



Mains Practice Question

Q. The Civil Disobedience Movement began with Gandhi's well-known Dandi March. What were the causes of the civil disobedience movement? Critically evaluate its significance. (250 words)

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Approach

- Start your answer by briefly describing about Civil Disobedience Movement which started with Dandi March.
- Discuss causes of Civil Disobedience Movement.
- Critically evaluate its significance.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- The civil disobedience movement owe its origin to Dandi March which is also known as the Salt March and the Dandi Satyagraha was an act of nonviolent civil disobedience led by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.
- It was a direct-action campaign of tax resistance and nonviolent protest against the British salt monopoly. Where, Gandhi and his supporters defy British policy by making salt from seawater.
- At Dandi, thousands more followed his lead, and in the coastal cities of Bombay and Karachi, Indian nationalists led crowds of citizens in making salt. This act of breaking salt law led to the rise of civil disobedience Movement.

Body

- **Causes of Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM):**
 - The origin of CDM owes to the Dandi Salt March which started because the government was controlling the making and selling of salt and everyone had to pay a salt tax.
 - The laws were so strict that if someone picked a handful of sea salt lying on the sand, they could be fined.
 - Further, the nationalistic feeling started brewing up among masses as the Simon Commission of 1928, refuse to include any Indian in the constitutional decision-making process, denying of dominion status and unlawful arrest of social revolutionaries.
 - Therefore, this tense situation led to the meteoric rise of civil disobedience movement.
- **Significance of the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM):**
 - **Imports from Britain had fallen considerably:** For example, imports of cloth from Britain had fallen by half.
 - **Pan India Participation:** The movement had started in India's west coast and had nearly completely covered the entire nation. Large-scale protests were held in Madras, Calcutta, Karachi, Bombay, Delhi, and Sholapur in response to the arrests of Nehru and Gandhi in April and May, respectively.
 - **Participation of Various Sections of the Society:** The movement was more widespread than the previous one. It includes the mass participation including women, peasants, workers, students, urban elements like merchants, shopkeepers provided the Congress a new all-India status.

- The support that the movement had garnered from the poor and the illiterate both in the town and countryside was remarkable.
- **Global Recognition:** At the beginning of the movement, nobody realized the significance of breaking the salt law. Even Viceroy Lord Irwin believed that it would have little effect on the general masses, yet while travelling to Dandi, Gandhi spoke to tens of thousands of people, inspiring many of them to join the march.
 - The iconic march elevated the Indian independence struggle to the top of the international news agenda. Even the front page of the American weekly magazine Time included a picture of Gandhi along with a description of the British government's cruelty and the strength of nonviolence.
- **Women Participation:** Another important aspect of this movement was the participation of women. For the first time, women had a substantial impact on the picketing of opium dens, liquor stores, and stores carrying foreign clothing. Rani Gaidinliu, a naga spiritual leader, hoisted the flag of rebellion against British occupation.
- **Evaluation:**
 - Though foreign imports of clothing and cigarettes were cut in half and Government revenue from land revenue and liquor excise were also reduced. But there was very little rise of Indian domestic industry and further Indian exports didn't rise substantially.
 - Finally, truce was declared, which was formalized in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Paving the way for Gandhi, representing the Indian National Congress, to attend the second session (September-December 1931) of the Round Table Conference in London.

Conclusion

The earlier movements were restricted to urban areas; the civil disobedience movement was the first to operate on a national level. Rural residents were given the chance to engage in this movement. Further, it steered the Indian Independence Struggle toward complete independence, it was unquestionably a turning moment in the movement.

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