CHAPTER VII

IMPACT OF THE CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT
The first non-violent revolt of the world history ended in March 1922. From August 1, 1920 to March 1922, it was sustained by the enthusiasm, devotion and self-sacrificing spirit of the people who, lacking in organisation, experience and discipline, were pitted against a powerful Government with almost unlimited material resources — army, police, administrative machinery, funds.

The non-co-operation movement ended with its fundamental objective unattained no doubt, but after inculcating some valuable lessons to the people and particularly to its organizers. The gains in the words of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Report were: (1) the general awakening of the masses to their political rights and privileges, (2) the total loss of faith in the present system of Government, (3) the belief that it was only through their own efforts that India could hope to be free, (4) the faith in the Congress as the only organisation which could properly direct national effort to gain freedom, and (5) the utter failure of repression to cow down the people.¹

Impact of Non-Co-operation Movement on Madhya Pradesh:

Madhya Pradesh was greatly effected by the historic non-co-operation movement of 1920-22. Till 1920, Madhya

¹ Quoted from Tarachand, Op.Cit., pp. 36-37.
Pradesh had never been active in nationalist movement. But the nationalist activities of non-co-operation movement could break the state of isolation and separation in M.P. and filled this Province with a new spirit of patriotism.

Non-Co-operation Movement mainly helped to the growth of political activity in the Hindi C.P., with the result, Hindi politicians gradually rose to dominate the Provincial and Congress politics. Politically Hindi society was less competitive, therefore Hindi politicians could conduct their activities through the medium of a single party - 'the Congress'. Whereas with the presence of rival parties, the Marathi Congress was merely one of a number of parties in the region and that too divided between Nagpur and Berar. Thus the existing position further helped Hindi politicians to come in prominence in the provincial politics.

With the result of this spectacular movement the extremist leaders of Marathi C.P. like G.S. Khaparde, Dr. B.S. Moonje and Gangadhar Rao Chitnavis etc. were driven out of the political field and in place of them the followers of Gandhiji in Hindi C.P., Pt. Ravishankar Shukla, Seth Govind Das, Pt. D.P. Mishra and few more, emerged as the leaders in the provincial politics. In the Marathi C.P. it gave an opportunity to those on the fringe of politics, and particularly to Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, Seth Poonam Chand Ranka, Brijlal Biyani, Vinoba Bhave and Vaman Rao Joshi to develop political careers in the Congress and replace the Tilakites as the fore-
most nationalist in the region.

With the result of Non-Co-operation Movement (N.C.O.M.), Mahatma Gandhi became the supreme and unquestioned leader of India. During the period of N.C.O.M., not only was his word law unto his numerous followers, he also created a profound impression on the stanch Tilakites of Marathi C.P.

Prior to N.C.O.M., there was no systematic political organisation in C.P. and Berar. After the inauguration of N.C.O.M., the Indian National Congress emerged as the foremost political party in C.P. and Berar. The people of C.P. and Berar joined the Congress with the firm belief that only the Congress could lead them to freedom. In all 3,43,865 persons of this province became the regular members of Congress.²

Prior to the N.C.O.M., the politics of the C.P. and Berar was the monopoly of the rich Malguzars, landlords, and highly educated persons; political agitation had seldom before gone below the surface. But this novel method of political action rallied round itself thousands of people from the poorer

2. Enrolment was done as per the figures given below:

(a) C.P. Marathi (Nagpur) 97,300
(b) Berar 97,500
(c) C.P. Hindi 1,49,065


sections, embracing the rural and the urban population in the province. Thus N.C.O.M. for the first time, emboldened the poor and illiterate masses of the province and further prepared them to undergo any suffering and sacrifice.

This movement also performed the task of welding all Indians irrespective of caste, colour and creed, into one nation. The Hindu-Muslim unity was remarkably strengthened by this movement.

On the call of N.C.O.M. 111 leading lawyers of the province left the legal profession and joined the freedom movement. Some of them remained active throughout their life and led the nationalist movement in their respective regions. The prestige of the law-courts was lowered down by the N.C.O.M. The establishment of 'National Panchayats' educated the people of C.P. and Berar to be depend upon the sense of justice and fairness of their own people for the settlement of their disputes and thus a check could be put to some extent upon the ruinous tendency for excessive litigation, mostly fostered by the laws promulgated by the foreign bureaucracy.

Council elections of 1920 were greatly affected by the N.C.O.M. Many prominent leaders of C.P. and Berar did not contest the council elections, and many sitting members

3. Appendix E.

4. Only 226 people attended the elections; 33 seats were filled uncontested. Please see Appendix E.
resigned the seats and decided to give their whole hearted support to the freedom movement. The elected members were also persuaded to give their support to the nationalist movement.

The boycott of Government and Government aided schools and colleges resulted in adding to the ranks of congress workers, some of the more ardent youngmen, whose patriotism and enthusiasm greatly advanced the cause of freedom movement. The national schools established during the N.C.O.M. included constructive programmes in their syllabus, and thus enabled the students to be self-dependent in their lives.

The N.C.O.M. served to focus the attention of all castes of people on the drink evil such as no previous agitation succeeded in doing. The item was so effective that the working classes like gold-smiths, barbers, and cobblers too resolved to abstain from drinking.

The movement made an everlasting impact upon the traditional cloth manufacturing system. Thousands accepted khadi because it was so cheap and readily available. The establishment of hand-spinning and weaving centres provided employment to thousands of professionally deprived weavers in the province. With the availability of khadi cloth, the province, to some extent became self-sufficient in her cloth requirement.
The literary activities of the province were greatly
effected by the N.C.O.M. The literary works of Seth Govind
Das, Pt. Makhanlal Chaturvedi, Pt. Madhavrao Sapre and
Subhadra Kumari Chouhan greatly imbued the nationalist feel-
ings among the people.

Non-Co-operation Movement also loosened the steel
framed structure of British administration in C.P. and Berar.
That is why the Governor of C.P. and Berar also admitted
that, "the Government can not carry on its duties unless they
receive the assistance, the help, the co-operation of the
large masses of the people."3

Throughout the movement the Police department of C.P.
and Berar was busy in arresting the agitators and trying to
suppress the movement, but it could not detract the people
from the path of their ultimate goal – Swaraj, which was
finally achieved in 1947.

5. Speeches from 1920 to 1923 by Sir Frank Sly, Chief
Commissioner and Governor of the Central Provinces, p.38,
Speech on 14 December 1921 at Saugor.