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Mass Mobilization in Indian Politics: A Case Study of Non-Cooperation Movement

Farooq Ahmad Dar¹, Muhammad Sajid Khan², Muhammad Abrar Zahoor³

Abstract

Mass-Mobilization is one of the key ingredients for not only launching a movement but also for spreading any political agenda. The involvement of the masses always plays an important role in a process of bringing change anywhere and at any time. The history of South Asia, however, witnessed that in the struggle against the colonial rulers, to begin with, started by the elite alone. Politics was considered as the domain of a selected few and the common men were considered as ignorant and perhaps irrelevant and thus were kept at a distance. It was only after the beginning of the twentieth century and especially after the entrance of Gandhi on the political screen that the masses gained importance and were directly involved in political affairs. They not only became part of the Non-Cooperation Movement but also played an important role in spreading the movement all across India. In this paper, an attempt has been made to highlight Gandhi's efforts to mobilize Indian masses during the Non-Cooperation Movement and its impact on the future politics of the region. The paper also discusses in detail different groups of society that actively participated in the process of mass-mobilization.

Keywords: Mass-Mobilization, Non-Cooperation Movement, Gandhi, Khilafat Movement, Congress, Ulama, Swaraj, Swadeshi.

¹ Associate Professor in Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, E-mail: farooqdar@gmail.com

² Lecturer in Department of History, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, E-mail: sajidkhan@aiou.edu.pk

³ Assistant Professor in Department of History and Pakistan Studies, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, E-mail: abrar.zahoor@uos.edu.pk

Introduction

Ever since the advent of the British in India, they tactically tried to dominate first the trade and then the politics of the region. Instead of using their military might, they were more interested in using their brain and strategy to not only compete with their European rivals but also to oust the indigenous competitors from the corridors of power politics. Initially, they took trade concessions from the Mughals and later indulged in conspiracies to play one stakeholder against the other. They were also good at bribing influential individuals and groups who were ready to betray their people. Once they managed to establish their rule in India, they skillfully created an elite structure based on British patronage. They set up an administrative pattern, which revolved around the services of the collaborators of the Raj, petitioners, and concession seekers. They heavily depended upon the services of the bureaucratic state apparatus, consisting of people who were Indian in appearance but with a typical British mindset. A new class of titleholders, zaildars, numberdars, etc. was created to facilitate bureaucracy and to control the general masses at the grassroots level. Though the constitutional reforms that the British brought after 1857 opened the doors for Indians in the political process, yet the limited and controlled democracy that they introduced was only to facilitate the pro-regime Indian elite. (Tharoor, 2016: 102-5). Only local influential, mainly patronized by the British, could have access to the legislative councils and executive bodies. This policy of the British was only challenged when for the first time when during the Non-Cooperation Movement, general masses were mobilized, brought out in the streets, and were made to realize that they were the main stakeholders and thus they had to actively participate in political activities.

Literature Review

There is a plethora of literature available on the British Raj in India with divergent, rather conflicting perspectives. Though most of the historians who worked on this period deal with the grand narrative of colonialism and anti-colonial struggle, their analysis and interpretation vary. If the likes of A.R. Desai (Desai, 1984), Anil Seal (Seal, 1971), R. Suntharalingam (Suntharalingam, 1971), explore the factors and patterns of the development of the Indian nationalist identity, Francis Robinson (Robinson, 1975) and Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi (Qureshi, 1977) view the events through the lens of Muslim separatism. Even otherwise the majority of the works including those conducted by Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal (Bose and Jalal, 1998), Sumit Sarkar (Sarkar, 2003), Bipan Chandra (Chandra, 1989), etc. deals with political and constitutional developments under the British rule in India, and on the response of the Indians towards colonial modernization project with socio-economic and political implications. Some of them also focus on the institutional developments and gradual realization of self-government in India in response to rising political aspirations of the native leadership, which ultimately culminated in British withdrawal from the region. Most of these sources have spared few pages to discuss the Non-Cooperation / Khilafat Movement from a purely political angle.

Biographers of Gandhi including B. R. Nanda (Nanda, 1989), Stanley Wolpert (Wolpert, 2001), Rajmohan Gandhi (Gandhi, 2007), and Judith Brown (Brown, 1972), highlight the role of Gandhi in shaping the political developments through his inspirational leadership. They try to explore the nature and political transaction of the national struggle by focusing on Gandhi's personality and his political philosophy of Satyagraha. Some of them also focus on the question of mass mobilization and the transition from elite to mass politics during the Non-Cooperation / Khilafat Movement. They also emphasize the fact that it was the charismatic leadership of Gandhi who inspired the millions and through mass mobilization, he was successful in shaking the very foundations of the otherwise skillfully crafted British imperial structures in India. Gail Minault (Minault, 1982) attempts to highlight the role of the newly emerging radical political class while Naeem Qureshi (Qureshi, 2009) concentrates on the

use of pan-Islamism in winning the support of Muslims during the movement. The present study, which is an attempt to analyze the role of Ulama, lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers, students, workers, peasants, and women through religious and political symbolism and idioms has largely benefited from most of the already existing works.

Methodology

This study is primarily based upon primary and secondary sources and qualitative methodology. The politics of mass mobilization in colonial India with particular emphasis on the movement of Non-Cooperation has been analyzed with the help of a range of sources which include both primary and secondary sources and documents. The overarching methodology used for this study is qualitative. However, quantitative data based upon various facts have also been used. Moreover, this study is descriptive-narrative and analytical-exploratory. The conceptual understanding regarding the available public sphere to the political parties and the various methods of resistance used by various political parties in the Indian context and particularly the means used by the Indian National Congress under the guidance of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi has been highlighted in this study.

Discussion

The influence of British dominance in the Indian society was so gigantic that even those who stood for the revival of the native people during the nineteenth century were inspired by the British thinking process and wanted to remain faithful to the Raj. Their focus was also on the upper class of the society and they were least bothered about involving common people in their scheme of reforms. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who is considered as the Father of Indian Nationalism, throughout his life claimed to be a loyal servant of East India Company. He always considered British rule in India as a blessing. To him, the British presence in India was instrumental in bringing modern educational institutions and press to the region. He was a great admirer of the notions introduced by the British including liberal democratic culture, the concept of liberty of thought, and innovation in society and religion. (Desai, 1984: 287-90). It is an irony that his organization, Brahma Samaj, which is considered as the pathfinder of modern India, had always the support of the British. Syed Ahmad Khan, who is being credited as a pioneer of the resurgence of the Muslim community in India, was also a British loyalist to the core. He considered the British government as legal and the one which brought progress to the land. He always used to praise the British for introducing industry, trade, transportation system, and modern educational system. (Dar, 2019: 92). Like Ram Mohan, he also limited his sphere of influence to a specific group and was not interested in giving political consciousness to the Muslim population at large.

Like social reformers, the men who led India to enter the new political culture were also motivated by the British and their system. Some of those who started early political organizations in India were themselves British, while the others were closely associated with the colonial masters. From Bengal Zimadari Association to East India Association, most of the political bodies worked in close connection with the British rulers. Indian National Congress, which eventually emerged as a symbol of anti-colonialism in the region; to begin with, was no exception. It was established by Allan Octavian Hume, a British, and that too with the blessings of the Viceroy, Lord Ripon. (Seal, 1971: 271). The party, during the first twenty years of its existence, was dominated by "Moderates", who had unlimited faith in British democracy and justice. Delegates of a couple of sessions were given a reception by the Raj's high-ups including Viceroy and Governors; while members of the Congress prayed for the long life for Her Most Gracious Majesty, the Queen, during the formal sessions of the party. Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, openly declared that he and his party men were "loyal to the backbone" because they understood the "benefits English rule had conferred" upon them. (Parekh, 1887: 333). Another stalwart of Congress, Surendranth Bannerji, as late as 1902, claimed that England was their

political guide and that they should have complete faith in the sincerity of the British rulers. (Suntharalingam, 1983: 147). Even when “Extremists” challenged the authority of these “Moderates” initially they were defeated and later Bal Gangadhar Tilak had to compromise on many radical ideas to become the leader of the party (Pati, 2011: 99). During these early years, the membership of the Congress was limited and the doors of the party were almost closed on the general masses.

All India Muslim League, the party which eventually was responsible for the creation of Pakistan, was not different. Before the establishment of the party, the Muslim Leaders used their British contacts to take an appointment from the then Viceroy, Lord Minto. On October 1, 1906, a delegation of thirty-five prominent Muslims, under the leadership of Agha Khan III, met the viceroy at Shimla and discussed with him the idea to launch a separate political organization for the Muslims of India. It was only after a sympathetic rather encouraging response from Viceroy, that the League was established two months later at Dhaka on December 30. It is needless to mention that one of the chief objectives of the new party was to show complete loyalty to the Crown and its administration in India. Even when the League leaders revisited their stance and in 1912 made amendments in their constitution; they discarded the policy of loyalty, yet they failed to completely get rid of the British influence. The constitutional methods which they adopted to challenge the colonial masters were based on the framework introduced by the British themselves. It was also a matter of the fact that the League till very late was least interested in the involvement of masses amongst its ranks. The party was very much involved in the drawing-room politics of the elite till the mid-1930s.

For the first time, an anti-British mass movement was launched, when Lord Curzon decided to partition the province of Bengal into two in 1905. The leadership of Bengal including Bipan Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh resented against the decision and declared it as an attack on Bengali nationalism. They decided to start a movement for the reversal of the decision and to achieve it they put pressure on British rule by initiating a popular uprising. (Bose and Jalal, 1998: 118-19). They raised both nationalistic and religious slogans to attract public support for their cause. They called for the complete boycott of government offices, schools, councils, honors, and titles and raised the slogan of Swadeshi, i.e. complete boycott of foreign goods. (Sarkar, 2003: 111-17). They also worked for the promotion of national education but they did not hesitate in adopting violent means to achieve their goal. Radical leaders from other provinces also supported their cause and propagated that the days of protests and prayers were gone and time had come where the Indians were to take inspiration from the experience of Ireland, Japan, and Russia. Though this movement proved to be the pioneer anti-British mass movement in India, yet it failed to provide a national base. The scope of this drive was limited to Bengal and even leaders like Tilak who visited Bengal to support the movement from Maharashtra had to rely on the local expressions. For the consumption of his audience, he had to link Shivaji with Goddess Kali and even had to tell them that they could consider Shivaji as a Bengali (Suntharalingam, 1983: 139). It is also important to note that a vast majority of Muslims, especially from East Bengal not only opposed the movement but also considered the partition of the province as a positive act of the British Government.

The process of mass mobilization, in an organized form, was however properly introduced after the arrival of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the Indian political scene. With the success in South Africa behind him, Gandhi wanted to activate the Indian public and to get them ready to fight for their fundamental rights. To his surprise, the constitutionalists, who had already occupied the central stage in anti-British politics, were not ready to endorse his stance and thus he had to adopt an alternative route to take the leadership of India (Gandhi, 2007: 198). The choice before Gandhi was between opting for the limited politics of the past by becoming part of the group which was dominating

politics or to transform the future of Indian political culture, whose potential was completely unforeseen. Gandhi selected the path which was difficult amongst the two. Instead of focusing on the elite politics of the metropolitan cities, he decided to invest in general masses based on the outskirts of the country. To feel the pulse of the natives he spent the first two years mainly on a train, traveling in the third class bogies. He visited every nook and corner of India and voyaged from east to west and north to south to gauge the conviction level of the common man. He established Ashrams and attended Melas¹ so that he could not miss even the smallest of the opportunities that came his way, to propagate his philosophy and methodology (Adams, 2010: 135). When in 1917, the tenants of Champaran in Behar stood against European planters, Gandhi established an “Ashram” there and launched a passive resistance movement. His triumph, in compelling the landlords to agree to suspend the increase in taxation and to allow the growers to plant the crop of their choice until the end of the famine, made him earn the title of “Mahatama” (Wolpert, 2001: 89). This was followed by his successful campaigns in favor of the farmers of Kheda and the factory workers in Ahmadabad; both in his native region of Gujrat Kathiawar.

When the stage was set for Gandhi to take off, even otherwise, circumstances arose which further created a favorable environment for his cause. British introduced the notorious Rowlatt Act in February 1919, which allowed the government to ridicule the native population and to put the political workers and leaders behind the bars without any trial. The Act was opposed by all the non-official Indian members of the Legislative Council; some of them even resigned from their membership in protest, but this could not satisfy the Indian masses. Gandhi, per the wishes of the public, formed Satyagraha Sabha and asked the Indians to celebrate Satyagraha Day on March 30, 1919, by holding hartal, processions, and public meetings. The day was observed peacefully all over the country except for Delhi and Punjab, where clashes between police and the protesters took place (Lelyveld, 2011: 158). This eventually resulted in the Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy on April 13, in which hundreds of civilians were killed and perhaps thousands injured due to the orders of Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer to open fire on unarmed protesters. This incident enhanced the anti-British feelings and paved the way for Gandhi to mobilize the general masses.

Likewise, the religious sentiments of the Muslim population were hurt because they felt that the British had betrayed them regarding the issue of the future of the Ottoman Empire and the institution of Khilafat (Talbot, 2017: 114). They formed Khilafat Committee, organized Khilafat Conferences, sent Khilafat Delegation to Europe, observe Khilafat Day, and launched a full-fledged Khilafat Movement against the colonial masters. Gandhi showed sympathy with the Muslim cause of Khilafat, indulged in the correspondence with the Khilafat leaders, and tried to know about their grievances. He participated in Khilafat Conferences and declared that Muslims were struggling for a “righteous” cause. He claimed that Khilafat had emerged as an Indian question and thus emphasized the importance of Hindu-Muslim Unity (Nanda, 1989: 282). He wanted that the “two sister communities could have real true Oriental love for one another” (*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1965: 41). He assured the Muslims that it was the duty of two hundred and twenty million Hindus to feel the pain of the eighty million Muslims living in India (*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1965: 306). On the other hand, Khilafat's leadership passed many resolutions to support the demands and strategy of Gandhi and his Non-cooperation Movement. Ali brothers toured different parts of India alongside Gandhi to motivate Muslim masses to participate in Gandhi's mass struggle against the British (Haq, 1961: 228-29). Religiously charged Muslims did not hesitate to respond.

The fast increasing popularity of Gandhi, coupled with the circumstances that had emerged in India, set the stage to launch the maiden broad-based mass movement in the region. On July 1, 1920,

he gave a warning to the British Government that he was about to launch a movement against them (Qureshi, 1977: 316). The first practical step was taken on July 17, when addressing a public meeting at Delhi Gate, Lahore, he asked the people to observe hartal voluntarily, but without violating the orders of police and Government. The movement, however, was formally launched on August 1 with the return of the Qaisar-i-Hind Medal, Zulwar Medal, and Boer War Medal by Gandhi himself (Abbasi, 1986: 158). He declared that the time for delegations, memorials, and support from the Government was goneⁱⁱ and thus asked Indians to refuse to participate in official and semi-official gatherings, forgo their titles, leave honorary offices, and resign from the nominated seats in the local bodies (Azad, 1959: 9). He also probed them to boycott government services, schools, courts, and even the electoral process. Moreover, he persuaded them to completely shun the usage of British goods (Mitra, 1988: 106-8). Meanwhile, the Treaty of Sevres was signed and the Muslims decided to observe August 30, as Khilafat day. This proved to be the practical commencement of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Gandhi's next task was to secure the support of the Indian National Congress. An opportunity came his way when the party called for its special session at Calcutta on September 8 and 9. With the backing of the Khilafat leaders, who by then had become members of Congress as well, Gandhi presented a resolution in support of the idea of non-cooperation. Speaking on the occasion he openly declared that non-cooperation was the only option left with them to get their rights acknowledged by the British government (*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1965: 247). As expected, he had to face strong opposition from the likes of Motilal Nehru, Annie Besant, Madan Mohan Malaviya, C.R. Das, M.A. Jinnah, etc. and thus had to compromise as he toned down his radical wording to get the resolution passed (Qureshi: 2009: 181). The resistance from the constitutionalists, however, proved temporary, and in the Nagpur session of the Congress held from December 26 to 30, 1920, Gandhi managed to fully capture the party. Likes of Besant opted not to attend the session; Jinnah opposed Gandhi but eventually had to quit his fourteen years' association with the organization; while Das not only decided to support the non-cooperation method but also presented the resolution to adopt it as the party's manifesto in the Nagpur session. A resolution was passed and Gandhi was given free hand to enforce the non-cooperation program (Brown, 1972: 296-97). Besides Congress and the Khilafat Committee, other political associations including Home Rule League, Jamiyat Ulama-i-Hind, and Sikh organizations also put their weight behind Gandhi's movement.

Gandhi asked the leadership to concentrate on expanding the political base of their organization by getting maximum support at the grass-root level. He instructed both the Congress and the Khilafat Committee to expand their scope to the village level, recruit vast numbers of new members and secure small contributions from everyone. However, an objective look at the developments suggests that the involvement of the masses was not because of the backing of the movement by the political organizations, rather it was the other way around. Gandhi introduced tactics that were previously unfamiliar in India. He had something to offer to every segment of society. His strategy was a mixture of the two models as he borrowed idioms and slogans from the extremists but he used methods and techniques of moderate constitutionalists, in which there was a chance of winning concessions within the system. He raised various issues at the same time: if one of them was close to the heart of a specific group of people the other could appeal to another section of the society. He linked local and provincial grievances with national issues and thus made it easier for the common man to associate himself with his movement. If his slogan of Rawan Raj vs. Ram Raj was attracting the religious segment, the issue of Swaraj was catering to the nationalists, while Swadeshi had an appeal for those who were suffering because of the economic domination of the British. All segments of the society including Ulama, educated class, students, peasants, laborers, women, etc. had at least some attraction in Gandhi's campaign and thus were ready to adopt his ideal of non-cooperation. People

belonging to different walks of life, practicing diverse faith, and living around India went all out to support the ideas of national schools, law enforcement bodies, and arbitration courts to bypass government institutions (Ashraf, 2005: 169).

Ulama played a dominant role in the affairs of both state and society during the medieval times under the Muslim rulers. They controlled the upper strata of the religious hierarchy, managed the judicial and ecclesiastical services, and had a say in the policymaking. They established matrimonial alliances with the ruling houses, purchased the property, and emulated the nobles in lavish lifestyle and expenditure. Even imam or khatib of a local mosque had a big impact on setting the mind-set of the local community through the sermons delivered from the pulpit. They were very powerful as the state not only had to recognize them but, at times, had to give them monetary benefits to win their support. Shibli Naumani in his address to the First Congress of Nadvat al-Ulama in April 1895 rightly summed it up when he said, "In the days of the Muslim rule the worldly, as well as the religious affairs of the Muslims, were in the hands of the Ulama" (Robinson, 1975: 273). However, with the advent of the British and the introduction of educational reforms, reorganization of the law courts, the growth of local governments, the spread of secular ideas, and, above all, the separation of religion and government weakened the political and financial position of the Ulama (Hasan, 1981: 122). Yet, their influence on the Muslim population remained intact. Their religious and educational role enabled them to leave an impact on their co-religionists considerably and to create a link between various Muslim groups. The Ulama had the greatest influence in regulating religious life. On Friday, the average Muslim would attend the mosque service in his village or town and hear the weekly sermon given by the *khatib*. Here the Ulama would come into contact with the rich and the poor; the Western-educated *sahib* and the peasant; the town folks and the rural dwellers and the young and the old.

The decline in their elite status with the majority of the Muslim community still listening to their voice, frustrated Ulama, and turned them against the British. They were charged and looking for an opening to express their sentiments. An opportunity came their way when the British backed out from the promise of giving protection to the Ottoman Caliphate at the end of the First World War. Ulama used mosques and madrasas, especially in small towns and villages, to raise the sentiments of Muslims by manipulating the symbols of Islam on the issue of Khilafat and the Holy places located in the Ottoman Empire (Faruqi, n.d.: 70). They suddenly emerged on the national scene to dominate the course of the Khilafat agitation, to demonstrate their hitherto unproved skills in mass mobilization, and to provide the much-needed legitimacy to a cause which had few chances of being sustained in the hands of Western-educated Muslims (Hasan, 1981: 122). They were successful in doing so because of their dominant religious hegemony enabling them to develop an extensive network of social connections, which ranged from the Taluqdars of Oudh to the underprivileged Muslim peasant of East Bengal (Sayeed, 1998: 52).

Though these Ulama were frequently attacked for their extremist, conservative, and outdated point of view, yet their popularity at the grass-root level had made them important for launching any mass movement in India. Gandhi understood this reality and was well aware of their significance for his non-cooperation campaign. As early as March 1919, he visited the Firangi Mahal and stayed with Maulana Abdul Bari and his companions to seek their support for his idea of non-cooperation. From then onwards, he frequently started interacting with the Ulama and had detailed discussions with them on the subject of the Islamic philosophy of non-violence. He tried to convince them that the religious scriptures of Islam support the idea of non-cooperation cum non-violence (Majumdar, 1976: 59-60). Gandhi also emphasized the importance of Hindu Muslim unity and declared that "the two sister communities could have real true Oriental love for one another" (*The Collected Works of*

Mahatma Gandhi, 1965: 41). To win the assistance of Ulama, Gandhi openly supported the Muslim cause of Khilafat. He termed the Muslim grievance against the British as a rivalry between “false Christianity with the strength of arms” on one side and “Islam with the moral force on the other” (*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1965: 478). He considered the Khilafat issue an “Indian question” and asked the Hindu community to support their Muslim brethren in their “righteous” cause (Nanda, 1989: 282).

Gandhi’s efforts proved fruitful as the Ulama displayed their widespread sympathy not only for the Hindu population but also for Hinduism as a religion. So dense was the new alliance that some Hindu religious leaders, who were earlier considered as enemies, were invited by the Muslims to share their opinion from the platform of the Royal Mosque of Delhi (Aziz, 1976: 37). Some of the Ulama acknowledged Vedas as divine; they appreciated Muslims putting tilak on their forehead and even allowed them to pray in the temples. According to a fatwa issued from Ferangi Mehal, Muslims were asked to avoid slaughtering cows to respect the sentiments of their Hindu countrymen.ⁱⁱⁱ Some Ulama went to the extent that they professed that had there been a prophet in modern times it must have been Gandhi (Saeed, 1976: 159). Meanwhile, few others declared Gandhi as their imam (Minault, 1982: 121). To cut it short, for the first time in the history of South Asia, the leadership of the Muslims fell in the hands of a Hindu, Gandhi (Robinson, 1975: 289).

All this helped Gandhi to win over Ulama’s backing for his non-cooperation campaign. Ulama pushed different Muslim organizations to pass resolutions assuring that they would not take part in the celebrations of the British victory, would not co-operate with the Raj, and would boycott British goods (Gandhi, 1957: 400). In the meeting of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, held in Delhi from November 19-21, 1920, a hundred and twenty prominent Ulama unanimously endorsed a fatwa in which they declared that the non-cooperation program of Gandhi was in accordance with the teachings of the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet (Qureshi, 1977: 187). For all practical purposes, Ulama emerged as the chief mobilizer of the mass contact campaign. They toured all parts of India, especially the remote and backward areas, and tried to convince the Muslims that Gandhi's campaign would resolve the problems of the community and would protect Islam in the region. Many of the Ulama groups, who before this movement, kept themselves aloof from politics, were drawn into the boycott drive. In the United Provinces, the center of the most vocal pan-Islamist educational institutions like Nadwat-ul-Ulama and the Dar-ul-Musaniffin became the main hub of agitations. Their slogan of “Islam in danger” became the main reason behind the support of Muslim masses for the movement at great length (Brown, 1972: 330). Ulama also played an important role in collecting funds for the movement. They used local mosques and anjumans to encourage Muslims to even give zakat for this cause (Rauf, 1999: 39).

Like Ulama, the educated class living in the major urban centers of India, including lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers, etc., also actively participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement. Before the launch of this movement, the Western-educated group mainly believed in constitutional methods and were against the model of street politics even when their country was under the foreign rule. But British state structure failed to respond to their expectations. Under the circumstances, Gandhi gave them a new dimension of political consciousness and convinced them that they could not get their due rights under the British and thus should stand behind the slogan of Swaraj. Unemployment because of the economic crunch during the First World War, discrimination between the British and the locals, and above all difference between the theory of democracy and liberalism and the way they were practiced in India, had already created frustration in the minds of this group. Their joining hands with Gandhi not only helped the movement in raising the numbers of its followers

but also enhanced its social structure and blessed it with new ideas and tools to propagate them. It was because of them that the concept of political activism gained roots in the Indian environment. If lawyers and teachers by boycotting courts and educational institutions were influential in bringing the day to day business of the state to a standstill, journalists through their newspapers and magazines were spreading the mission of Gandhi to every nook and corner of the country. Political poetry became a widespread trend and was used to motivate common people to stand against the Raj.

From amongst the educated class, students were the ones who most actively participated in the non-cooperation drive. Gandhi and Ali brothers visited educational institutions like Aligarh University and Banaras Hindu University and motivated the students to boycott their classes and join the movement. Many students, mostly Muslims, to become part of the crusade were not even frightened to be ousted from their schools. They were ready to sacrifice their future for the cause they were associated with. New nationalist institutions like Jamia Millia and Kashi Vidyapith were established to accommodate the students who were expelled from the other institutions (Tidrick, 2006: 163). Abul Kalam Azad announced the foundation of Madrasa-e-Islamia to facilitate the students who were sacked from the government-sponsored madaris. However, these institutions proved to be more of a training ground for political operatives than serving the purpose of education. The students of these institutions became the nucleus of the volunteer campaign. They were influential in propagating the new ideology, collecting subscriptions, and organizing different committees. Though most of them belonged to the urban middle class but because of their efforts, the movement spread to the lower class quarters and in smaller towns and villages, areas which were beyond the previous reach and limit of any political activity in South Asia (Minault, 1988: 120-21).

Another effective group that was part of Gandhi's strategy of political mobilization were women. Though very few of them were politically active in that period, yet Gandhi knew that this group had a powerful appeal. He was convinced that the non-violent instinct of women along with their emotional nature would make them ideal participants for his movement (Som, 2004: 17). He primarily focused on Muslim women like Abadi Bano Begum (Bi Aman), Begum Ajmal Khan, Begum M.A. Ansari, Begum Muhammad Ali Johar, and Begum Hasrat Mohani, who were already active in the Khilafat campaign. On the initiative of Gandhi, in July 1921 they established the women wing of the Central Khilafat Committee. These women traveled all over India to motivate other women to join them. They organized all-women public meetings, probably for the first time in India. It is interesting to note that Gandhi was the only male who was allowed to participate in those gatherings, as he was considered pure enough to be an exception (Nanda, 1965: 115-16). On the other hand, Gandhi openly declared all the women as his sisters (Bakshi, 1985: 38). Alongside these Muslim women, the likes of Sarojini Naidu, Basanti Devi, Sarala Devi, etc. also became active members of the non-cooperation team. They collected donations for Tilak Swaraj Fund, a charity that was started to sponsor the Indian freedom movement. Their main campaign revolves around the point that women were the true custodian of Indian culture and were matchless in the everyday affairs of life. They told common women that Swaraj had to begin in their homes as it could not be won by politics alone. They asked them to start using spinning wheels and make homespun saris (Bakshi, 1991: 48). These ideas received overwhelming response and support from women all across India.

The poor and downtrodden segment played the most effective part in raising the stature of the Non-Cooperation Movement, both in urban and rural India. The concept of Labor Union had already reached the big cities of India and the laborers had started claiming for their higher wages and better work conditions. When Gandhi introduced the idea of non-cooperation, the labor class linked their demands with his slogan and associated them with his movement. Likes of Lajpat Rai, the

President of the first Trade Union Congress of India as well as the leader of Congress, played an active role in establishing this link. He and his associates made the laborers realize that not only their help to the movement would enable India to get rid of the foreign yoke but would also help them achieve their rights. It was mainly due to the call for strike by the Labor Unions that life in major urban centers of India became standstill during the visit of the Prince of Wales in the winters of 1921-22. There was a complete boycott of his visit and wherever he went, he was welcomed with empty streets and closed shutters (Chandra, 1989: 189). When the administration to break the strike tried to run streetcars in Calcutta and Delhi, instead of attacking the scabs and destroying the property, the laborers peacefully laid themselves on the tracks, giving the message that they would prefer death over the failure of their mission. On the other hand, involvement in the Non-Cooperation Movement gave the Labor Unions tremendous strength and helped them play a significant role in bringing about freedom, in the years to come (Williams, 1922: 101).

In the rural belt, peasants were the chief sponsors of the program of non-cooperation. The concept of Kisan Sabha was introduced in 1918 by the leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya, Gauri Shankar Misra, and Indra Narain Dwivedi, the peasant movement in India, however, gained momentum mainly during Gandhi's non-cooperation campaign. The farmers who were already facing economic turmoil because of the multiple factors including the First World War, lack of rains in 1918, scarcity, famine, and the outbreak of epidemics like plague, cholera, and influenza; were burdened by heavy taxation introduced by the government after the war. They were frustrated and were looking for direction, which was provided by the launch of the Non-Cooperation Movement. The movement inculcated the spirit of revolutionary upsurge amongst the tenants (Ahmad, 2004: 140). They related their grievances and demand for their rights with the national cause. Peasants all over the country became part of this movement yet the United Provinces remained the main hub of activity. In the district of Rae Bareilly, the peasants were so determined to shun the payment of taxes to the government that the latter had to use violent means against them. Many were shot and killed or wounded and hundreds were put in prison (Ranjit Guha, 1984: 21). Nevertheless, when the tenants turned their focus towards demanding rights from the native landlords; Gandhi, realizing the potential danger of confrontation amongst Indians, asked them to confine them to "the improvement of the status of the kisans and the betterment of the relations between the zamindars and tenants" (Reeves, 1966: 270).

People from different walks of life wholeheartedly got involved in Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement. They belonged to diverse shades of opinion varying from moderates to those who wanted to go all out to create an environment of civil disobedience in the country. The biggest task before the management of the movement was to coordinate between all these groups and to keep them disciplined and non-violent. For this, all-volunteer bodies were amalgamated into a National Volunteer Corp, with uniform regulations. All volunteers had to take an oath of nonviolence and make a commitment that they would never carry arms. Their main mission was the defiance of the government authority and to accelerate the growth of the political involvement of the indigenous population. These volunteers used to parade in the public areas, put pickets in bazaars, organize demonstrations and show the path to the otherwise unsatisfied but directionless population. They were not afraid of even being sent to jail. Thousands of citizens used to wait in the queue to be allowed to become an active part of the National Volunteer Corp. When some members of this body were arrested by the government, a huge number of waiting persons were ready to be enrolled as their replacement. The Indian National Volunteer Corp had virtually become the National Police or even the Defense Force of the natives (Williams, 1922: 45).

Conclusion and Results

Non-Cooperation Movement failed to achieve its goal of attaining Swaraj. Gandhi, out of his idealism, in reaction to the killing of twenty-two policemen in Chauri Chaura, single-handedly called it off on March 10, 1922. Khilafat Movement also met with failure as Mustafa Kamal Atatürk abolished the institution of Khilafat and Turkey adopted a republican constitution on April 20, 1924. Yet, this Non-Cooperation cum Khilafat movement left a big impact on the history of South Asia. It completely changed the basic structure of the Indian political environment. It not only gave political consciousness to the common masses but also brought a structural shift in the nature and class of political leadership in the Indian sub-continent. To be pro-British became a stigma. Anti-British feelings gained popularity and challenging the foreign rule became short-cut to fame. Mass-movements became a trend as they were launched in India on regular basis till the achievement of independence. Groups like Ulama, professionals, traders, students, women, peasants, and laborers became political activists. The political parties started realizing that to survive they needed to be well-liked at the grass-roots level, instead of being focusing on the elite. Most of those who were trained during this movement actively participated in the freedom movement. More importantly, the concept of mass-mobilization which was first introduced during the Non-cooperation Movement became a permanent trend in this region.

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