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Q11

**Many voices had strengthened and enriched the nationalist movement during the Gandhian phase. Elaborate.**

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2019 · GS I · 15 marks · The Freedom Struggle

The Freedom Struggle - its various stages and important contributors / contributions from different parts of the country.

**Core demand of the question**

- Name the many voices in the nationalist movement during the Gandhian phase
- Show how those voices strengthened and enriched the movement

**Revision summary**

**Gandhi's** satyagraha and constructive work gave a mass frame from 1919 to 1947.

Peasants, workers, and students added rent, wage, and youth energy to swaraj.

**Nehru**, Bose, the INA, and earlier revolutionaries added socialist and militant strands.

Women, **Ambedkar**, Khilafat, and business groups made the movement socially thicker.

Praja mandals and language cultures carried it beyond British provinces.

The many voices strengthened nationalism and also exposed caste and communal fault lines.

**Introduction**

The Gandhian phase, from the Rowlatt and Khilafat years to 1947, was not a one-man march. Peasants, workers, women, students, socialists, revolutionaries, depressed classes, business groups, and regional and princely-state activists entered the same anti-colonial stream and made it wider, louder, and more Indian.

**Body****Mass satyagraha as the frame**

- **Gandhi's** methods of non-cooperation, civil disobedience, and individual satyagraha after 1940 gave a common language that village India could join without arms.
- The Non-Cooperation-Khilafat alliance (1920-22), the **Salt March (1930)**, and **Quit India (1942)** pulled millions into boycott, jail, and local parallel authority.
- Constructive work in khadi, village sanitation, and the Harijan campaign kept the movement alive between peaks of jail-going.
- That frame did not silence other voices; it gave them a national stage on which they could press their own demands.

**Peasants, workers, and students**

- Peasant leagues and Congress socialists carried no-tax and no-rent fights in Awadh, Bardoli (1928 under Vallabhbhai Patel), Bihar, and later Tebhaga in Bengal.

- The All India Kisan Sabha (1936) and provincial kisan bodies tied rent, canal rates, and forest dues to the national demand for swaraj.
- AITUC, mill strikes in Bombay and Kanpur, and railway and plantation labour showed that industrial India was part of the same struggle.
- Students and youth leagues spread the message in towns, while the 1942 underground and the 1946 RIN ratings' revolt showed that youth and the ranks of the services had their own voice.

### Left, Bose, and revolutionaries

- Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, and the Congress Socialist Party pushed planning, labour rights, and a sharper anti-imperial line inside the Congress.
- Bose's Forward Bloc and the Indian National Army, with the 1945-46 INA trials in the Red Fort, turned soldiers and the public toward a more militant idea of freedom.
- Bhagat Singh, the HSRA, and Chittagong armoury raiders kept the language of sacrifice alive even when Gandhi rejected their methods.
- The Communist Party's line shifted with the war, yet kisan and worker organisation still thickened the social content of nationalism.

### Women, caste, and community

- Sarojini Naidu, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Aruna Asaf Ali, Usha Mehta's Congress Radio, and countless unnamed women in pickets and salt pans made the movement half the population's fight.
- B. R. Ambedkar, the depressed-class conferences, and temple-entry and well-access campaigns forced the national movement to face caste, not only the British.
- Khilafat ulama, nationalist Muslims such as Maulana Azad, and later the Muslim League's mass turn all shaped the communal as well as the national field.
- Business houses that funded khadi and Congress work, and also those who later backed Pakistan, showed that capital was a voice, not a silent purse.

### Regions, princes, and culture

- Praja mandals in princely states, the State People's Conference, and struggles in Travancore, Hyderabad, and Rajputana carried nationalism beyond British India.
- Linguistic and cultural bodies, from Tamil and Andhra movements to the Naga and other hill voices, enriched the idea of India as a union of peoples.
- Journals, songs, and the press in many languages made Gandhi's symbols travel farther than English politics could.
- Rani Gaidinliu's Naga struggle and similar hill resistances show that the map of voices was not only the Ganga plain.

### How they strengthened the movement

- Social depth made British repression costlier, because a jail or a firing now hit peasants, mill hands, and women, not only lawyers.
- Programme diversity, from khadi to planning to INA, meant different classes could stay inside one anti-colonial story.
- **The risk was also real:** caste, class, and communal voices could split the stream, which 1947 showed.
- The fair reading is that many voices made 1919-47 a people's movement, not a mere elite petition.

### Way forward for the answer

- Name at least peasant, labour, women, Left, INA, **Ambedkar**, and princely-state strands, then say they widened swaraj rather than replacing **Gandhi**.
- End with the limit that communal and caste fractures also grew in the same years.

### Flow diagram

Gandhian satyagraha frame -> Peasants workers students  
Gandhian satyagraha frame -> Left Bose INA  
Gandhian satyagraha frame -> Women caste community  
Peasants workers students -> Wider nationalist movement  
Left Bose INA -> Wider nationalist movement  
Women caste community -> Wider nationalist movement  
Regions princely states -> Wider nationalist movement

### Conclusion

The Gandhian phase was a chorus. Mass satyagraha set the tune, but peasants, workers, women, socialists, the INA, depressed-class leaders, and regional activists gave it volume and social meaning, even as some of those same voices later pulled toward partition.

### Facts & figures

#### Bardoli satyagraha, 1928

Peasant no-tax campaign in Gujarat led with Vallabhbhai Patel, a model of rural voice inside the Gandhian phase.

#### All India Kisan Sabha, 1936

Peasant front that linked rent and forest dues to the national movement.

#### INA trials, 1945-46

Red Fort trials of INA officers that turned army and street opinion toward a sharper anti-British mood.

#### Quit India, 1942

Mass uprising after the failure of Cripps, with underground radio, parallel raj, and heavy repression.

#### Poona Pact, 1932

**Ambedkar-Gandhi** settlement on depressed-class representation after the Communal Award, showing caste as a nationalist issue.