

CONCLUSION

Civil Disobedience movement was an important campaign of freedom movement. Civil Disobedience movement was the first widespread movement in which people of all classes and castes took part. Gandhiji thought that British law provided lasting basis to their rule in this country and so he adopted the rational but non-violent programme of violation of unjust British laws.

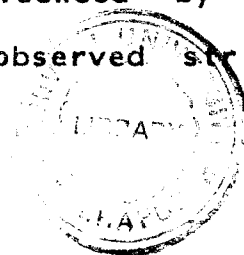
Salt Satyagraha was an important aspect of this movement. Though salt was a minor thing, a handful salt of Gandhiji shook the whole British empire and inspired thousands of people to fight against imperialism. A halfnaked fakir - Mahatma Gandhiji attracted attention of the whole world towards this movement, while he was marching towards Dandi. After the inauguration of Salt Satyagraha, thousands of volunteers from Maharashtra engaged themselves in the violation of salt law. Many Salt Satyagrahas took place in Maharashtra. Perhaps Maharashtra was in the forefront in Salt Satyagraha campaign. Bombay was the main centre of Salt Satyagraha under the prominent leaders like K.F. Nariman, Jamanalal Bajaj etc.. When the leaders were put behind the bars, preparation of salt campaign was carried on by women - the great daughters of Bombay,

like Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Avantikabai Gokhale, Perin Captain, Sarojiji Naidu, Hansa Mehta, Lilawati Munshi etc.. Salt Satyagraha took place at many places like Ville Parle, Congress House, Chaupati, Bhatia Baugh, Esplanade Maidan. People became fearless. Preparing salt became their daily programme. Every day people gathered at different places and prepared salt in defiance of salt law. Wadala Salt Satyagraha was the most noteworthy event in Bombay. Second to Bombay Shiroda was the main centre of Salt Satyagraha in Maharashtra. It was a different type of Salt Satyagraha. Hundreds of Satyagrahis faced the brutality and lathi charges of the police, but they were able to destroy the salt pans. Even owners of the salt pans joined hands with the Satyagrahis and encouraged them in their activities.

Salt Satyagraha took place not only at places on the sea coast but also at places situated away from the sea coast in the interior parts of Maharashtra. There were two places named Dahihanda and Bhamod in Akola district in Vidarbha. People arrived from many adjoining villages at Dahihanda and Bhamod and they took out water from saline wells and prepared salt. According to the popular view how much salt was prepared was not important but violation of salt law at any cost everywhere was more important. It was the main target. Contraband salt was sold everywhere and salt

was smuggled from the Portuguese territory and the princely states along the sea-board. Thus salt became an inspiring thing for the volunteers. Hundreds of volunteers were arrested and many had to suffer the lathi blows of British police. Thus salt became an inspiring thing for the volunteers.

As Salt Satyagraha came to an end due to arrival of monsoon rains in Maharashtra, Maharashtra Civil Disobedience Committee turned its attention towards boycott and picketing. A wave of boycott and picketing arose in the country. As there were many textile mills in Bombay, naturally it became the main centre of boycott of foreign cloth. Women were nominated as dictators when men were put behind the bars. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Sarojini Naidu, Hansa Mehta, Perin Captain, Avantikabai Cokhale, Lilavati Munshi and several brave daughters of Bombay gave an exemplary account of themselves in picketing of foreign cloths and liquor shops. The splendid work of Desh Sevika Sangh under the guidance and supervision of these women made Swadeshi and boycott campaigns a grand success. Programmes of bonfire of foreign cloths were held at many places in Maharashtra. Thousands of foreign clothes like caps, coats, etc. were burnt in bonfire. Even workers participated in picketing. Being influenced by the spirit of Civil Disobedience workers observed strikes



and closed down their mills. They declared hartals and joined the processions to protest against British government. Babu Genu, an ordinary worker, sacrificed his life in this movement. Many men and women gave up using foreign clothes. Women decided to support the Civil Disobedience movement by using Swadeshi articles in their houses. Even tailors refused to tailor the foreign cloth, merchants gave up selling foreign clothes. Many mill associations gave up using foreign cloths. Peasants refused to grow cotton in their fields and they stopped cotton production. The Mulji Jetha Cloth Market of Bombay, the biggest cloth market in India, was closed down for three months. All this boycott affected the British economy very badly. Bombay's import was lowered by 13 per cent, while export fell nearly by 41 per cent in 1931-32. The most catastrophic fall being that in raw cotton. This was bound to arouse peasantry against government.¹

Picketing and boycott of foreign cloth and foreign goods, liquor shops etc. also took place in other parts of Maharashtra like, Poona, Nasik, Ratnagiri, Nagpur, Dhule, Jalgaon, Satara, Raigad, Thana etc. districts. Peasantry living in villages was very much influenced by this movement and rose against British government. They voluntarily made bonfires of foreign cloths and took to boycott of foreign goods and started

using Gandhi caps. Swadeshi shops were opened like Lokmanya Swadeshi stores, and Gandhi Swadeshi Sangh to supply Swadeshi goods to the people.

Thousands of liquor shops were broken down and many gave up drinking liquor. Lathi charges and abuses were suffered by many women while picketing the liquor shops. Those who were drinking liquor and selling it were socially boycotted in villages, e.g., the liquor contractor at Bahaddurpur in Dhule district had made an agreement with the leaders of the village of not selling the liquor. But after three months he managed to sell about one gallon liquor outside the village. When the villagers heard about this they boycotted him and even his relatives refused to have anything to do with him.²

Forest Satyagraha was another important feature of the Civil Disobedience movement. Rural people, especially the peasants, were the heroes of this movement. Forest Satyagraha provided an opportunity to the peasants to participate in Civil Disobedience movement and protest against unjust government policy. They released their cattles in the forest without paying taxes and cut grass and trees in great measure and violated forest law. Due to Forest Satyagraha Civil Disobedience movement, alongwith Congress, could secure support from the rural peasant masses. Civil Disobedience movement gave an

opportunity to the peasants to express their anger against British government and it got full support from every corner of the country.

During this movement political consciousness of peasants and common man considerably developed and they were awakened to the need to fight against imperialism.

Roles of women and students in the movement were also noteworthy. Women came out leaving their traditional seclusion and joined the movement and gave response to Gandhiji's call. On the advise of Gandhiji Desh Sevika Sangh was organised in Bombay and they conducted intensive house to house propoganda of Swadeshi, temperance and Khadi. They also conducted Prabhat Pheris and organised public meetings. The Desh Sevika Sangh gave an excellent and spectacular account of themselves through the Civil Disobedience movement.

Women along with men participated in Forest Satyagraha. At Tambave in Satara district a large number of women participated in Forest Satyagraha. Women names Chandrabai Babur and Tanubai Hariba Babur seized weapons from the Forest Officers. They snatched the barrel of Ranger's gun and axe from a guard and two lathis from the constables. On account of that they were arrested and sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment. In Bilashi in the same district Zenda Satyagraha and

Forest Satyagraha were performed simultaneously on 18 July 1930 and women protected the national flag there. Young Women Association was formed in Akola. Durgatai Joshi and Sitabai Oak were prominent in this association. Thus, women played a remarkable role in this movement.

The role of students and youths, too, was important in this movement. Students of schools were seen in the forefront in Prabhat Pheris. They used to shout slogans like 'Inqilab Zindabad', 'Lalaji Ko Lathi Mari, Bhagatsingh Ko Fasi Di, Nahi Rakhani, Nahi Rakhani Ye Jalim Sarkar Nahi Rakhani', 'Boycott Ka Kayada Tod Diya', 'Todi Bacha Hai Hai', 'Commissioner Hai Hai', 'Namak Ka Kayada Tod Diya', etc.. Small boys and students of primary schools formed organisations like monkey force (Vanar Sena) of boys and cat army (Manjari Sena) of girls. It shows that small children also participated in the nationalist movement.

The College Students' Conference was opened at the Royal Opera House, Bombay. The object of this conference was to decide the attitude that they should adopt in regard to the present political struggle. Bombay Presidency Youth League was formed and the youths were asked to identify themselves with the national struggle and also to suspend their studies and join the Satyagraha camp.³

On 18 May 1930 Students' Day was observed and 'Students Swadeshi Union' and 'Students Swadeshi Association' were set up in May 1930 in Tilak Mahavidyalaya in Poona city. Also Youth League was formed in Jalgaon and Nagpur and many other cities.⁴

In this way students and youths threw themselves in this movement.

Many other factors, too, played an important role in the Civil Disobedience Movement, like the Parsi Organisation. They took out processions to protest against British government policy. Indian Motor accessories and petrol dealers also boycotted British goods. Indian Motor Accessories and Petrol Dealers' Union passed a resolution. They resolved that funds created from petrol profit be given to Congress hospital. About 80 per cent of dealers in motor accessories and petrol took a pledge not to buy, deal in, import, sell or recommend directly or indirectly any automobile goods made in Britain for four months.⁵ Also the meeting of non-Brahmin party was held on May 14, 1930 at Satara. A committee was formed to report on the increase and make assessment by last July. They passed a resolution to cooperate in picketing of liquor shops and foreign cloth and also cutting of toddy trees.⁶

Social boycott on government servants was another important feature of this movement. Social

boycott of government servants had been declared with ejection of government servants by householders at several places. Government servants were not allowed into the villages. On the night of 21 April 1930 a meeting was held in Ratnagiri and a resolution was passed that shopkeepers in the town should not supply the police with provisions for the next three months and any shopkeeper found doing so would be fined with Rs. 51. Whenever the police would go to market to fetch anything none of the shopkeepers would serve him. The police experienced many difficulties in having their daily bazaar.⁷ Trimbak Narayan, Police Patil of Khed in Dhule taluka smoked a foreign cigarette at a meeting on July 5, 1930. So he was boycotted by villagers. He was fined Rs. 2-8-0 and it was settled that the boycott would be continued till the fine was paid.⁸

Ejection of government servants by householders also started at many places. A Hindu constable at Ner in Dhule district was forced to vacate the house in which he was living by the owners.⁹ These social boycotts were continued in many villages and towns.

Resignation of government service was also followed at many places. Police Patils and government servants like Talathi (village revenue officer) resigned from their posts to strengthen the movement and to respond to Gandhiji's call and at some places people

forced them to do so. Those who refused to do so were socially boycotted. A Talathi named Nana Patil of Yede Machindre in Satara district resigned from his post to respond to Gandhiji's call and threw himself in the national movement. He was the hero of national movement. It was in his name that a Parallel Government ('Prati Sarkar') was founded during the days of Quit India movement in Satara district. Many prominent persons and Congress leaders delivered speeches at many places. They appealed to the peasants to start no-tax campaign on the model of Bardoli no-tax movement. The leaders also made speeches to propagate their anti-British views and appealed people to join the movement. Many people enrolled themselves as volunteers and formed many organisations to protest against British government and expressed their solidarity with the national movement. National Fund for the Civil Disobedience movement was raised at many places and many Swadeshi shops were opened to sell Khadi and Swadeshi goods.

Zenda Satyagraha (National Flag Salutation) was another important feature in Civil Disobedience movement. 'Zenda Vandan', national flag salutation was observed all over India. Programmes of Zenda Satyagraha were held at many places in Maharashtra, such as Bombay, Poona, Nasik, Ahamednagar, Dhule, Jalgaon, Ratnagiri, Satara, Raigad, Thana etc.. Even villages

were in the forefront in Zenda Satyagraha. Zenda Satyagraha of Bilashi in Satara district is noteworthy in the history of freedom movement. Prabhat Pheris were taken out by volunteers, women and students holding national flag and 'Vande Mataram', the national song was sung after flag salutation. They used to shout the slogans like 'Inqilab Zindabad', 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai', etc.. Processions were taken out to protest against British government and posters were pasted in towns asking people to use Swadeshi goods in preference to foreign ones, especially of British manufacture even if they be of higher cost.

Salt Satyagraha was only the catalyst and the beginning for a rich variety of forms of defiance that it brought in its wake. Before his arrest Gandhiji had already called for a vigorous boycott of foreign cloth and liquor shops and had especially asked women to play a leading role in this movement. "To call women the weaker sex is libel; it is man's injustice to women" he had said and the women of India certainly demonstrated in 1930 that they were second to none in strength and tenacity of purpose. Women, who never stepped unescorted out of their homes, women who had stayed in Purdah, young mothers, widows and unmarried girls, became a familiar sight as they stood from morning to night outside liquor shops and opium dens and stores selling

foreign cloth, quietly but firmly persuading the customers and shopkeepers to change their ways.

The liquor boycott brought down government's revenue from Excise duties. It soon assumed a new popular form of cutting of the heads of toddy trees. The success of liquor and drugs boycott was obviously connected with the popular tradition of regarding abstinence as the virtue and a symbol of respectability. The depth of this tradition is shown by the fact that lower castes trying to move up in the caste hierarchy invariably tried to establish their upper caste status by giving up liquor and eating of meet.¹⁰

Defiance of forest law assumed a mass character in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Central Province, especially in areas with large tribal population who had been the most seriously affected by the colonial government's restrictions on the use of forest. At some places the size of crowd that broke the forest law swelled to 70,000 and above.

The movement also popularised a variety of forms of mobilization, Prabhat Pheris in which bands of men, women and children went around at dawn singing national songs with national flags became a rule in villages and towns. Patrikas or illegal news-sheets sometimes written by hands and sometimes cyclostyled were part of the strategy to defy the hated Press Act and

they flooded the country.¹¹

Thousands of volunteers were put in jail, many sacrificed their lives for the sake of freedom and thousands of volunteers had to face brutalised treatment of police in jail. Owing to the bad qualities of food supplies to them the Satyagrahi prisoners in C Class had gone on hunger strike.

Imports of cloth from Britain had fallen by half, other imports like cigarettes had suffered a similar fate. Government income from liquor excise and land revenue had been affected. Elections of Legislative Assembly had been effectively boycotted. A vast variety of social groups had been politicized on the side of Indian nationalism. Also tribals became very active in this movement. Workers also were not behind; they joined numerous mass demonstrations in Bombay and were in the forefront in Sholapur.

The support that the movement had gathered from the poor and the illiterate, both in towns and cities, was remarkable indeed. This participation was reflected even in the government statistics of jail-goers and jail-going was only one of the many forms of participation.

For Indian women, the movement was the most liberating experience and can truly be said to have marked their entry into the public space.

Thus, though Civil Disobedience movement could not become successful completely in the achievement of its object, the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930 marked a critically important stage in the progress of the anti-imperialist struggle.

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