congress sessions, salt *satyagraha*, non-payment of *Chowkidari* tax, no-rent as well as no-revenue campaigns, violation of forest laws. There were occasions when the Congress carried out illegal activities such as secret radio transmitter and the use of bombs.

The Government severely repressed the movement. Towards the close of 1932, the movement had started tapering off, however in one form or the other it continued on till 1934. In the face of heavy repression, ordinary people started succumbing to it without losing faith either in Gandhi or in the congress. The leaders and the people who were arrested during the movement and kept in jail earned much greater respectability in the eyes of the society.

For a while it might appear that the Government of the day had an upper hand in dealing with and containing the movement. But the long-term consequence of the Civil Disobedience would tell us a different story altogether. This movement was able to free the minds of Indians even before the country earned its freedom on 15 August 1947. Gandhi had awakened the nation from its slumber. In the words of H.S.L.Polak, a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa, a chronicler, 'It acquiesced no longer in conquest.' During the movement, the resolve of India to win freedom was further steeled, as they no longer feared the *lathis* and other means of repression as they were prepared to suffer for an altruistic cause to liberate India from subjugation. Again in the words of Polak, 'They shed their servility and thought henceforward as free men.' The lasting contribution of Mahatma Gandhi in this movement as in earlier movements was to convey to the British rulers, that their rule was no longer treated as legitimate and that Indians had come of age to be the master of their own destiny.

8.8 SUMMARY

In view of the above discussion the following conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, Gandhi once again proved that he enjoyed the confidence of the classes and masses while carrying out such movements. Secondly, he thoroughly underlined the non-violent methods because violence would give a handle to the British to suppress Indians, while raising the most legitimate demands. However, this time Gandhi's adherence to non-violence was less dogmatic as compared to experience in 1922, when he had withdrawn the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement after the Chauri-Chaura violent incident.

This movement was significant because the social base of the nationalist movement had really expanded as more people from diverse background joined it with active participation. The participation of capitalists as a class was a noteworthy development, even though some tensions persisted among them as regards the extent to which they were prepared to go in the course of the movement. The geographical reach of the movement was immense. Large parts of India were involved in the movement, though with some variation of intensity. And finally, through this movement, the people of India were able to convey to the British that they no longer looked forward to them as there were leaders such as Gandhi and organisations such as Indian National Congress, which were closer to their heart and were willing to suffer and sacrifice in the cause of liberating India from the British rule.

8.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Trace the beginnings of the Civil Disobedience Movement.
2. What was the response to Gandhi's civil disobedience movement in different parts of India?
3. Write short notes on:
 - (a) Gandhi-Irwin pact
 - (b) Second Round Table Conference

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