

1. A Leader Announces Himself

- After staying two decades in South Africa, Gandhiji came back to India in January 1915. Most of his time he spent in South Africa, where as a lawyer he became a leader of the Indian community in that territory.
- Chandran Devanesan mentioned that South Africa made Gandhiji as 'Mahatma'. He used his special weapon of non-violence that was known as Satyagraha. Gandhiji returned back to India in 1915, but India was different from that which he had left in 1893.
- Indian National Congress had its branches in all big cities and towns. With the Swadeshi movement of 1905-07 it had set its appeal among the middle classes. The movement had thrown up some eminent leaders. They were Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra, Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal and Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab. They were known as Lal, Bal and Pal.
- They advocated the militant opposition of the colonial rule. At another side, a group of moderates was in the favour of gradual approach. Gandhiji acknowledged G. K. Gokhale as his political mentor.
- Gokhale advised Gandhiji to spend a year in visiting across the British India to know the people and the land. Gandhiji appeared first time in public at the opening of the Banaras Hindu University in Feb 1916. He was invited on the behalf of his work in South Africa.

- When Gandhiji came to speak, he charged the Indian Elite group for not caring about the labouring poor. He said that opening of the BHU was definitely a most gorgeous show. He was worried about the presence of richly bedecked nobleman and absence of millions of the poor.
- The opening of the BHU was an occasion for the celebration, and marked as it did the opening of a nationalist university that was patronised and sustained by Indian money and Indian initiative.
- At one level, Gandhiji's speech at Banaras in Feb 1916 was a statement of fact. The elite group of lawyers, doctors and landlords were there to represent the Indian nationalism. At another level, his statement showed his intent as he gave stress that Indian nationalism should properly represent the Indian people as a whole.



Mahatma Gandhi in Karachi, March 1916

2. The Making and Unmaking of Non-Cooperation

- Gandhiji spent his much more time of 1917 in Champaran where he fought for the peasants freedom to cultivate the crops as per their own choice. In 1918, Gandhiji was engaged in two movements in Gujarat. First, he demanded to make better working conditions for the textiles mill workers of Ahmedabad. Later he joined the another peasant's movements at Kheda for remission of taxes after the failure of their crops.
- Gandhiji was marked out as a nationalist as he had great sympathy for the poor, in the movements that took place at Champaran, Kheda, Ahmedabad. During the First World War, the British imposed censorship of the press and anyone could be detained without trial by the Rowlatt Act of 1919.
- In the response, Gandhiji started a countrywide campaign in opposition of the Rowlatt Act. In the result, the life in towns across North and West India came to a stand-still. Shops were shutdown, schools were closed in response to the call of 'bandh'.
- In Punjab, the protest was intense as many persons had served on the British side in the war. They were expecting rewards for their service, they were rewarded with the Rowlatt Act. Famous local Congress persons were arrested along with Gandhiji. Situation became worst. The tension reached its bloody climax as the Jallian Wala Bagh Massacre in April 1919.
- The Rowlatt Satyagraha made Gandhiji a true national leader. Gandhiji was encouraged by its success. He started Non-cooperation movement against British rule. Those people, who were against and wanted the colonialism to end, they urged not to attend the school, colleges, courts and not to pay any tax.
- He joined the hands with the Khilafat Movement and broadened the struggle. The Khilafat movement was started to restore the caliphate which was abolished by the Turkish ruler Kemal Attaturk.

2.1 Knitting a popular movement

- Gandhiji supposed that by joining both non-cooperation with Khilafat movement, two major religious communities—Hindu and Muslims, would collectively bring the end of British rule. These movements definitely provide the wider form to the national movement.
- Students stopped to attend schools and colleges which were governed by government. Advocates refused to attend the courts. Workers in different towns and cities went on strike.
- The rural areas were agitated with dissatisfaction. Tribals in northern Andhra violated the forest laws. Peasants of Awadh were not ready to pay taxes and Kumaun peasants refused to carry the loads of British officers.

- After the Revolt of 1857, the British rule was shaken to its base by the non-cooperation movement. In February 1922, a group of peasants attacked and torched a police station at Chauri-Chaura in United Provinces. Many policemen died in the widespread violence. This act of violence instigated Gandhiji to call off the movement at once.

- During the Non cooperation movement thousands of Indians were kept in prison. Gandhiji was arrested in March 1922 under the charge of sedition. Justice C.N. Broomfield also appreciated his nobility as well as popularity.



Non-cooperation Movement, July 1922 Foreign cloth being collected to be burnt in bonfires.

2.2 A People's Leader

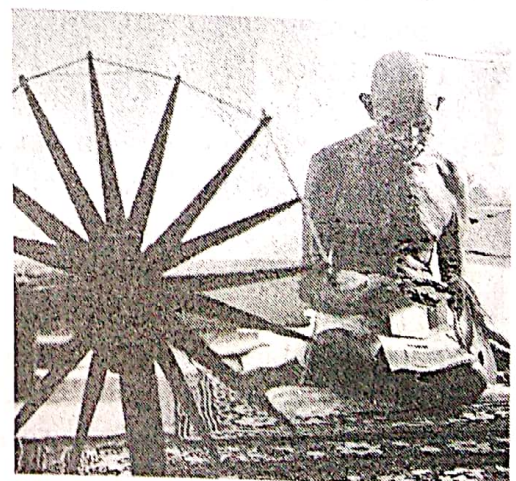
- By 1922, Gandhiji had changed the Indian nationalism. The movement was not the movement of intellectuals and the professionals. Now, it had become the movement of thousands of peasants, workers and artisans, as they took part in it. People considered as their Mahatma. As his identification was reflected by his outfits. Other leaders wore a western suit or an Indian bandgala but he liked to move among the people in simple dhoti.
- He used to spin each day. This act broke the limitations that predominated within the traditional caste. Wherever Gandhiji went there rumours spread about his miraculous powers. In some places, it was said that he was sent by the king to solve the problems of the peasants and he possessed the power to overrule all local officials.
- In other places it was claimed that the power of Gandhiji was stronger than the English monarch. The British rulers would flee the districts with his arrival. Some terrible results were faced by who opposed Gandhiji, such rumours were there in many parts of the country.

- Gandhiji had sympathy for poor peasants. He was called as 'Gandhi Baba', Gandhi Maharaj or as Mahatma. Farmers were impressed by his dress or ascetic style. He had a good understanding about the farmers, labour and poor.

- Gandhiji was able to broaden the basis of nationalism. Under his leadership many new branches of congress were set up in different parts of India. Many 'Praja Mandal' were established to promote the nationalist creed in the princely states.

- Gandhiji encouraged the use of mother tongue instead of English language to spread nationalist message.

All provincial committees of the Congress were based on linguistic regions instead of artificial boundaries of British India. By all these various methods nationalism spread to all the corners of the country.



- During the years from 1917 and 1922, a group of highly talented Indians associated to Gandhiji. It was included-Vallabh Bhai Patel, Mahadev Desai, Subhash Chandra Bose, J.B. Kriplani, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, Govind Ballabh Pant, Sarojini Naidu and C. Rajagopalachari.
- Gandhiji was released from prison in February 1924. He devoted his attention to encourage the home spun cloth and to eradicate untouchability from the society. Gandhiji was a brilliant leader and a good social reformer. He believed that Indians need to remove social evils like child marriage and untouchability in order to be worthy of freedom. He emphasised on using khadi instead of cloth imported from overseas.

3. The Salt Satyagraha — A Case Study

- Simon Commission arrived in India in 1928 to enquire the conditions in the colony. All members of this commission were White. So, it was opposed in the country. At Lahore, in the end of December 1929 annual session of Congress was held. This session was important for two things.
 - (a) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became the president. The change of leadership moved to the younger generation.
 - (b) The Proclamation of commitment to “Purna Swaraj’ or complete independence.
- On 26 January, 1930 ‘Independence Day ’ was observed. National Flag was hoisted at different places. Patriotic songs were sung. Gandhiji issued precise instructed how the day should be observed.
- Gandhiji advised the people to arrange the meetings to be organised making the advertising in the traditional way, beating the drums, hoisting the national flag. Further people were directed to do creative work – spinning and service of untouchables to unite Hindus and Muslims.
- People wished to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil. Government suppressed the rights of people either to alter it or abolish it.

3.1 Dandi

- Mahatma Gandhiji declared that he would lead the march to break the salt law. For each household, salt was indispensable. People were not allowed to make salt for domestic use. So, Gandhiji was hopeful to mobilise a huge opposition against the British rule.
- Gandhiji had informed about ‘salt march’ to the viceroy Lord Irwin but he did not accept its importance. On 12 March 1930. Gandhiji started his yatra. From his Ashram at Sabarmati towards sea – Dandi, where he made a fistful of salt and broke the salt law after three weeks of journey.
- Peasants of the country, breached the hated Forest Laws as they were not permitted to take their cattle to the forests in which they had once roamed freely. Factory labourers went on a strike in some towns. Lawyers boycotted the British courts and students refused to attend government run educational institutions.
- In the wake of Dandi salt march approximately 60,000 Indians were arrested. Gandhiji was one of them. Police monitored his movements. On the way,



On the Dandi March, March 1930



Satyagrahis picking up natural salt at the end of the Dandi March, 6 April 1930

he addressed the people and urged the local officials to renounce government employment and joined the freedom struggle. He mentioned that for Swaraj, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Sikhs will have to unite.

3.2 Dialogues

- The salt march was notable for many reasons.

- (a) Gandhiji attracted the world attention. European and American press widely covered the march.

- (b) In the march women took part for the first time in large numbers.

- (c) The British realised that their rule would not last forever.

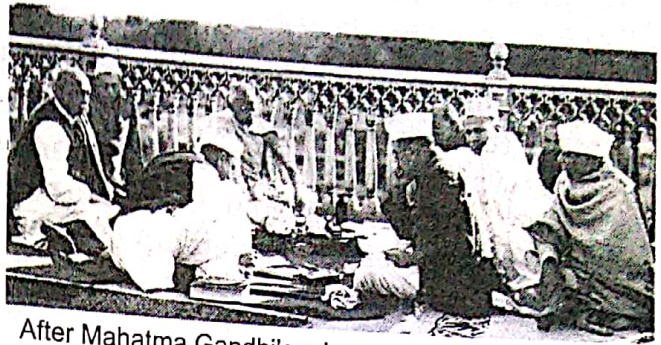
- The British government convened a series of Round Table Conferences in London. The First Round Table Conference was held in November 1930. This conference was not attended by pre-eminent political leaders of India. It was unsuccessful.

- Gandhiji was released from jail in January 1931. Second Round Table Conference was held at London. Several meetings took place between Gandhiji and Irwin. It was called 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact'. Gandhiji represented Indian National Congress in the 2nd Round Table Conference. He claimed that Congress represented whole India but other parties challenged his claim.

- The conference in London hardly reached at any result. Gandhiji returned back to India and started the Civil Disobedience Movement. Lord Willingdon became new Viceroy. He was deeply unsympathetic to the Indian leader.

- The Government of India Act was passed in 1935. It pledged some form of representative government. In 1937, elections were held on the basis of a restricted privilege. Congress won a huge victory in eight provinces out of eleven provinces.

- The Second World War was started in Sept. 1939. Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. J.L. Nehru both were strongly critical of Hitler and the Nazis. They supported to the war effort. The offer of Congress was refused. The congress ministries resigned in Oct. 1939. Through 1940-41 the Congress organised a series of individual satyagrahas to keep the pressure. The rulers promised freedom as the war ended.



After Mahatma Gandhi's release from prison in January 1931, Congress leaders met at Allahabad to plan the future course of action. You can see (from right to left) Jawaharlal Nehru, Jamnalal Bajaj, Subhas Chandra Bose, Gandhiji, Mahadev Desai (in front), Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel.

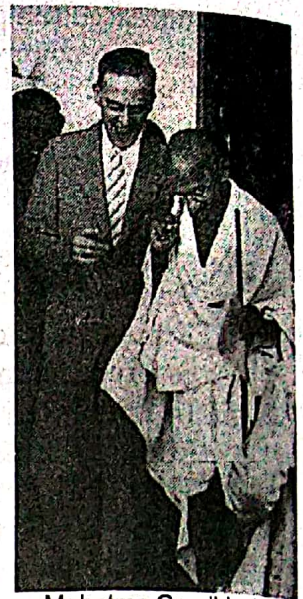


At the Second Round Table Conference, London, November 1931 Mahatma Gandhi opposed the demand for separate electorates for "lower castes". He believed that this would prevent their integration into mainstream society and permanently segregate them from other caste Hindus.



Mahatma Gandhi and Rajendra Prasad on their way to a meeting with the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, 13 October 1939. In the meeting the nature of India's involvement in the War was discussed. When negotiations with the Viceroy broke down, the Congress ministries resigned.

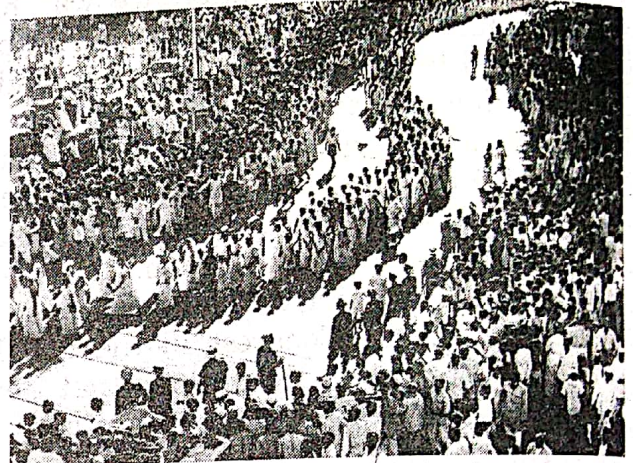
- In March 1940, the Muslim League passed a resolution for demanding a measure of autonomy for the Muslim majority parts of the country. The political landscape had become complicated and three-way struggle – Congress, Muslim League and the British.
- Prime Minister Winston Churchill was convinced to send his ministers under the leadership of Sir Stafford Cripps to India in 1942 to negotiate with Congress, as British wanted its support in war. First, viceroy will have to appoint any Indian as the Defence Member in his Executive Council but talks broke down on this issue.



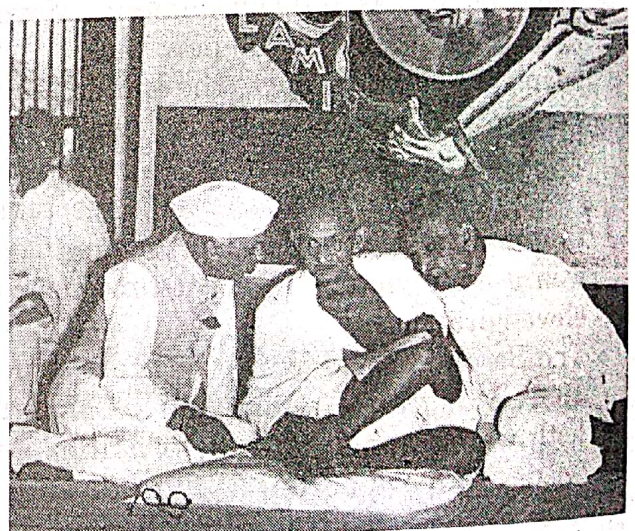
Mahatma Gandhi with Stafford Cripps, March 1942

4. Quit India

- Due to failure of the Cripps Mission, Mahatma Gandhi decided to launch his third major movement against the British rule. It was known as 'Quit India' and started in Aug. 1942. Gandhiji was jailed. This movement was participated by younger activists who organised strikes and acts of sabotage across the country.
- It was a mass movement in which hundred of thousands Indians took part and young people showed their strength. They left their colleges and went to jail. Congress leaders were languished in jail while Jinnah and his companions in the Muslim League worked to expand their influence.
- In June 1944, Gandhiji was set free from jail. A series of meetings was organised with Jinnah by Gandhiji to bridge the gap between the Congress and the Muslim League. In 1945, the labour government came to power in Britain. It was in favour of giving independence to India. Lord Wavell organised a number of meetings with Congress and Muslim League.
- Early in 1946, the fresh elections were held for the provincial legislatures. The Congress got a huge success in 'General' category. In other side, Muslim League won an overwhelming majority where the seats were reserved for Muslims.
- A Cabinet Mission arrived in India in the summer of 1946. It tried to agree Congress and the Muslim League on a federal system where provinces to be given a degree of autonomy but ended without any result. Jinnah called for a 'Direct Action Day'.
- Jinnah's was for the demand of Pakistan. On the designated day, 16 August 1946, Bloody riots broke out in Calcutta. Hindu-Muslim riots spread in Bihar, U.P. and Punjab.



Women's procession in Bombay during the Quit India Movement



Mahatma Gandhi conferring with Jawaharlal Nehru (on his right) and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (on his left) Nehru and Patel represented two distinct political tendencies within the Congress – the socialist and the conservative. Mahatma Gandhi had to often mediate between these groups.

- In February 1947, Wavell was replaced by Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy. He called one last round talks as both previous rounds proved inconclusive. He declared that India would be freed but the division into India and Pakistan would take place. The formal transfer of power was fixed for 15 August. There was prolonged applause in the meeting. The Assembly honoured Gandhiji as 'Father of the Nation'.

5. The Last Heroic Days

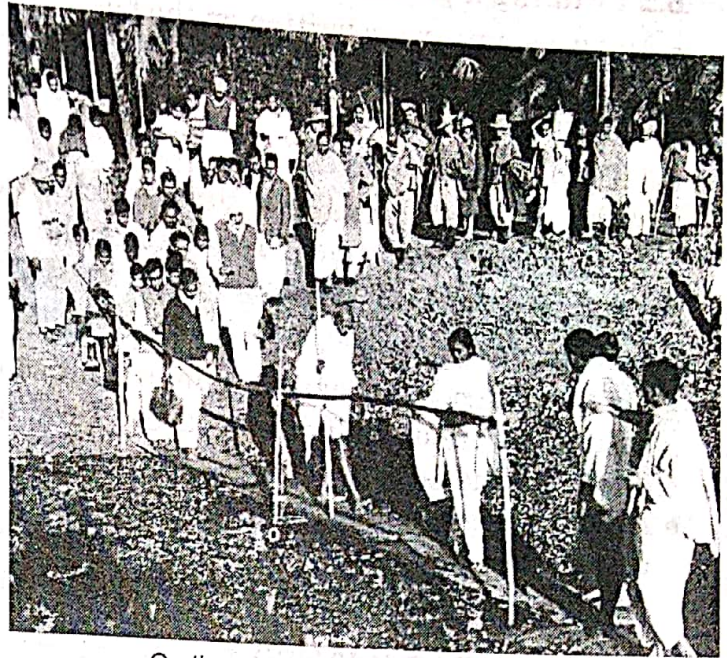
- On 15 August 1947, Gandhiji was not present at the festivities in Delhi. He was in Calcutta on 24-hour fast. The independence came at unacceptable price; the division of the nation against which Gandhiji had struggled for long. Hindus and Muslims had become the foe of each other.

- Gandhiji visited hospitals and refugee camps, consoled the afflicted people. He appealed to the Sikhs, the Hindus and the Muslims to forget the past and not to speak on their sufferings. He advised to increase trust and fellowship to each other.

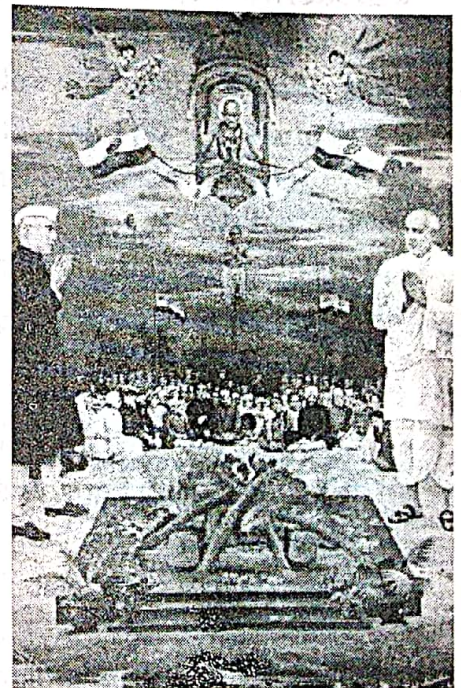
- Congress passed a resolution on the right of Minorities, it had never accepted the two-nation theory. As India is a land of many religions and many races, it should stay the same. Congress wished to assure the minorities in India and it would be continued.

- Scholars have described that the months after the freedom were the finest hour in Gandhiji's life. After making efforts for peace in Bengal, Gandhiji came to Delhi. He wanted to visit riot affected districts of Punjab. In Delhi, Gandhiji's meeting was disturbed by the refugees. Gandhiji was equally worried with the sufferings of Hindus and Muslims.

- On 30 January 1948 Gandhiji was shot dead by a young man. His death led to an extraordinary outpouring of grief. Rich tributes were given to him in entire country. International figures like George Orwell and Albert Einstein sent their messages on the death of Mahatma.



On the way to a riot-torn village, 1947



The death of the Mahatma, a popular print. In popular representations, Mahatma Gandhi was deified, and shown as the unifying force within the national movement. Here you can see Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel, representing two strands within the Congress, standing on two sides of Gandhiji's pyre. Blessing them both from a heavenly realm, is Mahatma Gandhi, at the centre.

6. Knowing Gandhi

6.1 Public Voice and Private Scripts

- The writings and speeches of Gandhiji and his contemporaries are the important sources. Within these writings, differentiations to be done, which were meant for the public and which were not. Many letters were written by individuals. They were personal letters. They are also meant for the public.

- The language of the letters is shaped by the awakenings. They might be published and printed one day. The fear of the printing of the letters; people were checked to express their opinion independently in personal letters. All these were published in his journal 'Harijan'.
- Nehru edited a big collection of letters written to him during the national movement and published – A Bunch of Old Letters'.

6.2 Framing a picture

- Many accounts were written on the basis of memory. They described the work of author – what he recollected or what he observed. Writing an autobiography is a way in reality to frame a picture of yourself.

6.3 Through police eyes

- Colonial rulers always kept strict watch on those whom they regarded as critical of the government. Government records are the important sources for our study. Reports of police officials were usually secret, at present they are available in archives.

6.4 From newspapers

- Contemporary newspapers are important source. They were published in English as well as in the various Indian languages. They tracked Mahatma Gandhi's movements and developed the reports on his activities.
- A detail description was mentioned by the newspapers about the common people what they thought about Gandhiji. The accounts that were published in London newspaper would be different from the report which was published in an Indian nationalist paper.