



Gandhian Mass Movements; Subas Chandra Bose and INA; Role of Middle Class in National Movement; Women Participation in National Movement

I. Gandhian Mass Movements

With the arrival of **Mahatma Gandhi** on the national political stage, the Indian national movement underwent a decisive transformation. Gandhi infused **mass character, moral legitimacy**, and **non-violent resistance** into the freedom struggle.

1. NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT (1920-22)

- Launched in response to the **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre** and **Khilafat Movement**.
- Advocated **boycott of British goods, schools, courts, and titles**.
- Spread across rural and urban India; participation by peasants, students, and workers.
- Withdrawn after the **Chauri Chaura incident** due to Gandhiji's insistence on non-violence.

2. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT (1930-34)

- Triggered by the **Salt Satyagraha (Dandi March)**.
- Involved **defiance of unjust laws**: salt production, foreign cloth, tax refusal.
- Massive participation from **peasants, women, students**, and some sections of the business class.
- Repressed heavily, but weakened the moral legitimacy of colonial rule.

3. QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT (1942)

- Launched in the backdrop of **World War II** and **Cripps Mission failure**.
- Gandhi's slogan: **"Do or Die"**.
- The movement was **leaderless initially due to preemptive arrests**, yet spread across the country.



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- Marked by **strikes, sabotage, underground activities**—demonstrating the growing radicalization of masses.

GANDHIAN STRATEGY AND LEGACY

- Promoted **Ahimsa (non-violence)** and **Satyagraha (truth-force)**.
- Unified Indians across caste, class, and gender.
- Laid the foundation for **mass democracy** and **politics of participation** in India.

II. Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army (INA)

Subhas Chandra Bose represented the **radical wing** of Indian nationalism that sought **complete independence by armed struggle**.

EARLY POLITICAL JOURNEY

- A charismatic leader, twice elected President of the Indian National Congress (1938 and 1939).
- Resigned after ideological differences with Gandhi and Nehru.

FORMATION OF INA

- Escaped house arrest in 1941, travelled to Germany and later to Southeast Asia.
- Reorganised **Indian National Army (INA)** with Japanese help in 1943.
- Formed **Provisional Government of Free India (Azad Hind)** in Singapore.



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- Gave the famous slogan: **“Give me blood, and I will give you freedom.”**

MILITARY CAMPAIGNS AND DECLINE

- INA advanced into **Northeast India (Imphal and Kohima)** but was repelled.
- INA trials (1945–46) in the Red Fort created **massive sympathy and nationalism** across India.
- Although militarily unsuccessful, Bose’s efforts inspired **militancy in nationalist psyche** and unrest in British Indian forces (e.g., **Royal Indian Navy Mutiny**, 1946).

III. Role of Middle Class in National Movement

The **urban educated middle class** played a **pivotal role** in shaping and sustaining the Indian national movement.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS:

- Leaders like **Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale, Tilak, Gandhi, Nehru, Bose** emerged from this class.
- They provided the **ideological foundation**, organized institutions, and led movements.
- Used press, associations, and public forums to **create political awareness**.
- Mobilized students, professionals, lawyers, and civil servants for nationalist causes.

LIMITATIONS:

- Initially limited to **petitioning and legal methods**.
- Had a tendency to alienate the **masses**, which was gradually corrected through Gandhian



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strategies.

POST-1920 TRANSFORMATION:

- Middle-class leadership helped **bridge the gap between elite and masses**.
 - Played a crucial role in forming **trade unions, youth leagues, and women's organizations**.
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IV. Women's Participation in the National Movement

The Indian national movement marked an **unprecedented awakening among Indian women**, bringing them from the margins into the mainstream of public life.

EARLY PARTICIPATION:

- Leaders like **Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant, Begum Rokeya, and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay** spearheaded early involvement in social reform and political platforms.
- Women joined **Boycott Movements, Swadeshi campaigns**, and later Gandhian movements.

GANDHIAN PHASE AND MASS MOBILISATION:

- Gandhi deliberately involved women in his satyagrahas, presenting it as **moral and non-violent**, suitable for female participation.
- Thousands of women participated in:
 - **Salt March**
 - **Picketing liquor and foreign cloth shops**



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▪ Underground activities during Quit India Movement

NOTABLE WOMEN FREEDOM FIGHTERS:

- **Aruna Asaf Ali**: led underground resistance during 1942.
- **Usha Mehta**: set up a secret radio during Quit India.
- **Matangini Hazra, Kanaklata Barua, and Captain Lakshmi Sehgal**: showed courage in confrontations with British forces.
- Women also joined revolutionary movements and the INA.

SIGNIFICANCE:

- Women's participation **challenged patriarchal norms**.
- Helped shape **post-independence discourse on gender and citizenship**.
- Laid the groundwork for **women's political activism and social reforms** in modern India.

Conclusion

The **Gandhian mass movements, Subhas Bose's armed struggle, the middle class's intellectual leadership, and the active role of women** formed the backbone of India's multifaceted freedom struggle. Each group brought a distinct **strategy, energy, and moral force** to the national movement, ensuring that the fight for independence was **not just political**, but a **social and cultural awakening** across the subcontinent. Together, they forged a **broad-based, participatory, and inclusive** movement that eventually led to the end of British colonial rule in 1947.