

1. Analyze the role of Mahatma Gandhi in shaping the Indian National Movement in the 20th century. What were the major phases of his involvement?

In 1915, Mahatma Gandhi returned to India, determined to lead his people to freedom. With the power of non-violence and truth, he united millions in peaceful resistance against British rule. His leadership transformed the Indian National Movement, evolving through key phases that grew his influence, from local struggles to nationwide campaigns, ultimately guiding India to independence.

1. Non-Cooperation Movement (1915-1922):

- **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-1922):** Gandhi's call for non-cooperation with the British government marked a new era in the Indian freedom struggle. The movement aimed to withdraw all support from British institutions, including schools, courts, and services, and encouraged the use of Swadeshi (self-reliance) by promoting the use of khadi (hand-spun cloth) and boycotting British goods. Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence was central to this campaign, emphasizing that Indians should not resort to violence to achieve independence.
- **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (1919):** The brutal massacre at Jallianwala Bagh by General Dyer, where hundreds of unarmed Indians were killed, was a turning point in Gandhi's activism. This event strengthened his resolve to fight British rule, and he launched the Non-Cooperation Movement in response, aiming to unite people across India against British policies.
- **Non-Violence and Civil Disobedience:** The movement gained massive support, with people of all classes participating in protests, strikes, and boycotts. However, Gandhi called off the movement in 1922 after the violent Chauri Chaura incident, where a mob killed policemen. This decision reflected Gandhi's commitment to non-violence and moral authority, even at the cost of immediate success.

2. Phase of Civil Disobedience movement (1922-1931):

- **Constructive Program:** After the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement, Gandhi shifted his focus to a constructive program aimed at social and economic reforms. He encouraged social unity, advocated for the upliftment of the Harijans (Untouchables), promoted Khadi, and worked towards the eradication of untouchability.
- **Salt March and Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-1931):** In 1930, Gandhi launched the Salt March (Dandi March) to protest the British monopoly on salt production and taxation, symbolizing his challenge to British rule. The march to Dandi was a powerful example of non-violent resistance, garnering widespread national and international support.
- **Civil Disobedience and Negotiations:** Gandhi's call for civil disobedience led to mass arrests and protests across the country. His leadership in the Salt Satyagraha brought the issue of India's independence to the global stage. This period also saw the Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931), where Gandhi agreed to suspend the civil disobedience movement in exchange for some concessions from the British, though the larger goal of independence was not yet achieved.

3. Phase of Quit India Movement and Post-War Struggles (1942-1947):

Quit India Movement (1942): During World War II, Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement, demanding an immediate end to British rule. With his call for "Do or Die," the movement intensified the nationalist struggle, but it was met with mass arrests and repression. While it did not achieve immediate results, it was a pivotal moment in the fight for independence.

Negotiations for Independence: After World War II, increasing pressure from the nationalist movement and the economic toll of the war forced Britain to engage in negotiations. Following the failure of the Cripps Mission (1942) and the Quit India Movement, the Mountbatten Plan (1947) led to India's partition and the creation of Pakistan, marking the end of British rule.

As Jawaharlal Nehru said, “Gandhi ji was the greatest leader of our times. He was the soul of the Indian National Movement. His leadership and philosophy of non-violence gave the movement its unique character. It was not just a struggle for freedom, but a movement for moral and spiritual regeneration of India.” These words encapsulate Gandhi’s profound role in guiding India through its struggle for independence, rooted in the principles of peace and justice.

2. Discuss the causes and consequences of the Partition of Bengal in 1905. Analyze its socio-political impact and its connection to the Partition of India in 1947?

In 1905, when the British announced the Partition of Bengal, it sent shockwaves throughout India. The decision was met with widespread resistance, but it was the suddenness and the perceived divisive motive behind it that fueled the fire of protest. The British claimed the partition was for administrative convenience, but many saw it as a calculated effort to weaken the growing Indian nationalist movement by sowing seeds of division. It was a move that set in motion events leading to the creation of Pakistan and ultimately the Partition of India in 1947, a tragedy that separated millions.

1. Causes of the Partition of Bengal (1905):

- **Administrative Reasons:** The British justified the partition on the grounds of administrative efficiency. Bengal, with its vast population and economic importance, was considered difficult to govern. Thus, the British decided to split it into Eastern Bengal and Assam (predominantly Muslim) and Western Bengal (predominantly Hindu).
- **Divide and Rule Strategy:** However, the true motive behind the partition was far more insidious. The British sought to divide the unity of the growing nationalist movement by creating a religious divide between Hindus and Muslims. Bengal had been a hotbed of nationalist activity, and the British feared the rise of a united political force. By creating a Muslim-majority province, they hoped to weaken the Hindu-dominated Congress and gain support from Muslims.
- **Strengthening Muslim Identity:** The creation of Eastern Bengal with a Muslim majority was also an attempt to foster a separate Muslim identity. This was crucial in the early stages of the All-India Muslim League (founded in 1906), which was seen as a political force that could counterbalance Hindu interests in the Indian freedom struggle.

2. Consequences of the Partition of Bengal (1905):

- **Intensified Nationalist Resistance:** The partition of Bengal sparked a massive nationalist backlash, particularly from the Indian National Congress (INC) and leaders like Surendranath Banerjee, who led the movement against the partition. The Swadeshi Movement (1905-1908) was launched, calling for the boycott of British goods, and advocating for the use of Swadeshi (indigenous) products. This movement became a critical moment in India’s fight for independence.
- **Strengthening of Bengali Unity:** The partition, though intended to divide, had the opposite effect. It united Hindus and Muslims in Bengal against British rule. People from both communities joined together in protest, realizing that their unity was essential to resisting British control. The Swadeshi Movement spread across Bengal and eventually to the rest of India, marking the rise of a more radical form of Indian nationalism.
- **Reversal of the Partition (1911):** In response to the widespread opposition, the British reversed the partition in 1911, but the damage was already done. The divide between Hindus and Muslims had been deepened, and the communal tensions sowed by the partition persisted.

3. Socio-Political Impact:

- **Rise of Communal Politics:** The partition of Bengal marked the beginning of communal politics in India. By dividing the province along religious lines, the British not only created a political divide but also fueled religious identity politics. This division became more entrenched in the years that followed, especially after the establishment of the Muslim League in 1906, which sought to represent Muslim interests in India.
- **Impact on the Indian National Congress:** The partition also had a significant impact on the Indian National Congress. The INC, initially a Hindu-dominated political party, began to shift towards more inclusive politics. However, the rise of communal politics led to divisions within the Congress, with some members like Lala Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak calling for a more radical approach to achieve independence, while others favored more moderate means.

4. Connection to the Partition of India (1947):

- **Roots of the Two-Nation Theory:** The division of Bengal in 1905 laid the foundation for the two-nation theory, which argued that Hindus and Muslims were two distinct nations, with separate political and cultural identities. This idea gained momentum over time, especially after the Jinnah-led Muslim League began pushing for the creation of Pakistan in the 1940s. The partition of Bengal was the first instance of communal division along religious lines, which ultimately contributed to the partition of India in 1947.
- **Communal Tensions and the Demand for Pakistan:** The partition of Bengal deepened the religious divide between Hindus and Muslims, leading to a rise in communal violence. This rift contributed to the eventual demand for a separate Muslim state, Pakistan, which was formalized in 1947, leading to the tragic division of India.
- **The Legacy of Divide and Rule:** The British strategy of divide and rule, which began with the partition of Bengal, continued throughout British rule in India. By encouraging religious divisions, the British ensured that India's independence would come at the cost of a divided nation. The legacy of the 1905 partition can be seen in the painful and violent division of India in 1947.

As Mahatma Gandhi poignantly remarked in 1947, "The partition of India is not just a political event, but a tragic story of human suffering and lost lives." The legacy of the 1905 partition is not only a lesson in British imperial tactics but also a painful reminder of the destructive power of communal politics. The emotional scars left by this division continue to echo through the generations, making the partition of India one of the most tragic episodes in world history, witnessed by those who lived through it and remembered by those who inherited its consequences.