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Nationalism in India

Class 10 | History | Chapter 2

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Every question in this workbook has been selected with deliberate care — because it genuinely matters, whether for your CBSE board examination, for UPPSC or Civil Services preparation, or simply for a deep and lasting understanding of India's freedom movement. Attempt every question on your own before you look at the answer. That small discipline, practised consistently, is what separates good students from outstanding ones.

SECTION A — Multiple Choice Questions (30 Questions)

Choose the most appropriate option. The correct answer with a brief explanation is given below each question.

1. In which year did Mahatma Gandhi return to India from South Africa?

- A) 1913
- B) 1914
- C) 1915
- D) 1919

Answer: C) 1915

Gandhi returned to India in January 1915 after successfully leading Satyagraha campaigns against racist laws in South Africa.

2. The Champaran Satyagraha of 1917 was directed against:

- A) The salt tax
- B) The oppressive indigo plantation system
- C) Forced recruitment into the army
- D) The Rowlatt Act

Answer: B) The oppressive indigo plantation system

Gandhi travelled to Champaran, Bihar in 1917 to organise Satyagraha against planters who forced peasants to grow indigo under exploitative terms.

3. Which of the following correctly describes the Rowlatt Act (1919)?

- A) It imposed a tax on salt production
- B) It empowered the government to detain political prisoners without trial for two years
- C) It established separate electorates for Muslims
- D) It dissolved the Indian National Congress

Answer: B) It empowered the government to detain political prisoners without trial for two years

The Rowlatt Act was hastily passed through the Imperial Legislative Council in 1919. Gandhi called it a 'Black Act' and launched a nationwide hartal on 6 April 1919 in protest.

4. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place on:

- A) 6 April 1919
- B) 10 April 1919
- C) 13 April 1919
- D) 18 April 1919

Answer: C) 13 April 1919

On 13 April 1919 — Baisakhi day — a crowd gathered at the enclosed Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. General Dyer blocked the exits and ordered firing, killing hundreds of innocent people.

5. The Khilafat Committee was formed in Bombay in March 1919 to defend:

- A) The rights of Indian labourers in South Africa
- B) The temporal and spiritual powers of the Ottoman Khalifa
- C) The rights of Dalits under the Constitution
- D) The cause of Hindu revivalism

Answer: B) The temporal and spiritual powers of the Ottoman Khalifa

After World War I ended with Ottoman Turkey's defeat, Indian Muslims feared a harsh peace would be imposed on the Khalifa. The Khilafat Committee was formed under Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali.

6. In 'Hind Swaraj' (1909), Gandhi argued that British rule in India survived primarily because of:

- A) Superior British military power
- B) The weakness of Indian princes
- C) The cooperation of Indians themselves
- D) The divisions between Hindus and Muslims

Answer: C) The cooperation of Indians themselves

Gandhi declared that British rule had been established in India with the cooperation of Indians and had survived only because of it. This reasoning became the philosophical foundation of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

7. The Non-Cooperation Movement was formally adopted by the Congress at its session in:

- A) Calcutta, September 1920
- B) Nagpur, December 1920
- C) Lahore, December 1929
- D) Bombay, January 1921

Answer: B) Nagpur, December 1920

At the Nagpur Congress session of December 1920, a compromise was reached within the Congress and the Non-Cooperation programme was formally adopted. The movement began in January 1921.

8. Between 1921 and 1922, the import of foreign cloth into India:

- A) Doubled from Rs 50 crore to Rs 100 crore
- B) Halved from Rs 102 crore to Rs 57 crore
- C) Remained unchanged at Rs 102 crore
- D) Fell from Rs 57 crore to Rs 20 crore

Answer: B) Halved from Rs 102 crore to Rs 57 crore

As the Non-Cooperation Movement spread, foreign cloth was boycotted and burnt in huge bonfires. The import of foreign cloth halved between 1921 and 1922, its value dropping from Rs 102 crore to Rs 57 crore.

9. The peasant movement in Awadh during the Non-Cooperation period was led by:

- A) Alluri Sitarama Raju
- B) Baba Ramchandra
- C) Muhammad Ali
- D) Motilal Nehru

Answer: B) Baba Ramchandra

In Awadh, peasants were led by Baba Ramchandra — a sanyasi who had earlier been to Fiji as an indentured labourer. The movement demanded reduction of revenue, abolition of begar, and social boycott of oppressive landlords.

10. Under the Inland Emigration Act of 1859, plantation workers in Assam were:

- A) Guaranteed minimum wage by law
- B) Allowed to form trade unions
- C) Not permitted to leave the tea gardens without permission
- D) Given land after completing five years of service

Answer: C) Not permitted to leave the tea gardens without permission

The Inland Emigration Act of 1859 effectively bound plantation workers to the tea estates. When they heard of the Non-Cooperation Movement, thousands left the plantations — only to be caught and beaten by the police.

11. Alluri Sitarama Raju led a militant guerrilla rebellion in the:

- A) Champaran districts of Bihar
- B) Gudem Hills of Andhra Pradesh
- C) Bardoli taluka of Gujarat
- D) Awadh region of Uttar Pradesh

Answer: B) Gudem Hills of Andhra Pradesh

In the Gudem Hills of Andhra Pradesh, a militant guerrilla movement spread in the early 1920s under Alluri Sitarama Raju, who attacked police stations and attempted to kill British officials. He was captured and executed in 1924.

12. Mahatma Gandhi withdrew the Non-Cooperation Movement in February 1922 following a violent incident at:

- A) Amritsar
- B) Lahore
- C) Chauri Chaura, Gorakhpur
- D) Bardoli

Answer: C) Chauri Chaura, Gorakhpur

At Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur, a peaceful demonstration turned violent — a police station was set on fire, killing 22 policemen. Gandhi called off the movement, believing satyagrahis needed more disciplined training.

13. The Swaraj Party was formed within the Congress by:

- A) Gandhi and Nehru
- B) C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru
- C) Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal
- D) Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru

Answer: B) C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru

C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru formed the Swaraj Party to argue for a return to council politics — entering the British-established legislative councils to oppose colonial policies from within.

14. When the Simon Commission arrived in India in 1928, it was universally greeted with the slogan:

- A) 'Quit India'
- B) 'Vande Mataram'
- C) 'Go Back Simon'
- D) 'Do or Die'

Answer: C) 'Go Back Simon'

The Simon Commission had no Indian members — all were British. All parties, including Congress and the Muslim League, participated in demonstrations with the slogan 'Go Back Simon'. Lala Lajpat Rai was assaulted by police during one such demonstration.

15. The demand for Purna Swaraj (Complete Independence) was formally adopted at the Congress session at:

- A) Calcutta 1920
- B) Nagpur 1920
- C) Lahore 1929
- D) Karachi 1931

Answer: C) Lahore 1929

At the Lahore Congress of December 1929, under Jawaharlal Nehru's presidency, the demand for Purna Swaraj was formalised. 26 January 1930 was declared Independence Day.

16. Gandhi's famous Dandi March commenced on:

- A) 26 January 1930
- B) 12 March 1930
- C) 6 April 1930
- D) 31 January 1930

Answer: B) 12 March 1930

On 12 March 1930, Gandhi started his salt march with 78 trusted volunteers from Sabarmati Ashram, marching over 240 miles to the coastal town of Dandi in Gujarat.

17. Gandhi reached Dandi and ceremonially violated the salt law on:

- A) 12 March 1930
- B) 31 January 1930
- C) 6 April 1930
- D) 5 March 1931

Answer: C) 6 April 1930

On 6 April 1930, Gandhi arrived at Dandi and ceremonially manufactured salt from seawater, marking the beginning of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

18. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed in:

- A) January 1930
- B) December 1930
- C) March 1931
- D) September 1932

Answer: C) March 1931

The Gandhi-Irwin Pact of March 1931 marked a temporary suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi agreed to attend the Second Round Table Conference in London; political prisoners were to be released.

19. The Poona Pact of September 1932 was an agreement between:

- A) Gandhi and Jinnah
- B) Gandhi and Lord Irwin
- C) Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
- D) Gandhi and Motilal Nehru

Answer: C) Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

When the British conceded Ambedkar's demand for separate electorates for Dalits, Gandhi went on a fast unto death. The Poona Pact gave Depressed Classes reserved seats in provincial councils, voted in by the general electorate.

20. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FICCI) was formed in:

- A) 1920
- B) 1924
- C) 1927
- D) 1930

Answer: C) 1927

FICCI was formed in 1927, led by industrialists like Purshottamdas Thakurdas and G.D. Birla. They attacked colonial control over the Indian economy and provided financial support to the Civil Disobedience Movement.

21. The famous image of 'Bharat Mata' was painted by:

- A) Ravi Varma
- B) Abanindranath Tagore
- C) Nandalal Bose
- D) Rabindranath Tagore

Answer: B) Abanindranath Tagore

During the Swadeshi movement, Abanindranath Tagore painted Bharat Mata as an ascetic, spiritual figure dispensing learning, food and clothing. This image became enormously powerful in nationalist imagination.

22. 'Vande Mataram' was composed by:

- A) Rabindranath Tagore
- B) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- C) Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay
- D) Bipin Chandra Pal

Answer: C) Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay composed 'Vande Mataram' in the 1870s as a hymn to the motherland. It was included in his novel 'Anandamath' and became widely sung during the Swadeshi movement.

23. The Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928 was organised against:

- A) Salt tax
- B) Enhancement of land revenue
- C) The Rowlatt Act
- D) Foreign cloth imports

Answer: B) Enhancement of land revenue

The Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928 was a successful peasant movement in Gujarat organised by Vallabhbhai Patel against the colonial government's enhancement of land revenue. Its success earned Patel the title 'Sardar'.

24. The Depressed Classes Association was formed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in:

- A) 1920
- B) 1925
- C) 1930
- D) 1932

Answer: C) 1930

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar organised the Dalits into the Depressed Classes Association in 1930. He clashed with Gandhi at the Second Round Table Conference by demanding separate electorates for Dalits.

25. The 'Quit India' resolution was passed by the All India Congress Committee at its Bombay session on:

- A) 14 July 1942
- B) 8 August 1942

- C) 15 August 1942
- D) 26 January 1942

Answer: B) 8 August 1942

On 8 August 1942 at Bombay (Gowalia Tank), the All India Congress Committee endorsed the Quit India resolution and Gandhi delivered his famous 'Do or Die' speech. The Congress Working Committee had earlier passed the resolution in Wardha on 14 July.

26. Forced Recruitment during World War I refers to:

- A) Compelling mill workers to work overtime without pay
- B) Forcing village people to contribute to road-building without payment
- C) The colonial state forcing rural people to join the army
- D) Making Indian merchants finance British war efforts

Answer: C) The colonial state forcing rural people to join the army

Forced Recruitment was a process by which the colonial state forced village people to join the army during World War I. Villages were called upon to supply soldiers, generating widespread anger and resentment.

27. During the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, the tricolour flag designed had:

- A) Saffron, white and green with the Ashoka Chakra
- B) Eight lotus flowers representing eight provinces and a crescent moon
- C) The spinning wheel at the centre
- D) Red, white and blue with a tiger emblem

Answer: B) Eight lotus flowers representing eight provinces and a crescent moon

During the Swadeshi movement, a tricolour flag (red, green and yellow) was designed with eight lotus flowers representing eight provinces of British India and a crescent moon representing Hindu-Muslim unity.

28. Which group was MOST reluctant to participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement?

- A) Rich peasants of Gujarat
- B) Women from urban households
- C) Industrial working class
- D) Business classes

Answer: C) Industrial working class

The industrial working class participated in the CDM in limited numbers — mainly in the Nagpur region. As industrialists drew closer to Congress, workers stayed aloof, fearing their specific demands for wages and conditions would be ignored.

29. What did 'begar' mean in the context of Indian agrarian society?

- A) A type of land revenue paid in kind
- B) Forced labour contributed without any payment
- C) A seasonal agricultural loan given by moneylenders
- D) The right to graze cattle on common land

Answer: B) Forced labour contributed without any payment

Begar (also spelled begaar) refers to unpaid forced labour that villagers were compelled to perform — for instance, working on landlords' fields or building roads for the government without any remuneration.

30. The book 'Folklore of Southern India' — a massive four-volume collection of Tamil folk tales — was published by:

- A) Rabindranath Tagore
- B) Natesa Saastrri
- C) Bankim Chandra
- D) Abanindranath Tagore

Answer: B) Natesa Saastrri

Natesa Saastrri published a massive four-volume collection of Tamil folk tales titled 'The Folklore of Southern India', believing that folklore was national literature — the most trustworthy expression of people's real thoughts.

SECTION B — Fill in the Blanks (20 Questions)

Fill each blank with the correct word or phrase. Attempt every question before checking the answer.

1. Mahatma Gandhi returned to India in January _____ after successfully leading Satyagraha campaigns in South Africa.

Answer: Answer: 1915

Gandhi arrived back in India in January 1915 and received a warm welcome. He had transformed the Satyagraha method in South Africa and now brought it to India.

2. In 1917, Gandhi organised the Champaran Satyagraha in Bihar to inspire peasants to struggle against the oppressive _____ system.

Answer: Answer: indigo plantation

The Champaran Satyagraha was Gandhi's first organised mass Satyagraha in India, directed at the exploitative system that forced peasants to grow indigo for British planters.

3. The Rowlatt Act of 1919 allowed the government to detain political prisoners without _____ for up to two years.

Answer: Answer: trial

The Rowlatt Act passed in 1919 gave the colonial government the power to repress political activities and detain individuals without trial — which Gandhi called a 'Black Act'.

4. On 13 April 1919, General _____ ordered firing on a peaceful crowd at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, killing hundreds.

Answer: Answer: Dyer

General Dyer entered the enclosed ground, blocked the exits and ordered firing. He later claimed his purpose was to 'produce a moral effect' — a statement that shocked the world.

5. The Khilafat Committee was formed under the leadership of brothers Muhammad Ali and _____ Ali in March 1919.

Answer: Answer: Shaukat

Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali were the two brothers who led the Khilafat movement, demanding that Britain protect the temporal powers of the Ottoman Khalifa.

6. The Non-Cooperation programme was adopted at the Congress session at _____ in December 1920.

Answer: Answer: Nagpur

The Nagpur Congress session of December 1920 marked the formal adoption of the Non-Cooperation programme after a compromise was reached within the Congress.

7. Between 1921 and 1922, the import of foreign cloth into India halved — its value dropping from Rs 102 crore to Rs _____ crore.

Answer: Answer: 57

The boycott of foreign cloth was one of the most effective economic weapons of the Non-Cooperation Movement, demonstrating the practical impact of the programme on British trade.

8. The peasant movement in Awadh was led by _____ — a sanyasi who had earlier been to Fiji as an indentured labourer.

Answer: Answer: Baba Ramchandra

Baba Ramchandra led the Awadh peasants against talukdars demanding exorbitant rents and begaar. Jawaharlal Nehru toured Awadh villages in 1920 to understand their grievances.

9. The Non-Cooperation Movement was called off in February 1922 following a violent incident at _____ in Gorakhpur district.

Answer: Answer: Chauri Chaura

A police station was set on fire at Chauri Chaura, killing 22 policemen. Gandhi immediately withdrew the movement, insisting that satyagrahis had not been sufficiently trained in non-violence.

10. C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru formed the _____ Party within the Congress to argue for participation in council elections.

Answer: Answer: Swaraj

The Swaraj Party believed that entering the British-established councils and opposing colonial policies from within was a more effective strategy than remaining outside them.

11. The Simon Commission arrived in India in 1928. It had not a single _____ member — all were British.

Answer: Answer: Indian

The complete absence of Indian members on the Simon Commission caused widespread outrage. All parties, including Congress and the Muslim League, greeted it with the slogan 'Go Back Simon'.

12. At the Lahore Congress of December 1929, under the presidency of _____, the demand for Purna Swaraj was formally adopted.

Answer: Answer: Jawaharlal Nehru

The Lahore Congress under Nehru's presidency was a landmark. 26 January 1930 was declared the first Independence Day, when people across India took a pledge to struggle for complete independence.

13. Gandhi's salt march — the famous Dandi March — began from _____ Ashram on 12 March 1930.

Answer: Answer: Sabarmati

Gandhi set out from his Sabarmati Ashram with 78 trusted volunteers. The march covered 240 miles over 24 days. Thousands joined along the way, making it a truly mass procession.

14. On 6 April 1930, Gandhi reached Dandi and ceremonially manufactured _____ from seawater, beginning the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Answer: Answer: salt

Salt was chosen as a powerful symbol because it was consumed by rich and poor alike. The salt tax and the government's monopoly over salt production were presented as the most oppressive face of British rule.

15. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed in _____ 1931, after which Gandhi agreed to attend the Second Round Table Conference.

Answer: Answer: March

The Gandhi-Irwin Pact temporarily suspended the Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi went to the conference but returned disappointed — the negotiations broke down completely.

16. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar organised the Dalits into the _____ Association in 1930.

Answer: Answer: Depressed Classes

Through the Depressed Classes Association, Ambedkar demanded separate electorates for Dalits as the only way to ensure genuine political representation free from upper-caste dominance.

17. The Poona Pact of September 1932 resulted from Ambedkar accepting Gandhi's position after Gandhi began a _____ to death in prison.

Answer: Answer: fast / fast unto death

When the British government conceded Ambedkar's demand for separate electorates, Gandhi announced a fast unto death, arguing it would permanently divide Hindu society. The Poona Pact followed.

18. The famous image of Bharat Mata as an ascetic spiritual figure was painted by _____ during the Swadeshi movement.

Answer: Answer: Abanindranath Tagore

Abanindranath Tagore's Bharat Mata — calm, divine, dispensing learning and food — became an enormously powerful symbol of Indian nationhood and devotion to the motherland.

19. 'Vande Mataram', composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, was deeply associated with the _____ movement in Bengal.

Answer: Answer: Swadeshi

Vande Mataram became an anthem of the Swadeshi movement. Rabindranath Tagore also collected ballads and nursery rhymes during this period to revive folk traditions as part of nation-building.

20. The Congress Working Committee passed the 'Quit India' resolution at its meeting in _____ on 14 July 1942.

Answer: Answer: Wardha

On 14 July 1942 in Wardha, the Congress Working Committee passed the Quit India resolution. On 8 August 1942 in Bombay, the All India Congress Committee endorsed it and Gandhi gave his famous 'Do or Die' speech.

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SECTION C — Frequently Asked Questions (20 Q&As;)

These are the most important conceptual questions for both board examinations and UPPSC / Civil Services preparation. Read the question and answer together with full concentration.

Q1. What is Satyagraha? How did Gandhi employ it in India?

Satyagraha — literally 'truth force' or 'soul force' — was Gandhi's novel method of mass agitation, developed and refined during his years in South Africa. It was premised on two convictions: first, that if a cause was genuinely just, physical force was unnecessary; second, that the oppressor, like any human being, was capable of recognising truth if confronted with it consistently and courageously.

A satyagrahi does not seek revenge or humiliate the adversary. Non-violence — ahimsa — is not passive resignation but an active, courageous engagement with injustice. Truth is the very substance of the soul, and this soul-force, Gandhi believed, was ultimately stronger than any government's arsenal.

In India, Gandhi employed Satyagraha in Champaran (1917) against the indigo plantation system, in Kheda (1917) in support of peasants facing crop failure, and in Ahmedabad (1918) in support of cotton mill workers. These early campaigns established his credentials and demonstrated that Satyagraha could work on Indian soil.

Q2. Why did the Rowlatt Act provoke such intense opposition across India?

The Rowlatt Act of 1919 provoked intense opposition for several interconnected reasons.

First and most fundamentally, it was an assault on civil liberties. The right to know the charges against oneself and to receive a fair trial are among the most basic principles of justice. The Act suspended these rights, allowing the government to detain political prisoners without trial for two years — a power widely associated with the worst forms of tyranny.

Second, it was passed in the face of unanimous Indian opposition within the Imperial Legislative Council. This demonstrated the colonial government's deep contempt for Indian views and opinion, which only intensified the anger.

Third, it came immediately after the First World War, during which Indians had sacrificed enormously — in blood and treasure — in support of British war efforts. Indians had hoped that this sacrifice would be rewarded with greater self-government. Instead, they received repressive legislation. The sense of betrayal was profound.

Gandhi described it as a 'Black Act' and called for a nationwide hartal on 6 April 1919. The response demonstrated that opposition to the Act was genuinely nationwide, cutting across regional, religious and class boundaries.

Q3. How did different social groups participate in the Non-Cooperation-Khilafat Movement?

The Non-Cooperation Movement, which began in January 1921, drew in various social groups, each with its own specific aspirations and grievances.

In the towns, middle-class professionals — students, lawyers, teachers — boycotted government-controlled institutions. Thousands of students left schools and colleges; lawyers gave up their practices; foreign cloth was burnt in bonfires and its import fell dramatically.

In the countryside, the movement took on a more radical character. In Awadh, peasants led by Baba Ramchandra revolted against talukdars demanding exorbitant rents and begaar. In the Gudern Hills of Andhra Pradesh, Alluri Sitarama Raju led a militant tribal guerrilla rebellion against forest laws.

In Assam, plantation workers defied the Inland Emigration Act, left the tea gardens and tried to return home — only to be stranded and beaten by the police.

Women participated in large numbers for the first time, in both urban and rural settings.

However, the movement revealed significant tensions: the vision of swaraj held by Congress leaders was often very different from what ordinary peasants, workers and tribals hoped for.

Q4. What was the significance of Gandhi's choice of salt as the symbol of Civil Disobedience?

Gandhi's choice of salt as the focal point of the Civil Disobedience Movement was one of the most brilliant pieces of political strategy in modern history, for several reasons.

First, universality. Salt was consumed by every Indian — rich and poor, Hindu and Muslim, urban and rural — making it the ideal symbol of a shared grievance. Unlike land revenue or textile tariffs, which affected specific groups differently, the salt tax was felt by all.

Second, symbolic resonance. The salt tax and the government's monopoly over salt production stood as a particularly vivid example of colonial exploitation — the government was taxing one of the most basic necessities of life.

Third, practical simplicity. The act of making salt from seawater was something anyone with access to the coast could perform. It was simultaneously a symbolic act of defiance and a practical assertion of self-sufficiency.

Fourth, moral clarity. By focusing on this concrete injustice, Gandhi was able to give the abstract demand for 'Purna Swaraj' a tangible, everyday meaning that ordinary people could connect with immediately.

The Dandi March itself was also theatrical genius — 78 volunteers walking 240 miles for 24 days, gathering supporters all along the way, with the international press following every step.

Q5. What were the limitations of the Civil Disobedience Movement? Why did some groups hold back?

While the Civil Disobedience Movement was the most widespread mass movement in Indian history, it had significant limitations that revealed the tensions within the nationalist coalition.

The industrial working class largely stayed away, except in the Nagpur region. As industrialists drew closer to Congress, workers distanced themselves, fearing that their specific demands — for wages, conditions and labour rights — would be subordinated to the broader nationalist agenda. Congress was

indeed reluctant to support workers' 'no-rent campaigns' or other class-based demands.

Poor peasants were enthusiastic but their goals — primarily 'no-rent campaigns' — made Congress uneasy, since these campaigns would directly confront the landlords and propertied classes on whom Congress also relied for support.

Dalits, under Ambedkar's leadership, were suspicious of Congress. The Poona Pact debate revealed the depth of mistrust: Dalits feared that swaraj under Congress would mean continued upper-caste Hindu domination, merely substituting Indian rulers for British ones.

Many Muslim leaders and organisations were lukewarm. After the collapse of the Khilafat alliance and the communal riots of the mid-1920s, Congress had come to be seen as a predominantly Hindu organisation. The Muslim League's insistence on separate electorates reflected a genuine fear that Muslim political interests would be marginalised in a Congress-dominated independent India.

Q6. How did the sense of collective belonging develop among diverse Indian communities?

The sense of collective national belonging in India developed through a combination of shared political struggle and deliberate cultural work — and it was always incomplete and contested.

On the political side, the shared experience of colonial oppression — of being taxed, conscripted, repressed and denied self-governance — created bonds across otherwise divided communities. The great mass movements of the 1920s and 1930s brought together, however temporarily, people who had previously seen themselves as members of different communities rather than a single nation.

Culturally, several processes reinforced this sense of shared identity. The image of Bharat Mata — India personified as a mother figure — gave the abstract idea of nationhood emotional immediacy. Bankim Chandra's 'Vande Mataram' gave it an anthem. The nationalist reinterpretation of Indian history provided a narrative of past glory and present humiliation that could inspire pride and anger simultaneously.

The revival of folk traditions — collecting and celebrating folk songs, stories and dances — sought to ground the idea of the nation in the everyday cultural life of ordinary people, rather than in the abstract claims of educated elites.

However, this project was never fully successful. The 'glorious past' being celebrated was largely Hindu; the symbols were drawn from Hindu iconography. Muslims, Dalits and other minorities often felt excluded from this nationalist narrative — a fault line that would ultimately prove impossible to bridge.

Q7. Compare the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22) with the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34). What were the key differences?

The Non-Cooperation Movement and the Civil Disobedience Movement were the two great mass campaigns of the Gandhian era. They shared a common philosophy — Satyagraha, non-violence, the mobilisation of ordinary people — but differed significantly in their methods, scope and social composition.

In terms of method, the Non-Cooperation Movement primarily involved withdrawal — refusing to cooperate with British institutions. People were asked to boycott schools, courts, councils and foreign

cloth. The Civil Disobedience Movement went further: people were asked to actively break colonial laws. They made salt, entered reserved forests, refused to pay taxes, picketed shops.

In terms of scope, the Civil Disobedience Movement was considerably broader and more intensive. The Salt March itself created an international spectacle that the Non-Cooperation Movement lacked. About 100,000 people were arrested during the CDM.

In terms of social composition, both drew widely from Indian society, but the CDM saw significantly larger participation from women — tens of thousands joined for the first time — and greater involvement of the business classes, who organised through FICCI and provided financial support.

Both movements were ultimately called off without fully achieving their stated objectives. The Non-Cooperation Movement was withdrawn after Chauri Chaura; the CDM was suspended through the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and then gradually petered out by 1934.

Q8. What was the significance of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in the context of India's freedom movement?

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 13 April 1919 was a pivotal moment in India's freedom movement — one of those events that permanently altered the political landscape.

Immediately, the massacre spread shock and outrage across India. In north Indian towns, strikes, police clashes and attacks on government buildings followed. The brutal government repression that accompanied the massacre — including forcing satyagrahis to crawl on their stomachs and perform salutations to all Sahib, bombing villages in Punjab — deepened the sense of humiliation and rage.

For many educated Indians who had retained some faith in the essential fairness of British rule, the massacre was a decisive disillusionment. Rabindranath Tagore returned his knighthood in protest. The massacre made it abundantly clear that colonial rule was fundamentally incompatible with any genuine respect for Indian lives or dignity.

For Gandhi, the massacre and the government's response to it demonstrated that the colonial government was capable of unlimited violence when its authority was challenged. While he called off the immediate Rowlatt Satyagraha after Chauri Chaura, the moral outrage generated by Jallianwala Bagh became one of the driving forces behind the Non-Cooperation Movement that followed in 1920.

In a broader sense, the massacre entered the collective memory of the freedom movement as the defining symbol of colonial brutality — a reference point that leaders and ordinary people would invoke for decades to come.

Q9. Explain the role of women in India's nationalist movement and what contradictions it revealed.

The nationalist movement of the 1920s and 1930s saw Indian women participate in public life on an unprecedented scale, in ways that were both transformative and contradictory.

During the Civil Disobedience Movement, thousands of women came out of their homes for the first time. They participated in protest marches, manufactured salt, picketed foreign cloth and liquor shops, and went to jail in large numbers. In urban areas they came from high-caste households; in rural areas,

from poor peasant families. The public visibility of women — mothers carrying infants, elderly women marching — created powerful images of mass participation that challenged the colonial government's narrative of elite agitation.

Gandhi played a crucial role in mobilising women by framing their participation as a sacred national duty — service to the motherland was presented as an extension of women's deepest values as nurturers and caregivers. This framing was enormously effective in drawing women into public life.

However, it also contained a fundamental contradiction. Gandhi was convinced that women's primary duty was to look after the home and the family — to be good wives and good mothers. Congress, for a long time, was reluctant to allow women to hold positions of authority within the organisation, keen only on their symbolic presence in the ranks.

The nationalist movement thus brought women into the public sphere while simultaneously reinforcing patriarchal assumptions about their proper role. Women participated as nationalists but were not yet recognised as fully equal citizens within the movement itself.

Q10. How did the Congress attempt to build unity across India's diverse social groups, and where did it fall short?

The Congress under Gandhi's leadership pursued a deliberate strategy of building the broadest possible coalition against British rule. This strategy had several elements.

First, Gandhi chose issues — like the salt tax — that cut across class, religion and region, creating genuinely universal grievances. Salt was consumed by all. The strategy succeeded in drawing in rich peasants, urban professionals, women, and business classes simultaneously.

Second, Gandhi constantly emphasised Hindu-Muslim unity as the cornerstone of national strength. His embrace of the Khilafat movement was an attempt to bring Muslim India into a shared movement with Hindu India.

Third, Congress tried to address the specific grievances of different groups — championing peasant causes in Champaran and Kheda, mill workers in Ahmedabad, tribals in Andhra Pradesh.

However, the strategy had consistent limitations. Congress was reluctant to support campaigns that would alienate landlords — so it did not back 'no-rent campaigns'. It was reluctant to support specific workers' demands that might alienate industrialists. It did not adequately represent Dalit political interests, leading to the Ambedkar-Gandhi conflict. And it failed to maintain Muslim confidence after the collapse of the Khilafat alliance.

The result was a movement of extraordinary breadth but also profound internal fractures. Congress could unite people against British rule; it could not always reconcile their divergent visions of the free India they hoped to build.

Q11. What was the importance of the Lahore Congress (1929) and the declaration of Purna Swaraj?

The Lahore Congress of December 1929 was a watershed moment in India's freedom movement for several interconnected reasons.

The formal adoption of Purna Swaraj — complete independence — as the Congress's stated objective represented a decisive shift away from the more cautious demand for 'dominion status' (self-governance within the British Empire) that some moderate leaders had been willing to accept. This was not merely a change in rhetoric; it was a fundamental redefinition of what the freedom movement was fighting for.

The declaration of 26 January 1930 as Independence Day was equally significant. The idea of a day on which people across India would take a collective pledge to struggle for freedom transformed an abstract political demand into a shared ritual of national commitment. The date was later chosen as the day on which India's Constitution came into force in 1950 — Republic Day — directly connecting the constitutional republic to the pledge made by nationalists in 1930.

The Lahore Congress also set the stage for the Salt March. Gandhi knew that the demand for Purna Swaraj needed to be anchored in the concrete experience of ordinary people. The selection of salt as the instrument of civil disobedience was a direct response to this challenge — it gave the abstract demand for independence a tangible, immediate meaning.

Under Jawaharlal Nehru's presidency, the Lahore Congress also signalled the ascendance of the younger, more radical wing of the Congress, pointing the movement towards greater confrontation with colonial authority.

Q12. Why did the Assam plantation workers' experience reveal the limits of the nationalist movement?

The experience of the plantation workers of Assam during the Non-Cooperation Movement is one of the most poignant and instructive episodes in the entire history of the freedom movement.

When news of the Non-Cooperation Movement reached Assam's tea gardens, thousands of workers were electrified. For them, the call of swaraj had a very specific, concrete meaning: the right to leave the tea gardens freely and return to their villages. Under the Inland Emigration Act of 1859, they had been legally bound to the estates and were rarely given permission to leave — a form of bonded labour in all but name.

Thousands of workers defied the authorities, abandoned the plantations and set out for home. They believed that Gandhi Raj was coming, and that everyone would be given land in their own villages. The hope was not political in any sophisticated sense — it was an immediate, concrete desire for physical freedom and land.

But they never reached home. Stranded by a railway and steamer strike, they were caught by the police and brutally beaten. Their swaraj remained a dream.

This episode reveals the profound gap between the Congress's conception of swaraj — constitutional self-government — and the immediate, desperate aspirations of India's most marginalised workers. The Congress movement could mobilise these workers but could not, in the end, deliver what they most urgently wanted.

The tragedy of the Assam workers is thus a microcosm of the larger tensions that characterised the Indian freedom movement: a broad coalition united against colonialism, but deeply divided about what freedom should actually mean.

Q13. What was the Poona Pact and why does it remain controversial?

The Poona Pact of September 1932 was an agreement between Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, reached under dramatic circumstances.

The background: At the Second Round Table Conference in 1931, Ambedkar demanded separate electorates for Dalits — constituencies in which only Dalit voters could elect Dalit representatives. He argued that without this protection, Dalit representatives would always be elected by upper-caste majority voters, making them responsive to upper-caste rather than Dalit interests. In 1932, the British government conceded Ambedkar's demand.

Gandhi's response was to announce a fast unto death. He argued that separate electorates would permanently divide Hindu society along caste lines and undermine the effort to abolish untouchability by removing the incentive for upper castes to integrate Dalits.

Under enormous public pressure, Ambedkar agreed to a compromise. The Poona Pact gave Dalits (Depressed Classes, later Scheduled Castes) a larger number of reserved seats in provincial and central legislatures than the British award had offered — but these seats were to be filled by Dalit voters choosing from Dalit candidates within the general (joint) electorate.

The Pact is controversial for reasons that persist to this day. Ambedkar himself later expressed deep regret at having signed it, arguing that Gandhi had used the moral coercion of the fast to deny Dalits a political right that was rightfully theirs. Gandhi's defenders argue that joint electorates ultimately served Dalit interests better by integrating them into the mainstream political process.

Q14. How did the reinterpretation of Indian history contribute to the growth of nationalism?

The reinterpretation of Indian history was one of the most important cultural projects of the nationalist movement, and it operated on several levels.

The immediate target was the British narrative of Indian history. British historians and colonial officials had consistently portrayed India as a land without a coherent history of its own — a subcontinent perpetually ruled by foreign conquerors, incapable of self-governance, whose only significant civilisational advances had come through external influence. This narrative served a clear ideological purpose: it justified colonial rule as a civilising mission.

Indian nationalists responded by excavating and celebrating the achievements of ancient India. They wrote about the brilliant developments in art and architecture, mathematics and astronomy, philosophy and governance in India's pre-colonial past. The Gupta period, the spread of Buddhism, the literary achievements of the classical age — all were presented as evidence of India's capacity for self-governance and cultural greatness. The implicit argument was: this is what we were before colonialism; this is what we can be again.

This historical reinterpretation had a powerful mobilising effect. It gave educated Indians pride in their heritage and justified their demand for independence as a restoration of a natural state of affairs, rather than a revolutionary departure.

However, this project had a significant limitation. The 'glorious past' being celebrated was predominantly Hindu in its symbols and iconography. When the history being written and the achievements being celebrated were drawn primarily from Hindu sources, communities outside this tradition — Muslims, Dalits, regional cultures — often felt excluded from the narrative of nationhood.

Q15. What role did folk traditions play in building Indian national identity?

The role of folk traditions — folk songs, folk tales, local legends, village customs and dances — in building Indian national identity was both important and revealing.

Nationalist intellectuals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries recognised a fundamental problem: the formal political arguments for independence were accessible only to the educated minority. The vast majority of India's population was illiterate and largely unaware of the constitutional debates taking place in the cities. To build a genuine mass movement, nationalism needed to speak a language that ordinary people already knew and loved.

The recovery and celebration of folk traditions was the answer. By collecting folk songs, documenting village customs and compiling local legends, nationalist scholars argued that there was a deep, living Indian culture — rooted in the everyday life of ordinary people — that predated and survived colonial rule. This culture was presented as authentic, uncorrupted, and essentially national.

In Madras, Natesa Saastris's four-volume collection of Tamil folk tales argued that folklore was national literature — the most trustworthy expression of the real thoughts and character of the people. In Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore's collection of ballads and nursery rhymes connected the nationalist movement with the vernacular culture of village Bengal.

The folk revival also served a political function: it was a claim that India had its own cultural resources and did not need to measure itself against a European standard. The nation could define its identity through its own traditions, not through the lens of colonial modernity.

Q16. What was the Bardoli Satyagraha and why is Vallabhbhai Patel associated with it?

The Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928 was a significant peasant movement in Bardoli taluka of Surat district, Gujarat, directed against an arbitrary enhancement of land revenue by the colonial government.

The revenue enhancement — assessed at around 30 per cent — was considered grossly unjust by the farmers. Vallabhbhai Patel, who had by then become a trusted associate of Gandhi, took charge of organising the resistance. Patel's approach was methodical and disciplined: he built a tight organisation, maintained strict non-violent discipline throughout, and combined local agitation with skilled negotiation.

The movement proved successful. The government, unwilling to face an extended and well-organised Satyagraha, suspended the enhanced revenue and appointed an inquiry committee. The inquiry eventually reduced the enhancement substantially.

The success of the Bardoli Satyagraha had several important consequences. It demonstrated conclusively that Gandhian Satyagraha could work effectively at the local level to achieve concrete economic demands — not just symbolic acts of national resistance. It boosted the confidence of the Congress at a time when the post-Non-Cooperation period had seen some drift and demoralisation.

Most visibly, it made Vallabhbhai Patel a nationally prominent figure. The grateful peasants of Bardoli gave him the title 'Sardar' — honourable leader — a title that stayed with him for life and that defined his public image throughout the independence struggle and into the years after 1947.

Q17. Why did Muslim political organisations remain largely outside the Civil Disobedience Movement?

The relative aloofness of many Muslim political organisations from the Civil Disobedience Movement was the product of a deteriorating relationship between the Congress and Muslim political leadership that had been developing since the early 1920s.

The high point of Hindu-Muslim political cooperation had been the Non-Cooperation-Khilafat alliance of 1920-22. Gandhi had joined forces with the Ali brothers to present a united front against British rule. When that movement collapsed, so too did much of the political unity it had fostered.

From the mid-1920s onwards, several factors drove a wedge between Congress and Muslim leaders. Congress came to be more visibly associated with Hindu nationalist organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha, which made many Muslims uncomfortable. Communal riots — disputes over music before mosques, cow slaughter, festival processions — became more frequent and severe, poisoning relations between communities at the grassroots level.

The fundamental political disagreement concerned representation. Muslim leaders feared that in an independent India with a Hindu majority, Muslim political interests would be systematically marginalised. The demand for separate electorates — which Congress opposed — reflected this fear: Muslim leaders wanted a constitutional guarantee that Muslim communities would be represented by people responsive to Muslim interests.

When the Civil Disobedience Movement was launched in 1930, this atmosphere of suspicion and distrust made it extremely difficult for large sections of the Muslim leadership to respond to the call for a united national struggle.

Q18. What distinguished Gandhi's political strategy from that of the earlier 'Moderate' and 'Extremist' factions within Congress?

Gandhi's political strategy represented a fundamental innovation within Indian nationalist politics, distinct from both the earlier Moderate and Extremist traditions.

The Moderates (Gokhale, Naoroji, Mehta) believed in constitutional agitation — petitions, delegations, speeches in legislative councils. They trusted in the goodwill of British liberalism and sought reform through persuasion within the existing colonial framework. Their methods were entirely peaceful and their demands relatively cautious.

The Extremists (Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai) had little faith in the goodwill of the British and demanded swaraj — self-rule. They were willing to use more confrontational methods, including boycott and passive resistance, and appealed to Hindu religious symbolism to build mass support. Yet their movement remained largely elite in character.

Gandhi differed from both. Unlike the Moderates, he had no faith in the willingness of the colonial government to deliver justice without sustained pressure. Unlike the Extremists, he was absolutely committed to non-violence as a matter of principle, not just of tactics.

Most importantly, Gandhi transformed Indian politics by making it genuinely mass-based. His genius was in choosing symbols — salt, the charkha, khadi — and methods — the public fast, the march — that could communicate to millions of ordinary people who had no access to newspapers or political pamphlets. He made politics a lived experience rather than a spectator sport.

Gandhi also sought, with varying success, to unite different religious communities within a single national movement — a goal that the Extremists, with their reliance on Hindu symbolism, had not consistently pursued.

Q19. What were the economic conditions that made the early 1930s a particularly explosive period in Indian politics?

The early 1930s were economically catastrophic for India, and these conditions significantly shaped the character and intensity of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

The immediate context was the Great Depression — the worldwide economic collapse that began with the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and spread rapidly to India. Agricultural prices, which had already begun to fall from 1926, collapsed completely after 1930. As the demand for agricultural goods fell and exports declined, peasants found it extremely difficult to sell their harvests and pay their land revenue.

For commercial farmers — the Patidars of Gujarat and the Jats of Uttar Pradesh, for example — this was particularly devastating. They had borrowed money to expand production during relatively prosperous years; now they faced falling prices, dwindling incomes and the same or higher revenue demands from the government. The refusal of the government to reduce revenue demand led to widespread resentment and made these communities enthusiastic supporters of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

For poor tenants and small cultivators, the Depression brought even more acute distress. Already living on the margins, they faced the complete disappearance of cash income, making rent payment to landlords impossible.

For urban workers and artisans, the Depression brought unemployment, falling wages and growing precarity.

This broad economic distress meant that when Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement in March 1930, he was not creating discontent — he was channelling discontent that already existed across virtually all sections of Indian society. The Depression thus served as a powerful accelerant for the nationalist movement.

Q20. What lessons does the Indian nationalist movement hold for understanding the relationship between leaders and mass movements?

The Indian nationalist movement offers some of the most instructive lessons available about the complex, creative and often tension-filled relationship between political leaders and the mass

movements they seek to lead.

Gandhi's genius was his extraordinary capacity to communicate with ordinary people across barriers of language, caste and class. Through carefully chosen symbols — the salt march, the spinning wheel, khadi — he made the politics of independence immediate and tangible for millions who had never participated in organised political life. He created rituals of national belonging — the Independence Day pledge, the spinning of the charkha — that could be performed by anyone.

Yet the movement he created had a dynamic of its own that repeatedly surprised and sometimes alarmed its nominal leaders. Peasants in Awadh heard Gandhi's call for swaraj and concluded that their landlords were about to be dispossessed. Workers in Assam heard it as a call to abandon the tea gardens and return home. Tribals in Andhra Pradesh interpreted it as permission to reclaim their forests. Each group brought its own urgent needs to the movement and acted on its own interpretation of what independence would mean.

This creativity and independence of ordinary people was both the movement's greatest strength — it gave the movement its genuine mass character, its depth and its energy — and its greatest challenge. Leaders like Gandhi repeatedly found themselves struggling to maintain the boundaries of non-violence and to prevent the movement from taking directions they had not sanctioned or anticipated.

The history of India's nationalist movement is ultimately the history of a negotiation — between the visions of its leaders and the aspirations of its millions of followers. It is a reminder that mass movements are never simply top-down exercises in mobilisation, but complex collective processes in which ordinary people are agents, not merely audiences.

SECTION D — Short Answer Questions (3–4 marks each)

Write your answers in 80–100 words. These questions test your understanding of specific facts and concepts.

1. What were the immediate economic and social effects of World War I on India?

World War I created severe economic distress in India. Defence expenditure was financed through war loans and increased taxes — customs duties were raised and income tax introduced. Between 1913 and 1918, prices more than doubled, causing extreme hardship for ordinary people. Villages were forced to supply soldiers through forced recruitment, generating deep resentment. In 1918-19 and 1920-21, crops failed in many parts of India, causing acute food shortages. A devastating influenza epidemic compounded the crisis. According to the 1921 census, between 12 and 13 million people died of famine and epidemic disease. The extraordinary suffering of the war years made Indians deeply receptive to Gandhi's call for non-cooperation.

2. What was the Justice Party and what was its role in the Non-Cooperation Movement?

The Justice Party was a non-Brahmin political organisation based in Madras (Tamil Nadu). It represented the interests of non-Brahmin communities who felt that Brahmins had monopolised access to government jobs, educational opportunities and political power. When the Non-Cooperation Movement called for the boycott of council elections in 1920, the Justice Party declined to participate in the boycott. Its reasoning was pragmatic: entering the legislative councils was one of the few available avenues through which non-Brahmin communities could gain political representation — an access ordinarily available only to Brahmins. The Justice Party's decision illustrated how social location within Indian society shaped different communities' calculations about political participation.

3. Who was Alluri Sitarama Raju and why did he become a folk hero?

Alluri Sitarama Raju was a tribal leader from the Gudem Hills of Andhra Pradesh who led a militant guerrilla rebellion in the early 1920s. The colonial government had closed vast forest areas, preventing the hill people from entering them to graze cattle, collect firewood and fruits — denying them their traditional livelihoods. When the government demanded beggar for road-building, the hill people revolted under Raju's leadership. He attacked police stations and attempted to kill British officials, claiming special powers including the ability to survive bullet wounds. He also persuaded people to wear khadi and stop drinking. He was captured and executed in 1924, becoming a celebrated folk hero in local memory and song.

4. What was the Bardoli Satyagraha? Why is Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel associated with it?

The Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928 was a successful peasant movement in Bardoli taluka of Gujarat, organised against an arbitrary enhancement of land revenue by the colonial government. Vallabhbhai Patel led the movement — building a disciplined organisation, maintaining strict non-violent conduct, and negotiating effectively with the administration. The movement succeeded: the government suspended the enhanced revenue and appointed an inquiry, which eventually reduced it substantially.

The success made Patel a nationally prominent leader. The grateful peasants gave him the title 'Sardar' — the honourable leader — which defined his public image throughout the rest of his political life, including his crucial role in integrating India's princely states after independence.

5. Explain what 'Purna Swaraj' meant and how it was different from earlier demands of the Congress.

Purna Swaraj means 'complete independence' — full sovereignty for India, entirely free from British control of any kind. It was formally adopted as the Congress's goal at the Lahore session of December 1929, under Jawaharlal Nehru's presidentship. It differed fundamentally from the earlier demand for 'Dominion Status', which would have given India self-governance within the framework of the British Empire — similar to the position of Canada or Australia. Many moderate Congress leaders had been willing to accept Dominion Status as a satisfactory goal. Purna Swaraj rejected this entirely: it demanded the complete severance of the connection with Britain and the establishment of a fully sovereign Indian state.

6. What was the significance of the Quit India Movement of 1942 and how did it differ from earlier mass movements?

The Quit India Movement of 1942 was the most radical and spontaneous of all the Gandhian mass movements. Launched after the failure of the Cripps Mission, the Congress passed the Quit India resolution demanding the complete and immediate withdrawal of the British from India. Gandhi gave his 'Do or Die' speech. The British arrested virtually the entire Congress leadership immediately. Yet the movement did not die — it intensified, carried forward by ordinary people without central direction. There were hartals, attacks on government property and symbols of British authority across India. Its distinctive feature was its truly popular, grassroots character, involving students, workers, peasants and women leaders like Matangini Hazra, Aruna Asaf Ali and Kanaklata Barua.

7. How did the image of Bharat Mata contribute to the growth of nationalist sentiment in India?

The personification of India as Bharat Mata — Mother India — was one of the most powerful cultural instruments of Indian nationalism. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's 'Vande Mataram', composed in the 1870s, gave the mother figure an anthem. Abanindranath Tagore's painting of Bharat Mata as a serene, ascetic, spiritual figure — dispensing learning, food and clothing — gave her a visual form that circulated widely in popular prints. As nationalist leaders like Nehru were shown holding her image close to their hearts, devotion to this mother figure came to be understood as evidence of one's nationalism. The image made the abstract idea of the nation emotionally vivid and personally meaningful to millions of ordinary people across India.

8. Why did the Civil Disobedience Movement have a complicated relationship with the poor peasantry?

The Civil Disobedience Movement's relationship with poor peasants was characterised by genuine enthusiasm on one side and structural caution on the other. Poor peasants — mostly small tenants

cultivating land they rented from landlords — were deeply affected by the Great Depression, which had dried up cash incomes and made rent payment impossible. Many joined radical movements organised by Socialists and Communists, demanding 'no-rent campaigns'. However, Congress was consistently reluctant to endorse these campaigns, for fear of alienating the landlord and propertied classes on whose financial support and organisational capacity the national movement also depended. The relationship between poor peasants and Congress therefore remained uncertain — marked by enthusiasm from below and hedged support from above.

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SECTION E — Long Answer / Essay Questions (5–6 marks each)

Write your answers in 150–200 words. Structure your answer with an introduction, key points and a conclusion.

1. 'Gandhi succeeded in creating a mass movement but not a fully unified one.' Critically evaluate this statement with reference to the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movements.

Introduction: Mahatma Gandhi transformed Indian nationalism from an elite political project into a genuine mass movement. Under his leadership, the Congress mobilised millions of ordinary Indians — peasants, workers, women, tribals — who had never previously participated in organised politics. Yet as a careful reading of this chapter reveals, the movement Gandhi built was one of remarkable internal diversity and persistent tension. Its breadth was its greatest asset and its greatest vulnerability.

The mass character of the movements: Gandhi's genius lay in choosing symbols and issues — salt, khadi, the charkha — that transcended barriers of class, caste and religion. The Dandi March and the Civil Disobedience Movement that followed were genuinely nationwide, drawing in rich peasants from Gujarat, tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh, women from both urban and rural households, and the professional middle classes in every city. About 100,000 people were arrested during the CDM — testimony to the movement's breadth.

The limits of unity: Yet the unity was always partial and contested. Peasants in Awadh interpreted swaraj as the redistribution of land from talukdars to the poor — a demand Congress was unwilling to support for fear of alienating landlords. Plantation workers in Assam believed Gandhi Raj would give them the freedom to leave the estates — Congress meant no such thing. Dalits under Ambedkar demanded constitutional protections against upper-caste dominance; Congress was slow to meet this demand. Many Muslim political leaders, alienated after the collapse of the Khilafat alliance, could not fully respond to the call for united struggle. The industrial working class largely stayed away, fearing their specific demands would be sidelined.

Conclusion: Gandhi's achievement was real and historic: he created the conditions for mass political participation in India. But the movement he led was a coalition of different groups, each with its own vision of swaraj and each prepared to participate only on its own terms. The Congress held this coalition together through deliberate ambiguity — but this ambiguity was simultaneously a source of strength and a source of fracture. The history of the nationalist movement is therefore a history of both unity and division — and both need to be understood.

2. Examine the significance of the Dandi March (1930) as an act of political strategy and mass mobilisation.

Introduction: The Dandi March of March–April 1930 stands as one of the most brilliantly conceived acts of political strategy in the history of non-violent resistance. To understand its full significance, we need to examine both the specific choice of salt and the broader political context in which the march was launched.

The political context: By early 1930, the Congress had formally committed to Purna Swaraj — complete independence. But this abstract demand needed to be given concrete form. Gandhi recognised that to launch a genuinely mass movement, he needed an issue that touched every Indian — not just the educated or the propertied. The salt tax and the government's monopoly over salt production provided exactly such an issue.

Why salt was the perfect symbol: Salt was consumed by every Indian — rich and poor, Hindu and Muslim, rural and urban. The government's monopoly and the tax it imposed were presented as a direct attack on this universal necessity. More importantly, making salt was an act that anyone with access to the sea could perform — it was simultaneously symbolic defiance and practical self-sufficiency. By manufacturing salt, Gandhi was saying: we can supply our own needs; we do not need the government's permission.

The march as theatre: The march itself was theatrical genius. Seventy-eight volunteers walking 240 miles over 24 days, gathering thousands along the way, followed by the world's press — it created a narrative of dignity, determination and non-violent courage that captured international attention and moral sympathy. When Gandhi made salt on 6 April 1930, he had created one of the defining images of the independence movement.

The movement that followed: The Civil Disobedience Movement that the march launched was the most widespread in Indian history. Salt laws were broken across the country, foreign cloth boycotted, taxes refused, forest laws violated. About 100,000 people were arrested. The movement was ultimately called off through the Gandhi-Irwin Pact without the salt laws being repealed.

Conclusion: The Dandi March's achievement was not primarily legislative. It was psychological and political: it demonstrated to Indians that colonial law could be defied with dignity, and demonstrated to the world that Indians were determined to be free. It is rightly regarded as one of the turning points of the independence movement.

3. How did cultural processes — including the image of Bharat Mata, folk traditions and historical reinterpretation — contribute to the growth of Indian nationalism? What were the limitations of this cultural nationalism?

Introduction: Nationalism is not simply a political programme — it is a cultural project, a way of imagining and feeling one's relationship to a community. In India, the growth of nationalism was accompanied and shaped by a rich cultural ferment: the creation of national images, the recovery of folk traditions and the rewriting of history. These cultural developments were as important as any political manifesto in making Indians feel that they belonged to a single nation.

Bharat Mata: The personification of India as Bharat Mata — Mother India — was one of the most powerful of these cultural inventions. Bankim Chandra's 'Vande Mataram' gave the nation-as-mother an anthem. Abanindranath Tagore's painting gave her a face. Popular prints showing nationalist leaders holding Bharat Mata's image made devotion to the mother-nation a visible, emotionally resonant act. The image made an abstract political idea — the nation — as immediate and personal as love for one's own mother.

Folk traditions: The recovery of folk traditions addressed a different audience: the vast majority of Indians who could not read political pamphlets. Nationalist scholars collected folk songs, tales and legends, arguing that these represented the authentic cultural life of the Indian people — untouched by colonial modernity. Natesa Saastris's Tamil folk collections, Tagore's Bengal ballads: these were not merely antiquarian exercises. They were claims that India had its own cultural resources, independent of European civilisation, on which national identity could be built.

Historical reinterpretation: The rewriting of Indian history was the third major cultural project. Against British claims that Indians had always been passive subjects, nationalist historians wrote about the achievements of ancient India — its mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and governance. This historical narrative gave Indians pride and justified independence as a restoration of a natural state of greatness.

Limitations: Yet all three cultural projects had a significant common limitation: the nation they imagined was predominantly Hindu. The images, symbols and narratives were drawn from Hindu iconography and the Hindu past. Muslims, Dalits and other minorities often found themselves on the margins of this nationalist imagination. When the past being celebrated was primarily the Hindu past, communities outside this tradition felt excluded — a fault line that would prove impossible to bridge and would contribute to the tragedy of Partition.

Conclusion: Culture gave Indian nationalism its emotional depth and popular resonance. But it also reflected and sometimes intensified the social and religious divisions of Indian society. The cultural project of nation-building was therefore simultaneously India's greatest strength and one of its most enduring sources of internal fracture.

SECTION F — Matching Exercise (3 Tables)

Match each entry in Column A with the most appropriate entry in Column B. The answer key is given below each table.

Table 1 — Personalities and Their Contributions

Column A — Term / Person / Event	Column B — Description / Date / Explanation
1. Mahatma Gandhi	(a) Led the Awadh peasant movement against talukdars; had previously been to Fiji as an indentured labourer.
2. Baba Ramchandra	(b) Organised the Depressed Classes Association in 1930; clashed with Gandhi at the Second Round Table Conference.
3. Alluri Sitarama Raju	(c) Chief Minister of Sardinia-Piedmont who engineered Italian unification through diplomacy.
4. Vallabhbhai Patel	(d) Led the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movements; developed Satyagraha as a mass political tool.
5. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar	(e) Painted Bharat Mata as an ascetic, spiritual figure during the Swadeshi movement.
6. Muhammad Ali	(f) Led the Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928; earned the title 'Sardar'.
7. Jawaharlal Nehru	(g) Presided over the Lahore Congress of 1929; formalised the demand for Purna Swaraj.
8. Abanindranath Tagore	(h) Co-led the Khilafat movement to defend the temporal powers of the Ottoman Khalifa.
9. Bankim Chandra C.	(i) Composed 'Vande Mataram' in the 1870s as a hymn to the motherland.
10. General Dyer	(j) Led a militant tribal guerrilla rebellion in Gudem Hills, Andhra Pradesh; executed in 1924.

Answer Key: 1→(d) 2→(a) 3→(j) 4→(f) 5→(b) 6→(h) 7→(g) 8→(e) 9→(i) 10→(j) — Note: 10 is General Dyer→ordered Jallianwala Bagh firing)

Table 2 — Events and Dates

Column A — Term / Person / Event	Column B — Description / Date / Explanation
1. Champaran Satyagraha	(a) March 1931
2. Rowlatt Act passed	(b) 1927

3. Jallianwala Bagh massacre	(c) 12 March 1930
4. Non-Cooperation Movement begins	(d) 1917
5. Chauri Chaura incident	(e) December 1929
6. FICCI founded	(f) 6 April 1930
7. Lahore Congress — Purna Swaraj	(g) February 1922
8. Dandi March begins	(h) 1919
9. Gandhi reaches Dandi — salt made	(i) January 1921
10. Gandhi-Irwin Pact	(j) 13 April 1919

Answer Key: 1→(d) 2→(h) 3→(j) 4→(i) 5→(g) 6→(b) 7→(e) 8→(c) 9→(f) 10→(a)

Table 3 — Key Terms and Definitions

Column A — Term / Person / Event	Column B — Description / Date / Explanation
1. Satyagraha	(a) Forced unpaid labour contributed by villagers — for landlords or the government.
2. Begar	(b) Refusal to deal with people, participate in activities, or buy and use certain goods — usually as a form of protest.
3. Boycott	(c) The process by which the colonial state forced village people to join the army.
4. Forced Recruitment	(d) A form of demonstration or protest by which people block the entrance to a shop, factory or office.
5. Picket	(e) The right to vote.
6. Suffrage	(f) Soul force / truth force — Gandhi's method of mass agitation based on non-violence and truth.
7. Khilafat	(g) Complete independence — the demand formalised at the Lahore Congress of 1929.
8. Purna Swaraj	(h) Movement to defend the temporal and spiritual powers of the Ottoman Caliph after World War I.
9. Swadeshi	(i) The idea of using goods manufactured within one's own country; boycotting foreign imports.

10. Inland Emigration Act

(j) 1859 law that prevented Assam plantation workers from leaving the tea gardens without permission.

Answer Key: 1→(f) 2→(a) 3→(b) 4→(c) 5→(d) 6→(e) 7→(h) 8→(g) 9→(i) 10→(j)

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SECTION G — UPPSC / UPSC Related Questions (Civil Services Perspective)

A note on this section: Questions on the Indian nationalist movement appear regularly in UPPSC (Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission) and UPSC prelims and mains examinations. This section provides the kind of analytical, context-rich answers that civil services examinations reward. For UPPSC specifically, questions on Awadh peasant movements, Alluri Sitarama Raju, the Bardoli Satyagraha and the role of Uttar Pradesh in the national movement are particularly important.

UPPSC Q1. What was the significance of the Awadh Peasant Movement (1920-22) in the context of the Non-Cooperation Movement? How did its goals differ from those of the Congress leadership?

Context: The Awadh Peasant Movement that developed alongside the Non-Cooperation Movement offers a revealing case study of the tensions between elite nationalist goals and the immediate agrarian aspirations of India's rural poor.

Nature of the movement: In Awadh, the peasant movement was led by Baba Ramchandra — a sanyasi who had previously been to Fiji as an indentured labourer. The movement was directed primarily against the talukdars (large landlords) who demanded exorbitant rents, imposed arbitrary dues and extracted begaar (unpaid forced labour). Peasants had no security of tenure and could be evicted at will. Jawaharlal Nehru toured Awadh villages in June 1920 and was struck by the depth of peasant grievance. By October 1920, the Oudh Kisan Sabha was set up with branches across the region.

The gap between peasant goals and Congress goals: When the Non-Cooperation Movement began the following year, the Congress attempted to direct the peasant struggle into the wider nationalist movement. However, the Awadh movement quickly developed in directions that the Congress found uncomfortable: talukdars' houses were attacked, grain stores looted, and bazaars taken over. Local leaders told peasants that Gandhi Ji had declared that land was to be redistributed to the poor and that no taxes need be paid. Gandhi's name was invoked to sanction actions that were, in fact, quite alien to the Congress's programme. The Congress's primary concern was colonial rule; the Awadh peasants' primary concern was the local landlord. This fundamental difference in perspective was never fully reconciled.

Significance: The Awadh Peasant Movement illustrates two important truths about India's nationalist movement: first, that the movement could mobilise people with very different grievances simultaneously; second, that this mobilisation was ultimately fragile because the different groups wanted different things from independence. The Congress's reluctance to support 'no-rent campaigns' reflected its structural dependence on the support of the landlord and propertied classes — a contradiction that would persist throughout the freedom struggle.

UPPSC Q2. Examine the Quit India Movement of 1942. Why is it considered the most spontaneous of the Gandhian mass movements?

Context: The Quit India Movement of 1942 was launched against the background of World War II and the failure of the Cripps Mission to offer India an acceptable constitutional arrangement. By mid-1942, Japanese forces were advancing through South-East Asia, and many Indians feared British India might collapse without any guarantee of independence.

The resolution and its immediate consequences: On 14 July 1942, the Congress Working Committee met in Wardha and passed the Quit India resolution, demanding the immediate and complete withdrawal of British authority from India. On 8 August 1942 in Bombay at the Gowalia Tank Maidan, the All India Congress Committee endorsed the resolution and Gandhi delivered his famous 'Do or Die' speech: 'We shall either free India or die in the attempt.' Within hours, the British arrested virtually the entire Congress leadership.

Why it was the most spontaneous: What distinguished the Quit India Movement from all previous Gandhian campaigns was precisely what happened after the leadership was arrested. Unlike 1920-22 and 1930-34, when the movements had been directed from the top, the Quit India Movement was carried forward entirely by ordinary people without central direction. Students, workers and peasants brought the state machinery to a standstill in large parts of the country. Railway lines were uprooted, telegraph wires cut, government buildings attacked. National songs and slogans accompanied every demonstration.

Local leaders and women: Women played a particularly prominent role — Matangini Hazra in Bengal, Kanaklata Barua in Assam, Aruna Asaf Ali and Ram Manohar Lohia nationally. These were not established Congress leaders but ordinary citizens who took extraordinary personal risks.

Significance: The Quit India Movement demonstrated that by 1942, the demand for independence had permeated deeply into Indian society. It was not simply a political movement led by educated elites — it was a genuine popular uprising. The British suppressed it with great force — over 100,000 people were arrested and the movement was crushed within a year. But its political message was unmistakable: Indian society as a whole wanted the British to leave.

UPPSC Q3. Critically examine the Gandhi-Ambedkar conflict over separate electorates. What does it reveal about the limits of the Indian nationalist movement?

Background: The conflict between Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar over separate electorates for Scheduled Castes is one of the most significant and most debated episodes in the history of the Indian freedom movement. It exposed a fundamental tension at the heart of the nationalist project: could a movement dominated by upper-caste Hindus genuinely represent the interests of those who had been oppressed by that same upper-caste dominance for centuries?

Ambedkar's position: Ambedkar argued that Dalits required separate electorates — constituencies in which only Dalit voters could elect Dalit representatives — to ensure genuine political representation. Without this constitutional protection, he contended, Dalit candidates would always be dependent on upper-caste votes and therefore responsive to upper-caste rather than Dalit interests. This was not a demand for separation from India but a demand for a specific form of democratic protection within it. At the Round Table Conferences, Ambedkar pressed this case forcefully and the British government conceded it in August 1932.

Gandhi's position and the fast: Gandhi opposed separate electorates on the grounds that they would permanently divide Hindus along caste lines, undermine the effort to abolish untouchability by removing the social incentive for upper castes to integrate Dalits, and fragment the nationalist movement at a critical moment. When the British award was announced, Gandhi — then in Yerwada Prison — announced a fast unto death. The fast placed Ambedkar in an impossible position. If Gandhi died, the responsibility would fall on Ambedkar — and with it, almost certainly, enormous popular violence against Dalit communities. Under this moral coercion, Ambedkar signed the Poona Pact, accepting reserved seats within a joint electorate.

What this reveals: The episode reveals the limits of the Indian nationalist movement in stark terms. It demonstrated that even the most progressive nationalist leaders were not prepared to allow Dalit communities to define the terms of their own political empowerment. It showed that 'national unity' was constructed in ways that repeatedly asked the most marginalised to subordinate their specific demands to the larger cause. Ambedkar's later writings — particularly 'Annihilation of Caste' (1936) — developed a sustained critique of the Congress's claim to represent all Indians. His conversion to Buddhism in 1956 was a final rejection of a Hindu-dominated nationalist framework. The Gandhi-Ambedkar conflict thus foreshadows the deepest tensions of independent India: between the constitutional promise of equality and the social reality of caste hierarchy.

UPPSC Q4. What do you understand by the term 'economic nationalism' in the context of the Indian freedom movement? How did Indian business classes contribute to the movement?

Defining economic nationalism: Economic nationalism in the context of India's freedom movement refers to the belief that political independence must be accompanied by — and is inseparable from — economic independence. It encompassed the boycott of foreign goods, the promotion of Indian industry and handicrafts, and the challenge to the colonial economic policies that had systematically undermined Indian industrial development and turned India into a supplier of raw materials and a market for British manufactured goods.

Historical roots: Economic nationalism had roots in the Swadeshi movement of 1905-08, when the partition of Bengal triggered a nationwide campaign to boycott British goods and promote Indian manufactures. The spinning wheel and khadi became symbols not merely of self-reliance but of resistance to British economic exploitation.

The role of Indian business classes: During World War I, Indian merchants and industrialists had grown considerably in wealth and confidence, filling the gap left by the diversion of British capital to the war effort. But they resented the colonial economic policies that restricted Indian business — the sterling-rupee exchange rate that discouraged Indian exports, the tariff policies that protected British goods, the dominance of British managing agencies. In 1927, prominent industrialists including G.D. Birla and Purshottamdas Thakurdas formed FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries) to articulate these grievances and attack colonial control over the Indian economy. FICCI provided financial support to the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Tensions and limitations: The Indian business classes supported the Congress's demand for swaraj primarily because they believed it would mean a free market in which Indian industry could flourish

without colonial restrictions. Their vision of swaraj was explicitly capitalist — and it was quite different from the agrarian and socialist visions of many other Congress supporters. This meant that business support for the movement was conditional: they were apprehensive of the growing influence of socialist ideas within Congress and of labour militancy. When movements threatened to disrupt business, they were less enthusiastic. The alignment between Indian capitalism and Indian nationalism was always uneasy — a partnership of convenience rather than conviction.

UPPSC Q5. How did the Indian nationalist movement understand and represent the idea of 'Mother India' (Bharat Mata)? What were the political implications of this representation?

Origins: The representation of India as 'Bharat Mata' — Mother India — was one of the most distinctive and politically potent cultural inventions of Indian nationalism. Its most celebrated literary expression was Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's 'Vande Mataram', composed in the 1870s and included in his novel 'Anandamath' (1882). The song invoked India as a divine mother, bountiful and beautiful, whose children were called upon to serve and liberate her.

Visual representation: The visual form of Bharat Mata was given its most famous rendering by Abanindranath Tagore during the Swadeshi movement in Bengal. Tagore portrayed Bharat Mata as an ascetic figure — calm, divine, dressed in ochre robes — dispensing learning, food, clothing and beads of sacred rudraksha. This was a deliberate artistic choice: unlike the more militant, armed representations of the nation that European nationalism had favoured, Tagore's Bharat Mata emphasised spiritual power, nurture and sacrifice. Later popular prints showed her standing with a lion, holding a trishul, draped in the national flag — a more assertive image that combined maternal compassion with national strength.

Political implications: The figure of Bharat Mata served several political functions simultaneously. It made the abstract idea of the nation emotionally intimate and personal — love of the nation was expressed as the love a child bears for its mother, the most primal of bonds. It gave nationalism a spiritual dimension that connected it to existing religious sensibilities. And it provided a visual vocabulary that could communicate across the barriers of language and literacy. However, the Bharat Mata figure also had significant limitations. The iconography was predominantly drawn from Hindu tradition — the goddess, the sacred lotus, the trishul, the saffron robes. This made the figure less universally accessible than nationalist leaders claimed. Muslims, Dalits and Christians sometimes felt that this 'Mother India' was not their mother — that the nation being imagined was a Hindu nation with a Hindu face. The tension between the inclusive aspiration of Indian nationalism and the predominantly Hindu character of its dominant symbols was never resolved. It contributed to the communal divisions that ultimately led to Partition — the tragic price paid for the failure to imagine a truly plural national identity.

A note from your teacher — Om Sikarwar

India's freedom movement was made not by a handful of great leaders but by millions of ordinary men and women who chose courage over safety, dignity over submission. When you read about the Awadh peasants who believed Gandhi Raj was coming, the plantation workers of Assam who walked home and never arrived, the women who picketed liquor shops for the first time, the Dalits who organised themselves under Ambedkar — you are reading about real human beings making real decisions under real pressure. That is what history is. Our job is not just to remember what happened but to understand what it cost, and to carry that understanding forward into the world we live in. Work hard. Think carefully. And never take your freedom for granted.

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