E-ISSN: 2706-8927
P-ISSN: 2706-8919
www.allstudyjournal.com
IJAAS 2025; 7(6): 112-116
Received: 18-04-2025
Accepted: 22-05-2025

Dr. Nasirahmed M Jangubhai
Principal & Associate Professor of Political Science, Government First Grade College, Beedi, Belgavi, Karnataka, India

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Nasirahmed M Jangubhai
Principal & Associate Professor of Political Science, Government First Grade College, Beedi, Belgavi, Karnataka, India

Civil disobedience movement and the quit India movement

Nasirahmed M Jangubhai

DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.33545/27068919.2025.v7.i6b.1524

Abstract
As per decision of the Indian National Congress taken at the Lahore Session, on 26 January, 1930 people all over the country took a pledge of independence, which was repeated year after year. According to the commitment, we think the Indian people have an unalienable right to freedom, the rewards of their labour, and the necessities of existence.

Keywords: Indian national congress, Lahore session, independence pledge, freedom, Labour rights

1. Introductions
The significant number of people who attended the nationwide pledge-taking event demonstrated how well supported the Congress's plan was, and they were waiting for Mahatma Gandhi to give the order to begin civil disobedience. But before making his last move, Mahatma Gandhi declared an Eleven Conditions Program, promising to postpone civil disobedience provided the British agreed to these eleven conditions.

2. The Civil Disobedience Movement
In compliance with the Indian National Congress's resolution from the Lahore Session, on January 26, 1930, citizens nationwide made an oath of independence that was reaffirmed annually. The vow read: "We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life so that they may have full." The growth opportunities people have the right to change or overthrow any government that oppresses them and denies them their rights. In addition to depriving the Indian populace of their freedom, the British government in India has destroyed India's economy, culture, and spirituality by focusing on mass exploitation. Since violence is not the most efficient means of achieving liberation, "We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj, or complete independence." India has become stronger and more independent, and it has marched a long way towards Swaraj by legal and peaceful means. It is through these means that our nation will achieve independence. We think the successful implementation of the Khadi program, communal harmony, and the abolition of untouchability are necessary for nonviolent action in general and preparedness for nonviolent action in particular. We will take advantage of every chance to foster goodwill among people of all castes and creeds. We will work to lift the disregarded out of ignorance and poverty and to further the interests of those who are viewed as repressed and backward in every manner." The wide participation of the people in the pledge-taking ceremony through country was a clear indication of the popular support to this decision of the Congress and the people were looking for a signal from Mahatma Gandhi to launch the civil disobedience. However, before taking a final plunge Mahatma Gandhi announced an Eleven Points Programme and announced that if the British conceded these eleven points, he would put off the civil disobedience.

3. The Eleven Points put forward by Mahatma Gandhi were
a. Total prohibition of alcohol;
b. The restoration of the exchange rate of rupee to 1s 4d;
c. Reduction of land revenue by 50 percent;
d. Abolition of salt tax;

e. Reduction of military expenditure by at least 50 percent;
f. Reduction of the salaries of civil servants by half;
g. A protective tariff against foreign cloth;
h. Enactment of a coastal reservation bill in favour of Indian shipping;
i. Release of all political prisoners not condemned for murder or attempted murder;
j. Abolition or control of the Criminal Investigation Department whose principal target was the Congress; and
k. Issue of fire-arms for self-defence subject to popular control. Mahatma Gandhi believed that the conceding of these demands by the British would mean attainment of the substance of independence. But the reply from the Viceroy was quite disappointing

4. Beginning of Civil Disobedience Movement-Dandi March

Additionally, he urged people to picket stores that sold alcohol, opium dens, and foreign clothing merchants. The government's schools, colleges, and services were instructed to close. Many persons resigned their seats in the legislature, quit government service, or withdrew from government universities and schools due to the call's positive reception. The peasants themselves refused to settle their debts and pay taxes. The Dandi March was a significant historical event. Gandhi called the fight against the salt tax an open battle. Motilal Nehru likened it to Ram Chandra's famous march to Lanka. Thus, Subash Chandra Bose highlighted the importance of the Dandi March. It can be likened to Mussolini's march on Rome to seize political power and Napoleon's march on Paris upon his return from Elba. Never in human history was the wave of patriotism so intense in people's hearts as it was on this particular occasion. It will undoubtedly be remembered as a tremendous beginning of a significant movement for India's national freedom. As can be seen, orthodox Muslims refrained from participating in the civil disobedience movement. Jinnah stated that the goal of this effort is to make India's 70 million Muslims reliant on the Hindu Mahasabha, not to achieve total independence for the country. However, Muslim nationalist leaders such as Maulana Azad and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan assisted them.

i) **Government Repression:** In the initial phases, the authorities did not take the movement seriously. It viewed the Dandi March as just another prank with little chance of bringing about Swaraj. "Gandhi could go on boiling sea-water till Dominion Status was attained," the Calcutta statesman stated. However, as the movement grew stronger, the government became alarmed and imprisoned several agitators. The majority of the top leaders were taken into custody. Not even women were exempt. An estimated 1600 women were arrested in Delhi alone, according to reports. The Press Act of 1910, which required the majority of nationalist journals to cease publication, was vigorously enforced. To put an end to the movement, Gorkha forces were sent to Bengal. Even the women were not spared as the army imposed a kind of reign of terror throughout the area. However, the agitators in the North West Frontier Provinces provided the clearest example of the non-violent movement, as several Pathans, in contrast to their violent tendencies, bravely faced the military's bullets and bayonets. The members of Royal Garhwal Rifles were so moved by the patience and forbearance of these often rebellious Muslim tribes that they declined to shoot their fellow soldiers. The Garhwal Rifle soldiers paid a high price for their acts of defiance, and some of their leaders were put to death on mutiny charges. "At times, the spectacle of unresisting men being methodically bashed into a bloody pulp sickened me so much that I had to turn away," stated Mr. Webb Miller, a United Press of America correspondent who witnessed this oppressive tactic. In addition to pursuing a campaign of repression, the government also declared the Congress to be an illegal body and took over the majority of its offices.

ii) **Significance of the Movement:** For Louis Fisher, the Civil Disobedience Movement was significant for two reasons. First, "it made the British people aware that they were cruelly subjugating India". Secondly, it "gave Indians the conviction that they would, by lifting their heads and straightening their spines, lift the yoke from their shoulders. The British beat the Indians with batons and rifle butts. The Indians neither cringed nor complained nor retreated. That made England powerless and India invincible."

After the repressive policy failed, the British government was persuaded that something needed to be done to appease the Congress. Even Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India admitted at a meeting of the Calcutta Association "we would, I am satisfied, make a profound mistake if we under-estimate the genuine and powerful meaning of nationalism that is today animating much of Indian thought and for this no complete or permanent cure has ever been or ever will be found in strong action by the Government. As a result, he made friendly contacts with the Congress. He urged the Indian populace to work together. He spoke with Motilal Nehru on June 20, 1930, about the terms under which the Congress leaders may be freed to participate in the Round Table Conference. But the Congress leaders asserted in a statement issued on 15 August, 1930 that unless the British granted "national government responsible to the people" and gave the Indians the right to secede at will from the British Commonwealth, they would not take part in the Round Table Conference to be held at London. The negotiations broke down because the government refused to budge on these demands.

5. Round-Table Conferences

Gandhiji made it clear to the British government that, except for orthodox Muslims, practically all of India supported him. Gandhiji then made it clear to the government that he was willing to end his agitation as long as he was assured that the substance of India's independence would be conceded at the upcoming Round-Table Conference. Solo Combe a journalist met Gandhiji as well as other national leaders of the Congress party and so did Dr. Jayakar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru but all their efforts to persuade Gandhiji to withdraw his agitation failed. The British government chose to hold the First Round Table Conference in London on November 12, 1930, without the participation of Congress party representatives, as it became evident that the agitation would not be stopped. Obviously, such a Conference could not be a representative body of India. Prime Minister Macdonald told the Conference that the

basis of their discussion should be that the provinces were to get full autonomy and at the centre there was going to be partial responsible government. In addition, India was likely go be a federation. Additionally, it was proposed that representation be maintained on a community basis. Even though the Conference was debated until January 1931, nothing tangible came of it without Congress's participation. The governments, both in India and England were, however, quite convinced that it was impossible to solve India's constitutional problems without Congress participation. On 26th January, 1931, ban on Congress party was removed and Gandhiji and members of the Congress working committee were released. Dr. Jayakar, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and V.S.S. Sastri made every attempt to settle Gandhiji and the government. Their efforts led to the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, which stipulated that Gandhi would withdraw from the movement and participate in the Second Round Table Conference's discussions. At the same time, the government committed to freeing all political prisoners and restoring their belongings. The motion was withdrawn but this again created a controversy about this action of Gandhiji. Many in the Congress believed that Gandhiji had outright surrendered without achieving anything. He even failed to get salt law repealed. The youth of India were frustrated with him because the Pact did not provide for the release of revolutionaries like Sardar Bhagat Singh and others and they felt that Gandhi-Irwin Pact was an agreement to send these patriots to the gallows. While discussing the nature of the movement A.R. Desai has said that deliberate efforts were made to restrict its scope. Independent actions of workers and peasants like strikes and non-payments of rents were disapproved because those were likely to seriously jeopardise vested interests like zamindari. Furthermore, "The bourgeosie leadership consistent with Gandhian political ideology and its class affiliation restricted the scope of nationalist movement." But even then Gandhiji could carry Karachi Congress with him which decided to participate in the Second Round-Table Conference and send Gandhiji as the sole representative of Congress to that Conference. The Conference began on 7th September, 1931, but it proved to be a pompous debating society that was being liquidated. It continued to deliberate, but in the end, nothing tangible emerged because the British Conservative Party was unwilling to make any concessions to India. It ended on December 1, 1931, and Gandhiji returned to India with nothing.

As soon as Gandhiji landed on the soil of India he was arrested. The new Viceroy Lord Willingdon did not much care for Gandhi-Irwin Pact and during the absence of Gandhiji several Congress leaders were arrested which among others included Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru. The government also issued several ordinances to crush nationalist activities. When Gandhiji and Sardar Patel were arrested on January 14, 1932, the Pact was practically broken and Gandhiji decided to start his Civil Disobedience Movement again. As if the government was ready to face the situation, several Congress leaders, who were still out of jails were arrested. The party's offices were raided after it was deemed unlawful. The government issued several regulations to address the problem, giving it enormous powers. The people were arrested even on suspicion and there were lathi charges and shooting of the demonstrators. Again the properties were confiscated. But movement continued and in a period of 6 months more than 1.25 lakhs people courted arrest. But obviously such a movement could not last long. As the time passed and vigorous leaders who were in the forefront, went behind the bars, there was slackness in it. It was, therefore, in the first instance suspended for 12 weeks in May 1933 and thereafter finally on April 7, 1934.

However, the movement's suspension led to widespread and intense condemnation of Gandhiji. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Vallabh Bhai Patel, and Subhash Chandra Bose publicly and vehemently opposed him. They believed that Gandhiji had recognised the failure of our mass struggle and unreservedly surrendered. Gandhiji defended his action, however, by arguing that the Indian people were no longer willing to endure further hardships and sufferings on the one hand and the British government's repression and suppression on the other. He was certain that if the movement hadn't been put down, it would have naturally subsided and further damaged India's reputation.

The Macdonald Award, which forced Gandhiji to move quickly and ultimately to the Poona Pact's signing, came in between. The Third Round Table Conference, which occurred in November 1932, failed to produce results. In March 1933, the British government released a White Paper outlining India's future constitution. This served as the foundation for the 1935 Government of India Act. When the Second World War started, and the Congress party left the provinces where it had power in 1939, the Act essentially ended. It had gone into effect in 1937. She needed India's assistance because the war was against the British administration. India was willing to assist if the British government committed to grant its claim for independence after the war ended and was willing to implement significant changes while the conflict was going on. The 'Quit India campaign' was another significant campaign in 1942 after Sir Stafford Cripps, who had come to India to address the country's constitutional issues, succeeded.

6. Quit India Movement

Quit India Movement was the last important movement launched by Gandhiji on a large scale in which masses were involved for India's freedom struggle. Gandhiji himself called it as the last struggle of his life. In this movement the people of India participated in a spirit of either to do or die. Equally the British government took a view that to demand constitutional reforms and to launch any movement either violent or non-violent at a time when war was going on to the disadvantage of British government was nothing but a sort of rebillion and should be crushed in that spirit. Since in this mass movement there were cases of violence at certain places, the British government tried to establish that so-called non-violent movement was a violent one. Moreover, the Britishers also tried to establish that Indians themselves were so much divided that even if all efforts were made to solve India's political problem, no solution could be found out because of divergent views of major religious communities about constitutional reforms.

Before starting his movement Gandhiji wrote to the Governor-General about his intention to launch the movement. He instead received a rebuff from him. In his communication he requested the British government to leave the country to God and if that was not possible the country be left to anarchy. Gandhiji also said that from British withdrawal all that he meant was that British domination over India should come to end. Once it was

decided to end British domination then the basis on which British forces will stay in India can mutually be decided and there should be no difficulty in that. Thus, there was no intention on the part of India to immediately throw.

British forces out of India. On July 14, 1942, Congress Working Committee at its Wardha Session decided that Britain should immediately withdraw from India. On 8th August, 1942, at its Bombay session All India Congress Committee also endorsed this decision of the Working Committee. In that Resolution about British rule was said that, "The continuation of this rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom." The Committee resolved that India had an inalienable right of freedom and independence and that of starting non-violent struggle on the widest possible scale. The Committee also decided that such a struggle should be guided by Gandhiji. It was suggested in the resolution that there should be a provisional government in the country which should be responsible for evolving at scheme for setting up a Constituent Assembly which will give constitution to India. Gandhiji made it clear from the very beginning that any violent or underground activity will be condemned outright. As discussed elsewhere that whereas the resolve of Congress party created an upheaval in the country and whereas the masses joined the movement the government was least hesitant to use repressive measures and to crush every individual participant of the movement with a very heavy hand. The agitators were machine gunned from low flying aircrafts and according to official estimates more than one thousand persons were killed and 3000 wounded. As many as 100,000 Indians went behind the bars and property worth Rs. 90 lakhs was confiscated. There was nothing but suppression everywhere and the people were really fighting in the spirit of 'do or die'. Since all important Congress leaders had been arrested, therefore, the whole movement went underground.

7. Assessment of the Movement: The Movement Went a Long Way in

India's battle., The response from the populace made it abundantly evident to the administration that the British could not continue to dominate India for very long. It brought the fight to the countryside and all around the nation, involving the masses. One odd aspect of the entire campaign, however, was that the British administration blamed Gandhiji and the Indian National Congress for the violence that resulted from the government's repression and the incarceration of national leaders rather than acknowledging that the movement had been peaceful otherwise. A booklet titled "Congress Responsibility for Disturbances 1942-43" attempted to prove that Gandhiji's atmosphere was why violence broke out in the nation. This was intolerable for Gandhiji who wanted to institute an enquiry into the charges levied against him. Since the government was not prepared for that, he went on 21 days fast on February 10, 1944. On the whole the movement gave big jolt to British rule in India.

It was a historic fast in the sense that the British government was not prepared to release Gandhiji in spite of the fact that after 15 days of his fast his health so much deteriorated that there was no hope of his life. It is said that government made all arrangements for his cremation but on account of his will power Gandhiji could survive even after fast of 21 days. In the words of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, "The extraordinary capacity for suffering he had shown on other occasions was displayed in an amazing degree. His stamina overcame the challenge of death and after 21 days he broke his fast. But after the break of fast his health so much deteriorated that the doctors attending on him informed the government that he could collapse at any time. The government perhaps would not have cared even now but the situation on the war front had changed to the advantage of British government. In addition to this, the government was still not in a position to bear the responsibility of Gandhiji's death on its shoulders. It was also hoped that his presence might help checking violent movement in the country. Taking all these factors combined together Gandhiji was released on May 6, 1944. Due to his weak health he did not lead any movement for some time. He tried to solve India's constitutional problems and met Mr. Jinnah as well. He also actively participated during Wavell Plan discussions, Shimla Conference and during the visit of Cabinet Mission in India. He was also the guiding spirit behind Congress when Mountbatten Mission Plan was put before the country and ultimately India won her freedom in 1947.

8. Conclusion

The period of non-violence witnessed a movement of civil disobedience and non-cooperation that involved middle-class and rural people in the nation's quest for freedom. Under Gandhiji's leadership feelings of freedom spread in Indian villages spread all over the country. Gandhiji had immense faith in the capacity of Indians to fight for freedom and to suffer as well for achieving the goal, though at times he was over optimistic. He was leader of masses and directed their energies for challenging the mightiest colonial power of the world.

9. Acknowledgement

Dr. N. M. Janngubhai (PhD), is currently working as a Principal and Associate Professor of Political Science in Government First Grade College, Beedi, Khanapur Tq, Ranini Channamma University, Belagavi, 2024 to Present. He has 16 years teaching experience. He has served as a Principal as a Government First Grade College, Dandeli (2013-2024) and also served as a Assistant Professor, Government First Grade College, Yallapur (2009-2013). He holds PhD (Political Science), MA (Political Science). He has presented 40 research papers at international and national conferences/seminars in India. His more than 30 research papers have been published in national and international journals. Who wishes to thank of Collegiate Education, Government of Karnatak for their Encouragement and Support.

10. References

1. Bandopadhyay S. From Plassey to Partition: A history of modern India. New Delhi: Orient Longman; 2004.
2. Chatterjee P. A brief history of Subaltern Studies. In: Chatterjee P. Empire and nation: Essential writings (1985-2005). New Delhi: Permanent Black; 2010.
3. Islam S. The origins of Indian nationalism. In: Religious dimensions of Indian nationalism. New Delhi: Media House; 2004.
4. Jalal A, Bose S. Modern South Asia: History, culture, and political economy. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; 1997.

5. Sarkar S. Modern India (1885-1947). New Delhi: Macmillan; 1983.
6. Smith AD. Nationalism. Cambridge: Polity Press; 2001.
7. Thapar R. Interpretations of colonial history: Colonial, nationalist, postcolonial. In: DeSouza PR, editor. Contemporary India: Transitions. New Delhi: Sage Publications; 2000.
8. Mani BR. Debrahmanising history: Dominance and resistance in Indian society. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers; 2005.