



History

ROLE OF HARYANA IN THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement resonated deeply in Haryana. The people of Haryana took actively participated in this movement and gave their arrests. They boycotted British goods and titles, medals and demonstrated their resolve for self-rule with great enthusiasm and determination. Lawyers stopped going to government courts. Students from colleges and school boycotted the institutions. Several young citizens from Haryana who were studying in places like Delhi and Lahore gave up their education to jump into the movement. Holi of foreign goods burned by in various districts of Haryana State like Rohtak, Gurgaon, Ambala, Hisar. In this way, within no time, the movement spread throughout Haryana reached its zenith. The non-cooperation movement programme became very popular in the cities and towns of Haryana. The growing popularity and success of this movement greatly alarmed the British government. A large number of the people were sent behind the bars, tortured and lathi-charges took place at several places in order to suppress the movement. On 4 February 1922, The Chauri Chaura Incident occurred in Gorakhpur, United Provinces (modern Uttar Pradesh). During a Non Cooperation Movement protest, police fired on a crowd. Protesters retaliated by attacking and burning a police station, killing 22–23 policemen. Consequently, Mahatma Gandhi suspended the nationwide movement due to the violence. Thus on 12 February 1922 in India as well as in Haryana region Non-cooperation movement ended.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

The Non-Cooperation Movement was a landmark event in the history of India's freedom struggle. It marked a shift from moderate to radical methods of resistance. It also demonstrated the power and potential of non-violent mass action against an oppressive regime. It was the first nationwide mass movement that mobilized millions of Indians across regions, religions and classes. It created a sense of unity and solidarity among them against a common enemy. The Non-cooperation movement was a reaction towards the oppressive policies of the British Indian government such as the Rowlatt Act of 18 March 1919, as well as towards the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 13 April 1919. The Rowlatt Act of 1919, which suspended the rights of political prisoners in seditious trials, was seen as a "political awakening" by Indians and as a "threat" by the British. The news of the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh on April 13, 1919 struck the people of Haryana with horror. On April 14, demonstrations were held throughout the district of Rohtak and Public property was damaged by angry mobs at Rohtak, Samar Gopalpur and Gohana. The Congress adopted a resolution of Non-Cooperation with the government in its Annual Session held at Calcutta on August 4, 1920. The resolution called upon the students to leave schools and colleges, the employees to give up government jobs and the farmers not to pay land revenue to the government. In pursuance of this programme, a special meeting was held at Bhiwani on October 20, 1920 to popularise the programme of the Non-Cooperation Movement. Similarly, a District Conference held at Rohtak in November 1920, and attended by ten to fifteen thousand persons, passed a resolution to launch Non-Cooperation Movement. A Swaraj Ashram was established at Rohtak to serve as the office and hosts for workers of the movement. In response to Gandhi Ji's call to do away with government sponsored institutions, Jat High School and Vaish High School, Rohtak disaffiliated themselves from the University of Punjab. A large public meeting was addressed at Kalanaur (Rohtak) by Gandhi Ji and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. It was here that Gandhi Ji used the word 'Satanic Government' for the British Government for the first time which later on became a common word. "Indians must not co-operate with this Satanic Government in any way, he said "They should leave Government Services. Pleaders should not practice in the courts leaders should boycott the Councils and students should refrain from going to Government Schools and Colleges." He also exhorted the people to take to the spinning wheel and to boycott the foreign goods in a non-violent way. To dampen the spirits of the people, the Government arrested a large number of leaders from Rohtak, Jhajjar, Mahes and few villages.

Non-Cooperation Movement and Haryana

Pandit Sri Ram Sharma of Rohtak joined the Congress at the time of non-cooperation movement in 1920. At the call of Mahatma Gandhi, he gave up studies and jumped in the movement. After Lala Lajpat Rai had left for Lahore, Sri Ram Sharma organised the nationalist movement in Haryana under the Congress flag. On March 1, 1923 he started 'Haryana Tilak' a weekly newspaper in Urdu for the

propagation and advancement of the Congress ideas and ideology in Haryana. He spent several years in Jail for the national cause. Others who associated themselves with the Congress in Haryana were Lala Sham Lal from Rohtak, Pandit Neki Ram from Bhiwani and Bhargava brothers- Dr. Gopi Chand and Thakur Dass from Hissar. Lala Lajpat Rai was a lawyer from Hissar who had later on shifted to Lahore. Lala Lajpat Rai was born in 1865 and at the age of 17, he joined the Arya Samaj and within a very short period, became the front-rank leaders. He was influenced by the Samaj on account of its educational mission. In 1886, he passed his L.L.B. examination and started his practice at Hissar. After 6 years, he shifted to Lahore to practise in Punjab High Court.

Lala ji published shorts biographies of Mazzini, Garibaldi and Shivaji with the object of infusing patriotic sentiments in the youth of the country. In July 1920, Lala Lajpat Rai was elected to preside over the special session of the Congress held at Calcutta. At the Nagpur Session, he gave his full support to the resolution of Mahatma Gandhi on non-cooperation. He took active part in the movement. As the President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, he directed the Non-Cooperation Movement in Panjab and also went on a tour of India to spread the ideas of Non-Cooperation. The government took against him and he was arrested along with Motilal Nehru and C.R.Dass. He was arrested on December 3, 1921 and sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment under the 'Seditious Meetings Act'.

Public Participation of Haryana in Non-Cooperation Movement

The programme of non-cooperation became very popular in the cities and towns of Haryana. The boycott programme was fully implemented in every town and a large number of students left schools and colleges. Mauli Chand Sharma of Jhajjar, President of the Student's Union Law College, Lahore, Sri Ram Sharma, Ram Phal Singh, Janid Dass, Niyadar Singh, Shiv Narain Bhatnagar and Desh Bandhu Gupta left colleges and joined the non-cooperation movement. The Gaur High School was deserted by its students until it became a National School. Almost all the students of Vaish High School, Rohtak left their classes and went on strike. The Jat High School, Rohtak which was then under the management of Congressmen led by its Headmaster Baldev Singh as also closed down. Students at Hissar also left their Schools. Hindu High School, Sonapat disaffiliated itself from the Punjab University. Students left Bahadurgarh Govt. High School in large numbers and many of their teachers resigned from there.

The boycott of foreign cloth also evoked a great deal of enthusiasm. The Muslim of Hansi, numbering 7000 unanimously decided to boycott foreign cloth. Cloth merchants at Hisar pledged not to order foreign goods and cloth merchants of Bhiwani resolved not to import foreign cloth for six months. Ambala and Karnal districts also did not import foreign cloth any more. Bonfires of foreign cloth were made at many places in Haryana. Besides, liquor shops were also picketed at places.

When the Simon Commission was appointed, Lala Lajpat Rai declared that he was not doing associate with the commission in any shape or manner. He led a vigorous campaign against the commission both in press and from the platform. On October 30, 1928 Lala ji led a mass demonstration against the Simon Commission at Lahore where he was brutally assaulted by the police with lathis. At a public meeting held the same evening at Lahore, he spoke with bitterness against the British Government and their police officials in the words "I want to say from this platform that every blow that was hurled at us this afternoon was a nail in the coffin of the British Empire. Nobody who has seen that sight is likely to forget it. It has sunk deep into our soil. We have to avenge ourselves of the cowardly attack, not by violently attacking them but by gaining our freedom." Lala Ji, however, did not survive the assault very long and he died on November 17, 1928. The coming of Simon Commission and Lala Lajpat Rai's death gave a shot in the arm to congress activities in Haryana. The congressman called a Punjab Provincial Conference at Rohtak. On March 8 and 9, 1929 under the Presidentialship of Dr. Satya Pal. Pt. Moti Lal Nehru and Jawahar Lal Nehru also attended it. Many important resolutions were passed regarding such important national subjects like Nehru Report and the local problems such as remission of land revenue owing to the failure of crops, the boycott of foreign clothes and picketing of liquor shops. After that a number of Congress committees were formed in towns and districts. The district committee in pursuance of the resolution passed by the Congress issued a circular to all units, with regard to the celebration of Independence Day January 26, 1930 by taking the following pledges. "We pledge ourselves afresh to this cause of India's freedom and to end the exploitation of our people and resolve to work to this end till success Comes to our people. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally spiritually. We believe therefore that India must sever its connection with the British and attain complete independence". In almost all the cities, towns and big villages of Haryana, Independence Day was celebrated. In Kalka, Jagadhari, Chanauli, Karnal, Kaithal, Thanesar, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Beri, Khatiwasi, Sonapat, Rewari, Bhiwani and Sirsa big processions were led by prominent congressmen, speeches delivered and pledge taken.

Political Shift and End of the Movement

In 1930, the Congress launched Civil Disobedience Movement. Public meetings were held all over Haryana to mark the beginning of the movement. Satyagraha Sabhas were organised in all districts and volunteers were enrolled to go jails. The salt was prepared in iron pans at Bhiwani, on April 13, At Hisar on April 21, by the volunteers led by K.A. Desai. The salt laws were violated on April 26 at Ambala under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Bhagat Ram Sehgal. At Rohtak, the salt laws were broken on April 10 and at Panipat the next day. Regarding the boycott of Foreign Clothes, March 17, 1930 was fired as 'Foreign Cloth Boycott Day' all over Haryana. Picketing of the shops selling foreign goods was also started. There was successful picketing at Sirsa, Abdulapur and Abdul Majid. The traders of these places as well as of Rohtak, Bhiwani and Ambala undertook not to import foreign cloth. At Ambala women volunteers started picketing temples and persons wearing khaddar only were permitted to go inside. Nearly 5000 persons of Ambala district took pledge to wear Khaddar. Picketing of liquor shops was also carried out by the Congress volunteers. They picketed liquor shops at Rohtak 1 May. A liquor vendor was socially boycotted and his house was surrounded by a crowd on August 8.

The picketing of polling booths for the elections to Assembly and Council was also attempted, but it failed as the Jats of Rohtak opposed it. In Ambala district, some banyas abstained from voting and the attempt to picket at two polling stations resulted in the arrest of the picketers. The government adopted a repressive policy to curb the Congress movement in Haryana. The Congress party was declared illegal, the people were deprived of the right of speech and association, meetings and processions were banned. However, meetings were held and processions taken out in defiance of law. A district political Conference was held at Jhajjar on April 12-13 under the presidentship of Suraj Bhan. At the Conference Nangli Ram Yadav, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, made a stirring speech, followed by Devi Chand and Ram Phul Singh and thousands of people came forward to court arrest. While the Civil Disobedience Movement was in full swing, Gandhi ji suddenly side tracked the whole campaign by raising the question of Harijan uplift. He decided to suspend the movement for six weeks and his decision was endorsed by the All-India Congress Committee which met at Patna on July 12, 1933. Later on, he

withdraws the movement and an individual Satyagrahe Movement was launched in its place. It seems that the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement had a great demoralising effect on the people of Haryana as they could not continue the Individual Satyagraha. The movement was suspended by Mahatma Gandhi after fifteen months. At this all the Satyagrahis were released from jail. The movement was almost a failure as it could not have any effect on the government. On August 8, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed the famous Quit India Resolution. The people of Haryana also took a very active part in the movement. The Government took a serious view of the situation and adopted regressive measures. Congress was declared an unlawful organisation and several Congress leaders were arrested, throughout the Haryana.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of above analysis, we can say that, the role and contribution of Haryana region and Haryanvi people played significant role in Non-cooperation movement. They participated with full enthusiasm along with their fellow freedom fighters against British to make India a free country. In order to spread Movement agendas among the population, propaganda committees were formed in each district of Haryana. They propagated the constructive programme among the people. So they could contribute in movement and lives a self-reliant life with proud. This type of participation in Haryana had a far-reaching impact on the Indian freedom struggle.

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