CHAPTER- 2

ROWLATT SATYAGRAHA AND JALLIANWALA BAGH TRAGEDY

The preceding chapter gave an idea of Gandhi’s working, organizational skills and the basic approach to comprehend his subsequent endeavors with a broader perspective. It is imperative to examine his calculated steps through the Rowlatt Satyagraha and the Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy so to better understand its connectivity with the Punjab. By identifying his preliminary steps to execute the satyagraha technique at a wider level I attempt to connect his line of action during the Rowlatt Satyagraha with the locality where its repercussions were intense. So the basic query through the chapter is how he conveyed the idea of non-violent satyagraha technique to the different localities in general and Punjab in particular? How leaders and the masses of Punjab responded to his idea? How Gandhi acted in the case of Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy?

A brief overview of Punjab before the Rowlatt Agitation

The interplay of internal tensions and external pressures began to create the India of the twentieth century…Where earlier conquerors had tended to be the objects of change, the British became the agents of change.’ Brown acutely analyzes the state of affairs governing at the time of Gandhi’s arrival in India. ‘It is clear that by the end of the nineteenth century the influence of the West was modifying Indian public life most profoundly. One of its most important effects was the creation of western educated groups which varied in strength and size from area to area. Just as its educational impact was uneven, differing in different parts of the subcontinent, so its economic, political and administrative penetration


Judith M Brown, Gandhi’s rise to Power, Indian Politics 1915-1922, Cambridge, 1972, p. 16.
varied in depth in different regions.... In the case of western education it provided new paths to influence and success in public life for those who took the opportunities it proffered: to those who lagged behind it held out new threats of failure and declining influence and prestige. As public life changed at a rate greater than ever before under the impact of the West, groups in society began to reassess their positions, to realign themselves, and to make provisions for their future. Concern about changes in the locus and balance in society was manifested in various ways and by various mechanisms, some of them recognizably political, some not so, with a host of gradations in between. All these were part of the fabric of public life to which Gandhi returned in 1915.  

Religious groups which failed to produce enough western educated men adequately to represent their interest in the new India, or which for one reason or another felt that their interests were being threatened locally, reacted in a whole gamut of ways ranging from the most sophisticated to the virtually incoherent. The Punjab was one area where this happened most obviously. For reasons which yet have to be studied in great depth, the impact of western rule and education on the Punjabis was such that from the end of the nineteenth century they tended to align according to community, Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims all fearing each other and calculating that they were losing out in the new era. At its most primitive this fear and communal alignment showed itself in periodic outbursts of communal rioting on the question of cow-killing. At a less rustic level the same motivation led to the foundation of communal associations which advocated religious purity, social improvement and educational reform. Sikhs joined Singh Sabhas, Muslims joined anjumans, or

99 Brown, p. 33.
religious associations, while Hindus flocked to the Arya Samaj. All had the same end in view— to define the identity of their community and to safeguard its local position in a changing situation.90

The lack of Western education gradually transformed the outlook of the different communities of the Punjab. They were becoming constricted in the matters of religion and inactive at the political front. Brown observes the political inactiveness of the Punjabis through the following piece of information. ‘The Hindustan noted in 1916: For the past ten years the Punjab has been locked in deep slumber. From the political point of view this province is so inactive that while the public men of all other provinces have expressed their opinions regarding the operation of the Press Act, the public of this province has shown no activity, except in publishing a few articles on the subject. Then again, when other provinces are preparing for the coming session of the Indian National Congress nothing is being done in the Punjab, where the Provincial Congress Committee wakes up only once a year, when nearly a dozen residents of Lahore meet and reluctantly perform the duty of electing the two or three delegates to the Congress.91 We noticed a similar kind of political inactiveness after the Rowlatt Satyagraha too. The Tribune provides us a piece of information in which the Congress leaders through their discussion shared the incompetence of the established leaders of the Punjab.

Here in the Punjab there is so far, and unless special efforts are made in this behalf, no question of a nationalist majority at all, whether moderate or advanced. The large majority of the seats will, it is seriously apprehended, go to people whose views have at present no nationalist complexion, who have never attended a meeting of the

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90 N. G. Barrier cited by Brown, p. 35.
91 Brown, pp. 19-20.
Congress or the Provincial Conference as delegates, and most of whom have never taken any part, whether active or passive, in any movement connected with the political advancement of the Province or the country.92

**Gandhi and the Rowlatt Satyagraha**

After having an idea of the constricted attitude and the political inertness of the established leaders of the Punjab it is essential to identify their response to the important political developments which were governing in India. In the beginning of 1919, the introduction of the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Bill and the Criminal Law Emergency Powers Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council roused the sentiments of the Indian representatives of the Council.

*Gazette* Bill No. 1: The object of this Bill is to amend the Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code so as to put effective curbs on activities dangerous to the state.93

*Gazette* Bill No.2: The object of the Bill is to make provision that the ordinary criminal law should be supplemented and emergency powers should be exercisable by the Government for the purpose of dealing with dangerous situations.94

Preliminary debates against the Bills stirred the political parties and leaders of India. Legislative Council members asserted for launching massive agitation. A reformer who was seeking a prospect to explain the working of his new technique to the Indians proposed an idea to confront the political stir through his satyagraha technique. ‘Under the circumstances I at any rate hope that all the Indian members will leave the Select Committee or, if necessary, even the Council, and launch a countrywide agitation. You and other members have said that if the

92 *The Tribune*, The Special Congress, 8-7-1920.

93 CWMG, Vol. 15, Summary of the Rowlatt Bills, Gujarati, 9-3-19191, pp. 115-16.

94 CWMG 15:110-11.
Rowlatt Bills are passed a massive agitation would be launched the like of which has not been seen in India. Mr. Lowndes said that the Government were not afraid of the agitation that is going on. He is right. Even if you held a hundred thousand meetings all over India what difference would it make?95 However in spite of much resentment of the council leaders the proceedings of the Bills carried forward and finally approved. Nanda observes Gandhi’s reaction after the passing of the Bill in such a manner.

All the elected Indian leaders voted against the bill; nevertheless it became law. The passage of the first Rowlatt Bill was an eye-opener to Gandhi. He had heard the debate in the Imperial Legislative Council and seen how the eloquent logic of Indian councilors had been wasted on the official benches. ‘You can wake a man,’ he wrote later, ‘only if he is really asleep; no effort that you make will produce any effect upon him if he is merely pretending sleep.’ The conviction grew upon him that the ‘Great Civil Service Corporation’ and the British commercial community had made the Government of India impervious to popular feeling. A government which really cared for public opinion would not have enacted a measure which had been opposed by every shade of Indian opinion. And a government which was hoping to introduce a substantial measure of constitutional reforms could hardly have provided a worse prelude to an installment of self-government.96

Gandhi shared his idea of satyagraha to Shankarlal Banker, Madan Mohan Malaviya, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and C. Vijayaraghavacharia but was not encouraged by any of these individuals. However, Gandhi with a

95 Letter to Madan Mohan Malaviya, 8-2-1919, CWMG 15:86.
meager support took a lead and moved ahead by sharing his idea directly to the countrymen. He with Vallabhai J. Patel, Chandulal Manilal, Kesariprasad Manilal, Anasuya Bai Sarabhai took a satyagraha pledge on 24th February in Ahmedabad.\footnote{CWMG, Vol. 15, The Satyagraha Pledge, \textit{New India}, 3-3-1919, pp. 101-02.} He appealed his compatriots to perform their duty against the laws which could seize their basic rights. He clarified that the Indian South Africans case and Ali Brother’s case also needs similar kind of support from the country. After taking satyagraha pledge he started his campaigning to different places so to directly appeal the masses. ‘After embarking upon the movement I began addressing meetings with Delhi. I passed then through Lucknow, Allahabad and Bombay to Madras. My experience of all these meetings shows that advent of satyagraha has already altered the spirit of those who attend the satyagraha meetings.’\footnote{Message to Madras meeting, 30-3-1919, CWMG 15:166.} He expressed himself through the Associated Press of India\footnote{Letter to The Press on Satyagraha Movement, \textit{The Hindu}, 24-3-1919, CWMG 15:145.} and utilized the links with the editors of the newspapers which we noticed through his correspondences with B. G. Horniman (\textit{The Bombay Chronicle}) and Kasturi Ranga Iyngar (\textit{The Hindu}). Many leaders were occupied in resenting his idea of satyagraha and at the same time some moderate leaders like Sir D. E. Wacha, Sir Surendranath Banerjee, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri issued a manifesto against his new approach. In spite of much criticism he formally announced the day of initiation and defined the limits of his satyagraha movement on 23rd March, 1919. He clarified his step to be purely pious.

Satyagraha, as I have endeavored to explain at several meetings, is essentially a religious movement. It is a process of purification and penance. It seeks to secure reforms or redress of grievances by self-suffering. I therefore venture to suggest that the second Sunday after the publication of the Viceregal assent to Bill No.2 of 1919 (i.e., 6th April) may be observed as a day of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textit{CWMG, Vol. 15, The Satyagraha Pledge, New India, 3-3-1919, pp. 101-02.}
\item \textit{Message to Madras meeting, 30-3-1919, CWMG 15:166.}
\item \textit{Letter to The Press on Satyagraha Movement, The Hindu, 24-3-1919, CWMG 15:145.}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
humiliation and prayer. As there must be an effective public demonstration in keeping with the character of the observance, I beg to advice as follows.100

He even asked the political leaders who were apprehending his approach to join him in his endeavors as reformers and not with any of the political intentions. ‘Will you please tell Mrs Besant, this movement is not a party movement, and those who belong to particular parties after joining the movement cease to be party men? She will find, as the movement progresses, that satyagrahis will endeavor to purge themselves of acrimony and other such delinquencies.’101 His preliminary move started influencing men of high stature like Swami Shraddhanand who volunteered his support on the Northern front. The idea influenced the Muslim leaders for expressing their resentment against the prolonged internment of their esteemed leaders Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali for an independent agitation. Gandhi was anxious for their release but at the same time did not agreed with the Muslim leaders demand and thus made himself clear which is explainable through the following passage.

As you are aware, I was in Lucknow and after the conversation there, as also with the friends in Delhi, I have come to the conclusion that you should not fog people and confuse the issue by resorting to separate satyagraha for the release of Brothers. The present movement impliedly includes this question also and I propose refer to it at a later stage of a struggle. I am still not without hope that they may be released. Do not think that their proposals to withdraw from India for the time being or actual withdrawal would be helpful. When the time comes, if it ever does, my strong advice would be that they should disregard the internment orders and invite

100 CWMG 15:146.
imprisonment. But that they will do with me. If their step is decided, I would go over to Chhindwara myself, so that they would break the law together with me. But now that the movement about the Rowlatt legislation is going on, we should be doubly patient about our friends. Do not think that the correspondence between Government and myself can be published. It is in the nature of a personal correspondence.¹⁰²

While his campaign he was informed of the incident of 30th March which occurred while observing Satyagraha Day. He publicized the sacrifices as exemplary after analyzing the intensity of the satyagrahis endurance in preserving the purity of his sacred movement. However, Rowlatt Bills were passed on the 6th April, 1919. Gandhi with the other satyagrahis responded with an initiation ceremony followed by mourn at Back Bay foreshore, Bombay. To express the day of national disgrace Sarojini Naidu, Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Horniman and others joined the satygrahis.¹⁰³ He started a weekly unregistered paper Satyagrahi on 7th April so to express his deep thoughts and progressive steps more clearly. He focused on various issues like civil disobedience, Swadeshi, Hindu-Muslim unity and Hindi language. He intended to make a visit to Delhi so to personally evaluate the incident. Before he could reach Delhi he was served with an order from the Delhi and the Punjab Government for not crossing their territories. Being a satyagrahi he disobeyed the orders and therefore was arrested and taken back to Bombay. He was conscious of the repercussions and thus without delay conveyed a message to his compatriots to be peaceful. In spite of that people at some places showed their impatience by crossing the confines of his sacred satyagraha which became uncontrollable after his release too. The incidents compelled him to reorganize and thus thought of suspending the movement temporarily which is noticeable through the course of his speeches, satyagrahi leaflet

¹⁰² Letter to O. S. Ghate, 22-3-1919, CWMG 15:151
¹⁰³ Speech at Chowpatty, Bombay, The Bombay Chronicle, 7-4-1919, CWMG 15:183
and correspondences. Finally after three days of fasting he formally announced the suspension of the satyagraha on 18th April. Gandhi’s new technique was countered differently by the Government, masses and the established leaders to which he acknowledged in a following manner.

I would like to assure you that I have acted with the greatest deliberation and with a due sense of responsibility. I had not the vaguest notion of the deep-seated and widespread anger against the Government. When I suggested the Sunday demonstration and fast, I thought I would be laughed at by most people as a lunatic. But the idea struck the religious imagination of an angry people. They thought that deliverance lay through some such demonstrative and penitential act. I was unprepared for this universal response as I was unprepared for the shooting (in my opinion, totally uncalled for) at Delhi and much more so for my arrest and deportation and various orders of exclusion and internment.104

Firstly, he was himself amazed for such an instant reaction from the masses to his call for the satyagraha. He added that people were unable to comprehend the basic idea and therefore cannot continue with the civil disobedience part. In spite of examining the state of masses all through his tours before the satyagraha call he was unable to estimate the intensity of the grievances of the masses for various reasons.

No, I had suspended the movement at the time and yet I wanted to place something before the country. Naturally, a leader would sometimes emphasize one part of his propaganda and sometimes another. At this time when I saw that the civil disobedience part was misunderstood by the people, I suspend that, but I wanted to emphasize the principle—a part of it—the non-violence part of it, and so I

104 Letter to E. S. Montagu, 14-6-1919, CWMG 15:367.
eliminated civil disobedience, not because it was unsuited
to the masses, but because it was unsuited to the season, in
other words, it was not in season to preach it.\textsuperscript{105}

Secondly, the Government showed their anxiety by averting the peaceful
activities of the leaders and the satyagrahis which stirred the masses in
general. They with their skepticism shaped the peaceful satyagraha into a
violent crusade. Thirdly, he was able to exhibit his potential to influence
the masses which was acknowledged by some of the astute political
leaders in a following manner. ‘It saddens me to see in your writings a
new Mrs. Besant and not the old Mrs. Besant who in utter disregard of
man-made laws, whether social or political, stood for Truth against the
whole world. It is tragic to think that you should now turn back upon
your own teachings and accuse me of “leading young men of good
impulses to break their most solemn pledges”. I cannot accept the charge,
but I would certainly advise everyone to break all the pledges he might
have taken I they are contrary to Truth.’\textsuperscript{106} Lala Lajpat Rai’s confession
for the futility of his own line of action gives an idea of the response to
Gandhi’s satyagraha.

During my absence from India, I have learnt and unlearnt
a great deal. This is no place to make a full confession of
faith. But I want to say that, although I do not fully agree
with your line of thought, I am in substantial agreement
with your conclusions as to what we should do. Never
before have I been more convinced of the futility of
attempts to bring about a forcible revolution in India.
Terrorism, too, in my judgment, is not only futile but
sinful. Secret propaganda and secret societies may have
some justification in the Government’s desire to prohibit
and penalize all kinds of open work, but in the long run

\textsuperscript{105} Evidence before Disorders Inquiry Committee, 9-1-1920, 1965, CWMG 16:416.
\textsuperscript{106} Letter to Annie Besant, 10-5-1919, CWMG 15:300.
this ends in the demoralization of those who take part in them. I believe that no nation deserves or will win freedom which is not prepared to suffer for it.\textsuperscript{107}

It is interesting to notice through his press statements and correspondences that he not even once acknowledged any lack in his ideal of non-violence and the satyagraha technique rather took the responsibility for improving his incompetence to sense the violent forces for the advancement of his satyagraha technique. ‘It is not without sorrow that I feel compelled to advise the temporary suspension of civil disobedience. I give this advice not because I have less faith now in its efficacy, but because I have, if possible, greater faith than before. It is my perception of the law of satyagraha which impels me to suggest the suspension. I am sorry, when I embarked upon a mass movement, I underrated the forces of evil and I must now pause and consider how best to meet the situation.’\textsuperscript{108} Moreover he persistently insisted for the case studies of the localities where violent activities were occurred so to analyze the limitations as well as the effectiveness of his satyagraha technique. Punjab is one such locality where he wanted to examine the efficacy of his satyagraha technique at his own. Before examining the response of Punjabis to his satyagraha call it is important to capture the briefs of his prior contacts and impressions for the Punjabis.

\textbf{Gandhi’s initial acquaintances with the Punjabis}

Gandhi was familiar with the stature of Lala Lajpat Rai owing to G. K. Gokhale’s association with both of them. Through the columns of \textit{Indian Opinion} he shared Lala Lajpat Rai’s spirit during the unrest of 1907, agitation against the proceedings of the \textit{Punjabee}, his release and success in getting the Punjab Lands Act repealed while in South Africa. ‘Mr. Lajpat Rai, from the Punjab, is no less noble in mind. He is a recognised leader of the Punjab. He has been devoting his earnings and his energy to

\textsuperscript{107} Appendix III, Letter from Lala Lajpat Rai, \textit{Young India}, 13-8-1919, CWMG 16:533.

\textsuperscript{108} Press Statement on Suspension of Civil Suspension, The Hindu, 21-4-1919, CWMG 15:243.
the promotion of the work of the Arya Samaj, which has been recently made familiar to our readers. Hardly had he finished the self-imposed work of relieving the distress in Kangra District, owing to the terrible earthquake, than, at the call of duty, he left for England. He even appealed the Indians of South Africa to take lesson from Lajpat Rai’s self sacrificing spirit and marked his achievement as a strong proof of the effectiveness of passive resistance.

We believe that Lala Lajpat Rai, in exile, is on a picnic. For, his object has been achieved. It was against the Punjab Lands Act that he gave a battle, and not merely for his own pleasure. That law is wrecked; then, what does it matter to Lalaji, whether he lives in Mandalay or in Lahore? Many know how to be wise and discreet in speech, but people do not pay attention to all that they say. But the man who follows up his words with deeds, who abides by his promise, will be listened to by everyone, though his words may of a mad man. For this reason, we give below the substance of a speech by Lala Lajpat Rai.

There are no particularly new thoughts in it, yet they are the thoughts of a patriot suffering exile.

Gandhi was also in contact of Prof. Parmanand who as a missionary of Arya Samaj made visit to him in October, 1905. He appreciated the zeal of Arya Samajist and therefore welcomed his stay as well his religious lectures. ‘Professor Parmanand the distinguished scholar from the Anglo-Vedic College, has been in our midst now for a few weeks. He has delivered interesting discourses to crowded audiences. His mission seems to be to advance the teachings of the Arya Samaj, which is a body that has done most useful and practical work, apart from its religious doctrine. It has produced earnest patriots, a band of self-sacrificing teachers, and it

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110 What did India’s Lala Do?, Indian Opinion, 16-11-1907, CWMG 7:363.
has also done noble work in connection with the terrible earthquake that took place in India a few months back. The Professor who belongs to such a body of workers has a right to except a warm welcome from Indians in South Africa. Indeed, we cannot have in our midst too many Indians of attainments and culture.\(^{111}\) C.F. Andrews introduced Swami Shraddhanand to Gandhi owing to his commitment for humanity. ‘Mr. Andrews has familiarized your name and your work to me. I feel I am writing to no stranger. I hope therefore that you will pardon me for addressing you by the title which both Mr. Andrews and I have used in discussing you and your work. Mr. Andrews told me also how you, Gurudev and Mr. Rudra had influenced him.’\(^{112}\) Shraddhanand bestowed his reverence by taking care of his boys when Gandhi was busy searching a place for the institution. Gandhi made personal visits to him at Gurukul near Hardwar. ‘The speech, it may be observed, was delivered in Hindi. After thanking Mahatmaji Munshi Ram for his great kindness to my boys to whom he gave shelter on two occasions and acted as father to them and after stating that the time for action had arrived rather than for speeches, I proceeded.’\(^{113}\)

After coming back to India, Gandhi and Lala Lajpat Rai shared their conflicting thoughts on Ahimsa indirectly through the articles of The Modern Review. ‘All other virtues which ennoble men and nations were thrown into background and subordinated to this, according to them, the supreme test of goodness, courage, bravery, heroism, all lapsed. Honour and self-respect were thrown into shade. Patriotism, love of country, love of family, honour of the race were all extirpated. It was this perverted use or misuse of ahimsa (non-killing), or its exaggerated importance at the cost of everything else, that brought about the social, political and moral downfall of the Hindus. They forgot that manliness was as good a virtue as ahimsa… Ahimsa overdone and misapplied is a gangrene that

\(^{111}\) Professor Parmanand, Indian Opinion, 26-8-1905, CWMG 5:48.

\(^{112}\) Letter to Mahatma Munshi Ram, 27-3-1914, CWMG 12:400.

\(^{113}\) Speech at Gurukul Anniversary, 20-3-1916, CWMG 13:260.
poisons the system, enervates the faculties and converts men and women into half-lunatic, hysterical, unnerved creatures, good for nothing that requires the energetic pursuits of noble ends and noble virtues. The Tolstoyian ahimsa has been known and practiced in India for three thousand years... I have the greatest respect for the personality of Mr. Gandhi. He is one of those persons whom I idolize. I do not doubt his sincerity. I do not question his motives. But I consider it my duty to raise an emphatic protest against the pernicious doctrine he is reported to have propounded. Even a Gandhi should not be allowed to poison the minds of Young India on this subject. No one should be at liberty to pollute the fountains of national vitality. Not even Buddha, much less Christ, even preached that.114 In reciprocity Gandhi was patient while explaining the practicality of the non-violence ideal. 'With due deference to Lalaji, I must join issue with him when he says that the elevation of the doctrine of ahimsa to the highest position contributed to the downfall of India. There seems to be no historical warrant or the belief that an exaggerated practice of ahimsa synchronized with our becoming bereft of many virtues. During the past fifteen hundred years, we have as a nation given ample proof of physical courage, but we have been dominated by love of self instead of love of country. We have, that is to say, been swayed by the spirit of irreligion rather than of religion.'115

He was familiar with Sarladevi Choudhrani and Chaudhari Rambhuj Dutt too. 'I first met Sarladevi in 1901. She comes from the famous Tagore family. Of her learning and sincerity, too, I get evidence in ever so many ways.'116 Their familiarity helped them to work together during his stay in Punjab. 'In the Punjab, I found Sarladevi. I first came to know her in 1910 and then I saw the husband and wife again in Hardwar. Sarladevi invited me to the Punjab. I accepted the invitation but felt nervous. At

that time she extended it, she was separated from her husband. That made me wonder whether it would be proper for me to accept her hospitality. However, I look upon it as my good fortune if I can share other's suffering and so I stayed with her in the Punjab. I had from her as much service as from one’s own sister and thus became her debtor.’

**Punjab during and after the Rowlatt Satyagraha**

These are the few acquaintances of Gandhi with the Punjabis before coming to India. After coming to India he visited different localities for various reasons which have been discussed at length in the last chapter. It is interesting to notice that while his tours Gandhi did not visited Punjab and shared only sparse observations for the Punjab in his writings. However, Gandhi tried to meet Dr. Satyapal after the call but before that he was interned and could not made his way further. He sent a message to the people of Lahore and Amritsar through Swami Shraddhanand to be tolerant in his concern. Gandhi shared a brief report in the *Satyagrahi: II* about Punjab deportations after his release. ‘Serious disturbances have occurred at Lahore and Amritsar owing to the deportation of Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal.’ However, a brief view of the Punjabis response to the Rowlatt Bills and subsequently to Gandhi’s call from the sources other than CWMG.

‘In the capital itself an active opposition to the Rowlatt Bills had started very early after their publication in the Gazette of India on the 18th January 1919. The Bills were referred to a Select Committee on the 10th February, but on the 4th February a meeting in the Bradlaugh Hall had already been held under the auspices of the local “Indian Association,” of which the Secretary was Mr. Duni Chand. On the 1st March Mr. Gandhi had issued to the press the terms of the *Satyagraha* vow and inaugurated his campaign of “civil disobedience to laws.” On the 9th March another protest meeting was held at the Bradlaugh Hall and addressed by Dr. Kitchlew of Amritsar and other including persons including Pandit

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Rambhaj Dutt of Lahore. It was presided over by the Honourable Mr. Fazl-i-Husain gave evidence before us to the effect that the passive resistance principle did not find favour with the great majority of the educated classes in Lahore and that no one in Lahore to the best of his belief ever took the Satyagraha vow. We think that these statements represent the facts with substantial accuracy, but by the 9th of March, when neither Bill had yet been passed, the “civil disobedience” notion was new; people were coquetting with it and holding it in terrorem over the head of the authorities, though not resolved to adopt or censure it. The resolution passed at this meeting was drawn, as Mr. Fazl-i-Husain tells us, “with the object of not taking Gandhi’s vow of passive resistance.” Its terms were “that in the event of these Bills being passed into law, in spite of the unanimous opposition afforded by communities of all shades of opinion, the Indian public will be justified in having resort to such forms of passive resistance as they can eventually decide upon.” One excited speaker was stopped by the chairman as he was declaring that they should adopt such means that all Lahore should be converted into a jail. Dr. Kitchlew declared that he would follow Mr. Gandhi; others like the chairman were more cautious or more critical. The chairman asked how Indians were to oppose this law, adding that the matter was not an easy one, that it was quite easy for one to say that he would not submit to it, but it should be decided after mature thought. The Times observes the inactiveness of the established political leaders and indicates the spirit of few influential leaders to educate the Punjabis for the efficacy of the satyagraha technique.

Mr. Shafi and the “raisi” class generally are no doubt prominent, professionally or socially, and a number of them are, of course, members of the Legislative Council.

It does not, however, follow that they are persons of

influence in Lahore. On the contrary, there is ample evidence of a convincing kind that the people of the city regard them as time-servers and title-hunters and dislike them accordingly. It is clear too, that other politicians look upon them as men who can led, though they cannot lead. Thus in his speech of the 4th of February, as reported in the *Tribune* of the 7th, in a passage, which provoked loud and prolonged applause, Gokal Chand did not hesitate to tell even Mr. Shafi and Sir Zulfikar Ali Khan that if they supported the Rowlatt Bills they would be regarded as enemies of their country and India would know the reason why.120

In addition *The Civil and Military Gazette* acquaints with the reaction of the masses to Gandhi’s satyagraha technique. 'The agitation has followed a double line of action, namely, direct criticism of the Act by means of public speeches and publications and the initiation of the threatened movement of passive resistance. The latter movement was ushered in by a demonstration consisting of the observance of a day of fasting and the closing of shops and places of business such a demonstration was not in itself illegal; but there is ample evidence to prove that in more than one place those locally responsible for its organization overstepped the limits of lawful persuasion and resorted to direct interference with the business of many who were not interested in the movement, and to forcible obstruction of the traffic in the public streets.' These activities indicate as how the satygraha technique was shaped by the various interest groups. 'The Committee then describe the events of the 11th, the inflammatory speeches delivered at the Badshahi mosque to excited crowds of Hindus and Muhammadans, the organization of the *Danda Fauji*, a band of hooligans, who marched through the city armed with

120 *The Times of India*, Lahore Conspiracy, 15-7-1919, p. 8.
sticks (lathis) and destroyed pictures of Their Majesties, shouting that King George was dead...Special attention is invited by the Committee to the use of inflammatory and seditious posters in Lahore, which in the name of Mahatma Gandhi called upon the brave people of the Punjab to enlist in the Danda Fauj and kill the English who were described as pigs, monkeys and Kafirs. Lastly these varied reactions took the shape of Massacre with the O’ Dwyers line of action. Nanda shares the information with the details of the inhuman behavior. ‘The city was quiet for the next two days, but on April 13th, the day of the Baisakhi festival, a meeting was held in Jallianwala Bagh, which became the scene of a holocaust. Dyer decided to break up the meeting. The entrance was too narrow to admit the armored cars, but the marched into the garden with his troops, who fired 1,650 rounds in ten minutes. The holiday crowd of unarmed men, women and children unable to escape from the walled compound, were caught ‘like rats in traps’. The Punjab Government estimated the number of killed at 379. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, a member of the Hunter Committee estimated that 400 persons had been killed and 12,000 injured. Later, Dyer explained that his object was to create a ‘moral effect’ by resolute action. He could not have dealt a bigger blow to the empire which he was professing to save.’ He briefly observes certain reasons for varied reactions to Gandhi’s call for satyagraha. ‘Meanwhile, events in the Punjab had moved to a tragic climax. The Punjab had been suffering from several undercurrents of discontent. It had provided nearly half a million recruits for the World War I; it suffered from the after-effects of the influenza epidemic which had claimed a heavy toll; it suffered, like the rest of India, from a high cost of

123 Nanda, p. 176.
living and its predominantly Muslim population had been disturbed by ideas of Pan-Islamism.\textsuperscript{124}

Whereas Kumar’s case study of Lahore acutely analyzes various socio-economic factors for the resentment of the masses against the Government before the satyagraha. \textquoteleft If O’Dwyer, the Arya samaj, and the crisis of 1913 explain the behavior of the Hindus in 1919, they through light on the motivations of the Muslim artisans and workers, whose participation in the events of April transformed the Rowlatt Satyagraha into a truly mass movement. The response of the Muslim of Lahore to the call for action in 1919 was influenced by considerations which had very little to do directly with Gandhi or with Rowlatt Act. But whatever the reasons which compelled the Muslims to demonstrate with the Hindus on the streets of Lahore, by doing so they created a striking impression of Hindu-Muslim unity against the British Government. The Muslims of Lahore were in fact far more agitated than the Hindus in the spring of 1919. They were more agitated than the latter because of the political values disseminated by poets like Iqbal, and also because of the propaganda conducted by demagogues like Zafar Ali. The Muslims had come to believe that the British Government was an inveterate enemy of Islam, both within and without India. The effect of such propaganda was heightened by the economic condition of the Muslims masses, since they suffered grievously under the inflammatory conditions of 1919. All that was required in April 1919 to launch a popular movement against the British Government was an issue which would provide a channel of expression for the discontents which affected various classes and communities in Lahore. By initiating a satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act, Gandhi provided such an issue, and he thereby set afoot a movement whose intensity surprised the local administration no less than it surprised the local leaders of Lahore.\textsuperscript{125} Brown notices the response of

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p. 175.

the city’s during the satyagraha. ‘In the Punjab there were no known signatures to the vow, people were mostly interested in local and economic problems, and only in the larger towns like Lahore and Amritsar was there any feeling about the bills.’

Gandhi and Punjab after the Rowlatt Satyagraha

All these viewpoints indicate varied reasons for the indifferent reaction of the Punjabis during the Rowlatt Satyagraha but an inadequate attention has been given to Gandhi’s viewpoint. As discussed earlier Gandhi was not able to contact Punjab before and immediately after the Rowlatt Satyagraha but how he connected himself with the locality and what was his viewpoint is essential to identify. However after a month’s silence Gandhi approached the Private Secretary to Viceroy to inquire the reasons for the violent occurrences in the localities which included Punjab too.

It is within His Excellency’s knowledge that I have made no public declaration regarding the events in Punjab. Even at the risk of being misunderstood by my countrymen, I have refrained from saying anything in public because I had no reliable data to enable me to form an opinion. I was not prepared to condemn martial law as such; I was unwilling to do anything calculated needlessly to irritate local authority; and lastly I was not prepared to infer from Sir Michael O’Dwyer’s reported severe administration during peace period that martial law measures would be unduly hard.

He also placed the cases of injustice done to Mr. Govardhandas and Messrs. Norton and Roy, counsel for the defense of the editor of The Tribune. He shared his position for maintaining silence after the suspension in Punjab’s case. ‘I have said not a word about the events in

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126 Brown, p. 167.
the Punjab, not because I have up to now not thought or felt over them, but because I have not known what to believe and what not to believe. Even the official communiqués have not been over-frank. I was, as I am still, hoping that very soon there would be the fullest investigation made as to the causes of disturbances and the measures adopted to quell them.128 He even contemplated to resume satyagraha129 solely against the injustice done to the Punjabis but before he could move further, Swami Shraddhanand conveyed the decision for his withdrawal from the movement. The reason for the drift was not clarified by Gandhi. Despite that both supported each other for the contributions to the bereaved families of the Punjab. He even sent C.F. Andrews to inquire and appeal on behalf of the Punjab prisoners.130 Moreover, Gandhi was also approached directly by the relatives of some of the victims of the Martial Law and thus directly put up certain cases to the Viceroy and also shared their experiences through his articles in Young India. ‘In the face of this emphatic opinion I despair of securing or expecting justice either for Mr. Labh Singh or for any of the great Punjab leaders, who are at present adorning the Punjab Jails. I do however feel tempted to say, with due deference to the Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab that, if he has not found a single case for challenging the correctness of the findings of the Special Courts, of all the many cases that have come before the public, it has not been my good fortune to find many judgments to inspire confidence in their correctness.’131 Babu Kalinath Roy (Editor, The Tribune), Lala Radha Krishan’s (Editor Pratap), Jagannath’s (Gujranwalla case), Dr. Kitchlew’s Trial (Amritsar), Lahore Judgment (Lala Harkishan Lal, Chaudhari Rambhaj Dutt, Duni Chand, Allah Din and Mota Singh), Karamchand (Student, D. A. V. College), Gujratimal (Dresser in Military Deptt.), Dr. Satyapal’s case (Amritsar), Amritsar appeals etc. are some of

128 Letter to J. L. Maffey, 16-5-1919, CWMG 15:311.
129 Babu Kalinath Roy, Young India, 11-6-1919, CWMG 15:356.
130 Mr. Andrews Appeal, 7-6-1919, CWMG 15:348.
the cases shared by Gandhi through *Young India*. Among them were the innocent people as well as the leaders of the masses who in spite of obeying the Government orders were apprehended as political convicts.

One thing stands out as our duty. Whatever the nature and strength of the committees appointed by the Government, what can they do if we are not able to lead proper evidence before them? If persons like Lala Harkishan Lal remain in prison, how can they come out with the facts? All those persons who are being held, not for any actual crimes but principally as political prisoners, should be released. There can be a proper inquiry on the Punjab incidents only if this is done.\(^{132}\)

Hunter Committee was appointed in October, 1919 to inquire the April disturbances in the provinces of Bombay, Delhi and Punjab and sentences were reduced due to his direct appeal to the Viceroy.\(^{133}\) But the commission’s decision regarding the members was detested by the Congress leaders as they were apprehensive for the sincerity of the British officials. In response the committed leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sannyasi Swami Shraddhanand and Pandit Motilal Nehru took the charge of making inquires and collecting the evidences at their own. Gandhi also appealed the Viceroy’s Private Secretary to waive off the prohibition orders against him as he was equally apprehensive and wanted to gather the true information before and during the Punjab Disorders. Gandhi visited Lahore on 24\(^{th}\) October, 1919 after receiving official permission. He stayed at Pandit Rambhuj Dutt house who was interned under the martial law and was looked after by her wife Sarladevi.\(^{134}\) He made visits mainly to the places where martial law was practiced so as to inquire the reality and took the evidences. He visited


\(^{134}\) Letter to Esther Faering, 24-10-1919, CWMG 17:254.
Lahore, Golden Temple and Jallianwala Bagh: Amritsar, Gujranwala, Kasur, Wazirabad, Nizamabad, Akalgarh, Ramnagar, Hafizabad, Gujrat, Sangla Hill, Sheikhupura, Chuharkana and lastly to Lyallpur. ‘There is a small village called Jalalpur Jata near Gujarat, which also we had to visit. This village may be said to be inhabited almost entirely by weavers. The women spin and the men weave. The whole of the little lane had been decorated with hand-made cloth. The cloth was not just white khadi but khadi dyed red and embroidered with silk. Such cloth is known here as phulkari. Beautiful designs are worked on the cloth and these make the cloth delightful to the eye.’

He was inquisitive to know the state of weavers of Punjab, looms and the ancient techniques for spinning which he explored during his visits to different places in Punjab.

A craftsman from Ludhiana has left a ten-spindled spinning wheel with me. The design is quite good, simple and cheap. But he could not spin on all the spindles simultaneously. He was intelligent but had not been able to make progress for want of experience. When the thing was explained to him, he followed it all right, he has promised to try again. Having seen this spinning-wheel, I have a hope that we may see a ten-spindled spinning-wheel in India.

He shared the historical significance, his own observations for each place and the troubles which were coming in the way of Punjab Congress Sub-Committee in collecting the evidences with the readers of *Navajivan* through his Punjab Letters. He shared his spirited experience while his visit to the sight of Golden Temple and Jallianwala Bagh. While collecting the evidences, Government of Punjab did not permit the members of the Congress Sub-Committee to take the information from the important leaders who were interned under Martial Law.

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Consequently, the Hunter committee was boycotted by the Congress Sub-Committee and hence appointed five commissioners to prepare a report on the Punjab Disorders. On the 14th November 1919, the Punjab Sub-committee of the All India Congress Committee appointed yourself, the Hon’ble Fazlul Haq, Messers C. R. Das, Abbas Tayabji and M. K. Gandhi, as Commissioners, with Mr. K. Santanam as Secretary, to examine, sift, collate and analyse the evidence already collected by and on behalf of the Sub-committee regarding the events of last April in the Punjab, and to supplement such evidence where necessary, and to present their conclusions thereon.\textsuperscript{137} The Indian National Congress session was convened at Amritsar from 27\textsuperscript{th} December – 1\textsuperscript{st} January, 1920 which gave vent to the resentment gathered against the atrocities made under the Martial Law. Gandhi was able to acquire reasonable space for himself in the Punjab Sub-Committee to draft the report of the Punjab Disorders which aided him to approve his resolutions based on his ideals during the session.

Besides these, the other resolutions which were passed to give a lead to the nation should be considered excellent. The congress welcomed the current movement for swadeshi and has given a place in its programme to hand-spinning and hand-weaving. The All-India Congress Committee was requested to investigate the conditions of the peasants and a resolution was passed to support the Muslims on Khilafat issue: similar other useful resolutions which were passed will help us forward and, if the nation implements them, good results cannot but follow. The country must be proud that Jallianwala Bagh has passed into its possession.\textsuperscript{138}


Gandhi’s has not shared much information through his correspondences or columns regarding the inquiry at his personal level so to gather the information from the inquiry made by the Disorder Inquiry Committee in the session at Ahmedabad on January 9, 1920 are also taken into account. There are only few statements of Gandhi through the condensed version of his evidences before the committee but it gives some idea to comprehend further.

Firstly they held him responsible for stirring the masses in spite of knowing the critical state of affairs in Punjab through Swami but Gandhi refuted by explaining one of his correspondences with Swami which only clarified the reasons for their differences and nothing of such information. ‘Q: He (Swami Shraddhanand) wrote to you a letter upon the subject of hartal. He indicated to you that after what occurred in Delhi and, I think also in the, Punjab it was manifest that you could not have a general hartal without violence inevitably ensuing? I do not think he said that in so many words. I cannot recall the contents of that letter. Q: It was very much to that effect? A: I think what he said was – he went much further- that it was not possible; he was not referring to the hartal, but the law breaking campaign; he suggested that the satyagraha campaign could not be carried on with impunity among the masses of people, but there was really a difference between him and me. When I suspended civil disobedience he thought that I ought not to suspend civil disobedience, but when I found it necessary to suspend civil disobedience, because I had not obtained sufficient control over the people in order to prevent violence, then he said: “If this is the position you take up, the moral for me to draw is that satyagraha can never be put into action as a mass movement.” I think that is the drift of his letter. I had to discuss with him also.’139 Secondly Gandhi was asked to clarify his correspondences with Dr. Satyapal and for which he indicated the keenness of few leaders to learn the nitty-gritty’s of his new technique. ‘Q: I am rather anxious, Mr. Gandhi, to find out from you exactly what

139 Evidence Before Disorders Inquiry Committee, 9-1-1920, CWMG 16:368.
made you start upon your journey to Delhi, which was interrupted. Will you tell me shortly in your own way the facts that led up to that act and what exactly you intended to do when you got to Delhi? A: I think it was about the 1st of April, or even a little before, I had received a letter from Dr. Satyapal from Amritsar saying he had been trying to follow the satyagraha movement, that he appreciated the thing and he liked it immensely, but that he himself did not fully understand it, nor did the people. Would I not go over to Amritsar, be his guest, and deliver a few speeches explaining the doctrine of satyagraha, as they were on a superficial observation of it, enamored of the thing? As I happened to know from information given to me by the police officers that this letter was intercepted, copied by them and then given to me, I told Dr. Satyapal that I should do so at the very first opportunity that I had....

Gandhi indicated the naivete of Punjab leaders and the masses for misunderstanding the satyagraha technique which is clearly explained by Gandhi in answer to the next query.

Q: Of course in some parts of India there was greater reason than in others for being in a state of excitement. The Punjab is an instance, and there are other instances which I need not mention, but I understand it, or rather put it, that where people got more excited, there they were more liable to misinterpret what you wanted? A: I think where the people did not understand the doctrine there they were liable to misinterpret it. I found to my most agreeable surprise that, for the first time people from the Punjab came to me voluntarily and said, “Oh, if only we had understood the doctrine, how differently we would have acted.”

140 CWMG 16:400-01.

141 CWMG 16:406.
Gandhi’s summarized reply’s to the query’s gives some idea of his viewpoint which is further probed through the Congress Report on the Punjab Disorders. The Report provides the details of the Punjab before and during the satyagraha. It was a collective effort in which Gandhi was assigned with the drafting of the report. It includes concrete evidences to prove the disturbed state of affairs of the Punjab before Gandhi’s call for satyagraha.

Firstly it gives an idea of Michael O’ Dwyer (Lt.-Governor of the Punjab) estrangement with the different classes during his governorship due to his forceful policies which consequently created resentment for the Government. ‘The disturbances, where they took place, were an undisciplined demonstration against Sir Michael O’ Dwyer’s rule. From the very commencement of this rule, he estranged the educated classes by every means he could devise. He incensed the populace by his overzealous canvassing for contributions to the War in men and money. We consider it to be a proper thing to use social and moral pressure for stimulating contributions to the War, in which the very existence of the Empire may be at stake. But Sir M. O’ Dwyer overstepped the limits of decency and, in his laudable zeal for outstripping his fellow satrapas in supplying men and money, he forgot himself and the quality of the means adopted. The consequence was that his under-officials out-heroded Herod, and, as marked in a previous chapter, we have in our possession evidence to show that the British rule was disgraced by officials whose one aim was to get recruits and money. It was a result too dearly bought.’

Secondly it indicates the way O’ Dwyer gradually gagged the Press and secluded Punjab from the national activities ‘He abused the powers given to him by the Defence of India Act by prohibiting the entry into the province of Messrs Tilak and Pal (Bipin Chandra Pal). He interned hundreds of local men with little or no cause. He gagged the Vernacular Press, prevented the nationalist papers edited outside the Punjab from circulating in the province, as, for instance, New India.

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142 Congress Report on The Punjab Disorders, CWMG 17:201.
He prohibited the circulation even of pre-censored vernacular papers and brought about a state of things whereby it became practically impossible for the people of the province to have a free interchange of independent views, or a free ventilation of their grievances in the public Press, and then, having prevented free speech and free writing, allowed ... myself to think, and gave outsiders to understand that the people of the Punjab were the happiest under his rule. How local newspapers were forced to discontinue after the Rowlatt Satyagraha. ‘The existence of Independent journalism became an impossibility during the Martial Law regime and The Tribune, the Punjabee, and the Pratap stopped publishing.’

Thirdly it gives an idea of O’Dwyer’s indifferent approach towards the public opinion as well as the leaders apprehensions but in of spite that some local leaders tried their best to control the populace. ‘We have had several interviews with the Lahore leaders since their discharge. They have favoured us with their statements; we believe that most of the leaders tried their best to break up the hartal, even though the authorities would not return the dead and the wounded, but they did not succeed. There was a big meeting on the 11th at the Badshahi Mosque at which the idea of breaking up the hartal was considered, but nothing came out of it.’ Fourthly, it also indicates the influence of local leaders of Amritsar who were able to infuse the spirit for observance of hartal among the masses and consequently their deportation incensed not only the people of Amritsar but also the people of the adjoining districts.

All this popular demonstration and unfoldment of national consciousness would have gladdened any ruler with imagination and sympathy with popular aspirations. It only enraged Sir Michael O’Dwyer. He was angry that

143 C.WMG 17:124.
144 CWMG 17:214.
145 CWMG 17:199.
his orders, referred to by us, instead of cowing down the people had only made them bolder and more articulate in their demands. Therefore, practically at the same time that the popular demonstration was going on in an orderly, perfectly constitutional manner, an order was being forged in the Punjab Government Secretariat, which was to destroy and disturb the people’s peace; for the Lieutenant-Governor had decided to deport Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal. The orders were received at Amritsar late at night on the 9th April, and Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal were sent for on the 10th April by the Deputy Commissioner, who served the orders on them and sent them away to an unknown destination in a motor-car. The news spread throughout Amritsar like lighting. A crowd immediately gathered together. It was a crowd of mourners-bareheaded, many unshod, and all without sticks.146

Fifthly the report highlights the brutality by exposing the ‘Dwyerism’ through the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. It indicates it to be a calculated piece of inhumanity towards the entirely innocent and unarmed men including children. The report termed the act of Dwyerism to be unparalleled for its ferocity in the history of Modern British administration.

Thus we know why and how the “fright fullness” of the 13th April came about. A staggering blow had to be delivered. The idea of bombardment was evidently given up. The meeting of the 13th furnished a ready chance and General Dyer seized it. Mr. C. F. Andrews has called it a massacre, even like the Glencoe Massacre (Scotland, 1692). If there can be degrees in assessing values of inhumanities, we consider that the massacre of Glencoe

146 CWMG 17:163-64.
was infinitely worse than the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh, but the standard of correctness exacted today was not the standard set in the military manuals of the days of the Glencoe Massacre. In our opinion even the people who heard the proclamation had not understood the significance or the meaning of the prohibitory part of it. Not a single man went to that meeting in open defiance of the proclamation. No provocation whatever was given to the military authorities and nothing, in Amritsar or outside it, justified the massacre. It was a calculated act of inhumanity, and if the British Rule in India is to be purged of this inexcusable wrong, General Dyer must be immediately relieved of his command and brought to justice.\(^{147}\)

The report emphasizes the disturbed state of affairs to be the sole reason for the Punjab Disturbances. ‘In the Punjab, however, the civil resistance part of satyagraha was neither appreciated nor understood, much less practiced. The hartal, as such, has nothing to do with civil resistance. It may be part of satyagraha, if it is voluntary, free from all violence and resorted to not to express ill will against, but disapprobation of the acts of a wrongdoer. Moreover, hartal is an age-old institution in India, resorted to by people under the very conditions in which it was applied in the Punjab during April. Neither Satyagraha nor hartal, therefore, had anything to do with the mob excesses.’\(^{148}\) The Congress Report explains the fact that the hartal was observed twice in Amritsar as on the 30\(^{th}\) of March as well as on 6\(^{th}\) April due to lack of information for its postponement. Secondary sources overlook to provide this kind of information. After the hartal of 30\(^{th}\) March Dr. Satyapal invited Gandhi to explain the nitty-gritty’s of the

\(^{147}\) CWMG 17: 176.

\(^{148}\) CWMG 17: 158.
satyagraha to the people of Amritsar. Hartal was again maintained peacefultly on 6th April. Through the hartal Dr. Satyapal was prohibited to address the masses and which was similarly ordered to Dr. Kitchlew. However, the news of the deportation of these leaders provided spak to the existing resentment of the masses and which swelled further to the adjoining districts of Amritsar and further to whole Punjab.

Important observations for Gandhi’s absence before his satyagraha call
Gandhi was unable to visit Punjab while his tours all over India. He was outlawed to visit Punjab during the Rowaltt Satygarha. In addition there is dearth of substantial specifics in his writings even after analyzing the Punjab wrongs. Inadequate attention has been given to his viewpoint in the consulted secondary source material. However, his viewpoint has been gathered only through the Government Disorder Inquiry and the Congress Disorder Inquiry Committee Report. In addition Gandhi’s sparse comments for the Punjab gives an idea of his level of acquaintance with the Punjab. Interestingly it helped in identifying the reasons for his absence in Punjab during his tours.

After coming to India Gandhi was inquisitive to explore the existing state of affairs by personally visiting the different localities of India. He was eager to approach the influential leaders of the localities to support him in the cultivating his ideals to the masses at large. Through his tours he was confronted with the issue of language differences for reaching the masses. As discussed earlier, he consequently contemplated the means to express himself through the common language i.e., Hindi. Gandhi was aware of the fact that in Punjab’s case he will not be having such communication problem as Hindi language was a prevalent means for the Punjabis. Thus it can be construed that he was seeking support of the leaders initially in the areas where he was unable to communicate. Since, he can always communicate with the people who were well versed in Hindi.
We should pause and think what Hindi means, I don’t think the Sanskritized language they use is Hindi; it is an artificial product. Nor is Persianized Urdu Hindi. The language we want to adopt as our national language is a mixture of Hindi and Urdu. It is the language spoken, by and large, in Bihar, Delhi and the Punjab. Secondly, the traditional handicrafts did not lose its significance and its skill was rooted in the culture of Punjab. Gandhi shared the particular information through his writings and thus he was aware of the fact that it was no new an ideal to be introduced to the Punjabis. ‘The Punjab has made the solution still clearer to me. God be thanked that the beautiful women of the Punjab, have not yet lost the cunning of their fingers. High or low, they still know the art of spinning. They have not yet burnt their spinning-wheels as many Gujarati women have done. It is to me a perfect delight to find them throwing balls of yarn into my lap. They admit they have time at their disposal for spinning. They admit they have time at their disposal for spinning. They admit that the khaddar woven from their hand-spun yarn is superior to the machine-spun yarn.... This beautiful art—and yet so simple—is in danger of being lost if we do not wake up betimes. The Punjab gives proof of its possibilities. But the Punjab too is fast losing her hold of it. Every year witness a decrease in the output of hand-spun yarn. Rather on his visit to Punjab he was inquisitive to explore the traditional techniques which were prevalent in Punjab. Through his Punjab letters he shared that his message was instantly been grasped by the women of Punjab. ‘We have our sisters in the Punjab. Those ladies who believe that Nadiad and Gujarat are not the whole country, that our country is India and so the Punjab, too, is our land, for them the Punjab is their land. There, they spin and weave with their own hands and wear the clothes so made. This was formerly the

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149 Speech at preparatory meeting for Hindi Conference, Bombay, Gujarati, 20-4-1919, CWMG 15:240.
150 Swaraj in Swadeshi, Young India, 10-12-1919, CWMG 16:336.
practice all over India. Even women in big wealthy families used to spin. People of every caste did so. Our people, the elders among them, discovered that the hat, if they would clothe the millions in the country, they should learn to make cotton into yarn.151

Thirdly, his inquisitiveness to work with some influential Muslim leaders led him to contact Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali. His immense hope from the Muslim leaders leads him to voice for justice in their concern which has been discussed at length in the next chapter. Unfortunately, the prolonged internment delayed Gandhi to connect with the Muslims dominated areas. Gandhi was relying on these established leaders to introduce his ideals among the Muslim masses of the Punjab and which did not materialized before Rowlatt Satyagraha.

My suggestions therefore would be that the Government should recognize satyagraha as an estimable weapon in the armory of reformer; they should seek the assistance of Messers Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali, who, so far as I am aware, are able, equally upright and well informed, and solve the Islamic question to the entire satisfaction of the intelligent Mohomedan population.152

Fourthly, the gradual gagging of Press under Michael O’ Dwyer’s administration and the forceful closer of independent newspapers during Rowlatt agitation did blocked Gandhi’s way to reach the masses of Punjab.

He gagged the Vernacular Press, prevented the nationalist papers edited outside the Punjab from circulating in the province, as, for instance, New India, Amrita Bazar Patrika, Independent. He prohibited the circulation even of pre-censored vernacular papers and brought about a

151 Speech on Swadeshi at Women’s meeting, Nadiad, Gujarati, 20-7-1919, CWMG 15:440.

152 Letter to Sir Stanley Reed, 15-4-1919, CWMG 15:231.
state of things whereby it became practically impossible for the people of the province to have a free interchange of independent views, or a free ventilation of their grievances in the public Press, and then, having prevented free speech and free writing, allowed ... myself to think, and gave outsiders to understand that the people of the Punjab were the happiest under his rule.  

So far it has been observed that Gandhi was not able to contact the masses and the leaders of the Punjab before and during the Rowlatt Satyagraha. In addition he was not able to instruct the skills of the technique to the local leaders of the Punjab. Thus the naiveté of few influential leaders for the use of satyagraha technique and the inactiveness of the established political leaders stirred the masses to be uncontrollable during the Rowlatt satyagraha. By personally investigating the whole truth and seeing the zeal of Punjabis during Jallianwala Bagh Massacre He acknowledged his fallacy for the Punjabis through his writings.

I think it has spread to the Punjab as a leaven. I cannot lay my hands upon any who has signed the satyagraha pledge, but I have come to the conclusion that the Punjab is just as capable of receiving and responding to the doctrine as any other part of India, if not perhaps more so; but there I may be mistaken, but certainly the Punjab is just as receptive as any other part of India.  

He publicized the sacrifices as exemplary while analyzing the intensity of the Punjabis endurance in preserving the purity of his non-violence ideal. He asserted that the sacrifices during the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre were exemplary but performed without the knowledge of non-violence ideal. 'The joy of freedom is only for those who are ready to

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face death. In 1896-97 hundreds of thousands died of plague in the Punjab. No one treated the Punjab as a place of pilgrimage then. Now, Amritsar and various other places in the Punjab have become centers of pilgrimage because the people here have endured hardships for the good of the country. He added if they would have sacrificed in accordance to the ideal then certainly they would have attained much higher stature in comparison to one they attained now.

If they had died knowingly and willingly, if, realizing their innocence they had stood their ground and faced the shots from the fifty rifles, they would have gone down in history as saints, heroes and patriots. But even as it was, the tragedy became one of the first-class national importance. Nations are born out of travail and suffering.

Conclusion
As discussed above some of the statements indicate his strong conviction for the efficacy of the satyagarha technique after the suspension and the inquiry too. If Gandhi was able to prove the efficacy then the question is to identify his achievement during the Rowlatt satyagraha. ‘For a brief time Gandhi engineered an agitation whose reverberation were felt throughout the subcontinent, from the North-West Frontier to Madras, from Sind to Bengal. But the power behind that agitation was neither antagonism to the Rowlatt legislation nor loyalty to a new leader, but local discontents, which found a focus and a means of expression in Gandhi’s call for hartal. In every place where hartal was well observed and Gandhi’s propaganda welcomed it seems that the tinder of unrest had been drying for months and Gandhi’s campaign was merely the spark which started the conflagration.’ Brown and Kumar confines Gandhi’s call for the Rowlatt Satyagraha as a spark for the already enraged masses.

155 Speech at women’s Meeting, Amritsar, 4-11-1919, CWMG 16:287.
156 Jallianwala Bagh, Young India, 18-2-1920. CWMG 17:37.
157 Brown, p. 185.
Whereas from a broader canvass it can be construed that Gandhi through the Rowlatt Satyagraha channelized the force of enraged masses to expose the Indian British Government’s brute force. One of the influential Muslim newspaper, Zamindar observes the effect of spark in a following manner.

The Za[e]mindar, in a lengthy article says:- whether or not the high priests of British Prussianism in India receive deserved punishment, one thing at least is clear from the Amritsar debate. One of the greatest outrages in British history as Mr. Asquith puts it has roused British democracy to a sense of what it owes to humanity. The mailed fist of Imperial Jingo will no longer dictate British policy in the East, if only they will let Mr. Montagu have his way, but practice is better than perpect. The high sounding political dicta have had their day. General Dyer’s dismissal is not sufficient to restore India’s confidence. England must act up to her professions and court martial the whole race of Dyers and O’Dwyers.\footnote{158}

Zamindar indicates the outcome in the form of wide-ranging debate regarding the act of O’ Dwyer whereas Erikson acutely assesses the execution of Gandhi’s satyagraha in a following manner.

Was the campaign, then, a “failure,” and did the “initiative pass to the opposition” as should never, never happen to the leader of a satyagraha? Not, I would think, from a long-range point of view. By his very suspension Mahatma kept the initiative and demonstrated his ability first to mobilize and then to call a halt to a national movement of unprecedented grandeur. In contrast the government, in displaying nervous as well as naked force,\footnote{158 The Times of India, Indian Press Views, 16-7-1920, p. 9.}
lost face in an irretrievable way and helped to precipitate the eventual fate of colonialism in India. And as the central problem of an age is often highlighted quite unintentionally by a zealot creating an “ism” that will live in infamy (as did did Senator Josep P.Mc Carthy in our time), there suddenly appeared “Dwyerism” on the scene in the person of a British brigadier general. In ten minutes of tenest history, he established a model for cold military murder which would show up colonialism at its most brutal.159

Gandhi’s preliminary step for showing the efficacy of satyagraha technique with the help of Punjabis sacrifices was progressive for the advancement of his movement.

Gandhi’s new technique was countered differently by the Government, masses and the established leaders. Firstly, he was himself amazed for such an instant reaction from the masses to his call for the satyagraha. He emphasized that people were unable to comprehend the basic idea and therefore cannot continue with the civil disobedience part. In spite of examining the state of masses all through his tours before the satyagraha call he was unable to estimate the intensity of the grievances of the masses. Secondly, the Government showed their anxiety by averting the peaceful activities of the leaders and the satyagrahis which stirred the masses in general. They with their skepticism shaped the peaceful satyagraha into a violent crusade. Thirdly, he was able to exhibit his potential to influence the masses which was acknowledged by some of the astute political leaders too. Lala Lajpat Rai’s confession for the futility of his own line of action gives an idea of the response to Gandhi’s satyagraha. It is interesting to notice through his press statements and correspondences that he not even once acknowledged any lack in his ideal of non-violence and the satyagraha technique rather took the

responsibility for improving his incompetence to sense the violent forces for the advancement of his satyagraha technique. Moreover he persistently insisted for the case studies of the localities where violent activities were occurred so to analyze the limitations as well as the effectiveness of his satyagraha technique. Punjab is one such locality where he examined the efficacy of his satyagraha technique at his own.

Gandhi was unable to visit Punjab while his tours in India. He was outlawed to visit Punjab during the Roawlalt Satyagraha. In addition there is dearth of substantial specifics in his writings even after analyzing the Punjab wrongs. Inadequate attention has been given to his viewpoint in the consulted secondary source material too. However, his viewpoint has been gathered through the Government Disorder Inquiries and the Congress Disorder Inquiry Committee Report. In addition Gandhi’s sparse comments for the Punjab gives an idea of his level of acquaintance with the Punjab. Interestingly it helped in identifying the reasons for his absence in Punjab during his tours. After coming to India Gandhi was inquisitive to explore the existing state of affairs by personally visiting the different localities of India. He was eager to approach the influential leaders of the localities to support him in cultivating his ideals to the masses at large. Through his tours he was confronted with the issue of language differences for reaching the masses. As discussed earlier, he consequently contemplated the means to express himself through the common language i.e., Hindi. Gandhi was aware of the fact that in Punjab’s case he will not be having such communication problem as Hindi language was a prevalent means for the Punjabis. Thus it can be identified that he was keen in seeking the support of the leaders initially in the areas where he was unable to communicate. Since, he can always communicate with the people who were well versed in Hindi. Secondly, the traditional handicrafts did not lose its significance and its skill is rooted in the culture of Punjab. Gandhi shared the particular information through his writings and thus he was aware of the fact that the Punjabis were familiar with the skill. Rather on his visit to Punjab he was inquisitive to explore the traditional techniques which were prevalent in
Punjab. Through his Punjab letters he shared that his message was instantly been grasped by the women of Punjab. Thirdly, his inquisitiveness to work with some influential Muslim leaders led him to contact Mohamed Ali and Shaukat Ali. His immense hope from the Muslim leaders leads him to voice for justice in their concern which has been discussed at length in the following chapter. Unfortunately, the prolonged internment delayed Gandhi to connect with the Muslims dominated areas. Gandhi was relying on these established leaders to introduce his ideals among the Muslim masses of the Punjab and which did not materialized before Rowlatt Satyagraha. Fourthly, the gradual gagging of Press under Michael O’ Dwyer’s administration and the forceful closer of independent newspapers during Rowlatt agitation did blocked Gandhi’s way to reach the masses of Punjab. Fifthly, as observed Gandhi was not able to contact the masses and the leaders of the Punjab before and during the Rowlatt Satyagraha. In addition he was not able to instruct the skills of the technique to the local leaders of the Punjab. Thus the naiveté of few influential leaders for the use of satyagraha technique and the inactiveness of the established political leaders stirred the masses to be uncontrollable during the Rowlatt satyagraha. Sixthly, by personally investigating the whole truth and seeing the zeal of Punjabis during Jallianwala Bagh Massacre he acknowledged his fallacy for the Punjabis as he was doubted for the positive response of the Punjabis for the non-violence ideal. He publicized the sacrifices as exemplary while analyzing the intensity of the Punjabis endurance in preserving the purity of his non-violence ideal. He asserted that the sacrifices during the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre were exemplary but performed without the knowledge of non-violence ideal. He emphasized that if they would have sacrificed in accordance to the ideal then certainly they would have attained much higher stature in comparison to one they attained now.

As discussed earlier some of the statements indicate his strong conviction for the efficacy of the satyagraha technique after the suspension and the inquiry too. If Gandhi was able to prove the efficacy then the question is to identify his achievement during the Rowlatt. Brown and Kumar
confines Gandhi’s call for the Rowlatt Satyagraha as a spark for the already enraged masses. Zamindar indicates the outcome in the form of wide-ranging debate regarding the act of O’ Dwyer whereas Erikson acutely assesses Gandhi’s Rowlatt Satyagraha’s execution in a psychoanalytical manner. A British official view for Gandhi’s broad objectives cannot be overlooked.

In addition to this, the events of the Punjab disturbances of 1919, which only became fully known during the period under review, gave rise amongst educated Indians to feelings of intense and bitter humiliation. Against the all-dominant tide of Western materialism, Western might and Western achievement, Mr. Gandhi, with his explicit scorn for that which we call modern civilization, stands before the injured national pride of many of his countrymen like a rock of salvation.\(^{160}\)

Thus, from a broader canvass it can be construed that Gandhi through the Rowlatt Satyagraha channelized the force of enraged masses to expose the Indian British Government’s brute force. Significantly the nonviolent spirit of the Punjabis during the Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy proved to be a great strength for Gandhi in exposing the inhumanity in the form of ‘Dwyerism’. Gandhi’s preliminary step for showing the efficacy of satyagraha technique with the help of Punjabis sacrifices was progressive for the advancement of his movement. By heightening the brutal act of inhumanity and challenging the cry of benevolence of the Indian British Rule he was able to initiate a dialogue in the British Parliament on the basis of integrity.


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