

CHAPTER - V :

SWARAJY & MONTAGUE-CHELMSFORD REFORMS

5:1 (A) Montague-Chelmsford Reforms.

5:2 (B) Tilak's concept of Responsive-Cooperation.

5:3 (C) Gandhiji, Non-Cooperation and Jallianwala Bagh.

5:4 (D) Mahatma Gandhiji's concept of Non-Cooperation.

5:5 (E) Non-Cooperation and its political implications.

.

CHAPTER - V :

SWARAJYA & MONTAGUE - CHELMSFORD REFORMS

5:1 (A) MONTAGUE - CHELMSFORD REFORMS :

After the 1915 Congress Mrs. Besant started Home Rule League. She chose the term 'Home Rule' instead of the word Self-Government and launched vigorous movement all over India through her All India Home Rule League. Simultaneously, B. G. Tilak also started the Indian Home Rule League that was confined to Bombay, Central provinces and Karnataka, thus there was a great spread of Home Rule League movement all over India and due to their vigorous propaganda, the British Government tried to stop it by using oppressive measures. They arrested Mrs. Besant and also adopted several preventive measures against Tilak.

Tilak and Mrs. Besant successfully put forward the demand of Home Rule or self Government, within the British Empire and in 1916, the Congress adopted the scheme of reform known as the Congress League scheme or Lucknow pact. The scheme supported the British supremacy in India but with regard to internal affairs, the scheme provided that the Central as well as provincial executive councils were to be bound by the resolutions of their legislative councils and there should be communal representation to both Hindus and Muslims.¹

After the formulation of the Congress-League scheme, the

British Government announced on 20 Aug. 1917 that it would gradually grant self governing institution to India in order to establish responsible Government to India as an integral part of the British Empire.² The 1917 Congress welcomed the August declaration of the British Government and conveyed to it that such Bill might be passed in the parliament.

Montague, Secretary of State and Chelmsford, Governor General of India, Published the report on Indian constitutional reforms in July 1918. The report rejected the Congress League scheme of reform partly, on the ground that there were some conflicting areas in the scheme. From the speeches Surendranath, Tilak and other, it became clear that the Congressmen wanted to make the irremovable executive a virtual agent of the popular legislature. But Montague did not think that it was possible to introduce responsible Government at the centre and he knew that Indian aspirations would not be satisfied by the grant of full responsibility only in local matters.³ When Montague and Chelmsford decided to grant some political rights to India. They were flooded with defferent types of demands put forward by many interest and pressure groups, in India including minorities and depressed castes.

On the basis of Montague Chelmsford report, British Parliament passed the bill of Government of India Act 1919 in Dec.1919. Following were the main features of Montague Chelmsford Reforms :-

1. The report favoured the introduction of a limited measure of responsible Government in provincial matters. It suggested the 'dyarchy' or the division of provincial administration into two parts, 'reserved' and 'transferred' so that the irremovable executive would continue to retain the ultimate responsibility for the administration of reserved subjects, while in the matter of transferred subjects the Governor was normally to act on the advice of Ministers chosen from and responsible to the majority in the provincial Legislature 4

2. The second feature of the reform was that law, order and finance were made reserved subjects, while education, agriculture, Public health and local Government were made transferred subjects in the field of provincial Government.

3. No change was introduced in the Central Government. The Government of India still remained responsible to the British Parliament through the secretary of State.

4. Provincial councils were to be consisted of three kinds of members - ex officio members of the executive council of the Governor, nominated and elected. Not more than 20% members should be officials and at least 70% members should be elected. The qualification method of election number of members elected by communal electorates and other related matters were also considered and prescribed by rules.

Towards the end of 1917, the outlines of this plan were adopted in a Joint Address presented to the Government by a number of Indians and Europeans. The Joint Address suggested that the formation of smaller and more homogeneous provinces or states were essential for the ultimate development of a real United State of India within the British Empire.⁵

It did not suggest any solution about the territorial reconstitution of the provinces. But Montague Chelmsford agreed with Joint Address suggestion. It suggested that the fields of Government should be divided into a responsible and non-responsible parts.⁶

The Montague-Chelmsford report had boldly argued that for the development of Indian nationhood it was necessary deliberately to disturb "the placid, pathetic, contentment of the masses"⁷. R Craddock believed that the peasant lived, contentedly under the British rule, and that it would be unwise to stir up discontent among the peasants or to replace the rule of British officials by the rule of Indian middle class lawyers.⁸

George M. Chesney attacked Montague reforms scheme on the ground that the western ideals of democratic self Government were altogether unsuited to Indian conditions. He maintained that the operation of representative institutions in socially backward Eastern countries such as China, Persia, Turkey had proved completely unsuccessful.⁹ But despite these contrary opinions, the reforms were

introduced and passed.

MONTAGUE :

Montague-Chelmsford reforms did not satisfy the Indians only small minority of old congressmen, however, welcomed it. In a separate Moderate Conference, held on 1st Nov. 1918 they argued that, it was true that the reforms ~~show~~ scheme granted only a limited measure of responsible but in the course of time the Government would become more and more responsive to the demands of the people. Thus, according to their view it was a right step in the direction of gradual development of democratic institutions in India.

The special congress session held at Bombay in 1918 considered the reforms suggested by Montague-Chelmsford reports to be inadequate. The congress expressed its disagreement on the report and said that the responsible Government should immediately be introduced in the centre. It asked that in the centre apart from foreign affairs, Army, Navy and princely states, all other subjects should be transferred subjects.¹⁰ In the provinces, the department of law, police and justice should be reserved subjects but all other departments ~~sh~~ should placed in the list of transferred subjects.¹¹ In the congress session of 1918 it was demanded that ~~an~~ as in ~~offer~~ ^{other self-governing} ~~and~~ ^{growing} British Dominions, Indian should be represented in any conference that might be held to decide terms of peace. The representation by the elected representatives of the people should be included as delegates. It selected Tilak, Gandhi and Mohani the three leaders to represent India in such conferences.¹²

Later at Calcutta Congress in Sept., 1920, the Congress decided to change its attitude due to the agitation over the Rowlatt Act, the Khilafat question and the tragedy of Amritsar.¹³ The Calcutta Congress passed a resolution approving the adoption of a policy of progressive non-~~civil~~^{violent}ent, non-cooperation with Government. The old resolution was changed at Nagpur Congress in Dec., 1920. The Congress had decided to obtain Swarajya by all legitimate and peaceful means.¹⁴ M. K. Gandhi, who at that time dominated the Congress party wanted Swarajya within Empire if possible and without it if necessary.¹⁵ At the Nagpur Congress of 1920, the resolution of non-cooperation was voted.

The intention of the framers of the act appeared to have been to provide a training school for politician and to test the ability of Indians to profit by their training in the use of parliamentary methods of Government rather than to confide the welfare of the people into their own land.¹⁶

The Montague-Chelmsford reforms divided Indians into three groups : (1) the first group, consisted of moderates and loyalists, supported the reforms and wanted to implement them, (2) the second group was led by Tilak who expounded his concept of responsive co-operation and favoured the working of reforms. He said that our co-operation should be based on response we receive from bureaucracy and, (3) Third group was led by Gandhi, who advocated non-cooperation in the light of anti-people activities of the British Government like Rowlat Act, massacre

at Jalianwala Bagh and Khilafat. Gandhi became an uncompromising opponent of British rule and carried the Congress along with him. The death of Tilak greatly facilitated his total dominance. But he correctly understood the mood of the people and exposed the cause of Indian freedom.

Tilak and Gandhi had differences of opinion on Montague-Chelmsford reforms as Tilak was ready to work them on the basis of pragmatic responsive co-operation and Gandhi opposed it by expounding his concept of non-cooperation which was to be used against the British Imperialists with the help of his new method of Satyagraha and new approach to politics.

5:2 (B) TILAK'S CONCEPT OF RESPONSIVE COOPERATION :

Tilak was not satisfied with vague promises at Montague on 8th July 1918 the Montague-Chelmsford Report was published in India. Tilak expressed his opinion about Montague-Chelmsford reforms before the select committee. He firmly stated that India was fit for immediate introduction of responsible - Government. He believed that the Government should fix a time limit for the grant of self Government. He did not completely oppose the system and said, "We like it as little as possible." He pleaded for the provincial autonomy and argued that there should be no reserved subjects in the provinces for the Central Government he made a suggestion that half the members of the executive should be selected from the elected members of the Legislative Council.



Tilak came back from England on 27th Nov. 1919. He told the public meeting at Bombay that he was doubtful if people would be satisfied with the Montford proposals which were being formulated into an Act. Later he visited Madras and declared there, " I am sure persistent agitation will help you to attain Home-Rule, not in fifteen years but possibly in five years."

He attended the Amritsar Congress on his way from Bombay to Amritsar, he was welcomed at many places. While he was on his way to Amritsar, the Royal Proclamation had been issued. It granted amnesty to all political offenders and declared the creation of a Chamber of Princes. Tilak sent telegram to the King Emperor through the Viceroy and Montague, promising 'Responsive Co-operation'.

The phrase 'responsive co-operation' was coined by one of the supporters of Tilak - Baptisa and the draft of the telegram had been prepared by Kelkar. The telegram was as follows "Please convey to His Majesty grateful and loyal thanks of Indian Home-Rule league and the people of India for proclamation and amnesty and assure him of responsive co-operation." 17

Responsive co-operation had created some doubts in the minds of some delegates, yet Tilak was received by the people almost as a God at Amritsar. Motilal Nehru was the President of the Congress. He asked the moderates to join the Congress but they refused. The concept of responsive co-operation was not new in his political philosophy. It meant that people would cooperate

with bureaucracy to the extent and degree to which the -
bureaucracy would co-operate with them. Responsive co-operation
was only an English rendering of what the Bhagawad Gita has said,
"ये चया मा पुपधन्ते तारुशेव भजाम्यदम्" ¹⁸ Responsive Co-
operation meant that there should be an attitude of 'quid pro
quo' between the people and the Government.

Tilak delivered a speech at Amritsar and declared
He
India's fitness for Swarajya./Expressed his opinions about the
Act and made it clear that 'some small bone has been thrown to us
and the parliament expects that we shall spend the next ten years
in licking that little piece of bone'.

On 22nd March, he went to Delhi to ~~attend~~ attend a meeting
on foreign propoganda. In the public meeting held there, he
explained the theory of responsive-cooperation. He said -
bureaucracy wanted loyal co-operation. He told that co-operation
was a mutual affair and nationalists were willing to co-operate
with the Government only to the extent that Government would be
willing to co-operate with them. Bureaucracy was the servant and
they should not perform the functions of the master. He exhorted
the people to agitate ~~the~~ for Swarajya and not to get deceived
by the false prospects of the Reform Act.

The principles of responsive cooperation was that the
Reforms Act was to be worked and agitation had to be continued
as long as we do not get the real Swarajya. Many leaders opposed
his principle of Responsive co-operation. At Amritsar, the

delegates mistook the word 'responsive' for responsible and did not understand correct the meaning of responsive co-operation. Annie - Besant also opposed the phrase 'Responsive Co-operation.'

Tilak's theory of responsive Co-operation was based on his political pragmatism that believed in the principle of tit for tat, which he borrowed from the Gita. Gandhi opposed responsive co-operation and argued that he believed in Budha's principle that advocated that untruth should be fought by truth and anger should be pacified by calm and peaceful behaviour. Thus, Gandhi did not believe in ethical relativism of Tilak in political matters and put forward his own theory of Non-Co-operation.

5:3 (C) GANDHI, NON-COOPERATION AND JALIANWALA BAGH :

Non-co-operation movement of Gandhi became popular because of occurrence of some important incidents. Most prominent among them were the imposition of the Rowlatt Act, genocide of the Jalianwala Bagh and unjust removal of Khalifa and Khilafat agitation. As a result of these developments, the impact of First World War and due to other international developments there was considerable change in political situation in India.

During the First World War, people supported the British Government and hoped that after the end of the War the people of India would get self Government immediately. It was said that the Britishers stood for the security of democracy, independence of small nations and self determination. This roused great hopes in the

minds of the people of India, who began to see in the world -
divastating War a chance of their deliverance from the humiliating
position of a subject people and hope of the elevation of their
country to the status of an equal partner in the British -
Commonwealth.¹⁹

But after the end of the War, the people of India got
disappointed because after the end of the Government of the India
followed many anti-people policies and prosecuted many Indians.
Rowlatt Act greatly angered the Indians as it recommended the
continuation of the provision of the Defence of India Act and thus
opposed the Civil rights and liberty of the people. On the basis of
the Report of Rowlatt, the bill was placed before the Imperial
Council on 8th Feb., 1919. When the bill was published, Gandhiji
opposed it. He said that no state, however, despotic had the right
to enact laws which were inimical to the whole body of the people,
much less a Government guided by constitution usage and precedent
such as the Indian Government. 20

Gandhiji started an agitation against the Rowlatt Act and
there occurred of the most tragic incident at Jallianwal Bagh. The
'Hartal' declared by Gandhi against Rowalrtt Act was very successful.
In Punjab few minor riots took place. Some prominent leaders of
Punjab were arrested. Gandhi was also arrested. There was a high
tension in Punjab and on 13th April, 1919 it reached a climax. On
that day a meeting was held at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. -
General Dyer within 30 seconds of his arrival, opened fire which
continued for 10 minutes taking the lives of 600 Indians. All

these developments related to the Amritsar firing added a stimulus to the non-cooperation movement when it was launched later.

The Khilafat agitation also strengthened the movement. The word Khilafat is derived from the Arabic root 'Khalf' to leave behind and the word Khalifa (past tense) means primarily a successor. One who comes after and fills another's place whether his agency be due to death or removal of that other, or to his absence or to a voluntary transfer of his authority and power. The terms of the Peace Treaty with reference to the Khalifat were interpreted by many Indian Muslim leaders as a betrayal of the promise given by the British to them. The news of the Peace Treaty reached India and Khilafat agitation started.

5:4 (D) MAHATMA GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF NON-COOPERATION :

Gandhiji was first to start the massive non-cooperation movement in India. Though before him many Indian leaders advocated the concept it was Gandhi who gave clear meaning of it. According to him, "Non-Cooperation means refusal to assist the Government which did not listen to the people's just grievances and had in their view become corrupt."²¹ It is true that before Gandhi some leaders asked people not to co-operate. For example, Gokhale said that if the Government refused to co-operate with people, the people in turn should refuse to co-operate with Government. He, as President of Banaras Congress in 1905, warned the Government that the people would have to say 'Goodbye' to all hopes of co-operation in any way with the bureaucracy.²² Bipin Pal also advocated the principle of non-cooperation during the Bengal

partition agitation. Aurbindo also gave complete programme of Non-Violent, Non-Co-operation in the form of passive resistance. B.G.Tilak, Subhashchandra Bose also advocated the principle of Non-cooperation. Gandhiji had given practical policy and programme of Non-cooperation and started the agitation against the British Government to protest against the Punjab genocide and the question of Khilafat.

Gandhi placed before the country his own method of resisting evils or injustice which he had practiced and perfected in South Africa and which had been regarded as his most original contribution to political thought. This method was known as 'Satyagraha' He did not take any objection against the use of 'passive resistance' but he was of the view that it was different from passive resistance. Passive resistance was conceived of as a weapon at the weak and avoided violence on the ground of expediency, but did not exclude its use, if in the opinion of the resister the occasion demanded it, whereas Satyagraha was a weapon of the strong and excluded the use of violence in any shape or form.²³ Satyagraha is made up of two words 'Satya' and 'Agraha' This Satyagraha means clinging to truth, holding fast to truth and insistence on truth. Gandhi called it 'Truth-Force' He described Satyagraha as a coin on whose face you read love and on the reverse you read truth.²⁴ Satyagraha was a weapon of mass struggle, including Hartal, Fast, Non-Co-operation etc. Non-Co-operation was the best way to bring the oppressor and unjust to his senses. If the Government was to be wholly evil or doing evil act one should not give any support or service, physical or moral to the Government.

According to him, Non-Cooperation was not merely a negative term, it had its positive sides also. Its external - negative success was in proportion to their inward positive - growth, the growth of Co-operation among the people. He wrote that a little reflection would show us that civil disobedience was a necessary part of Non-Co-operation, you assist and - administration most effectively by obeying its order and decrees.²⁵

5:5 (E) NON CO-OPERATION AND ITS ^{Political Implication} PROGRAMME :

Non-Co-operation movement was not only launched to - protest against Rowlat Act, the Khilafat and Amritsar firing, but it was an expression at the general lack of faith in the ^ujustness of the British rule and the consequent demand for Swarajya. Gandhi wrote a letter to Viceroy and stated that the method of agitation by the way of petition, deputation and the like was not useful at this time. Therefore he suggested the remedy of Non-Co-operation.

The Khilafat Committee had accepted Gandhi's Non-Co-operation programme on 28th May, 1920. On 30th June there was a joint Hindu Muslims conference at Allahabad and it decided to adopt Non-Co-operation principle after giving a month's notice to the viceroy. Gandhi and Maulana Mohmad Ali toured different parts of the country and tried to get support for the programme of - Non-Cooperation. At Calcutta Congress, in Sept., 1920, Non-Co-operation resolution was passed by the Congress. In Dec., 1920 at Nagpur Congress, same resolution was reaffirmed. It was decided in the programme that the ultimate aim was the removal of British rule in India and such specific slogan as repeal of the Rowlat Act

and the redressed of the Punjab grievances. Its aim was to create consciousness among the masses and to mobilise their support.

Thus, the Indian aspirations of self Government were not fulfilled by the provisions of Montague-Chelmsford reforms. - Indian concept of Swaraj meant self Government within the empire. The reform granted a very limited political concessions to Indian and the British Government embarked upon the oppressive politics that embattered the Indian people. The Indian response was - varied from Co-operation, responsive Co-operation to Non-Co-operation because the reforms offered some concessions and some Indian leaders wanted to use them. Therefore, they were ready to consider the reforms as partial fulfillment of demands of Swaraj.

'Swaraj' was the most overworked term during this period as ^{var} varied interpretations of its true import were given. The desire of the Congress then to set benefitted by the political concessions of the reforms was so strong, and irresistible that after the end of Non-Co-operation movement, they decided to enter the councils and for that purpose, leaders like Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das formed a political party and incidentally the name of that party was - Swaraj party. Because by that time the word Swaraj had become the vehicle of carrying the growing political aspiration of the Indian people.

* * * * *

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1) Report of 31st Indian National Congress P.P. 78-79.
- 2) Debate in house of Commons, 1917-16 P. 445.
- 3) Tilak B.G. The National Demand P.P. 14-16.
- 4) Montegne - Chelmsford Report, 1918 Para 218-19.
- 5) Paper reading about application of
dyarchy to Government of India P.P. 320 - 330.
- 6) Montegne Chelmsford Report, 1918 Para 246.
- 7) Ibid. Para 246
- 8) Craddock R. The Dilima in India P. 178.
- 9) Chesney G.M. India Under Experiment P. 173.
- 10) Sitaramayya P. - The History of Indian
National Congress P. 261.
- 11) Ibid. P. 262.
- 12) The Hindu 16th Sept. 1926.
- 14) Zaidi, A.M. of The Encyclopaedia of
Indian National Congress Vol. VI. P. 659.
- 15) Gandhi M.K., An authobiograph P. 402.
- 16) Tara Chand - The History of Freedom
Movement in India Vol. III P. 468.
- 17) Varma V.P. The Life and Philosophy of
Lokmanya. P. 414.
- 18) Ibid. P. 415.
- 19) Young India, 1919
- 20) Gandhi, M.K. Vol. V, 13. P. 168.
- 21) The Collected Work of Gandhi Vol. 14th. P. 466.
- 22) Gokhale G.K. (Speeches, Nalsan) P.P. 414-15.

- 23) Gandhi M.K. (Speeches and Writings) P. 501.
24) ~~IBID~~ Ibid. P. 503.
25) The Independence 8 May 1919.

.....