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Themes in Indian History–Chapter (13-15)

Chapter 13 - Mahatma Gandhi and the Nationalist Movement

Civil Disobedience and Beyond

**Chapter 14 - Understanding Partition Politics, Memories,
Experiences**

**Chapter 15 - Framing the Constitution The Beginning of a New
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Chapter 13 - Mahatma Gandhi and the Nationalist Movement Civil Disobedience and Beyond

1. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Porbandar on 2nd October, 1869.
2. Gandhiji left for South Africa as a barrister to argue a case in 1893.
3. Gandhiji returned from South Africa in Jan, 1915.
4. Gopal Krishna Gokhale- The political Guru of Mahatma Gandhi
5. Peasant Movement in Bardoli-1928
6. BHU stands for-Benaras Hindu University
7. Khilafat Movement-1920
8. Peasant Movement in Bardoli-1928
9. Resolution of Poona Swaraj passed in Congress Session in Lahore on 26th Jan, 1930
10. Civil Disobedience Movement begins- March-April 1930
11. Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed- March 1931
12. Second Round Table Conference held in London-Dee 1930
13. Government of India Act promulgated -1935
14. Provincial Government formed by Congress in some provinces-1937
15. Second World War broke out- Sep 1939
16. Congress Provincial Governments resign- 1939
17. Quit India Movement begins- Aug 1942
18. India becomes independent- 15th Aug 1947

In 1905, Bengal, the biggest province of British India and included Bihar and some parts of Orissa, was partitioned by Viceroy Curzon. It enraged people all over India. Both the Moderates and the Radicals unitedly opposed the British action. This led to the birth of the Swadeshi Movement, which boycotted British institutions and goods.

An important development came in 1906 with the formation of the All India Muslim League at Dacca. The founder members of the League were Muslim landlords and nawabs. They supported the partition of Bengal and demanded for separate electorates for Muslims.



However, in the year 1916, the Congress and the Muslim League decided to work together for representative government in the country.

The growth of mass nationalism began to take place after 1919. Peasants, tribals, students and women became involved in the struggle against the British rule.

Mahatma Gandhi emerged as a mass leader. He, first of all, toured the entire country in order to understand the people, their needs and the overall situation.

Afterwards, he led to local movements in Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad in which he got immense success.

In 1919 Gandhiji started Satyagraha Movement against the Rowlett Act that the British had just passed. The Act curbed fundamental rights such as the freedom of expression and strengthened the police powers.

In April 1919, there were a number of demonstrations and hartals in the country against this Act. The government used hartal measures to suppress them. The Jallianwala Bagh atrocities in Amritsar on Baishakhi Day were a part of this suppression.

In the year 1920, the British did another wrong known as khilafat movement. The British imposed a harsh treaty on the Turkish Sultan also known as Khalifa. This enraged Muslims and Khalifa agitation started under the leadership of Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali. They wished to initiate a full-fledged Non-Cooperation Movement. Gandhiji supported their call and urged the congress to campaign against Jallianwala massacre, and demand swaraj.

During the years 1921-22, the Non-Cooperation Movement gained momentum because it got a wide support. However, it was abruptly called off by Mahatma Gandhi when on February 1922 a crowd of peasants set fire to a police station in Chauri Chaura. twenty two policemen were killed on that day. It hurt Mahatma Gandhi because he had never thought that people would go violent. He always wished to drive away the British by violent methods.

The Congress now resolved to fight for Purna Swaraj (complete independence under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru.



Now efforts began to be made in this direction. In 1930, Gandhiji started Dandi March against the Salt Law. He got immense support from the people.

The combined struggles of the Indian people bore fruit when the Government of India Act of 1935 prescribed provincial autonomy and the government announced elections to the provincial legislatures in 1937.

In September 1939, the Second World War broke out. The Congress leaders were ready to support the British war effort. But in return they wanted independence after the war. The British refused to concede the demand.

A new phase of movement popularly known as Quit India Movement was initiated in August 1942 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. As a result prominent leaders were jailed at once. But the movement spread.

In between these events the Muslim League began to demand independent states for Muslims in the north-western and eastern areas of the country. Mahatma Gandhi was not in favour of this.

The League began to think that Muslims were a minority and they would always have to play second fiddle in any democratic structure. The Congress's rejection of the League's desire to form a joint Congress-League government in the United Provinces in 1937 further annoyed the League.

In 1945, the British opened negotiations between the Congress, the League and themselves for the independence of India. The talks failed because the League then wanted Pakistan.

In March 1946, the British cabinet sent a three-member mission to Delhi to examine the League's demand for Pakistan and to suggest a suitable political framework for a free India.

The Mission suggested that India should remain united and constitute itself as a loose confederation with some autonomy for Muslim majority areas. Neither the Congress nor the League agreed to it. Now, partition of India became inevitable.

Finally, Pakistan came into existence. The violence of partition shook both the newly-independent countries – India and Pakistan. It marred the joy of independence.

Beginning of Gandhian Era:

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Some times in the history of nationalism an individual with his contribution is identified with the making of a nation. Mahatma Gandhi is regarded as the father of Indian nation.

- Gandhi came back to India in January 1915 after leading successful struggle against discriminatory and oppressive policy of British in South Africa. For the first time, Gandhi started Satyagraha in South Africa (non-violent protest) and promoted harmony between different religious communities.
- When Gandhi came back to India, he realised that India become politically more active. Congress had made its reach to major towns and cities and Swadeshi Movement greatly broadened National Movements appeal among middle classes.
- Gandhiji's first major public appearance in India was at opening of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in 1916. During his speech, Gandhiji charged the Indian elite with a lack of concern for the labouring poor sections of our society.
- Gandhiji said "There can be no spirit of self-government if we take away or allow other to ' take away from the peasant almost the whole result of their labour."
- Gandhiji's speech at one level was a statement of the fact that Indian nationalism was an elite phenomenon in which lawyers, doctors and landlords were mostly involved. But he wanted that Indian National Movement should represent Indian people as a whole.

Gandhi as a People's Leader:

Gandhiji made the freedom struggle and National Movement representative of masses. Movement transcended from elite to peasants, working class and encompassed every section of society. People started venerating Gandhiji referring to him as 'Mahatma'. People started appreciating the fact that Gandhiji lived like them, dressed like them, spoke their language, stand with them, empathise with them, and identified with them.

Gandhiji went among the people in simple dhoti or loincloth. He spent some part of each day working on Charkha and encouraged other nationalist to do likewise. The act of spinning helped in breaking traditional caste system and distinction between mental labour and manual labour.

Gandhiji appealed to peasants as saviour who can save them from oppressive taxes, officials and restore dignity and autonomy to their



lives. Gandhiji ascetic lifestyle and love of working with hand, a deep empathy for poor and peasant won him followers irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

A series of Praja Mandal were established to promote the nationalist creed in the princely states. Gandhiji stressed the use of mother tongue in communication, as the provincial Congress Committees were based on linguistic region. Many industrialists, entrepreneurs, businessmen started supporting Congress and Gandhiji.

Mahatma Gandhi was released from prison in 1924 and now choose to devote his attention to the promotion of home spun khadi and the abolition of untouchability. He believed that India need to be free from evils of untouchability, child marriage, to cultivate a genuine tolerance for one another and religious harmony.

He stressed the Indian's need to be self-reliant on the economic front, so he promoted Khadi and was against mill-made clothes. Background of National Movements in India:

In 1917, Gandhiji successfully led Champaran Movement. Through this movement he wanted to seek security of the peasants and their freedom to cultivate crop of their choice. In 1918, he led a strike demanding for better working conditions for the textile mill workers in Ahmedabad and other peasant movement asking the state for the remission of taxes in Kheda. During the First World War (1914-18), the British government instituted censorship of the press and permitted detention without trial. At the recommendation of Rowlatt Committee, these policies were continued. So in response to it Gandhiji called for nationwide campaign against Rowlatt Act and Bandh were observed.

In Punjab opposition was quite intense, Gandhiji was detained while going to Punjab and many other local Congress leaders were also arrested. In April 1919, repressive policy took very ugly and tremendous turn when British Brigadier Dyer ordered his troops to fire on peaceful assembly at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. In this incident more than 400 people died. This shocked the nation and very deep resentment and anger was brewing inside Indians.

It was the Rowlatt Satyagraha that made Gandhiji a true national leader. Emboldened by its success, Gandhiji called for campaign of non-cooperation with British rule. Indians were asked to renunciate all voluntary associations with British government. Gandhiji



believed if non-cooperation was carried effectively, British would leave the country within a year.

Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement:

- To further strengthen the movement and unity among fellow Indians he joined hand with Khilafat Movement. Khilafat Movement was led by Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali and it demanded restoration of the respect of the Caliphate.
- According to Gandhiji by intermixing of Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movement, the two major religious communities i.e. Hindus and Muslims could collectively bring an end to colonial rule.
- Students refused to go to schools, colleges, lawyers stopped to going courts, working class went on strike, tribes in Andhra Pradesh violated forest laws and farmers in Awadh stopped paying taxes.
- American biographer of Mahatma Gandhiji, Louis Fisher wrote "Non-Cooperation became the name of an epoch in the life of India and Gandhiji. It was negative enough to be peaceful but positive enough to be effective. It entailed denial renunciation and self-discipline. It was training for self-rule." Due to this movement British government was shaken.
- In February 1922, Gandhiji called off Non-Cooperation Movement due to untowards incident of burning of police stations in Chauri Chaura in which several constables were burnt to death.
- During the Non-Cooperation Movement, thousands of Indians were put in jail and Gandhiji was arrested in March in 1922, charged with sedition and awarded him six years of imprisonment.

The Salt Satyagraha:

- In year 1928, there was Anti-Simon Commission Movement in which Lala Lajpat Rai was brutally lathicharged and later he succumbed to it. In year 1928, another famous Bordoli Satyagraha took place. So again by the year 1928 political activism started brewing in India.
- In 1929, Congress session was held at Lahore and Nehru was elected as its President. In this session "Purna Swaraj" was proclaimed as motto, and on 26th January, 1930 Republic day was observed.

Dandi (Salt) March:



- After Republic day observance, Gandhiji announced his plan of march to break salt law. This law was widely disliked by Indians, as it gave state a monopoly in manufacture and sale of salt.
- On 12th March, 1930 Gandhiji began his march from ashram to ocean. He reached to shore and made a salt and thereby making himself criminal in sight of law. Many parallel salt marches were undertaken during this time in other parts of the country.
- Movement was supported by peasants, working class, factory workers, lawyers and even Indian officials in British government supported it and
- left their jobs. Lawyer boycotted the courts, peasants stopped paying taxes and tribal broke forest laws. There were strikes in factories or mills.
- The government responded by detaining the dissenters or Satvagrahis. 60000 Indians were arrested and various high rank leaders of Congress including Gandhiji were arrested.
- An American magazine, 'Time', was initially doubtful on the strength of Gandhiji and wrote that Salt March would not be successful. But latter it wrote that this march made the British rulers 'desperately anxious'.
- These rulers were now started considering Gandhiji as a 'Saint' and 'Statesman', who was using Christian acts as a weapon against men with Christian beliefs.

Significance of Dandi March:

- Dandi March was very significant for at least three reasons:
- It brought Mahatma Gandhi and India to attention of the world.
- It was the first National Movement in which women participation was really very notable. Kamladevi Chattopadhyay, a socialist leader persuaded Gandhi not to restrict movement to men alone. Many women including Kamladevi broke salt and liquor laws and courted arrest.
- Third and most significant was that this movement forced the British to realise that their Raj would not last forever and they need to devolve some power to Indians.
- In January, 1931 Gandhiji was released from jail and afterwards many meetings between Gandhi and Irwin took place and these meetings ended in a Gandhi-Irwin pact. Through this pact Civil Disobedience Movement would be called off, political prisoner will be released and salt



manufacturers can make salt near coast. This pact was criticised by radical nationalist, as Gandhiji was unable to obtain commitment of political Independence for Indians.

- In later part of 1931, Gandhiji went to attend Second Round Table Conference as representative of Congress and he said his party represent all of India but his claim was countered by Muslim league, Princely states and BR
- So, this conference remained inconclusive. Gandhiji returned to India dejected and resume Civil Disobedience Movement.
- In 1935, a Government of India Act came and it promised some part of representative government. Two years later, elections were held and out of 11 provinces in 8 provinces Congress government were formed. However in 1939, Congress government resigned from office as British declined their offer of cooperation in the war in lieu of granting freedom to India after the end of war.
- In 1940 and 1941 Congress organised individual Satyagraha to pressure the government. In 1940, Muslim league passed the resolution demanding autonomy for the Muslim-majority areas of the subcontinent. Now, whole struggle became complicated and took a shape of three way struggle between British, Congress and Muslim league.
- In 1942, Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent a mission under Stafford Cripps to India to try and forge a compromise with Congress and Gandhiji. However, talks broke down when Congress offered, it will help the British to defend India from Axis powers. Then the viceroy had to appoint an Indian as the Defence member of his Executive Council.

Quit India Movement:

After the failure of Cripps Mission, Gandhiji started Quit India Movement in August, 1948 from Bombay. Immediately, Gandhiji and other senior leaders were arrested, but younger activists organised strikes and acts of sabotage all over the country.

- Quit India Movement being a Mass Movement brought into its ambit hundreds of thousand of ordinary citizens and youths left their colleges and went to jail. During this time as Congress leaders were in jail, Jinnah and other Muslim league leaders worked patiently to extend its influence in Punjab and Sind where it had scarcely any presence.
- In June, 1944 Gandhiji was released from prison, later he held series of meeting with Jinnah to sort out the differences.



- In 1945, labour government came to power in England and committed itself to grant Independence to India. In India, Lord Wavell organised meetings with Congress and league. In elections of 1946, polarization was completely observed when Congress swept general category but seats reserved for Muslims. These seats were won by the Muslim League by overwhelming majority.
- In 1946, Cabinet Mission came but it failed in getting Congress and the Muslim League agreed on federal system which would have kept India united and autonomy would have been granted to provinces to a certain extent.
- After failing of talks Jinnah called for direct action day to press demand for Pakistan. On 16th August, 1946, riots broke out in Calcutta, later spread to other parts of Bengal, then to Bihar, United Provinces and Punjab. In riots both the communities suffered.

In February 1947, Viceroy Lord Mountbatten replaced Wavell. He called for one last round of talk and when talks were inconclusive he announced India would be freed and it will be divided. Finally on 15th August, 1947, power was transferred to India.

The Last Heroic Days of Mahatma Gandhi:

Gandhiji marked the day of Independence with a 24 hour fast. The freedom struggle ended with division of country and Hindus and Muslims seeking each others life.

In the months of September and October Gandhiji went around hospitals and refugee camps giving consolation to people. He appealed to Sikhs, the Hindus and Muslims to forget the past and to extend the hand of friendship, cooperation and peace.

At the backing of Gandhiji and Nehru, Congress passed resolution on the right of minorities. It further said party had never accepted partition but it has been forced on it.

Congress said India will be a democratic secular country, every citizen will be equal. Congress tried to assure the minorities in India that their rights will be protected in India.

On 26th January, 1948, Gandhiji said, earlier independence day was celebrated on this day, now freedom has come but it has been deeply disillusioning. He believed that worst is over. He allowed himself to hope that though geographically and politically India is divided into two, at heart we shall ever be friends and brothers



helping and respecting one another and be one for the outside world.

Gandhiji was shot dead by a Hindu extremist Nathuram Godse. Nathuram Godse was an editor of Hindu extremist, newspaper who had denounced Gandhiji as an appeaser of Muslims.

Gandhiji's death led to extraordinary pouring of grief, tributes were paid across the political spectrum in India and appreciation coining from International figure such as George Orwell, Einstein, etc. Time magazine compared his death to Abraham Lincoln.

Knowing Mahatma Gandhi:

- There are different sources from which history of the National Movement and the political career of Gandhiji can be reconstructed.
- Writing and speeches of Mahatma Gandhi and his contemporaries were important source for knowing the events. Though there is a difference, speech were meant for public while private letter were meant to express emotions and thinking that cannot be expressed publicly.
- Many letters written to individuals were personal but they were also meant for the public. The language of letter was shaped by the awareness that it might be published, so it often prevent people from expressing their opinion freely.
- Autobiographies give us an account of past, but one need to be careful while reading and interpreting it. They are written on the basis of memory of author.
- Government records, official letters were also important source for knowing the history. But it also have limitations as these were mostly biased so it needs to be interpreted carefully.
- Newspapers in English and other Vernacular languages tracked Gandhiji's movement, National Movement and sentiment of Indians regarding freedom movement and Gandhiji. Newspaper should not be seen as unprejudiced as they were published by people who had their own political opinions and views.

Important Terms:

- Moderate: A person who is against taking extreme action.
- Repeal: To undo law.
- Radical: A person who welcomes new ideas or opinions.



- Revolutionary Violence: The use of violence to make a radical change within society.
- Council: An appointed or elected body of people with an administrative advisory or representative function.
- Knighthood: An honour granted by British crown for exceptional personal achievement or religious public service.
- Picket: A person or a group of people protesting outside a building or shop to prevent others from entering.
- Mahanta: Religious functionaries of Sikh gurudwaras.
- Illegal eviction: Forcible and unlawful throwing out of tenants from the land they rent.
- RSS: It stands for Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.
- Purna Swaraj: Complete independence.
- Provincial Autonomy: Capacity of the provinces to make relatively independent decisions while remaining within a federation.
- General Constituencies: Election districts with no reservations for any religious or other community.
- Refugee: One who has been forced to leave his country or home due to some political, or social reasons.

Time line:

1905 – Bengal got partitioned

1915 – Mahatma Gandhi came to India from South Africa.

1919 – The Rowlatt Satyagraha started. The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre took place.

1920 – The Non-Cooperation Movement started.

1922 – Gandhiji called off the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Chapter 14 - Understanding Partition Politics, Memories, Experiences

The British policy of Divide and Rule played a key role in spreading of communal-ism.

- Earlier the British attitude towards the Muslim was not favorable, they think that they were responsible for the revolt of 1857.



- But soon they felt that due to their behavior Hindus grew stronger, so they reversed their policy.
- Now, they began to take side with the Muslims and turned against Hindus.
- Bengal was partitioned in 1905 by Lord Curzen. He said Bengal was partitioned due to administrative problems.
- The real objective of British behind the partition of Bengal was to sow the seed of disunity between the Hindus and the Muslims.
- By the act of 1909 British government gave the Muslims the right of separate electorate.
- In, 1916 Lucknow Pact was signed between Congress and the Muslim League. It was an important landmark step forward in achieving Hindu- Muslim unity. But it was really an agreement for cooperation in the political field on the basis of common programme.
- In February 1937, elections to the provincial assembly were held, in which only few had the right to vote.
- To solve the political crisis of India, Lord Attlee sent Cabinet Mission to India.
- The Muslim League, on 6th June 1946 accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan as the foundation of Pakistan was inherent in it, but Congress opposed it.
- To solve the political tangle of India Lord Mount Batten arrived India. He proposed his plan on 3 June 1947, in which he stated that country would be divided into two Dominions, i. e. India and Pakistan. It was accepted by both Congress and Muslim League.
- The joy of independence from colonial rule was tarnished by the partition and violence which was unleashed after the partition. Some of the incidents and facts about partition and its disturbing experiences can be known by interviews, books and other related documents.
- Partition caused at very large scale violence, thousands of people were killed, innumerable women were raped and abducted. There was large scale displacement of people across the border, millions were uprooted and transformed into refugees. In all, approximately 15 million had to move across the newly created borders.
- Displaced people lost their all immovable property and most of their movable property, separated from their relatives and friends as well. People were stripped of their local culture and were forced to begin life from scratch.



Speaking of these killings, arson, rape and loot that came along with partition, observers and scholars have sometimes used the expression 'holocaust', with primary meaning of destruction or slaughter on a mass scale.

Historical Background of Partition:

There are several events which gave fuel to fire for partition of India and Pakistan, whether directly or indirectly.

Politicisation of religion started with separate electorate in 1909. It was further strengthened by colonial government of India in 1919.

Community identities no longer indicated simple difference in faith and belief, they became mean to active opposition and hostility between communities.

Communal identities were further consolidated during 1920s and 1930s by music before rnasjid, by Cow Protection Movement and Shuddhi Movement of Arya Samaj. Hindus were angered by the rapid spread of tabligh (propaganda) and tanzim (organisation).

Middle class publicist and communal activist sought to build greater solidarity within their communities and mobilising people against other community. Every communal riot deepened the difference between communities.

The Provincial Elections of 1937 and its Result:

- In 1937, for the first time provincial elections were held. In this election, Congress won majority in 5 provinces and formed government in 7 provinces out of 11.
- Congress fared badly in reserved constituencies, even Muslim league performed poorly and captured only few seats of reserved categories. In United Province, Muslim league wanted to form government with Congress but Congress rejected it as they had absolute majority. This rejection led to believe by leagues member that they would not get political power as they are minority. League also believed that only Muslim party can represent Muslims and Congress is a Hindu party.
- In 1930's, league's social support was fairly small and weak, so league started working enthusiastically to expand its social support in all the Muslim dominated areas.



- Congress and its ministries failed in countering the hatred and suspicion spreaded by league. Congress failed in winning over the Muslim masses.
- Growth of RSS and Hindu Mahasabha also played an important role in widening the difference between Hindus and Muslims. The 'Pakistan' Resolution:
- On 23rd March, 1940, league passed a resolution demanding a measure of autonomy for Muslim majority areas of the sub-continent. This resolution never mentioned partition or a separate state.
- Earlier in 1930, Urdu poet Mohammad Iqbal spoke about re-organisation of Muslim majority areas in the North-Western India into autonomous unit within a large federation. He also not imagined a separate country at the time of his speech.

The sudden Demand of Partition:

- None of the leaders of Muslim league were clear about Pakistan.
- Demand for autonomous area was made in 1940 and within 7 years only partition took place.
- Even, Jinnah in the beginning may have seen the Pakistan as bargaining tool for preventing British to grant concession to Congress and to gain favours for Muslims.

Important Events during Partition: Negotiation and Discussions Started Again

- Negotiations between British, Congress and Muslim league began in 1945 but the discussions broke down due to Jinnah's unrelenting demands about members of council and communal veto.
- In 1946, again provincial elections were held. In this election, Congress swept general constituencies and league succeed in gaining large majority of Muslim vote.
- The League's success to capture seats reserved for Muslims was spectacular. It won all 30 reserved constituencies in the centre and 442 out of 509 seats in the provinces. Therefore, in 1946 league established itself as dominant party among Muslims.

Cabinet Mission Came to India:

- In March 1946, Cabinet Mission came to India to make a suitable political framework for India.



- Mission recommended India to be united with three tier confederation. It grouped provincial assemblies into 3 sections. A for Hindu majority province, while B and C were for Muslim majority areas of North-West and North-East. Cabinet Mission proposed a weak centre and provinces will have power to set up intermediate level executives and legislature of their own.
- Initially, all parties agreed but later league demanded that grouping should be made compulsory and should have right to secede from the union. While Congress wanted that provinces should be given the right to join the group. So due to differences, talks broke down.
- Now Congress sensed after this failure that partition became inevitable and took it as tragic but unavoidable. But Mahatma Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan of North-West frontier province continued to oppose the idea of partition.

Re-Election in the Year 1946:

- After withdrawal from Cabinet Mission, Muslims league decided on direct action for winning its Pakistan demand. It announced 16th August, 1946 as 'direct action day'. Initially riots broke out in Calcutta and gradually spread to other parts of Northern India.
- In March 1947, Congress accepted division of Punjab in 2 halves, one will be Muslim majority and other will be Hindu/Sikh majority. Similarly, Bengal was also divided.

The Withdrawal of Law and Order Situation:

- Large scale bloodshed took place in the year 1947. Governance structure of the country was totally collapsed, there was complete loss of authority. British officials were reluctant to take decisions and did not know how to handle the situation. British were busy preparing to quit India.
- Top leaders barring Gandhiji were engaged in negotiation regarding Independence. Indian Civil Servants in the affected areas were concerned for their own life. Problem became more complicated when soldiers and policemen forgot their professional commitment and helped their co-religionist and attacked members of other communities.

Condition of Women during the Partition:

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- During the partition women suffered the most. Women were raped, abducted, sold and forced to settle down to a new life with stranger in unknown circumstances. Some began to develop a new family bond in their changed circumstances.
- Government of both India and Pakistan showed lack of understanding of emotions and sometimes forcefully sent women away from their new relatives. They did not consult the concerned women and undermine their rights to take decisions.
- Notion of honour drew on a conception of masculinity, defined as ownership of zan [women] and zamin [land]. Virility, it was believed that lay in ability to protect your possession i.e. zan and zamin from outsiders.
- So when men feared that their women-wives, daughters, sisters would be violated by enemy, they killed their women themselves. There was an incident in village of Rawalpindi, where 90 Sikh women voluntarily jumped into well for protecting themselves from outsiders.
- These incidents were seen as 'martyrdom' and it is believed that men at that time had to courageously accept the decision of women and in some cases even persuade them to kill themselves.

Role of Mahatma Gandhi during Partition:

- Using Turmoil, Gandhiji took brave effort to restore peace, toured villages of Noakhali (East Bengal), villages in Bihar then riots torn Calcutta and Delhi to stop communal killing and reassure the safety of minority community.
- In East Bengal, he assured safety of Hindus, while in Delhi he told Hindus and Sikhs to protect Muslims and tried to build a spirit of mutual trust.
- Gandhiji began a fast to bring about a change in the heart of people. Many Hindus, Sikh migrants fasten with him. The effect of the fast was
- 'electric' as people started to realise the misdeed what they have done with other communities. But only with martyrdom of Gandhiji, finally this massacre ended.

Regional Variations in Partition:

- The partition brought carnage and thousand of lives were lost.



- In Punjab, there was a mass displacement of Hindu and Sikh population from Pakistani side to Indian side and displacement of Punjabi Muslims to Pakistan from Indian side.
- Displacement of people in Punjab was very agonising. Property were looted, women were killed, abducted and raped. There was large scale massacre.
- In Bengal, people moved across porous border, suffering was less concentrated and agonising in Bengal in comparison to Punjab. There was also not total displacement of Hindu and Muslim population in Bengal.
- Some Muslims families of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Hyderabad also migrated to Pakistan during 1950s and early 1960's.
- Jinnah's theory of two state based on religion failed when East Bengal separated it from West Pakistan and become independent country as Bangladesh in 1971.
- In Punjab and Bengal there is huge similarity in both these states. Women and girls were the prime target of persecution. Attacker treated women bodies as territory to be conquered.
- Discouraging women of community was seen as dishonouring community. Help, Humanity and Harmony:
- There is history' of help, and humanity beneath the debris of violence and pain of partition. Numerous stories are there when people took an extra effort to help the victims of partition.
- Many stories of caring, sharing, empathy are present, stories of opening of new opportunities and of triumph over trauma are also present.

For e.g. the story of Khushdeva Singh, a Sikh doctor's work, is one of the finest examples, who helped many migrants whether of Muslim, Hindu or Sikh communities with affection. He provided them shelter, food, security, etc in times of partition.

Oral Testimonies and History:

- Oral narratives, memoirs, diaries, family histories, first hand written accounts helped in understanding the suffering of people during the time of partition.
- Lives of the affected people changed drastically between 1946-50. They bore immense, psychological, emotional and social pain.



- Oral testimonies helps us to know about experience and memory in detail. It enabled historians to write rich and vivid account of suffering and anguish of people. Official record tells us about policy matters and high level decision of government and its machinery.
- Oral histories provided historian the experiences of poor and powerless. It gives information about significant help and empathy of people in easing out the life of affected person.
- The oral history of partition has succeeded in exploring experiences of those men and women who were earlier ignored and taken for granted or mentioned in passing history.

Some historians casts doubt on oral history as they say oral history lacks concreteness and chronology. Oral histories are not able to provide overall bigger picture and are usually touching the tangential issues. Reliability of oral histories can be corroborated and examined by the evidences from other sources. Oral history should not be seen as tangential if one has to know about experience of people.

Oral histories are not easily available and affected People might not like to share their sufferings to strangers. The oral historian faces the daunting task of having to shift, the actual experiences of partition from the web of constructed memories.

Important Terms:

- Unionist Party: This party stood for the interests of all landlords in Punjab. It was founded in the year 1923.
- Confederation: It refers to a union of fairly autonomous and sovereign states with a central government.
- Arya Samaj: Founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in the year 1875.
- Muslim League: Founded in the year 1906.
- Hindu Mahasabha: Founded in the year 1915.
- Federal Union: Autonomous federation given autonomous status. Its Central Government has some limited powers.
- Lucknow Pact: A pact between Congress and Muslim League signed in the year 1916.
- Pakistan: Came into existence after partition of India. Choudhary Rehmat Ali, a Punjabi- Muslim student at Cambridge, coined the name 'Pakistan' for the first time in the year 1933.



- Muslim League's Resolution at Lahore: In 1940, the Muslim League moved a resolution at Lahore demanding a measure of autonomy for the Muslim-majority areas.
- General Elections of 1946: In the year 1946, last general elections were held of pre-independence. Major political parties of India contested the election. The Indian Congress won massively in the general elections of constituencies. The Muslim also won in Muslim constituencies.
- Cabinet Mission: A three-member Cabinet Mission arrived in India in March 1946.

Time line:

1905 – Partitioned on Bengal

1906 – Muslim League was formed

1916 – Lucknow Pact was signed

22 Dec, 1939 – Deliverance day, observed by Muslim League

16 Aug, 1946 – Direct Action Day plan celebrated by Muslim League

3 June, 1947 – Declaration and acceptance

15 August, 1947 – India became free and emerged as an independent nation.

Chapter 15 - Framing the Constitution The Beginning of a New Era

- Indian constitution was prepared by the learned members of the Constituent Assembly.
- The constitution was framed between December 1946 to December, 1949.
- Each clause of the constitution was discussed by the Constituent Assembly. All in all, eleven sessions of Constituent Assembly were held and 165 sittings took place.
- Different committees and sub-committees carried out the work of revising and refining the drafts of the constitution.
- The Constituent Assembly had 299 members. The assembly adopted the constitution on 26 November 1949, but it came into effect on January 26, 1950.
- The members of the Constituent Assembly were elected on the basis of provincial election held in 1946.



- Muslim League did not participate in the meeting of Constituent Assembly. These meetings were held before the partition of India.
- The Constituent Assembly remained as a one party show as its 82% members belonged to Congress party.
- The meeting of the Constituent Assembly was influenced by the public opinion. The arguments of various sections were published in all leading newspapers and there was a public debate on all proposals.
- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar played an important role in Constituent Assembly. He acted as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the constitution.
- Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru moved the objective resolution in the Constituent Assembly.
- Objective Resolution was a historic resolution which defined the ideals of the constitution of free Indian.
- It proclaimed India as an independent sovereign Republic.
- It guaranteed justice, equality and freedom to all citizens of India. It assured that safeguards shall be provided for all the minorities, backward and tribal area.
- By 1949, most of the members of the Constituent Assembly agreed that the resolution of separate electorate is against the interest of minorities.
- A socialist leader and the leader of the peasant movement N.G. Ranga urged that the word minorities must be interpreted in economic terms.
- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar demanded the separate electorates for scheduled caste. He raised this issue during the national movement. It was opposed by Mahatma Gandhi, who said that this would segregate from the rest of the society.
- K. Santhanam favoured the right to the states because he felt that a reallocation of powers of the state as well as the centre is necessary.
- The language issue was debated in the Constituent Assembly for many months.
- Till the decade of 1930s the Congress accepted the Hindustani to be given the status of national language. Hindustani which was blend of Hindi and Urdu was a popular language among most of people of India.
- R.V. Dhulekar favoured the use of Hindi language as a language of constitution making. He argued that the Hindi must be declared as a national language not as an official



language. He criticised that those who protested that the Hindi language was being forced on the nation.

- Most of the members of the Assembly were agreed on the fact that all the adult citizens of India must be granted the right to vote.
- Our constitution is a very long and detailed document. Therefore, it needs to be amended quite regularly to keep it updated.
- Those who drafted the constitution of India felt that it has to be in accordance with people's aspiration and changes in the society. So, they made provisions to incorporate changes from time to time.
- The constitution describes the institutional arrangements in a very legal language. It lays down the procedure for choosing person to govern the country.
- Constitution declares India as a secular state. Every person is allowed to practise the religion of his/her choice.
- The Indian Constitution came into effect on 26 January 1950.
- It is the largest Constitution of the world.
- On 16 Jun, 1946 Cabinet Mission presented scheme for the formation of an Interim Government at Centre.
- On 2nd September 1946, the Indian National Congress formed Interim Government with Jawaharlal Nehru as the Vice-President.
- On 13 October 1946, Muslim League decided to join the Interim Government.
- Federal form of government was adopted in which political power is divided among Centre and States . It means Government works at two levels.
- Citizens of India have been granted Fundamental Rights. These are important for the progress and development of any individual.
- Division of power was made between the Centre and the States. There are 97 issues in the Union List, 66 issues in the State list and 47 in the Concurrent List.
- On the subjects of the Union List only Centre can make laws.
- State has the power to make laws on subjects related to the State List.
- State and the Centre both have the power to make laws on the subject related to Concurrent list. But whenever there is a clash, the centre Law will prevail.
- At present there are 30 states and 7 Union territories in the Union of India.



The constitution of India is the longest constitution in the world. It was framed between December 1946 and December 1949. It came into effect from 26th January, 1950. A Constitution is designed to keep the country together and to take it forward. A constitution is an elaborated and carefully worked out document.

The Making of the Constituent Assembly:

- Members of the constituent assembly were indirectly elected. Members were elected by provincial legislature. Constituent assembly was dominated by the Congress.
- The Muslim League boycotted the assembly as it wanted separate constitution and separate state.
- Though members were mostly from the Congress but views and opinion of its members were diverse. In constituent assembly, there was intense debate between the members regarding different ideas and proposals.
- Intense discussion within the constituent assembly was also influenced by opinion of the public. Public was also asked to send in their views and ideas.
- Linguistic minorities asked for protection of their mother tongue, religious minorities demanded for special safeguards. While dalits asked for abolition of caste suppression and reservation in education and government jobs.

The Dominant Voices in the Constituent Assembly:

Out of all 300 members of the constituent assembly, few members like Pt Nehru, Vallabh Bhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, BR Ambedkar, ICM Munshi and Alladi Krishna Swamy Aiyar had a remarkable contribution. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabh Bhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad were representatives of the National Congress.

Pt Jawaharlal Nehru moved crucial "objectives resolution" as well as proposal of National Flag. While Vallabh Bhai Patel played an important role in negotiating with princely states, merging these princely states with India. He drafted several reports and worked for reconciling the opposing point of view.

Rajendra Prasad as a President of assembly steered the discussion along the constructive lines and made sure that all members had a chance to speak.

Dr BR Ambedkar joined the cabinet on advice of Gandhiji and worked as law minister. He was the chairman of drafting committee of the constitution. KM Munshi and Alladi Krishnaswamy Aiyar



were another two lawyers who played important role in drafting of the Constitution.

There were two civil servants who gave vital assistance to these leaders, one among them was B.N. Rao, who worked as constitutional advisor to government of India and another was S.N. Mukherjee who put up complex proposal in clear legal language.

The Objective of Indian Constitution:

On 13th December, 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru introduced "Objective Resolution". It proclaimed India to be an "Independent Sovereign Republic" guaranteed its citizen, justice, equality, freedom and assured "adequate safeguards for minorities, backward and tribal areas, depressed, and backward classes".

- **Objective resolution outlined the ideals of constitution and provided frame-work for constitution making.**
- Nehru referred to American and French constitution and event associated with its making. He said that we are not just going to copy them, instead he said it is important to learn from these, so mistakes can be avoided.
- Nehru said the system of government to be established in India had to fit in with the temper of our people and should be acceptable to them.
- The objective of the Indian constitution would be to fuse the liberal ideas of democracy with socialist idea of economic justice, and re-adapt and rework on all these ideas within the Indian context.

The Aspiration of the People:

- Somnath Lahiri, a communist member said 'we Indians need to be free from British influences'. He further said Constituent Assembly was British- made and was working with British plan.
- Nehru said, in his response that it is true, British government played role in Assembly's birth and attached conditions to the function of assembly. But, he also said, we have met because of strength of the people behind us and we shall go as far as people wish to go alongwith us.
- He believed that members of assembly were elected by provincial legislature and provincial legislature is elected by Indian people. So here, we represent our country men.



- The constituent assembly was expected to express the aspirations of people. Democracy, equality and justice were ideals that people of India aspires for.

Rights of People:

- The way of defining the rights of people was quite different. Different demands were made by different groups of people. These demands, ideas, opinions were debated, discussed and conflicting ideas were reconciled and then consensus was made to take collective decision.

The Problem with Separate Electorates:

- Intense debate took place in assembly on the issue of separate electorate. B. Pocker Bahadur gave powerful presentation for continuation for separate electorate. He said electorate will help in giving minorities representation in the political system and in governance of the country. The need of Muslim could not be understood by non-Muslims-he further said.
- Many nationalist leaders saw separate electorates system as a tool to divide people on the basis of religion and they also believed that this idea was finally culminated in partition of the country. Therefore many leaders were against of it.
- Sardar Patel strongly declared that separate electorate was a poison that has entered the body of politics of our country and turned one community against other, caused blood sheds, riots and partition. So for a peace we need to remove separate electorate.
- GB Pant in a debate said, separate electorate is not only harmful for nation but also for minorities. He said that majority community had an obligation to try and understand the problem of minorities and empathise with their aspirations. Demand of separate electorate would permanently isolate the minorities and will make them vulnerable and in addition it will deprive them of any effective say within government.
- All these arguments against separate electorate was based on the unity of nation, where every individual is a citizen of a state, and each group had to be assimilated within the nation.
- The Constitution will grant citizenship and rights, and in return citizens had to offer their loyalty to the state. Communities could be recognized as cultural entities and.



politically members of all communities are equal to the member of the state.

- By 1949, most of the Muslim members of constituent assembly were agreed against separate electorates and removed it.
- Muslims needed to take an active part in the democratic process to ensure that they had a decisive voice in the political system. Objective Resolution of the Constitution:
- NG Ranga, a socialist and a leader of peasant movement welcomed the Objective Resolution and urged that the term minority be interpreted in economic terms. The real minorities are poor and downtrodden.
- NG Ranga welcomed all legal and civil rights granted by the constitution to its citizen but said these rights can only be enjoyed when suitable conditions or opportunities are provided. Therefore to make the condition of poor and downtrodden better and protect them, there is need of much more than this resolution.
- Ranga also talked about huge gap between the masses of India and their representatives in the assembly. Most of members of constituent assembly does not belongs to masses. But, they are representing them as their trustees, their companions and trying best to work for them.
- Jaipal Singh a representative, a tribal, spoke in detail about the exploitation, oppression and discrimination faced by tribal all through the history. He further said about the need to protect the tribes and to make provisions that would help them come to the level of the general population.
- Jaipal Singh said, there is a need to break physical and emotional distance to integrate them into mainstream. He stressed on reservation of seat in legislature, as it helps them to give their demands voice and people would be compelled to hear it.

Provision in the Constitution for Depressed Classes of our Country:

- Depressed classes form 20-25% population of our country, so they are not minority but they have faced marginalization continuously.
- Members of Depressed classes suffered systematic marginalization. They had no access to public places, they were suppressed through distorted social and moral orders.



Depressed classes had no access to education and had no share in the administration.

- Members of Depressed classes emphasized the problem of untouchability that could not be resolved through safeguard and protection. To completely remove this, there is a need to integrate these people into mainstream and bring attitudinal change in the society.
- The constituent assembly made a provision that abolished untouchability, Hindu temples be-thrown open to all castes and seats in legislature, jobs in government offices be reserved for lowest castes. Many recognized that social discrimination could only be solved through a change in the attitudes within society.

The Powers of the State:

- Issue of division of power of the government at the centre and at state level was intensely debated.
- Draft constitution provided three lists of subject i.e. Union List-union government can make laws on it. State List, State government can make laws on it and Concurrent List-Both Union and State government can make laws on listed items.
- More items are listed in Union list. In India-Union government is made more powerful so that it can ensure peace, security, and can coordinate on the matter of vital interest and to speak for whole country in the international sphere.

However some taxes such as land and property taxes, sales tax and tax on bottled liquor could be levied and collected by the state on their own. View of Santhanam on Powers of Centre and State:

K Santhanam said reallocation of power was necessary, not only to strengthen the state but also the centre. He said if centre is overburdened with responsibility it could not function properly. So it is important that some powers to the state should be transferred.

Again, Santhanam said states should be given appropriate fiscal provision so that they can work independently and they do not need to depend on centre for even nominal expenditure,

Santhanam and many others predicted dark future if allocation is not done properly. He further said that province might revolt against centre and centre will break, as excessive power is centralised in the constitution.



Need for Strong Government:

- The need for strong government had been further reinforced by the events of partition. Many leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, BR Ambedkar, Gopalaswami Ayyangar etc advocated for strong centre.
- Before Partition the Congress had agreed to grant considerable autonomy to the provinces. This was agreed to satisfy the Muslim League. But after partition, there was no political pressure and violence aftermath of partition gave further fillip to centralised power.

The Language of the Nation:

- In the Constituent Assembly issues over national language was intensely debated over months. Language was an emotional issue and it was related to culture and heritage of the particular region.
- By 1930s, Congress and Mahatma Gandhi accepted Hindustani as National language. Hindustani language was easy to understand and was a popular language among large section of India. Hindustani developed with the interaction of diverse culture and language.
- Hindustani language was chiefly made up of Hindi and Urdu but it also contained words of another language. But unfortunately, the language also suffered from communal politics. Gradually, Hindi and Urdu started moving apart. Hindi started using more Sanskritised words similarly Urdu became more Persianised. Even then, Mahatma Gandhi retained his faith in Hindustani. He felt that Hindustani was a composite language for all Indians.

A Plea for Making Hindi as National Language:

- RV Dhulekar, a member of constituent assembly made a strong plea to make Hindi as national language and language in which constitution should be made. The plea evoked strong opposition.
- Language committee of assembly produced a report in which it tried to resolve the issue by deciding that Hindi in devanagiri script would be an official language but transition to Hindi would be a gradual process and for initial 15 years after Independence, English to be used as official language.
- Provinces were allowed to choose one language for official work within the province. The Fear of Domination of Hindi:



- SG Durgabai, a member of constituent assembly said that there is intense opposition against Hindi in South India.
- After the eruption of controversy regarding the language, there is a fear in the opponent that Hindi is antagonistic to provincial language and it cuts the root of provincial language and cultural heritage associated with it.
- She had accepted Hindustani as language of people but the language is being changed. Words from Urdu and regional languages were removed. This move erodes the inclusive and composite character of Hindustani, and due to this, anxieties and fear developed in the mind of people of different language groups.
- Many members felt that issue of Hindi as a national language must be treated cautiously and the aggressive tenor and speech will only create fear in non-Hindi speaking people and will further complicate the issue. There should be mutual understanding between different stake holders.

Important Terms:

- Constitution: Set of rules and regulations according to which a country is governed.
- Draft: A premier version of legal document.
- Clause: A distinct section of a document.
- Constituent Assembly: An assembly of people's representative that writes a constitution for a country.
- Constituent Amendment: A change in the constitution made by the supreme legislative body in the country.

Time line:

26 July 1945 - Labour Government comes to power in India

16th May 1946 - Cabinet Mission announces its constitutional scheme.

16th June 1946 - Cabinet Mission presented the scheme for the formation of an interim government at centre.

2 Sept 1946 - Congress forms the interim govt.

13 October 1946 - Muslim League decides to join the interim government.

11 August 1947 - Jinnah was elected as the president of Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.



14 August 1947 – Pakistan Independence

15 August 1947 – India became an independent nation.



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