Introduction:

Gandhi’s faith in the British Government was stunned in the year 1920. He anticipated no justice from it. He was opposed to the Rowlatt Bills, which curtailed even the minimum freedom of every citizen. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the subsequent martial law oppressions and atrocities on the people of Punjab stirred the fury of the whole of India. Gandhi was incredibly upset at the happenings. The report of the Hunter Committee published in May 1920, and the debates in the House of Lords protecting and praising Dyer’s conduct at Amritsar reddened the Indian sentiments.

Another major event, which played an important part in launching the Non-co-operation movement, was Khilafat issue. The Khilafat was a religious institution of the Sunni Muslims. Gandhi and other leaders of the Indian national movement supported the Muslim demand regarding the Khilafat for various reasons. Thus it was high time to launch and register a protest movement on National basis against the British atrocities. Under the leadership of Gandhi the movement went organised and composed until the tragic event of Chauri Chaura took place, which became the immediate cause for the termination of Non-co-operation movement.
Inauguration of the Non-co-operation Movement:

Gandhi first recommended non-cooperation as a medicine for the Khilafat wrongs at the Khilafat Conference held in Delhi on the 23rd November, 1919, the redress of the Punjab wrongs was, of course, there. He also placed before the Conference broad items of the non-cooperation programme such as renunciation of titles, honours and government service. For the time being, the idea of non-cooperation was lost in the proceedings of the Conference. But the events in 1920 brought the idea of non-cooperation to the forefront. The Viceroy's reply to the Khilafat deputation on the 19th January 1920 disappointed the Indian Muslims. The Khilafatists thought of sending a deputation to London. According to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad the matter was discussed for six long hours in the drawing room of Hakim Ajmal Khan. Nothing came out of the discussion; thereafter, the matter was referred to a sub-committee consisting of Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Azad, to go into the question of alternative methods if the constitutional methods failed to achieve the object. They again discussed the matter with Gandhi at the residence of Sushil Rudra, Principal of St. Stephan's College, Delhi. Gandhi placed his non-co-operation programme before Azad and Ajmal Khan; it was here that the Non-cooperation movement was "conceived".

Soon after this Maulana Azad placed the non-cooperation programme before the public at the Khilafat Conference held at Meerut on the 22nd January 1920. Subsequently he referred to it in his presidential address to the Bengal
Khilafat Conference held in February 1920, in Calcutta. Gandhi issued his first manifesto on non-cooperation on the 10th March 1920. He stated: "Non-Cooperation is...the only remedy left open to us". 4

On the 7th July, 1920, the Non-co-operation Committee appointed by the Khilafat Conference at its meeting at Allahabad held in June, 1920, announced its programme. 5 It was in this programme that the boycott of schools, colleges and law courts first figured. The committee also incorporated the boycott of councils and surrender of titles, honours and honorary offices and appealed to the public that "Swadeshi must be pushed forward without waiting for the 1st August, for it is an eternal rule of conduct not to be interrupted even when the settlement arrives". A complete hartal was to be observed by the people on the 1st August 1920 6 - the day fixed for the inauguration of the Non-cooperation movement.

Gandhi, as previously planned, inaugurated the Non-cooperation movement on the 1st August, 1920 by returning his Kaiser-I-Hind gold medal, Zulu War medal, Boer War medal with a letter to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy. The letter briefly stated his reasons for returning the medals and starting the Non-cooperation movement. He wrote: "... Valuable as these honours have been to me, I cannot wear them with an easy conscience so long as my Musalman Countrymen have to labour under a wrong done to their religious sentiments... The attitude of the Imperial and your Excellency's Government on the Punjab question has given me (an) additional cause for
grave dissatisfaction ..... I can retain neither respect nor affection for such a
Government".  
Gandhi, Shaukat Ali and other leaders toured extensively through the
Punjab, Sind and Madras, addressing huge meetings on the Khilafat question.
Gandhi asked the people to replace the off-shouted slogans- "Mahatma Gandhi-
ki-jai" and "Mohammad Ali ShaukatAli-ki-jai"- by " Hindu Musalman- ki-jai".
He said: "There should be only three cries recognized, "Alla-ho-Akbar" to be
joyously sung out by Hindus and Muslims showing that God alone was great
and no other. The second should be "Bande Mataram" or "Bharat Mata-ki-jai".
And the third should be "Hindu-Mus salman-ki-jai" without which there was no
victory for India, no true demonstration of the greatness of God. He preferred
"Bande Mataram" to "Bharat Mata-ki-jai".  

The provincial Congress Committees were unanimous in accepting the
principles of non-cooperation, but they differed about the details of the
programme. Even before the special Congress had met in Calcutta in
September, 1920, the Gujarat and the Bihar Political Conferences, under the
presidentship of Abbas Tyabji and Rajendra Prasad respectively, had passed
resolutions supporting the non-cooperation.  

To the conservative minds, Gandhi's non-cooperation appeared to be a
negative movement. But his Non-co-operation with England presupposed the
coop eration of all Indians. Gandhi succeeded in establishing this unity in India
and in bridging over the differences, especially between Hindus and Muslims.
He created for the first time something like a real Indian Nation, all United in a
uniform national sentiment. He regarded the union between Hindus and Muslims as a fundamental condition for a free India.

The special session of the Congress began in Calcutta on September 4th, 1920. It was convened to consider the recommendations of Hunter Committee, the Treaty of Sevres, and non-cooperation. There was a huge gathering of 20,000 persons including 5,000 delegates representing all provinces. Muslim delegates attended the session in large numbers. Lajpat Rai, who had recently returned from America, was elected to preside over the momentous session.

Gandhi prepared the draft of the non-cooperation resolution in the train itself at the request of Shaukat Ali. Gandhi was at sea as to who would support the non-cooperation resolution and who would oppose it. He only saw an imposing phalanx of veteran warriors assembled for the fray—Mrs. Besant, Pandit Malaviya, Vijayaraghavachari, Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das and Jinnah.11

Before Gandhi’s resolution on non-cooperation was conferred in the open session, the Subjects Committee deliberated on it. It met on the premises of the Indian Association. About three hundred members attended it. The discussion lasted for six hours.12 Gandhi met with the "most terrific and formidable opposition that he had ever faced before, in his political career".13 The debate was all though orderly thought at times “the speeches were strong and enlivened here and there by sharp passage-at-arms among the opponents".14

The substantive motion before the Subjects Committee was the resolution drafted by the Reception Committee and thirty amendments. The
principal amendments were moved by Gandhi, C.R.Das and Bipin Chandra Pal. Gandhi's amendment was his resolution on non-cooperation; C.R.Das's amendment was on the lines of the Reception Committee resolution; and that of Bipin Chandra Pal was practically a super session of Gandhi's resolution. In the Subjects Committee, Gandhi was at his best. According to an eye-witness account: "He was heard with rapt attention-amidst pin drop silence. The smooth flow of his easy eloquence was a treat. His beaming eyes, the mellowness of his voice and the earnestness with which he evidently spoke so dispassionately with such absolute fairness that it seemed a judge was giving his charge to the jury."  

Gandhi was very serious about his resolution. Neither "friendly appeals" nor "hostile threats" could move him from his position. His speech was so lucid and convincing that he "practically demolished" the entire case of eminent leaders like C.R.Das, B.C.Pal, M.A. Jinnah, M.M.Malaviya, Lala Lajapat Rai, Mrs. Annie Besant and others. It decided the fate not only of the Congress but also of the country.

Bipin Chandra Pal's amendment was first put to vote and declared lost by 124 to 140 votes. He was not satisfied with the counting and he demanded a re-poll. Again his amendment was lost by 135 to 161 votes. Then a poll was taken on Gandhi's amendment, which was carried by 148 to 133 votes.

The resolution he placed before the Subjects Committee envisaged non-cooperation because of the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs; it did not appeal to C. Raghavachariar. He told Gandhi: "If non-cooperation was to be declared,
why should it be with reference to particular wrongs? The absence of Swaraj was the biggest wrong that the country was labouring under; it should be against that and that non-cooperation should be directed”. Motilal Nehru also wanted the demand for Swaraj to be included in the resolution. Gandhi readily accepted it. He told the Congress that if there was a sufficient response to his programme of non-cooperation, Swaraj would be obtained in one year.

Another amendment Gandhi accepted was the boycott of British goods, which was included at the instance of C. Raghavachariyar. But Gandhi was not quite happy about it. The word "gradual" was added with regard to the boycott of schools, colleges and law courts. This made Gandhi's resolution moderate.

Gandhi moved this amended resolution in the open session with humility and yet with firmness. He said," I stand before you in fear of God and a sense of duty". The resolution said that both the Indian and the Imperial Governments had signally failed in doing justice to the Muslims of India, and that the Prime Minister had deliberately broken his pledge given to them in regard to the Khilafat. Both the Governments had "grossly neglected or failed to protect the innocent people of the Punjab and punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour towards them". They had exonerated Sir Michael O' Dwyer who "proved himself, directly or indirectly, responsible for most of the Official crimes, and callous to the sufferings of the people placed under his administration. The debates in the House of Commons and House of Lords had betrayed a woeful lack of sympathy with the people of India and
showed virtual support of the systematic terrorism and frightfulness adopted in the Punjab. The only way "to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swaraj". The Congress felt that there was no other alternative left open for the people of India except non-cooperation till all the said wrongs were righted and Swaraj was established.

The following steps were suggested to achieve these objectives:

a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation of nominated posts in local bodies;

b) Refusal to attend Government levees, and official and semi-official functions held by government officials, or in their honour;

c) Gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges in the various provinces;

d) Gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants and establishment of private arbitration courts by them for the settlement of private disputes;

e) Refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia;

f) Withdrawal by the candidates from election to the reformed councils and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election.

g) Boycott of foreign goods.
Non-cooperation was also conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice without which no nation could make progress. It was also suggested that Swadeshi in piece goods, and, hand spinning and hand-weaving should be encouraged.\textsuperscript{22}

Gandhi made a very spirited speech in the open session. His whole argument for non-cooperation ran as follows: "... Musalmans cannot remain as honourable men and follow their Prophet if they do not vindicate their honours at any cost. The Punjab has cruelly, brutally treated on inasmuch as one man in the Punjab was made to crawl on his belly, the whole of India crawled on her belly, and if we are worthy sons and daughters of India, we should be pledged to remove these wrongs. But we have not been able to bend the Government to our will. We can not rest satisfied with a mere expression of angry feeling... If the Congress can not bring Justice from unwilling hands how can it vindicate its existence and its honour?"

The sharpest differences arouse over the boycott of Legislative Councils. Gandhi believed that Swaraj could not come through them. But on the other hand C.R. Das spearheaded the group, which was opposed to their boycott. He wanted to use them for the benefit of the country. The difference between the viewpoints of Gandhi and Das may appear wide but this was not really so. Basically, it was a difference of tactics. Never in its life had the "Congress witnessed such determined opposition as was offered to the non-cooperation resolution".\textsuperscript{23} But Gandhi carried the day by a clear majority of 982 votes. Lajpat Rai personally superintended the count, which lasted for six
hours. Thus the non-cooperation resolution was passed on September 9, by 1,855 votes against 873.

The special Congress adopted the non-cooperation plan as a means to achieve the two objectives, which it now set before itself: Swaraj for India and correcting the Khilafat wrongs. Nationalism and Khilafatism were organically related, as the confirmed twin objects of the entire country. The Muslim League also joined in the National Movement. For some years it had been holding its annual session at the same time and place as the Congress. It held a special session at Calcutta on September 7. The league president, Jinnah, said: "There is no other course open to the people except to inaugurate the policy of non-cooperation though not necessarily the programme of Mr. Gandhi."

In November and December 1920, elections were held under the New Reforms. The elections demonstrated the influence the Congress had over the people. Even those who opposed Gandhi at Calcutta and had filed their nomination papers withdrew their names from the contest. C.R. Das, Rajendra Prasad, Mazharul Haque, N.C. Kelkar, Gopabandhu Das and many others retired from the contest in obedience to the Congress decision at Calcutta. In some constituencies no candidate offered himself for election. At some places the elections were simply a shame affair with only one candidate in the field. On an average about 20 to 25 percent voters exercised their franchise. Government used their pressure all over the country to create some enthusiasm over the elections but they failed miserably. In fact a large percentage of voters- in some constituencies about 90 to 95 percent of voters- expressed their
sympathy with the Congress programme of boycott of Councils and abstained from voting. At some polling booths, no voter turned up to exercise his franchise.  

Gandhi had to cross one more hurdle. The Congress had yet to deliberate finally on non-cooperation. After the Calcutta session, Gandhi did not rest. He visited places, which had little or no political activity and infused enthusiasm there. Thus he included the spirit of non-cooperation over the greater part of the country by December 1920.

The defeat at Calcutta did not deter those who were opposed to Gandhi's non-cooperation resolution. They now pinned their hope on the regular session of the Congress, which was to be held at Nagpur. According to B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, "C. R. Das brought a contingent of about 250 delegates from East Bengal and Assam, bore their expenses to and fro, and spent Rs. 36,000 from his pocket to undo what was done in Calcutta". But at Nagpur, Das, instead of opposing the resolution on Non-cooperation, actually moved it in the open session. Lajpat Rai also supported it. The eleventh hour change in Das's attitude was unexpected. Prithwis Chandra Ray, a friend and biographer of C.R. Das, ascribed the change in Das's attitude towards non-cooperation resolution to a secret Gandhi-Das Pact. But this is perhaps not true. There seems to have been a conference between Gandhi and Das at Nagpur. Das insisted on the removal of the clause regarding boycott of Councils to which Gandhi had no objection because the elections to the Councils were already over. The preservation of the clause was unnecessary if not totally useless.
C.R. Das narrated the story as follows: "It was at my instance that the clause with regard to the boycott of Councils was removed because at the time of Nagpur session, the elections were practically over..."\(^{29}\)

The support of C.R. Das and Lajpat Rai assured the smooth passage of the non-cooperation resolution. Sitaramayya rightly points out: "the support that Gandhi obtained at Nagpur was undoubtedly greater than what he had in Calcutta... The stool of the Non-cooperation (at Calcutta) was resting on but one leg. At Nagpur, it stood on all its four legs with perfect equipoise. Gandhi and Nehru, Das and Lalji were all for it.\(^{30}\)

The resolution passed at Nagpur reaffirmed the Calcutta resolution including the boycott of educational institutions, law courts, foreign goods and cloth. Great emphasis was put on hand spinning and hand weaving. The resolution further wished every section and every single man and women in the country to make utmost possible contribution of self-sacrifice to the national movement. A band of national workers under the name of Indian National Service was to be organized, and to finance such a national service, a fund called the All-India Tilak Swaraj Fund was to be raised.\(^{31}\) The resolution congratulated the people on the progress made by them in working the programme of non-cooperation especially with regard to the boycott of Councils by voters. It further said that since the councils elected under the prevailing circumstances, do not represent the country, and (Congress) trusts that those who have allowed themselves to be elected in spite of the deliberate abstention from the polls of an over-whelming majority of their constituencies,
will see their way to resign their seats in the Council. The resolution expected that policemen and soldiers would refuse to subordinate their creed and country to the fulfillment of orders of their officers. The resolution emphasized the policy of non-violence in word and deed among the people themselves, as in respect of Government, and that "the spirit of violence is not only contrary to the growth of a true spirit of democracy but actually retards the enforcement (if necessary) of the other stages of non-cooperation".

Gandhi explained his position when he moved the resolution at Nagpur for a change in the Congress creed. "What I say is that it is derogatory to national dignity to think of permanence of British connection at any cost.... I do not for one moment suggest that we want to end British connection at all costs unconditionally. If the British connection is for the advancement of India, we do not want to destroy it. But if it is inconsistent with our national self-respect, then it is our bounden duty to destroy it." Gandhi carried the day at Nagpur and was now the undisputed leader of the Congress. The chief legacy of the Nagpur Congress was that the people realized their future lay in their own hands, and not in the hands of the British.

The Nagpur Congress at last set its seal to the programme of non-cooperation. The unity that prevailed at Nagpur enthused the people. The year 1921 opened with a new spirit of freedom and fearlessness. The feeling of "oppression and frustration was completely gone. This made them fearless; they did not bother about the consequences of their activities. Gandhi said that his hopes were more on masses. This was the first time when a mass movement
was initiated in India. The destruction of the prestige of the British rule in India marked the beginning of its end. The events in 1921 made a vigorous onslaught on it.

There was a general feeling that the British Government was God-ordained and none could challenge its authority. Gandhi gave a mortal blow to this myth. Even moderates on whom the Government had depended so much, showed signs of desperation and even defiance. Even members of the Viceroy Executive Council were not immune from that contamination. Sir Sankaran Nair resigned from the Viceroy's Council.

Another item in the non-cooperation programme was the boycott of law courts. The one basic function of law courts is to meet out justice to the subjects of the state. It is also obligatory on the state that justice should be inexpensive and speedy. The law courts as they functioned in India under the British Government fell short of this. Everybody felt the immoral character of law courts and it found expression in the popular saying: Adalat me jo jita, so hara, jo hara, so mara. (Success in the court is defeat: defeat is death).

**The response to the call and its impact:**

The response to the call for boycott of courts by lawyers was not widespread, but it was not discouraging; some of the best-known lawyers left their lucrative practice to join the Non-cooperation movement. From U.P Pandit Motilal Nehru, from Bengal C.R.Das and J.M. Sen Gupta, from the Punjab Dr. Saif-ud-din Kitchlew and Pandit Ram Bhuj Datt, from Gujrat
Vallabhbhai Patel, from Bombay M.R. Jayakar and L.B. Bhopatkar, and from Delhi Asaf Ali and Mohammad Taqi suspended their legal practice in response to the call of the Indian National Congress. In all, more than 1,500 lawyers suspended their practice. Lawyers, as a class, showed sympathy for the spirit underlying the Non-cooperation movement. A number of bar associations passed resolutions condemning the repressive policy of the government.33

The boycott of Government and Government aided schools and Colleges was another item in the non-cooperation programme. Soon after the Calcutta Session of the Congress, Gandhi and the Ali Brothers made efforts to persuade the Aligarh and Banaras University authorities to nationalize the universities, but they failed. Nevertheless, hundreds of students came out of them as a result of the Non-cooperation movement. Before the Nagpur session of the Congress, students came out of their schools and colleges from the Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Sind, U.P., Madras and Bengal. The decision to non-cooperate was confirmed by the All-India College Students' Conference at Nagpur on the 28th December 1920 by an overwhelming majority. In the beginning of 1921 thousands of students joined the movement. The withdrawals from colleges and schools affiliated to the Calcutta University were 27 percent and 23 percent respectively of their total number. The university suffered a loss of no less than £20,000 under examination fee. 34 The total number of Students from all over India who left their studies was about 90,000. In many provinces, schools refused their grants in aid to become free of government control. In other words they became national schools.
The movement made its impact even in England. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, the socialist leader, left her college in England and returned to India. A.K. Pillai, who was studying at the Oxford University, gave up his studies on account of the Non-cooperation Movement. The movement attracted a large number of students who later on played an important role as freedom fighters. Some of them were: Zakir Hussein, Lal Bahadur Shastri, T.N.Singh, B.V.Keskar, Naba Krishna Chaudhary, Jayaprakash Narayan, Ganga Saran Sinha, Hare Krishna Mehtab, Pyarelal, J.N.Sahni, Lala Jagat Narain, Lala Feroze Chand and Chandra Shekhar Azad.

The boycott of schools and colleges was accompanied by opening of national schools and colleges. National Universities like the National Muslim University (Jamia Millia) at Aligarh, the Gujarat Vidyapitha, the Gauriya Vidya Ayatan in Bengal, the Kashi Vidyapitha, the Bihar Vidya Pitha and Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapitha were opened. In these universities the system of education was national and emphasis was laid on the freedom of the country. To inculcate the spirit of patriotism among the students, histories of Ireland and Italy were taught. Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution and Mills' on Liberty also found place in the course of one of the universities. No wonder that these Universities produced young men who became soldiers in the fight of India's Freedom. On the one hand they produced men like Lal Bahadur Shastri and on the other they produced violent revolutionaries like Chandra Shekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev.
Another item of the Non-cooperation programme was prohibition. Gandhi was opposed to drinking because he considered it the worst evil. He wrote: "I told drink to be more damnable than thieving and perhaps even prostitution. Is it not often the parent of both." Besides the "immorality" of drinking, he considered it ruinous physically, intellectually and economically. But as far as the Non-cooperation movement was concerned prohibition had two aspects. It aimed at saving the addict from the deleterious effect of drinking and depriving the Government of the revenue it received from the sale of liquor. This programme appealed to the mass of Indian people, the majority of whom were teetotalers. In certain parts of the country public opinion became so strong against drinking that even the contractors of liquor shops did not bid for licenses to run toddy and arrack shops. The Government revenue from liquor shops fell considerably. The movement was such a success that people abstained not only from liquor but also from other intoxicants like opium, ganja etc.

The British Government partly in order to honour the distinguished persons in the country, but largely to have powerful supporters, conferred titles and honours on leading public men. The recipients of honours from the Government were mainly big Zamindars, Jagirdars and moneyed people who were generally drawn from the conservative section of society. In return for the honours conferred on them, they were expected to give their allegiance to the Government. In most cases, these honours were conferred on persons without any personality or sense of honour, i.e., on those expected to be over ready to
toe the line of the Government. So, it was not expected that money persons would surrender their titles and honours and thereby would be ready to incur the displeasure of the Government. But these title-holders lost their prestige in their own localities. The titles, which were symbols of respectability, became the badge of insult, ridicule and shame. Title-holders were "reduced to the position of untouchables".

The boycott of foreign goods was also an item in the programme of the Non-cooperation movement. Gandhi was originally opposed to the boycott of foreign goods. He considered it a form of violence, totally impracticable and vindictive. In spite of the clause demanding the boycott of foreign goods being a part of resolution, Gandhi did not propagate it. He restricted the scope of the boycott of foreign goods to that of foreign cloth, which was the principal imported item of consumers' goods. He stood for Swadeshi pure and simple. And Swadeshi to him meant increase in the production and use of Khadi.

The quantum of imports from Britain as far as cloth was concerned was considerably sliced. Trade in foreign cloth was going down almost in every province of India. In Sind the foreign cloth trade dwindled by 50 percent. In other parts of India like the C.P., Bihar and the city of Bombay the position was the same. The impact of the movement was so powerful that some Indian business houses had to close down. A firm hit by the boycott campaign wrote to Gandhi: "With the present movement of Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods, we have been brought to a very critical condition. Our Manchester office has had to be closed. Our stocks are all lying unsold and we have
suffered unbearable losses and are threatened with more, unless things improve, which is not likely...It is almost unbearable. So much so that there is no way for us but to go into liquidation to relieve ourselves from the unbearable liabilities and responsibilities that we owe to our different creditors, both English and Indian. At Manchester, the cotton manufacturing firms like Graham and Company Limited, Ros Hewlett & Company and Thomas Dinnin & Company Limited, went into liquidation for 770,000, and 283,77, and 186,666 pounds respectively.

Boycott of foreign cloth cut down the import of foreign cloth into India, particularly from England. It directly encouraged hand spinning and hand weaving which was the main rural Industry in India. It had died soon after the British came to India. Its disappearance had been the main cause of rural poverty in India. Gandhi was the first Indian leader to make a serious effort to popularize the use of Khadi among Indians. It killed two birds with one stone. First, it saved the money that was drained out of India on account of the import of foreign cloth; secondly, it improved employment or partial to a large number of people suffering from unemployment, and, thus they could better their lot at least a little. In spite of the fact that khadi was costlier than the imported or Indian mill made cloth, its demand increased. A large number of spinning wheels began to hum in Indian homes; looms were started; and khadi worth lakhs of rupees was produced. It seriously affected the British commercial interests in India, and, to the same degree, brought India nearer freedom.
Khadi also played an important role in the national life of India from another angle. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, it became the "livery of freedom"; it also became a symbol of revolt against the Government authority. It created a sense of comradeship among the freedom fighters.

The Meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Bezwada on the 31st March 1921 marked the end of the first phase of the Non-cooperation movement. Gandhi was of view that the various items of the Non-cooperation programme particularly the boycott of councils and educational institutions had made its impact on the people. Therefore, campaign for these served little purpose. Instead, he pleaded for popularizing the charakha, for he believed that it would lead India to Swaraj. Therefore, efforts were diverted in that direction and the target of twenty lakh charakhas plying all over the country was fixed and nearly achieved. Another item of the Bezwada programme was the collection of one crore rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund; the fund was oversubscribed by fifteen lakh rupees. The third item laid emphasis on enrolling one crore Congress members but the target could not be achieved. Nevertheless membership increased tremendously. But the figures of membership did not convey the real following of the Congress. As Jawaharlal Nehru stated: "The number of members on its rolls, large as it was, was only a feeble reflection of its widespread representative character, for membership depended not on the people's desire to join but our capacity to reach remote villages." The number of the Congress Committees increased. They came into being in innumerable districts, tahsils and villages and even in the municipal wards in some cities.
The exact number of Congress committees in the various provinces is not known but they were roughly estimated at 50,000. The wide network of Congress Committees with lakhs of members really made the Congress a mass organization. It sucked in those sections of society, which had been outside the pull, and the whirlpool of politics before. The peasants and workers joined the Congress. The women, who till then had lived a sheltered life, also came forward to join. It was Gandhi who made the Congress a "mass organization". The greatest achievement of Gandhi was the participation by the masses in the movement. And they participated without any fear.

Events were moving swiftly as India was passing through revolutionary times. A spirit of militancy was abroad. There were disturbances in Rae Bareilly in January 1921; a powerful Akali movement sprang up in the Punjab in March 1921; in April 1921, the peasants of Mulshi Petha in Maharashtra offered Satyagraha; Nagpur witnessed serious incidents on account of the picketing of liquor shops. There was an emigration of Assam tea garden coolies who were subjected to inhuman oppression and indignities for decades. The Non-cooperation movement gave courage to rise against the sub-human treatment they were getting. The Government became concerned about the fortunes of the European tea garden owners. The migrated coolies were not allowed to board the railway coaches. This led to the Assam Bengal Railway Strike and then to the strike of the employees of the steamer company (R.S.N) plying in East Bengal rivers. Then came the Malegaon outbreak in April involving serious loss of life and property.
The critical political situation forced Viceroy Reading's hands to call Gandhi for an interview at Simla. The interview took place in the second half of May 1921, largely through the efforts of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. At these meetings, discussion centered on the "causes of discontent in India, including, the Punjab disturbances, the treaty of Severs and the general condition of the people. Curiously enough Swaraj was not discussed at these interviews. The only common point between Gandhi and the Viceroy was non-violence. The interview was unsuccessful. But it was for the first time in the history of the British rule in India that the representative of the King-Emperor was eager to seek an interview with the popular leader of a mass movement.

The Bezwada resolution was finally implemented by the time the All-India Congress Committee met at Bombay on the 28th July, 1921, except that the target of one crore members could not be achieved. At its meeting at Bombay A.I.C.C gave call for complete boycott of foreign cloth by the 30th September, 1921, and for the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales.

Soon after the All-India Congress committee meeting at Bombay on the 31st July 1921, bonfires of clothes made of foreign cloth were made in various parts of India. The people responded to the call with enthusiasm. One such bonfire was lit on the 30th July 1921, in Bombay on the grounds of the Elphinstone Mills. The Bombay Chronicle published an account of this bonfire in the following words: "It was a vast crowd that had gathered there; it would only be counted in lakhs and not in thousands; ...... opposite the platform was
a nicely decorated mount of foreign clothes of varieties. There were solar hats, neckties, collars and the fine silk also of foreign manufacture; in the center there was huge heap of foreign caps and coats and other things. It was a gaily-decorated affair. Bonfires of foreign clothes became frequent incidents; practically every town in India had similar bonfires.

**The visit of the Prince of Wales:**

The Indian Government, in consultation with the British Government, arranged the visit of the Prince of Wales to counter the Non-cooperation movement. They set store by the visit. Therefore, the Indian Government summoned all their resources to make it a success. People were hired to gather on the streets through which the Prince passed. Even falsehood was used to project the visit as a success. As ill luck would have it, riots broke out in Bombay on 17th November, 1921- the day Prince landed at Apollo Bunder. Gandhi took immediate steps to restore peace. Along with other Congress leaders, he toured the affected areas. He also admitted his responsibility for the violent outburst although he was very particular about the observance of non-violence and peace. India observed a hartal the day Prince landed in Bombay. The authority of the Government was at its lowest ebb. People were openly asking: "who rules India, Reading or Gandhi?" It was apparent that the "willing allegiance of the nation was no longer to the British rule but to the Indian National Congress". As a result of the shock of the boycott, the Viceroy broke down.
The Congress viewed the visit as a faint means to reinforcement of the British rule. Therefore, without meaning any disrespect to the person of the Prince, it employed all its resources to make the visit a failure. And verily it succeeded. Only flunkeys attended the receptions and functions arranged in honour of the Prince. In Allhabad the hartal was "complete and voluntary... Not even a pan or bidi shop was open ". The Allhabad University students did not bother to turn up to honour the guest! It was reported that "out of total of 1,200 students not more than 20 attended the meeting in the Senate Hall ......."

In spite of the Government propaganda proclaiming the visit a success, the Prince came to know the truth. In a letter to Montagu he wrote: "They (the British) think that my tour is a success and I must reluctantly tell you that it is no such thing."47

The political situation in India was becoming more severe everyday. The response of the people to the call of the Congress to boycott the visit of the Prince and make bonfire of foreign clothes unquestionably showed the unpopularity of the Government. Its prestige was shaken. No wonder, even the Viceroy felt "puzzled and perplexed". The Government suppressed the right of association by declaring the volunteer organizations illegal. Many Congress committees passed resolution asking all Congress members to enlist themselves as volunteers. The spirit of defiance was everywhere dominating the mind of the people-whom only a year ago was considered by the Government as dumb and dead to all such feelings.
The Government denied the right of speech by proclaiming the Seditious Meetings Act in the various parts of India. The Government arrested a large number of people all over the country. The repression was in full swing. On the 3rd December 1921, Lala Lajpat Rai, K. Santhanam, Dr. Gopichand Bhargava and Malik Lal Khan were arrested at the Provincial Congress committee office at Lahore while holding a general meeting of the Committee to consider the political situation in the Province for violating the Seditious Meetings Act. Many important Sikh leaders were also arrested. S.E. Stokes, an American settled in India, Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Gurubax Rai were also arrested.48

In the U.P many important leaders including Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Purushottamdas Tandon, Choudhari Khaliquzzaman, Mohan Lal Saxena, and Harakaran Nath Mishra were arrested. Soon thereafter, fifty-four members of the U.P Congress Committee were arrested en bloc.49

C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. T.S. Rajan and Ramaswami Naikar were arrested in the Madras Presidency. In Assam T.R. Phookan, Mouli Tayabulla and ten others were arrested. In Delhi, L. Shankar Lal, Hanumant Sahai, Suraj Bhan and Asaf Ali were taken into custody.50 In short; all the important leaders throughout India were arrested. Many political workers were prohibited from making speeches at public meetings.

While this was going on in the Punjab and other parts of the country, Calcutta made history by openly defying the Government in a perfectly non-violent manner. By the end of November, the Bengal Congress Committee met in camera to decide the future course of action. It decided upon civil
disobedience, and in view of the state of emergency, it vested its powers in C.R.Das, who was authorized to name his successor. C.R.Das wanted to "make a modest beginning" in this regard. He decided on the sale of Khaddar by volunteers as a method of offering civil disobedience. His idea was that if the Government prosecuted the volunteers for selling khaddar, then its action would be regarded arbitrary and unjustified by the public. Thus, a large number of people would rally round the Congress. To begin with, he sent his son, Chiraranjan Das, to hawk khaddar in the city. On the 6th December 1921, he was arrested. The next day, Basanti Devi, wife of C.R.Das, along with Urmila Devi, his sister, and Suniti Devi was also arrested. Their arrests had a astonishing effect on the public. The news of the arrests spread like a wild fire throughout Calcutta. A contemporary described the scene: " A scene was witnessed in Bara Bazaar, where the arrest took place, such as comes but once in life-time of a nation. Marwaris joined, Muslims joined, Bhattias joined, Sikhs poured in, coolies, mill-hands, schoolboys, all rushed to the scene. Some wept, some cried, some ran aimlessly- the wild multitude watched and watched and then long after melted away with brewing thoughts such as brew only on the eve of a revolution.

This was not all. Even the loyalists resented the arrests of the ladies. As Mrs. Das stepped into the police van, many constables came up to her and took a vow to resign from their jobs. S.N.Mallik, a top liberal politician of Bengal, left the Government House as a protest where he had gone to attend a dinner party, when he heard of the arrest of Mrs. Das. The people were so much
exited over the arrests and the atmosphere had become so tense that the Government felt compelled to release the ladies and it was given out that they were arrested by mistake.

The Amrita Bazaar Patrika, as a protest against the arrest of the ladies, came out without editorials. The editorial column was kept blank. The paper wrote: "The only course open to us now is to cease writing editorials, till we feel we can write them to the advantage of the country. Nothing but news and reports will appear in these columns till then." In a few days two prisons in Calcutta were filled with political prisoners. Camp prisons were opened but they too were full soon. Masses came forward to court arrest. Thus, thousands of people went to jail.

The government was afraid that the visit of the Prince to Calcutta would not pass off smoothly. At last on 8th December (before the arrest of C.R.Das) Lord Ronald shay, the Governor of Bengal, saw C.R.Das to discuss the issues involved. But no means to resolve the deadlock were found. Lord Ronald Shay communicated the gist of talks he had with C.R.Das to the Viceroy. The Government wanted the Congress to waive the boycott of the visit of the Prince when he visited Calcutta. Das could not promise to do so, because it was the decision of the Congress and he could not revoke it. C.R. Das told the Governor that these activities would cease if the Government withdrew all repressive orders. The Government failed to gain its point. Thereafter on the 10th December 1921, C.R.Das and his associates were arrested. According to the estimate of the Bengal Government during the three days preceding the
arrest of C.R.Das nearly 500 persons were arrested. Among those arrested at Calcutta were: Abul Kalam Azad, Subhas Chandra Bose, B.N. Sasmal, Maulana Akram Khan, Ambika Prasad Bajpai, Padmaraj Jain, Bholanath Burman, J.Pal, son of Bipin Chandra Pal, and Harilal Gandhi, son of Mahatma Gandhi. Again there was anger and excitement over the arrest of C.R.Das and others. As a protest against these arrests, the members of the Calcutta Bar cancelled the banquet to which they had invited the Viceroy.

It was in these circumstances that Madan Mohan Malaviya made efforts to mediate between the Government and the non-cooperators to restore normal conditions. Malaviya deputation met the viceroy in Calcutta on the 21st December 1921. The reply of the viceroy to the deputation was a queer mixture of humility and threat. He was agreeable to the calling of a conference as asked by Malaviya deputation provided the non-cooperation gave up their campaign of picketing and enrolling of volunteers. Since Reading got no assurance on behalf of the non-cooperators to suspend what Gandhi termed as "defensive civil disobedience", he refused to call a conference.

Before the deputation met the Viceroy on the 21st December 1921, Malaviya paid a visit to C.R.Das and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the Presidency Jail, Calcutta. He felt that if he could persuade the Bengal leaders to his point of view, Gandhi would attach greater importance to his proposals. From 19th to 21st December 1921, Madan Mohan Malaviya shuttled between the Viceroy House and the Presidency Jail several times. The result of their
discussions was a telegram from C.R.Das and Abul Kalam Azad to Gandhi. It read:

We recommended calling off hartal on the following conditions:

i) Government calling a conference (which shall) soon consider all questions raised by Congress.

ii) Withdrawal of recent Government communiqué and police and magisterial orders.

iii) Releasing all prisoners under this new law unconditionally.

To this Gandhi replied the same day:

Composition (and) date of conference should be previously determined. Releases should include prisoners convicted for Fatwas, including Karachi ones. Subject to these conditions in addition (to) yours we can in my opinion waive hartal.

After the receipt of Gandhi's telegram, Madan Mohan Malaviya again saw Lord Reading and told him about the additional terms of Gandhi at which it is reported the Viceroy got annoyed. The next day Malaviya again sent another telegram to Gandhi in which an additional demand was added to the calling off of the hartal that "pending conclusion of the proposed conference, non-cooperation activities other than relating to national education. Swadeshi and prohibition of intoxicants, without picketing in any case, will be suspended..." To this Gandhi replied: "Regret exceedingly inability (to) give undertaking asked. Non-cooperation can cease only after satisfactory result (of) Conference. In no case have I authority (to) decide for Congress." But Gandhi
was prepared to attend the Conference unconditionally in his individual capacity.

The genuine point in the negotiations was that Gandhi wanted all points regarding the proposed Round Table Conference to be settled in advance. He also wanted that the Fatwa prisoners, including the Karachi ones, should be released. On the contrary the Viceroy did not want to be bound by any conditions. It appears that his aim in entering into negotiations was to persuade the Congress leaders to call off the boycott of the Prince's visit to Calcutta on the 24th December 1921. On the 21st December, the Viceroy was rather impolite and abrupt to the deputation—consisting of Malaviya, Jinnah and Besant.

Gandhi did not object to the quelling of violence by the Government but he could not tolerate suppression of free expression of opinion. The negotiations were unsuccessful. Gandhi was conscious of the weakness of the non-cooperators. He believed that they had not shown enough strength by way of self-sacrifice. He wrote: "India has not yet incontestably proved her strength. Her suffering is great indeed, but nothing and not prolonged enough for the object in view. She has to go through greater discipline". 57

Gandhi made it a pre-condition for holding of the proposed parleys that the Fatwa prisoners should be released. This additional condition by Gandhi was a wise move. In case he had agreed to the clause regarding the releases as it stood, the Ali Brothers would not have been released. Any Round Table Conference without them could not be a representative conference because they
were then the most popular leaders of the Muslims. Therefore any conference with the Government without the Ali Brothers would have been a blunder. The Ali Brothers and the Muslims might have taken it as an act of treachery on the part of the Hindus not to have made efforts to have them at the conference table. And this might have created a schism in the nationalist ranks. Lord Reading was eager to divide Gandhi and Mohammad Ali. It should have been no surprise if he had tried to play the same game again. Thus, by insisting on the release of the Ali Brothers, Gandhi warded off the danger of a split in the Congress.

At that time, it might have seemed that Gandhi made a mistake in rejecting the proposals for a conference. But now when the official papers are available, one cannot endorse that view. Madan Mohan Malaviya was not the first to make efforts for the summoning of a Round Table Conference. It had been discussed a few times before also. But every time the Government of India rejected the proposal for a discussion on it in the Legislative Assembly. The proposal for a calling a Round Table Conference was rejected as early as the 27th January 1921. After that, whenever the question of calling a conference came, the government rejected it. Even in December 1921, the various provincial governments were not in favour of a Round Table Conference. The Governor of Madras even hinted at what could be the reason for the assurance of calling a Round Table Conference. He wrote to the Viceroy: "We understand that the offer of a conference is designed to produce a purely temporary arrangement to tide over the Princes visit." Therefore, it would be too much to
believe that the Government was really and genuinely interested in such a conference.

The Ahmedabad session of the Congress took place in the last week of December 1921. One of the resolutions appealed to all to "offer themselves for arrest by belonging to volunteer organizations to be formed throughout the country in terms of the resolutions of the working committee arrived at in Bombay on the 3rd Day of November last."58

There was an unprecedented and unexpected political consciousness in the country. Even the Government Servants could not remain unaffected by the political tempo of the time. There were a large number of resignations from government service. It percolated even to the ranks of the police. In November 1921, the Commissioner of Police of Calcutta told an officer of the Intelligence Department that a large number of policemen had resigned and "many more were going and he feared that the whole lot would leave the service."

In this state of the country, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and some other moderate leaders made another attempt in a conference in Bombay on the 14th January 1922, to which 300 leading Indians were invited. The purpose of the conference was to "settle the terms of truce" with the Government. Gandhi sympathized fully with the conveners of the conference and attended it on behalf of the non-cooperators. By a resolution the conference asked for the calling of a Round Table Conference between the Government and the representatives of the people. To facilitate such a conference, the representative
Conference wanted the Government to withdraw all notifications and orders restricting the liberty of speech and writing.

At the request of the Conference, Gandhi agreed to suspend picketing of liquor shops and the starting of civil disobedience for a fortnight up to the 31st January 1922. But he did not agree to stop the enlisting of volunteers. However, he was convinced of the uselessness of such a conference. Therefore, he told the Conference: "I have my misgivings about the Round Table Conference becoming successful."

It may be asked if he had misgivings about the Round Table Conference then why did he suspend the Civil Disobedience and picketing of liquor shops. Perhaps Gandhi wanted to get the moral support of, and to wean away, as many moderates as he could from the Government side, or, to use his own words: "to buy the support of those countrymen of mine who are not non-cooperators in order to enlist their sympathy on our side." 59

The Congress Working Committee met on the 17th January and passed a resolution resolving not to start civil disobedience till the 31st January 1922. But it was all hoping against hope. In December 1921, the Government talked of a Round Table Conference to bide time, until the Prince's visit was over; but now that urgency was over. The representatives of the Conference went on sending telegrams to the Viceroy wrote to the secretaries of the Conference: "His Excellency regrets that the proposals now put forward should have been regarded by those who subscribed to the resolution as a response to sentiments which the Viceroy expressed at Calcutta.... No useful purpose would therefore
be served by entering into any detailed examination of their terms." The sponsors of the Conference still pursued the matter but the Government took up an attitude of pure cussedness.

As there was no favourable response from the Viceroy, Gandhi issued his 'ultimatum' to the Viceroy on the 1st February 1922, if the demands were not accepted, to start civil disobedience in Bardoli, a small tahsil, in the Surat district then in the Bombay. He gave seven days' time to the Viceroy to decide and make a declaration accepting the demands of non-cooperators. But, instead of agreeing to the demands made by Gandhi, the Government issued a communique on the 6th February, 1922, in the concluding part of which, it said;" The issue is no longer between this or that program of political advance but between lawlessness with all its dangerous consequences on the one hand, and on the other, the maintenance of those principles which lie at the root of civilized Government."

The suspension of the Movement:

In reply to the Communique of the Government, Gandhi issued a rejoinder in which he replied to every charge contained therein. To prove that the Government indulged in repression, he cited nine cases out of many, of official lawless repression. Hardly had he issued his rejoinder to the communique of the Government, when he read about the tragic happenings at Chauri Chaura, a small village near Gorakhpur, U.P, where an angry mob had forced twenty-two constables and a sub-inspector of police into the police
station and set fire to it. All of them died in the fire, Gandhi was very much pained and agitated at this and decided to scrap all activities in respect of civil disobedience.

The working committee of the Congress met at Bardoli on the 11th and 12th February 1922, and passed a resolution suspending all kinds of activities of civil disobedience. Many leaders did not approve of the suspension of civil disobedience. Lajpat Rai wrote from prison: "We have been defeated and that too very badly. Our defeat is in proportion to the greatness of our leader ". J.L. Banarjee, Syed Mahmud, Mahadev Desai, Subhas Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru, Asaf Ali registered their disappointment.

Many reasons were advanced against the suspension of the civil disobedience. It was argued that violence at Chauri Chaura could not have affected Bardoli. That it was politically unwise. Some argued that suspension was "due to the unfortunate fact that a religious preacher rather than politician is at the helm of affairs". The communists traced the course of suspension of the movement to its bourgeois leadership. The secret service of the Government was of the opinion that the movement was suspended because Bardoli was not ready for it.62

It is very difficult to agree with any of these explanations given for the suspension of the movement. Gandhi explained his position in the article "The Crime of Chauri Chaura" which was described by Romain Rolland as the most "human document ever written".63 Gandhi was a firm believer in non-violence. Therefore, Gandhi could never support any violent movement. The Chauri
Chaura affair was certainly a very gruesome affair. There is no doubt that the people became violent only after one of their leaders had been hit by a sub-inspector of police and firing had been resorted to. On the whole, it appears that people became uncontrollable and violent.

To the people who asked how a disturbance at Chauri Chaura could affect Bardoli, Gandhi's reply was: "Bardoli is but a speck on the map of India. Its effort cannot succeed unless there is a perfect co-operation from other parts. Bardoli's disobedience will be civil only when other parts of India will remain non-violent." The argument of loosing prestige did not bother him in the least. He wrote: "Let the opponent glory in our humiliation or so called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of denial of our oath and sin against God. It is a million times better to appear untrue before the world than to be untrue to ourselves."64

It was not the moral argument, alone which led him to adopt the course he had taken. The situation in the country was unfavourable to the resort of civil disobedience. Hence, Gandhi cannot be accused of sacrificing the interests of country for his own principles. Both the practical exigencies of the situation as well as his moral principles demanded the suspension of the movement. The country was heading towards violence and indiscipline. He was receiving many letters requesting him to suspend the movement even before the Chauri Chaura Tragedy. After the violence in Chauri Chaura even the supporters and sympathizers of the movement demanded that the movement be suspended. The Chauri Chaura incident was "really an index finger". The violence at
Chauri Chaura was not committed by unknown people but by Congressmen. This weighed with Gandhi. He had also been receiving news of indiscipline in the Congress ranks for quite some time.

Thus under these circumstances, Gandhi was unable to direct the fight. There lies the secret of the suspension of the movement. In the circumstances then prevailing in India it was the right decision. Even Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru who were critics of Gandhi’s decision, later on admitted the wisdom of his decision of suspending the civil disobedience.65

The Government felt this was the opportune time to arrest Gandhi who had also anticipated his arrest. On March 9, 1922, he gave his last message in the article "If I am Arrested". He asked the people to maintain peace. On 10th March, he was arrested on the charge of sedition for three articles published in the 'Young India' and was given two years imprisonment on each article to run consecutively—but not concurrently as was the judicial convention; so in all six years.

During the trial Gandhi did not defend himself; in fact practically no non-cooperation prisoner defended himself. In an oral statement he said "I have no desire whatsoever to conceal from this court the fact that to preach disaffection towards the existing system of Government has become almost a passion with me."66 Then in a written statement he explained how from a loyalist and co-operator, he had "become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-cooperator...The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act...then followed the Punjab horrors beginnings with Jallianwala Bagh and
culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations. I discovered too that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Musalmans of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled. Gandhi also stated that the British system of administration was based on the “exploitation of the masses”- which he described as “crime against humanity”. And he thought it would be sinful to co-operate with such a system of administration. He also said in the court, "I was playing with fire. I ran the risk, and if I was set free, I would still do the same."67

It may be relevant to make an assessment of this great movement. Apparently, history may give a verdict of failure, as it had failed to bring Swaraj within one year as promised. In the course of the movement twice Gandhi's loyal supporters differed from him and criticized him. When in December 1921, Malaviya initiated talks for compromise, many thought, he should have agreed to a conference with the Government, as that would, at least, have brought a semblance of Swaraj within one year. But, as by known records, the Viceroy, Reading, was interested only to save his face before the Prince of Wales; so he was eager to make the Congress agree to suspend its programme of the boycott of the Prince. Similar eagerness at two subsequent stages of fight was shown by the Government- the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931 and the Cripps Mission of 1942. On both these occasions, the Government was not sincere in its desire for any understanding. There is no reason to think that in 1931, the Government was more honest in its proposals.
The second instance of public criticism was on the suspension of the civil disobedience movement after the Chauri Chaura tragedy. Purely from political point of view, perhaps, no political leader should have done that. But, Gandhi was not simply a political leader; nor was the motive force behind his movement purely political. In him, we find a strange amalgam of politics and ethics. He wanted to keep the movement non-violent. In his oral statement in the court, he stated-"Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered has done an irreparable harm to my country, or to incur the risk of the mad fury of my people". Yet whenever there was an outburst of that mad popular fury, he suspended the movement. Further, let us consider what would have been the consequences if the movement was not suspended. Practically all the leaders-national, provincial or even local-were in prison. There was a move to lead and guide the movement on wrong lines. Outburst of popular violence would have been no match against the organized violence of the Government. The steamroller of Government repression would have mauled down the courage of the people.

The greatest attainment of the Non-co-operation movement was that it made the inert masses of India bold enough to defy the authority of the mighty British Raj (Government). Gandhi had asked the people to be ready for sacrifice and suffering and to cultivate the virtue of Abhaya or fearlessness. There is a limit to the power of endurance by the people. So it can be said-considering the situation in a historical perspective-that Gandhi's decision of
The Non-cooperation movement made the Indian masses conscious of their strength to stand up before the repression of an alien Government. Gandhi was correct in advising the nation to accelerate slowly and to call off the movement that was going on the wrong track. He gave a touch of new life to every section of the society. In the year 1921, there were 400 labour strikes involving about 5,00,000 workers - a thing almost undreamt of before. He instilled a new life in men and women belonging to the lowest strata of society - the untouchables, the prostitutes, the lepers and similar other sections of society.

There were many ideas Gandhi preached and propagated through the Non-co-operation movement. But his method of revolution was non-violent and peaceful in thought, word and deed. That is why he could say that a Satyagrahi had no enemy. His idea was to fight the evil without harbouring any ill will towards its perpetrators. From this moral juncture he spoke and acted; and from this juncture one should judge him.
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