

Report of the National Flag Committee

At a meeting of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress held on 2nd April 1931 at Karachi, a resolution was passed appointing a committee of seven persons to examine the objections to the National Flag now in vogue, and disapproval to the tricolor flag accused of being communal and hence recommend a flag for the acceptance of the Congress. The Committee included Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Master Tara Singh, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, Principal D.B. Kalelker, Dr. N.S. Hardiker and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya.

It was authorized to collect evidences considered necessary and to send the report to the Working Committee before 31st July 1931. A questionnaire was circulated by Pattabhi Sitaramaya from Masulipatanam on April 4, 1931 on behalf of the Committee to various Provincial Congress Committees, and the public through the press. It was intended to understand the response of communities in provinces on the design of the National Flag, and inviting their suggestions. Eight Provincial Committees, fifty individuals and the Executive Committee of the Central Sikh League send the memoranda. At meeting of the Flag Committee which met in Bombay from 7th July, the highlight was the presence of Sardar Patel.

It was originally conceived that while red and green colors represented Hindus and Muslims, white colour stood for other communities. Objecting to this assortment, the Sikhs led a deputation to Gandhiji in December 1929 demanding either the inclusion of a color for them or for a flag which was non communal.

The Committee pointed out that although various interpretations have been given to these colors the sentiments grown around the existing flag in the context of non cooperation, Nagpur protests and non-violent agitation of 1930-31 cannot be neglected. On the questions of colors and device of the National Flag, there is unanimous opinion that the National Flag should be of a single color except for the color of its device. If there is one color wholeheartedly accepted by the Indians in the context of its ancient tradition it is the Kesari or saffron color. Hence it is felt that the flag should be of Kesari color and the device should be that of charkha which should be in blue. The Committee recommend Kesari or Saffron color for the National Flag, with blue Charkha at the left top quarter and wheel towards the flagstaff.

After taking into consideration the opinion of provincial committees and members of A.I.C.C the Committee recommended that the National Flag should be in Saffron color with emblem of Charkha at the top corner and submitted it to the Working Committee. But it was unacceptable to them and after discussions arrived at their conclusion. It was placed before A.I.C.C in August 1931. After much discussions the tri color was adopted with dark blue charka. The saffron was recommended for courage and sacrifice, white for truth and peace and green for loyalty and valor. Thus the A.I.C.C set the official recognition of the National Flag through a resolution.

(The text was published by Jairamdas Doulatram, General Secretary, AICC, Ahmedabad.)