

IMPORTANT QUESTION CLASS – 12 HISTORY CHAPTER- 11 MAHATMA GANDHI AND THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND BEYOND

Question 1.

What were the reasons for the beginning of the Khilafat Movement? What was the contribution of this movement to the freedom struggle of India?

Answer:

Khilafat is associated with the Caliphate who was the religious head of all the Muslims. The Sultan of Turkey was accepted as the head of the Muslim world. After the war, the Indian Muslims were unhappy with the British because they had ill-treated the Sultan of Turkey and even divided the Ottoman Empire and snatched Three, a part of Turkey. This was all contrary to the War Declaration made by Lloyd George, the then British Prime Minister.

He had openly declared that the British had no intention to devoid Turkey of Asia Minor and Three. The main population of these areas was of Turkish origin. The Muslims wanted that the Sultan of Turkey should not be shown a bit of insult in any way. When the white rulers acted contrary to their avowed statements, the Muslims started a severe struggle against the British.

Contribution to National Movement For Independence: The Khilafat Movement had strengthened the national struggle for freedom. Due to the Lucknow Pact of 1916, the unity between the Hindus and the Muslims strengthened. Due to the Khilafat Movement, many other nationalist leaders had plunged into the freedom struggle. It is clear from the following points:

1. A Khilafat committee was constituted to start a nation-wide struggle against British rule.
2. An All India Khilafat Conference was held in Delhi in November 1919. A resolution was passed in the conference which exhorted the British to accept the demands of the Muslims, failing which a struggle against the foreign rule would be launched.
3. The Muslim League supported every movement started by the Indian National Congress.
4. The Congress supported the Khilafat Movement. This action of the Congress strengthened the Hindu-Muslim unity. It also inspired the Muslims for the national struggle to attain freedom from the alien rule.

5. Gandhiji went to the extent of declaring that the issue raised by the Khilafat Movement was much more important than the issue of social reforms initiated by him.

6. Gandhiji expressed his desire to start the Non-Cooperation Movement if the British failed to satisfy the Muslims of India. It enabled Gandhiji to emerge as a great leader of India.

7. The Khilafat Movement accelerated the pace of the national struggle for freedom. Mahatma Gandhi soon started his Non-Cooperation Movement. It was the first step towards the end of British rule in India.

Question 2.

What was the Rowlatt Act? What steps were taken by the British to repress to Satyagraha started by Gandhiji?

Answer:

Rowlatt Act was passed by the British Government in March 1919 in the Central Legislative Council. It was passed to repress the nationalists.

The Rowlatt Act had such provisions that annoyed all the nationalists. It empowered the British Government in the detention of revolutionaries without trial. It was not necessary to present the concerned person in the court. In brief, it was such a law that had no argument, no lawyer, and no appeal. So the nationalists considered it a black law as it was a strong blow on individual liberty.

Satyagraha against Rowlatt Act: Gandhiji, like other nationalist leaders, was shocked to hear about the Rowlatt Act. So he laid down the foundation of a Satyagraha Committee in February 1919. All the members of the committee pledged not to adhere to this Act. They offered their arrests and went to jails. It was a new kind of struggle. Till then, the British had seen movement where big assemblies were held and processions were taken out. In such national movements, the people often refused to cooperate with the government.

There was a boycott of foreign goods and government schools. But Satyagraha gave new but elevated stature to the national movement. It provided all nationalists a chance to show their might to the alien rulers.

In March 1919, there was an unprecedented national upsurge in India. Almost every Indian was filled up with new vigor and strength. There were strikes, bandhs, campaigns, processions, and demonstrations. The slogans of Hindu-Muslim unity also rent the air. The people of India were no longer ready to face humiliation and insult.

Repression of the Satyagraha: The Government wanted to crush the Satyagraha. It lathi-charged the unarmed protestors in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Delhi, and a few other cities. The bullets were also hurled at them. So Gandhiji gave a nation-wide call for strike on

6 April 1919. The people followed the directive of Gandhiji with verve and vigor. In Punjab, a large number of people gathered at Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar on 13 April 1919.

Their intention was to oppose the repressive measures adopted by the British Government. They were also against the Rowlatt Act. But General Dyer reached on the spot with his soldiers who started shooting at the protestors. Hundreds of men, women, and children were killed in this massacre.

Question 3.

Discuss the nature of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Discuss its spread in all parts of the country along with its failures.

Answer:

The Civil Disobedience Movement was started by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930. It was a mass movement based on truth and non-violence. It was the first important step taken towards complete independence from British rule after the Revolt of 1857. We can discuss its various aspects as under Causes:

1. The Simon Commission visited India in 1928. It was an all-white commission. In other words, it had no member from India. So the people opposed Simon Commission wherever it went. They raised the slogans of "Simon: Go Back" before the Simon Commission. In spite of this, the report of the commission was published. It spread discontent among the people.
2. The British Government did not accept the recommendations of the Nehru Report.
3. The Peasants Movement of Bardoli had succeeded which inspired Gandhiji to start a national movement against British rule.
4. Gandhiji put forward a few conditions before the British Government but the Viceroy did not accept any of them. Under these circumstances, Gandhiji had no option other than to start a Civil Disobedience Movement against British rule.

The Progress of Movement: The Civil Disobedience Movement started with Dandi March. Mahatma Gandhi started his journey from Sabarmati Ashram on 12 March 1930 and reached Dandi, a place near sea-coast on 6 April 1930. He made a fistful of salt from the seawater and broke the salt laws. From there, this movement spread to each nook and corner of the country. In many places, the people defied the government laws.

To crush this movement, the British adopted repressive measures. Many people along with Gandhiji were put behind the bars. But it did not dampen the vigor of the people and the pace of the movement. However, a compromise was reached between Gandhiji and the Viceroy. According to this agreement, Gandhiji accepted to suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement and take part in the Second Round Table Conference. In this way, the Civil Disobedience Movement came to a halt for some time.

End of the Movement: The Second Round Table Conference was organized in London in 1931. Gandhiji participated in it on behalf of the Congress. But even at this conference, no solution could be found for the redressal of Indian problems. Gandhiji felt depressed and returned to India. He again started the Civil Disobedience Movement. On the other hand, the British Government also initiated repressive measures to control this movement. Because of the atrocities of the government, the movement lost a bit of its momentum. In 1933, Congress officially suspended this movement. It was at last withdrawn in May 1934.

Causes for Failure: The following reasons were responsible for the failure of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

1. Some scholars felt that this movement could not utilize the enthusiasm of the common people. It was suspended in between which dampened its pace.
2. Congress did not put forward any social and economic programs. As a result, a new party emerged which was named as Congress Socialist Party.
3. This movement did not benefit the farmers in any way.
4. Some scholars felt that the leadership of this movement was in the hands of the rich. Besides, it had limited objectives.

Significance: In spite of a few short-comings, the Civil Disobedience Movement yielded some good results:

1. Because of the boycott of foreign cloth, the import of such cloth declined.
2. Because of picketing at wine shops, the collection of government revenue was reduced.
3. The Indians were permitted to make salt near the sea-coast.
4. An awakening was seen among the farmers, laborers, tribal people, and women. All these people had become an inseparable part of the national movement.
5. Because of the atrocities committed by the British, the people were determined to attain freedom.
6. The British Empire got a severe jolt.

Question 4.

Briefly describe the progress (events) of the Indian National Movement from March 1940 till 1945.

Answer:

1. **Demand of Pakistan:** In March 1940, the Muslim League passed a resolution for the creation of a separate nation called 'Pakistan' and declared it as its objective. The political situation of the country was now complicated. Now, this struggle was no longer between Indians and the British. Instead, now it had become a three-way struggle, i.e., between the Congress, the Muslim League, and the British. Britain, at this time, had an all party government, and the Labour party was part of it. Members of the Labour Party had-

sympathetic views about Indian aspirations. But Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was a diehard imperialist and was of the view that he was not appointed by the king to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.

2. Cripps Mission: In 1942, Churchill sent one of his ministers, Sir Stafford Cripps, to India to find a way regarding the resumption of talks with Congress. While negotiating with Cripps, Congress stressed the fact that if the British wanted its support in the war then first of all the Viceroy should appoint any Indian as the Defence Member in his Executive Council. But talks broke down on this issue.

3. Quit India Movement: After the failure of the Cripps Mission, Mahatma Gandhi decided to launch his third major movement against British rule. This movement was launched in August 1942 which was given the name of 'Quit India Movement'. Although Gandhiji was arrested at once, even then young activists organized strikes all over the country. Socialist members of Congress like Jayaprakash Narayan played a great role in it.

In many districts like Medinipur in the east and Satara in the West, Independent governments proclaimed. British adopted a very strict attitude towards this movement. Even then it took the government more than a year to suppress the rebellion.

Quit India Movement was a mass movement which was participated by hundreds of thousands of Indian. This movement attracted a large number of young people. They left their colleges and took the path of jail.

4. Efforts of the Muslim League to expand its Influence: When Congress leaders were in jail, Jinnah and other members of the Muslim League were busy expanding their influence. During these years, the League got a chance to make a mark in Punjab and Sindh where it had no or very little presence at all.

In June 1944, World War was on the verge of an end, Gandhiji was released from prison. In June 1944, Gandhiji talked many times with Jinnah to bridge the gap between the Congress and the Muslim League.

5. Government of Labour Party in Britain: In June 1945, elections were held in Britain and the Labour party came to power. This government was in favor of giving independence to India. Meanwhile, in India, Lord Wavell held a number of meetings with representatives of Congress and the Muslim League.

Question 5.

Discuss the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi in the freedom struggle of India.

Answer:

Mahatma Gandhi attained a supreme place in the history of modern India. Under his leadership, the national movement got such a way that led directly to the independence of

India in 1947. He challenged the authority of British rule with the weapons of truth and non-violence. He forced the Englishmen to quit India. We can discuss the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi in the freedom struggle as given below:

Political Life: The political life of Mahatma Gandhi started in South Africa. When he came back from England, he started practicing as a lawyer in India. But then he went to South Africa.

Life in South Africa: When Gandhiji reached South Africa, the condition of Indians there was pitiable due to maltreatment by the white government. Gandhiji could not bear this insult and started his Satyagraha against the white government of South Africa. He helped the people in getting their rights.

Life in India: Gandhiji returned to India from South Africa in 1916. The First World War had already started. The British Government was fighting this war against the Axis Powers. So it needed both men and money. Therefore Gandhiji appealed to the people to cooperate with the British. He wanted to win the hearts of the white men by helping them. He was convinced that the British would free India after the end of the war. But when the First World War ended, the British did not do anything concrete to free India. Contrary to the expectations of the people, it passed the Rowlatt Act. Gandhiji was shocked to see this drastic law and made up his mind to start the Non-Cooperation Movement against British rule.

Non-Cooperation Movement: Gandhiji started this movement in 1920. The people fully supported this movement and whole-heartedly participated in it. However, Gandhiji called off this movement when violent incidents took place at Chauri Chaura in Uttar Pradesh.

Civil Disobedience Movement: This movement was launched by Gandhiji in 1930. He took out his Dandi March and symbolically broke the Salt Laws by making a fistful of salt from the sea-water. The government was taken aback by this action of Gandhiji. At last, it allowed the Indians to make salt near the coast. An important Act was also passed in 1935.

Quit India Movement: Gandhiji wanted to seek freedom for the country. So in 1942, he started the Quit India Movement. Lakhs of followers joined the movement of Gandhiji. The British felt shocked at such a mass movement and made up their mind to free India. At last, India was set free on 15 August 1947. The credit for Indian independence obviously goes to Mahatma Gandhi.

Other Works: Gandhiji did a lot of work to enhance the prestige of the Indian remove poverty of the Indians, he exhorted all the people to wear Khadi. For the upliftment of the untouchable, Gandhiji called them 'Harijans'. Similarly, he preached fraternity to get the people rid of communal riots.

Death: Gandhiji was shot dead on 30 January 1948 by Nathu Ram Godse, a youth. He recited thrice “Hey Ram” and died. His death was mourned all over the country. The Indians cannot forget Gandhiji and still remember him as the ‘Father of the Nation’.

Question 6.

Explain how the coming of Mahatma Gandhi broadened the base of the Indian National Movement.

Answer:

Mahatma Gandhi broadened the base of the national movement of India in the following way:

1. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the national movement did not merely remain a movement of intellectuals and professionals. Thousands of farmers, laborers, and artisans started participating in it.
2. Gandhiji lived a simple life that was liked by the common people. He wore clothes like a poor farmer or a worker. His way of living was also like a common man.
3. Gandhiji himself worked on the spinning wheel. He also inspired others to operate the spinning-wheel. The job of spinning cotton helped Gandhiji to break the wall of distinction between mental and physical labor prevalent in the traditional caste system.
4. Gandhiji tried to mitigate the sufferings of the farmers and other poor people.
5. The rumors that spread about the miracles of Gandhiji made him very popular. He had become a household name due to which most of the people jumped in the struggle for freedom and whole-heartedly participated in the national movement for freedom.
6. Under the leadership of Gandhiji, many branches of the Indian National Congress were opened in different cities. He established panchayats and Praja Mandals to instill nationalist feelings in the royal rulers.
7. Gandhiji emphasized the spread of the nationalist message in the mother tongue of the people and not in English.
8. Gandhiji emphasized the Hindu-Muslim unity to strengthen the base of the national movement of India.
9. Because of the impact of Gandhiji’s majestic personality, many leaders from different sections and regions of the country, had become an inseparable part of the freedom struggle.
10. He emphasized the fact that the defective society was essential to seek freedom.

Question 7.**How did Gandhiji succeed in strengthening the basis of nationalism in India?****Answer:**

Gandhiji had brought a great transformation in the Indian nationalism. He' gave it a mass base. When Gandhiji came to India from South Africa, nationalism in India was a movement of professionals and intellectuals. But Gandhiji ensured the involvement and participation of peasants, workers, and artisans. Rather than standing aloof from the common people, Mahatma Gandhi identified himself with them. He lived like the common people; dressed and ate like them, and also spoke the language which the common people spoke. He wore a simple dhoti or loin-cloth and worked on a Charkha (spinning wheel). He also encouraged other nationalists to do the same. He did all these things to strengthen the nationalist movement in India.

Mahatma Gandhi had a mass appeal. He broadened the basis of nationalism in Indian politics. For this, he took up the following steps:

1. He suggested the Indian National Congress set up its new branches in various parts of the country.
2. He suggested the establishment of a series of Praja Mandals to promote the nationalist creed in the princely states.
3. He did not use the language of the rulers. He conveyed his message in the mother tongue.

Thus, Gandhiji took nationalism to distant corners of the country. He broadened its base to include all social groups. He also strengthened it so that it could be the path to achieve complete independence from the colonial rule

Question 8.**“The India that Mahatma Gandhi came back to in 1915 was rather different from the one that he had left.” Give five reasons in favor of the comment.****Answer:**

1. Although India was still a British colony now it was more active from a political point of view. Now, most of the Indian towns and cities had branches of the Indian National Congress.
2. Through the Swadeshi Movement of 1905-07, Congress had broadened its base among the middle class.
3. Swadeshi Movement had thrown up some great leaders which included Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra, Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal, and Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab. These three leaders were also known as 'Lai, Bal, and Pal'. Collection of all these three was a symbol of all—Indian character of their struggle because basically, they belonged to far off places.

4. These leaders advocated the militant opposition of colonial rule but on the other hand, there was a group of moderates that was completely in favor of a gradual and persuasive approach.

5. These moderate leaders included Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who was the acknowledged political mentor of Gandhiji and Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

Question 9.

Give a brief description of the struggle done by Gandhiji for communal harmony after few months of independence.

Answer:

The freedom, for which Gandhiji struggled so long, came at an unacceptable price, i.e., division of the country. The nation was divided and Hindus and Muslims wanted to cut the throats of each other. Gandhiji appealed to Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs of riot-hit areas that they should forget the past and extend their hands of fellowship to each other and to determine to live in peace.

After working for bringing peace to Bengal, Gandhiji came back to Delhi. He then wanted to move on to the riot-hit districts of Punjab. But his meetings in the capital were disrupted by refugees. How could he go to Punjab when he was unable to promise the Muslims of Delhi about their protection? The end result of this struggle of Gandhiji came on 30th January 1930 when he was shot dead by a young man. It was a great sacrifice for the country.