

Key Events (1919–1922) – Hijrat, Nilambur, Chauri Chaura & Non-Cooperation

Background

After World War I, India was full of **anger and disappointment**. The British had promised reforms but instead passed the **Rowlatt Act (1919)** and caused tragedies like the **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre**. Muslims were also hurt by the British betrayal over Turkey after the war. Under **Mahatma Gandhi**, both **Hindus and Muslims united** in the **Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movements** to peacefully resist British rule. However, during this time (1919–22), several major incidents shaped the movement's future — **Hijrat, Nilambur violence**, and **Chauri Chaura**.

The Hijrat Movement (1920)

Many Indian Muslims believed living under British rule had become **religiously wrong** because the British were oppressing Muslims and insulting the Caliph. Religious scholars suggested **Hijrat (migration)** to **Afghanistan**, seen as a Muslim land. Thousands sold their homes and left India hoping for safety. But when they arrived, **Afghanistan refused to accept them**. Many died from **hunger, disease, and exhaustion**. The movement failed tragically but it showed **Muslim emotional depth and anti-British feelings**. It also strengthened the belief that Muslims needed their **own political identity**.

Violence at Nilambur (1921)

The **Nilambur incident** was part of the **Moplah Revolt** in Malabar (Kerala). Poor Muslim farmers (Moplahs) rebelled against **British landlords and oppression**. What began as a religious protest soon turned violent, and some Hindus were attacked. The British crushed the revolt **brutally**, killing and jailing thousands. Gandhi condemned the violence, calling it **against the principles of non-violence**. The event **weakened Hindu-Muslim unity** and showed how easily peaceful protests could turn violent.

Chauri Chaura Incident (1922)

In the town of **Chauri Chaura**, protestors in a Non-Cooperation rally clashed with police. When police fired on them, the angry crowd **set fire to the police station**, killing 22 policemen. Gandhi was horrified because his entire struggle was based on **non-violence**. He immediately **called off the movement**, even though it was gaining strength. Many leaders were upset, but Gandhi believed **violence would destroy the moral purpose** of freedom. This marked the end of the first great national movement.

Gandhi and Non-Cooperation Movement

The **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–22)** was Gandhi's first large-scale campaign against British rule. He encouraged people to **boycott British schools, courts, goods, and titles**. It

united **Hindus and Muslims**, making it a powerful national force. People from all classes joined — peasants, students, and workers. Even though it ended early due to violence, it **awakened political consciousness** among millions and gave Gandhi **moral authority** as India's true national leader.

Conclusion

The years **1919–1922** were a turning point in India's freedom struggle. The **Hijrat tragedy**, **Nilambur violence**, and **Chauri Chaura incident** showed both the **strength and weakness** of mass movements. Gandhi's **Non-Cooperation Movement** transformed Indian politics from elite discussion to **people's participation**, laying the foundation for future struggles leading to independence.