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## The Indian Freedom Struggle: A Journey Towards Independence

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### **Indian Freedom Struggle Overview**

**or**

### **History of British rule in India and freedom struggle Notes**

Indian freedom struggle was a long and arduous journey that spanned several decades. It was a movement against British colonial rule that culminated in the independence of India in 1947. The freedom struggle was marked by several phases. Each of which had its own set of challenges, strategies and leaders. This article will provide an overview of India's freedom struggle, its major events and key personalities who shaped this historic movement.



## Background

India was a colony of the British Empire for more than 200 years. The British East India Company established its presence in India in the early 17th century and gradually extended its control over the country. By the mid-19th century, the British had established direct colonial rule over India, which continued until 1947.

The Indian independence struggle began in the late 19th century with the establishment of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885. The INC was formed with the aim of promoting Indian interests and demanding self-government. However, in its early years, the INC was largely dominated by moderate leaders who believed in gradual constitutional reforms and were not necessarily committed to complete independence.



### Phase I (1885–1905)

The first phase of the War of Independence was marked by moderate demands for political reforms and representation in the British colonial government. Early Congress leaders such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Ferozeshah Mehta and Gopal Krishna Gokhale focused on issues such as civil rights, education and economic development. They believed that by engaging with the British government and presenting their demands in a fair and dignified manner, they could achieve meaningful reform.

However, this phase was also marked by the emergence of more radical voices within Congress that advocated for more militant action. Leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai called for Swaraj or self-rule, and sought to mobilize the masses through mass movements and civil disobedience.

## **Phase II (1905–1919)**

The second phase of the freedom struggle was marked by more intense opposition to British rule. The British government's decision to partition Bengal in 1905 (which was seen as a ploy to divide Hindus and Muslims) led to widespread protests and boycotts. This phase saw the emergence of new leaders such as Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and Sarojini Naidu, who advocated more radical action against the British.

The movement gained momentum with the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi, who returned to India from South Africa in 1915. Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent resistance or Satyagraha became the guiding principle of the freedom struggle. Gandhi's campaigns such as the Champaran and Kheda movements aimed at improving the lives of farmers and peasants and used non-violent methods of protest.

## **Phase III (1919–1939)**

The third phase of the freedom struggle was marked by a more concerted effort to achieve independence. The British government's response to the protest and movement was harsh and many of the leaders were jailed or exiled. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919, where British soldiers opened fire on peaceful protesters in Amritsar, spurred public opinion against the British.

During this phase, the Congress adopted the demand for complete independence and Gandhi initiated several mass movements such as the Non-Cooperation Movement and the Civil Disobedience Movement, aimed at weakening British authority. These movements saw massive participation, with people from all walks of life joining the struggle.

## **Phase IV (1939–1947)**

The fourth and final phase of the freedom struggle was marked by World War II and the Quit India Movement. British government's decision to involve India in the war Without consulting Indian leaders and due to deteriorating economic conditions in the country, there was widespread discontent and protests.

In 1942, Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement, which called for immediate independence and the withdrawal of British troops from India. The movement was violently suppressed by the British government and many leaders including Gandhi were imprisoned.

However, the movement played an important role in bringing the issue of Indian independence to the forefront of international attention. The British government, facing increasing pressure from

the Indian public and the international community, finally announced in 1947 that it would grant independence to India.

On August 15, 1947, India finally achieved its long-awaited independence, but the freedom struggle had to pay a heavy price. The struggle was marked by violence, repression and sacrifices, with many leaders and common people losing their lives or being imprisoned for participating in the movement.

## Major Personalities of freedom struggle

The Indian independence struggle was shaped by many prominent personalities who played an important role in the movement. Some of the most prominent leaders include:

**Mahatma Gandhi** – The leader of the Indian freedom movement, is known for his philosophy of non-violent resistance.

**Jawaharlal Nehru** – India's first Prime Minister and a prominent leader of the movement.

**Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** – A prominent person in India's struggle for freedom and the first Deputy Prime Minister of India.

**Subhash Chandra Bose** – A prominent leader of the Indian National Army, who fought for the independence of India along with Japanese during World War II.

**Bhagat Singh** – A revolutionary socialist who advocated violent action against the British and executed at an early age for his involvement in the struggle.

An important aspect of the Indian freedom struggle was the role of women in the movement. From participating in women and demonstrations to serving as leaders and organizers, women played an important role in the struggle. Some notable female leaders in the movement included Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant and Aruna Asaf Ali.

Another important aspect of the movement was the role of non-violent resistance, which was made by Mahatma Gandhi. The use of non-violent resistance as a means of achieving political changes became the identity of Indian freedom struggle and inspired similar movements worldwide, including the movement of civil rights in the United States.

Indian freedom struggle also affected the cultural identity of the country. This movement helped bring a sense of pride in Indian culture and traditions and paved the way for the revival of Indian art, literature and music.

There were economic implications in struggle for freedom. The British colonial government exploited India's natural resources and imposed trade restrictions, which had a negative impact

on the country's economy. Therefore, the movement for freedom was also a struggle for economic liberation and the creation of a more equitable society.

Overall, the Indian freedom struggle was a complex and versatile movement that included a wide range of people, strategies and ideologies. This was a decisive moment in the history of India, and one that inspires people around the world to fight for freedom, justice and equality.

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## Freedom Movements

The Indian freedom struggle was not the same movement, but a series of movements and campaigns over several decades. There are some additional movements here which have played an important role in India's struggle for freedom:

### I. The Indian Rebellion of 1857

The Indian Rebellion of 1857, also known as the Indian Rebellion or the First War of Indian Independence, was a major rebellion against British colonial rule in India. The rebellion began on May 10, 1857 in the city of Meerut and rapidly spread to the northern and central parts of the country.

The causes of the rebellion were many and complex. A major factor was the introduction of new rifles into the Indian Army, which required sepoy, or Indian soldiers, to grease the ends of cartridges with animal fat, which was seen as an affront to both Hindu and Muslim religious beliefs. . Other factors included the enforcement of British laws and regulations that were seen as repressive. Exploitation of Indian resources and labor for the benefit of British merchants and industrialists and loss of prestige and status among the Indian rulers and elite.

The rebellion was marked by a series of fierce battles and skirmishes, as well as acts of violence and brutality committed by both sides. The rebels were able to capture several major cities and towns including Delhi, Lucknow and Kanpur and set up their own governments and administrations. However, the rebellion was eventually suppressed by British forces, who regained control of the country during the following year.

The legacy of the Revolt of 1857 was complex and multi-faceted. On the one hand, the rebellion inspired a sense of national unity and pride among many Indians, who saw themselves as part of a wider struggle against colonialism and oppression. On the other hand, the rebellion also

exposed deep divisions and tensions within Indian society, particularly between Hindus and Muslims, which would continue to shape the course of Indian history for years to come.

Overall, the Revolt of 1857 played a significant role in the wider struggle for Indian independence and helped inspire subsequent movements and campaigns for independence and self-rule.

## **II. Non-Copy Movement (1920–1922)**

The movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi in response to the Rowlatt Act, which allowed imprisonment of political dissidents without trial. This movement called Indians to boycott British goods and institutions and led a wave of protests and protests across the country.

## **III. Salt satyagraha (1930)**

This movement was started by Mahatma Gandhi in protest against British monopoly on salt production, which made it illegal for Indians to produce or sell their own salt. Gandhi led a march to the coast to collect salt from the sea, which inspired the same acts of civil disobedience across the country.

## **IV. Movement of India (1942)**

This movement was launched by the Indian National Congress in response to Britain's refusal to give India's independence during World War II. The movement called for an immediate return of British soldiers from India and the establishment of a sovereign government of the Government of India. This movement was met with a violent reaction by the British and several leaders including Gandhi were imprisoned.

## **V. Indian National Army (1942–1945)**

The Indian National Army was an armed force that fought against the British during World War II with Japanese support. It was led by Subhash Chandra Bose, the first leader of the Indian National Congress. It played an important role in the struggle for freedom and inspired many young Indians to join the fight for freedom.

## **VI. Farmer movements**

During the colonial period, Indian farmers faced several challenges, including oppressive landlords, high taxes and poor working conditions. The farmers' movements emerged in different parts of the country to demand better rights and conditions for farmers and agricultural workers. Some of the most notable peasant movements included the Tebhaga movement in Bengal, the Kisan Sabha movement in Uttar Pradesh and Bardoli Satyagraha in Gujarat. These movements helped to increase rural communities and played an important role in the broad struggle for freedom.

## **VII. Home Rule Movement (1916)**

Annie Besant and Tilak started the Home Rule Movement to demand self-rule for India within the British Empire. The movement demanded an Indian Parliament to establish an Indian Parliament with the power to enact laws and to conduct matters of the country. Although this movement was not successful in achieving its immediate goals, it helped raise awareness about the need for Indian self-governance.

## **VIII. Khilafat movement (1919–1924)**

The Khilafat movement was launched by Indian Muslims in support of Ottoman Khalifa, which was threatened by the Allies after World War I. The movement called the Khalifa and Muslim holy sites to conserve. , The Khilafat movement was important in the sense that it brought Hindus and Muslims together in a common cause and helped raise awareness about widespread conflict for Indian independence.

## **IX. Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)**

There was a peasant movement in the state of Gujarat under the leadership of Bardoli Satyagraha Vallabhbhai Patel. The movement was started to protest against the huge increase in land taxes levied by the British colonial government. The movement was successful in achieving a decrease in taxes and helped Patel establish as a prominent leader in the Indian independence movement.

## **X. Indian Freedom League (1942–1945)**

The Indian Independence League was a political organization formed by Subhash Chandra Bose in 1942. The League demanded to promote Indian independence through military means and cooperate with Japanese during World War II. Although the League did not succeed in achieving its goals, it played an important role in raising awareness about the struggle for Indian independence and motivating young Indians to fight for their rights.

## **XI. Telangana Rebellion (1946–1951)**

The Telangana rebellion was an armed rebellion under the leadership of farmers and laborers in the present Telangana region of present -day Telangana region. A rebellion was started to demand better rights and working conditions for farmers and agricultural laborers. The rebellion got a violent action by the British colonial government and resulted in thousands of people. The rebellion helped inspire similar movements across the country and contributed to the broad struggle for Indian independence

## **conclusion**

The Indian freedom struggle was a historical movement that changed the country and inspired similar movements around the world. The movement was marked by the emergence of new leaders, adopting new strategies and gathering the public. The struggle for freedom came to a

huge cost, with many lives lost and sacrificed, but it was eventually born of a new nation that has ever emerged as a major global power.

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