

UPSC Civil Services Examination

UPSC Notes [GS-I]

Topic: Bardoli Satyagraha (NCERT Notes)

NCERT notes on important topics for the [UPSC exam](#) preparation. These notes will also be useful for other competitive exams like banking PO, SSC, state civil services exams and so on.

The Bardoli Satyagraha, 1928 was a movement in the independence struggle led by Sardar Vallabhai Patel for the farmers of Bardoli against the unjust raising of taxes. This is an important topic in the history portion of the [IAS exam](#).

Bardoli Satyagraha

Background

- The Bardoli Taluk in modern-day Gujarat was hit by floods and famines in 1925, which adversely affected crop yield. This affected the farmers financially.
- Ignoring the plight of the farmers, the Bombay Presidency increased the tax rates by 22%.
- Despite petitions and appeals from civic groups and farmers to review this unjust hike in tax rates in lieu of the grave situation, the government decided to go ahead with tax collection.
- In 1927, the local Congress Party published a report to show that the farmers could not carry the burden of the enhanced assessment. But the authorities did not budge.
- In January 1928, farmers in Bardoli invited Vallabhai Patel to launch the protest movement wherein all of them resolved not to pay taxes.
- They also assured Gandhiji of their commitment to non-violence.
- Patel agreed to take on the leadership role only after getting assurances from the farmers of their resolve to the movement. He informed them of the possible consequences of their move such as confiscation of land and property and imprisonment.
- Patel got in touch with the government and apprised it of the situation. He got the reply that the government was unwilling to make any concessions.
- Gandhiji also lend support to the movement through his writings in 'Young India' magazine.

The Movement

- Patel was an exemplary commander of his non-violent 'army' in Bardoli.
- He divided the taluk into camps and organised hundreds of men and women under the camps.
- The volunteers came from Hindu, Muslim and Parsi communities also.
- From the camps, volunteers issued news bulletins, campaigns and also made speeches educating the masses about the need to be disciplined and prepared for austerity.
- Door-to-door campaigning was also done.
- A large number of women took active part in the movement. It was these women who gave Patel the moniker 'Sardar'.

- Peasants were asked to take oaths in the name of god that they would not pay the taxes.
- Those who paid taxes or were supportive of the British were socially boycotted.
- They also worked for the betterment of the Kaliparaj caste (farmers who worked as landless labourers).
- They refused non-essential goods to government offices in the area.
- They resisted eviction and confiscation (jabti) in unique ways. They had informers in the government offices who would give prior information as to if and when a jabti notice was going to be carried out. The whole village would then move to another place and the officers would be faced with an empty village when they arrived to confiscate the property.
- K M Munshi and Lalji Naranji resigned from the Bombay Legislative Council.
- Although the movement was local, it received nation-wide attention and support.

Bardoli Satyagraha Effects

Effects

- Fearing things could go out of hand, the government set up the Maxwell-Broomfield commission to look into the matter.
- The revenue was reduced to 6.03%.
- The peasants were returned their confiscated land.
- Patel emerged as a national leader after the success of the Bardoli Satyagraha. He showed his remarkable organising skills.

Bardoli Satyagraha Criticism

Criticism

- The movement was focused on the conditions of the rich and middle-class farmers and largely neglected the poor farmers.
- It did not raise the problem of Hali Pratha (a kind of bonded labour system).
- It is said that the movement was an experiment on Satyagraha as a method of freedom struggle. The basic problems of the peasants were not addressed.