Class 10 History Chapter 2: Nationalism in India - Notes, Important Questions and MCQs (2026-27)

Free PDF notes from Nextoper.in | Session 2026-27 | Read online:
https://nextoper.in/class-10-history-chapter-2-pdf-notes/

These Nationalism in India Class 10 notes cover Class 10 History Chapter 2 completely: the impact of the First World War, Gandhiji's idea of satyagraha, the Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh, the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement, its differing strands in towns, villages, forests and plantations, the road to Civil Disobedience, the Salt March, how different social groups joined the struggle, and the sense of collective belonging.

Along with clear explanations, you get a complete timeline from 1915 to 1932, a Non-Cooperation vs Civil Disobedience comparison table, a social groups table, NCERT-style questions with answers, 10 MCQs, a map-work list and a free PDF with no signup.

Use the table of contents below to jump to the part you need, or read top to bottom for a complete revision of the chapter.

Table of Contents

- Chapter Overview
- Important Topics and Concepts
- Important Dates and Timeline
- Social Groups and Their Idea of Swaraj
- Map Work: Places to Locate
- Non-Cooperation Movement vs Civil Disobedience Movement
- Important Definitions and Terms
- Short Answer Questions
- Long Answer Questions
- MCQs with Answers
- Quick Revision Points
- Chapter Summary
- Exam Tips and PYQ Pattern
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Conclusion

Want notes for every chapter? Explore the full Class 10 Social Science notes on Nextoper, arranged book-wise and chapter-wise.

Chapter Overview

In India, as in Vietnam and many other colonies, the growth of modern nationalism was closely connected to the anti-colonial movement. People began discovering their unity in the process of their struggle with colonialism. The sense of being oppressed under colonial rule gave different groups a shared bond, even though each group felt the effects of colonialism differently and had its own idea of freedom.

Important Topics and Concepts

The First World War, Khilafat and Non-Cooperation

- The war created a new economic and political situation: defence expenditure rose sharply and was financed by war loans and higher taxes.
- Customs duties were raised and income tax was introduced.
- Prices nearly doubled between 1913 and 1918, causing extreme hardship for common people.
- Forced recruitment of soldiers in villages caused widespread anger.
- In 1918–19 and 1920–21, crops failed in many parts of India, leading to acute food shortages, accompanied by an influenza epidemic. According to the census of 1921, 12 to 13 million people died as a result of famines and the epidemic.

The idea of Satyagraha

Mahatma Gandhi returned to India in January 1915 from South Africa, where he had successfully fought the racist regime with a novel method of mass agitation called satyagraha. Satyagraha emphasised the power of truth and the need to search for truth. Gandhiji believed that if the cause was true and the fight was against injustice, physical force was not necessary to fight the oppressor. Without seeking vengeance or being aggressive, a satyagrahi could win the battle through non-violence, by appealing to the conscience of the oppressor.

Early satyagraha movements in India

- Champaran (Bihar), 1917: Gandhiji inspired peasants to struggle against the oppressive plantation system (indigo).
- Kheda (Gujarat), 1917: supported peasants who could not pay revenue because of crop failure and a plague epidemic, and demanded relaxation of revenue collection.
- Ahmedabad, 1918: organised a satyagraha movement among cotton mill workers.

The Rowlatt Act (1919)

The Rowlatt Act was hurriedly passed through the Imperial Legislative Council despite the united opposition of Indian members. It gave the government enormous powers to repress political activities and allowed detention of political prisoners without trial for two years. Gandhiji launched a nationwide satyagraha against it, starting with a hartal on 6 April 1919. Rallies were organised, workers went on strike and shops closed. Alarmed by the popular upsurge, the British arrested local leaders in Amritsar and Gandhiji was barred from entering Delhi. On 10 April, the police in Amritsar fired upon a peaceful procession, and martial law was imposed with General Dyer in command.

Jallianwala Bagh massacre (13 April 1919)

On 13 April, a large crowd gathered in the enclosed ground of Jallianwala Bagh. Some came to protest against repressive measures, while others had come to attend the annual Baisakhi fair and were unaware of martial law. General Dyer entered the area, blocked the exit points and

The Khilafat issue

The First World War ended with the defeat of Ottoman Turkey, and there were rumours that a harsh peace treaty would be imposed on the Ottoman emperor, the spiritual head of the Islamic world (the Khalifa). A Khilafat Committee was formed in Bombay in March 1919, led by the brothers Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali. Gandhiji saw this as an opportunity to bring Muslims under the umbrella of a unified national movement. At the Calcutta session of the Congress in September 1920, he convinced other leaders to start a non-cooperation movement in support of Khilafat as well as for swaraj.

Why Non-Cooperation?

In his book Hind Swaraj (1909), Gandhiji declared that British rule was established in India with the cooperation of Indians and had survived only because of this cooperation. If Indians refused to cooperate, British rule would collapse within a year and swaraj would come. The movement was to unfold in stages: surrender of government titles, boycott of civil services, army, police, courts, legislative councils, schools and foreign goods, and, if the government used repression, a full civil disobedience campaign. After much debate, the programme was adopted at the Nagpur session in December 1920.

Differing strands: the movement in the towns

- The movement started with middle-class participation in the cities. Thousands of students left government schools and colleges, headmasters and teachers resigned, and lawyers gave up their legal practices.
- Council elections were boycotted in most provinces except Madras, where the Justice Party, the party of non-Brahmans, felt that entering the council was a way of gaining power.
- Foreign goods were boycotted, liquor shops picketed and foreign cloth 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.
- Merchants refused to trade in foreign goods, and production in Indian textile mills and handlooms went up.
- The movement slowed down because khadi was more expensive than mass-produced mill cloth, and alternative Indian institutions were not available quickly, so students and teachers began returning to government schools and lawyers to courts.

Rebellion in the countryside

- Awadh: peasants were led by Baba Ramchandra, a sanyasi who had earlier been to Fiji as an indentured labourer. They demanded reduction of revenue, abolition of begar (forced labour) and a social boycott of oppressive landlords; nai–dhobi bandhs were organised. By October 1920, the Oudh Kisan Sabha was set up, headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, Baba Ramchandra and a few others, and within a month over 300 branches were formed. In 1921, houses of talukdars and merchants were attacked and bazaars looted.

- Tribal peasants, Gudem Hills (Andhra Pradesh): in the early 1920s a militant guerrilla movement spread under Alluri Sitarama Raju against the closing of forests, which took away grazing and fuelwood rights and forced begar on road building. Raju claimed special powers, was inspired by the Non-Cooperation Movement but believed swaraj could come only through force. He was captured and executed in 1924.
- Plantation workers in Assam: under the Inland Emigration Act of 1859, they were not permitted to leave the tea gardens without permission. For them, freedom meant the right to move freely in and out of the confined space and to retain a link with their villages. When they heard of the movement, thousands defied the authorities, left the plantations and headed home.

Towards Civil Disobedience

- In February 1922, Gandhiji withdrew the Non-Cooperation Movement after the violent clash at Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur, where a peaceful demonstration turned into a violent clash with the police.
- Some leaders, including C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru, formed the Swaraj Party within the Congress to argue for a return to council politics. Younger leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose pressed for more radical mass agitation and full independence.
- A worldwide economic depression made agricultural prices fall from 1926 and collapse after 1930, creating turmoil in the countryside.
- The Statutory Commission under Sir John Simon arrived in India in 1928 to look into the functioning of the constitutional system. It had not a single Indian member, and it was greeted with the slogan ‘Go back Simon’.
- In October 1929, Lord Irwin announced a vague offer of ‘dominion status’ and a Round Table Conference. This did not satisfy the Congress.
- In December 1929, under Jawaharlal Nehru, the Lahore Congress formalised the demand of ‘Purna Swaraj’ or complete independence. 26 January 1930 was declared Independence Day.

The Salt March and the Civil Disobedience Movement

Gandhiji found in salt a powerful symbol that could unite the nation, since it was consumed by the rich and the poor alike. On 31 January 1930, he sent a letter to Viceroy Irwin stating eleven demands, the most stirring being the abolition of the salt tax. If the demands were not fulfilled by 11 March, the Congress would launch civil disobedience. Gandhiji started the famous Salt March with 78 trusted volunteers, walking over 240 miles from Sabarmati to the coastal town of Dandi in 24 days. On 6 April 1930, he reached Dandi and ceremonially violated the law by manufacturing salt by boiling sea water. This marked the beginning of the Civil Disobedience Movement, in which people were asked not only to refuse cooperation but also to break colonial laws.

Spread, repression and the Gandhi–Irwin Pact

- Thousands broke the salt law, foreign cloth was boycotted, peasants refused to pay revenue and chaukidari taxes, village officials resigned, and forest people violated forest laws.
- When Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a devout disciple of Gandhiji, was arrested in April 1930, angry crowds clashed with armed police in Peshawar. When Gandhiji himself was arrested a month later, industrial workers in Sholapur attacked police posts and government buildings.

- The government followed a policy of brutal repression; peaceful satyagrahis were attacked, women and children beaten and about 100,000 people arrested.
- On 5 March 1931, Gandhiji called off the movement and signed the Gandhi–Irwin Pact, consenting to participate in a Round Table Conference in London, while the government agreed to release political prisoners.
- In December 1931, Gandhiji went to London, but the negotiations broke down. Back in India, the movement was relaunched, but by 1934 it had lost its momentum.

How participants saw the movement

- Rich peasants (Patidars of Gujarat, Jats of Uttar Pradesh) were hit hard by the depression and falling prices; for them swaraj meant a struggle against high revenues. They were disappointed when the movement was called off in 1931 without revising revenue rates.
- Poor peasants wanted the unpaid rent to the landlord to be remitted; they joined radical movements often led by Socialists and Communists. The Congress was unwilling to support ‘no rent’ campaigns, fearing it would upset rich peasants and landlords.
- Business classes wanted protection against imports and a rupee–sterling exchange ratio that would discourage imports. Industrialists such as Purshottamdas Thakurdas and G.D. Birla formed the Indian Industrial and Commercial Congress in 1920 and the Federation of the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI) in 1927. Many became apprehensive after the failure of the Round Table Conference and the spread of militant activities.
- Industrial workers participated selectively (Nagpur, railway workers in 1930, dockworkers in 1932, Chotanagpur tin mines), but the Congress was reluctant to include workers’ demands in its programme.
- Women participated in large numbers, joining protest marches, manufacturing salt and picketing foreign cloth and liquor shops. Yet the Congress was reluctant to allow women to hold positions of authority within the organisation.

The limits of Civil Disobedience

Not all social groups were moved by the abstract concept of swaraj. Gandhiji called the ‘untouchables’ harijan (children of God) and organised satyagraha to secure their entry into temples and access to public wells, tanks, roads and schools. Many dalit leaders, however, wanted a different political solution: reserved seats in educational institutions and a separate electorate. Dr B.R. Ambedkar organised the dalits into the Depressed Classes Association in 1930 and clashed with Gandhiji at the second Round Table Conference by demanding separate electorates. When the British conceded this, Gandhiji began a fast unto death. Ambedkar ultimately accepted Gandhiji’s position, and the result was the Poona Pact of September 1932, which gave the Depressed Classes reserved seats in provincial and central legislative councils, but to be voted in by the general electorate. Some Muslim political organisations also responded lukewarmly; after the decline of the Non-Cooperation–Khilafat movement, relations between communities worsened. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was willing to give up the demand for separate electorates if Muslims were assured reserved seats in the Central Assembly and representation in proportion to population in Muslim-dominated provinces, but the All Parties Conference in 1928 failed to resolve the issue after M.R. Jayakar of the Hindu Mahasabha strongly opposed compromise.

The sense of collective belonging

- Image of Bharat Mata: created by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, who wrote ‘Vande Mataram’ as a hymn to the motherland in the 1870s and later included it in his novel Anandamath. Abanindranath Tagore painted his famous image of Bharat Mata as an ascetic, calm, composed, divine and spiritual figure.
- Folklore: nationalists recorded folk tales sung by bards and toured villages to gather folk songs and legends, believing they gave a true picture of traditional culture. In Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore led the revival of folk ballads, nursery rhymes and myths; in Madras, Natesa Sastri published a massive four-volume collection of Tamil folk tales, The Folklore of Southern India.
- Flags: during the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, a tricolour (red, green and yellow) was designed with eight lotuses representing eight provinces of British India and a crescent moon representing Hindus and Muslims. By 1921, Gandhiji designed the Swaraj flag, a tricolour (red, green and white) with a spinning wheel in the centre, representing the Gandhian ideal of self-help. Carrying the flag during marches became a symbol of defiance.
- Reinterpretation of history: nationalist writers urged readers to take pride in India’s great achievements in the past and to struggle to change the miserable conditions of life under British rule.

Important Dates and Timeline

Use this timeline to write answers in the correct sequence.

Year	Event
1859	Inland Emigration Act restricts movement of plantation workers
1870s	Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay writes Vande Mataram
1909	Gandhiji writes Hind Swaraj
January 1915	Gandhiji returns to India from South Africa
1917	Champaran satyagraha (Bihar) and Kheda satyagraha (Gujarat)
1918	Ahmedabad cotton mill workers’ satyagraha
March 1919	Khilafat Committee formed in Bombay
6 April 1919	Rowlatt satyagraha hartal
13 April 1919	Jallianwala Bagh massacre
September 1920	Calcutta session decides on Non-Cooperation
October 1920	Oudh Kisan Sabha set up
December 1920	Nagpur session adopts Non-Cooperation programme
February 1922	Chauri Chaura incident; movement withdrawn
1924	Alluri Sitarama Raju executed
1927	FICCI formed
1928	Simon Commission arrives; All Parties Conference
December 1929	Lahore Congress demands Purna Swaraj
26 January 1930	Independence Day celebrated
6 April 1930	Gandhiji breaks the salt law at Dandi

Year	Event
5 March 1931	Gandhi–Irwin Pact
December 1931	Second Round Table Conference, London
September 1932	Poona Pact
1934	Civil Disobedience Movement loses momentum

Social Groups and Their Idea of Swaraj

Questions often ask how different groups understood swaraj. Revise this table.

Group	Leader / Example	What swaraj meant to them
Middle class in towns	Students, teachers, lawyers	Boycott of foreign goods and British institutions
Peasants of Awadh	Baba Ramchandra	Reduction of revenue, end of begar, boycott of oppressive landlords
Tribal peasants (Gudem Hills)	Alluri Sitarama Raju	Freedom to use forests; swaraj through force
Plantation workers (Assam)	—	Right to move freely and return to their villages
Rich peasants	Patidars, Jats	Relief from high revenue demands
Business classes	G.D. Birla, Purshottamdas Thakurdas	Freedom from colonial restrictions on business; protection against imports
Dalits (Depressed Classes)	Dr B.R. Ambedkar	Reserved seats, separate electorate, social equality
Women	Satyagrahis in marches	Service to the nation; participation in public life

Map Work: Places to Locate

CBSE asks map questions from this chapter. Practise locating these places on an outline map of India.

- Indian National Congress sessions: Calcutta (September 1920), Nagpur (December 1920), Madras (1927), Lahore (1929)
- Champaran (Bihar): movement of indigo planters
- Kheda (Gujarat): peasant satyagraha
- Ahmedabad (Gujarat): cotton mill workers’ satyagraha
- Amritsar (Punjab): Jallianwala Bagh incident
- Chauri Chaura (Uttar Pradesh): calling off the Non-Cooperation Movement
- Dandi (Gujarat): Civil Disobedience Movement

Non-Cooperation Movement vs Civil Disobedience Movement

Feature	Non-Cooperation Movement	Civil Disobedience Movement
Period	1920–1922	1930–1934
Adopted / launched	Nagpur session, December 1920	Salt March, Dandi, 6 April 1930

Feature	Non-Cooperation Movement	Civil Disobedience Movement
Main aim	Swaraj and support for the Khilafat cause	Purna Swaraj (complete independence)
Method	Refusing to cooperate with the British	Refusing to cooperate and also breaking colonial laws
Key programme	Surrender titles; boycott of schools, courts, councils and foreign goods	Breaking salt law, refusing revenue and chaukidari taxes, violating forest laws
Hindu–Muslim unity	Strong, because of the Khilafat alliance	Weaker; many Muslims felt alienated
Why it ended	Violence at Chauri Chaura, February 1922	Gandhi–Irwin Pact (1931); relaunched, lost momentum by 1934

Important Definitions and Terms

Term	Meaning
Satyagraha	A method of mass agitation based on truth and non-violence, appealing to the conscience of the oppressor
Rowlatt Act	1919 law allowing detention of political prisoners without trial for two years
Khalifa	The Ottoman emperor, regarded as the spiritual head of the Islamic world
Begar	Labour that villagers were forced to contribute without any payment
Boycott	Refusal to deal and associate with people, or to buy and use things, as a form of protest
Picket	Demonstration or protest by which people block the entrance to a shop, factory or office
Forced recruitment	A process by which the colonial state forced people to join the army
Purna Swaraj	Complete independence, demanded at the Lahore Congress, 1929
Harijan	Children of God, the name Gandhiji used for the so-called untouchables
Poona Pact	1932 agreement giving Depressed Classes reserved seats, to be voted in by the general electorate
Hind Swaraj	Gandhiji’s 1909 book arguing that British rule survived because of Indian cooperation
Swaraj Party	Party formed within Congress by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru to return to council politics

Short Answer Questions

Q1. Why did nationalism in colonies grow out of the anti-colonial movement?

People in colonies began discovering their unity in the process of their struggle against colonialism. The sense of being oppressed under colonial rule gave different groups a shared bond. The Congress under Gandhiji tried to forge these groups together within one movement.

Q2. How did the First World War create a new economic and political situation in India?

Defence expenditure rose and was financed by war loans and higher taxes; customs duties were raised and income tax introduced. Prices doubled between 1913 and 1918, forced recruitment angered villagers, and crop failures and an influenza epidemic caused 12–13 million deaths.

Q3. What is meant by the idea of satyagraha?

Q4. Why was the Rowlatt Act opposed?

It was passed despite the united opposition of Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council. It gave the government enormous powers to repress political activities and allowed detention of political prisoners without trial for two years, which was seen as a denial of basic rights.

Q5. Why did Gandhiji decide to withdraw the Non-Cooperation Movement?

In February 1922, a peaceful demonstration at Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur turned into a violent clash with the police. Gandhiji felt the movement was turning violent in many places and that satyagrahis needed proper training before mass struggles, so he withdrew it.

Q6. Why was the Simon Commission boycotted?

The Statutory Commission under Sir John Simon was set up to look into the functioning of the constitutional system in India and suggest changes. It did not have a single Indian member, so when it arrived in 1928 it was greeted with the slogan ‘Go back Simon’.

Q7. Why was salt chosen as a symbol for the Civil Disobedience Movement?

Salt was consumed by the rich and the poor alike and was one of the most essential items of food. The tax on salt and the government monopoly over its production revealed the most oppressive face of British rule, so it could unite all sections of society.

Q8. What was the Poona Pact?

After Gandhiji’s fast unto death against separate electorates for dalits, Dr B.R. Ambedkar accepted his position. The Poona Pact of September 1932 gave the Depressed Classes reserved seats in provincial and central legislative councils, but they were to be voted in by the general electorate.

Long Answer Questions

Q1. Describe how the Non-Cooperation Movement spread in the cities and why it slowed down.

The movement started with middle-class participation in the cities. Thousands of students left government schools and colleges, headmasters and teachers resigned, and lawyers gave up their practices.

Council elections were boycotted in most provinces, except Madras, where the Justice Party contested.

Foreign goods were boycotted, liquor shops picketed and foreign cloth burnt. Imports of foreign cloth halved between 1921 and 1922, falling in value from Rs 102 crore to Rs 57 crore. Indian textile mills and handlooms increased production.

It slowed down because khadi was often more expensive than mill cloth, and poor people could not afford it.

Alternative Indian institutions had to be set up for boycott of British ones; these came up slowly, so students and teachers went back to government schools and lawyers returned to

Q2. Explain how the Civil Disobedience Movement began and how different social groups participated in it.

On 31 January 1930, Gandhiji sent eleven demands to Viceroy Irwin. When they were ignored, he began the Salt March from Sabarmati to Dandi with 78 volunteers and broke the salt law on 6 April 1930.

Rich peasants such as the Patidars and Jats joined because the depression and high revenue demands hurt them; poor peasants wanted rent remission.

Business classes led by G.D. Birla and Purshottamdas Thakurdas supported the movement financially, wanting protection against imports.

Industrial workers participated selectively, for example in Nagpur and among railway workers and dockworkers.

Women participated in large numbers in marches, salt making and picketing.

Dalits under Dr B.R. Ambedkar and many Muslims stayed away or responded lukewarmly, showing the limits of the movement.

Q3. How did nationalists create a sense of collective belonging among Indians?

Images: the figure of Bharat Mata, created by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay through Vande Mataram and painted by Abanindranath Tagore, became a symbol of the nation.

Folklore: nationalists collected folk tales, songs and legends. Rabindranath Tagore revived folk ballads in Bengal and Natesa Sastri published The Folklore of Southern India.

Flags: the Swadeshi movement tricolour with eight lotuses and a crescent moon, and Gandhiji’s 1921 Swaraj flag with a spinning wheel, became symbols of defiance.

Reinterpretation of history: nationalist writers urged people to take pride in India’s past achievements and to struggle against British rule.

Together, these made people feel they were part of the same nation.

MCQs with Answers

1. When did Mahatma Gandhi return to India from South Africa?(a) January 1915 (b) January 1917 (c) April 1919 (d) March 1920Answer: (a) January 1915

2. The Champaran satyagraha of 1917 was against the oppressive(a) Salt law (b) Indigo plantation system (c) Revenue collection in Kheda (d) Rowlatt ActAnswer: (b) Indigo plantation system

3. The Rowlatt Act allowed detention of political prisoners without trial for(a) Six months (b) One year (c) Two years (d) Five yearsAnswer: (c) Two years

4. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place on(a) 6 April 1919 (b) 10 April 1919 (c) 13 April 1919 (d) 26 January 1930Answer: (c) 13 April 1919

5. Who led the peasant movement in Awadh?(a) Alluri Sitarama Raju (b) Baba Ramchandra (c) Abdul Ghaffar Khan (d) Motilal NehruAnswer: (b) Baba Ramchandra

6. The Non-Cooperation Movement was called off after the incident at(a) Chauri Chaura (b) Dandi (c) Amritsar (d) PeshawarAnswer: (a) Chauri Chaura

8. How many volunteers accompanied Gandhiji on the Salt March?(a) 38 (b) 78 (c) 100 (d) 240Answer: (b) 78

9. The Depressed Classes Association was organised in 1930 by(a) Mahatma Gandhi (b) M.R. Jayakar (c) Dr B.R. Ambedkar (d) Muhammad Ali JinnahAnswer: (c) Dr B.R. Ambedkar

10. The Swaraj flag designed by Gandhiji in 1921 had which symbol in the centre?(a) Eight lotuses (b) Crescent moon (c) Spinning wheel (d) Ashoka ChakraAnswer: (c) Spinning wheel

Quick Revision Points

- Nationalism in India grew through the anti-colonial struggle.
- First World War: higher taxes, income tax, prices doubled (1913–1918), forced recruitment, famine and epidemic.
- Gandhiji returned in January 1915; satyagraha = truth and non-violence.
- Early satyagrahas: Champaran 1917, Kheda 1917, Ahmedabad 1918.
- Rowlatt Act 1919: detention without trial for two years; Jallianwala Bagh, 13 April 1919.
- Khilafat Committee, March 1919: Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali.
- Non-Cooperation: decided at Calcutta (Sept 1920), adopted at Nagpur (Dec 1920).
- Foreign cloth imports fell from Rs 102 crore to Rs 57 crore (1921–22).
- Awadh: Baba Ramchandra; Gudem Hills: Alluri Sitarama Raju; Assam: Inland Emigration Act 1859.
- Chauri Chaura (Feb 1922) ended Non-Cooperation.
- Simon Commission 1928: ‘Go back Simon’.
- Lahore 1929: Purna Swaraj; 26 January 1930 Independence Day.
- Salt March: Sabarmati to Dandi, 78 volunteers, 240 miles, 24 days; salt law broken on 6 April 1930.
- Gandhi–Irwin Pact 5 March 1931; Second Round Table Conference December 1931.
- Poona Pact September 1932: reserved seats for Depressed Classes with general electorate.
- Collective belonging: Bharat Mata, folklore, flags, reinterpretation of history.

Chapter Summary

Nationalism in India grew out of the struggle against colonial rule. The First World War brought economic hardship, and Gandhiji’s satyagraha offered a new, non-violent method of mass struggle. After the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Gandhiji joined the Khilafat issue with the demand for swaraj and launched the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920–21.

Different groups joined the movement with their own understanding of swaraj: the urban middle class, peasants of Awadh, tribal people of the Gudem Hills and plantation workers of Assam. After Chauri Chaura, the movement was withdrawn. The Simon Commission, the Lahore demand for Purna Swaraj and the Salt March led to the Civil Disobedience Movement, in which people broke colonial laws. Its limits were shown by the distance of dalits and many Muslims. Through images, folklore, flags and history, nationalists built a sense of collective belonging.

Exam Tips and PYQ Pattern

- Long answers on the Non-Cooperation Movement (towns and countryside) and the Civil Disobedience Movement (participation of social groups) are asked very often.
- Learn the NCM vs CDM table; comparison questions are common in 3-mark and 5-mark sections.
- Revise dates such as 13 April 1919, December 1920, February 1922, December 1929, 6 April 1930 and September 1932 for MCQs.
- Map questions: Congress sessions, Champaran, Kheda, Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Chauri Chaura and Dandi.
- Case-based questions often use passages from Hind Swaraj, Gandhiji's letter to Irwin or Dr Ambedkar's views.
- In long answers, write point-wise with a short introduction and conclusion, and underline key names and dates.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main idea of Nationalism in India Class 10?

It explains how the Indian national movement grew in the 1920s and 1930s through the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movements, how different social groups participated, and how a sense of collective belonging developed.

Why did Gandhiji start the Non-Cooperation Movement?

He believed British rule survived because of Indian cooperation. He launched it to oppose the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, to support the Khilafat cause and to win swaraj.

What was the difference between the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movements?

In the Non-Cooperation Movement, people refused to cooperate with the British. In the Civil Disobedience Movement, they refused to cooperate and also broke colonial laws, such as the salt law.

Is the full chapter in the 2026-27 CBSE syllabus?

Yes. Nationalism in India is part of the 2026-27 Class 10 History syllabus. Always check the latest CBSE curriculum document released by your school.

Can I download these Nationalism in India notes as a PDF?

Yes. Use the free PDF link at the top of this page. No signup is required.

Conclusion

Nationalism in India explains how people from different regions, classes and communities came together against colonial rule while each group understood freedom in its own way. Learn the sequence of events from 1915 to 1934, revise the comparison and social groups tables, and practise the map work. These notes give you everything you need to answer short, long, case-based and map questions with confidence.

Author Bio: Written and reviewed by the Nextoper Editorial Team, a group of CBSE social science educators who build chapter notes directly from the NCERT textbook and past board paper patterns.

Freshness Note: These notes follow the NCERT Class 10 History textbook, India and the Contemporary World – II (Reprint 2026-27), and the CBSE syllabus for the 2026-27 session. Last checked on 8 November 2026.