

The Swaraj Party was a significant political party in India during the early 1920s. It emerged as a splinter group within the Indian National Congress and played a crucial role in the political landscape of the time. Here are the key features and consequences of the Swaraj Party:

Background:

1. **Non-Cooperation Movement:** The Non-Cooperation Movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920 as a response to the repressive Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. It aimed to unite Indians in nonviolent resistance against British colonial rule.
2. **Withdrawal from Legislatures:** As part of the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Indian National Congress had called for non-cooperation with the British government, including boycotting legislatures at the central and provincial levels. Many Congress members resigned from their elected positions in protest.

Formation of the Swaraj Party:

1. **Difference of Opinion:** While the Non-Cooperation Movement was initially very popular and saw widespread participation, it was abruptly called off by Mahatma Gandhi after the Chauri Chaura incident in 1922, where a violent clash occurred between police and protesters.
2. **Congress Split:** The suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement and the differences in approach created a rift within the Indian National Congress. One faction, led by Mahatma Gandhi, advocated for nonviolence and the cessation of mass protests, while another faction, led by C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru, believed in a more confrontational approach to challenge British rule.
3. **Formation of the Swaraj Party:** In 1923, the faction that supported a more active role in legislatures and confrontational politics formed the Swaraj Party. C. R. Das was elected as its president, and Motilal Nehru as its secretary.

Key Features:

1. **Participation in Elections:** The Swaraj Party decided to contest elections and actively participate in the legislative councils, both at the provincial and central levels, with the aim of pushing for self-governance and constitutional reforms.
2. **Objective:** The Swaraj Party's primary objective was to work within the existing colonial legislative framework to press for political reforms and self-rule.

3. **Moderate Approach:** While the Swaraj Party pursued a more moderate approach compared to the Non-Cooperation Movement, it still aimed at achieving self-governance and political autonomy for India.

Consequences and Impact:

1. **Electoral Success:** In the elections that followed, the Swaraj Party performed well, winning a significant number of seats in the provincial legislatures. It demonstrated the popularity of its approach among a section of the Indian electorate.
2. **Influence on Constitutional Reforms:** The Swaraj Party's presence in the legislatures allowed it to exert pressure on the British government for constitutional reforms. This eventually led to the Government of India Act of 1935, which introduced substantial constitutional changes.
3. **Legacy:** The Swaraj Party marked a significant phase in the Indian freedom struggle, showcasing the importance of political participation and a continued commitment to the goal of self-governance.
4. **Short-Lived:** The Swaraj Party's influence waned over time, and it gradually merged back into the Indian National Congress after the 1937 provincial elections. The Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, continued to be the dominant force in the freedom movement.

The Swaraj Party was a noteworthy political development during the early 1920s, representing a divergence in strategy within the Indian National Congress. While it played a role in influencing constitutional reforms, its significance diminished as the Indian independence movement evolved.