

HIGHER SECONDARY COURSE



XI



Government of Kerala
Department of General Education

Prepared by

State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Kerala
2026

The National Anthem

Jana-gana-mana adhinayaka, jaya he
Bharatha-bhagya-vidhata.
Punjab-Sindh-Gujarat-Maratha
Dravida-Utkala-Banga
Vindhya-Himachala-Yamuna-Ganga
Uchchala-Jaladhi-taranga
Tava subha name jage,
Tava subha asisa mage,
Gahe tava jaya gatha.
Jana-gana-mangala-dayaka jaya he
Bharatha-bhagya-vidhata
Jaya he, jaya he, jaya he,
Jaya jaya jaya jaya he!

Pledge

India is my country. All Indians are my brothers and sisters.

I love my country, and I am proud of its rich and varied heritage. I shall always strive to be worthy of it.

I shall give my parents, teachers and all elders, respect and treat everyone with courtesy.

To my country and my people. I pledge my devotion.
In their well-being and prosperity alone, lies my happiness.

Higher Secondary Course | Plus One

Gandhian Studies

Prepared by

State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Kerala

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Designed by : SCERT

First Edition : 2026

Printed at : Centre for Advanced Printing and Training (C-apt), Thiruvananthapuram-695 013

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ISBN : 978-93-47213-53-3

Preface

This textbook introduces Higher Secondary First Year students to the life and thought of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the most outstanding leaders and moral thinkers of the modern world. Gandhiji was not only a leader of India's freedom struggle but also a philosopher who offered new ways of understanding politics, economics, society, and human relationships. The chapters in this book—ranging from Gandhian Studies and India's cultural heritage to Gandhi's early life, his experiences in South Africa, and his role in the Indian freedom movement—help students understand how his ideas evolved through personal experience and public action.

The book also explores the core principles that guided Gandhi's life and work. His political ideas, economic thought, vision of Sarvodaya, and the method of Satyagraha are presented in a systematic and student-friendly manner. These chapters explain how values such as truth, non-violence, justice, self-reliance, and service to humanity shaped Gandhi's approach to social change. By studying these themes, students gain insight into Gandhi's belief that fundamental transformation begins with the individual and extends to society as a whole.

In today's world, increasingly marked by violence, inequality, environmental destruction, and intolerance, the study of Gandhian ideas is highly relevant. Gandhi's message of non-violence, dialogue, ethical living, and respect for human dignity offers meaningful solutions to many contemporary problems. This textbook aims not only to provide knowledge about Mahatma Gandhi but also to inspire students to critically reflect on his ideas and apply them in their personal lives and in the broader society.

With love and regards,

Dr. Jayaprakash R. K.
Director, SCERT, Kerala

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Certain icons are used in this textbook for convenience



Additional Reading:
Not subject to evaluation



Learning
Activities



Extended
Activities

THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a ¹**[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]** and to secure to all its citizens :

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the ²[unity and integrity of the Nation];

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)

01

Gandhian Studies and Indian Heritage: Foundations, Influences, and Contemporary Relevance



The collective memory of India is etched with diverse portraits of Mahatma Gandhi- playing with little children, engaged in spinning, nursing the sick, feeding his pet goat, leading demonstrations, addressing large gatherings, negotiating with British bureaucrats, or lost in deep contemplation. The picture given above is one such image, in which Gandhi is seen leading the historic Salt March of 241 miles (240 according to certain sources) from Ahmedabad to Dandi.

In 1930, when Gandhi chose the issue of the salt tax as the basis for launching mass civil disobedience, many eyebrows were raised. Several leaders dismissed the idea as insignificant. However, once the movement was launched and the Salt March advanced towards Dandi, the entire country was

swept into turmoil. Millions of people took to the streets. As Jawaharlal Nehru observed, Gandhi possessed the rare gift of sensing the pulse and reading the heartbeats of India's rural masses. He was not merely a mass leader, but also a social reformer, a profound thinker, and a philosopher—all rolled into one. Though deeply engaged with the issues of his time, his vision and thinking were distinctly futuristic. Even today, his ideas and ideals continue to resonate with contemporary socio-economic, political, and ecological discourses. Therefore, no one who is seriously concerned about the destiny of humanity can afford to ignore Gandhi. It is precisely for this reason that this textbook has been prepared and presented.

Defining Gandhian Studies

Gandhian Studies is the academic inquiry into the life, thought, and practice of Mahatma Gandhi, encompassing both his historical role in India's freedom struggle and the universal relevance of his philosophy. It is not merely about studying Gandhi as a political leader but about critically analysing his ideas of truth (*satya*), nonviolence (*ahimsa*), self-reliance (*swaraj*), and ethical living. The field is both descriptive and prescriptive: it seeks to understand Gandhi's actions and writings historically, while also applying his principles to present-day challenges in politics, economics, education, conflict resolution, and ecology.

Historical Emergence

Gandhian Studies as an organised field began after Gandhi's assassination in 1948, when universities, research institutions, and civil society groups in India and abroad established centres dedicated to his legacy. The Indian government initiated the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (CWMG), a 100-volume set of Gandhi's writings, which became a key resource for scholarship. Institutions such as the Gujarat Vidyapith, founded by Gandhi himself in 1920, and later institutions like the Gandhi Peace Foundation and the Institute of Gandhian Studies in Wardha, provided institutional frameworks for research and teaching.

Nature and Scope

When we study Gandhi, we explore how his ideas influence personal life, social behaviour, national movements, and global peace efforts. This gives us a clear picture of the nature and scope of Gandhian studies.

Gandhi's role as the leader of India's freedom struggle places his work firmly within the domain of political science. His vision of *swaraj* (self-rule) and *Gram swaraj* (village republics) contributed to theories of participatory democracy, decentralisation, and political legitimacy.

An Interdisciplinary Field of Inquiry

Gandhi's politics was inseparable from ethics; he saw political action as a moral endeavour guided by truth and nonviolence. Gandhi's approach to political struggle through *Satyagraha* redefined resistance as a moral act rather than a purely planned action. Gandhian Studies thus explores his influence on democratic practices, civil disobedience movements, and critiques of modern state power.

Globally, Gandhi's influence on civil rights movements and peace activism generated academic interest, with courses on nonviolence and Gandhian philosophy being introduced in universities in the United States, Europe, Africa, and Asia. The field of Gandhian Studies emerged in the mid-twentieth century as scholars wanted to understand the multiple dimensions of Gandhi's life, writings, and movements. Gandhian Studies is inherently interdisciplinary.

The interdisciplinary nature of Gandhian Studies arises from Gandhi's own holistic vision of life. He refused to separate politics from ethics, religion from social reform, or economics from spirituality. Consequently, the academic study of Gandhi cannot be confined to one discipline. Gandhi's ideas engage with philosophy, politics, economics, sociology, religious studies, education, peace research, and environmental ethics. At its core, Gandhian thought is grounded in philosophy and ethics. Gandhi's commitment to truth (*satya*) and nonviolence (*ahimsa*) reflects deep moral inquiries about human nature, justice, and the relationship between ends and means. His theory of *satyagraha* not only offered a method of political resistance but also posed a universal ethical principle for human conduct.

Social reform was central to Gandhi's praxis, particularly his campaigns against untouchability, caste discrimination, communal violence, and gender inequality. These issues are of enduring relevance to sociology and social work. Gandhi's *Constructive Programme* sought to rebuild Indian society through community-based initiatives in education, health, sanitation, and women's empowerment. The campaigns for khadi, village industries, and basic education, reflected his vision of social renewal. Scholars have analysed how these reforms were integral to his political struggles, not secondary to them.

Meaning of Interdisciplinary

Interdisciplinary means bringing together ideas, methods and insights from two or more different fields to understand a problem or topic. It means mixing ideas and methods from different fields. Gandhian studies is interdisciplinary because his life and thought touch so many areas that no single discipline is enough to have a wholesome understanding.

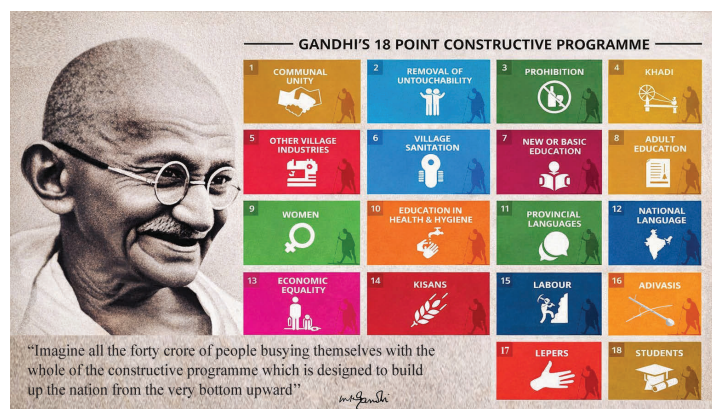


Fig. 1:01 :
Gandhi's 18 Point
Constructive Programme

Gandhi's critique of industrial capitalism and his insistence on ethical economics provide another interdisciplinary dimension. Rejecting both unregulated capitalism and authoritarian socialism, Gandhi proposed trusteeship, where wealth is held in trust for the benefit of society. He also emphasised village industries and local self-reliance, anticipating debates on sustainable development and critiques of globalisation. Gandhian Studies explores these ideas in the context of alternative development paradigms, cooperative movements, and business ethics. In development studies, Gandhi's ideas challenge dominant models of growth and consumerism, offering alternative frameworks rooted in equity and ecological balance.

Gandhi's worldview was shaped by Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islamic traditions. His emphasis on religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue contributes to comparative religion and theology. Gandhi viewed religion not as dogma but as a quest for truth, insisting that spirituality must inform politics and daily life

Perhaps Gandhi's most enduring global contribution is his articulation of nonviolence as a method of conflict resolution. His experiments with *satyagraha* provided a model for later peace movements led by Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and others. In peace and conflict studies, Gandhian methods are studied as tools for nonviolent communication, and grassroots peacebuilding. This establishes Gandhian Studies as a vital part of contemporary peace research.

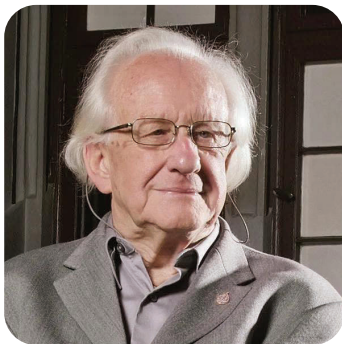


Fig. 1:02 :
Johan Galtung

For Gandhi, nonviolence was not merely a tactic but a way of life grounded in self-purification and respect for all beings, and of fearlessness. Gandhian frames of relevance emphasises its ethical and spiritual dimensions. Modern peace research often regards Gandhi as a forerunner to conflict transformation approaches advanced by Johan Galtung and John Paul Lederach. His constructive programmes, dialogue, and reconciliation resonate with the concept of positive peace.

Gandhi's *Nai Talim* or basic education emphasised experiential learning, dignity of labour, and integration of head, heart, and hand.

This education model provides an alternative to colonial and memory based learning systems, and remains relevant to debates on holistic and value-based education. Educational theorists and practitioners study Gandhian models as precursors to experiential and transformative learning. He believed in integrating productive work into education, thereby linking knowledge with dignity of labour and self-reliance. Gandhian Studies examines this model in light of contemporary debates on value education, experiential learning, and education for sustainable development

Though Gandhi did not frame himself as an environmentalist, his critique of consumerism, industrial excess and unsustainable exploitation of nature resonates strongly with modern ecological thought. Gandhi's ethic of moderation, captured in the dictum, "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed." challenges consumerism. His

Gram Swaraj anticipated localised, low-carbon economies. Gandhi extended *ahimsa* to animals and ecosystems. His critique of industrial modernity provides important resources for addressing climate change.

Gandhi's use of civil disobedience against unjust laws provides a rich case study for legal scholars. His insistence on the moral legitimacy of law, and his belief in justice as higher than legality, influence debates on human rights and international law.

His insights on preventive health particularly nature cure, sanitation, small scale technologies, village arts and crafts and so on are important areas for exploration in Gandhian studies.

The scope of Gandhian Studies is wide and it progresses from interdisciplinarity to trans-disciplinary levels. It helps us understand the past while also guiding us towards the future. Though emerged from India, Gandhian ideas are relevant to the whole world and are both thoughtful and practical in daily life. By studying Gandhi's ideas with understanding and critical thinking, we can work towards building a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world.



Fig. 1:03 :
Low Carbon Lifestyles

Gandhi's ideas are studied not only as history but also as solutions to present-day problems. Conduct a discussion on this statement by identifying any two social/political/economical/environmental issues.



Mahatma Gandhi and Cultural Heritage of India

Let us see a quote from Gandhi

'The ideal is a synthesis of the different cultures that have come to stay in India, that have influenced Indian life, and that, in their turn, have themselves been influenced by the spirit of the soil.'

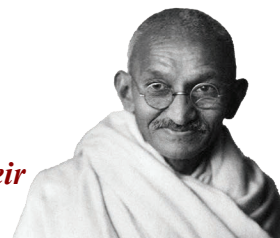


Fig. 1:04 :
Mahatma Gandhi

What we now refer to as India's cultural heritage is the harmonious blending of cultures that Gandhi described. India's civilisational journey is one of the longest and richest in the world. Over thousands of years, our heritage has evolved through engagements with various philosophies, cultural practices, spiritual traditions, and social movements. Among the many thinkers who interpreted and strengthened this heritage for modern India, Mahatma Gandhi stands out as one of the most influential. His life and ideas were deeply rooted in India's cultural soil, yet his message appealed to universal human values: truth, non-violence, simplicity, compassion, self-discipline, and respect for all forms of life.

This section tries to examine how Gandhian philosophy is rooted in Indian Culture. It shows how the Upanishads, Jainism, Buddhism, and the Bhakti tradition influenced the process. Gandhi sharpened these ideas into strong

tools for social change. In a time filled with violence, inequality, climate issues, and fast globalisation, revisiting Gandhian thought provides new insights into living ethically, developing sustainably, and coexisting peacefully.

India is often described as a “civilisation rather than a nation” because its roots stretch back thousands of years and encompass countless languages, religions, customs, and ideas. From the snowy Himalayas to the tropical seas, every region has given something unique to what we call Indian culture. But cultural heritage includes not only ancient temples or monuments but also values, practices, stories, festivals, and philosophies that shape peoples’ attitudes and ways of life.

At the same time, it is important to admit that what is depicted as Indian cultural heritage has not equally represented all sections of people, equally or equitably. Many communities—Dalits, Adivasis (tribal groups), women, and remote regions—were often left out of the “mainstream” picture of Indian civilisation. What we usually hear is the heritage of the powerful, literate, or dominant groups. The full reality is much richer and more diverse.

Mahatma Gandhi, one of the most influential figures of modern India, emerged as a child of this heritage became a reformer who tried to make it more inclusive. His life and ideas cannot be understood without understanding the traditions that shaped him—Indian philosophy, dharma, social ethics, folk culture, and the spirit of reform movements. In the following pages, we will journey through this cultural heritage, see what Gandhi drew from it, and

understand why his example remains relevant for people today.

Jain Principles



*The primary beliefs of Jainism are based on the **Pancha Mahavruthas**, which are the Five cardinal vows: Truth (satya), Non-violence (ahimsa), Non-Stealing (asteya), Non-Possession (aparigraha), and Chastity (brahmacharya). Important principles in Jainism also include the **Three Gems** (Tri Ratnas), which consist of Right faith, Right knowledge, and Right conduct, as well as the concept of **Anekandavada**, or the idea of many-sided reality.*

Philosophical Traditions: Quest for Truth and Meaning

From the earliest times, India has been a land of Seers and Sages. The Vedas and Upanishads, composed thousands of years ago, asked deep questions: *What is the self? What is truth? What is the ultimate purpose of existence?* These texts emphasised values like truth (satya), non-violence (ahimsa), discipline, and respect for all life. Later, Jainism and Buddhism carried these values even further. **Jainism** taught radical non-violence, so deep that even harming a tiny insect was considered wrong. Its principle of *anekantavada* (many-sidedness of truth) encouraged tolerance of different viewpoints. **Buddhism** focused on compassion, mindfulness, and reducing suffering in the world. Both traditions spread beyond India and influenced Asia, but more fundamentally helped in shaping Indian ethical mind. Centuries later, philosophical schools such as Vedanta, Yoga, and Nyaya continued this search for truth, while poets like Kabir and saints like Narsinh Mehta carried philosophy into the hearts of ordinary people through devotional songs and stories.

Charvaka, sometimes referred to as Lokayata, is a branch of Indian philosophy that dismissed the authority of the Vedas and the rituals performed by Brahmin priests. Those who view India solely as a land of religion might benefit from exploring this philosophy. The Charvaka School represents one of the most atheistic and sceptical schools of thought.

However, this heritage had its limitations, as well. Most of these traditions were preserved by educated elites who could read and write. The philosophies of tribal communities, oral traditions of peasants, and women's voices were less recorded. Still, they existed in folk proverbs, songs, and everyday wisdom, forming a parallel but often ignored strand of India's heritage.

Religious and Spiritual Pluralism

India is one of the few civilisations where multiple religions coexisted for centuries. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and later Islam, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism, all found a home here. The



Fig. 1:05 : Mirabhai

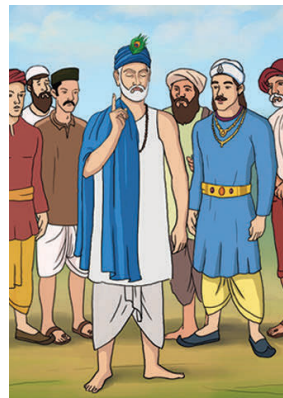


Fig. 1:06 : Kabir Das



Fig. 1:07 : Nizamuddin Auliya

presence of different faiths gave rise to beautiful examples of dialogue though it was not totally tension-free. The **Bhakti movement** (from the 7th century onwards) saw saints like Mirabai, Tukaram, and Kabir speak of God in terms of love rather than ritual. They often rejected caste discrimination and declared that devotion mattered more than caste or class. Similarly, **Sufi saints** like Nizamuddin Auliya spread message of love, equality, and service. Their shrines became spaces where Hindus and Muslims worshipped together.

Thus emerged Indian pluralism which naturally became the main defining characteristic of India's cultural legacy. Although Indian culture was composite in spirit, this spirit of mutual tolerance and respect was not manifested at all levels of human transactions. We must acknowledge the presence of discrimination. Caste systems and untouchability frequently conflicted with the principle of equality. While women were revered as divine figures in mythology, they often encountered limitations in reality. Therefore, Indian heritage is both uplifting and complex; it embodies noble ideals as well as severe exclusions.

Social and Ethical Ideas

By and large the concept of *dharma*—duty or righteous living—has guided

Four Noble Truths in Buddhism



- Life is full of suffering.*
- Desire is the main cause of these suffering.*
- These sufferings can be alleviated by eliminating desires.*
- Desires can only be overcome by following the Eightfold Path.*

Indian society for centuries. It encouraged individuals to live in harmony with family, society, and nature. Alongside dharma, *ahimsa* (non-violence) became a core ethical principle, especially in Jainism and Buddhism, and later in Hinduism too. The idea of *sarvodaya*—the welfare of all—was present in the sayings of saints and rulers. Ancient texts like the *Arthashastra* also spoke of good governance, stressing that the king’s duty was to protect the poor and maintain justice.

At the village level, community solidarity was strong. The idea of the self-sufficient village, where people produced their own food, cloth, and tools, became an enduring symbol of Indian life. Festivals, harvest rituals, and folk assemblies created a sense of belonging. Foreign travellers like Megasthenes (4th Cen BC) and Fa-Hien (5th Cen BC) who visited ancient India praised the quality of life in Indian villages.

But again, social ethics were not perfect. The caste system restricted social mobility and excluded millions. Women were often denied education and property rights. Adivasi communities had their own ethical systems rooted in respect for nature, but these were sidelined by mainstream culture. Thus, Indian heritage is a mixture of noble principles and unresolved contradictions.

Art, Literature, and Folk Traditions

India’s cultural heritage is not only about ideas but also about creativity. The epics—the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*—have shaped Indian imagination for centuries. They tell stories of duty, justice, love, and sacrifice, but also raise questions about power, morality, and human weakness.

Classical literature in Sanskrit, Tamil, and other languages produced masterpieces like Kalidasa’s plays and Sangam poetry. Meanwhile, folk traditions - songs, dances, storytelling, handicrafts - kept alive the voices of ordinary people. Tribal art like Warli painting, folk theatre like Yakshagana, and regional festivals carried values of resilience and joy.

Yet, many of these folk and tribal contributions were ignored in the grand narratives of Indian civilisation. When we speak of “heritage,” we often think of the Taj Mahal or Ajanta caves, but not of a Gond painting or a Baul song. This imbalance is important to remember.

The cultural heritage of India is woven from many threads: philosophy, religion, ethics, arts, and folk traditions. It is dazzling in its diversity, but also uneven in whose voices are heard.

This was the world into which Gandhi was born. He grew up hearing devotional songs, learning about dharma and ahimsa, witnessing religious pluralism, and observing both the beauty and the inequalities of Indian society. These early

influences prepared him to later reinterpret India's heritage in his own way—making it more inclusive, practical, and global.

Roots in Jain and Hindu Traditions

Gandhi was born in Porbandar, a coastal town in Gujarat. Gujarat was a region where Hindu and Jain traditions had mingled for centuries. As a child, Gandhi was influenced by Jain monks who preached *ahimsa* (non-violence), vegetarianism, and tolerance. His mother, Putlibai, was deeply religious, observing fasts and performing rituals with sincerity. These experiences gave Gandhi his lifelong respect for spiritual discipline and simplicity.

From Hinduism, Gandhi drew especially from the *Bhagavad Gita*. He first read it as a young man in England, and it became his “moral and spiritual dictionary.” The Gita's teaching of *nishkamakarma*—selfless action without attachment to results—became the foundation of his philosophy of service. Gandhi interpreted the Gita not as a call to war but as a metaphor for the battle within each person to overcome selfishness and attachment.

At the same time, Gandhi was aware of the problems within Hinduism, particularly caste and untouchability. While he respected many traditions, he refused to accept discriminating practices followed by upper caste Hindus. His campaign against untouchability showed that he was not a blind follower of heritage, but a reformer who wanted to make it more humane.



Fig. 1:07 : Sufi Dance

Bhakti and Sufi Influences: Love and Equality

Another strong current in Gandhi's thinking came from the Bhakti and Sufi traditions. Saints like Narsinh Mehta—whose song *Vaishnava Jana To* (a true devotee is one who feels the pain of others) became Gandhi's favourite hymn, taught him that true religion is compassion. The Bhakti poets rejected empty rituals and stressed equality of all people, whether high caste or low, Hindu or Muslim, man or woman.

Similarly, the Sufi saints of India spread messages of love, humility, and universal brotherhood. Gandhi admired their emphasis on service and their disregard for rigid boundaries of religion. This

Bhakti Movement : Main features



- a) Faith in God
- b) Purity of heart
- c) Hindu – Muslim Unity
- d) Rejection of idol worship
- e) Resistance to the caste system
- f) Teaching in vernacular languages

spirit of inclusiveness inspired Gandhi to reach out to Muslims, Christians, Parsis, and Sikhs in his freedom struggle.

The Bhakti-Sufi heritage was especially important because it showed Gandhi how religion could be a unifying force rather than a dividing one. He believed that all religions contain elements of truth and should coexist in harmony. His famous statement—"I am a Hindu, I am also a Muslim, a Christian, a Buddhist, and a Jew"—captures this vision.



Prepare a concept map / chart on the foundations of Gandhian Thought showing: the key philosophical traditions of India, their core values and how they influenced Gandhi.

Encounters with the West: A Mirror to Indian Heritage

Though deeply shaped by Indian traditions, Gandhi's thought also grew through his encounters with Western ideas. Gandhi read the works of Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin, and Henry David Thoreau along with other religious scriptures such as the Bible and the Bhagavad Gita.



Fig. 1:08 :
Leo Tolstoy

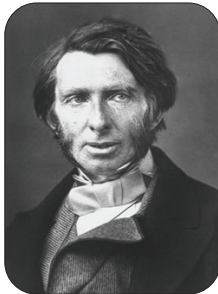


Fig. 1:09 :
John Ruskin



Fig. 1:10 :
Henry David Thoreau

Leo Tolstoy's teachings on non-violence and moral resistance resonated with Gandhi's own Hindu-Jain background.

John Ruskin's book *Unto This Last* influenced Gandhi's economic and ethical thinking—he embraced the dignity of labour and the idea that the good of the individual lies in the good of all.

Henry David Thoreau's essay on Civil Disobedience gave Gandhi practical hints for resisting unjust authority.

However, Gandhi did not simply adopt these Western ideas. He filtered them through his lenses of rationality and morality. For example, when he read about the dignity of labour, he connected it to the Indian tradition of spinning and weaving. While he studied civil disobedience, he incorporated it with the development of *satyagraha* (truth-force).

Thus, Gandhi's genius lay in synthesising the best of the East and the West, old and new, and amalgamating them into an integrated whole.

Heritage and Reform: Gandhi's Balancing Act

While Gandhi was deeply rooted in tradition, he did not hesitate to critique it and reject what he found immoral and irrational.

- Initially he defended the idea of the ancient division of labour in the varna system in ancient Hindu social organisation, he rejected caste and untouchability in unequivocal terms.
- He respected Hindu rituals but rejected those that lacked compassion and tolerance.
- He admired Indian village life but recognised that villages also needed reform in terms of hygiene, education, and equality. He rejected superstitions found in village life.

This balancing act, respecting tradition while reforming it, made Gandhi a unique bridge between the tradition and modernity. He was both a child of Indian heritage and its bold reformer.

Gandhi's life shows that cultural heritage is not static. It serves as a dynamic resource that can be reinterpreted in new ways. He absorbed lessons from Hinduism, Jainism, Bhakti and Sufi saints, and Western thinkers, and wove them together into a philosophy that guided India's freedom struggle. At the same time, he tried to make this heritage more inclusive- by standing with the poor, the untouchables, women, and minorities. Gandhi's genius lay not in inventing new values but in discovering the latent values of traditional wisdom and practices and giving them new life in the modern world.

Gandhi's approach to reforming tradition was marked by his efforts to confront inequalities inherent in heritage. He opposed untouchability within Hinduism, referring to untouchables as "Harijans" and actively dismantling the stigma attached to "polluting" work by participating in it himself. Gandhi also championed the role of women in the freedom movement, encouraging them to take on leadership roles, and recognising their inherent strengths such as patience and courage. His commitment to religious harmony was evident in his efforts to promote the idea that all religions are equal paths to truth, as demonstrated through inclusive prayer meetings. Additionally, Gandhi worked with marginalised communities, including Adivasis and peasants, highlighting his belief that true freedom must extend to the weakest members of society, as illustrated by his leadership in campaigns against oppressive practices in rural areas.

Reviving Ancient Values for Modern Times

One of Gandhi's greatest contributions was to take old Indian values and breathe new life into them.

Satya (Truth): Truth was central to the Upanishads and the Bhakti tradition. Gandhi turned truth into a political principle. He argued that unjust laws

should not be obeyed because they are lies imposed by the powerful. His method of satyagraha (truth-force) was a way of living truthfully in public life.

Ahimsa (Non-Violence): For centuries, ahimsa was seen mainly as a personal or religious virtue. Jain monks practiced it by avoiding harm to even insects; Buddhist monks cultivated it through compassion. Gandhi redefined ahimsa as a weapon for ordinary people against political oppression. In his hands, ahimsa became active, courageous, and revolutionary.

Village Economy: Traditional Indian villages valued self-reliance and community living. Gandhi revived this idea through his promotion of the spinning wheel, khadi (handspun cloth), and local industries. While modern elites looked to big factories, Gandhi insisted that India's strength lay in small communities where everyone had dignity of work.

In this way, Gandhi made heritage practical. Instead of leaving values in scriptures or rituals, he turned them into tools for social and political change. Gandhi showed that cultural heritage must be continuously reformed. Tradition is not sacred if it dehumanises people. Its real purpose is to promote dignity, equality, and justice. Gandhi is not just as a historical figure, but as a guide who continues to shape India's democratic, social, and cultural identity.

Universalising Indian Traditions

Gandhi's significant achievement in universalising Indian traditions is highlighted through three key principles. Firstly, the concept of nonviolence emerged as a powerful global heritage, effectively utilised against colonial

powers, inspiring figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela. Secondly, Gandhi's emphasis on simple living, vegetarianism, and sustainability predated contemporary environmental discussions; he famously noted that resources are sufficient for all needs but not for greed, promoting a harmonious relationship with nature. Third, his advocacy for spiritual democracy, grounded in the equal respect for all religions (sarva dharma samabhav), advanced pluralism and offered a constructive response to religious intolerance, demonstrating the relevance of Indian values on the global stage.

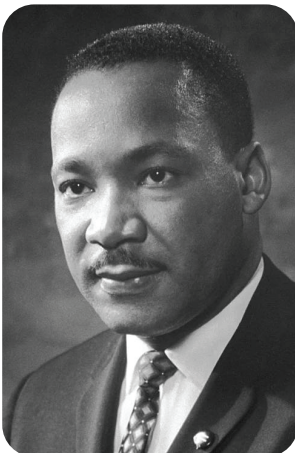


Fig. 1:11 :
Martin Luther King Jr.



Fig. 1:12 :
Nelson Mandela



Conduct a panel discussion on, "Gandhi universalised Indian values to address modern global challenges such as violence and environmental crisis."

Relevance for Today's Students

For young people today, Gandhi's engagement with heritage offers important lessons:

- **Critical Engagement, Not Blind Imitation:** Gandhi respected Indian tradition but was not afraid to challenge it. Students can learn to value cultural heritage while also questioning practices that cause injustice.
- **Inclusivity:** Heritage must include the voices of all—Dalits, Adivasis, women, minorities. Gandhi's struggle reminds us that a culture is only as strong as the dignity it gives to its weakest members.
- **Practical Values:** Gandhi did not treat heritage as something locked in books. He wore it, spun it, walked it, and lived it. For students, this means that values like simplicity, service, and honesty are not abstract ideals and they can be part of daily life.
- **Global Relevance:** Gandhi proves that Indian heritage is not just for India. It can offer solutions to global challenges like violence, inequality, and climate change.

This chapter has shown how Gandhian Studies explores the meaning, scope, and relevance of Gandhi's ideas. It demonstrates how deeply these ideas are rooted in India's rich cultural heritage. We view Gandhi as a thinker who drew from tradition and questioned its limits. He transformed tradition into a guide for ethical and practical living. To understand how these ideas were shaped, it is important to look at the early influences and life that formed his character and values. The next chapter turns to the early life of Mahatma Gandhi and traces the experiences that laid the foundation for his philosophy.



Fig. 1:13 : Mahatma Gandhi walking at Satyagraha Ashram, Sevagram



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. *Prepare a chart or table showing how Gandhian ideas relate to different subjects such as: Politics, Economics, Education, Environment, Peace and Conflict Studies. (Write one example under each heading to show the interdisciplinary nature of Gandhian Studies.)*
2. *Gandhi respected Indian traditions but also challenged practices like untouchability and gender inequality. Prepare a write up on any one tradition that needs reform today and explain how Gandhi's approach can guide positive change.*
3. *Take a case study on how Gandhi influenced leaders across the world. Analyse how the Gandhian principles inspired them.*
4. *Design a poster or write a slogan on any one of the following:*
 - *Non-violence as a way of life*
 - *Simple living and sustainability*
 - *Unity in diversity*
 - *Truth and moral courage*
5. *Prepare a short reflective write-up or presentation titled*
“Is Gandhian Heritage Relevant in Today's World?”
6. *Conduct a group discussion on, ‘How can we practice Non-violence in our daily life?’*

Mahatma Gandhi: Early Life and Influences

The lives of great sages, seers, and moral leaders have amply demonstrated that family background and early influences play a decisive role in shaping personality and worldview. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was no exception to this pattern. In Part I of his celebrated autobiography, *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Mahatma Gandhi offers a fascinating and reflective account of his early life, detailing the major influences that left an indelible impression on him and profoundly shaped his outlook on life. As is well known, the role Gandhi later played in shaping human history was heroic and epic in scale.

This chapter proposes to present an overview of the compelling early life of Gandhi, focusing on his family background, childhood, education, and the moral and ethical lessons he learned and internalised during these formative years.

Family background and Childhood

Everyone is influenced by his/her family background, parents, close relatives and friends, their culture, religion, education, and the period in which s/he live.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2 October 1869 in Porbandar in Kathiawad to Karamchand Gandhi and Putalibai. He belongs to the Modh Baniya caste of the Vysya Varna. He was endearingly called Moniya.



Fig. 2:01
Moniya - Gandhi in his
childhood

Gandhi's grandparents were known for their honesty, simplicity, and loyalty. Gandhi's grandfather, Uttamchand Gandhi, was the Diwan of Porbandar. Later, he resigned from the post due to differences with the then Queen of Porbandar, Roopaliba.

His father, Karamchand Gandhi, then became the Diwan of Porbandar. He served Porbandar for 28 years. Gandhi describes his father in his autobiography as, "My father was a lover of his clan, truthful, brave and generous, but short-tempered... My father never had any ambition to accumulate riches and left us very little property. He had no education, save that of experience... But his rich experience of practical affairs stood him in good stead in the solution of the most intricate questions and managing hundreds of men." These words show that Gandhi inherited virtues like honesty and practical wisdom from his family.

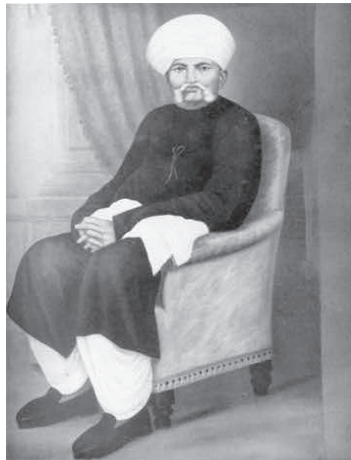


Fig. 2:02 : Karamchand Gandhi



Fig. 2:03 : Putlibai

As Gandhi's father was the Diwan, religious men of many faiths used to visit his house. They engaged in spiritual discussions on religions. Gandhi used to listen to these discussions with great interest. The unique environment at home had sown the seeds of religious pluralism and tolerance in young Mohandas's mind. In later years, these influences became foundational to his firm belief that all religions are equal and deserved equal respect.



Porbandar – Geographical History

Porbandar was an old seaport town in Saurashtra, now in Gujarat. The word 'Porbandar' comes from 'Porai' and 'Bandar'. The word 'Porai' is the name of the local goddess, and 'Bandar' means port or harbour. It is believed that Porbandar is associated with the birth of Sudama – Lord Krishna's friend. It was also known as 'Sudamapuri'.

Gandhi's mother was also deeply religious. She frequently visited temples with her children. She led a simple life. She took the most rigid vows and practised them in letter and spirit.

In his autobiography, Gandhi wrote about his mother: "The outstanding impression my mother has left on my memory is that of saintliness. She was deeply religious. She would not think of taking her meals without her daily prayers."



Gandhi's mother exerted a lasting influence on Gandhi's religious outlook, including his faith in God, his respect for vows, and his image of a woman as the embodiment of love and sacrifice.

As a child Mohandas was afraid of ghosts and spirits. Rambha, the old servant in his family, advised him to repeat 'Ramanama' as a solution for his fear of ghosts. She sowed in Gandhi the seeds of faith in Ramanama. Gandhi later acknowledged that 'Ramanama' had been a sure remedy for him throughout his life.

School life

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi went to a Primary School in Rajkot in 1876. Later, he attended Kathiawad High School in Rajkot in 1880, when he was 11 years old. He was an average student in the class. He did not make friends with his classmates, nor did he spend any extra time in school. He was keen about being truthful. He never lied. "I do not remember having ever told a lie, during this short period, either to my teachers or to my schoolmates."

The dramas *Shravana Pithrubhakti* and *Harishchandra* had a significant impact on Mohandas during his school days.

Truth had always captivated Mohandas. His faith and will to uphold the truth were strengthened by the tale of Harishchandra, who gave up everything for the love of Truth. Gandhi asked himself, "Why should not all be truthful like Harishchandra?"

Gandhi makes special mention of The *Shravana Pithrubhakti* nataka, a play on Shravana's loyalty to his parents. Mohandas was deeply affected by the picture of Shravana carrying his blind parents on his shoulders. Gandhi decided to serve his parents with love and devotion, becoming as devoted to them as Shravana. "Obedience to parents" became his motto. For Mohandas, Shravana, and King Harishchandra served as living examples and sources of motivation to improve and live moral lives. They had permanently altered his character.

Pranami tradition

Putlibai was born into a family belonging to the Pranami tradition in the village of Datrana near Junagadh. The Pranami sect's belief system blended Hindu and Islamic elements, and a Kshatriya initiated its rituals in Kathiawad in the 18th century.

There was no idol worship in the Pranami temples. Elements from the Quran and Hindu texts were incorporated. The main themes/messages from these are displayed on the temple walls. Simplicity was the hallmark of the Pranamis. Medicines, meat, alcohol, and tobacco are forbidden for Pranamis.



The story of King Harishchandra

The gods desired to put Harishchandra to the test. They sent him a Brahmin. The Brahmin requested alms. Until the king gave him everything, including his kingdom, he would not be content. In accordance with his dharma, Harishchandra gave up everything he owned. He was sold into slavery. He was assigned to oversee the cremation grounds. After taking their son with her, his wife abandoned him. When the son eventually passed away, the wife took the body to Harishchandra to be cremated. However, the woman was unable to pay the regular amount that he insisted upon. Harishchandra's honesty pleased the gods. They gave him back the kingdom.

The Story of Shravana



When King Dashrath ruled Ayodhya, a boy named Shravan Kumar lived there. His parents were old and blind. He had to do all the work for them. Shravan Kumar did everything with earnestness and love. He fulfilled all their wishes. One day, Shravan Kumar's parents expressed their desire to go on a pilgrimage. As an obedient son, he wanted to fulfill their wish. But how was he going to do that? He couldn't afford any transportation because he didn't have any money. He found another way. He took a strong bamboo stick, tied baskets to its two ends, and placed his parents in them. He then set out on a pilgrimage, carrying the baskets on his shoulder. The parents were very pleased with their son's devotion.

Sports and other extracurricular activities didn't appeal to him. However, he later acknowledged that physical education affects one's personality development. When he was a student, he had no care at all about his handwriting. However, he later claimed that flawless handwriting is an indication of an excellent education.

During his childhood in Rajkot, Mohandas experienced both good and difficult experiences. In Mohandas's house, if family members accidentally touched Uka, a scavenger appointed to clean the latrines, they were required to bathe immediately to "purify" themselves. Mohandas reacted strongly against this. When his mother told him not to touch Uka, Mohandas not only disobeyed her but also argued that there was no difference between himself and Uka. This incident genuinely anticipated his later anti-untouchability stance.

The Kettle That Tested Truth

The famous 'Kettle incident' occurred during his first year at Alfred High School. An English Inspector named Mr. Giles visited the school and came to Mohandas's class. He asked the students to write five English words as a spelling test.

Mohandas was the only student who misspelt the word 'Kettle'. Seeing this, the teacher prompted him, using signs, to copy the correct spelling from the student sitting next to him. However, Mohandas refused to do so. Later, the teacher scolded Mohandas for "tarnishing the reputation of the class." Despite this, Mohandas's respect for his teacher did not diminish. However, 'Little Gandhi' made it clear to the teacher that cheating is not a part of obedience.



Conduct a debate on the topic, "True obedience lies in following one's conscience, not authority."

It was during a phase when anti-British sentiment was gaining strength in the princely states of India that Mohandas was influenced by the arguments of one of his friends, Sheikh Mehtab. Mehtab argued that if the youth strengthened their bodies by eating meat, they would be able to drive out the foreigners.

A popular poem by the Gujarati poet Narmad gained much attention at the time:



“Behold the mighty Englishman
He rules the Indian small,
Because being a meat-eater
He is five cubits tall

Mohandas was patriotic right from his schooldays. Gandhi continued meat eating for one year. But meat eating was strictly forbidden in his family. Meat-eating was not presented by Gandhi as a “sin” in religious terms, but as moral deception.

A poem by Shamal Bhatt also influenced Mohandas. It emphasises returning good for evil. Again, Gandhi pointed out the impact of Shamal Bhatt’s poem in the following words. “It was from Shamal Bhatt’s couplet... that I had first learnt the principle of winning over even an enemy with love.”

A Childhood Experience with Non-Violence

Gandhi has emotionally recorded a childhood experience of theft in his autobiography. Once, his brother Karsandas fell into a debt of 25 rupees due to a scam. Karsandas shared his distress with his younger brother. To settle the debt, Mohandas stole a bit of gold from Karsandas’s gold bracelet and sold it. However, the guilt of this act became too much for him to handle.

Realising that true repentance comes only through confession, Gandhi wrote a heartfelt note to his father admitting his mistake with deep pain. In the letter, he requested suitable punishment for his wrong doing and promised never to repeat such an act.

His father, who was bedridden, burst into tears upon reading his son’s letter. His tears soaked the paper. Those pearls of love and tolerance washed away the sins and purified Mohandas’s heart. For him, it was a good confession. Gandhi says, “A clean confession, combined with a promise never to commit the sin again, when offered before one who has the right to receive it, is the purest type of repentance.”

Gandhi later acknowledged that this incident was an object lesson in ahimsa (Non-violence). Gandhi writes in his autobiography: “This was for me, an

Alfred High School

The school was built during British rule and was the first English school in the Saurashtra region. It was founded on October 17, 1853. It was initially known as Rajkot English School. It came to be known as Rajkot High School by 1886. The school was named Alfred High School in 1907 in memory of Prince Alfred (H.H. Nawab of Junagadh). Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi did his schooling at Alfred High School. After Independence, the name of the school was changed to Mohandas High School.



Shamal Bhatt’s poem

*For a bowl of water, give a goodly meal;
For a kindly greeting, bow thou down with zeal;
For a simple penny pay thou back with gold;
If thy life be rescued, life do not withhold.
Thus, the words and actions of the wise are regarded;
Every little service tenfold they reward;
But the truly noble know all men as one,
And return with gladness, good for evil done.*

object-lesson in ahimsa. Then I could read in it nothing more than a father's love, but today I know that it was pure ahimsa. When such ahimsa becomes all-embracing, it transforms everything it touches. There is no limit to its power."



Fig. 2:04 : Kasturba Gandhi

Gandhi's marriage took place at the age of 13. He was still a student at Alfred High School in Rajkot. Kasturba, his wife, was also of the same age. She had never been to school. But she later learned to read and write. Recalling the day of their marriage, Gandhi said, "I do not think it meant to me anything more than the prospect of good clothes to wear, drum beating, marriage processions, rich dinners and a strange girl to play with." Later, Gandhi strongly opposed child marriage. According to him, it was thoughtless and dangerous.

Mohandas passed his matriculation in 1887 at the age of 18. Mohandas joined Samaldas College in Bhavnagar. He found the studies difficult. Meanwhile, his father died in 1885.



Fig. 2:05 : Samaldas College, Bhavnagar

A family friend, Mauji Deve, suggested that if young Gandhi hoped to take his father's place as Diwan in the state service, he should become a barrister. He could do the studies in England in three years. Mohandas agreed to this and overcame his mother's objection by taking a solemn vow not to touch wine, women and meat.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was given a send-off by his fellow students of the Alfred High School, Rajkot, when he was leaving for England. Gandhi, in his reply, pointed out his intention after his legal studies in London.

“I hope that some of you will follow in my footsteps, and after you return from England you will work wholeheartedly for big reforms in India.”

In 1888, Gandhi sailed to England to study law in London, despite the stiff resistance from his elders.

Student Life in London

Gandhi reached London on 29 September 1888 as a young student determined to qualify as a barrister, enrolling himself at the Inner Temple College, in England.

The Farringdon Street Awakening

During his early days in London, Gandhi underwent a profound inner struggle while trying to remain faithful to the moral vow he had taken before his mother. In search of vegetarian food, he would walk long distances each day, often satisfying his hunger only with bread from cheap restaurants, yet remaining physically and mentally dissatisfied. These difficult wanderings came to a decisive end when he discovered a vegetarian restaurant in Farringdon Street. The moment filled him with intense joy, similar to that of a child finding something deeply cherished.

Outside the restaurant, Gandhi noticed a small display of books, among which Henry Salt's *A Plea for Vegetarianism* caught his attention. He purchased the book and then entered the dining room, where he enjoyed his first truly satisfying meal since arriving in England. However, the book proved to be far more nourishing than the meal. Its ideas deeply influenced him, transforming his outlook on vegetarianism. Gandhi moved from merely obeying a vow to developing a thoughtful and conscious commitment to it.

From that moment onwards, Gandhi regarded himself as a vegetarian by choice, not by compulsion. He felt grateful for the vow he had taken before his mother, realising that it had guided him towards a deeper understanding of truth and self-discipline. Earlier, he had abstained from meat only to keep his promise, while privately believing that meat-eating was necessary and even desirable. The Farringdon Street experience marked a decisive



Fig. 2:06 : Inner Temple College, England



Fig. 2:07
Gandhi as a
student in London

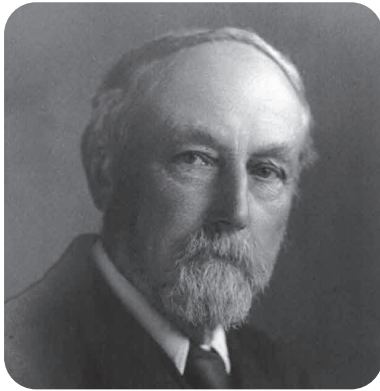


Fig. 2:08 : Henry Stephens Salt

Henry Stephens Salt

1851(born in India) - 1939

Writer, ethical vegetarian, socialist, naturalist and pacifist.

Notable works:

1. A Plea for Vegetarianism, 2. Biography of Henry David Thoreau

He founded the 'Humanitarian League' in 1891 to prevent cruelty against animals and to protect animal rights.

shift in his thinking: vegetarianism became not only a personal conviction but also a moral cause. Henceforth, the promotion of vegetarianism emerged as an important part of Gandhi's life mission, foreshadowing the ethical clarity and firmness that would later define his public life and philosophy.

From Delusion to Realisation

Gandhi tried to adopt "English" customs and lifestyles in every possible manner. Gandhi decided to become an "English gentleman". So, he started practising elocution, western dance, music and French. He began to imitate the British lifestyle. The pursuit of becoming an English gentleman lasted for three months. Realising that he did not have to spend his entire life in England, he abandoned his artificial efforts to become an 'English gentleman' and reached the conclusion that being a gentleman through one's own character was sufficient. According to Narayan Desai, "Gandhi tried to imitate externally those whom he considered superior. Later, Gandhi realised that no one can become civilised just through imitation."

Gandhi advised Indian students in England, self reliance and importance of simple living and essential ways to overcome the culture shock.

Theosophical influences

Theosophical Society was established in New York in 1875. Gandhi was introduced to Blavatsky and Annie Besant of the Theosophical Society in London. Annie Besant became a prominent Indian nationalist later; during Gandhi's London years, she was primarily known as a Theosophist and orator. He was attracted towards the principles of Theosophy. On March 26, 1891, Gandhi was enrolled as an associate member of the London Theosophical Society. Theosophical involvement and acquaintance with many vegetarians in London helped Gandhi in his spiritual development to a great extent.

During 1899, the Theosophical influence led Gandhi to read Madam Blavatsky's *The Key to Theosophy* and other religious literature, including Edwin Arnold's *The Song Celestial*, *The Light of Asia*, the *Bhagavat Gita* in original and the *Bible*.

Gandhi heard the speech of Annie Besant twice, in London. "How I became a Theosophist" was the theme of the speech. Gandhi went to the Queen's Hall



Theosophical Society

Blavatsky, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and William Quan Judge, with several others, founded The Theosophical Society in 1875.

Objectives of the Theosophical Society

To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.

To investigate unexplained laws of Nature, and the powers latent in man.

The Key to Theosophy (1889) by Madam Blavatsky

This book was a clear exposition in the form of questions and answers, on ethics, science and philosophy. Theosophical Society was founded to study these areas. Gandhi read this book while he was in London and was attracted towards the Theosophical Society.

In May 1882, a large estate was bought at Adayar, near Chennai in South India and the Theosophical Headquarters was moved there by the end of the year.

in London to hear Annie Besant's speech. In it, she said, "Write the following lines in my epitaph. This Lady lived for Truth and died for Truth. Then I will be the happiest woman". These words had a profound influence on Gandhi.



Fig. 2:09
Helene Petrovana
Blavatsky

**Helena Petrovana
Blavatsky**
1831-1891

*Popularly known as
Madame Blavatsky.*

*One of the founders of
Theosophical Society.*

Notable works:

*The Voice of Silence
The Secret Doctrine
The Key to Theosophy*



Fig. 2:10
Annie Besant

Annie Besant

1847(London) -1933
(Adayar, India)

*Known as a Theosophist,
Women's rights activist,
Writer and orator.*

*First female president of
Indian National Congress.*

*Founded the Central
Hindu College of Banaras
in 1898.*

Contact with Religions

Gandhi was raised as a Hindu and never left that tradition. Yet, he was also open to other influences. As a youth, he absorbed much from the Jain tradition. It was popular in his native state of Gujarat. When he studied law in London in the early 1890s, he developed a great interest in Christianity, especially in the New Testament.

Hinduism remained the foundation and framework of all his thoughts and life. Being born into a traditional Vaishnava family, Gandhi was deeply influenced by the religious atmosphere in Kathiawad. He listened to the reading of Tulsidas' Ramayana at the age of 13. "Reading the Ramayana left a deep impression on me before my father. That laid the foundation of my deep devotion to the Ramayana. Today I regard the Ramayana of Tulsidas as the greatest book in all devotional literature." For Gandhi, the *Bhagavat Gita* conveyed the message of the triumph of good over evil. He was influenced by the relevance of detached duty and the purity of means in the *Bhagavat Gita*.

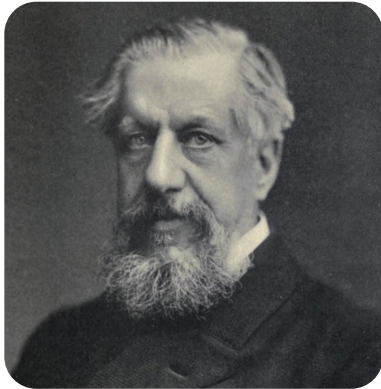


Fig. 2:11 : Sir Edwin Arnold

Sir Edwin Arnold

1832 - 1904

Journalist, Editor, Poet and Teacher

In 1856, he came to India as the Principal of the Government Sanskrit College, Poona, a post he held for seven years, including a period during the First War of Indian Independence in 1857.

He was of the view that "There is no caste in blood".

Notable works:

1. The Light of Asia, 2. The Song Celestial



Gandhi was introduced to the *Bhagavat Gita* by Edwin Arnold's "*The Song Celestial*". Gandhi read this translation of the *Bhagavat Gita* and became greatly interested in it. He read the original *Bhagavat Gita* and was enchanted by its beauty.

According to him, '*Bhagavat Gita* is the essence of Hinduism'. The 'Nishkama karma' propounded by the *Gita* attracted him. It became Gandhi's spiritual dictionary. The Hindu belief in the oneness of all life confirmed and sustained his faith in ahimsa (non-violence).

Gandhi says, "It was through the Hindu religion that I learnt to respect Christianity and Islam." "I am a Hindu because it is Hinduism which makes the world worth living. I am a Hindu hence I love not only human beings, but all living beings." (*Young India*, January 12, 1926)

Gandhi was acquainted with the life and teachings of Buddha from Edwin Arnold's book, *The Light of Asia*. Buddha's life of

renunciation and his doctrine of compassion and tolerance had influenced Gandhi. He admitted that the teachings of Buddha influenced him'. According to Gandhi, "I am trying my level best to follow Buddha's life."

The Noble Eightfold Path is one of the main teachings of Buddha. He described it as the way leading to happiness and self-awakening.

Gujarat has a rich history of Jainism. Gujarat is the region which gave birth to great Jain sanyasis like Acharya Hemachandra, Acharya Sheel Gun Soori, Shrimad Raj Chandra, Kanaji Swami and others.

Jainism greatly influenced Kathiawad. So was Mahatma Gandhi. He was influenced by the overall Jain environment of his native place, his mother Putlibai's affiliation to Jainism and his friendship with the great Jain philosopher Shrimad Rajchandra.

Gandhi adopted all five vows of Jainism, with a higher degree. The vows include Truth, Nonviolence, Non-stealing, Non-possession and Celibacy. But beyond that, he seems to be a true Jain in terms of his bravery. We do not see any instance in which he behaved like a coward. He was a brave man throughout his life. Another significant influence of Jainism on Gandhi was simplicity in life and a simple dress code.

The *Panchamahavrutas* of Jainism strongly influenced Gandhi. Gandhi was also influenced by the *Three Ratnas* (Jewels) of Jainism. Gandhi says, "No religion of the world has explained the principle of non-violence so deeply and systematically, with its applicability in life as in Jainism. Bhagawan Mahaveera is sure to be respected as the greatest authority of non-violence."

Gandhi was introduced to the Bible while in England. The New Testament influenced him. According to him, "But the New Testament produced a different impression especially the Sermon on the Mount which went straight to my heart. I compared it with the Gita. The verses, 'But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man take away thy coat let him have thy cloak too', delighted me beyond measure and put me in mind Shamal Bhatt's 'For a bowl of water, give a goodly meal', etc. My young mind tried to unify the teaching on the Gita, *The Light of Asia* and the Sermon on the Mount. That renunciation was the highest form of religion, which appealed to me greatly." Gandhi insisted always that Jesus occupied in his heart the place of one of the greatest teachers who had a considerable influence on his life. Gandhi often affirmed: "It is that sermon which has endeared Jesus to me."

But what did Jesus mean to Gandhi? He says, "I regard Jesus as a great teacher of humanity". What really attracted Gandhi to Jesus' life and message is the aspect of Jesus' suffering. Suffering for others forms one of the pillars of Gandhi's message to the world. It is worth noting that Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence - satyagraha-has three principles: Truth or Satya, Nonviolence or Ahimsa and self-suffering or Tapasya. These are called the pillars of Satyagraha. Failure to grasp them is a handicap to the understanding of Gandhi's non-violence. Gandhi saw all these principles in Jesus' life, and the one that really attracted him was the third aspect, which is Tapasya - willingness to self-sacrifice or suffer. Gandhi declares: "the example of Jesus"

suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in nonviolence which rules all my actions, worldly and temporal.” Jesus, for him, was the prince of satyagrahis.

Gandhi read “Heroes and Hero Worship” by Thomas Carlyle while in London. Gandhi wrote, “I read the chapter on the Hero as prophet and learnt of the Prophet’s greatness and bravery and austere living.” Islam means submission to God; the word *salaam* means peace. He was influenced by concepts such as non-exploitation, justice, and charity in the Quran. Islam is against the caste system. The aim of life, according to the Quran, is the happiness and well-being of the individual. It also preached religious tolerance and universal love. He learned more about the practical ways of Islam during his early days in Durban through Dada Abdulla Seth.



Conduct a group discussion on the Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Christian, and Islamic ideas that influenced Gandhi.

Impact of London life on Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

- Became a vegetarian by choice.
- Acquired a good command of the English language.
- Developed skills in writing and publishing articles.
- Internalised organisational skills and techniques.
- Came in to contact with progressive movements.
- Became familiar with the scriptures of various religions.
- Gandhi passed the matriculation examination of the University of London and later qualified as a barrister by passing the examinations of the Inner Temple in 1891
- Became familiar with the English lifestyle and Modern civilisation
- Practised punctuality
- Started writing a diary about daily life.
- Interacted with thinkers and writers like Sidney James Webb and George Bernard Shaw.
- Came in to contact with philosophers like Edward Carpenter, Madame Blavatsky and Annie Besant

The transformation of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi into Mahatma was the result of many influences. India’s cultural heritage, civilisation, his family background, childhood experiences, school, and his three years’ stay in

London are among them. Gandhi was initially shy by nature. But in London, his shyness did not stop him from learning new things. He engaged in debates and social activities with great interest. London was the setting for Gandhi's professional training. This period initiated his intellectual and moral growth, opening the door to his spiritual explorations.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi returned to India on June 12, 1891. The death of his mother was his first shock.

Return to India as Barrister

After his return to India, he enrolled in the Bombay High Court in May 1892.

The living expenses in Bombay made him even more anxious. Barrister Gandhi, who had no income, was led into a deep crisis. At that time, lawyers had to pay a commission to middlemen to get cases. Gandhi's sense of justice was opposed to this.

Finally, he received a case in the High Court for a woman named Mamibai without paying any commission. The fee was 30 Rupees. In this case, as the defence lawyer, he had to cross-examine seven witnesses. The moment Barrister Gandhi stood up for the cross-examination, he felt as if his head was spinning; it felt like the court itself was revolving around him! Feeling humiliated, he walked out of the courtroom and decided that he would not take up any more cases until he gained the courage to argue. But the first case itself was a failure for Gandhi.

Gandhi received a case regarding the government seizure of land belonging to a poor Muslim man in Porbandar. He was given this case because he was the son of Karamchand (Kaba) Gandhi. Although the case itself was weak, Gandhi's petition was excellent. Although he did not shine as a lawyer during his stay in Bombay, he studied Indian law in depth and gained expertise in preparing petitions.

He returned to Rajkot in 1892 and was willing to help his brother Lakshmidas. Upon returning to Rajkot, Gandhi opened his own office. By drafting petitions and applications, he began to earn an occasional income of up to 300 Rupees per month. Lakshmidas's interventions were very helpful to him.



Fig. 2:12 : M.K. Gandhi with his elder brother Lakshmidas

Insult to Gandhi

Lakshmidas was involved in a dispute with the British. Gandhi recommended his case before Charles Olivent, the Political Agent, and vouched for his brother's honesty and sincerity. Gandhi had known him while he was in London. Olivent was angry and insulted Gandhi for trying to persuade him. After this incident, Gandhi decided not to exploit friendship with anybody.

Gandhi became unhappy about his life in India. He eagerly wished to leave India. At that time, he received an offer from Dada Abdulla & Co. in South Africa for a one-year contract. He took the offer and proceeded to South Africa in 1893 at the age of 24.



Prepare a map or timeline of Gandhi's formative years using the locations and dates provided in the chapter.

Influences

Srimad Rajchandra (Raychand)

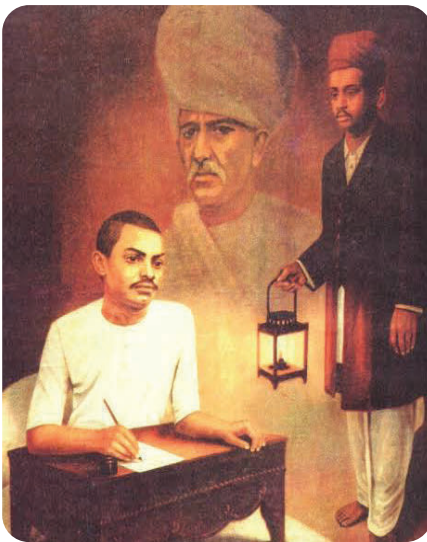


Fig. 2:13 : Shrimad Rajchandra

Shrimad Rajchandra a devote Jain was Gandhi's mentor. Rajchandra was a genius with a deep knowledge of Jain philosophy. Gandhi met him upon his return from England. Raychand was a man of great character. He was also known as 'Shatavadhani' (one having the faculty of remembering or attending to a hundred things simultaneously). He had a vast knowledge of scriptures. Gandhi realised the spiritual wisdom of Raychand from his speeches and articles on religion and God. Gandhi discussed the concept of self-realisation and the passion to see God face to face with Raychand. While in South Africa, Gandhi sent a lengthy questionnaire to Shrimad Rajchandra. The questionnaire had 27 questions, which Shrimad Rajchandra promptly answered. Gandhi acknowledged Raychand's influence on his spiritual development in his autobiography.

Gopalakrishna Gokhale

Gandhi acknowledged Gokhale as his political guru. Gokhale treated Gandhi as his younger brother. Gokhale's style of work greatly influenced Gandhi. According to Gandhi, 'To see Gokhale at work was as much a joy as education.' Gokhale never wasted a minute, and he always worked for his fellow citizens. He was very much concerned about India's poverty. Gokhale's spirit of freedom attracted Gandhi. In general, Gokhale's personality, lifestyle,

practical wisdom, and simplicity greatly influenced Gandhi and helped shape his own.

Gandhi's life in London was a formative phase that shaped his character, values, and outlook on life. His sincere efforts to adjust to a new culture, his experiments with simplicity, self-discipline, and truth, and his moral struggles helped him gain a deeper understanding of himself and the world around him. The experiences he gathered in London - both successes and failures - strengthened his commitment to honest living and ethical conduct. These early lessons became the foundation for his later ideals and actions.

In the next chapter, we shall see how these values were tested and transformed during his life in South Africa, where Gandhi's personal growth evolved into a powerful force for social justice and leadership.



Fig. 2:14 : Gopalakrishna Gokhale

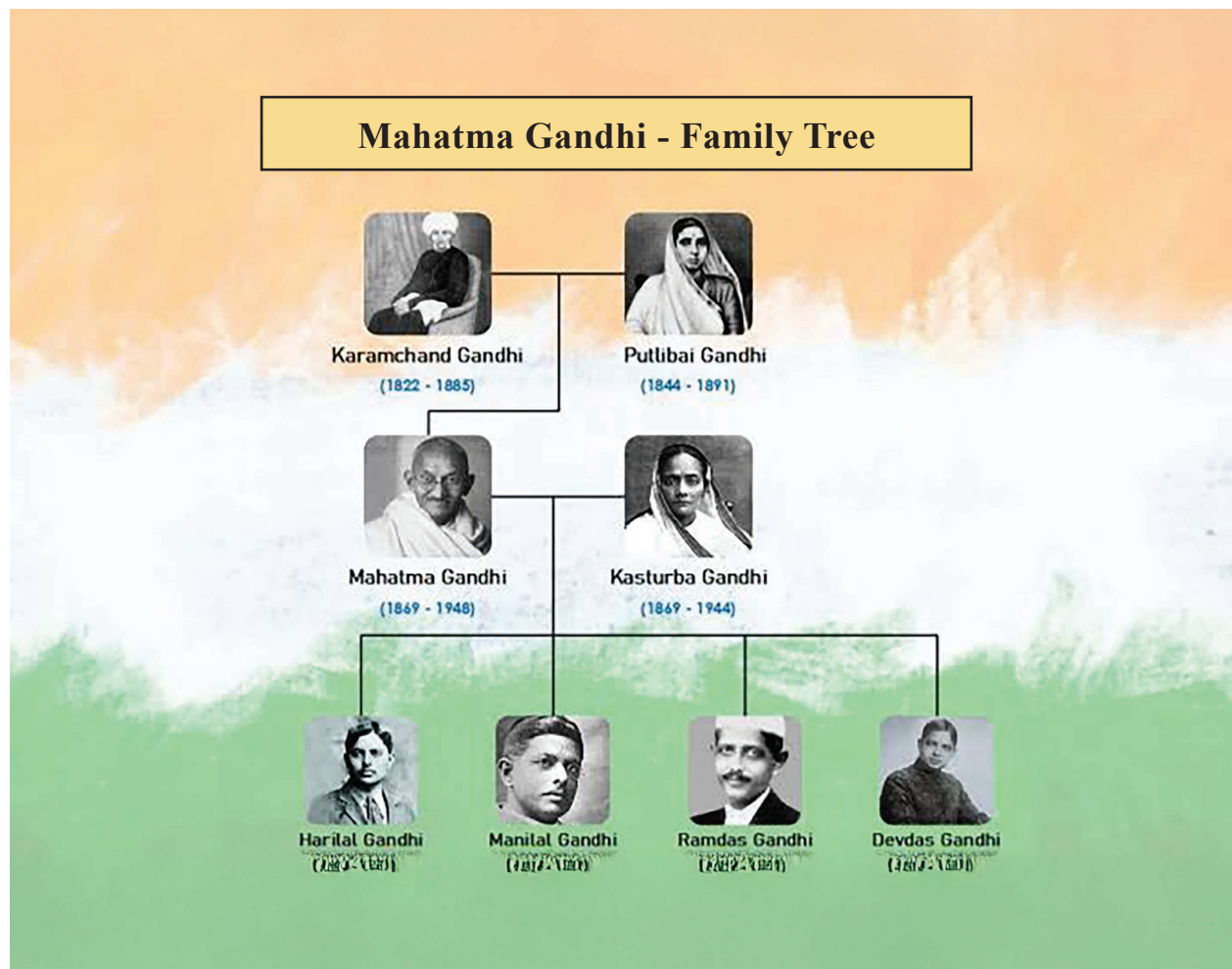


Fig. 2:15 Family Tree of Gandhi



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. *Prepare a reflective write up on obedience to teacher and adherence to honesty in the context of the Kettle incident.*
2. *Students should work in small groups to write a script and perform a short play based on either the story of Shravana or King Harishchandra to analyse how literature and theatre can alter a person's character.*
3. *Based on Gandhi's autobiography and his experience as a student in London write a daily diary by identifying three unnecessary habits of your own in a week.*
4. *Prepare a letter of Gandhi's father, Karamchand, describing his reaction to the confession letter by Mohandas. Discuss how non-violence can be used as a tool for emotional and moral transformation*
5. *Create a digital presentation on 'Religious Pluralism in Gandhi's Early Life'*

03

Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa

The previous chapter detailed Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's early life and education; this chapter explores his transformative journey in South Africa (1893–1914). It was on this “foreign soil” that Gandhi evolved from a shy lawyer into a mass leader, developing the unique philosophy of Satyagraha.

This chapter explores his transformative journey on South African soil, where a series of profound experiences and experiments shaped his political and spiritual evolution. Significant turning points, such as the Pietermaritzburg incident and the struggle against the Disfranchising Bill, led to the formation of the Natal Indian Congress. Through campaigns against the Three-Pound Tax and the publication of Indian Opinion, Gandhi mobilised the Indian community across class lines. His ideological growth was further influenced by the writings of John Ruskin, Leo Tolstoy, and Thoreau, leading to experiments in community living at Phoenix Settlement and Tolstoy Farm. It was during this period that Gandhi refined his unique method of non-violent resistance, known as Satyagraha, which would eventually become the cornerstone of the Indian National Movement.

Early Settlement and European Expansion in South Africa



South Africa was originally inhabited by the Bushmen, Hottentots, and later Bantu-speaking people. In 1652, the Dutch East India Company established a settlement at the Cape of Good Hope. The Dutch settlers, known as Boers, became farmers and considered South Africa their homeland. In 1795, the British captured the Cape Colony and took permanent control in 1806. British policies giving equal rights to all people angered the Boers. As a result, the Boers moved inland in the 1830s and 1840s in an event called the Great Trek. They founded new states like the Orange Free State and Transvaal.

Gandhi in South Africa

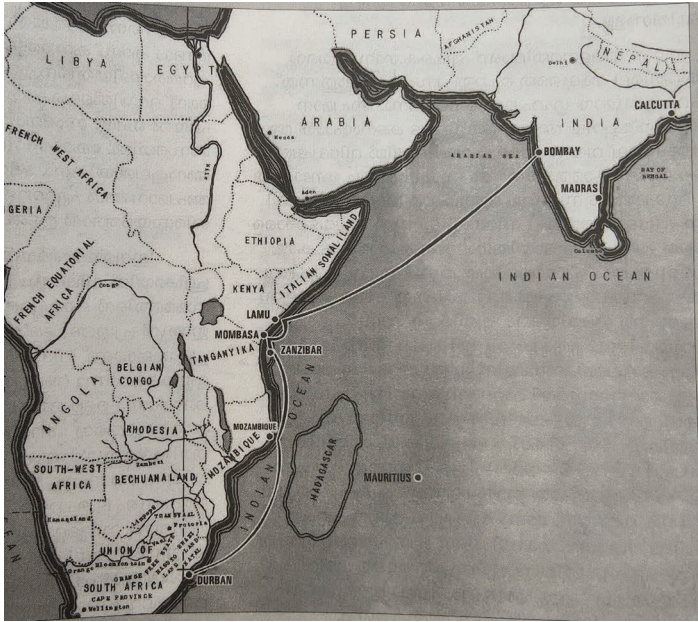


Fig. 3:01

Sea route of Mahatma Gandhi from India to South Africa

After being called to the bar in London, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi returned to India in 1891 with high professional hopes. However, he met with little success in establishing a legal practice, first in Bombay where his shyness prevented him from arguing his first case and later in Rajkot. Facing a professional deadlock and a strained relationship with a local British political agent, Gandhi sought an escape from these domestic frustrations. In 1893, an opportunity arose when Dada Abdulla & Company, a merchant firm in South Africa, offered him a one-year contract to assist in a significant legal suit involving £37,000. The firm required a lawyer who was well-versed in English

law but could also communicate in Gujarati to interpret their business accounts. Viewing this as a providential chance to gain experience and see a new country, Gandhi accepted the offer. He set sail for South Africa in April 1893, unaware that this brief professional assignment would ultimately lead to a struggle spanning over two decades against racial discrimination and the birth of Satyagraha.

An 'Unwanted Visitor'

Gandhi arrived in Durban, where he stayed for a week before departing by train for Pretoria. After two days, his employer, Mr Seth, took him to the Durban court. There, he was introduced to several prominent individuals. He was seated beside the lead lawyer. However, "the magistrate stared at me and ultimately requested that I remove my turban. I refused to comply and exited the court." Mr Seth explained to Gandhi the rationale behind the magistrate's request; only Muslims from India were permitted to wear their traditional attire, while all others were required to remove their turbans upon entering the court.

Gandhi believed that taking off the turban constituted an act of self-degradation. The incident was reported in the *Natal Advertiser*. Gandhi wrote a letter to the publication articulating his position, which was subsequently published. This provided Gandhi with unexpected exposure in South Africa during the first week of his arrival. Consequently, even in the initial days of his presence, sections of the settler press portrayed him as an 'unwanted visitor'.

Pietermaritzburg Incident

The journey from Durban to Pretoria in June 1893 proved to be the most significant turning point in Gandhi's political career. After staying for a week in Durban, Gandhi set out for Pretoria by train, travelling in the first-class compartment. During the journey, a white passenger objected to sharing the compartment with Gandhi, referring to him disrespectfully as a "coolie." Despite holding a valid ticket, Gandhi was ordered to move to the third-class compartment. When he refused, he was forcibly thrown off the train at Pietermaritzburg railway station and had to spend a cold night on the platform.

This incident proved to be a significant turning point in Gandhi's life. Reflecting on the event, Gandhi questioned whether he should return to India, quietly endure the humiliation, or stand up for his rights. He concluded that leaving South Africa without completing his responsibility would be an act of cowardice. He realised that the suffering he faced was not personal but a sign of a much deeper problem-racial discrimination. He felt that true justice could be achieved only by challenging this prejudice, even if it meant enduring hardship.

With strong determination, Gandhi chose the difficult path of staying back and fighting against injustice. Although he knew the journey would not be easy, he continued to Pretoria on the next available train. During this journey, he faced another insult at Pardekoph, where he was not allowed to sit inside a stagecoach because of his skin colour.

The Pardekoph Incident: A Test of Endurance

The journey to Pretoria was not yet complete after the ordeal at Pietermaritzburg. Since there was no railway connection between Charlestown and Standerton, Gandhi had to travel by a horse-drawn stagecoach. Despite having a ticket, the white conductor (the "leader") refused to allow Gandhi to sit inside the coach with European passengers. To avoid conflict and ensure he reached his destination, Gandhi agreed to sit outside on the coachbox.

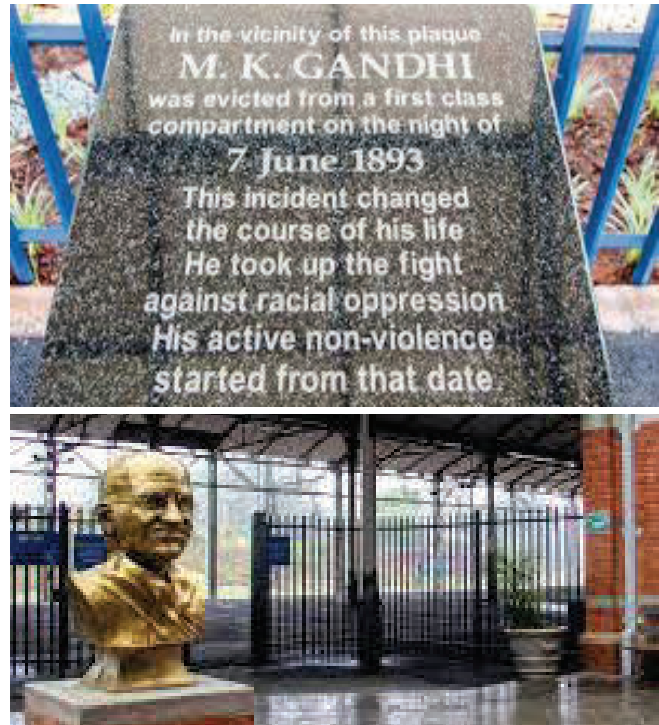


Fig. 3:02 : Monument of Pietermaritzburg incident



Arrival of Indian Indentured Labourers in South Africa

Indians came to South Africa mainly to work as labourers on European-owned plantations. From the 1840s, European settlers in Natal needed workers for sugarcane, tea, and coffee cultivation. Since slavery was abolished and local Africans could not be forced to work, the settlers turned to India for labour. With the permission of the British Indian Government, Indians were brought under the indentured labour system to work for low wages. On November 16, 1860, the first group of Indian labourers arrived in Natal on the ship S.S. Truro, marking the beginning of Indian settlement in South Africa.



Fig. 3:03
Stage horse rider coach

The situation reached a crisis at Pardekoph. The conductor, wanting to sit outside for a smoke, ordered Gandhi to vacate his seat and sit on a dirty piece of sacking on the footboard. When Gandhi politely but firmly refused to be further humiliated, the conductor began to viciously assault him, attempting to pull him down from the moving coach. Gandhi clung to the brass rails with all his strength, refusing to strike back or yield his seat. It was only the intervention of the white passengers on the coach, moved by Gandhi's quiet resilience, that forced the conductor to stop the beating.

These repeated experiences of humiliation at the railway station and before the magistrate awakened the social reformer within Gandhi and marked the beginning of his lifelong struggle against injustice and inequality.



Prepare a script of Unwanted visitor, Pietermaritzburg, and Pardekoph incident for a role play

Impact of Christian Missionaries on Gandhi

During his South Africa phase, Gandhi became closely associated with Christianity in both thought and practice, studying the Bible and other Christian texts to deepen his understanding. He was influenced by several Christian associates, including his senior lawyer A. W. Baker, many of whom were missionaries or practising believers. Although he attended a few Sunday prayer meetings, they did not greatly impress him. However, his visit to the Trappist Monastery profoundly influenced him, and its disciplined life of prayer, silence, manual labour, and community service later inspired his Ashram experiments in India.



The Discovery of His Mission

Gandhi successfully settled the legal dispute of Dada Abdulla through arbitration, without taking the matter to court. An arbitrator acceptable to both parties was appointed. The arbitrator ruled in favour of Dada Abdulla. The award was £ 37,000 plus court costs. Gandhi convinced his client to allow Tybe Seth to pay the amount in installments. As agreed, Tyeb Seth paid the amount to Dada Abdulla's firm. This settlement strengthened the bond between the two families and deepened their friendship and mutual trust.

After completing the case, Gandhi returned to Durban. By then, he had gained great respect among the Indian community, who fondly began calling him "Gandhi Bhai." Dada Abdulla arranged a farewell meeting for him at Sydenham, intending to bid him goodbye before his return to India. However, the meeting took an unexpected turn. During the gathering, Gandhi drew attention to a news item published that day in the newspaper *Natal Mercury*. The report spoke about a new bill that proposed to deny Indians the right to vote. Gandhi discussed the issue with Dada Abdulla, who admitted that he was unaware of these political developments because he was mainly focused on business matters.

Gandhi then proposed organising Indians born and raised in South Africa. He believed that such an organisation could unite the community and fight against injustice and exploitation. Moved by

his concern and leadership, the people present unanimously requested Gandhi to postpone his return to India by at least a month. Although they offered to pay him professional fees, Gandhi firmly refused, stating that public service should not be done for money. He only asked for a place to stay and some funds to buy law books. The gathering agreed to collect the required amount. As a result, what was meant to be a farewell meeting became the first working committee meeting in Indian public life in South Africa.

This day proved to be a turning point in Gandhi's life. Reflecting on it later, he remarked that it was at that moment that the foundation of his life's mission in South Africa was laid, and the seeds of his struggle for national self-respect were sown.

The Birth of the Natal Indian Congress

The "working committee" formed during Gandhi's farewell party soon realised that a temporary struggle was not enough to counter the systemic racism of the colonial government. To provide a permanent structure for the movement, Gandhi established the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) on May 22, 1894. This organisation was modelled after the Indian National Congress, founded in India in 1885. The primary aim of the Congress was to unify the diverse Indian community which included wealthy Memon merchants, Hindu traders, and oppressed indentured labourers into a single political force. The organisation focused on:

- **Political Awareness:** Educating Indians about their rights and the discriminatory laws being passed against them.
- **Protest through Petitions:** Sending formal appeals and well-researched memoranda to the Natal Legislative Assembly and the British Colonial Office in London.
- **Social Reform:** Improving the living conditions of Indians and fostering a sense of discipline and hygiene within the community.

Under his leadership, the NIC became a vibrant body. He introduced a system of membership fees to ensure the organisation remained self-funded, famously insisting that even the poorest members should contribute something to feel a sense of ownership in the struggle. The Natal Indian Congress adopted peaceful, constitutional methods, such as petitions, memoranda, and public meetings, to present Indian grievances to the government. Gandhi played a key role as its secretary, dedicating his time and energy to educating Indians about their rights and duties. The formation of the Natal Indian Congress marked the beginning of organised political struggle by Indians in South Africa. It also served as a training ground for Gandhi, where he developed his ideas of leadership, unity, and non-violent resistance.

The Disfranchising Bill and the Natal Indian Congress

The colonial government of Natal introduced the Disfranchising Bill in 1894 with the explicit aim of depriving Indians of their right to elect members to the Legislative Assembly. The British settlers argued that Indians were not accustomed to representative institutions and therefore did not deserve the vote. This move was a direct attempt to reduce Indians to a lower status and secure white supremacy in the region. Recognising that this was a threat to the very dignity of the Indian community, Gandhi postponed his return to India to lead the opposition. The Natal Indian Congress provided a common platform for Indians to express their grievances and fight against discriminatory laws. Under Gandhi's leadership, the NIC adopted peaceful, constitutional methods such as petitions, representations, and memoranda to protest the Disfranchising Bill.

The Natal Indian Congress sent petitions signed by thousands of Indians to the Natal Legislative Assembly and to the British authorities in London. Gandhi appealed to Lord Ripon, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies in India. Finally, the Bill was passed by the Natal Legislature but disallowed by the British government. This was the first victory for Gandhi in South Africa. The formation of the Natal Indian Congress helped Gandhi develop his skills in building an organisation, mobilising Indians, and strengthening his leadership. It successfully drew the attention of the British Parliament and the Indian public to the plight of South African Indians. More importantly, it fostered a newfound sense of solidarity and political consciousness, proving that even a marginalised community could challenge unjust laws through organised, nonviolent protest. The struggle against the Disfranchising Bill marked the beginning of organised political action by Indians in South Africa and laid the foundation for Gandhi's future leadership in the fight for justice and equality.



Conduct a mock Assembly about the struggle against disfranchising bill.

Three-Pound Tax

The defeat of the Disfranchising Bill did not end European hostility toward the Indian community. White settlers continued to view the growing Indian population as a threat to their dominance, citing differences in trade practices and lifestyles as justification for further control. Consequently, the Natal Government introduced a new Immigration Bill designed to prevent Indians from settling as free citizens. The Bill stipulated that at the end of their five-year contract, indentured labourers had to either return to India or re-indenture themselves for another two years. Failure to comply with these conditions would result in a massive annual tax of 25 pounds.

The Natal Indian Congress (NIC), under Gandhi's leadership, launched a strong agitation against this "tax on the poor," arguing it was an attempt to reduce Indians to a state of permanent servitude. In response to this pressure, the Natal Government sent a deputation to India to seek approval from the British-Indian authorities. However, the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, moved by the gravity of the situation and the protests led by Gandhi, refused to sanction the exorbitant amount. As a result, the tax was reduced from 25 pounds to three pounds. While this reduction was a partial victory for the NIC, Gandhi remained resolute in his opposition, viewing even the three pound tax which amounted to nearly half a year's wages for a labourer as a grave injustice. Gandhi strongly opposed the Three Pound Tax. He considered it cruel and discriminatory. Under his leadership, Indians protested against this tax through peaceful means such as petitions and public meetings, and later through Satyagraha. Many workers willingly suffered hardships to oppose the unjust law.

The struggle against the Three-Pound Tax united Indians across regions and communities. The struggle laid the groundwork for its eventual abolition in 1914. The movement became an essential chapter in the history of Indian struggle in South Africa and strengthened Gandhi's belief in non-violent resistance. This struggle became the foundation for the massive working-class strikes that would eventually define the Satyagraha movement in South Africa.

Green Pamphlet: Exposing Colonial Injustice

In 1896, after spending three years in South Africa, Gandhi returned to India for a six-month break to bring his wife and children back with him. However, he also used this time to inform the Indian public about the pathetic conditions of their fellow Indians in Natal. While in Rajkot, he wrote and published a 70-page booklet titled "The Grievances of British Indians in South Africa: An appeal to the Indian public". Because of its distinctive sea-green cover, it famously became known as the Green Pamphlet. Gandhi printed 10,000 copies and sent them to all major newspapers and political leaders in India.

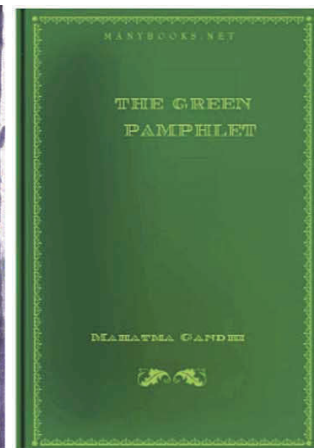
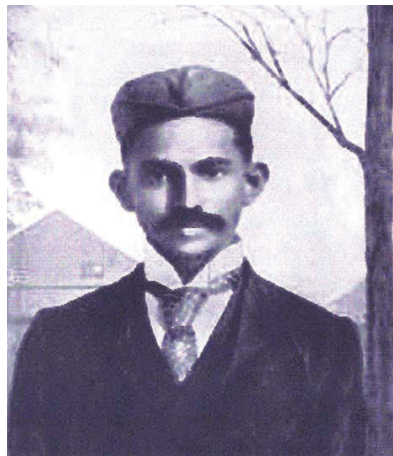


Fig. 3:04
The cover of Green
Pamphlet

In this pamphlet, Gandhi clearly explained the social, economic, and political hardships faced by Indians in South Africa. He exposed discriminatory laws such as restrictions on voting rights, harsh taxes, and racial segregation. The pamphlet presented facts and arguments calmly and truthfully. Gandhi

sent the Green Pamphlet to members of the British Parliament, government officials, and influential people in England. Through this, he hoped to create public awareness and gain sympathy for the Indian cause. The document helped correct many misunderstandings about Indians and their role in South African society.

However, a distorted summary of the pamphlet reached South Africa, leading the white settler community to believe that Gandhi was inciting a rebellion. This misinformation culminated in a violent confrontation upon Gandhi's return to Durban in 1897, where an angry mob assaulted him. In a remarkable display of his evolving philosophy of nonviolence, Gandhi refused to prosecute his attackers, stating that they had acted out of ignorance. This incident and the widespread reach of the Green Pamphlet significantly reinforced Gandhi's reputation as a fearless leader. They transformed the local struggle in Natal into an international cause.

The Indian Ambulance Corps

The Indian Ambulance Corps was established by Gandhi in 1899 during the Boer War to demonstrate that Indians were willing to fulfil the responsibilities of British citizenship in exchange for their rights. Between 800 and 1,100 volunteers, including both free and indentured Indians, the corps served as stretcher-bearers on the front lines, most notably during the Battle of Spion Kop. Later, in 1906, Gandhi organised a similar medical unit during the Zulu Rebellion.

Gandhi's primary objective in forming such a corps was to prove that Indians were capable of disciplined, organised service and were willing to face physical danger to fulfil their duties as citizens. Gandhi believed that by serving the wounded on the battlefield, the Indian community could challenge the racial stereotype that they were "cowardly" or unfit for the responsibilities of citizenship. The corps was one of the first platforms where Indians of all religions, castes, and economic backgrounds worked side by side under a single leadership, fostering a sense of national solidarity.

Members were trained in basic first aid and the rigorous physical task of carrying the wounded over long distances. Gandhi himself often led the marches, emphasising the dignity of manual labour and selfless service. The corps was strictly non-combatant, focusing entirely on the preservation of life and the alleviation of suffering, which aligned with Gandhi's emerging philosophy of Ahimsa. For their dedicated service, Gandhi and the Corps members received the Queen's South Africa Medal.

The Boer War (1899–1902)

When the war broke out between the British and the Boer Republics, Gandhi

argued that if Indians claimed the rights of British citizenship, they must also accept its responsibilities. Despite the racial insults he had faced, he organised a volunteer Indian Ambulance Corps of over 1,100 members. Since the British were hesitant to let Indians serve in combat, the corps acted as stretcher-bearers. They served under dangerous conditions, most notably during the Battle of Spion Kop, where they carried wounded soldiers for miles over hilly terrain. For this bravery, Gandhi and 34 other leaders were awarded the War Medal, and the incident helped temporarily soften British prejudice against the "cowardly" Indian stereotype.



Fig. 3:05
Indian Ambulance Corps
led by Gandhi

The Zulu Rebellion (1906)

In 1906, a tax protest by the Zulu people in Natal escalated into the Bambatha Rebellion, an armed conflict. Gandhi again offered the services of the Indian Ambulance Corps, this time comprising about 20 volunteers. This experience was deeply harrowing for him; unlike the Boer War, where he helped soldiers on both sides, here he witnessed the brutal suppression of the Zulus. His corps was often tasked with nursing Zulus whose wounds caused by lashes and bullets had been left to fester because white medical staff refused to touch them. Witnessing the "man-hunt" against the Zulus deeply disturbed Gandhi and sowed the early seeds of his eventual disillusionment with the British Empire. It was during the Zulu Rebellion, while marching through the silent South African landscape, that Gandhi took his vow of celibacy (Brahmacharya) to devote his life entirely for public service.

Indian Opinion

Gandhi felt the need for a newspaper after realising that Indians in South Africa were politically unaware and divided along language, religious, and regional lines. To address this problem, he started *Indian Opinion* in 1903 at Durban with the support of Indian merchants and well-wishers. But Gandhi did not want to be its chief editor because, as a lawyer, he thought the editorship would be seen as his own advertisement. Therefore, Mansukhlal Nazar became its editor. In 1904, the newspaper was shifted to the Phoenix Settlement, a community founded by Gandhi near Durban, where printing work and living were based on principles of simplicity and self-reliance. The newspaper not only reported on matters concerning the Indian population but also served as the mouthpiece of the Natal Indian Congress.



Fig. 3:06
The Cover of Indian
Opinion

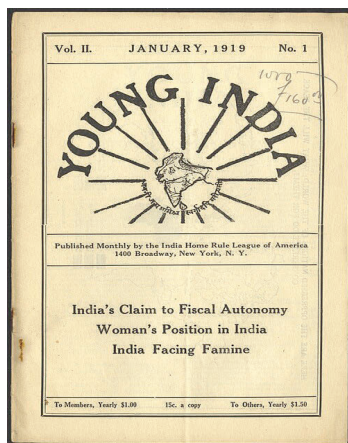


Fig. 3:07
The Cover of Young India

Gandhi as a Journalist

Mahatma Gandhi used journalism as a powerful tool to support India's freedom struggle and spread his ideas. In 1919, he began Navajivan, a Gujarati weekly, to promote social reform, swadeshi, moral living, and satyagraha. Around the same time, he took charge of Young India (1919–1932), an English-language weekly that educated readers about non violence, self-rule, and political freedom. After Young India ceased following his arrest in 1932, Gandhi started Harijan in 1933 to campaign against untouchability and promote social justice. Through these publications, he inspired social change and national awakening by emphasising truth, communal harmony, and village upliftment.

It was published simultaneously in Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil, and English. Many a time, Gandhi took money from his own pocket to continue the publication. But later, it had more than 3,000 subscribers and 20,000 readers. The Indian community, white colonists, and government officers were its main readers. Many years later, Gandhi felt that the *Indian Opinion* had served the people and that this service was an expression of his inner thoughts. In his autobiography, Gandhi writes, “Indeed, the journal became for me training in self-restraint and for friends a medium through which to keep in touch with my thoughts”.

From its early days, *Indian Opinion* focused on exposing unjust laws, such as the Disfranchising Bill, the Three-Pound Tax, and restrictions imposed on Indian traders and labourers. Gandhi used the newspaper to explain political developments, encourage peaceful protest, and educate Indians about their rights and duties. The newspaper followed the principles of truthful and ethical journalism. Gandhi avoided abusive language and sensational reporting. He believed that the press should serve society by presenting facts honestly and appealing to the conscience of the rulers and the public. *Indian Opinion* played a key role during the Satyagraha movements in South Africa. It helped mobilise public opinion, spread news of protests, and maintain unity and discipline among participants. The newspaper also connected the struggle of Indians in South Africa with supporters in India and Britain. *Indian Opinion* was more than just a newspaper; it was an instrument of social and political reform. It trained Gandhi and his associates in leadership, sacrifice, and service. The experiences gained from editing and publishing the paper greatly influenced Gandhi's later use of the press in India, including *Young India* and *Harijan*.



Prepare a Newspaper report about the incidents of Three-pound tax, Indian Ambulance corps, Boer War and Zulu Rebellion

Influence of Ruskin: "Magical Spell of a Book"

In 1904, while travelling by train in South Africa, Gandhi was given Ruskin's book, *Unto This Last*, by his friend Henry Polak. Gandhi was so captivated by its contents that he could not sleep. He realised that the book reflected his own deepest convictions, which he had not yet been able to put into words or practice. In his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Mahatma Gandhi devotes an entire chapter to the "Magical Spell of a Book," referring to John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. This work did not merely influence his thinking; it brought about an "instantaneous and practical transformation" in his life.

According to Gandhi, the three important principles of Ruskin's book are as follows:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, since all have the same right to earn their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e. the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is the life worth living.

Gandhi says that he knew the first and had a faint realisation of the second, but the third never occurred to him. Gandhi decided to reduce these principles to practice. Thus, the teaching of Ruskin touched the depths of Gandhi's heart. It had a revolutionary impact on his mind. He accepted Ruskin's ideas. He made them universally applicable. Another significant influence of Ruskin was the emphasis on simple living and moral values over material wealth. Inspired by this, Gandhi adopted a life of simplicity and self-discipline. Thus, John Ruskin's influence helped shape Gandhi's vision of a just society based on equality, dignity of labour, simplicity, and service to humanity. His ideas became a strong moral foundation for Gandhi's life and his methods of social and political reform.

Soon after reading *Unto This Last*, Gandhi set about establishing the Phoenix Settlement. It was based on the values that Ruskin promoted. Gandhi translated Ruskin's book into Gujarati, titled *Sarvodaya*, which literally means 'welfare of all'.

Phoenix Settlement: Gandhi's Centre for Truth, Labour, and Self-Reliance

The Phoenix Settlement was founded in 1904 on a 100-acre plot of land and situated 14 miles from Durban and two and a half miles from Phoenix station, near Mount Edgecombe. Its establishment was the direct result of the "magical spell" cast by *Unto This Last*. The settlement marked Gandhi's

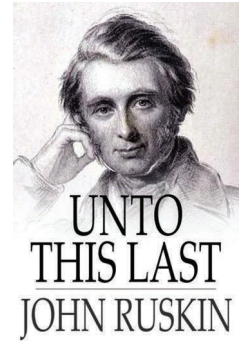


Fig. 3:08
The Cover of *Unto This Last*

transition from a professional lawyer to a community leader committed to poverty and manual labour.

The settlement was designed to be a self-sufficient community where residents practised Bread Labour. Residents lived in simple corrugated iron huts. All members, whether editors, lawyers, or labourers, received the same monthly allowance of three pounds for their basic needs. The headquarters of the newspaper *Indian Opinion* was moved here. To emphasise self-reliance, the press was initially worked by hand rather than by a motor. The land was used for farming to grow food for the residents. Gandhi also established a school for the settlement's children, focusing on character-building and manual skills alongside traditional education.



Fig. 3:09
The settlers of Phoenix
settlement near Durban
South Africa, 1905

Phoenix Settlement was also a training ground for Gandhi's philosophy of truth and nonviolence. It helped prepare volunteers for public service and peaceful struggle against injustice. People of different religions and backgrounds lived together, promoting unity and harmony. The experiences gained at Phoenix Settlement helped Gandhi develop his ideas on simple living, community service, and non-violent resistance. The settlement laid the foundation for future experiments such as Tolstoy Farm and played a significant role in shaping Gandhi's philosophy and leadership during his South African struggle.



Prepare a write-up about the importance of community living on the basis of Phoenix settlement.

Transformation of Gandhi from Petitioner to Revolutionary Leader

The period between 1906 and 1908 was a crucial phase in Gandhi's life, as it marked his transformation from a law-abiding petitioner into a revolutionary

leader committed to social justice. This period saw the first practical application of Satyagraha and the personal spiritual shifts that sustained it.

The catalyst for this change was the Asiatic Registration Bill of 1906, a discriminatory law introduced by the Transvaal government. Termed the "Black Act" by the Indian community, it mandated that all Indians, men, women, and children register with the police, submit to a complete set of ten fingerprints, and carry a registration certificate at all times. Failure to produce this "pass" on demand resulted in immediate imprisonment, fines, or deportation. Gandhi viewed this not merely as a legal hurdle, but as a "death warrant" for the honour and self-respect of the Indian people.

In response to this legislative assault, Gandhi organised a historic mass meeting on September 11, 1906, at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg. It was here that the world witnessed the birth of Satyagraha. Over 3,000 Indians gathered and took a solemn oath in the name of God to defy the Act and accept whatever punishment followed without resorting to violence. Gandhi initially struggled to name this new method of resistance, rejecting the English term "Passive Resistance" because it implied weakness.

To find a more appropriate name, Gandhi announced a competition in his newspaper, *Indian Opinion*. He wanted a term that originated from an Indian language and reflected the indigenous spirit of the struggle. One of the entries was submitted by his nephew, Maganlal Gandhi. He suggested the word "Sadagraha." Gandhi liked the word but felt it didn't fully capture the scope of his philosophy. He amended "Sadagraha" to "Satyagraha" to make the meaning even more straightforward and more profound. The word satya: derived from Sat, meaning "Truth," which for Gandhi was equivalent to God or the Ultimate Reality. The word agraha means "holding fast," "Adherence," or "Insistence." Thus, Satyagraha literally translates to "Insistence on Truth" or "Truth-Force." This "Truth-Force" or "Soul-Force" became the moral foundation of his struggle, shifting the focus from external petitioning to internal strength and the power of non-violent suffering.

The implementation of the Act led to the first significant phase of the struggle and Gandhi's first experience as a prisoner. In January 1908, he was arrested for refusing to register and was sentenced to two months in prison. During this time, he began to view the jail not as a place of shame, but as a "temple of liberty" and a laboratory for spiritual discipline. While he was imprisoned, General Jan Christian Smuts, the Colonial Secretary, intervened with a proposal. Smuts promised that if Indians registered voluntarily to prove they were legal residents, the compulsory "Black Act" would be repealed. Trusting Smuts' word, Gandhi agreed to the compromise and was released, only to be met with a bitter betrayal when Smuts refused to repeal the Act after the voluntary registrations were completed.

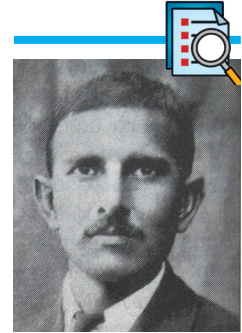


Fig. 3:10
Maganlal Gandhi

Maganlal Gandhi (1882-1928) is a nephew of Mahatma Gandhi and key figure in South Africa's Indian community. He was a journalist, activist and educator who supported Gandhi's causes, including the Phoenix Settlement and Tostoy Farm. He played a crucial role in spreading Gandhi's ideas and managing his publications. He was known for his simplicity, dedication and commitment to social service.

Driven by this betrayal, the movement reached a dramatic turning point on August 16, 1908. Outside the Hamidia Mosque in Johannesburg, Gandhi presided over a massive rally where protesters burned more than 2,000 registration certificates in a large metal pot. It served as a definitive declaration that the Indian community no longer feared the colonial government's authority.

During his periods of Imprisonment and the broader struggle, Gandhi's philosophy was profoundly shaped by two Western thinkers. While in jail, he read Henry David Thoreau's essay on Civil Disobedience, which provided what Gandhi termed "scientific confirmation" for his tactics specifically the principle that a just individual is duty-bound to endure imprisonment rather than comply with an unjust law.

Even more influential was Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*. Gandhi was so moved by the text that he entered into correspondence with the Russian author, who offered his encouragement for nonviolent resistance in South Africa. Tolstoy's emphasis on the "Law of Love" and the virtues of simplicity eventually became the spiritual cornerstone of Gandhi's movement.

The Duty of Disobedience: Analysing Thoreau's Influence on Gandhi

The influence of Thoreau on Gandhi was profound, specifically in providing a "scientific" and legal justification for the concept of civil disobedience. Gandhi first encountered Thoreau's famous essay, *"On the Duty of Civil Disobedience,"* in 1907, while he was leading the struggle against the "Black Act" in South Africa. At the time, Gandhi was already practising resistance, but Thoreau's writings helped him organise his thoughts and gave him a strong vocabulary to explain his movement to the world. Gandhi was so impressed by the essay that he published extracts of it in his newspaper, *Indian Opinion*, to inspire his followers.

Thoreau's central argument that individuals have a moral obligation to refuse to obey unjust laws became a cornerstone of Gandhi's political philosophy. Thoreau's idea of "Civil Disobedience" taught Gandhi that a single honest individual, by withdrawing support from an immoral state, could effectively disrupt the working of the government. This provided a tactical framework for Satyagraha, shifting it from a mere moral protest to a method of non-violent political disruption.

Despite these similarities, Gandhi was careful to distinguish his method from Thoreau's. While Thoreau's resistance was rooted in Individualism and sometimes allowed for the possibility of physical force, Gandhi's Satyagraha was rooted in Ahimsa (nonviolence) and was designed as a mass movement. Gandhi believed that while Thoreau was a great "passive resister," he did not

fully develop the "soul-force" or the communal discipline that Gandhi felt was necessary for a national struggle. For Gandhi, Thoreau was the "master" who confirmed his ideas, but it was Gandhi who took those ideas out of the library and onto the streets, transforming a private act of conscience into a global weapon for justice.

Conduct a debate on the basis of Henry David Thoreau's essay *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*.



Influence of Tolstoy: The Law of Love

Gandhi had a long association with Tolstoy and his ideas. As a member of the Vegetarian Society in London, he was familiar with Tolstoy's name. The intellectual and spiritual relationship between Mahatma Gandhi and Leo Tolstoy was one of the most significant chapters in the history of nonviolence, serving as the bridge between 19th-century moral philosophy and 20th-century political action. Gandhi's transformation in South Africa was deeply accelerated by his reading of Tolstoy's masterpiece, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*. This seemed to align closely with the Jain doctrine of ahimsa, and Gandhi embraced it with open arms. He became a passionate reader of Tolstoy and read *Gospels in Brief*, *What to Do*, *The First Step*, *How Shall We Escape*, and *Slavery of Our Times*.

At a time when Gandhi was struggling with doubts regarding the effectiveness of nonviolence in a world dominated by brute force, Tolstoy's work provided a "scientific" and spiritual foundation for his beliefs. A central pillar of Tolstoy's influence was the concept of "Bread Labour," a term Gandhi borrowed to describe the moral necessity of physical work. Tolstoy, despite his aristocratic background, had come to believe that it was a sin to live off the labour of others. He advocated a life of extreme simplicity, in which every person produced what they consumed. Inspired by this, Gandhi began dismantling his prosperous legal practice and Westernised lifestyle. He realised that to be a true leader of the poor, he had to live like the poor. This led to the rejection of industrial luxuries and the adoption of manual labour.

The bond between the two men was strengthened through a series of letters exchanged between 1909 and 1910. In these letters, the ageing Russian sage and the young Indian activist discussed the struggle in the Transvaal. Tolstoy saw in Gandhi's South African movement a practical application of his own theories on "non-resistance to evil." In his final letter to Gandhi, written shortly before his death, Tolstoy expressed deep admiration for the struggle, which tested the principle of love against that of violence. This validation from one of the world's greatest thinkers gave Gandhi the immense moral confidence required to sustain the long years of Satyagraha against the South African government.

Gandhi paid tribute to Tolstoy in the following words. 'Tolstoy was the greatest apostle of nonviolence that the present age has produced. No one in the West, before or since, has written and spoken as he did. True ahimsa should mean complete freedom from ill-will and anger and over-flowing love for all. For inculcating this true and higher type of ahimsa amongst us, Tolstoy's life, with its ocean-like love, should serve as a beacon light and never-failing source of inspiration.'

The Tolstoy Farm: An Experiment in Community and Discipline (1910)

The Tolstoy Farm, established in May 1910, was the second of Gandhi's communal experiments in South Africa, following the Phoenix Settlement. It was named in honour of the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, whose philosophy of simplicity and non violence Gandhi sought to put into practice. A German friend, Herman Kallenbach, purchased the 1100-acre farm at Lawley, 35 kilometres from Johannesburg. The victims of the Passive Resistance took refuge here. The inmates were comprised of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, whites, and blacks. As hundreds of Indian men were being sent to prison for defying the "Black Act," their families were often left without a source of income or a place to live. Tolstoy Farm served as a "cooperative commonwealth" where these families could live a self-sufficient, dignified life while their breadwinners were imprisoned.

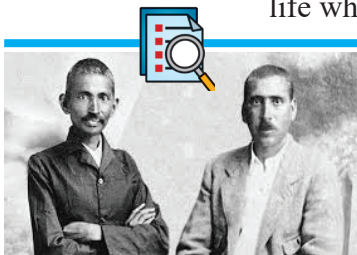


Fig. 3:11
Gandhi with Hermann Kallenbach

Hermann Kallenbach

Hermann Kallenbach was a Lithuanian born Jewish architect who emigrated to South Africa and became one of Gandhi's closest friends and supporters during his early years of activism there. He worked with Gandhi on community projects like Tolstoy Farm and was a key figure in Gandhi's Satyagraha movement in South Africa.



Fig. 3:11 : Tolstoy farm

It was designed to be a sanctuary where the spirit of resistance was kept alive through communal discipline and moral training. Life at the farm was governed by the principle of "Bread Labour" the idea that everyone must perform physical work to earn their sustenance. There were no servants, and every resident, regardless of their social status, participated in the daily household duties. The residents grew their own vegetables and tended to nearly 1,000 fruit trees. To avoid dependency on external markets, Gandhi and Kallenbach introduced various crafts. Residents learned carpentry, blacksmithing, and

sandal-making. Residents built their own simple houses out of corrugated iron and wood and managed all sanitation and scavenging themselves.

Tolstoy Farm served as a laboratory for Gandhi's educational philosophy. He believed that the heart and the character should be educated before the mind. Children spent much of their day in manual labour, learning practical skills alongside their elders. In a radical move for its time, boys and girls were educated together and encouraged to interact as siblings, with Gandhi closely monitoring their moral development. Tolstoy Farm was the bridge between Gandhi's life as a lawyer and his life as a Mahatma. The farm proved that a community could live peacefully and self-sufficiently without modern luxuries or state assistance.

The Final Triumph: The Great Satyagraha (1910–1914)

The final years of Gandhi's stay in South Africa (1910–1914) represented the climax of his experiments with Truth and the ultimate victory of his first Satyagraha campaign. During this period, Gandhi moved from the quiet, disciplined life of Tolstoy Farm back into the heat of a mass political struggle that would eventually force the South African government to negotiate. By 1910, the battle against the "Black Act" had left many Indian families destitute as the breadwinners were in jail. In 1912, Gokhale arrived in South Africa as a guest of the government. During his stay, he held high-level meetings with the leaders of the Union of South Africa. Gokhale presented the Indian community's grievances, explicitly focusing on the three pound annual tax imposed on ex-indentured labourers. After his meeting with the Cabinet, Gokhale informed Gandhi that the ministers had promised to repeal the three pound tax in the next parliamentary session.

In early 1913, the government went back on its word. Ministers publicly denied making any such promise to Gokhale, and they refused to include the repeal of the tax in the upcoming Immigration Bill. Gandhi viewed this as a personal insult to Gokhale and a "breach of trust" that made the resumption of the struggle inevitable. For Gandhi, this was not just a political failure but a matter of "National Honour." Gokhale was a revered leader in India, and Gandhi felt that the South African government had insulted Gokhale and, by extension, the whole of India by lying to him. Perhaps the most insulting provocation occurred in March 1913, when the Cape Supreme Court declared that only marriages performed according to Christian rites and registered by the Registrar of Marriages were legally valid. This meant that all marriages performed under Hindu, Muslim, or Parsi traditions were suddenly null

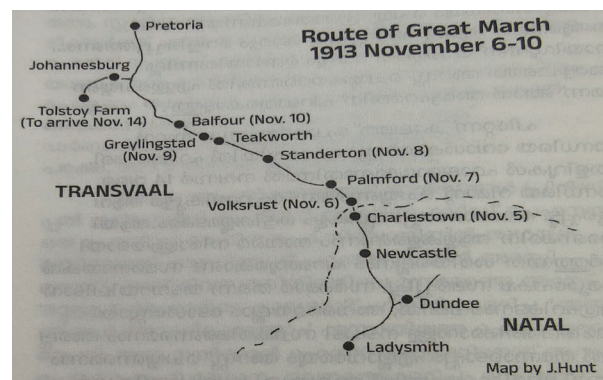


Fig. 3:12 : Route of Great march in 1913

and void in the eyes of the law. The two issues - the three pound Tax and the invalidation of non-Christian marriages - served as the final catalysts for Gandhi's movement in South Africa.

The Great March: Testing the Power of Mass Non-Violent Action

The Great March of 1913 marked the climax of Gandhi's twenty-year struggle in South Africa. Gandhi led over 2,000 men, women, and children on a 36-mile nonviolent march from Newcastle to the Transvaal border, despite harsh conditions and repeated arrests. The government responded with brutal repression, including imprisonment, floggings, and forced labour, leading to the deaths of young activists like sixteen-year-old Valliamma. Public sympathy and the moral force of the march pressured the authorities, resulting in the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement and the Indian Relief Act of 1914, which repealed the tax and recognised Indian marriages. The march demonstrated that disciplined nonviolence could empower even the poorest labourers, laying the foundation for Gandhi's future campaigns in India.

The South African Crucible: The Metamorphosis of Mahatma

Gandhi's personality was the profound product of his experiences and experiments across three nations: India, England, and South Africa. When Gandhi first arrived in South Africa, he was a young, hesitant barrister with no firsthand knowledge of the systemic racial prejudices that governed the region. However, over the course of twenty-one years, he matured into a seasoned politician and a visionary leader. It was in this "laboratory of life" that he fought relentlessly against racism and discrimination, refining the principles of nonviolence (Ahimsa) and Truth-force (Satyagraha) as practical tools to resolve deep-seated political problems.

His African life served as a definitive indicator of the historic achievements to come. While in South Africa, he mobilised hundreds of resisters; this experience provided the blueprint for his return to India, where he mobilised millions, transforming the struggle into an authentic mass movement. The independence of India in 1947 was the fruit of an enormous struggle that drew on lessons learned on the streets of Durban and the farms of Johannesburg. Without the South African experience, his later triumphs may not have been possible. Ultimately, it was in South Africa that Gandhi underwent a radical transformation - shedding the skin of an ordinary person to emerge as the Mahatma.



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. *Prepare a seminar report on Gandhi's experiences in South Africa to transform him from an ordinary lawyer into an extra ordinary political leader.*
2. *Assume that you are a journalist in 1910, covering Gandhi's activities in South Africa. Write a short newspaper report describing the events, the people involved, and how ordinary people reacted.*
3. *Make a report and presentation about the Influence of Community Living on Individuals with reference to Tolstoy Farm and Phoenix Settlement*
4. *Create a digital album of the Gandhian initiatives in South Africa by collecting photographs of at least four major resistance movements.*

04

Role of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian National Movement



Look at our National flag carefully.

It is not just a cloth or fabric.

It carries stories of courage, sacrifice, and dreams.

How are courage and sacrifice connected to the Indian freedom struggle?

Why the Indian flag is considered as a symbol of freedom?

What does the question “Can freedom be gifted, or must it be earned?” teach us about India’s history?

In this chapter we are going to learn about Mahatma Gandhi, a leader who transformed ordinary Indians into extraordinary freedom fighters and led millions to challenge the British Empire without weapons.” Gandhi’s contribution to the freedom struggle is discussed in this chapter. It covers Gandhi’s involvement in local affairs, his rise to prominence in national politics, his efforts to end communal violence, and his background as a social and political activist. He emerged as the leader of the masses, taking upon himself the baton to guide the country in its nationalist struggle. He espoused ideas of Satyagraha, nonviolence, truthfulness, and other principles.

The advent of Gandhi from South Africa

Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in January 1915. After his return, he travelled abroad only on a few occasions, most notably in 1931 when he attended the Second Round Table Conference in London. Soon after arriving in India, Gandhi established an ashram at Kochrab near Ahmedabad for the Satyagrahis who had accompanied him from South Africa. In 1917, this ashram was relocated to the banks



Revolt of 1857

The Revolt of 1857 was the first large-scale challenge to British rule in India, starting as a military uprising and spreading into a widespread uprising involving peasants, rulers, and common people. Leaders like Rani Lakshmibai, Kunwar Singh, Bahadur Shah Zafar, and Nana Saheb became symbols of resistance. Although it was eventually suppressed due to lack of unity and modern weapons, it shook British authority. The revolt led to the end of Company rule and the start of direct British Crown rule in India.

of the Sabarmati River, and much later, in 1936, he founded another ashram at Wardha (Sevagram).

After his return to India in 1915, Gandhi consciously kept himself away from active politics for a year following the advice of his political mentor Gopal Krishna Gokhale. During this period, he travelled extensively across the country, often in third-class railway compartments. These journeys enabled him to directly observe the lives of ordinary Indians, particularly poor villagers, and to understand the everyday realities of colonial exploitation. Gandhi returned to a very different India than the one he had left behind in 1893. It was more politically active, despite still being a British colony.

Indian nationalism before Gandhi's entrance

Modern Indian nationalism emerged and flourished in the 19th century. The growth of nationalism in India was the result of numerous interrelated political, economic, social, and cultural factors during British rule. Among them, the following were significant,

1. British Economic Exploitation

- British policies ruined Indian industries and handicrafts.
- Heavy taxation, land revenue systems, and drain of wealth to Britain caused widespread poverty.
- Indians realized that British rule was responsible for their economic suffering, strengthening national feeling.

2. Political Unification of India

- The British introduced a uniform system of administration, laws, courts, and education.
- Railways, roads, postal, and telegraph systems connected different regions.
- This helped Indians see themselves as part of one nation.

3. Western Education and Ideas

- English education exposed Indians to ideas of liberty, equality, democracy, and nationalism.
- Educated Indians began to question British authority and demand their rights.

- Leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji and Surendranath Banerjee spread national awareness.

4. Role of the Press and Literature

- Newspapers and journals in English and regional languages spread nationalist ideas.
- Writers and poets inspired pride in India's past and culture.
- The press helped unite people in opposition to British injustices.

5. Socio-Religious Reform Movements

- Reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Vivekananda worked to eradicate social evils.
- These movements promoted self-confidence and pride in Indian culture.
- They encouraged unity and a sense of national identity.

6. Racial Discrimination by the British

- Indians were treated as inferior in their own country.
- Discrimination in jobs, clubs, and public places angered Indians.
- Events like the Ilbert Bill controversy exposed British racial arrogance.

7. Impact of Movements and Revolts

- The Revolt of 1857 created a sense of unity against British rule.
- Later movements, like the Swadeshi Movement, strengthened mass nationalism.
- Indians learned the power of collective action.

8. Partition of Bengal (1905)

- Lord Curzon's decision to divide Bengal was widely opposed.
- It united Indians across regions and communities.
- The boycott and Swadeshi movements increased national consciousness.

9. Formation of the Indian National Congress (1885)

- Provided a common platform for Indians to express grievances.
- Helped develop national political awareness.
- Gradually became the leading force of the freedom struggle.

10. Inspiration from International Events

- Nationalist movements in Europe and other colonies inspired Indians.
- The success of freedom struggles elsewhere showed that British rule could be challenged.

Moderate politics characterised the first stage of the liberation struggle. During this time, Congress politics were dominated by national figures such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Dinshaw Wacha, W.C. Banerjee, Surendranath Banerjee, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Many of these leaders were educated in the West. Western philosophy had an impact on them. They believed that India benefited from British rule. They believed that India would become a modern nation like Britain under British administration. Therefore, any mass agitation was opposed by these leaders. Instead, they favoured peaceful methods, such as petitions, memoranda, and other constitutional means of representing the Indian cause. The majority of moderate leaders did not work as full-time politicians. A few of them were from higher social classes. There was little public backing for the moderate leaders.

Extremist politics characterised the second stage of the liberation movement. The principal leaders were Aurobindo, Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Lala Lajpat Rai. Extremism grew as a result of a number of circumstances, such as the viceroys' reactionary policies, famine, plague, bad economic conditions, the resurgence of Hinduism, racial discrimination, the effects of revolutions and global events, the expansion of education, etc. The radicals' programs included national education, boycotts, non-cooperation, Swaraj, and Swadeshi. They established cooperative sanitation facilities in rural areas. The extremists' policy yielded positive outcomes by setting the stage for mass-based, confrontational movements that characterised the freedom struggle later. Bengal's partition was revoked in 1911. Indian nationalists gained newfound confidence as a result.

Both Moderate and Extremist political ideologies in India had certain drawbacks that limited their effectiveness. The Moderates were often criticized for being too slow and relying on petitions and negotiations, which delayed urgent reforms. Extremists, on the other hand, sometimes relied on aggressive methods that risked alienating the public and inviting harsh British repression. Their differences also caused divisions within the national movement, weakening unity at times. Despite their limitations, these ideologies together provided lessons that shaped the strategies of later leaders in India's struggle for Independence.



Prepare a seminar report on the important factors that led to the rise and growth of nationalism in India.

Mahatma Gandhi's rise to prominence in Indian politics through local struggles

For the next few years, Gandhi became involved in various local struggles such as the ones in Champaran, Ahmedabad, and Kheda. These local struggles were also a landmark in the history of the Indian freedom struggle, as they were the first Satyagraha protests initiated by Gandhi, based on the principle of ahimsa or nonviolence, against the British. His leadership earned him widespread respect and the loyal support of the people, and he rapidly rose to the helm of nationalist politics as a charismatic leader of the nationalist movement. Rabindranath Tagore, India's most renowned poet and author, bestowed upon him the title of Mahatma, meaning 'Great Soul'. Although many leaders fought for Indian Independence, Mahatma Gandhi's role stands out among them. His arrival galvanized the nationalist movement, transforming it into a mass movement.

Champaran Satyagraha (1917)

The Satyagraha at Champaran took place in 1917. It was the first major incident in Gandhi's movement against the British. Mahatma Gandhi's early battles in India were for labourers and peasants. A Champaran villager named Raj Kumar Shukla approached Gandhi in December 1916. He informed Gandhi about the British Indigo planters' brutal treatment towards peasants. The peasant was required to plant indigo on three of the twenty parts of his land for the benefit of the landlord. The Tinkathia system was the name given to this. Gandhi departed Calcutta for Champaran at the beginning of 1917.

Mahatma Gandhi stated, "My goal was to find out how the Champaran farmers were doing and to comprehend their complaints against the Indigo planters." I had to meet thousands of riots in order to accomplish this. However, I felt it was crucial to see the Commissioner and the Diwan and learn the planters' side of the story before beginning my investigation. I requested and received an appointment with both".

Gandhi, according to the Planters Association Secretary, was an outsider. Therefore, he had no right to stand in the way of the planters and their renters. However, he should submit any written representation if he has one. The Commissioner suggested that he should leave Champaran right away. Mahatma Gandhi received a warning to quit Champaran while travelling there to investigate the mistreatment of a tenant. However, he wasn't prepared to depart without finishing his investigation. Gandhi was summoned to appear in court the following day. The summons and notice became well known. Gandhi may have lawfully objected to the notices that were delivered to him.

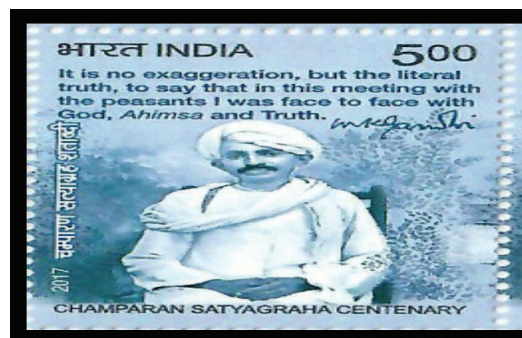


Fig. 4:01
Champaran Satyagraha
Centenary Stamp – Issued
By Indian Postal Department



Fig. 4:02
Gandhi Sangralaya
(Museum), Motihari,
Champaran, Bihar

Rather, he accepted them, and he behaved appropriately with the officials. His colleagues also assisted the Government in controlling the masses. The villagers welcomed Mahatma Gandhi with open arms when he arrived. Gandhi states in his book that “I was face to face with God, Ahimsa, and Truth in this meeting with peasants.” This is not hyperbole. Lieutenant Governor Sir Edward Gait stated that he would be willing to

designate an inquiry. He sent an invitation to Gandhi to join the committee. Gandhi accepted the invitation after conferring with his colleagues.

However, he proposed that if the investigation’s findings were unsuccessful, he should be allowed to counsel the riots on their course of action. After accepting the condition, Sir Edward Gait made the inquiry public. The Champaran Agrarian Bill was approved after the investigation supported the rioting. According to the committee report, the peasants were free from the clutches of the European planters. Gandhi emerged as a leader with mass appeal. Gandhi also initiated a number of positive initiatives in Champaran, including the establishment of elementary schools, sanitation projects, and medical assistance.

Importance of Champaran Satyagraha in Indian History

The Champaran Satyagraha was a watershed moment that introduced a new, effective methodology for protest and laid the foundational principles for India’s eventual independence struggle. It was the blueprint for future mass Satyagraha movements, displaying nonviolence as a viable path to political change in India. The following are the important milestones of the Champaran Satyagraha in Indian history.

Entry into Indian Politics: It marked Gandhi’s active, large-scale entry into India’s freedom struggle, shifting the focus of politics from urban elites to the common people, particularly farmers.

Demonstration of Satyagraha: It proved the effectiveness of satyagraha as a powerful weapon against colonial oppression, relying on moral strength rather than physical force. It was the first time that the philosophy of nonviolent moral resistance was applied on a large scale in India, proving that British authorities could be compelled to address local grievances without the use of violence.

Abolition of the Tinkathia System: The movement led to the passage of the Champaran Agrarian Act of 1918, which legally abolished the oppressive “Tinkathia” system, under which farmers were forced to grow indigo on 3/20ths of their land for very low pay.

Mass Mobilisation: It was the first peasant movement to gain nationwide attention, uniting farmers, educated people, and youth, making peasant grievances a national issue. It helped bridge the gap between the middle-class educated people and the rural peasantry, uniting different sections of society in the fight against British exploitation.

Shift in Nationalism: It initiated a shift towards mass-based movements, uniting diverse groups and fostering a sense of collective power against British rule.

Mohandas to Mahatma: It was the turning point at which Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi transformed into Mahatma Gandhi, the revered leader, thereby strengthening the independence struggle.



Fig. 4:03
Gandhiji and
Sub-Inspector Qurban Ali
in Champaran (1917)

The emergence of Gandhi as a mass leader: The emergence of Gandhi as a mass leader marked a significant shift in the Indian freedom struggle, as his success gained him national recognition and established his credibility among the common people. This development transformed the movement from one led by urban elites to a mass-based movement with broad peasant participation.

Precedent for Future Movements: Champaran served as a training ground for future major campaigns, including the Kheda Satyagraha, the Non-Cooperation Movement, and the Quit India Movement, all of which employed nonviolent civil disobedience as their primary method.

Moral Victory: The British Government was forced to form an inquiry commission and accept many of its recommendations, including a partial refund of illegally collected money to the farmers. Gandhi viewed this concession as a significant moral victory over the British planters.

Ahmedabad Mill Strike (1918)

Anasuya Sarabhai wrote to Mahatma Gandhi regarding the state of the Ahmedabad mill workers. The pay was meagre. The workers had been demanding an increase for a long time. Gandhi arrived at Ahmedabad. Gandhi had cordial connections with the mill owners. After consulting with them, Gandhi asked them to submit the disagreement to arbitration. However, they



The Story of My Experiments with Truth

Gandhi's autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth, completed in Gujarati in 1925, marks 100 years and remains a classic work. It reflects his personal journey, experiments with truth, nonviolence, and moral discipline, including his struggles with anger, vanity, and diet. The book also documents his early social work and the beginnings of the Satyagraha movement in South Africa. Translated into many Indian and foreign languages, it continues to inspire readers worldwide with lessons on ethics, self-improvement, and social responsibility. It is valued not just as a memoir but as a guide to living a principled life.

declined the request. Gandhi then had to encourage the workers to go on strike. Gandhi informed them of the prerequisites for a successful strike before doing so. They included the following.

- Never resort to violence.
- Never trouble the blacklegs.
- Never take up arms.

The workers were to remain firm, no matter how long the strike might continue, and to earn bread during the strike by other honest means. The strike's leaders were aware of and agreed to the terms. At a general meeting, the workers made a vow. Until their terms were approved or the mill owners consented to arbitrate the matter, they would not return to work.

Mahatma Gandhi had close interactions with Shankarlal Banker and Vallabhai Patel throughout this strike. On the banks of Sabarmati, Gandhi and his associates met with the strikers every day under the shade of a tree. Twenty-one days passed during the strike. Gandhi occasionally communicated with the mill owners throughout the strike.

He pleaded with them to treat the labourers fairly. However, they disliked third-party meddling. They weren't even prepared for arbitration. The employees displayed tremendous bravery and self-control throughout the first two weeks. However, they started to exhibit signs of agitation. Gandhi started to worry that they would start acting rowdily. So, he decided to fast. It created a positive and self-assured environment.

The employees displayed tremendous bravery and self-control throughout the first two weeks. The mill's owners came forward to negotiate. Their conversations took place at Anasuya Sarabhai's home. Gandhi himself went on a fast unto death to keep up the workers' resolve to continue the strike. His fast-unto-death succeeded in putting pressure on the mill owners, who gave in to the workers' demands on the fourth day and agreed to give the workers a 35% increase in wages. After 21 days, a settlement was made, and the mill owners celebrated the occasion by offering sweets to the workers.

Kheda Satyagraha 1918

In Gujarat's Kheda District, crop failure was rampant. Famine was a threat to the peasantry. They requested a yearlong suspension of the revenue assessment. According to the land revenue rule, farmers are entitled to request a complete suspension of the revenue assessment for the year if the crop was

worth four annas or less. The crop worth exceeded four annas, according to government figures. However, the real value was lower. The Government turned down the public's request for arbitration. Gandhi and his supporters asked the Government to halt income collection.

Then, Gandhi asked them to begin the satyagraha. The individuals demonstrated great bravery. At first, the Government made an effort to disregard them. After that, it started using force against the peasantry. People's cattle were seized and sold by the police. Notices of penalties were delivered. In his judgement, Gandhi advised the people to harvest onions from the field, as he believed the government had incorrectly attached the land.

The people have a decent chance to learn about the necessary repercussions of such disobedience, such as fines or jail time. Thus, with the assistance of several friends, Mohanlal Pandya, one of Gandhis coworkers, cleared the field of onions. Mohanlal and his friends were taken into custody by the Government. This increased people's zeal. A parade accompanied Mohanlal Pandya and others. Mohanlal Pandya was then dubbed "Dungli Chor" (Onion Thief) by the people.

Over time, the people grew weary. Mahatma Gandhi sought a suitable solution to resolve the conflict. The authorities decided that land revenue collection from poorer patidars would be suspended if the wealthy paid their dues. The satyagraha was withdrawn after Gandhi requested and received a written undertaking to that effect. Gandhi expressed his dissatisfaction with the satyagraha. A Satyagraha campaign can be considered worthy only when the Satyagrahis emerge as stronger and more motivated than before.

The actions of government representatives gave the impression that there was no resolution at all. Relief was intended for the impoverished, but very few people benefited from it. However, there were other advantages. The Kheda initiative brought educated state employees closer to the realities of peasant life. They discovered how to relate to the peasants. Through the Kheda Satyagraha, Vallabhai Patel became a national leader. Gandhi thus intervened at the micro level to address the complaints of labourers and peasants through the Champaran, Ahmedabad, and Kheda Satyagrahas.

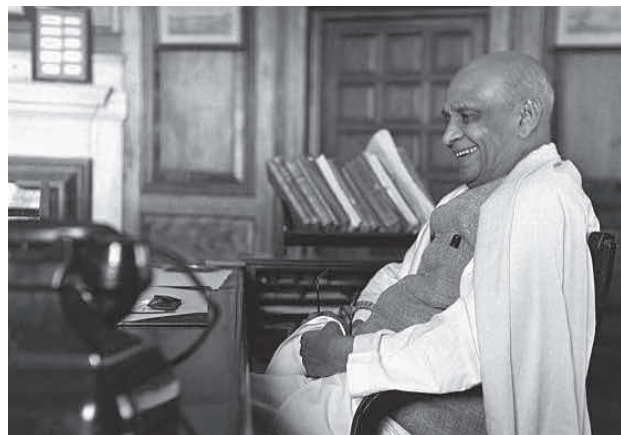


Fig. 4:04
Sardar Vallabhai Patel

The Champaran, Ahmedabad, and Kheda Satyagrahas marked important victories of nonviolent struggle under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. In Champaran, farmers were freed from the oppressive indigo plantation

system. The Ahmedabad Satyagraha helped workers secure better wages through peaceful protest. The Kheda Satyagraha brought relief to farmers by suspending tax collection during a time of hardship. Together, these movements demonstrated that truth, unity, and nonviolence could effectively challenge injustice and bolster India's freedom struggle. Gandhi's efforts in Champaran, Ahmedabad, and Kheda earned him a distinguished position in nationalist politics. They demonstrated how satyagraha is a potent tool for combating injustice on a global scale.



Conduct a group discussion about Gandhi's first three local-level Satyagrahas in India.

Gandhi's debut in the national politics of India

Under Gandhi's leadership, the nature of the nationalist movement underwent a drastic change. He adopted principles of nonviolence in his method of protests. Mahatma Gandhi gained the confidence of the Indian masses and gradually emerged as the leader who controlled the movement against the British Government. Gandhi's leadership played a decisive role alongside other national and international developments to put an end to colonialism.

The Rowlatt Act

The Rowlatt act came like a sudden blow. To the people of India, who had been promised extension of democracy during the War, the Government's step appeared to be a cruel joke. It was like a hungry man, expecting bread, being offered stones. Instead of democratic progress, there was a further restriction of civil liberties. Another name for it was the "Black Act." The British Government was assessing the political revolutionary actions of Bengal and Punjab.

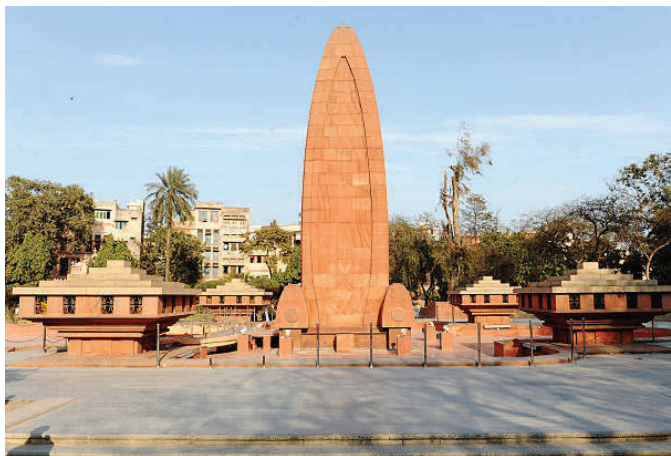
In 1918, a committee was established, with Justice Rowlatt serving as its president. Thus, on March 10, 1919, the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crime Act was passed based on the committee's recommendations. The Rowlatt Act is the common name for this. The Act permits anyone to be detained and imprisoned without charge or trial. It allowed for a special court to try offenders quickly. Provincial Governors were granted wide-ranging authority to search any location and detain a suspect without a warrant.

Gandhi's position as a leader of the nationalist movement was further strengthened by his actions against the "Rowlatt Act". This Act was passed to control public unrest and check conspiracy against the British. This Act authorised the British Government to imprison any person without trial who was suspected of terrorist activity for a minimum period of two years. Unrest spread in the country, and a powerful agitation against the Act arose. The introduction of the Rowlatt Act was opposed by forms of protest, such as the

hartal. As a mark of protest, Gandhi organised a strike in which Indians would close their businesses. Although the strike was successful in Delhi, riots took place in other parts of India.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

The Rowlatt Act led to the largest mass movement against British rule since the Revolt of 1857. It provided the spark that ignited the movement for Independence, which later spread throughout India and eventually led to Independence. Gandhi opposed the Rowlatt Act and called for mass agitation and an all-India hartal, or strike, in which Indians shut their businesses and fasted to show their opposition to the British. As protests against the Rowlatt Act intensified, the British government employed increasingly oppressive measures to suppress the mass agitation. There were frequent lathi charges and firings on unarmed demonstrators at Bombay, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Delhi, and other cities.



*Fig. 4:05
In memory of
Jallianwallabagh
massacre*

People all over the country signed a Satyagraha pledge to follow the path of nonviolence. Gandhi's call was well received in the Punjab region. Nationalist leaders in Punjab, such as Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal, spoke during large-scale demonstrations. To speak at a rally, Mahatma Gandhi personally traveled to Punjab. However, he was detained and late returned to Bombay. On April 10, Satyapal and Kitchlew were detained. To demand the release of the leaders, people planned a march to the home of Deputy Commissioner Mr Irivings. There were some fatalities and injuries.

In Amritsar, the enraged mob rioted, setting British buildings on fire and killing some British citizens. General O Dyer assumed control of the city and declared martial law on April 11. On the 12th, he declared that all gatherings and processions were prohibited by Section 144 of the Criminal Code. A public gathering to denounce police brutality was staged on the evening of the 13th at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. Jallianwalla Bagh was a sizable open area, with barriers on three sides. There, some 20,000 unarmed, nonviolent people gathered.

When General Dyer arrived, he gave the order for his soldiers to open fire on the crowd. Only when the ammunition ran out did he stop shooting. Official estimates state that 1500 people were injured and 379 people died. Over a thousand people were thought to have died, according to unofficial figures. The massacre was justified by Michael O'Dyer. The Indian National Congress responded angrily. It required a high-level investigation. In protest, Tagore

renounced his knighthood. Sir C. Sankaran Nair left the Viceroy's executive council.

In October 1919, the British finally established an inquiry committee led by Lord Hunter. Jallianwala Bagh jolted the British rule that the Battle of Plassey had established. Following the massacre, Gandhi made a statement. Gandhi entered the national political scene as a result of his protests against the Rowlatt Act. Millions of moderate Indians who had previously been devoted followers of the British Raj became nationalists after the Jallianwala Bagh slaughter.



Conduct a group discussion and make a detailed report on the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.

Mahatma Gandhi's contribution for Hindu-Muslim unity during the Khilafat movement

Gandhi hoped that by integrating non-cooperation with the Khilafat movement, India's two major religious communities, Hindus and Muslims, could collectively bring an end to colonial rule. A fundamental tenet of Gandhian ideology is communal harmony. Gandhi consistently advocated for the unification of Muslims and Hindus. Gandhi had the chance to promote Hindu-Muslim harmony through the Khilafat Movement, which the Ali brothers founded. The Indian National Movement underwent a significant transformation and entered a new phase following the First World War. Mass politics and mass mobilisation characterised this new stage.



Fig. 4:06
Ali brothers-, Maulana
Mohammad Ali and
Maulana Shaukat Ali

In India, two large-scale movements emerged during 1920 and 1921. They were the non-cooperation and Khilafat movements. Turkey allied with Germany and Austria to fight the British during World War I. The Sultan of the Ottoman Empire was regarded as the spiritual leader of Muslims worldwide. However, the British ended the Caliphate after the War. The Ali brothers, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Shoukat Ali, led the formation of the All-India Khilafat Committee in September 1919.

Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, and Madan Mohan Malaviya attended the All India Khilafat Conference in Delhi in November 1919. To persuade the British to agree to their demands, Mahatma Gandhi advised the Khilafatists to resort to non-cooperation. The Central Khilafat Committee thereupon announced a plan of non-cooperation with the Government. Gandhi and the Ali brothers travelled all throughout India to promote Hindu-Muslim harmony. The Khilafat movement, however, was short-lived.

Turkey became a republic in November 1922 after Mustafa Kamal Pasha led a democratic revolution. Gandhi included the majority of Muslims in

the national cause through the Khilafat cause. Hindu-Muslim harmony was reinforced by the Khilafat movement. It carried the anti-British sentiments to the remotest corners of India.

Mahatma Gandhi's unquestionable leadership- Non-Cooperation Movement

Imagine refusing to follow rules that you know are unfair—not by fighting with weapons, but simply by saying ‘no’ and withdrawing your support. In 1920, Mahatma Gandhi turned this idea into a powerful weapon against the British in India. Through the Non-Cooperation Movement, millions of Indians stopped attending British schools, courts, and offices, boycotted foreign goods, and refused to pay taxes—all peacefully but firmly. Here, we will explore how ordinary Indians became extraordinary heroes under Gandhi's leadership, showing the world that courage and truth could challenge a mighty empire without a single bullet.



*Fig. 4:07
Gandhi's first national
movement in India- Non
cooperation movement*

The first pan-Indian agitation against the British was Non-cooperation movement which started in 1920 and ended with an unexpected incident in 1922. Gandhi called for a campaign of non-cooperation with British administration after the Rowlatt Act agitation was successful. His programme was approved by the Congress assembly in Nagpur in 1920. The primary goal of the non-cooperation movement was to achieve Swaraj. As part of the non-cooperation movement, there were widespread calls to non-cooperate with the British administration through all possible non-violent means. These included the boycott of courts and litigation, the boycott of British-run schools and colleges, the use of hand-spun khadi, and the picketing of liquor shops.

Gandhi called for a campaign of non-cooperation with British administration after the Rowlatt Act agitation was successful. His programme was approved by the Congress assembly in Nagpur in 1920. The primary goal of the non-cooperation movement was to achieve Swaraj.

For the movement, Gandhi presented the following programmes,

- Surrender of titles and honorary posts given by the British Government.
- Boycott of government-run schools and colleges and promotion of national education.
- Boycott of law courts and encouragement of settling disputes through local panchayats.
- Boycott of legislative councils and elections established under British rule.

- Resignation from government services, including civil and military posts.
- Boycott of foreign goods, especially foreign cloth, and promotion of Swadeshi.
- Peaceful nonviolent resistance based on truth (Satya) and nonviolence (Ahimsa).

Additionally, there were a number of beneficial activities. National schools such as Jamia Millia College, Gujarat Vidyapith, and Kashi Vidyapith were founded. Constructive initiatives also included promoting indigenous products, such as the charkha and khadi. Gandhi's plea for non-cooperation was well received. Numerous pupils dropped out of schools and universities. Hundreds of solicitors quit their jobs. Clothes from other countries were burned.

The front-runners were peasants and factory workers. The Satyagraha fund received jewellery donations from thousands of women. The Non-Cooperation Movement also ensured that the women nationalists organised their efforts under the Mahila Karma Samaj. They organised meetings, spread the spirit of non-cooperation, and enlisted new volunteers. They picketed foreign wine and cloth shops and promoted the sale of khadi.

The movement enjoyed massive popular appeal, and within the first month, scores of students left government schools and colleges to join national institutions that had been established throughout the country. The Mappila peasants in Malabar rose in rebellion against the landowners. In the states of Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Odisha, the tenants refused to pay unlawful taxes. The boycott of foreign cloth was the most successfully executed resolution of the programme. It was determined that protests, hartals, and political gatherings would take place during the Prince of Wales' visit in November 1921. He was greeted with empty streets and downed shutters wherever he went. These measures made the volunteers of the Non-Cooperation Movement bold, and urged by the successful defiance of the Government, they became increasingly aggressive. There were some indirect effects of the Non-Cooperation Movement as well.

- In the United Provinces, it was impossible to distinguish between a Non-Cooperation Movement meeting and a peasant gathering.
- In Kerala, the movement provoked Muslim tenants against their landlords.
- In Assam, tea plantation labourers went on strike.
- In Punjab, the Akali movement became a part of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

The movement was so popular that the Government put Sections 108 and 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure into action. Various volunteer groups were declared illegal, and scores of people were arrested from all over the country.

The Congress and the Khilafat organisations were made illegal. Processions and public gatherings were prohibited. Gandhi was the only significant leader who had not been arrested by the end of 1921. Upto the start of 1922, the movement was still going strong. However, Mahatma Gandhi suspended the Non-Cooperation Movement due to an unfortunate incident.

Chauri Choura and the cessation of Non-cooperation

At Chauri Chaura in present-day Uttar Pradesh, a mass protest was organised in February 1922, in which nearly 3,000 people participated. The protesters were demonstrating against high prices and liquor shops. During the protest, the police attempted to disperse the crowd and opened fire, killing three civilians. In retaliation, the demonstrators attacked and set fire to the local police station, resulting in the death of 22 policemen.

Gandhi saw the incident with great seriousness. He believed that the people's nonviolent training was inadequate. As a result, he put the Non-cooperation Movement on hold. He asked the Congressmen to focus on the Constructive Programme.

The movement's suspension was approved by the Congress Working Committee meeting in Bardoli. The movement's abrupt retreat took the country aback. The general public was greatly disappointed by it. National leaders like C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, and Lala Lajpat Rai, who were in jail, could not approve the decision. Subhash Chandrabose called it a "national calamity". However, Mahatma Gandhi became the unchallenged leader of the liberation struggle as a result of this movement. But the movement still managed to achieve several positives, including the following:

- Provide a platform for the unification of all religious communities, enabling them to form a united front to resist foreign rule.
- Provide the required impetus and mass support for future agitations and movements.
- Provide a sense of courage, direction, and confidence to the masses and fill them with self-respect and esteem.
- Provide a sense of representation to the Muslim community in the nationalist movement.
- For the first time, common people were included in the national movement's mainstream. They gained self-assurance and self-worth.

After the non-cooperation movement was put on hold, Gandhi created the Constructive Programme. It played a crucial role during the passive or non-mass movement phase in filling the political space left vacant by the withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement. It was primarily organised around the promotion of Khadi, spinning and village industries, national

education, Hindu-Muslim unity, the struggle against untouchability, and the social upliftment of the Harijans, as well as the boycott of foreign liquor.

The constructive work addressed a fundamental issue that mass movements often encounter. Constructive work also had the advantage of involving a large number of people. Hundreds of Ashrams, which sprang up all over the country, primarily in villages during that period, symbolised constructive work. After a few years, the constructive workers became Gandhi's steel frame or standing army. The hardcore of constructive workers also provided a large cadre for the civil disobedience movement. Because relatively few could do parliamentary and intellectual work, constructive work could involve millions. Moreover, not all could go to jail. But constructive work was within the reach of all. It aimed at the whole development (social, political, economic, moral, and spiritual) of the nation. It laid the foundation for future movements, such as the Civil Disobedience Movement.



1. Write a short essay imagining yourself as a student in 1920, describing your participation in the Non-Cooperation Movement. Include how you felt and what actions you took.
2. Make a small poster illustrating the symbols and slogans of the Non-Cooperation Movement, such as the boycott of British goods or spinning khadi.

Civil Disobedience Movement

Imagine living in a nation where you are subject to rules that you did not create, where you are required to pay taxes that you never consented to, and where even basic actions like spinning your own fabric are penalised. How would you react—by engaging in violent combat or calmly defying unfair regulations? In the early 1930s, India confronted this dilemma. Indians opted for peaceful resistance under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance, starting the Civil Disobedience Movement to oppose British rules and claim their freedom. Here, we'll look at how common people joined this remarkable fight led by Mahatma Gandhi.

The Civil Disobedience Movement was the direct reaction to Lord Irwin's disregard for the demands put forward by Gandhi. After Gandhi was given the responsibility of the Civil Disobedience Movement, he wrote a letter to Viceroy Irwin seeking the abolishment of the salt tax, reduction of military expenditure, and the release of political prisoners. However, Lord Irwin chose not to respond to this letter. This formed the trigger for the outbreak of the Civil Disobedience Movement against the British by Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi was granted the freedom to organise a Civil Disobedience Movement at the Lahore Congress in 1929. The 'Purna Swaraj' resolution was passed and January 26, 1930 was symbolically celebrated as the first

Independence Day. He declared shortly after the first Independence Day that he would begin a campaign of civil disobedience by breaching the salt prohibition. Gandhi had informed Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, in advance of his salt march. However, Irwin was unable to understand the action's importance.

Why was salt chosen as an important symbol?

Gandhi had decided to break the law as he believed that salt was a basic necessity of people and the salt tax was against the interests of the poor. Inspired by Gandhi, people began manufacturing salt all over the country. This movement galvanized widespread participation across India and marked a significant escalation in the struggle for Independence.

As Gandhi said, “there is no other article like salt, outside water by taxing which the Government can reach the starving millions, the sick, the maimed and the utterly helpless.... It is the most inhuman poll tax the ingenuity of man can devise”. Salt provided a very small but psychologically important income, similar to Khadi, for the poor through self-help. Like Khadi, it again offered the urban populace the opportunity for symbolic identification with mass suffering.



Fig. 4:08
Historical Dandi march
with his followers

Even before the proposed march began, thousands thronged to the ashram. Gandhi gave the following directions.

- Wherever possible, civil disobedience of the salt law should be stated.
- Foreign liquor and cloth shops can be picketed.
- Lawyers can give up practice.
- Refuse to pay tax if we have the requisite strength.
- Government servants can resign from their posts.
- The public can boycott the law courts by refraining from litigation.
- All these should be subject to one condition, truth and nonviolence as means to attain swaraj, should be faithfully adhered to.

The Great Dandi March

The civil disobedience movement was started by Gandhi on March 12, 1930, with his famous Dandi March. The Dandi March is often compared to the “Long March” because it was a 24-day, long-distance march, undertaken

together with 78 chosen followers which included four from Kerala. Gandhi walked nearly 375 Kilometres from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi, a village on the Gujarat seacoast. Day after day, newspapers reported his progress, his speeches, and the impact on the people. Hundreds of the village officials on his route resigned their jobs. The march, which gained massive national and international attention, was a turning point in the Indian independence movement and catalysed the broader Civil Disobedience Movement.

The initial group of 78 marchers grew significantly, as people joined along the way, reaching about 50,000 people by the time they arrived at Dandi. On April 6, Gandhi reached Dandi, picked up a handful of salt, and broke the salt law as a symbol of the Indian people's refusal to live under British-made laws and therefore under British rule. This marked the final signal for the commencement of the civil disobedience movement, a movement that would remain unsurpassed in the history of the Indian national movement for the country-wide mass participation it inspired.

From Madras to Maharashtra, from Bengal and Assam to Karachi, volunteers were recruited on a large scale through careful planning, and the movement soon spread like wildfire. Supporters launched a massive demonstration in Peshawar, the farthest north. Peasants in several regions of India broke forest rules that prohibited them and their cattle from entering the forest. In certain towns, students refused to attend government-run schools, lawyers boycotted British courts, and industry workers went on strike. The Pathans of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) were also included in the movement. Khan Abdul Gafar Khan (Frontier Gandhi) actively participated in it under the Khudai Khitmatgars (Servants of God) flag. The Manipuris also participated in it from the Northeast.



Fig. 4:09 : A two mile long rally of Indians in Bombay protesting the arrest of Gandhi, 1930

The reaction of the masses took the colonial government aback, as it had not anticipated such widespread support for the movement. Insecure, it decided to arrest Gandhi in May 1930, but the decision only added much fuel to the fire. The most significant feature of the Civil Disobedience Movement was the widespread support it received from the country's youth, particularly students and women. Women-led groups attacked liquor shops as well as those that sold foreign

goods. The Government went all out to stop the people and issued orders curbing the civil liberties of citizens. It also decided to ban civil disobedience organisations in the provinces.

The Government brutally put an end to this movement. The Indian National Congress was deemed unlawful. Gandhi was detained along with around 90,000 Satyagrahis. Thousands of acres of land, were attached. The civil disobedience movement was temporarily put on hold in March 1931 following the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Only in March 1934 did the Congress formally end the movement.

Effects of Salt Satyagraha in Kerala

Gandhi's Dandi March also had a profound and lasting impact in Kerala, particularly in the Malabar region. In Kerala, the main centre of the Salt Satyagraha was Payyannur in North Malabar. Under the leadership of K. Kelappan, a prominent Congress leader often referred to as the 'Kerala Gandhi,' volunteers marched from Kozhikode to Payyannur in April 1930 to defy the British salt laws by producing salt from coastal sand and selling it openly.

The Satyagraha in Kerala garnered widespread mass participation from all sections of society, including students, workers, and ordinary citizens. The Act of breaking the salt laws inspired large-scale demonstrations, picketing of toddy shops, boycott of foreign goods, and public rallies in towns such as Kannur, Thalassery, and Kozhikode.

The British authorities responded with repression; many leaders, including K. Kelappan, C. M. Kunhiraman Nair, and Muhammad Abdul Rahiman, were arrested and imprisoned, and police resorted to lathi charges to disperse crowds. These harsh measures, however, only strengthened the determination of the people.



Fig. 4:10
K Kelappan- In his
honour India Post
released a
Commemorative
stamp in 1990



Timeline of Mahatma Gandhi's Visits to Kerala

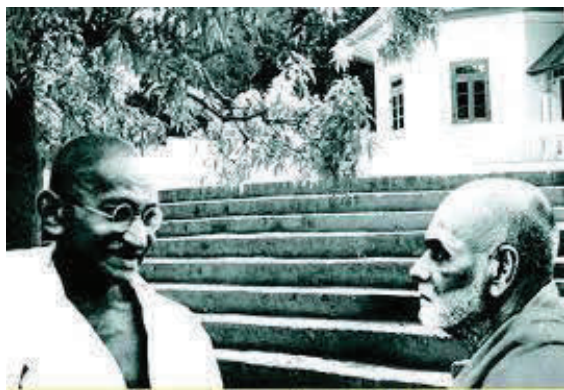


Fig. 4:11 : Mahatma Gandhi with Sreenarayana guru

First Visit – 1920

Purpose: Promotion of Non-Cooperation Movement and Khilafat Movement

- He addressed large public meetings at Kozhikode (Calicut).
- He emphasized non-violent resistance, boycott of foreign goods, and promotion of khadi.

Second Visit – 1925

Purpose: Support for Temple Entry and Social Equality

- *Gandhi visited Kerala in March 1925 during the Vaikom Satyagraha.*
- *He held discussions with leaders, temple authorities, and the Travancore government.*

Third Visit – 1927

Purpose: Campaign Against Untouchability

- *Gandhi toured several places including Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, and Kochi.*
- *He addressed public meetings stressing social reform, Harijan upliftment, and national unity.*

Fourth Visit – 1934

Purpose: Harijan (Anti-Untouchability) Tour

- *Gandhi visited Kerala as part of his All-India Harijan Tour.*
- *Gandhi appealed for the eradication of caste discrimination and promotion of dignity of labour.*

Fifth Visit – 1937

Purpose: Promotion of Gandhian Constructive Programme

- *He stressed basic education (Nai Talim), khadi, village industries, and communal harmony.*
- *He advised Congress workers to focus on constructive social work rather than only politics.*

The movement also helped to mobilise the youth and ordinary citizens of Kerala politically, fostering a stronger sense of national consciousness and unity against colonial rule. The participation in Salt Satyagraha laid the foundation for further involvement of Kerala's people in subsequent phases of the freedom struggle.

Overall, the Salt Satyagraha in Kerala had a lasting impact on the region's freedom movement by awakening political awareness, encouraging mass participation, and challenging British authority through non violent resistance.

Gandhi-Irwin pact-1931

When the First Round Table Conference concluded, the British Government recognised that to achieve further progress in drafting the Indian Constitution, it would need the full cooperation and support of the Indian National Congress. Thus, the British Government ordered Lord Irwin to settle with Gandhi.

The following terms were included in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, which was signed on March 5, 1931.

- The discontinuation of the Civil Disobedience Movement by the Congress.



Bhagat Singh

Bhagat Singh was a prominent Indian freedom fighter and socialist revolutionary, inspired by his family and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. He co-founded the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) and carried out bold protests, including the 1929 bombing of the Central Legislative Assembly. Executed by the British on March 23, 1931, at just 23, he became a celebrated martyr and symbol of India's struggle for independence.

- The participation of the Congress in the Round Table Conference.
- The Government's withdrawal of all ordinances to curb the Congress.
- The Government's withdrawal of all prosecutions about offences not involving violence.
- The release of all those serving prison sentences for activities in the Civil Disobedience Movement, by the Government.

Jawaharlal Nehru and Subash Chandra Bose were among the Congress leaders who opposed the agreement. They contended that the Government had granted none of the main nationalist demands. The Government's unwillingness to reduce Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Raj Guru's death sentences to life in jail infuriated them.

Round Table Conferences

The Round Table Conferences were a series of three meetings held in London between 1930 and 1932 to discuss constitutional reforms in India and the future of British rule. The British Government called these conferences to negotiate with Indian leaders and find a solution acceptable to all communities. Indian politicians from all the communities, that is, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians,

were asked to attend the conference. At that conference, Gandhi decided to speak alone on behalf of all Indians, arguing that the Congress party represented the people of India.

Mahatma Gandhi attended the Second Round Table Conference (1931) as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress. His participation was historic because it was the first time a Congress leader officially represented Indian aspirations before the British. Gandhi stressed the need for complete

Independence, Hindu-Muslim unity, and the removal of untouchability, and he opposed the British policy of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. Poorna Swaraj was repeated as the Congress's prime objective. However, the discussions at this Round Table did not go in favour of India. The British Government refused to recognise the Congress as the representative of the people of India.



Fig. 4:12
Gandhi participating
Second Round Table
Conference

Although the conferences did not result in immediate major reforms, Gandhi's presence highlighted the moral and political authority of the Congress and strengthened India's demand for self-rule. The Round Table Conferences are remembered as a significant step in India's freedom struggle, demonstrating how negotiation and dialogue were employed alongside nonviolent resistance.



1. Create a timeline showing five major events of the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930–1934).

Include:

- Dates
- Event names
- One-line explanation for each

Communal Award and Poona Pact



Fig. 4:12
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

The Second Round Table Conference was unsuccessful. The Communal Award was announced by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald in 1932. It granted separate electorates to various minority communities in India, including Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Anglo-Indians, and the Depressed Classes (Dalits/Harijans). This meant that these communities could elect their representatives separately, rather than as part of a general electorate. The Award was intended to give minorities political representation, but it angered Mahatma Gandhi, who opposed separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. Gandhi believed it would divide Hindus and weaken their unity.

In protest, Gandhi started a fast unto death while imprisoned in Yerwada Jail, emphasising the importance of Hindu unity and social equality. Under pressure, a compromise was reached in September 1932, known as the Poona Pact. According to the Pact, the Depressed Classes would have reserved seats within the general electorate, rather than separate electorates, with a significant increase in the number of reserved seats. This agreement strengthened Gandhi's commitment to social harmony while still providing political representation to the Depressed Classes. The Communal Award and Poona Pact remain important in Indian history as they highlight the struggle for political representation, social justice, and unity in the fight against colonial rule.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956)



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was an Indian jurist, economist, and social reformer, best known as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution and the country's first Law Minister. He championed the rights of Dalits and the poor, advocating for equality, democracy, and women's rights. Ambedkar also promoted education and welfare through initiatives like the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha and periodicals such as Mook Nayak and Bahishkrit Bharat. His efforts made him a leading figure in India's social and political reform movements.

Anti-War Satyagraha

Gandhi engaged in collective satyagraha for a national cause through the civil disobedience and non-cooperation movements. He demonstrated that satyagraha may be practised on an individual basis through anti-war satyagraha. However, the Satyagrahi should be chosen carefully.

The circumstances were unfavourable for the British throughout the early phases of World War II. Thus, Britain tried to win over the Indians. As a result, the British Government made a number of pledges known as the August Offer. India was promised Dominion status by Britain through the August Offer.

The August offer was turned down. Under the leadership of Subash Chandra Bose, the Congress's left wing sought to start a powerful uprising against the Government. Gandhi, however, was not opposed to the Plan because it would not negatively impact the British war effort. Thus, in October 1940, he initiated the Individual Satyagraha, also known as the Anti-War Satyagraha. The Indian freedom movement was revitalised by individual satyagraha. Gandhi drafted a commitment and established extremely stringent guidelines to ensure the satyagraha was conducted successfully. Vinoba Bhave was his choice as the first Satyagrahi.

On October 17, 1940, Vinoba initiated the satyagraha. However, on October 21, he was taken into custody. Nevertheless, a number of individual Satyagrahis attempted to carry on the anti-war satyagraha. One by one, they were all taken into custody. Others, such as Vallabhbhai Patel and Maulana Azad, also participated in this satyagraha. Nearly 20,000 Congressmen courted arrest during the 1940–1941. Up to the end of 1941, this satyagraha persisted. Meanwhile, more Indians were added to the Viceroy's executive council. On December 4, 1941, the Government released the satyagrahis in response to the opinions of other parties.

Cripps' Mission

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbour in December 1941, it was evident that India would be the next target of the Japanese forces. In April 1942, Britain sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India. He came with an offer for all provinces, for complete Dominion status with the right to leave the Empire and Commonwealth, after the War. It was also recommended by Cripps that any province that did not wish to join India could turn into an independent state. Negotiations between Cripps and the Congress leaders broke down. The Congress objected to the provision for Dominion status instead of complete Independence, the representation of the princely states in the constituent assembly not by the people of the states but by the nominees of the rulers, and above all, by the provision for the partition of India. The British Government also refused to

accept the demand for the immediate transfer of effective power to Indians and a genuine share in the responsibility for India's defence. Gandhi urged the Working Committee to reject the post-dated cheque on a failing bank.

Quit India Movement

"Imagine living under foreign rule for nearly 200 years, while your country is forced to support a war you never agreed to. How would you respond?"



Fig. 4:13
Mass participation in Quit
India movement

In 1942, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, millions of Indians chose to rise and demand that the British 'Quit India'. This was not just a protest, but a call for complete Independence, where ordinary men and women became heroes through nonviolent resistance. Here, we will explore how this movement shook the British Empire and united the nation like never before."

The Cripps proposal was rejected by Nehru and the Congress, who instead demanded a complete cabinet government in which Indians had complete power of decision-making in India. The concept of provinces as independent states was against the aim of the Congress to create a strong and united India with central governance. The British Government rejected these demands. The Muslim League reiterated its demand for Pakistan while rejecting the Plan. Cripps' Mission was therefore unsuccessful.

Then, in August 1942, Gandhi decided to begin the Quit India movement, his third significant satyagraha against British authority. Gandhi threatened to launch a civil disobedience movement in May 1942 if the British refused to withdraw from India. The All India Congress Committee passed the historic Quit India Resolution on August 8, 1942. The phrase "DO OR DIE" was given to the country by Gandhi. Gandhi stated, "Here is a mantra, a small mantra that I give you, you shall imprint it in your heart, let every breath of yours give

expression to it, we shall either free India or die in our attempt, we shall never live to see the perpetuation of our slavery. Apart from formal resolutions, Gandhi, in an informal way at Bombay, addressed various sections of society:

- To the students: Be ready for sacrifice, be confident, and leave studies.
- To the peasants: If zamindars are pro-government, do not pay rent.
- To the soldiers: Do not open fire on fellow countrymen .
- To government servants: Do not resign, but oppose the Government from within.
- To princes: Support the masses and accept the sovereignty of your people .
- To the people of princely states: Support the ruler only if he is anti-government and declare your state to be a part of the Indian nation.

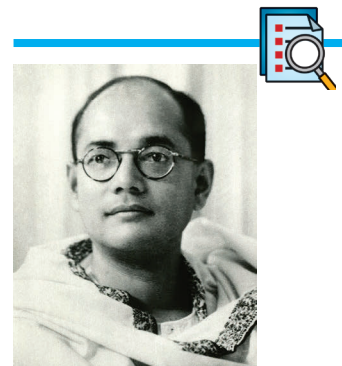
The Congress failed to offer a clear course of action. However, the Government had been preparing to put an end to the movement. All of the important leaders were imprisoned on August 9, 1942. In various regions of India, people protested against it by taking to the streets.

Jayaprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, and Aruna Asaf Ali led the underground movement. Kerala had numerous gatherings and parades. Police stations and government buildings were frequently

attacked. The Tellicherry sub court, the Chemancheri Railway station, the Naduvannur Registrar's office, and the Chompalla salt godown were all destroyed. An attempt was made to demolish the Faroke Bridge.

The news of the arrest of Congress leaders angered the people, who came out on the streets and attacked the British Government in every possible way. In the absence of their leaders, people became violent and attacked, looted, and destroyed government property.

The Government's action was severely brutal, and many people were killed in police firing. Finally, the British Government was able to suppress the movement only with the help of large-scale killings and arrests. The Quit India Movement differed from the Non-Cooperation Movement and the Civil Disobedience Movement due to widespread violence. At the outset, every leader was taken into custody. The movement lost its appropriate course in the absence of the leaders. The Muslim League avoided the movement. At last, the Government was able to put an end to the movement.



The Indian National Army

The Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj) was formed in 1942 by Indian nationalists and Japan to fight British rule, initially led by Mohan Singh and later revived by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. It consisted mainly of Indian prisoners of war and played a significant role in India's independence movement. Bose is remembered as a great freedom fighter for his efforts against colonialism.

Although the Quit India Movement did not immediately achieve Independence, it weakened British control and demonstrated the determination and unity of Indians. Gandhi's leadership inspired millions, showing that ordinary people could challenge a powerful empire through courage and moral conviction. The movement is remembered as a pivotal moment in India's freedom struggle and a testament to Gandhi's vision of nonviolent resistance and social justice.



Prepare a newspaper report about the incidents of the Quit India Movement.

Wavell Plan and Cabinet Mission

On June 14, 1945, Lord Wavell arrived in India as Viceroy. Wavell unveiled fresh plans to amend India's constitution. We call this the Wavell Plan. Mahatma Gandhi welcomed the inclusion of Indians in administration but criticised the Plan because it was based on communal representation and did not promise complete Independence. He opposed the idea that the Muslim League alone represented Muslims and supported the Congress stand. In Simla, a political party meeting was called. Due to disagreements between Congress and the Muslim League, the Plan failed. However, because of Jinnah's dissent, Wavell cancelled the summit.

In England, Clement Attlee's Labour Government was elected. By 1946, the British Government understood that its only remaining choice was to leave India with dignity. Under the direction of Sir Stafford Cripps, the British Government dispatched a Cabinet Mission to India to negotiate the specifics of the transfer of power. The Cabinet Mission (1946) was sent to India by the British Government to work out a plan for the transfer of power and to preserve Indian unity. It proposed a federal system with a weak central government and grouping of provinces, while rejecting immediate partition.

Gandhi welcomed the Mission as a step towards India's independence and supported its aim of keeping the country united. However, he was disappointed with the complex grouping system and the continued British control during the interim period. Gandhi opposed the idea of partition and urged both the Congress and the Muslim League to cooperate for a united India. Despite his efforts, political differences ultimately led to the plan's failure and eventual partition.

The Mission rejected the League's desire for a fully fledged Pakistan. By establishing autonomous regions with a predominance of Muslims, it simultaneously calmed the League. As a result, the League and the Congress were prepared to approve the idea. However, the League altered its position following the results of the Constituent Assembly election.

The Muslim League initiated Direct Action for Pakistan. On August 16, 1946, the battle cry “We will fight and get Pakistan” was used to call for direct action in Calcutta. In several regions of the nation, there were violent communal riots. Thousands lost their lives. The so-called Calcutta Killings claimed the lives of about 5,000 individuals. Gandhi walked through Bihar and East Bengal to put an end to the communal uprisings.

In the House of Commons, Prime Minister Attlee declared the clear aim. By June 1948 at the latest, Britain desired to hand over power to India. The Mountbatten Plan (1947) was proposed by Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, to ensure a speedy transfer of power. He initiated conversations with Indian leaders to find a solution suitable to all parties. Mountbatten recognised the impossibility of reaching a compromise on the Pakistan issue. It provided for the partition of India into two independent dominions, India and Pakistan, and allowed provinces to choose their future through legislative votes. Mahatma Gandhi was deeply opposed to partition and described it as a tragedy. However, he accepted the Plan reluctantly to prevent widespread violence and bloodshed. Gandhi focused on maintaining peace and communal harmony, even as Independence and partition became inevitable.

The Indian Independence Act of 1947

The British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act (1947) to give legal effect to the Mountbatten Plan. It ended British rule in India and created two independent dominions, India and Pakistan, on August 15, 1947. The Act abolished the office of the Viceroy and granted full legislative authority to the constituent assemblies of both dominions. As a result, India observed its first Independence Day on August 15, 1947, with a mix of conflicting emotions, including pleasure and sorrow.

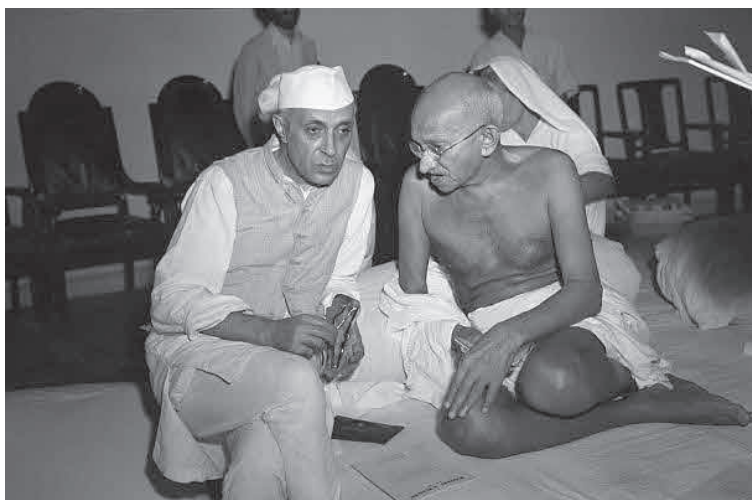


Fig. 4:14
India's first prime minister
Jawaharlal Nehru with
the father of Nation

Gandhi welcomed Independence but was deeply saddened by partition. Gandhiji accepted the Act as a practical necessity, while continuing to uphold his ideal of a united and harmonious India. He did not participate in independence celebrations, instead worked to prevent communal violence and promote peace and unity. Gandhi spent the night in Noakhali, near Calcutta, during the Independence Day festivities. “Instead of making me, a helpless witness to the savagery committed by man, regardless of whether he dares to

identify as a Muslim, Hindu, or anything else,” he added: “I invoke the aid of all-embracing power to take me away from this valley of tears.”

Noakhali Initiatives- A peace mission by Gandhi

The Noakhali Initiative was a peace mission undertaken by Gandhi in October 1946 in the Noakhali district of Bengal (now in Bangladesh). This region had witnessed severe communal riots between Hindus and Muslims, resulting in deaths, displacement, and destruction of property.

Gandhi’s main objectives were:

1. Restoring communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims.
2. Rebuilding trust in the affected communities through personal contact and dialogue.
3. Encouraging voluntary service, such as providing relief, helping displaced families, and promoting unity.



*Fig. 4:15
Gandhi listens to a
survivor in Noakhali,
1946*

On October 10, 1946, the day of Kojagari Lakshmi Puja, violence broke out and continued for approximately a week. Hindu homes and families were routinely targeted by communal mobs, who influenced individuals like Ghulam Sarwar and local Muslim League activists. The sectarian violence that broke out in the British Indian districts of Noakhali and Tipperah (now Tripura) in October and November of 1946 is known as the Noakhali conflict.

Communal mobs targeted the Hindu minority in the area with massacres, forced conversions, rape, and arson during the turmoil, which started soon after the Great Calcutta Killings. These incidents, which occurred in the run-up to India’s partition, turned into one of the bloodiest instances of intercommunal strife in Bengal prior to partition.

A power imbalance existed in Noakhali, where the majority Muslim population often included impoverished labourers, while the minority Hindus tended to be more educated, wealthy, and included landowning zamindars. This disparity contributed to long-standing resentment that instigators exploited. Around 50,000 Hindus were stuck in the affected areas subordinate to the Muslim radicals, where the administration had no say. Impacted by the violence, Mahatma Gandhi undertook a four-month peace mission in the area. He preached nonviolence while walking barefoot from village to village,

trying to bring peace back and help those in need. Gandhi helped to defuse the tension. While touring the region with his assistants, he primarily advised Hindus not to use violence in retaliation.

In a direct correspondence with Gandhi on October 18, Bidhan Chandra Roy evaluated the situation of Hindu women in particular as well as the killing of Hindus in Noakhali. Gandhi expressed concern about the occurrences in Noakhali during the evening prayer. He claimed that India could never truly feel free if half of its populace was immobilised. Instead of making Indian women feel powerless, he would much rather see them educated. He decided to travel to Noakhali.

On November 6, Gandhi set off for Noakhali, arriving in Chaumuhani the next day. He spent two nights at J. Majumdar's house before embarking on his barefoot tour of Noakhali on November 9. He travelled 116 miles and stopped in 47 places over the course of the following seven weeks. In the village of Srirampur, he established his camp in a partially burnt house and remained there till January 1. He met local Muslim leaders, arranged prayer gatherings, and made an effort to gain their trust.

Gandhi stayed in Noakhali for approximately four months, from November 1946 until the end of February 1947. He embarked on a walking tour through the interior villages, living with locals and attempting to rebuild trust between the communities.

During his Mission, Gandhi emphasised shared histories and religious tolerance, even engaging with locals about the Quran to highlight that the faith did not permit such violence. He worked to heal societal ruptures and assist victims, including addressing the abduction of women. He encouraged forgiveness and mutual understanding, urging both Hindus and Muslims to coexist peacefully. Gandhi's presence alone inspired confidence among the people, helping to calm fears and hostilities. In addition to reconciliation, Gandhi focused on practical relief measures. Volunteers under his guidance provided aid to displaced families, helped rebuild homes, and facilitated the return of people to their villages. His efforts emphasised the role of selfless service and grassroots engagement in resolving social conflicts.

The significance of the Noakhali Initiatives is profound. They demonstrated that Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence was not just a political tool, but also a means to address social and communal crises. The initiatives reinforced the idea that leadership requires moral courage, personal sacrifice, and direct involvement in solving human suffering. Moreover, Gandhi's work in Noakhali became a symbol of hope and unity at a time when India was deeply divided along religious lines.

In conclusion, the Noakhali Initiatives reflect Gandhi's deep humanitarian values and his lifelong dedication to promoting peace, tolerance, and social

justice. Through his personal efforts, he not only restored harmony in a troubled region but also left a lasting legacy of nonviolent conflict resolution that continues to inspire generations.



Prepare a seminar report on the Noakhali Peace Mission by Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi as a fighter for social and political justice

Gandhi was a powerful fighter for social justice who dedicated his life to equality and human dignity. He opposed untouchability, caste discrimination, and social inequality through peaceful means. Gandhi believed that true freedom was incomplete without justice for the poor, women, and marginalised communities. Through movements like the Harijan uplift and constructive programmes, he worked to reform Indian society from within. His commitment to nonviolence and moral courage made him a global symbol of social justice.

Gandhi transformed the Indian national movement by introducing a morally grounded, mass-based, and nonviolent form of resistance that reshaped both its strategies and goals. He broadened the struggle from elite political negotiation to a genuinely popular movement by mobilising peasants, workers, women, students, and marginalised groups. Through Satyagraha, Gandhi established nonviolence as a powerful political method, as demonstrated in major campaigns such as the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Salt March, Civil Disobedience, and the Quit India Movement. He linked political freedom with social reform, emphasising Hindu–Muslim unity, the eradication of untouchability, rural uplift, and economic self-reliance through Khadi and village industries. Gandhi’s leadership gave the movement organisational discipline, international visibility, and an ethical foundation that delegitimised colonial rule. His fusion of moral principles and political action not only hastened India’s independence but also shaped the democratic ethos of modern India.

Gandhi was a strong fighter for political justice who stood against colonial oppression and unjust laws. He believed that true political justice meant equal rights, freedom, and dignity for all people. Through satyagraha and nonviolent resistance, he challenged discriminatory policies imposed by the British Government. Gandhi emphasised the moral responsibility of citizens to resist injustice peacefully. The methods used by Gandhi in his fight against British imperialism can be divided into the following four categories:

1. **Non-cooperation and Satyagraha:** Gandhi's most popular strategy was to lead nonviolent protests by refusing to cooperate with the British Government. Satyagraha, which Gandhi defines as courageous agitation founded on non-cooperation, bravery, and sincerity, was a key contribution. Gandhi used satyagraha to persuade the British Government to grant the Indian people's legitimate demands.
2. **Nonviolence:** Mahatma Gandhi knew that any violent protest would only lead to more Indian casualties and that the poor Indians could not compete with the British administration in physical terms. As a result, he adopted nonviolence as the guiding principle of his entire movement.
3. **Truthfulness:** Truthfulness was a symbol of Gandhi's beliefs and practices, much like nonviolence. It is well known that he not only preached but also lived a life of complete honesty, which gave him the inner fortitude to oppose the British Government. In addition to his inner strength, he persuaded the Indian populace of his intentions towards the British.
4. **Involvement of masses:** Involving the average person in the fight for freedom was a crucial step in bringing the country together against the British. In the past, a tiny minority of intellectuals controlled the nationalist movement, and the general public was neither informed about nor participated in its evolution. Under Gandhi's leadership, this trend was reversed.

Gandhi's freedom movement sought to elevate humanity on all fronts—social, political, economic, and moral—in addition to liberation from foreign domination. Examples of these aspects of freedom include his Constructive Programme, support for the Vaikom and Guruvayoor Satyagraha, the establishment of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, and the Kasturba National Memorial Trust.

Gandhi exercised unmatched moral and political influence over Indian politics between 1919 and 1947. Thus, in Indian history, this period is appropriately referred to as the Gandhian Era. Gandhi was a special kind of politician. He was a saint-politician who used moral methods to achieve political goals.

While fighting for Independence, Gandhi united the roles of a prophet, a social reformer, a religious reformer, and a patriot. He offered a message of ahimsa and nonviolence for all humanity. He employed ahimsa as a political tool through satyagraha. He opposed brute force with soul force.

Mahatma Gandhi's Assassination and Enduring Legacy

Gandhi was assassinated on January 30, 1948, against a backdrop of heightened tensions between Hindus and Muslims following the partition of



Fig. 4:16
On January 31, 1948,
Gandhi's body was kept
for public homage at
Birla House before being
taken to Raj Ghat, turning
the house into a centre of
national mourning.

British India. His killer was Nathuram Vinayak Godse, a Hindu extremist who believed that Gandhi was excessively sympathetic to the subcontinent's significant Muslim population.

The assassination occurred around 5:17 p.m. as Gandhi, accompanied by his two granddaughters, was leaving Birla House, his residence, to attend his evening prayers at a nearby summer pagoda, where he planned to address his followers. Upon greeting the frail leader, Nathuram Godse fatally shot Gandhi three times at close range with a small-calibre handgun hidden in his cupped hands, hitting him in the chest, upper thigh, and abdomen. As he fell, Gandhi made the traditional Hindu gesture of forgiveness by placing his hand on his forehead.

Gandhi was immediately carried back inside Birla House and laid on a couch, his head resting in his grandniece-in-law Abha Gandhi's lap. She announced

Fig. 4:17 : A front page story by the New York Times reported on Gandhi's death

to the immediate crowd a few minutes later, “Bapu is finished.” Accounts suggest his last words may have been “Oh God, Oh God” or “He Ram, He Ram.”

News of Gandhi’s death sparked immediate, sometimes violent, reactions across India. Riots erupted in Bombay (now Mumbai) between apprehensive Muslims and hardline Hindus. In New Delhi, vast numbers of people abandoned their homes and businesses to gather at Birla House to mourn. Troops were deployed to maintain order. A few hours after his death, Gandhi’s body was displayed to the crowd, seated in a chair outside the open balcony window of Birla House.

Later that evening, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru delivered a radio address, urging calm and declaring a day of national mourning. His famous words captured the nation’s profound sorrow and sense of loss:

“The light has gone out of our lives, and there is darkness everywhere. I do not know what to tell you and how to say it. Our beloved leader, Bapu as we called him, the Father of the Nation, is no more.... We will not run to him for advice and seek solace from him, and that is a terrible blow.... The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong.... The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later, that light will be seen in this country and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts”.

The phrase expresses the profound grief and sense of a guiding force being extinguished, symbolising the loss of a leader who was seen as a beacon of hope and morality for India and the world. Nehru also predicted that the light of Gandhi’s legacy would continue to illuminate the country for centuries to come. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30 1948, was a moment of deep sorrow, not just for India but for the entire world. His death reminded us of the immense challenges of building a nation on truth, nonviolence, and unity. Yet, even in his absence, Gandhi’s ideals continue to guide generations, inspiring people to fight injustice with courage and compassion. Though the world lost a great leader, his vision of peace, tolerance, and humanity remains eternal. Gandhi may have passed away, but his message of love and justice will never fade.

Conduct a Panel discussion on Gandhi’s assassination.



After his death, Mahatma Gandhi’s influence continued through global movements for civil rights, peace, and social justice, most notably inspiring figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and movements in the United States and South Africa. His principles of nonviolence (ahimsa), civil disobedience

(satyagraha), and the pursuit of social equality through means such as self-sufficiency and peaceful protest remain a powerful framework for activism and social change today.



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. *Prepare a storybook of India's freedom struggle. If you were to highlight five events from the timeline as the most exciting turning points, what would they be and why?*
2. *Imagine that you are a journalist in the 1920s, covering Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement. Write a short newspaper report describing the events, the people involved, and how ordinary Indians reacted. Include quotes or dialogues to make your report lively.*
3. *Imagine you are a participant in Gandhi's Salt March. Prepare a diary describing your journey, the challenges you faced, your interactions with fellow marchers, and how you felt when making salt in defiance of the British law.*
4. *Suppose you are a young student living in India during the Quit India Movement. Write a letter to a friend describing the protests, strikes, and acts of civil disobedience you witnessed, and explain how the movement made you feel about India's struggle for freedom.*
5. *Create a visual timeline of the Indian freedom struggle by collecting photographs of at least 10 major freedom fighters. For each photo, write a short description of its contribution and explain why you think it was important to India's Independence.*

Core Principles of Gandhian Philosophy



Mahatma Gandhi's reputation is primarily centered on his role as a political mobiliser and liberator who shaped the nonviolent weapon of satyagraha to resist and defeat socio-political and cultural invasion and domination. He is also hailed as a social reformer who fought against social segregation and advocated social equality. But adequate attention is not paid to his philosophy, which was, in fact, the foundation of his political and socio-cultural actions and activities. In this chapter we will briefly examine the philosophical foundation of Gandhian thought and programme of action.

Some leading thinkers and philosophers have questioned the claim that Gandhi has a coherent body of thought that could be characterised as "a philosophy". The reason for this argument is that Gandhi did not formulate his philosophy of life in a systematic written form. But Gandhian scholars like J.B. Kripalani, Bhikhu Parekh, Akeel Bilgrami et. al have pointed out that although Gandhi did not systematically present his philosophy, he certainly had a cogent philosophy that lay scattered through out his writings and was exemplified in and through his personal and public life. His ideas inspired and guided movements for freedom, justice and human dignity, not only in India but across the world.

As a prelude to the study of Gandhi's philosophy it would be beneficial for us to consider what is meant and intended by philosophy briefly.

Philosophy, literally meaning the “love of wisdom” (from the Greek *philo* - meaning ‘love’ and *sophia* meaning ‘wisdom’), is an academic discipline that seeks to explore and understand fundamental truths about human existence, the world we live in, and our relationships within its system. It employs critical thinking, logic, and careful, rigorous arguments to investigate foundational questions that often go unexamined in daily life or by other specialized disciplines. In short, philosophy is more than an academic subject; it is training in thinking that equips students with the intellectual tools to navigate the complexities of life and of our knowledge systems and to contribute thoughtfully to society.



Fig. 5:01 :
Gandhi in Noakhali

Gandhi – A Man of Action

When we examine any aspect of Gandhi’s life, we should remember that he was mainly a man of action, known as a *karmayogi*. He was more interested in changing society through non-violent action than in interpreting it philosophically. While growing up he developed, a simple, sincere religious outlook on life and human relationships, shaped by the religious environment of his family. From this background, he came to believe that “morality is the basis of religions and truth is the essence of morality”. So, all the socio-political activities he organised, first in South Africa and later in India, were conceived and executed in light of the moral lessons he had internalised through his religious self-education. This basic sense of moral lessons slowly grew into a strong philosophy through study and actions. By following the path of karma yoga (selfless action), he played an important role in the social and political life of the vast Indian subcontinent.

While understanding the point mentioned earlier that Gandhi did not formulate his philosophy of life into a structured theoretical system, it has to be borne in mind that there are fundamental differences in the Eastern and Western approaches to philosophy. While the Western approach gives precedence to theoretical aspects of the philosophy, the Eastern approach, particularly the Indian approach, gives primacy to the practical aspects of the ideas and ideals. In other words, while in the Western stream a philosophy is validated on the basis of its inner logical consistency, the Indian approach focuses more on how the ideas and ideals are practised/followed by its proponents and followers. Being a product of Indian culture and Hindu faith Gandhi’s emphasis was on living his philosophy rather than arguing it out. He focussed on praxis, i.e., acting on the basis of theory and thus testing its validity and

modifying it in the light of practical experience; therefore, his philosophy is to be understood as a general theory of life or world view.

*“Gandhi was more a man of action than a theorist.”
Explain this statement using two examples from his life.*



Defining features of Gandhi's philosophy

It was the study of the basic scriptures of major world religions—Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Zoroastrianism—that helped Gandhi in developing his philosophy of life. His religious faith was deeply rooted in his Hinduism, but it is best described as a synthesis of the moral truths from various religious traditions. Thus, in the light of the insights he gained from the study of religious scriptures, their commentaries and the works of some of the major thinkers of his time and by engaging in creative dialogues with scholars and activists Gandhi formulated a theory of life which is also called his philosophy or world view. There are five major constituents to his worldview, viz, concepts of God, World, Humans, Ultimate Purpose of Life, and Ways to realise the Ultimate Purpose.



Gandhi's first postulate is that there is a great power behind the universe, guiding and regulating its orderly functioning. He qualified the power as “unseen”, “mysterious” and “indefinable”. But, although unseen, mysterious and indefinable, the “power” could be felt and experienced by an earnest seeker, said Gandhi. That power, according to Gandhi, operated in the Universe as “inexorable laws” and constituted the Ultimate Reality, and he called it “God” and “Truth”. When Gandhi was asked whether God was the lawgiver, he answered that for him the Law and the Lawgiver are not separate, but the same. Thus God/Truth is both Law and Lawgiver. Gandhi meant that God expresses Himself through universal moral laws rather than as a separate creator figure.

God/Truth

Clarifying his understanding of God as Truth Gandhi wrote in Harijan, his journal: “There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it”. Gandhi felt the presence of this unseen power though he could not prove it. He says, “I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light

*“But two years ago I went a step further and said that Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements, viz., that God is Truth and Truth is God. And I came to that conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after Truth which began nearly fifty years ago. I then found that the nearest approach to Truth was through love. But I also found that love has many meanings in the English language at least and that human love in the sense of passion could become a degrading thing also. I found too that love in the sense of Ahimsa has only a limited number of votaries in the world. But I never found a double meaning in connection with truth and even atheists had not demurred to the necessity or power of truth. But in their passion for discovering truth, the atheists have not hesitated to deny the very existence of God—from their own point of view rightly. And it was because of this reasoning that I saw that rather than say that God is Truth, I should say that Truth is God.”
(Young india dec 31, 1931)*

persists. Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth, and Light. He is Love. He is the Supreme Good.”

From God is Truth to Truth is God

As God’s creations are many, God is also called by many names. People also attribute qualities like love, compassion etc., to God and therefore God could be understood as love, mercy, etc. But according to Gandhi the best term to characterise God was Truth. In fact Truth and God were identical for Gandhi. Later, he reflected on the debate on God. Gandhi knew well that there were athiests who refused to accept the very idea of God and even denied the existence of any power that could be called God. He knew that serious atheists were seekers of truth and the reason why atheist opposed and denied the concept of God was that it obstructed their search for Truth. Therefore, when God is equated with truth, there is no reason for atheists to oppose it as no one can deny the importance of truth. Therefore, Gandhi changed his definition of “God is Truth” to “Truth is God.” He explained that it was after long and sincere prayerful search that he arrived at this conclusion. For Gandhi, Truth became the central principle of his life and thought. He valued it so deeply that he titled his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*.



Write one paragraph explaining why Gandhi changed from “God is Truth” to “Truth is God”.

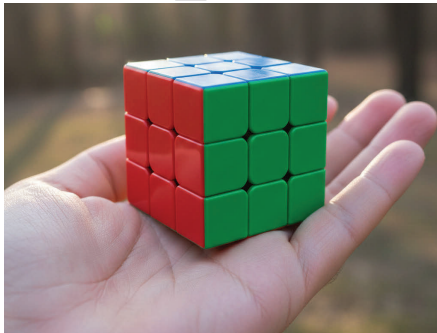


Fig. 5:02 : Rubik's Cube

Absolute Truth and Relative Truth

Look at a Rubik's Cube placed in the centre of the class and notice the colour you see from your side. Your friend standing on another side sees a different colour, and both of you are correct from your own position. Each colour seen represents relative truth, while the whole Rubik's Cube together represents absolute truth. Just as no one can see all sides of the cube at once, no one can know the complete truth fully.

The term truth is problematic, as it is understood differently by different people and it is hard to arrive at a consensus. Gandhi had understood from his study of religions that truth is multifaceted and therefore different approaches to truth are possible and logical. In order to explain the complex concept, Gandhi classified truth into two categories: Absolute Truth and Relative Truth. Absolute Truth, for Gandhi, is the Eternal Principle i.e. God. Human beings with their limited cognitive capacity cannot fully grasp the Absolute Truth; we can have only partial view or perception of it. Truth, as each individual grasp it, is only the relative truth. Gandhi was of the view that human beings can perceive truth only relatively. But he argued that it was the duty of every human being to act on his relative truth. In his Autobiography he even asserted

that acting on one's (relative) truth is, in fact, the sole justification for human existence. He also pointed out that following relative truth is the only way toward the Absolute Truth.

For Gandhi, truthfulness means not only truthfulness in speech, but truthfulness in thought and action as well. Gandhi said, "I worship God as Truth only. But as long as I have not realised this Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth as I have conceived it. I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood". We can grasp only the relative truth. Each one approaches reality from his own perspective. So, differences of opinion are inevitable. We should, therefore, learn to see truths from the point of view of others as well. Here we can see the influence of the Jain principle of 'Anekandavada'. Human life's ultimate purpose is to realise Absolute Truth, or God.

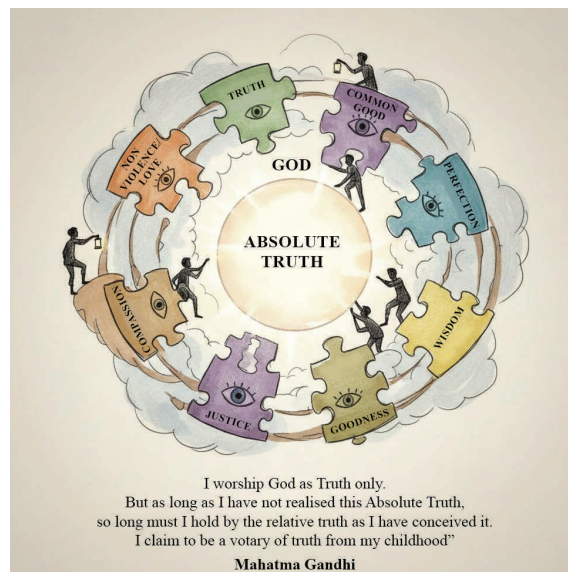


Fig. 5:03
Relative Truth/
Absolute Truth

Gandhi's second postulate is that everything in this universe, living and non-living (sentient and non-sentient) is a manifestation of the Ultimate, in other words, of God or Truth. The third postulate is that as all creations are manifestations of the same Ultimate Reality, all creations are not only just interconnected but essentially one. Gandhi wrote: "I believe in the absolute oneness of God and, therefore, also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source.". This intuitive perception of the oneness of the physical universe has been corroborated by later discoveries in sub-atomic physics, which demonstrate that the universe constitutes a unified cosmic process in which all entities are interconnected patterns.

Two students argue about a political issue. Each believes they are right. Using Gandhi's idea of relative truth, explain how this conflict should be resolved.



World/Nature

Gandhi's understanding of and attitude to Nature was organically derived from his perception of the oneness of creations. For Gandhi - and for anyone who shares this perspective - physical Nature is our

Ecosophy

Ecosophy is a philosophy of ecological harmony, advocating a deep, holistic understanding of the interconnectedness between humans and nature, moving beyond human-centredness to recognise the intrinsic value of all life, fostering ethical responsibility, and promoting sustainable ways of living to achieve ecological balance and address crises like climate change.



God-given habitat and life-support system, not a mere repository of resources to be exploited and consumed whimsically. As Nature constitutes an organic system, it must be approached with reverence. As humans are endowed with the capacity for discretion, it is our duty to cultivate a creative, nature-friendly way of life in alignment with the laws of nature.

Almost all major concepts of Gandhi like Simplicity, Vegetarianism, Swadeshi, and Nature-cure etc., are practical expressions of this perception. Gandhi's spiritual-organic view resonates strongly with ecosophical approaches in contemporary environmental thinking.

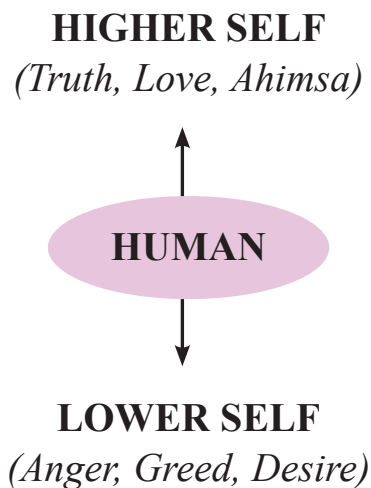


List three Gandhian practices that support environmental protection

Human Self and Human Nature

The basic questions in any philosophy are centred around the meaning and purpose of life: what does human life mean and what is its purpose? Gandhi too reflected deeply on these issues and developed his concept of the human self and human nature, which forms an essential part of his philosophy. Central to Gandhi's conception of the human self is the belief that the individual is essentially a manifestation of the Divine. Drawing upon the Hindu philosophical tradition, Gandhi viewed human beings as complex, multidimensional entities composed of elements of matter, life, consciousness,

intelligence, and a divine spark. This divine spark, which Gandhi identified as the soul, represents the Godhead within the individual. His understanding of the human person is, therefore, inseparable from his broader metaphysical world view: if the entire universe is a manifestation of Ultimate Reality, human beings, as integral parts of that universe, cannot be otherwise. According to Gandhi, all living beings are the manifestations of the Ultimate, and, therefore, are endowed with a divine spark within them. So, all human beings are inherently divine. As a corollary, he pointed out that as all humans have a spark of the divine in them, all are essentially good. Gandhi believed that it is the inner divinity that is the basis of human dignity and consequently all are interconnected and essentially one.



Although Gandhi believed that human nature is essentially good, he was certainly aware that, at the operational level, human nature is mixed; good and evil coexist within the human self. Gandhi held that while all humans possess a divine spark and innate goodness, they also struggle with lower impulses such as anger, greed, and desire.

Gandhi also believed in the primacy of the human individual. He knew that human beings are multidimensional entities and in order to equip them for the

service of humankind and through that to qualify them for self-realisation, it is essential to integrate the various dimensions of personality into a unified whole. Gandhi said, “Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man.”

Recognising that humanity is a blend of good and evil, Gandhi distinguished between the ‘higher self’ and the ‘lower self’ in the human person. Although humans are not perfect, they are perfectible, argued Gandhi. Through conscious effort humans can overcome the negative pulls and pressures of their lower selves and develop positive qualities and move upward towards perfection. Gandhi believed that it is the bounden duty of all humans to try to move higher towards perfection through self-discipline.

Prepare a write up on, ‘Why did Gandhi say all humans are essentially good?’



Self Realisation

As indicated earlier, realising the God who dwells within, is called ‘self-realisation’. He also used such terms as God-realisation, Truth-realisation, moksha, salvation, liberation and freedom as synonymous with self-realisation, indicating the comprehensive nature of the ideal. He said: “man’s ultimate aim is the realisation of God and all his activities social, political, and religious have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God.”

Gandhi also explained self realisation as seeing God face to face. Then the question arises therefore how can one see God face to face? Gandhi did not conceive God as a person. Then how can one see God face to face? Gandhi argues that God manifest himself in His creations - He said, ‘ the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all.’

Gandhi largely depended on the Gita to outline the path to self-realisation. and described the Gita’s path as **anasakti yoga**, or the path of selfless action—that is, action without the desire for its results. It is only by desireless action and by dedicating all activities to God that one can attain moksha. He emphasised seeking liberation through action/service and rejected the idea of withdrawing from active life for moksha. Gandhi believed that self-realisation was a historical and practical goal that should be continuously worked towards and attained by stages in the actual world, rather than in solitude or another world.

As he believed in the absolute oneness of humanity, he held that no individual could hope to attain complete salvation unless and until the rest of humanity

also reached the level of fitness for moksha. According to Gandhi, salvation is therefore collective rather than individualistic. That is why he always emphasises Sarvodaya-the welfare of all. Thus salvation is linked to Sarvodaya also.

As self-realisation is the ultimate goal of life, Gandhi insisted that all life activities must be directed towards this end. **In this way, self-realisation through selfless action forms the core of Gandhi's philosophy.** According to him, service to others was impossible without self purification. One should lead a life of truth and nonviolence in thought, word, and deed, and observe strict inner discipline. Gandhi emphasised the role of moral conduct and self-discipline in attaining self-mastery and self-purification. Gandhi translated these philosophical beliefs into concrete practices in his ashrams, which took the form of eleven vows aimed at moral self-discipline. In order to attain this, he prescribed the observance of eleven ashram vows. Gandhi considered a high level of ethical discipline acquired through the observance of vows essential for moral growth and self-realisation.



Prepare a response note on, "Why did Gandhi reject withdrawal from society for attaining moksha?"



Ashrams:

The term ashram in Sanskrit originally refers to a hermitage where sages reside. However, Gandhi redefined the ashram as a centre of communal living in which people lived as one community. For Gandhi, community life meant working together, sharing joy and suffering, and engaging in collective prayer. He sought to translate spiritual and religious ideals into the daily lives of the residents. The ashrams did not impose any rigid theology or rituals on their members, but required them to follow a few simple principles of personal conduct.

Meaning of Vow:

A vow signifies firm resolve and steadfast determination. It strengthens a person against temptations and challenges. Determination loses its value if it gives way to discomfort, and without it, progress cannot be achieved. Vows should be undertaken only in matters based on universally accepted moral principles, where the risk of wrongdoing is minimal. Taking a vow reflects strength of character rather than weakness. A vow, therefore, is the commitment to carry out what one believes ought to be done, regardless of difficulties.

Ashram Life and Ashram Vows

The practice of ideals and moral values is easier if attempted in a community, rather than experimenting individually. That is also why community life is important in social change. In order to make community living creative and goal-oriented, the members of the community must lead a very disciplined life. Such disciplined living would be less difficult if the members pledge to

practise certain observances and vows. The vows thus taken would strengthen them morally and spiritually and deepen their commitment to Truth and Nonviolence. By observing vows, members would learn to control worldly temptations and be more focussed on the goals they set for themselves. Moreover, only a disciplined person can truly help others. Therefore, after consulting the inmates and friends Gandhi recommended eleven ashram vows viz., Truth, Nonviolence, Non-stealing, Non-possession, Brahmacharya or chastity, Bread-labour, Control of the palate, Fearlessness, Equal respect for all religions, Swadeshi, and Removal of untouchability.

1. Truth (*Satya*)

According to Gandhi, Truth was the supreme moral principle and the foundation of his entire philosophy of life. For him that Truth is God and that the search for Truth is the ultimate goal of human existence. Therefore, Truth was placed as the foremost vow in Gandhian ashrams.

Truth required absolute honesty in thought, word, and deed. Gandhi insisted that inmates of the ashram must speak the truth, act truthfully, and maintain purity of intention. Truth, for Gandhi, was not merely factual accuracy but moral integrity and sincerity in all actions.

Gandhi also emphasised that Truth must be practised fearlessly and with self-discipline. He believed that adherence to Truth gives inner strength and fearlessness to resist injustice. Without commitment to Truth, personal and social progress was impossible.

2. Nonviolence (*Ahimsa*)

Ahimsa is coined by adding the Sanskrit prefix ‘a’, meaning “not,” to ‘*himsa*’, meaning injury or killing. Hence, ahimsa signifies the absence of the desire to harm or destroy life. However, nonviolence has a broader and more positive meaning in Gandhian thought. Gandhi regarded not only physical harm but also harsh speech, ill-will, anger, cruelty, exploitation, suppression of the weak, and injury to human dignity as forms of violence. For him, exploitation was the core of violence. The positive meaning of ahimsa is love, compassion, and selfless service to all beings, including those who cause harm. Gandhi believed that human beings are basically non-violent and called it soul force. It meant that early human being is capable of nonviolence in thought speech and action. Therefore, everyone must try to be non-violent.

Gandhi viewed ahimsa as both an individual moral principle and a social virtue. He clearly distinguished between nonviolence of the strong and non-violence of the weak. Practising nonviolence out of fear or inability to resist injustice, according to Gandhi, is not true nonviolence but a

form of cowardice. Likewise, fleeing from danger while abandoning loved ones cannot be considered non-violent. Such cowardly avoidance, he argued, is worse than violence itself. While a violent person may eventually realise the futility of violence and reform, a coward lacks this moral opportunity. Therefore, Gandhi asserted that he would prefer violence to cowardice, emphasising that genuine nonviolence requires greater braveness and moral strength than violence.

3. **Brahmacharya (*Chastity*)**

According to Gandhi self-discipline and self-purification were essential for self-realisation or God-realisation. And for attaining self-purification and self-lessness Gandhi prescribed the practice of Brahmacharya or Chastity as a vow. He had successfully observed the vow from 1906, the time he launched Satyagraha in South Africa and realised how helpful it was for a seeker after Truth.

Brahmacharya literally means moving in the path of Brahman - God. But as a vow it means the control of all the organs of sense and the mind. Thus, it means complete self-control. But the term brahmacharya is generally understood as the control of the sexual urge and total abstinence from sexual relationships, although it meant control of all sensual passions and emotions and control of the mind. Of course, Gandhi stressed the control of sexual urge as it was one of the most difficult of basic human sensual urges to control and one of the most distracting and disastrous, if uncontrolled. Gandhi also pointed out that controlling the sense of taste and regulating the food accordingly will help aspirants to observe brahmacharya successfully. He believed that it is and will be possible for a sincere seeker after Truth to observe brahmacharya successfully.

4. **Non-stealing (*Asteya*)**

A person following truth and nonviolence should not steal. But according to Gandhi, non-stealing means not only taking other persons belongings without permission but also accepting things which one does not really need. If one takes anything that one does not need and keeps it, it amounts to stealing. Therefore, Gandhi wants everyone to have “enough” and nothing more. A person who wishes to practise Asteya should lead a simple life. Then there would be no poverty and starvation. Gandhi wants everyone to limit their wants and practise voluntary poverty.

5. **Non-possession (*Aparigraha*)**

The vow of non-possession emphasises the importance of simple living. It is an extension of non-stealing. This vow discourages attachment to

**ENOUGH
IS ENOUGH**

private property and encourages voluntary limitation of possessions, rather than denying private property outright. According to Gandhi, what is needed is not merely reducing wants but refining them. He believed that this idea is closely related to the principle of non-stealing. Just as a person should not take what is not necessary, one should also not keep possessions that are not truly needed. Keeping extra food, clothes, or furniture is a violation of this principle. For example, if a person can manage without a chair, they should not keep one. By following this rule, one gradually learns to lead a simpler and more disciplined life.

6. **Bread labour (*Sharirashram*)**

Gandhi believed that every person has a moral duty to perform manual labour to earn their daily meals. According to Gandhi, it is a law of nature that humans must do manual labour to produce what they eat. This idea is known as “Bread Labour. The question came up as to whether people with special talents like artists, intellectuals, or scientists should also do manual labour. Gandhi was very clear they should not be exempted from physical work.

**NO WORK
NO RIGHT
TO EAT**

Gandhi believed that anyone who enjoys life’s basic needs without doing physical work is a thief. For Gandhi and thousands with him, hand-spinning with the charkha provided the ideal means of bread labour.

7. **Control of the palate (*Asvada*)**

One of the most effective ways to achieve self-control, or Brahmacharya, is through the “conquest of taste.” Gandhi believed that if we can master our sense of taste, it becomes much easier to control our other senses and animal passions. This practice, known as Asvada, involves setting strict limits on what and how much we eat. Instead of eating for pleasure or indulgence, we should view food strictly as fuel meant to sustain the body. The ultimate goal is to keep the body healthy so that it can be used for the service of others. While Gandhi admitted that controlling one’s palate is one of the most difficult vows to keep, he insisted it is the essential foundation for a disciplined and spiritual life.

8. **Fearlessness (*Abhaya*)**

Fearlessness means freedom from all fears, external and internal. Gandhi believed that fear can be overcome by developing non-attachment to the body. His guiding principle was to “fear God most and you don’t have to fear anyone else.” According to Gandhi, a person

cannot follow Truth or Nonviolence as long as fear controls the mind. Since fear was widespread in society during Gandhi's time, he gave special importance to cultivating fearlessness. He said that a seeker of truth should give up fear of caste, government, thieves, poverty, and even death. The fear of God, according to Gandhi, is actually the fear of doing wrong. Removing fear from the mind is necessary to realise God. Fear of God helps a person to control negative thoughts and rise above ordinary fears.

9. Equal respect for all religions (*Sarva Dharma Samabhav*)

Gandhi believed that all religions are equal because they teach the same basic moral values such as truth, love, compassion, and self-discipline, even though their practices may differ. Since their spiritual goal is the same, no religion should be considered superior or inferior to another. He also recognised that people naturally feel a special attachment to the religion into which they are born, just as they feel a bond with their own mother, but this attachment does not justify disrespect for other faiths. As an ashram vow, *Sarva Dharma Samabhav* called upon individuals to respect all religions equally, and live peacefully with followers of different faiths. Gandhi believed that practising this vow would encourage mutual understanding, tolerance, and communal harmony, and help build a peaceful and inclusive society based on respect and unity.

10. Swadeshi - Duty towards the neighbour

Gandhi defined Swadeshi as that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of more remote. Swadeshi is an attitude and conviction of a person who prefers domestic goods and services instead of foreign goods and services.

According to the doctrine of Swadeshi, people should use goods produced in their own neighbourhood to meet their daily needs, as far as possible. It is our responsibility to help our neighbours learn how to produce goods if they do not already have the necessary skills. This approach also provides useful work to those who need employment. If Swadeshi is practised in this way, every Indian village can become largely self-reliant and independent. Villages would then exchange only those essential goods that cannot be produced locally with other villages.

11. Removal of untouchability (*Asparshyata*)

According to Gandhi, treating anyone as untouchable is morally wrong, as all human beings are equal. Through this vow, he emphasised the



need to remove untouchability from Indian society. He believed that untouchability had no religious basis and went against true religious values. In Gandhian ashrams, so-called untouchables were given the same status as all other people. For Gandhi, removing untouchability meant showing love and service to all humanity. He included this vow as an important part of his Constructive Programme and expected ashram inmates to mix freely and equally with everyone, without any discrimination.

Besides these vows, Gandhi also underscored the role of prayer, silence and fasting in attaining self-control and self-purification. He regarded fasting and prayer as the two sides of the same coin. Gandhi said, “I believe there is no prayer without fasting and there is no fast without prayer.”

Prayer

Gandhi described himself as a man of prayer, and prayer guided all his actions. For Gandhi, the purpose of prayer was not to please God but to purify one’s own mind and heart. True prayer protects a person from wrong thoughts, words, and actions, and brings inner peace and harmony with the world. Gandhi felt that prayer is the soul’s effort to unite with the divine and is as essential to the soul as food is to the body. He believed that prayer is the heart and soul of religion.

He spoke of different forms of prayer and believed that prayer does not always need spoken words. He valued sincere feeling over empty words and stressed the need for continuous prayer based on living faith in God. Prayer was an important part of daily life in Gandhi’s ashrams, where fixed times were set aside for it and hymns from all religions were sung equally. Gandhi had deep faith in the power of prayer and believed that sincere prayer could bring great change by purifying the soul and inspiring noble actions.

Fasting

We are all familiar with the practice of fasting. A true fast, according to Gandhi, purifies the body, mind, and soul. It helps control physical desires and allows the soul to grow stronger. Fasting deepens the spirit of prayer and brings a

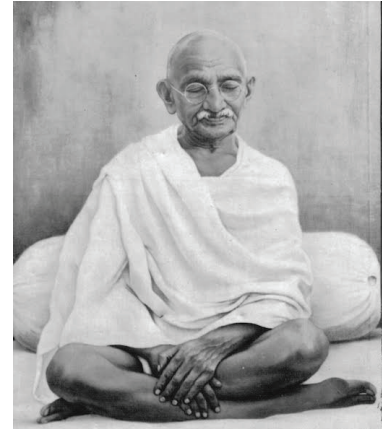


Fig. 5:04: Gandhi on meditation

Silence and Self Discipline

Mahatma Gandhi regarded silence as a powerful means of self-discipline, inner purification, and deeper communion with truth. In his life, silence was not mere absence of speech but a conscious spiritual practice that helped him reflect on his thoughts, words, and actions. Gandhi believed that constant talk weakens self-control, while silence strengthens the mind and sharpens moral awareness. To cultivate this habit, he observed a vow of silence for one day every week, usually on Mondays. During silence, Gandhi communicated only through brief notes. Most of the time he devoted for prayer, reading, and self-examination. For Gandhi, silence created a space for deep self-reflection and closer communion with the inner voice, enabling him to live more truthfully and act with greater clarity and compassion in the world.

person closer to God, as it is essentially a spiritual act. Therefore, fasting is not merely a physical practice but an act of inner devotion and self-discipline.

Gandhi also warned that fasting should never be mechanical or done without understanding. It must arise from deep inner conviction and sincerity. A pure fast should be free from selfish motives, anger, impatience, or lack of faith. It requires mental calmness and a clear moral purpose. Gandhi believed that fasting is a powerful practice but can be harmful if misused. Hence, he insisted that truth and nonviolence should form the foundation of fasting and strongly opposed fasting done for selfish ends.

Gandhi practised fasting in different forms as a spiritual, moral, and social discipline. He undertook personal fasts for self-purification and self-control, believing that fasting helped strengthen the spirit and master the body. Gandhi observed penitential fasts to express repentance and moral responsibility. Gandhi also used fasting as a moral appeal to awaken the conscience of individuals and communities during times of social conflict. For him, fasting was not a form of punishment but an act of inner discipline and non-violent persuasion rooted in truth and compassion.

Ethical Religion

According to Mahatma Gandhi, true spirituality is inseparable from ethical behaviour because spirituality becomes meaningful only when it is expressed through moral action. This approach, known as “spirituality in action,” suggests that a truly spiritual person does not withdraw from society but remains active in it to work for the welfare of others. Gandhi emphasised the ethical dimension of religion because while rituals vary, the core moral principles of different faiths are largely universal, and they unite people of all backgrounds. Furthermore, he believed that in the fields of social and political activism, practical morality is more significant than private beliefs. Gandhi viewed the relationship between the two as vital, famously stating that religion is to morality what water is to a seed. Without a spiritual foundation, morality becomes unstable. Ultimately, he considered religion and morality to be interchangeable terms, believing that one cannot exist without the other and that the highest form of religion is the tireless service of humanity.

Sarva Dharma Samabhav (Equal respect for All Religions)

In most civilisations, the concept of religion is centred on the realisation of a Supreme, Almighty Power. However, in the Indian context, instead of religion the term ‘dharma’ is used and it conveys a much deeper meaning than the English word ‘religion’ often suggests. While religion often refers to specific sets of rituals and doctrines, dharma represents a deeper metaphysical and broader humanitarian framework. It encompasses all living creatures together in a spiritual bond. In this sense, dharma is not a divisive force but a unifying one and emphasises ethical conduct and mutual care and responsibility.

Gandhi considered himself to be a religious person. Born into a family with a deep tradition of religious devotion, it may be said that he inherited his religiosity. Gandhi's father used to invite religious scholars from different faiths to discuss the basic principles of their religions. Thus, Gandhi grew up in an atmosphere of inter-religious dialogue, which not only kindled his intellectual and spiritual curiosity but inculcated in him a deep sense of toleration and respect for all religions. For him, religion was not a matter of outward customs or sectarian labels, but rather a universal spiritual force that underlies all faiths and brings us face to face with our Creator. He defined this view as a "belief in the ordered moral governance of the universe." For Gandhi, this view transcends individual religions like Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity without superseding them. To him, no religion was higher than truth and righteousness. Through a reverential study of world religions, he concluded that all religions were fundamentally equal because they all arose as answers to the same human quest for meaning and purpose of life. He believed that while all religions seek the same ultimate Truth, they are also subject to human imperfection because they are conceived, interpreted and passed on by people; therefore, all religions contain some degree of human error. Thus, every religion/faith is simultaneously true yet imperfect. Therefore, Gandhi argued that the question of superiority of one religion over the other never arises. Consequently, he saw no justification for conversion, arguing that there is no need to change one's religion because salvation can be achieved through the faith into which a person is born.

If all religions centre on the belief in one God, why do we have so many different faiths instead of just one? Mahatma Gandhi addressed this paradox by distinguishing between theory and practice. Theoretically, because there is only one God, there should be one religion. In reality, however, no two people perceive God in exactly the same way. Our spiritual beliefs are shaped by our unique temperaments, cultures, and environments.

Gandhi didn't see this variety as a problem. He believed that different religions emerged because they were tailored to the specific needs of the people to whom they were revealed. Rather than dreaming of a world with only one religion, Gandhi envisioned a future where people of all backgrounds treat other religions with the same reverence they hold for their own. He championed the idea of **"unity in diversity"**, reminding us that as children of the same Creator, we are all fundamentally equal.

Because Gandhi believed all religions draw inspiration from the same divine source, he viewed them as fundamentally equal. He insisted that respecting another person's faith is just as important as respecting our own. But respect, Gandhi argued, requires more than just tolerance; it requires effort.

He taught that if we want others to value our beliefs, we have a “sacred duty” to engage in a friendly, open-minded study of the world’s scriptures. Gandhi believed that every “cultured person” should make an effort to understand the holy books of other faiths. By doing so, we move past prejudice and create a global atmosphere of mutual sympathy, understanding, and deep-seated respect.

For Gandhi, **Sarva Dharma Samabhav** - the principle of equal respect for all religions -was much more than a philosophical theory. It was a solemn vow, a daily observance, and a core act of faith. By practicing this principle sincerely throughout his life, Gandhi effectively dismantled the artificial barriers between different faiths. He demonstrated that a creative religious life is one that translates this spiritual equality into everyday action.

This positive approach is essential for maintaining communal harmony and remains the definitive answer to inter-religious conflicts worldwide. Gandhi believed that peace does not come from everyone accepting and following the same religion, but from appreciating the religions others follow. As he famously wrote: “The need of the moment is not one religion but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of different religions. We want to reach not the dead level but unity in diversity.”

Self-Realisation and Sarvodaya

The process of attaining self-realisation is not an individual or isolated effort but a collective one rooted in service to others. True self-realisation is achieved through desireless action, where one serves without expecting personal gain. Such service involves supporting others in ways that make them capable of attaining self-realisation themselves. It requires empathy towards all forms of life and a deep sense of responsibility towards the rest of creation. This support should aim at inner growth and moral development, not in the spirit of charity or superiority, but by empowering others to realise their own potential and spiritual fulfillment.

Human beings, both as individuals and socially responsible persons, must grow and develop continually in the direction of self-realisation and must eventually become fit for moksha. But Gandhi found so many hindrances to this central quest of life in the existing socio-economic and politico-cultural structures. Several unfair systems prevented people from achieving their full potential and living a meaningful life. Society was divided by harmful customs and the practice of keeping people separate, which allowed many social evils to continue. At the same time, the economy relied on the reckless use of people and resources, leading to widespread poverty. Centralisation of



*Fig. 5:05
Gandhi collecting money
for Harijan Fund on a
railway station,
Bhav nagar*

political power, which used it to control the majority and deny them their basic right to freedom. Together, these social, economic, and political problems acted as barriers, making it difficult for individuals to pursue higher spiritual and life goals.

In an extremely violent society, there are many obstacles to the attainment of self-realisation. Therefore, it is necessary to create a favourable and peaceful social environment for spiritual growth. Gandhi proposed the Constructive Programme and Satyagraha as effective methods to restructure the society into a *Sarvodaya* society, where the welfare of all is ensured. Satyagraha seeks to remove social evils and resolve conflicts through truth and non-violence, while the constructive programme focuses on building a better and more sustainable society by improving living conditions and promoting social harmony. Together, these methods aim to create conditions that support both individual self-realisation and collective well-being.

The unique contribution of Gandhi in this respect lies in the way he developed truth and nonviolence into an infallible technique of social change. Through various distinct experiments in South Africa and India he demonstrated the power of satyagraha and proved that it could be universally used as an effective weapon for the redressal of grievances and for the eradication of injustices and social evils.

Gandhi lived his life strictly in accordance with a unified system of moral principles and values and thus integrated them in his own life. The teachings and programmes of Gandhi also reflect the same integration and co-ordination. Although he did not attempt a systematisation of his thoughts and ideas in the form of a written thesis, he achieved the systematisation and integration in his life. That was why he said with confidence : “ **My life is My message.**”



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. *Prepare a Truth Journal for one week (writes one situation every day, when you told the truth even when it was difficult, or avoided telling the truth, or were unsure what the truth was.)*
At the end of the week, students write a short reflection on how acting on their relative truth affected them.
2. *Take up a 3-day Simple Living Challenge. Students should avoid buying unnecessary things, Limit screen time, Eat only needy food, Use only things what they really need*
Prepare a diary along with this challenge by noting things which you gave up, whether it was difficult, find out the actual needs and wants.
3. *Prepare a Faith and Values display or presentation of various religions and find out the moral values in common*
4. *Design a Sarvodaya Action Plan by identifying a small issue in the school or community, (such as Littering, Loneliness among elderly, Discrimination, Waste of food) and prepare a simple action plan (including statement of the problem, non-violent helping ways and analyse how the service helps both others and ourselves)*
5. *Design a slogan or a poster on an idea promoting Sarvadharmā Samābhav in your school or community.*
6. *Prepare a group discussion on the relevance of Gandhi's ashram vows in the present world.*

Political Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi

“The State represents violence in a concentrated and organised form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.”

-Mahatma Gandhi

It is worthwhile to examine Gandhi's political ideas in the light of the above quote. Before we do that, let us examine how politics and associated concepts are commonly understood.

Politics is one of the earliest and most enduring dimensions of social life. From the moment human beings began living in groups, questions arose about how to organise collective life, how to make decisions that affect everyone, and how to regulate power so that the community can flourish. Human societies, whether small tribes or vast civilisations, have always needed mechanisms by which conflict can be managed and cooperation secured. Before we turn to the political ideas of Gandhi one of the most transformative thinkers of the twentieth century it is essential to understand the broader traditions of political inquiry, the concept of the state, and the major political ideals that have historically shaped governance. Only by knowing the foundations of mainstream political thought can we appreciate how Gandhi reinterpreted, challenged, and enriched them.





Fig. 6:01 : Aristotle

Aristotle (384-322 BCE)

Aristotle was a Greek philosopher and polymath often called the “Father of Politics.” He studied under Plato tutored Alexander the Great and founded the Lyceum in Athens.

The Meaning of Politics

The term *politics* originates from the Greek word *polis*, referring to the self-governing city-states of ancient Greece. For Aristotle, who is often regarded as the father of political science, human beings are “by nature political animals” because they achieve their fullest potential within a community. The polis was the arena where citizens deliberated, formulated laws, and determined the common good through reasoned discussion. Thus, politics was not merely an exercise of authority; it was a collective moral endeavour.

Modern political theory has developed this classical insight in various ways. Harold Lasswell famously defined politics as “who gets what, when, and how,” highlighting the distribution of resources and power within society. His definition highlights how politics structures access to wealth, opportunities, and decision-making processes. David Easton, another influential thinker, described politics as “the authoritative allocation of values.” According to Easton, societies constantly decide what they value—security, welfare, freedom, equality—and politics is the institutional mechanism and the process through which these values are prioritised and implemented.

These definitions broaden our understanding of politics beyond elections or government machinery. Politics is inherent in all social relations where decisions with collective consequences are made. When a school decides its rules, when a village assembly discusses water sharing, when a community resolves a dispute, or when citizens debate public issues, they are participating in politics. At its core, politics involves cooperation, conflict, negotiation, persuasion, and compromise. It is the art of living together peacefully in the midst of differences—an idea particularly important for understanding Gandhi, who viewed politics as inseparable from ethics and social harmony.

The Nature of the State

Four element of the state

- Population
- Government
- Territory
- Sovereignty

To regulate collective life, every society develops an organised structure of authority known as the *state*. A state typically has four elements. The state is not simply a government in power; it is a permanent institution encompassing the population, the territory they inhabit, the government machinery that administers laws, and the sovereignty that gives the state ultimate authority within its borders. While governments change, the state endures.

Different thinkers have explained the origin and nature of the state in strikingly different ways:

a. Social Contract Theorists

Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau the three key figures of social contract theory, argued that the state emerged when individuals voluntarily agreed to establish a government.

- For Hobbes, the natural condition of human beings was chaotic and violent. People created the state to ensure peace and security, even if that meant surrendering significant freedom.
- Locke believed individuals formed the state to secure natural rights such as right to life, liberty, and property. Government remained legitimate only so long as it protected these rights.
- Rousseau viewed the state as an expression of the “general will,” seeking to promote collective freedom and equality.

b. Idealist Theory

The German philosopher Hegel regarded the state as the highest embodiment of ethical life. Individuals realise moral freedom through participation in the state. The state, in this view, is not merely a coercive authority but the rational expression of human ethical development.

c. Marxist Theory

Marxists interpret the state as an instrument of class domination. For them, the state arose when societies became divided into classes, and it functions to maintain the power of the ruling economic class. Under capitalism, therefore, the state protects the interests of capitalists. A classless society would make the state unnecessary.

d. Liberal and Democratic Views

Modern liberal democracies emphasise the need for constitutional limits on state power, the rule of law, and accountability to the people. The state is expected to safeguard individual rights while promoting public welfare.

Across these theories, one theme recurs: the state is indispensable for maintaining order and enabling human flourishing. Yet, history warns us that the state can also become authoritarian when power is unchecked. Political philosophy constantly grapples with balancing the authority of the state with the freedom of the individual. This tension, too, forms a crucial backdrop to Gandhian thought, which sought to minimise coercion and maximise moral self-governance.

Major Political Ideals

Over centuries, political thinkers have proposed certain guiding ideals that define good governance and a just society. These ideals continue to shape modern democracies and inform civic education.



Jail as a “Temple of Liberty”

Unlike conventional political leaders, Gandhi regarded imprisonment as a badge of honour. He famously called jail a “Temple of Liberty,” believing that voluntary suffering for an unjust law strengthened moral authority rather than weakening a movement

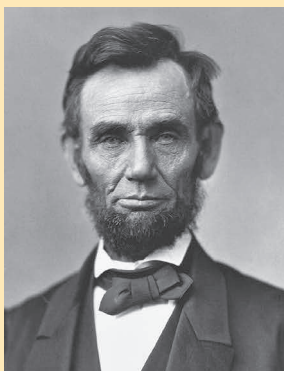


Fig. 6:02 : Abraham Lincoln

Democracy is
“Government of the
people, by the people,
for the people”

– Abraham Lincoln

a. Liberty

Liberty refers to the condition where individuals are free to act, think, and express themselves without arbitrary restrictions. It includes personal, political, and economic freedom. However, liberty is always balanced by responsibility to others.

b. Equality

Equality means that all individuals possess equal moral worth and deserve fair opportunities. It may refer to legal equality, social equality, or equality of opportunity. Political systems strive to eliminate discrimination and ensure inclusive development.

c. Justice

Justice involves giving each person what is due—ensuring fairness in rights, responsibilities, laws, and social arrangements. Justice integrates both liberty and equality.

d. Democracy

Democracy is governance by the people, through participation, deliberation, and consent. It depends on institutions such as elections, but also on civic virtues like tolerance, respect, and cooperation.

e. Rights and Duties

Rights—such as the rights to life, liberty, education, and expression—are essential for personal development. But rights are inseparable from duties toward the community. Citizenship involves both demanding rights and fulfilling responsibilities.

f. Nationalism and Internationalism

Nationalism fosters a sense of belonging and commitment to one’s nation. Internationalism recognises that humanity shares common problems, such as peace, the environment, and justice, requiring global cooperation.

These ideals frame the political aspirations of societies. Yet they are interpreted differently within different traditions. Modern politics often emphasises material progress, competition, and state power. Gandhi challenged many of these assumptions by promoting moral politics, decentralised governance, nonviolence, and the dignity of every individual. His ideas mark a radical shift from conventional political thinking, a shift we can appreciate only after understanding mainstream political concepts.

Students work in small groups to create a concept map linking key political ideas:

- Liberty
- Equality
- Democracy
- Rights and duties



The Gandhian Concept of the Ideal State

Gandhi's vision of an ideal state was radically different from the modern, centralised, bureaucratic nation-state. He believed that large, powerful states tend to become coercive and alienating, concentrating authority in a few hands and reducing citizens to passive subjects. Gandhi, therefore, rejected the idea of the state as the ultimate locus of power. For him, the highest form of political order was one in which the need for a coercive state progressively diminishes as individuals cultivate self-discipline, moral responsibility, and cooperation.

Gandhi's ideal state is rooted in the principles of Swaraj, Ahimsa, and Sarvodaya. Swaraj means both self-government and self-control; therefore, political freedom must emerge from the moral autonomy of individuals. Ahimsa governs the relationships within the community, ensuring that power is exercised through persuasion and love rather than force or domination. Sarvodaya, the welfare of all, obliges society to prioritise the needs of the weakest and most vulnerable.

This ideal society takes institutional form in decentralised village republics, self-sufficient, self-governing communities with their own panchayats, local industries, and moral responsibility for social welfare. Higher levels of government exist only to coordinate, not dominate. Gandhi envisioned a polity in which the state becomes "a trustee," not a controller, and ultimately moves toward "enlightened anarchy," a condition where people govern themselves by conscience rather than law.

Thus, Gandhi's ideal state is not a state in the conventional sense but a moral community founded on truth, nonviolence, and voluntary cooperation. In this society, politics is inseparable from ethics and service. He often referred to it as Rama Rajya.

Ramarajya (Ideal State)

"By Ramarajya, I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by Ramarajya Divine Raj, the kingdom of God. For me Rama and Rahim are one and the same deity. I acknowledge no other God but the one God of Truth and Righteousness"

-Mahatma Gandhi

The concept of Ramarajya occupies an essential place in Gandhi's political and moral philosophy. Gandhi used the term Ramarajya to describe an ideal form of governance based on justice, morality, and equality. It is important to note that Gandhi did not mean a religious state or the rule of any particular religion. For him, Ramarajya meant "the Kingdom of God on earth", that is, a society based on truth, nonviolence, and ethical values.

Gandhi explained that Ramarajya was not connected to any king or mythological rule. Instead, it stood for good governance in which the welfare of all people was ensured. He believed that political freedom would be meaningful only when it led to social, economic, and moral upliftment of the masses, especially the poorest and weakest sections of society.

Features of Ramarajya

- **Moral and Ethical Governance**

Ramarajya is based on truth (*Satya*) and nonviolence (*Ahimsa*). Rulers are expected to be morally upright and selfless.

- **Equality and Social Justice**

All citizens are equal, irrespective of caste, religion, gender, or economic status. Untouchability and exploitation have no place in Ramarajya.

- **Welfare of the Poor (Sarvodaya)**

Gandhi emphasised *Sarvodaya*, meaning the welfare of all. Special care is taken of the weakest and most disadvantaged sections of society.

- **Decentralisation of Power**

Power should not be concentrated in a few hands. Village self-rule (*Gram Swaraj*) forms the foundation of administration.

- **Religious Tolerance**

Ramarajya respects all religions equally and promotes harmony among different faiths.

- **Rule of Law and Justice**

The law applies equally to everyone. Justice is fair, simple, and accessible to all.



Conduct a seminar based on Gandhiji's ideal state of Ramarajya.

Gandhi's criticism of power politics

Gandhi provided a thorough analysis of power politics, which he perceived as a system motivated by dominance, force, and a tendency to acquire power through whatever means possible. This viewpoint, which distinguished between politics and morals, was rejected by him. Gandhi believed that truth,

nonviolence, and regard for human dignity were the foundations of authentic politics. He thought that violence could never bring about longlasting peace since it merely fostered hatred and fear, even when it was used for a worthy cause. He demonstrated via satyagraha that self-suffering and moral fortitude were more potent than weaponry. Gandhi maintained that the quest for power is not necessary for true freedom; instead, cooperation, fairness, and ethical leadership are. His theories continue to be a compassionate substitute for violent political customs. He believed that power can also be generated through selfless service to the people.

Conduct a panel discussion on the ethical dilemmas in power politics. (e.g. intervening in another country's affairs) Should morality guide state actions?



Spiritualisation of politics.

Gandhi's understanding of the spiritualisation of politics rested on the conviction that political life could not be separated from moral and spiritual values. For Gandhi, politics divorced from ethics became a pursuit of power, domination, and self-interest, whereas true politics had to be a form of moral self-discipline and service. He rejected the modern tendency to treat politics as a technical or purely strategic activity and insisted that it must be grounded in truth (*satya*), nonviolence (*ahimsa*), and a deep sense of responsibility towards others. As he famously wrote, "Politics bereft of religion are a death-trap because they kill the soul" (*Young India*, 1924). By "religion," Gandhi did not mean sectarian faith, but a universal moral law governing human conduct.

Central to Gandhi's spiritualisation of politics was the idea that means are as important as ends. He said the means may be likened to a seed and the end to a tree. Only good seeds produce healthy trees. He argued that unjust or violent means could never yield a just outcomes, because they corrupted both the individual and society. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi insisted that self-rule was not merely political independence from British rule but *self-mastery*: Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority. This inward dimension of freedom made politics an extension of ethical self-governance rather than a struggle for control over the state.

Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha exemplified this spiritualised politics. Satyagraha was not passive resistance but an active moral force rooted in truth and self-suffering. By willingly accepting suffering instead of inflicting it, the satyagrahi sought to appeal to the conscience of the oppressor and transform relationships rather than defeat an enemy. Gandhi described this as soul-force, asserting that "nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind." Political action, in this sense, became a form of ethical communication aimed at moral conversion, not coercion.

Equally important was Gandhi's belief that leaders must embody the values they preached. The spiritualisation of politics demanded personal integrity, simplicity, and self-restraint. Gandhi believed that a politician who could not control personal desires had no moral right to exercise authority over others. Hence his emphasis on vows, fasting, voluntary poverty, and service as political practices. He openly acknowledged this unity of life and politics when he declared, "My life is my message."

Finally, Gandhi's spiritualisation of politics challenged the modern state's reliance on violence and centralised power. He feared that replacing colonial rulers with a powerful national state without moral transformation would merely substitute one form of domination for another. His vision pointed instead toward decentralised, participatory, and ethical forms of governance rooted in conscience rather than force. In this way, Gandhi transformed politics from a struggle for power into a discipline of moral responsibility, insisting that lasting peace and justice could emerge only when spiritual values guided political action.

Gandhi believed that serving his nation and humanity was the path to salvation. Gandhi desired to live in harmony with both friends and enemies, according to the Bhagavat Gita. He believed that politics could not exist without faith. Machiavelli's "Ends justify the means" theory was regarded as the standard in politics. Gandhi disagreed with this logic. According to him, politics should be governed by the same moral principles that govern human relationships. An unethical individual has no place in politics, according to Gandhi.

Gandhian critique of Parliamentary democracy.

Gandhi did not reject democracy as such; rather, he offered a profound moral and structural critique of parliamentary democracy as practised in modern states, especially in Britain. His critique was shaped by his experiences in England and articulated most clearly in *Hind Swaraj*. Gandhi believed that while parliamentary democracy claimed to represent the will of the people, in practice it often failed to uphold truth, moral responsibility, and genuine self-rule.



Fig. 6:03 : British Parliament

Gandhi acknowledged the positive features of parliamentary systems, such as the protection of civil liberties, the rule of law, and freedom of expression. However, he argued that these procedural strengths did not guarantee ethical governance. His most famous criticism that the British Parliament (Mother of Parliaments) had become a "barren woman and a harlot" was not an attack on elections or representation itself, but a condemnation of a system

that, in his view, produced laws without moral purpose and allowed itself to be swayed by party interests, pressure groups, and fluctuating public opinion rather than conscience and truth.

A central concern for Gandhi was the dominance of party politics. He believed that Members of Parliament were often compelled to obey party whips, sacrificing moral judgment for party loyalty. This reduced representatives to numbers in a power game rather than moral agents accountable to their own conscience. For Gandhi, politics that demanded obedience to party discipline at the cost of ethical conviction was fundamentally corrupting.

Gandhi also criticised the representative nature of parliamentary democracy. He argued that once elected, representatives became distant from the everyday lives of citizens, turning democracy into a periodic ritual of voting rather than a continuous practice of self-governance. True Swaraj, he insisted, meant not merely electing rulers but cultivating the capacity of people to govern themselves morally and socially. Without this inner discipline, parliamentary institutions could easily become instruments of domination rather than liberation.

Another key aspect of Gandhi's critique was centralisation. Parliamentary democracy, especially in the modern nation-state, concentrates power in distant capitals and bureaucracies. Gandhi feared that replacing British rulers with Indian legislators without decentralising power would reproduce colonial forms of domination. He therefore contrasted parliamentary democracy with village-based self-rule, where citizens directly participated in decision-making through panchayats rooted in local realities.

Gandhi and Civil Society

Civil society is essential in a democracy because it provides a space where citizens can organise, express their views, and participate in public life independently of the state. Civil society organisations, such as voluntary groups, NGOs, unions, women's groups, and community associations, hold the government accountable, protect rights, and give a voice to marginalised communities. They promote transparency, expose corruption, and encourage public debate. Civil society also strengthens social solidarity, fosters active citizenship, and ensures that power is not concentrated solely in political institutions. By enabling participation and vigilance, civil society helps democracies remain responsive, inclusive, and vibrant.

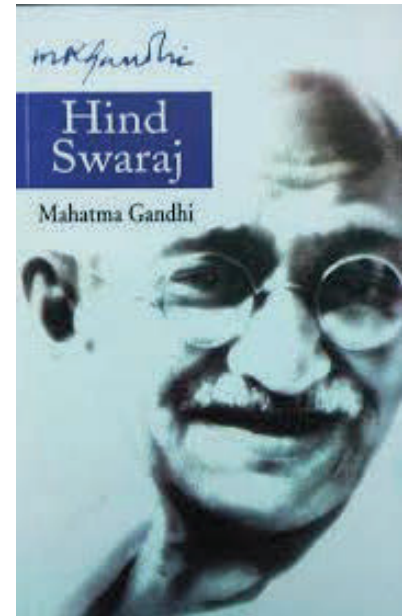


Fig. 6:04
Cover page of
Hind Swaraj



Parliamentary democracy:

It is a system of government in which the executive derives its authority from the legislature and remains accountable to it. Citizens elect representatives to a parliament, and the party or coalition that commands a majority forms the government. The head of government—usually the prime minister—is drawn from the legislature and must retain the confidence of parliament to remain in office. The executive and legislature are thus closely linked, unlike in presidential systems. Parliamentary democracy emphasises collective responsibility, debate, accountability, and the rule of law, with regular elections ensuring popular consent and political legitimacy.

Gandhi is widely regarded as a progenitor of civil society in modern India because he transformed voluntary social action into a nationwide, people-centred force independent of the state. Before Gandhi, civil society activity in India was largely urban, elite, and limited to small reform groups. Gandhi changed this by mobilising millions of ordinary people, peasants, workers, women, and the marginalised, into collective action outside formal political institutions.

Gandhi built an extensive network of voluntary organisations that embodied the spirit of civil society: the Sabarmati and Sevagram ashrams, the All India Spinners' Association, the All-India Village Industries Association, the Harijan Sevak Sangh, and the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. These bodies promoted khadi, village industries, basic education, communal harmony, Dalit upliftment, and rural reconstruction, activities carried out independent of the colonial state.



Fig. 6:05: Civil society

Civil Society

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Civil Society organisations (CSOs) are non-state entities that neither seek profits nor political power. Instead, they unite individuals to work towards shared goals while promoting ethical, cultural, scientific or philanthropic values.



His Constructive Programme acted as a blueprint for citizen-led development, encouraging people to take responsibility for sanitation, literacy, women's empowerment, and economic self-reliance. Gandhi's emphasis on non-violent mobilisation, through satyagraha, non-cooperation, and boycott, created a non-state public sphere where citizens could assert moral authority and hold power accountable.

Gandhi also advocated decentralisation and self-governing village republics, reinforcing the idea that communities should solve their own problems through cooperation rather than dependence on the state. After independence, major civil society movements such as Bhoodan–Gramdan, Sarvodaya, Chipko, and SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) drew directly from his ideals.

Thus, Gandhi laid the intellectual, organisational, and moral foundations of modern civil society in India by promoting voluntary action, community autonomy, ethical politics, and citizen participation.



Conduct a panel discussion based on the role of civil society in implementing Gandhian ideas.

Lok Sevak Sangh

A day before his death, on January 29, 1948, Gandhi drafted a constitution for the Lok Sevak Sangh, envisioning it as the body into which the Indian National Congress would transform. He outlined strict qualifications and

duties for its workers: each must habitually wear khadi made from self-spun yarn or certified by the A.I.S.A., be a teetotaler, and if Hindu must reject untouchability in every form, uphold inter-communal harmony, respect all religions equally, and support equal opportunity and status for all regardless of race, creed, or sex. Every worker was to maintain personal contact with villagers in their area, enlist and train local volunteers, keep proper records, and document their own daily work. They were tasked with organising villages to become self-sufficient through agriculture and handicrafts, promoting sanitation, hygiene, and disease prevention, and providing lifelong education rooted in Nai Talim as guided by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh.

The Sangh shall affiliate the following autonomous bodies:

➤ **A.I.S.A. (All-India Spinners Association)**

It was founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1925 to promote self-reliance through hand-spinning and khadi.

➤ **A.I.V.I.A. (All-India Village Industries Association)**

It was founded by Gandhi on December 14 1934, in Wardha, to promote rural self-sufficiency by reviving and developing village crafts and industries such as spinning, pottery, and oil pressing.

➤ **Hindustani Talimi Sangh (Society for Basic Education)**

Hindustani Talimi Sangh was established in 1938 following the Haripura session of the Indian National Congress (1938)

➤ **Harijan Sevak Sangh (Society for the service' of "untouchables")**

It was founded by Gandhi in 1932. It was aimed at abolishing untouchability. Its headquarters is in Delhi.

Village Swaraj

Village Swaraj, the Gandhian model of rural reconstruction, envisions not merely a reform of traditional village panchayats but the creation of independent village units rooted in swaraj and suited to the modern world. It represents the practical expression of nonviolence in politics, economics, and social life. In this system, villages function as decentralised political units, with ultimate authority resting with the individual. The model is non-exploitative, and based on a simple, decentralised economy that ensures employment for all through voluntary cooperation. Each village strives for self-sufficiency in food, clothing, and essential needs while promoting a harmonious, inclusive society.

Gandhi described village swaraj as a complete republic, self-sufficient in vital needs yet interdependent where necessary. A village should grow



Fig. 6:06
Ideal village -
A symbolic picture

its own food and cotton, maintain cattle reserves, and provide recreational spaces. If more land is available, valuable cash crops may be cultivated, excluding harmful ones. The village will maintain a theatre, school, public hall, and a clean water supply through controlled wells and tanks, with compulsory education upto the basic level and cooperative practices guiding most activities. There will be no caste hierarchy or untouchability, and issues will be resolved through nonviolence, satyagraha, and cooperation. A village guard will serve by rotation, and governance will be handled by an annually elected Panchayat of five qualified adults, functioning as the combined legislature, judiciary, and

executive. This structure embodies perfect democracy grounded in individual freedom and non-violence, enabling even a small village to stand firm against external power.

Basic principles of Village Swaraj

1. Supremacy of man – Full employment

Gandhi said that every person had an equal right to the necessities of life, just as birds and beasts did. He explained that every right carried a corresponding duty and a remedy to resist any attack on that right. According to him, the duty was to labour with one's own limbs, and the remedy was to refuse to cooperate with anyone who deprived a person of the fruits of that labour.

2. Body Labour/Bread Labour

Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow, says the Bible. Sacrifices may be of many kinds. One of them may well be Bread labour. If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of over-population, no disease and no such misery as we see around. Such labour will be the highest form of sacrifice. Men will no doubt do many other things either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this will be labour of love for the common good. There will then be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable.

3. Equality

True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics to be worth its name must at the same time be also good

economics. An economics that inculcates Mammon worship and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak is a false and dismal science. It spells death. True economics, on the other hand, stands for social justice; it promotes the good of all equally, including the weakest, and is indispensable for a decent life.

4. Trusteeship

Gandhi explained that equal distribution of wealth rests on the idea that the rich should act as trustees of the extra wealth they hold. He argued that forcibly taking wealth from the rich would require violence, harming society by destroying the abilities of those who know how to create wealth. Instead, he believed the rich should keep only what they need and use the rest for the welfare of society. However, if the rich failed to act as true trustees and the poor continued to suffer, Gandhi suggested non-violent non-cooperation and civil disobedience as the solution. Since the wealthy depend on the cooperation of the poor, he felt that if the poor understood this, they could use non-violence to free themselves from injustice and inequality.

5. Decentralisation

Gandhi said that if India were to develop along nonviolent lines, it would have to decentralise many aspects of its life. He stated that centralisation could not survive without the use of considerable force. He explained that simple homes, which had nothing to be stolen, needed no policing, whereas the palaces of the rich and large factories required heavy guarding. He further observed that a rurally organised India would face less danger of foreign invasion than an urbanised India equipped with military, naval, and air forces.

6. Swadeshi

Swadeshi, Gandhi said, means using and supporting what comes from one's immediate surroundings rather than distant sources. By depending on and helping their neighbours, people can make each village nearly self-sufficient, needing to trade only what cannot be produced locally. He acknowledged that this idea may seem unrealistic, but people can also be persuaded to use only Indian-made goods and locally grown food.

7. Self-sufficiency

The unit of society, Gandhi believed, should be a village or a small, manageable group of people that is ideally self-sufficient. Each village must first grow its own food crops and cotton for its clothing, since the essence of Khaddar is to make every village independent in meeting

these basic needs. Such self-sufficient khadi is impossible unless cotton is grown by the spinners themselves or in every village, which would require decentralising cotton cultivation. Ultimately, every village should be self-sustained, capable of managing its own affairs, and strong enough to defend itself even against the entire world.



Conduct a reverse quiz based on the topic village swaraj.

Panchayati Raj

Gandhi's idea of panchayats and Panchayati Raj was central to his vision of democracy, self-rule (Swaraj), and moral politics. For Gandhi, freedom was not merely the transfer of power from British rulers to Indian elites; it required the reconstruction of society from below, with villages as the foundation of political life.

Gandhi believed that India lived in its villages, and therefore, true democracy could survive only if villages were self-governing, self-reliant, and morally responsible. The panchayat, traditionally a council of five respected members, represented for him an indigenous institution through which people could manage their own affairs without dependence on distant authorities. He envisioned Panchayati Raj as a system where power flowed upward from the village, not downward from the state.

At the heart of Gandhi's idea was Village Swaraj. Each village, he argued, should be a "complete republic," capable of meeting most of its basic needs food, clothing, sanitation, education, and justice through local effort. Panchayats were to function as units of direct democracy, where decisions were made through discussion, consensus, and moral persuasion rather than coercion. This sharply contrasted with the centralized, bureaucratic state inherited from colonial rule.

Gandhi's panchayats were not merely administrative bodies; they were ethical institutions. Panchayat members were expected to possess integrity, a spirit of service, and commitment to nonviolence (ahimsa). Authority, in Gandhi's view, came not from law or force but from moral legitimacy and public trust. He opposed professional politics divorced from everyday life and believed that governance should be an extension of community responsibility.

Economically, Panchayati Raj was linked to Gandhi's emphasis on decentralisation and the dignity of labour. Panchayats were to promote local crafts, agriculture, and cottage industries, thereby reducing exploitation and dependence on industrial capitalism. This economic self-reliance was essential, Gandhi felt, for political freedom; poverty and dependence made genuine self-rule impossible.

Socially, Gandhi saw panchayats as instruments of social reform. They were to work actively against untouchability, caste discrimination, alcoholism, and gender inequality. Importantly, Gandhi insisted that panchayats must represent all sections of village society, including the poor and marginalised, otherwise they would merely reproduce local hierarchies. His vision thus combined tradition with radical reform.

Gandhi was deeply sceptical of excessive centralisation. He warned that replacing British rule with a powerful Indian state could lead to new forms of domination. Panchayati Raj, therefore, was meant to act as a check on state power, ensuring that governance remained participatory, humane, and accountable.

Although independent India initially adopted a more centralised model of development, Gandhi's ideas later influenced constitutional reforms, especially the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992), which gave constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions. While contemporary panchayats often fall short of Gandhi's ethical and participatory ideals, his vision remains a powerful reminder that democracy is strongest when rooted in local self-government, moral responsibility, and active citizenship.

In essence, Gandhi's idea of panchayats was not just about decentralised administration; it was about rebuilding politics as a moral practice, where ordinary people govern themselves with dignity, restraint, and mutual care.

For Mahatma Gandhi, the ultimate aim of politics was not the mere acquisition of power or even formal political freedom, but the moral and spiritual

Organise a discussion comparing and contrasting the panchayati raj as envisioned by Gandhiji and the present panchayati raj system.



development of individuals and communities. He warned that political freedom without inner discipline and ethical responsibility was fragile and could easily replace one form of domination with another. True Swaraj, therefore, required self-restraint, dialogue, and voluntary cooperation rooted in conscience.

Gandhi believed that politics, at its highest level, was a collective search for truth and justice. In times marked by social polarisation, economic greed, environmental degradation, and declining public trust, his insistence on ethical politics remains deeply relevant. He rejected violent revolution and instead sought to humanise and decentralise the state, making power accountable to morally responsible citizens rather than distant institutions.

Through Satyagraha, the Constructive Programme, and his vision of Village Swaraj, Gandhi promoted a political culture based on nonviolence, participation, and social responsibility. His ideas on trusteeship, communal harmony, and civil society activism anticipated modern concerns with sustainable development, participatory governance, and social justice.

In a world still shaped by conflict and inequality, Gandhi's legacy reminds us that genuine politics begins where conscience, compassion, and collective responsibility converge, offering a vision of democracy grounded in moral integrity rather than force or fear.



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. *Prepare a project report on the Gandhian idea of Village swaraj. How can the idea of village swaraj be applied to the present day challenges in India.*
2. *Prepare a study report on prominent personalities, who were inspired by Gandhian ideas and analyse their contributions and activities.*
3. *Invite an elected Panchayat Member or Councillor to your school on Gandhi Jayanti and conduct a discussion on grassroots democracy and prepare a report based on the interaction.*
4. *Visit a Panchayat and engage in a discussion with its members to ascertain the level of self-governance it has achieved.*
5. *Write a brief note on Gandhi's response to issues like :*
 - *Political polarisation*
 - *Corruption*
 - *Climate change*
 - *Centralisation of power*

Economic Ideas of Mahatma Gandhi



Our world has advanced significantly in terms of economics and technology. However, poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation continue to rise. Although many economic models and ideas have been introduced globally, they have failed to solve these fundamental issues. The rich are getting richer, while the poor are becoming poorer, and inequality is widening. Today, many modern economists are beginning to rethink our systems through a Gandhian lens.

This chapter covers certain general economic concepts. They are necessary to understand Mahatma Gandhi's economic ideas and those of his followers,

such as J.C. Kumarappa and E. F. Schumacher. Gandhian economic thought emerged as a moral critique of mainstream economics. Influenced by John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, Gandhi entered economic discourse by questioning the assumption that economics is a value-neutral science. While conventional economics focuses on wealth creation, efficiency, and the maximisation of individual wants, Gandhi argued that ethics, justice, and human well-being must guide economics.

Unlike mainstream economics, which separates economic activity from moral concerns, Gandhi viewed economics as a moral science aimed at Sarvodaya, or the welfare of all. His approach emphasised human dignity, social affection, and ethical responsibility, marking a fundamental departure from the profit-centered and individualistic framework of classical and modern economic theory.

The Foundations of Economic Science

In its earliest stages, economics was viewed as a branch of political science. The ancient Greeks used the term “oikonomia” to describe the management of a household or the administration of a city-state, or “Polis.” During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Mercantilists believed a nation's strength was determined by its accumulation of precious metals like gold and silver, leading them to advocate for strict trade barriers. By the 18th century, the Physiocrats in France protested these commercial policies, arguing that a nation's true wealth was derived from the cultivation of land and the strength of its agriculture.

Modern economics emerged as a distinct social science in 1776 with the publication of Adam Smith's masterpiece, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Smith, a Scottish moral philosopher, shifted the focus towards the systematic study of how wealth is created and distributed.

Defining the Boundaries of Economics

Defining the boundaries of economics involves identifying what the discipline studies (its subject matter) and where it ends compared to other social sciences, such as sociology or political science.

The Wealth Perspective (Adam Smith)

Often referred to as the “Classical” view, Adam Smith defined economics as the **study of wealth**. This perspective focuses on the nature and causes of a nation's prosperity, examining how material riches are produced and accumulated to build a strong economy.

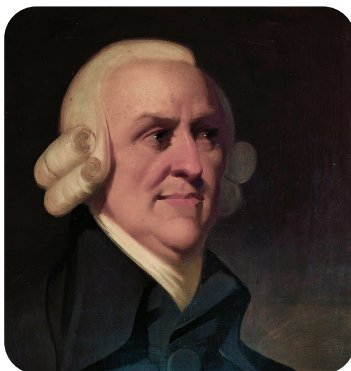


Fig. 7:01:
Adam Smith

The Welfare Perspective (Alfred Marshall)

In his 1890 work, *Principles of Economics*, Alfred Marshall shifted the focus from wealth to **human welfare**. He defined economics as the study of mankind in the “ordinary business of life.” In this view, wealth is an essential tool, but the ultimate goal of the discipline is to understand how humans use resources to improve their material well-being and standard of living.

The Scarcity Perspective (Lionel Robbins)

In 1932, Lionel Robbins introduced a more analytical definition centered on **choice**. He defined economics as the science that studies human behaviour as a relationship between:

- **Unlimited Ends:** Human beings wants and needs are infinite.
- **Scarce Means:** Resources are limited and have alternative uses.

This perspective transformed economics into a science of decision-making, focusing on how individuals and societies allocate limited resources to satisfy their most important needs.

The Growth and Development Perspective (Paul Samuelson)

Modern economics, significantly shaped by thinkers like by Paul Samuelson, expands the concept of scarcity by incorporating time and social distribution. This view is considered the most complete because it bridges individual choices with the nation’s goals.

Dynamic Resources: It recognises that human beings wants are not just unlimited but also grow over time. Therefore, the focus shifts from simply managing existing resources to increasing them through economic growth.

Production & Distribution: Economics is the study of how society chooses to use scarce resources to produce goods over time and to distribute them fairly among different groups for both current and future consumption.

Macro-Economic Scope: Unlike earlier narrow definitions, this perspective includes the study of national income, employment, and how a society can achieve long-term stability and abundance.

The Fundamental Economic Problem

Economics assumes that human wants tend to be unlimited relative to available resources. This scarcity forces individuals and nations to make choices. Every resource used to satisfy one want cannot be used for another. Therefore, the economic problem is essentially a problem of choice—deciding how best to allocate scarce resources with alternative uses.

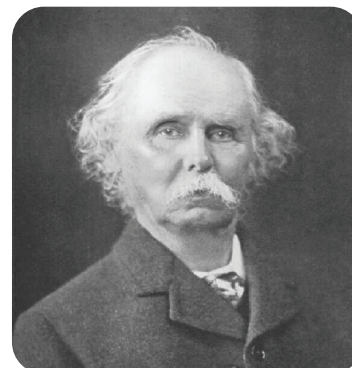


Fig. 7:02 :
Alfred Marshall



Fig. 7:03 :
Lionel Robbins



Fig. 7:04 :
Paul Samuelson

The Central Problems of an Economy

Every economy faces certain fundamental economic problems that require systematic solutions. To understand these challenges better, please refer to the table provided below. Addressing these core issues is essential for the balanced growth of any economic system.

	Central Problem	Key Focus	Description
1.	Allocation of Resources	What, How, and For Whom?	Deciding what goods to produce, choosing between Labour-intensive and Capital-intensive methods, and ensuring fair distribution.
2.	Efficient Utilization	No Wastage	Ensuring "Full Employment" of all resources (Land, Labour, Capital) to achieve maximum production.
3.	Growth of Resources	Future Capacity	Increasing the nation's ability to produce more over time through savings, investment, and development.



How do the central problems of an economy—what to produce, how to produce, and for whom to produce—reflect the basic problem of scarcity? Analyse how different economic systems attempt to solve these problems.



Concept	Definition	Key Characteristic / Rule
Needs	Basic requirements for human survival (food, shelter).	Limited in number and universal.
Wants	Desires for goods/services that offer comfort or status.	Unlimited and vary by individual.
Utility	The want-satisfying power of a commodity.	Diminishes as consumption increases.
Income	The flow of rewards for factors of production.	Categorized as Rent, Wages, Interest, or Profit.
Wealth	The stock of assets that possess value and scarcity.	Must be transferable and have utility.
Capital	The part of wealth used for further production.	Man-made instrument of production (e.g., machinery).

Sources of Gandhian Economics

Mahatma Gandhi's economic ideas were shaped by three primary influences: Hinduism (specifically the Bhagavad Gita), Western critics of industrialism (John Ruskin and Leo Tolstoy), and the socio-economic conditions of colonial India.

Hinduism and the Bhagavad Gita

Hinduism is the primary source that helped Gandhi to develop his ideas. The **Bhagavad Gita** was Gandhi's "infallible guide" and daily companion. While traditional Western thought views history as linear and progressive, Gandhi's worldview, rooted in the Gita, sees a constant struggle between good and evil within the human soul.

Main ideas from the Bhagavad Gita that influenced Gandhi include the distinction between the Ego (the "lower self" driven by selfish desires) and the Self (the "higher self" aligned with Truth or God). Gandhi emphasises that the Ego focuses on personal gain, while the Self is devoted to service and moral righteousness. The ultimate goal is Self-Realisation, promoting the growth of the Higher Self over the Ego. Key concepts include "detached service" (Karmayoga), in which duties are performed without attachment to results, and Yajna, the principle of life dedicated to service rather than mere enjoyment. Additionally, Gandhi integrates Dharma (social duty) and Moksha (liberation from selfishness), creating an economic vision that honours every role as important and essential.

Prepare a chart showing how elements of Indian culture influenced and shaped Gandhi's economic ideas.



Western Thinkers : John Ruskin and Leo Tolstoy

While Gandhi's ideas were deeply rooted in Indian spirituality, they were also significantly shaped by his encounter with Western thinkers who challenged the materialistic and industrial nature of modern civilization. Unlike the mainstream economists of his time, who focused solely on wealth and self-interest, Gandhi found a soul connection with critics like John Ruskin and Leo Tolstoy. They helped him articulate a human-centric economic vision where ethics, morality, and human dignity are more important than machines and profits.

John Ruskin significantly influenced Gandhi, particularly through his book *Unto This Last*, which transformed Gandhi's perspective on economics and human nature. Ruskin rejected the notion of the "Economic Man," asserting that humans are motivated by love and duty, not merely self-interest. His philosophy centres on the idea that true wealth lies in the quality of life



*The **Economic Man** (or Homo Economicus) is a theoretical model of a human who is perfectly rational and driven solely by self-interest. In this framework, every action is a cold calculation designed to maximize personal gain, utility, or profit.*

*While this “man” possesses perfect information and never makes emotional mistakes, the concept is mainly a simplified tool used by economists to predict market behaviour. It serves as a boundary between **pure economic theory** and the **messy reality** of human psychology, where people often act out of habit, love, or ethics rather than just money.*

supported by resources, rather than monetary value. He emphasised the dignity of all labour, equating the work of barbers and lawyers, and advocated for a Just Wage system to ensure fair compensation based on workers’ needs rather than market competition. Gandhi distilled Ruskin’s teachings into his own economic philosophy, Sarvodaya, which advocates the welfare of all individuals, the equal value of all work, and a life grounded in manual labour.

Leo Tolstoy: The Economics of Bread Labour and Non-Possession

Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) was a Russian writer and philosopher whose critique of religion and the state significantly influenced Gandhi. A key concept from Tolstoy was “Bread Labour,” which asserts that individuals must perform physical labour to earn their food, challenging the divide between intellectual and manual work. He described wealth accumulation as sinful, leading Gandhi to advocate for a “need-based” economy and Limitation of Wants. Tolstoy valued agriculture as the primary occupation, forming the basis for Gandhi’s Village-Centric Economics. Tolstoy’s emphasis on duty and moral responsibility influenced Gandhi’s later formulation of Trusteeship. Lastly, Tolstoy saw political power as a source of violence, inspiring Gandhi’s promotion of Swadeshi and self-reliance in villages to minimize state dependence and economic exploitation.



A development project prioritises workers’ welfare over profit, treats wealth as a social responsibility, and discourages excessive industrial centralisation.

Analyse how the ideas of John Ruskin and Leo Tolstoy are reflected in this approach, and examine how these ideas influenced Gandhi’s economic thought.

The Economic Impact of British Imperialism

Gandhi viewed British rule not merely as a political conquest but as a systematic economic and cultural exploitation that dismantled the foundation of Indian society. His economic ideas were a direct response to the specific ways the British destroyed the self-sufficient village life.

The Destruction of the Rural Economy: The British replaced traditional systems with oppressive land revenue policies, such as the Permanent, Ryotwari, and Mahalwari Settlements. These systems forced farmers into a cycle of debt and exploitation. For the first time, farmers were forced to pay taxes in cash rather than in kind (a share of the crop). This requirement,

combined with the “Commercialisation of Agriculture,” forced peasants to stop growing food for their own communities and to start growing cash crops such as indigo, cotton, and jute to feed British factories. This shifted the focus of the Indian economy from “consumption for survival” to “production for a foreign market,” leaving the masses vulnerable to starvation.

De-Industrialisation and the “Machine” The British followed a dual strategy to ensure their industrial dominance. They flooded Indian markets with cheap, machine-made textiles from Manchester while imposing heavy tariffs on Indian handmade goods. This led to “De-Industrialisation”—the collapse of traditional handicrafts and village industries. Millions of artisans lost their livelihoods, creating a massive unemployment crisis. This experience led Gandhi to his famous critique of modern machinery. He saw that the “Machine” was the engine of imperialism, used to replace human labour and centralise wealth in a few hands. In response, he promoted the Charkha (Spinning Wheel) not just as a tool, but as a symbol of economic freedom and the restoration of human dignity.

A region that once had a thriving handicraft industry becomes dependent on imported manufactured goods, faces widespread unemployment, declining agriculture, and increasing poverty during colonial rule. Analyse this situation to explain the major economic impacts of British imperialism on India



The Influence of Indian Intellectuals

While Gandhi’s reactions to poverty were deeply emotional and spiritual, he found the “scientific” proof for his beliefs in the writings of Dadabhai Naoroji and R.C. Dutt.

Dadabhai Naoroji: The Drain Theory Naoroji’s book, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, provided the mathematical evidence of how India’s wealth was being “bled” away. He described a “Drain of Wealth” where Indian resources were sent to England as “Home Charges,” pensions, and interest on public debt. Naoroji described the existence of “Two Indias”: a prosperous India inhabited by the British and their collaborators, and a poverty-stricken India of the voiceless masses. This convinced Gandhi that political independence (Swaraj) was an economic necessity; without control over its own finances, India could never stop the drain.



Fig. 7:05 :
Dadabhai Naoroji

Romesh Chunder Dutt: The History of Famines When Gandhi read R.C. Dutt’s *Economic History of India*, he famously remarked that it made him weep. Dutt’s research proved that the frequent famines in India were not caused by a lack of food, but by a lack of purchasing power caused by



Fig. 7:06 :
Romesh Chunder Dutt

excessive taxation. He showed that even as millions starved, the British continued to export grain to Europe to maintain trade profits. Dutt's work confirmed Gandhi's belief that the colonial tax system and the "Manchester Machine" had paralysed the Indian heartland. It reinforced the Gandhian conviction that the only way to save India was to return to a decentralised, village-based economy in which production and consumption occurred locally.

The Gandhian Synthesis

Gandhi synthesised these influences into a new economic vision. From the British exploitation, he learned the dangers of centralisation. From Naoroji and Dutt, he understood the mechanics of poverty. He concluded that true economics must be "Humanistic Economics"—a system where the focus is not on the accumulation of wealth (the Ego), but on the welfare of the poorest (the Higher Self). This led to his core principles: **Swadeshi** (self-reliance), Bread Labour (physical work for all), and Trusteeship (wealth held in trust for the community).



An Indian nationalist leader analyses rising poverty, frequent famines, and the continuous outflow of wealth during colonial rule to argue that economic underdevelopment was not natural but systematically created. Examine how the ideas of Indian intellectuals influenced this understanding and contributed to the critique of colonial economic policies.

Economic Concepts of Mahatma Gandhi

Economics and Ethics

In school, we often study Economics as the science of wealth, profit, and markets. However, Mahatma Gandhi believed that Economics cannot be separated from ethics (right and wrong). For him, any economic rule that hurts the character of a person or a nation is "immoral and sinful." Here are the four simple pillars of his thought:

Human beings are More Than Just "Profit-Seekers"

In traditional economics, there is a concept called 'Homo Economicus' (Economic Man). This theory assumes that humans always act selfishly to maximise their own profit. Gandhi rejected this, calling it "technological materialism." He believed humans are driven by love, co-operation, and a soul, not just money. For example, if a shopkeeper helps a poor customer by giving a discount instead of charging the highest price, he is moving from being a "money-machine" to a "human being." Today, this is called Humanistic Economics.

“Need” vs. “Greed” (Sustainability)

Gandhi famously said: *“The world has enough for everyone’s need, but not for everyone’s greed.”* Gandhi’s was not against progress, but he was against “limitless consumption” that destroys nature. For example, building a factory by cutting down a forest might show “Economic Growth” on paper, but it is “Real Loss” for the planet. Modern economists now call this Sustainable Development or Ecological Economics.

Fair Play and Social Justice

Gandhi believed that if we buy something made by exploiting workers, we are part of a “sinful” system. Gandhi’s view that true economics stands for the good of all, especially the weakest. For example, imagine buying a cheap football made by children in a sweatshop (Child Labour). While the price is low, the “ethical cost” is high. Gandhi’s idea is the foundation of what we today call ‘Fair Trade’ and ‘Ethical Consumerism.’

The “Trusteeship” Concept

Gandhi didn’t want to snatch money from the rich, but he wanted them to change their attitude toward wealth. Rich people should see themselves as “Trustees” (caretakers) of their wealth. They should keep what they need for a simple life and use the rest for the welfare of society. For example, today, many big companies use a portion of their profits to build schools or hospitals, known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR reflects some aspects of trusteeship, though Gandhi’s idea demanded deeper moral transformation rather than legal compliance alone.

Prepare a concept map explaining the salient features of the Gandhian economic system.



Salient features of Gandhi’s system of Economy

In his book ‘Towards new Horizons’ (1959) Pyarelal (1899-1982) points out the salient features of Gandhi system of economy as given below:

- *Intensive, small – scale, individual, diversified farming supported by cooperative effort as opposed to mechanised, large- scale or collective farming;*
- *Development of cottage crafts as ancillary to agriculture;*
- *Cattle - based economy with strict enforcement of the “law of return” viz. to return to the soil in organic form what is taken out of the soil:*
- *Proper balance of animal, human and plant life, their relationship being symbiotic, ie. one of mutually beneficial association; and*

Voluntary protection of both human and animal power against the completion of machinery as the price of social insurance

Plain Living and High Thinking

The Gandhian ideal of “plain living and high thinking” lies at the heart of Gandhian economics and ethics. As Mahatma Gandhi warned, *“Man falls from the pursuit of the ideal of plain living and high thinking the moment he wants to multiply his daily wants... Man’s happiness really lies in contentment”* (Harijan, 1942, p. 27). For Gandhi, true progress was not measured by rising consumption but by moral and spiritual growth.

Scholars such as Romesh Diwan and Mark Lutz explain that Gandhian economics shifts attention from material accumulation to character formation and social responsibility. Central to this vision is the distinction between *needs* and *wants*. Needs are essential for a dignified life, while wants are often artificially multiplied by fashion and advertising. Gandhi cautioned that *“most of us improperly multiply our wants and thus unconsciously make thieves of ourselves,”* linking excessive consumption to poverty and injustice.

Gandhi, therefore, argued for restraint in consumption and envisaged a “need-satisfying society,” where limited wants would ensure that the basic needs of all are met. Happiness, he insisted, comes from contentment rather than acquisition. Plain living, thus, is not hostility to material progress but a redefinition of development—one that frees individuals from greed and enables them to become better human beings.



“Plain living and high thinking is not a rejection of material progress but a redefinition of development.”

Critically analyse this statement with reference to Gandhian philosophy.

Bread Labour

The Philosophy of Bread Labour is central to Mahatma Gandhi’s ethical and economic thought. Gandhi asserted that *“God created man to work for his food, and said that those who ate without work were thieves”* (Young India, 13-10-1921, p. 325), grounding labour in moral obligation rather than mere economic necessity. He believed that the deepest motivation for work lies in ethical, moral, and spiritual values, not in material reward alone. The doctrine of Bread Labour holds that every healthy person must perform physical labour to meet basic needs, making work a universal duty and a law of life.

Gandhi drew inspiration from T. M. Bondarev, (*Timofei Mikhailovich Bondarev was a 19th-century Russian peasant philosopher whose ideas on the sanctity of physical labour left a profound mark on social and economic thought*) Leo Tolstoy, and Unto This Last, while also linking the idea to the Bhagavad Gita, which teaches that those who eat without work or service consume “stolen food.” In the Gandhian view, work is not merely productive activity but a path toward self-perfection: *“every individual tries to attain*

perfection through his work.” Labour thus becomes a means of spiritual growth and social responsibility.

This vision sharply contrasts with Western economic traditions that treat labour as a “necessary evil” or disutility to be minimized. For Gandhi, work is a positive utility—a source of health, mental clarity, and inner peace. Rooted in the Indian concept of *dharma*, labour is its own reward, not merely a means to consumption. By dignifying manual labour, Gandhi sought to dissolve the divide between the intellectual and working classes and promote equality and social harmony.

According to J. D. Sethi, Bread Labour has four components: minimum physical labour for bodily health; a means of self-actualisation; an instrument of service to the community; and an honest way of earning a living. Observance of this law would lead to a “silent revolution,” freeing the mind for higher pursuits. As Helena Norberg-Hodge suggests, such meaningful, localised work points toward an economics of happiness, where labour becomes not a curse but “a thing of beauty and a joy forever.”

“Bread labour is both an economic necessity and a moral obligation.” Analyse this statement in the light of Gandhian philosophy. Based on the concept of Bread Labour, conduct a discussion on how it can be implemented in your daily life.



Swadeshi

Swadeshi occupies a central place in Mahatma Gandhi’s economic, moral, and social philosophy. Gandhi linked Swadeshi directly to freedom from colonial exploitation, declaring: *“If we would get rid of the economic slavery, we must manufacture our own cloth and, at the present moment, only by hand-spinning and hand-weaving”* (Young India, 21 July 1920). While the term literally means “of one’s own country,” Gandhi expanded it into a comprehensive philosophy of life rooted in ethics, non-violence, and responsibility towards one’s immediate environment.

Gandhi described Swadeshi as *“Swadharma applied to one’s immediate environment.”* Just as Swadharma denotes one’s moral and spiritual duty, Swadeshi signifies an economic and social duty toward one’s neighbours. He defined it as *“that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote.”* Swadeshi thus emphasises self-reliance, neighbourhood-based production, and moral restraint in consumption.

As explained by Romesh Diwan and J. D. Sethi in *Essays in Gandhian Economics*, Swadeshi rests on certain key principles. First is the *spirit of service*: it is morally wrong to purchase luxury goods from distant markets

while one's neighbour—the local artisan or farmer—lacks livelihood. Second, Swadeshi places *human values above profit*. Gandhi rejected the modern economic rule of buying in the “cheapest market,” calling it an “inhuman maxim,” and argued that moral considerations must override price alone. Third, Swadeshi stresses *self-reliance*, requiring communities to meet basic needs such as food and clothing locally to avoid vulnerability to external shocks and exploitation.

The practical elements of Swadeshi include satisfying minimum domestic needs, preferring goods produced by immediate neighbours, reducing individual wants, maximising indigenous resources and technology, and fostering cooperation between consumers and producers to improve efficiency. The ultimate goal is a non-violent, non-exploitative social order in which all individuals can realise their potential.

In international trade, Gandhian economics offers a moral critique of comparative advantage. Thinkers such as Mark Lutz emphasise that Gandhi viewed trade as legitimate only when guided by *ahimsa*. Trade becomes exploitative when it enables the domination of one nation by another or enriches urban elites at the expense of rural producers. Service to humanity, Gandhi argued, must begin with service to one's neighbour.



Fig. 7:07 :
Swadeshi Economy

Swadeshi does not reject foreign trade entirely. A self-reliant economy may import goods if they are essential, not locally produced, and cannot be produced domestically in the near future. Thus, Swadeshi represents not economic isolationism but an ethical framework that redefines development, trade, and consumption in terms of moral responsibility and human dignity.

Swadeshi is a doctrine of selfless service rooted in love (*Ahimsa*). It is not about hatred for the foreigner, but about the scientific limitation of human capacity—we serve the world best by serving the community we can actually see and touch. As Norberg-Hodge puts it, localising our trade is the only step toward a genuinely sustainable future.

Main elements in Swadeshi principle

- (1) The society must be capable of satisfying the basic minimum needs of its people without dependence on external sources.
- (2) Consumer will prefer the commodities produced by an immediate neighbour to the commodities produced by a distant neighbour.
- (3) It makes sure that a non violent, non – exploitative society that would provide an environment in which all individuals would have the opportunity to realize their best selves.

- (4) An individual, as a consumer, will reduce his wants.
- (5) Swadesi ensures maximum use of indigenous resources and technology
- (6) The consumer will cooperate with the producer neighbour in the process of improving the efficiency of production.

Khadi

The idea of Khadi occupies a central place in Mahatma Gandhi's thought and extends far beyond the use of hand-spun cloth. Gandhi vividly explained its role through a metaphor: "*Khadi is the sun of the village solar system. The planets are the various industries which can support khadi in return for the heat and the sustenance they derive from it*" (Harijan, 16-11-1934). By this, he meant that Khadi stands at the centre of village life, supporting and being supported by other local industries such as pottery, carpentry, tanning, and oil pressing. He also realised that Khadi could not grow on its own; the entire village economy had to be revived so people could use their spare time productively.

For Gandhi, Khadi was not merely cloth but the *material symbol of freedom*. He called it the "livery of India's freedom" and made it the core of his constructive programme after launching the Khadi movement in 1918. Khadi represented economic self-sufficiency, political independence, simplicity, moral purity, communal unity, social equality, and non-violence. It was a practical tool to transform India from a centralised colonial economy into a decentralised, self-reliant one.

Gandhi contrasted "*production by the masses*" with "mass production." In mass production, large factories produce goods for distant markets, often causing unemployment and exploitation. In production by the masses, people produce goods in their own homes or villages, mainly for local use. This creates "*values-in-use*" rather than mere "*values-in-exchange*" and ensures that income and dignity reach those who actually work.

Gandhi explains why India should receive textile industry as the most suitable cottage industry of our economy. What is claimed for spinning is that:

1. It applies the readiest occupation to those who have leisure and are in want of a few coppers.
2. It is known to the thousands.
3. It is easily learnt.
4. It requires practically no outlay of capital.
5. The wheel can be easily and cheaply made. Most of us do not yet know that spinning can be done even with a piece of tile and splinter.

6. The people have no repugnance to it.
7. It affords immediate relief in times of famine and security.
8. It alone can stop the drain of wealth which goes outside India in the purchase of foreign cloth.
9. It automatically distributes the millions, thus saved, among the deserving poor.
10. Even the smallest success means so much immediate gain to the people.
11. It is the most potent instrument of securing co-operation among the people

For Mahatma Gandhi, Khadi symbolized economic freedom, equality, and national unity. It was a non-violent alternative to colonisation, consistent with Swadeshi, Bread Labour, and plain living. Gandhi envisioned Khadi as the basis for village self-reliance, decentralised production, the dignity of labour, the use of indigenous resources, and an “economy of permanence” rooted in truth and non-violence.



*Prepare a list of goods that you regularly use in your daily life. Classify these goods into **Swadeshi (Indian-made)** and **foreign-made** products. Analyse the extent of dependence on foreign goods. Further, examine whether Indian alternatives are available for the foreign products listed, and prepare a separate list of such Indian substitutes.*

Economic Equality

Economic equality in the thought of Mahatma Gandhi meant much more than equal wages or identical incomes. Gandhi openly admitted, “*My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see, it is not to be realised. I therefore work for equitable distribution*” (Young India, 17-3-1927). For him, equality existed when everyone’s basic needs—food, clothing, and shelter—were met with dignity.



Fig. 7:08 :
Amartya Sen

Gandhi explained this idea using the simple analogy of the elephant and the ant: both are equal when each has enough to eat, even though their needs differ greatly. Thus, equality does not mean uniformity. As he clarified, “Economic equality of my conception does not mean that everyone would literally have the same amount. It simply means that everybody should have enough for his or her needs.” His concern was to remove “cruel inequality,” such as when those who produce essential goods cannot afford them for their own families.

This vision closely resembles modern ideas such as the Basic Needs Approach and Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach, which emphasise

that real equality lies in people having the freedom and ability to live healthy, educated, and meaningful lives. For Gandhi, such equality could only be achieved through decentralisation, which prevents excessive concentration of wealth and power.

The same human-centred ethics guided Gandhi's views on mechanisation and industrialisation. He warned, "*The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man*" (Young India, 13-11-1924). He was not against machines as such, but against those that displaced labour and created unemployment, especially in labour-rich countries like India.

According to Gandhi, unchecked industrialisation led to unemployment, environmental damage, destruction of village crafts, and growing inequality. Machinery was acceptable only if it reduced drudgery, supported village industries, avoided monopoly, and served social welfare. Hence, Gandhi rejected large-scale, urban-centred industrialisation and supported small-scale, decentralised village industries, forming the economic foundation of his ideal of *village swaraj*, where production served human needs rather than profit.



Fig. 7:09 : Man vs Machine

"Gandhi argued that mechanisation and industrialisation should serve human beings needs rather than displace human labour or exploit villages. Imagine you are a village artisan whose work is being affected by a new factory in your area. Discuss in groups how you would balance the use of machinery with preserving traditional skills and employment. Propose one practical solution that aligns with Gandhi's principles of industrialisation."



Decentralisation of Economic Power

Decentralisation of Economic Power is a core principle of Mahatma Gandhi's thought. Gandhi clearly stated: "*The end to be sought is human happiness combined with full mental and moral growth... This end can be achieved under decentralisation. Centralisation as a system is inconsistent with a non-violent structure of society*" (Harijan, 18-1-1942, p. 5). For him, decentralisation was essential for building a just, humane, and non-violent society.

Meaning of Decentralisation

Decentralisation involves distributing power, responsibilities, and economic activities so that people directly participate in shaping their lives. It has two dimensions:

- **Political decentralisation** is the process where power is shared among elected national, state, and local bodies
- **Economic decentralisation:** Production, distribution, and exchange spread across many small units owned by the masses.
- Gandhi's aim was equality, self-reliance, and empowerment of ordinary people, especially villagers.

Key Features of Gandhian Decentralisation

Decentralised decision-making

- Village republics (panchayats) form the base of governance.
- People participate directly in social, economic, and political decisions.

Decentralised ownership of production

- Means of production belong to the masses
- Khadi and village industries promote labour-intensive, community-based work.
- Monopolies and concentration of wealth are rejected.

Decentralised production structure

- Emphasis on small-scale and cottage industries.
- Each village becomes a production unit meeting local needs first.
- Create mass employment, reduces poverty, and distributes wealth widely.
- It makes use of local skills and talents.

Decentralised location of production

- Located in village/home.
- Avoids over-concentration of industries in cities.
- Spreads economic benefits across villages.

Why Gandhi Opposed Centralisation of economic power

According to Gandhi, centralised industrialisation leads to:

- Displacement of labour and loss of dignity of work
- Exploitation of villages by urban centres (a form of internal colonialism)
- Violence, imperialism, and war are driven by mass production
- Environmental damage and resource exhaustion
- Concentration of wealth in the hands of a few
- Loss of creativity and alienation of workers
- The gap between the rich and the poor will be widened.

Importance of Decentralised Planning

Decentralised planning applies Gandhi's vision in practice by shifting planning to the grass root level with key role assigned to the Gram Sabha:

- Solutions tailored to local needs
- Greater accountability and transparency
- Efficient use of local resources
- Inclusion of women and marginalised groups
- Stronger resilience to global economic shocks

In essence, Gandhi believed decentralisation alone could ensure dignity, justice, sustainability, and true human development.

Trusteeship

"I am inviting those people who consider themselves as owners today to act as trustees, i.e., owners, not in their own right, but owners' right of those whom they have exploited." (*Young India*, 26-11-1931)

While nature thrives on diversity—ensuring no two leaves or two humans are exactly alike—society often struggles with the inequalities these differences create. In a world where the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" continues to widen despite various economic experiments, Gandhi proposed a revolutionary middle path: **Trusteeship**.

The main objective of the Gandhian principle of Trusteeship was to address economic inequality in society. Gandhi realised that absolute 'ownership' was the cause of all economic inequalities in society. So, he gave an alternative to solve these inequalities. This was the Trusteeship principle. According to Mahatma Gandhi Trusteeship considers wealth as a social asset and should be used for the welfare of all. Gandhi was opposed to absolute ownership, whether private or state-controlled. To him, a mere change of ownership will not bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. According to Gandhi, this was tried by many economies in the world through law and force. But he believed that many such attempts had failed to achieve genuine equality.

The Gandhian principle of Trusteeship will enable the wealthy people to act as trustees. They will take only the minimum wealth for their basic necessities. They will use the rest for the welfare of the society.

Trusteeship is not merely a charity model; it is a transformative method of wealth management. Gandhi believed that the root of economic injustice lay in the obsession with "ownership." He argued that:

By viewing every talent and every penny as a "social asset," Trusteeship offers a way to balance individual ambition with social justice.

- **Nature's Law of Diversity:** Just as no two leaves are identical, human beings differ in their ability to earn. Inequality is a reality, but it shouldn't lead to exploitation.
- **The Problem with Ownership:** Gandhi argued that the traditional concept of absolute "private ownership" is the root cause of the gap between the rich and the poor.
- **The Solution:** Instead of using force or laws to seize property (which often fails), the wealthy should voluntarily become Trustees.
- **The "Ishopanishad" Rule:** Enjoy your wealth by giving up. Keep what you need for a simple, legitimate life, and give the rest back to the society that helped you earn it.

Key Principles of Trusteeship

- **Non-Violence:** Unlike systems that take wealth by force, Trusteeship relies on "reason and persuasion." It believes people can choose to be good.
- **Social Assets:** Wealth—whether it is land, money, or even intellectual talent—is a social asset. If you are a genius or a great businessman, your "intellect" is a gift to be used for the poor.
- **Individual Action:** You don't have to wait for the government or a revolution to bring it about. Any person can choose to live as a trustee today.

The Practical Trusteeship Formula

Kishorlal Mashruwala, Narahari Parikh, and Prof. Dantawala jointly prepared the draft of the practical Trusteeship formula. Gandhi made a few changes to it. The final draft, as amended by him, reads as follows:

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.
2. It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.
3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.
4. Thus under State-regulated Trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interests of society.

5. Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that would be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.
6. Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.

If you adopt Trusteeship as a principle in your life what are the activities that you can do in your locality?



Contribution of JC Kumarappa and E.F. Schumacher

Economy of Permanence

Joseph Cornelius Kumarappa, often called the “Green Gandhian,” took Gandhi’s spiritual ideas and turned them into a practical economic blueprint.¹ His masterpiece, *Economy of Permanence*, is now considered a foundational text for modern **environmentalism** and **sustainable development**.

What is the “Economy of Permanence”?

Kumarappa argued that modern economics is often an “Economy of Transience” (temporary and destructive) because it consumes resources faster than nature can replenish them.

An **Economy of Permanence** is:

- **Nature-Centric:** It follows the laws of the natural world, where nothing is wasted.
- **Non-Violent:** It doesn’t “rob” the earth or future generations.
- **Circular:** Like a forest, every unit works for itself but, in doing so, helps the whole system survive.

The Five Types of Economy

Kumarappa used examples from nature to show how humans behave economically. He ranked them from most violent to most peaceful:

1. Parasitic Economy – The Most Harmful

Some plants live on others and become parasites. Often the host tree, or plant, dies due to their parasitic growth. Like a fungus that kills a tree, this kind of economy takes everything without giving back. Example: A factory that drains village water supplies and then leaves the area barren.

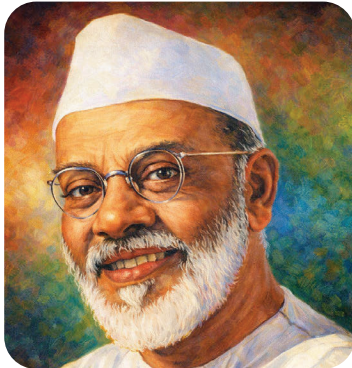


Fig. 7-10 :
J C Kumarappa

Joseph Chelladurai Kumarappa, popularly known as J. C. Kumarappa (1892-1960), was a close associate and trusted disciple of Gandhi. He was an economist and thinker who played a key role in shaping Gandhian economic ideas. He studied economics and chartered accountancy in Britain in 1919. In 1928 he travelled to the United States to obtain degrees in economics and business administration. Kumarappa returned to India and devoted his knowledge to the service of the nation. He strongly supported village industries, self-sufficiency, and an economy based on moral and social values. Kumarappa served as the editor of Young India during salt satyagraha and actively participated in the constructive programmes. His writings and ideas greatly influenced Gandhian studies and the development of an ethical, non-violent economic vision. After independence, Kumarappa worked for the Planning Commission of India and the Indian National Congress to develop national policies for agriculture and rural development.



2. Predatory Economy

This is like an animal eating fruit but not helping the tree grow. A monkey comes into a mango grove, to the existence of which it has not contributed anything by either digging, planting or watering, but enjoys the fruits on the trees. It acts in self-interest but without a contribution. People take resources but do little for the community. Example: Mining industries that take minerals but leave the local people in poverty.

3. Economy of Enterprise

Some living beings take what they need for survival while also giving something valuable in return to the system from which they benefit. Honey bees are a good example of this. While collecting nectar and pollen from flowers, they help in pollination and later convert the nectar into honey. They also build honeycombs using wax produced by their own bodies. Such creatures are neither parasitic nor predatory, because they contribute through their own effort and support the source from which they receive their livelihood. Example: A business that earns profits while paying workers fairly and protecting the environment.

4. Economy of Gregation (Group Interest)

It may be noted that honey bees do not work for their own individual benefit, but for the common good of the entire colony. Their work shows a shift from personal interest to collective interest. It also reflects a movement from meeting immediate needs to planning for the future. This example helps us understand the importance of cooperation and shared responsibility in society. Example: Farmer cooperatives, social welfare schemes, or open-source projects like Wikipedia.

5. Economy of Service – The Ideal

The highest form of economy in nature is based on service. This can be clearly seen in the relationship between a parent and its young. A mother bird

searches tirelessly for food for its young and even risks its life to protect them from danger. It does not act for its immediate needs or personal gain, but works for the well-being of the next generation. Such selfless action, guided by love and care, represents a non-violent and lasting form of economy based on service rather than reward. Example: Scientists or activists who fight climate change to protect interest of the future generations.

Why Kumarappa Is Important Today

Kumarappa was decades ahead of his time. Today, we call his “Economy of Permanence” by different names. These are conceptual parallels, not direct equivalents.

- **The Circular Economy:** Processing waste and re-using them. (just like Kumarappa’s nature model).
- **Regenerative Agriculture:** Farming that gives back to the soil rather than just “predating” on it.
- **Intergenerational Equity:** The moral idea that we shouldn’t “steal” the planet from our grandchildren.



Fig. 7:11 :
A mother bird feeding
her young -
A symbolic picture

Circular Economy



The circular economy is an economic system designed to minimise waste and maximise the efficient use of resources by keeping products, materials, and resources in use for as long as possible. It replaces the traditional linear model of take–make–dispose with a closed-loop system based on reduce, reuse, repair, refurbish, and recycle.

Regenerative Agriculture

Regenerative agriculture is a farming approach that aims to restore and improve the health of soil, ecosystems, and biodiversity while producing food sustainably. Instead of merely sustaining existing resources, it seeks to regenerate natural systems by enhancing soil fertility, increasing organic matter, improving water retention, and capturing atmospheric carbon.

Intergenerational equity is the principle that the present generation has a moral responsibility to use natural resources and economic opportunities in a way that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It emphasises fairness and justice between generations in the use of environmental, economic, and social resources.

Intermediate Technology

Intermediate Technology is a concept developed by E. F. Schumacher, a deep admirer of Gandhi. Schumacher argued that, for developing societies,

advanced Western technology is often too costly, complex, and damaging to local culture and the environment. To address this, he proposed Intermediate or Appropriate Technology—a middle path between primitive tools and highly capital-intensive industrial machines.

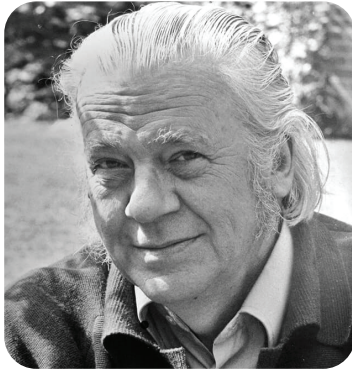


Fig. 7:12 :
E. F. Schumacher

E. F. Schumacher

E. F. Schumacher (1911–1977) was a German-born British economist and statistician who made a significant contribution to alternative economic thinking. He is best known for advocating **human-scale, decentralised, and appropriate technologies** that place people and nature at the centre of development. Schumacher believed that economic progress should serve human well-being rather than mere growth and profit. His ideas reached a global audience through his book *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as If People Mattered*, published in 1973. The book criticised large-scale industrialisation and promoted simplicity, sustainability, and ethical responsibility in economic life. In recognition of its lasting impact, *Small Is Beautiful* was ranked among the **100 most influential books published since the Second World War**.

Schumacher's thoughts closely resonate with **Gandhian principles** such as decentralisation, self-reliance, and dignity of labour. His work continues to inspire discussions on sustainable development, environmental responsibility, and people-centred economics.

What is Intermediate Technology?

The word *intermediate* suggests balance. If:

- Level 1 is simple hand tools, and
- Level 3 is large, automated, expensive factories.

Then **Intermediate Technology (Level 2)** lies in between. It is more efficient than traditional tools but remains affordable, simple, and locally manageable. Schumacher believed technology should have a “*human face*”—machines must serve people, not dominate them. The real aim of technology, he argued, is to reduce drudgery while preserving human dignity, creativity, and nature.

Core Features of Intermediate Technology

Schumacher's model rests on three key pillars:

- **Accessibility and Affordability**

Technology must be cheap enough for ordinary people. If a machine costs more than what a worker earns in a year, it only benefits the rich. Intermediate technology uses local materials, simple designs, and skills that villagers can learn, repair, and control themselves.

- **Environmental Sustainability**

Inspired by the philosophy of “*Small is Beautiful*,” Schumacher insisted that technology should work *with* nature, not against it. It should use renewable energy, reduce waste, and conserve resources for future generations.

- **Human Creativity and Participation**

Modern mass production often reduces workers to “cogs in a machine.” Intermediate technology supports production by the masses, allowing room for skill, intelligence, and meaningful work. It creates jobs locally and reduces forced migration to overcrowded cities.



Intermediate Technology :

Practical Examples

- **Biogas plants and solar cookers:** *These provide clean energy using local waste, improve health, save forests, and can be maintained by villagers themselves.*
- **Amul’s Milk Collection System:** *The Amul cooperative model is a classic example. Instead of relying on massive, fully automated industrial farms, Amul uses small-scale technology like Bulk Milk Chillers at the village level. This allows thousands of small-scale farmers to preserve their milk locally without needing expensive, high-end infrastructure, bridging the gap between traditional farming and large-scale dairy processing.*

Relevance

Schumacher’s ideas continue to shape green technology and the maker movement today. His lasting message is simple, the best technology is not the biggest, but the one that solves human beings problems with minimum resources and maximum dignity. In short, Intermediate technology is not just old technology; it is modern technology developed using local resources, at a cost that is affordable to the common man, without destroying employment opportunities.

Local is Our Future: Steps to an Economics of Happiness

The book ***Local is Our Future*** is written by **Helena Norberg-Hodge**. She is a leader in the movement to support local economies. Her main idea is that for a better future, we must focus on “local” rather than “global.”

1. **What is Localisation?** Instead of big factories and products coming from far-away countries (Globalisation), we should produce and buy things near our homes. This is called **Localisation**. It reduces the distance between the person who makes the product and the person who uses it.



Fig. 7.13 :
Helena Norberg-Hodge

2. **The Economics of Happiness** Usually, a country's success is measured by money (GDP). But Helena says we should measure success by the **health of our community** and the **safety of our environment**. This is the "Economics of Happiness." When we stay connected to our neighbors and nature, we become happier
3. A **"Solution-Multiplier"** (one simple solution that fixes many problems at the same time) Localisation is a single solution that solves many problems at once:
 - **Climate Change:** Less transport means less pollution.
 - **Nature:** Local farming protects different types of plants (Biodiversity).
 - **Mental Health:** Stronger friendships and face-to-face talk make us feel better.
4. **Resilience and Diversity** Globalisation makes every city look the same (Monoculture). Localisation celebrates different cultures and traditions. It makes communities strong (Resilience) because they can produce their own food and energy without depending on risky global markets.
5. **Global Knowledge, Local Action** Localisation does not mean we should live alone. It means we should share **knowledge and ideas** with the whole world, but produce and use **physical goods** (like food and clothes) locally.



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. Design a 'Swadeshi Action Plan' for your school or locality—what practical steps would you suggest and why?
2. Prepare a 'One-Week Simple Living Challenge' for your class—what activities would you include and what values would it promote?
3. Choose one form of bread labour you can practise in your daily life and explain how it benefits both you and society.
4. Design a 'Student Trusteeship Plan' to use shared resources (books, water, electricity) responsibly in your school.
5. Organise a **Swap Shop** in the school campus. (Students are asked to bring usable items such as books, stationery, toys, bags, clothes, or household items that they no longer need but are in good condition. These items are displayed in a common space and exchanged freely among students without the use of money.)

Sarvodaya Social Order

This chapter focuses on the social thought of Mahatma Gandhi. As a political activist and social reformer he had a clear vision of an ideal society where everyone lived with prosperity and equality. He envisioned a society that ensured the welfare of all living beings. Gandhi sought to restructure the existing social, economic, political and educational systems in order to achieve the integrated development of all. To understand Gandhi's social vision, it is essential to understand certain basic sociological concepts.

Society

Society is a commonly used term. It refers to a group of people living within a common territory with shared customs and laws. The term society is derived from the Latin word 'societas' which means companionship or friendship. It indicates that human beings live in the company of other people. That is why Aristotle described human beings as a social animal. Society is a web of relationships among individuals who share similar culture, values, and lifestyles. It provides the structure within which people engage,



Fig. 8:01 : A symbolic image depicting the diversity of society



Fig. 8:02 : Auguste Comte

Sociology

Sociology is the scientific study of human society and social behaviour. It examines how societies originate, develop, and function, as well as the structure of social relationships. Sociology is a branch of social science that focuses on the social life and activities of human beings within society. The French philosopher Auguste Comte, who is known as the father of sociology, defined sociology as the science that studies social phenomena governed by natural and unchanging laws, with the aim of discovering these laws through systematic investigation.

Family

The family is the smallest unit of society. It is where individuals first learn language, values, and social behaviour, and get socialised.

collaborate, and meet their needs. A society has several important characteristics: it is made up of individuals who regularly interact, share a common culture, inhabit a specific geographical area, adhere to norms and regulations, and rely on each other, which allows it to persist over time. The relationship between individuals and society is mutual. Society influences individuals through socialization, while individuals, through their actions and involvement, contribute to the maintenance and development of society. Within society, a community represents to a smaller and more interconnected group where individuals have close ties, a sense of belonging to one another and often share a common location. Communities such as villages, neighbourhoods, or tribal groups embody shared identity and mutual assistance, making them vital components of social life.

Society and Modern Life

In the contemporary world, society is no longer limited to people living within the same geographical area. With the advancement of communication technology and social media, people also form virtual societies beyond geographical boundaries where they share ideas, interests, and values online, thus forming a community. Although these virtual societies may not have a common territory, they still show common features of a territory-bound society such as communication, interaction, cooperation, and shared norms. At the same time, traditional communities like families, villages, and neighbourhoods continue to play a significant role in shaping a person's character by teaching values such as cooperation, responsibility, and respect. This shows that while society is constantly evolving the need for social relationships remains vital.



1. Identify a society in which you are part of (such as school, city, or nation).
2. Identify one community within that society (such as neighbourhood, peer group, or cultural group).
3. Prepare short notes :
 - a. Shared values and norms of society
 - b. Inter-dependence between individuals and society

Gandhi on Society, and the Ideal of Sarvodaya

Human beings are gregarious and hence naturally social. Their instinct drives them to be part of a community. Individuals and society are closely linked mutually dependent complementing one another.

The relationship between individual and society has been problematic and controversial. Several sociologists and thinkers identified individual – social relationship as conflictual. They argued that society as it is traditionally structured restricted and even violate individual interests. So there is a construct as ‘individual versus society,’ as though there is an unresolved and unresolvable conflict between individual and social interests. Gandhi did not share this view. He believed in the complementarity of individual and social interests. According to Gandhi, there was no ground for such a conflict as society is created by individuals or groups to support life and ensure safe and peaceful living. Gandhi argued that individual happiness should contribute to societal happiness and vice-versa. For him, social welfare meant ensuring individual freedom and equal opportunity to contribute their talents and resources for the community.

Gandhi’s vision of an ideal society-Sarvodaya society- is based on his concept of the oneness of life. He believed that reality and everything in it are essentially one and inseparable. Therefore, there cannot be any individuals with no inherent conflict between the interests of the individual and those of society.

Meaning of Sarvodaya

The word Sarvodaya is a Sanskrit word comprising sarva(all) and udaya (rising). So the term Sarvodaya means ‘upliftment’ or ‘welfare’ of all. ‘All’ means not only the human beings, but all the living organisms in this universe. Gandhi believed that human development is possible only through a balanced interaction between human and nature.

Gandhi rejected the utilitarian philosophy of achieving the greatest good for the greatest number prevalent during his times. The problem in the idea of greatest number is that it does not include all; it excludes some sections of society – and those get excluded are invariably the weak, the marginalised and the poor. So according to Gandhi it is an unjust system. True welfare must give priority and precedences to the ‘lowest and least’ over others. So in the ideal social order conceived by Gandhi, development begins from the last man. (Vinoba Bhave later called it Antyodaya). According to him, all individuals should have equal opportunities for their development. Hence he aimed at the greatest good of all. Thus the concept of Sarvodaya aimed at the integrated and inclusive development and happiness of all.



Antyodaya

Antyodaya, as envisioned by Vinoba Bhave, means the upliftment of the last and weakest person in society. He believed that true social progress begins when the poorest are placed at the centre of development. Rooted in compassion, non-violence, and voluntary sharing of resources, Antyodaya aimed at creating a just, self-reliant, and morally awakened society.

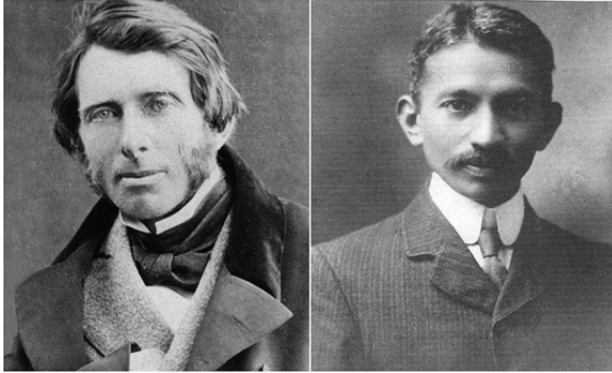
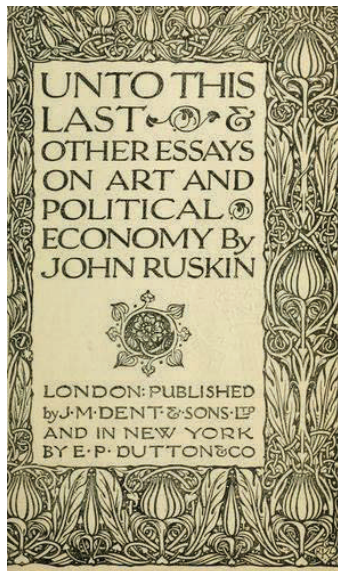


Fig. 8:03 : John Ruskin

Fig. 8:04 : Gandhi



Unto This Last

Unto This Last is a collection of essays written by John Ruskin that challenges conventional economic theories of profit and competition. Ruskin argues that economics should be guided by moral values and concern

for human welfare. He believes that wealth is meaningful only when it improves the lives of all members of society. The book strongly criticises industrial capitalism for ignoring the dignity of labour. Ruskin emphasises cooperation, fairness, and social responsibility over selfish profit. Unto This Last impacted Mahatma Gandhi, in shaping his philosophy of life, particularly his views on the economics of non-violence. Gandhi translated the work and applied its principles to his philosophy of simple living. The book inspired thinkers concerned with ethical economics and social justice worldwide. Ruskin's ideas remain vibrant in contemporary debates on social justice.

Origin of the concept Sarvodaya

“Sarvodaya” means the upliftment and welfare of all. The word was coined by Gandhi in 1908 as the title for his Gujarati paraphrase of John Ruskin’s book *Unto This Last*. Gandhi read Ruskin’s book on a train journey from Johannesburg to Dublin. He devoted an entire chapter in his Autobiography entitled “The Magic Spell of a Book” - Part IV, Chapter 18 – in which he described its impact the book made on him. He concluded the chapter by saying: “I determined to change my life in accordance with the ideals of the book. Gandhi sums up the teachings of *Unto This Last* as follows:

The good of the individual is contained in the good of all.

The lawyer’s work has the same value as the barber’s, as all have the same right to earn their livelihood from work.

The life of a labourer i.e. the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living. .

Gandhi continued, “the first of these I knew. The second I had dimly realised. The third had never occurred to me. *Unto This Last* made it as clear as daylight for me that the second and the third were contained in the first”. On the basis of these three teachings, Gandhi developed the concept of Sarvodaya.

The third principle struck him as entirely new. This principle influenced Gandhi in developing his idea of bread labour. In order to practise the teachings of Ruskin he established the Phoenix settlement in South Africa. In 1908 he paraphrased this book into Gujarati with the title *Sarvodaya*. Ruskin borrowed the expression from *Unto This Last* based on a Biblical story which teaches equality and justice for all.

Philosophical Foundations of Sarvodaya

Gandhi's concept of Sarvodaya is based on the Upanishadic principle of oneness of all life. It incorporates the traditional Indian concepts of yajna, anasaktiyoga, renunciation, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam etc.

Gandhi moved from theory to practice by building the Phoenix Settlement. Students will do the same through a design a Modern Sarvodaya School. Groups present their "blueprint" in class, explaining how their school reflects Ruskin's "Unto This Last."



Gandhi believed in the fundamental unity of life. He also believed that all human beings possess a Divine spark in the form of soul or atman. Hence all have equal right to live with dignity in this world. The ultimate purpose of our life is self-realisation or to be one with the Divine. This is possible only through selfless service to our fellow beings, which ultimately results in the welfare of all.

Guiding Principles of Sarvodaya

Mahatma Gandhi considered truth and non-violence as the guiding principles of Sarvodaya. For Gandhi, truth is the end and non-violence is the only means for that. He interpreted non-violence as the positive form of love i.e. the unconditional love for our fellow beings. This positive form of love develops an attitude of service and renunciation for the good of others.

Gandhian concept of Individual and Society

Gandhi gave prime importance to the role of individual in Sarvodaya society. But he knew that man cannot live in isolation. Social support is essential for the complete development of an individual. According to Gandhi no society can be built on the denial of individual freedom. But at the same time he considered too much individualism dangerous as it was the law of the beast in the jungle. So he suggested a balance between individual freedom and social responsibility. That is why he said "The willing obedience to social restraints for the well-being of others enriches both the individual and the society."



Key Concepts from Indian Philosophy

Advaita: A school of Vedic philosophy that teaches a unified understanding of the Upanishads.

Anasakti Yoga: A concept from the Bhagavad Gita, meaning non-attachment. Gandhi interpreted it as: "Do your duty without expecting rewards."

Yajna: A Vedic concept meaning sacrifice. It represents helping others and performing acts of charity.

Renunciation: Giving up something for the good of others.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Means "the whole world is one family." It teaches living in harmony while respecting each other's differences.

Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu: A Sanskrit prayer wishing for the well-being and happiness of all living beings in the universe.

Individual transformation

According to Mahatma Gandhi individual is the basic unit of society. Therefore transformation of an individual is the starting point of social change. He believed that a permanent change of society is possible only through the inner change of the individual.

Gandhi realised that a disciplined life is essential for the inner change of the individual. For that he gave the Ashram Vows or Basic Vows. Gandhi believed that the practice of Ashram vows in daily life provided an inner strength for the individual. The inmates at the Gandhi's Ashrams followed these vows in their life. (The Ashram Vows are explained in Chapter 5)



Identify the role of the individual from your surroundings. Examine how an individual can change the society through Gandhian views. Write a report.

The place of Village Community in Sarvodaya

In his ideal social order Mahatma Gandhi gave great importance to the village community. According to him village used to be the basic unit of community life in India. He considered India as a land of villages and said that India lives in her villages. That is why he said, "I would say that if village perishes, India will perish too. India will be no more India. Her own mission in the world will get lost." Gandhi believed that if India has to attain true freedom the people should live in villages not in cities, in huts-meaning small house-not in palaces. We can realise truth and nonviolence only in the simplicity of our villages.

In the Sarvodaya social order, the village community holds a central and vital place. Sarvodaya, emphasises grassroots development starting from



Fig. 8:06 : Village Community

villages. Villages are seen as self-sufficient units where economic, social, and moral growth can take place simultaneously. The village community promotes cooperation, equality, and shared responsibility among its members. It encourages decentralised governance through local participation and collective decision-making. Cottage industries and village-based occupations are important for providing employment and dignity of labour. Education and moral values are nurtured within the face to face communities in villages. Gandhi described the relationship between the individual, village and the world not as a pyramid (where the top crushes the bottom), but as Oceanic Circles, the individual at the centre and the other units around it in ever widening circles. Sarvodaya stresses the importance of non-violence and mutual service in village life. The village becomes a space for reducing inequality and exploitation. Thus, the village community is the foundation for achieving true Sarvodaya.

Conduct a small group discussion on “Do you agree with Gandhi that India lives in her villages? Give reasons.” Have you heard about Urbanisation? How you understand it – discuss in your group



Removal of Untouchability and Sarvodaya

Untouchability refers to the social inhibition to touch. It was a feature of the Indian caste system. “It is a practice in which some lower caste people are kept at a distance and denied of social equality for their touch is considered to be polluting or contaminating the higher caste people.”

Gandhi considered untouchability as a blot on Hinduism. “In my opinion untouchability in the form in which we practise it today is not, and ought to be, an essential part of Hinduism. There is sheer ignorance and cruelty behind it. I look upon it with an excrescence on Hinduism. It does not protect religion, but suffocates it.” To him all are born out of a single father. So, he called the Dalits ‘Harijans’, which means people or children of God. The Sarvodaya society was free from the practice of untouchability. According to Gandhi, “none can be born untouchable as all are sparks of one and the same fire. It is wrong to treat certain human beings as untouchables from birth”.

Gandhi put forward many steps for the removal of untouchability. In his satyagraha ashrams all people lived together without any caste discrimination. Gandhi included removal of untouchability as an important item in his constructive programme. On 8th May 1933, Gandhi began 21 days fast primarily to protest against the practice of untouchability and the continued discrimination in the Hindu society. He also launched a one-year campaign to help the Harijan movement. In order to gather public opinion against this inhuman practice he went on a country-wide tour.

Seven Social evils

Mahatma Gandhi held the conviction that India could attain genuine freedom only when its society was liberated not merely from political oppression but also from entrenched social injustices. He identified issues such as untouchability, inequality, poverty, illiteracy, addiction, communal animosity, and exploitation as significant barriers to human dignity and national advancement. Gandhi's strategy for addressing these social issues was informed by the tenets of truth, non-violence, and Sarvodaya. Through his constructive initiatives, ethical leadership, and personal example, he aimed to transform society from within and motivate individuals to become catalysts for change. Grasping these seven social evils and Gandhi's responses to them enhances our understanding of his vision for a fair, compassionate, and harmonious society.



Fig. 8:09 :
Frederick Lewis
Donaldson

The authorship of the concept of social evils formulated as “The Seven Social Evils” has been attributed to Gandhi. But originally it was part of a sermon delivered by Frederick Lewis Donaldson, an Anglican priest and Christian Socialist, at Westminster Abbey on March 20, 1925. Originally termed the “Seven Deadly Social Sins,” the

list was intended to warn the public about the moral decay caused by modern industrial society. The concept gained global prominence when a “fair friend” sent the list to Mahatma Gandhi, who published it in his weekly journal, Young India, on October 22, 1925. Gandhi did not claim to be the author but adopted them as the root causes of “passive violence” that leads to physical conflict. The list serves as a moral framework, highlighting that societal progress is impossible when politics, wealth, and science are separated from ethics and human character.



The Sarvodaya society is free from the following seven social evils. They are:

1. Education without character
2. Politics without principle
3. Science without humanity
4. Worship without sacrifice
5. Pleasure without conscience
6. Commerce without morality
7. Wealth without work

Originally it was formulated by an Anglican priest. Gandhi endorsed them. Gandhi realised that the awareness about these seven social evils is necessary to understand the social, economic, political and communal problems existing in the society. Many programmes proposed by Gandhi for social transformation were aimed at the eradication of these social evils.



Conduct a debate in the school on the topic “Knowledge without character is dangerous.”

Economic and Political Order of Sarvodaya

The economic order of Sarvodaya stresses a balance between material and moral progress.. Its main features include simple living, swadeshi,

decentralisation, need-based production, equitable distribution, bread labour, trusteeship, self-sufficiency, and rejection of labour-saving machinery. The political order of Sarvodaya aimed at enlightened anarchy i.e., society free from excessive control of the state. Gandhi proposed a political structure based on decentralisation, where power is exercised by village panchayats with active participation of the people.

Pathways to Sarvodaya

In order to realise the Sarvodaya social order, Gandhi proposed two pathways. They were Constructive Programme and Satyagraha.



Constructive programme

Gandhi defined Constructive Programme as a ‘truthful and non-violent way of winning poorna swaraj’. Constructive Programme aimed at the multi-sided growth of the whole nation. Through the Constructive Programme Gandhi wanted to revive the self-sufficient, self-reliant and autonomous Indian village system. With this intention, he introduced the programme during the freedom struggle. Let us discuss the areas of constructive programme.

*Fig. 8:10 :
As part of constructive
programmes Gandhi
is spinning yarn on the
Charkha*

1. Communal unity

All religions preach the gospel of love and universal brotherhood. Different religions are different paths leading to the same goal i.e. God. People usually forget this and use religion as a tool for division. Conflicts on the basis of religion always caused bloodshed and distress in society. Gandhi realised that peace could not be maintained without communal unity. Therefore, he worked for it.

2. Removal of Untouchability

Segregation of people as untouchables was an inhuman practice. It was the violation of human rights. Therefore, Gandhi gave prime importance for the removal of untouchability.

3. Prohibition

Prohibition means enforcement of law to prohibit intoxicating drinks and drugs. Gandhi realised that the intoxicating substances will spoil the body as well as the mind. He considered alcoholism as a sin. He treated it as a social problem. He was aware of the miseries in the life of a drunkard, his family and the society. Hence Gandhi included prohibition as an item in the Constructive Programme.

4. Khadi

Gandhi considered Khadi as the symbol of political and economic independence of the country. He said ‘‘It connotes the beginning of economic freedom and equality of all in the country... It means a wholesale Swadeshi mentality, a determination to find all the necessities of life in India and that through the labour and intellect of the villagers’’. For him, Khadi mentality means decentralisation of production and distribution. He said ‘‘Khadi to me is the symbol of unity of Indian humanity, of its economic freedom and equality’’.

5. Other Village Industries

Gandhi realised the fact that village economy will be incomplete without the essential village industries. They are hand- grinding, hand-pounding, soap-making, paper-making, match-making, tanning, oil-pressing, etc., In India, where man power is plenty, what we require is not labour-saving devices but a production system which will use maximum manpower. Village industries served this purpose and helped millions to earn a decent minimum to support their life.

6. Village Sanitation

Gandhi gave great importance to village sanitation. Lack of latrines and proper drainage facilities made villages unclean and caused epidemics. He tried to prevent by creating awareness among the village people about cleanliness.

7. Basic Education

Basic education connects the child with his village and with his surroundings. It was a craft-centered education, which emphasised the training of three Hs- Head, Heart and Hand. The training of these faculties helped to bring out the best in the child and developed both the body and the mind.

8. Adult Education

Gandhi considered Adult Education as a social responsibility. He did not want the state to undertake the adult education programme.

He said every educated member of the society should undertake the responsibility of adult education.

9. Women

With a view to improve the status of women in society, Gandhi included emancipation of women in the constructive programme. He said that men have not realised that women must be the true helpmate of man in the mission of service. During the freedom struggle Indian women actively participated in public activities. Satyagraha brought them out of kitchens.

10. Education in Health and Hygiene

Gandhi said, ‘in a well-ordered society citizens know and observe the laws of health and hygiene. It is established beyond doubt that ignorance and neglect of the law of health and hygiene are responsible for the majority of diseases to which mankind is heir’. Hence Gandhi gave importance to health and hygiene in the education of villagers.

11. Provincial Languages

Gandhi realised that ‘the languages of India have suffered impoverishment’. As the provincial languages represent great wisdom, Gandhi suggested the promotion of provincial languages.

12. National Language

According to Gandhi, an independent nation should have a national language. In the Indian context, he preferred Hindustani a simplified form of Hindi-a combination of Hindi and Urdu, spoken by the majority as the national language.

13. Economic Equality

For Gandhi working for economic equality meant abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. He said “it means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation’s wealth on the one hand, and the levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other”. Gandhi proposed Trusteeship as a means to achieve economic equality.

14. Kisans

India is predominantly an agrarian country. Farmers constitute the majority of its population. They produce the food grains for the country. So they should be treated well. Through proper motivation and awareness programmes their conditions should be improved.

15. Labour

Gandhi considered exploitation of labour as a sin. This can be avoided only through organising the labourers on a non-violent basis.

16. Adivasis

Gandhi included service of Adivasis as an important item in the constructive programme. He said “Adivasis are the original inhabitants whose material position is perhaps not better than of Harijans and who have long been victims of neglect on the part of the so called high classes.” He believed that India could not achieve poorna swaraj on non-violent basis by neglecting the Adivasis. So he said the problem of Adivasis should be studied carefully and immediate measures should be taken to preserve their cultural identity.

17. Lepers

In the past there were a lot of persons afflicted with leprosy. Though it was a curable disease, society ill-treated them. Gandhi was totally against the discrimination. He believed that efforts should be taken to convince the people that leprosy, like any other disease was curable.

18. Students

Gandhi considered students as the barometers of social change. He used the student force in the freedom struggle. However, he did not encourage the involvement of students in party politics.

Apart from these 18 items Gandhi added three more items in the Constructive programme such as improvement of cattle, nature cure and refugees and their problems. Later, his follower Vinoba Bhave added two more items viz: Bhoodan and Santhi Sena.

19. Nature Cure

By Nature Cure Gandhi implied an ideal way of life. It also implied that “the treatment should be the cheapest and the simplest possible. Such treatment should be carried out in villages. The villagers should be able to provide necessary means and equipment. What cannot be had in the villages should be procured.” According to Gandhi, Nature Cure means the regulation of life in accordance with the laws of health. He said “the essence of nature cure is that we learn the principles of hygiene and sanitation and abide by those laws as well as the laws relating to proper nutrition”.



20. Improvement of cattle

Gandhi included improvement of cattle as an important item in the constructive programme, because he believed that cattle represented the entire sub-human species in the world. He believed that it was impossible for an individual farmer in a village to look after the welfare of his cow in his own home in a proper way. So, he suggested the promotion of co-operative cattle farming.

21. Refugees and their problems

Gandhi was very much concerned with the problems of refugees. He visited refugee camps and hospitals giving consolation to them. He asked them to live in cooperation to maintain peace and to improve their living condition.

Through these programmes Gandhi wanted to reconstruct the nation from the bottom. He introduced

it as a programme for the social and economic upliftment of the country. Various organisations were formed for the implementation of the Constructive Programme. All India Spinners' Association, All India Village Industries Association, Harijan Sevak Sangh, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust etc. were some of them. Now we shall discuss two important organisations that were formed with the aim of social transformation as a continuation of the constructive programmes, under the complete leadership and guidance of Gandhiji.

Harijan Sevak Sangh



It was founded in September 1932 in the wake of Gandhis fast at Yervada Jail against Communal Award. Its headquarters were in Delhi. Gandhi himself drafted the constitution of the Sangh. It was registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 in Delhi. It worked

for the social and educational upliftment of the Harijans. The objective of Harijan Sevak Sangh was eradication of untouchability through truthful and non-violent means.

The Harijan Fund was closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi's tour of India after the Poona Pact of 1932. During this tour, Gandhiji travelled to different parts of the country to spread awareness against untouchability and to mobilise public support for the upliftment of the Harijans. He appealed

“Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place”

The Constructive Programme is the title of a seminal booklet written by M.K. Gandhi, officially published as “Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place” in 1941. In this work, Gandhi shifted the focus from merely opposing British rule to the internal “reconstruction” of Indian society, arguing that Poorna Swaraj could only be achieved through self-reliance and social reform. Later the book was revised and enlarged in 1945. While Gandhi had been practising and preaching these ideas since his time in South Africa, this specific book served as a consolidated “manifesto” for the social and economic reconstruction of India.

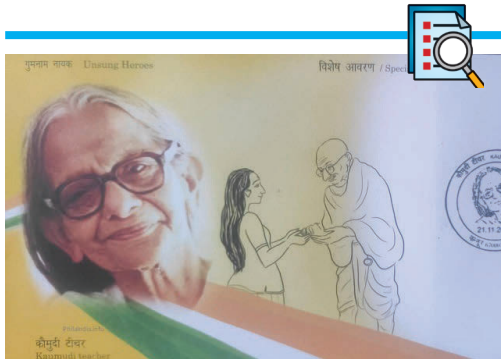


Fig. 8:11 : Picture of special poster cover released by the department of posts in 2022 to Honour Kaumudi Teacher

The Sacrifice of Kaumudi

During his nationwide Harijan Tour in January 1934, Mahatma Gandhi visited Kerala to mobilise public opinion against the social evil of untouchability and to collect contributions for the Harijan Fund. On January 13, at a public meeting in Vatakara, a young girl named Kaumudi demonstrated an extraordinary example of Gandhian sacrifice. Responding to Gandhiji's appeal for funds, she stepped onto the stage and voluntarily surrendered her gold bangles, necklace, and earrings. Gandhi agreed to accept the jewellery only after she pledged to never wear gold ornaments again—a condition she accepted with immense grace. This act of renunciation deeply moved Gandhi, who later wrote about her in his journal, Harijan, noting that her "true ornament" was her character and her spirit of sacrifice. This incident highlights how the Gandhian movement succeeded in transcending age and gender, inspiring individuals to place social justice above personal material wealth.

to people to contribute to the Harijan Fund, which was meant to finance programmes for their social, educational, and economic welfare. The amount collected through the fund was later utilised by the Harijan Sevak Sangh. Thus, Gandhi's Indian tour helped in building public opinion as well as providing financial support for his campaign against untouchability.

The Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

It was established in 1945 by Mahatma Gandhi to address the issues of women in rural India. The growth of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust is set against the backdrop of the history of India's freedom struggle. People from all walks of life as well as the masses gave their resources to set up the Trust. Its headquarters were in Kasturbagram (Indore). It has 22 state branches all over the country. Sarojini Naidu, dedicated her time and energy for the Trust. At the beginning of the new century, the role of Kasturba Trust was very powerful. The trust has remained true to its ideals for over 50 years of constructive work among women and children in rural India. It did constructive work among women and children in rural India in the fields of healthcare, education, literacy, vocational training, relief work and employment generation. Mahatma Gandhi, Vallabhai Patel, Thakkar Bapa, Dada Saheb Mavlankar, Prem Leela Thakarasi, Laxmi N. Menon, Maniben Patel and Dr. Sushila Nayar were its chairpersons.



Fig. 8:12 : Kasturba Gandhi

Living memorial

Following the death of Kasturba Gandhi on February 22, 1944, during her internment at the Aga Khan Palace, the nation sought to create a tribute to her memory. Mahatma Gandhi envisioned a "living memorial"

that would actively continue her work rather than a static monument. Consequently, the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust was established. The Indian public contributed over 1.31 crore to the fund, reflecting the deep collective respect for "Ba."

To uphold the Gandhian principle of Aparigraha (non-possession), Gandhi donated all of Kasturba's personal jewellery to the Trust. He mandated that these resources be used exclusively for the upliftment of rural women and children, focusing on healthcare, education, and self-reliance. Today, the Trust remains a vital institution, embodying the ideal of Sarvodaya and the combined legacy of "Ba" and "Bapu."

Divide the class into small groups. Provide them with a list of key items from the Constructive Programme (e.g., Communal Unity, Removal of Untouchability, Khadi, Village Sanitation, Adult Education, Uplift of Women). Ask them to place these items into three "Building Blocks":

Social Equality (e.g., Removal of Untouchability, Unity)

Economic Self-Reliance (e.g., Khadi, Village Industries)

Individual/Community Health (e.g., Prohibition, Sanitation)



Satyagraha

Gandhi proposed Satyagraha as a strategy for the establishment of Sarvodaya. Gandhi considered Satyagraha as the inherent birth right and sacred duty of a person. 'Satyagraha implies the exercise of the purest soul-force against all injustice, oppression and exploitation'. The technique of Satyagraha is to destroy the evil without destroying the evil doer through the self-suffering of the Satyagrahi. The self-suffering of the Satyagrahi changes the heart of the evildoer which guides him to the path of Sarvodaya. (For details see Chapter 9)



Mahatma Gandhi's Talisman

"I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]. Will he [she] gain anything by it? Will it restore him [her] to a control over his [her] own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melt away".

This was one of the last notes left behind by Mahatma Gandhi in 1948, expressing his deepest social concern. It is also a piece of advice for future policy makers of India. It urges them to prioritise the concerns of the poorest of the poor in governance.

Sarvodaya after Mahatma Gandhi

After the death of Gandhi his followers launched various programmes for the establishment of Sarvodaya. Under the leadership of Vinoba Bhave, a

Sarvodaya Samaj was formed. The Gandhian Constructive workers continued their programmes. Vinoba spent a period of ten months among the refugees. He, as a Satyagrahi, tried to clear their mind from bitterness and distrust. Vinoba formed a peace brigade or shanti sena for the revival of peace in various parts of the country. Let us analyse a few movements organised after Gandhi for the establishment of Sarvodaya.

Bhoodan Movement

The Bhoodan Movement, led by Acharya Vinoba Bhave, emerged as one of the most significant voluntary social reform initiatives in post-independence India. Beginning in 1951, the movement responded to the deep inequalities in land ownership and the widespread distress among landless peasants,



Fig. 8:13 :
Vinoba Bhave on the
Bhoodan Padayatra

particularly in regions still shaped by feudal and semi-feudal land relations. Although the Indian government had already begun implementing land reforms, these were slow, uneven, and often resisted by powerful landed interests. Vinoba Bhave sought an alternative path grounded in Gandhian principles of non-violence, trusteeship, and Sarvodaya. His belief was that social harmony required a fair distribution of resources, and

that wealthy landowners should consider themselves moral trustees of their surplus land, voluntarily sharing it with the landless poor.

The immediate spark for the movement came during Vinoba's visit to Pochampally in present-day Telangana on April 18, 1951. When some landless Dalit families expressed their difficulties, a local landlord, Rama Chandra Reddy, spontaneously offered them 100 acres of land. This moment convinced Vinoba that voluntary land redistribution was possible on a much larger scale and that moral appeal could succeed where legislation had struggled. He therefore launched a nationwide campaign based on padayatra—walking from village to village, engaging directly with local communities, and appealing to their conscience. Through these long journeys across India, Vinoba mobilised villagers, encouraged dialogue, and created an atmosphere in which donating land was perceived as a noble and socially responsible act.

The movement soon expanded from simple land donation (Bhoodan) to the more ambitious idea of Gramdan, or “village gift,” in which an entire village would collectively agree that all land was to be treated as common property. Gramdan was envisioned as a step toward Gandhian Gram Swaraj—self-sufficient, cooperative village communities based on equality and mutual trust. The first Gramdan village was Mangroth (or Magroth) in the Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh, declared in 1952. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, thousands of villages had formally pledged to Gramdan, and millions of acres had been promised under Bhoodan. However, although the movement achieved notable moral and symbolic success, it faced several practical difficulties. A significant portion of the land pledged was either uncultivable, disputed, or not legally transferred to recipients. Many gifts consisted of small, scattered plots are insufficient for economic viability. Over time, paperwork and bureaucratic hurdles prevented effective redistribution, and the voluntary nature of the movement meant that donors often gave away marginal land rather than their fertile holdings.

Bhoodan, Gramdan, Shramdan, Budhi Dan, and Jeevandan were core ideas of the Bhoodan–Gramdan movement. Shramdan, or labour-gift, encouraged people to voluntarily contribute their physical labour for community welfare and village development. Budhi Dan, the intellect-gift, involved offering one’s knowledge, skills, and wisdom to guide the movement and support rural reconstruction. Jeevandan, the life-gift, represented the highest level of commitment, where individuals dedicated their entire lives to the ideals of Sarvodaya and rural upliftment. Together, these principles aimed at a non-violent social and economic transformation—a “Bloodless Revolution”—by promoting community spirit, sacrifice, and self-reliance in rural India.

By the 1960s, the initial enthusiasm began to fade, and the movement gradually declined, overshadowed by more structural, state-driven land reforms and more radical agrarian movements. Nevertheless, the Bhoodan and Gramdan movement remains an extraordinary experiment in non-violent social transformation. It played a major role in raising national consciousness about land inequality, influenced later policy debates on rural development, and demonstrated the possibilities and limits of moral persuasion in achieving economic justice.



Fig. 8:14 : Acharya Vinoba Bhave

Vinoba Bhave

Vinoba Bhave was born on 11 September 1895 in Gagode, Maharashtra, India. He was a devoted disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and a prominent freedom fighter, social reformer, and educationist. Vinoba is best known for launching the Bhoodan Movement (Land Gift Movement) in 1951. He also emphasised Sarvodaya (welfare of all), simplicity, non-violence, and ethical living. Vinoba founded the Shanti Sena (Peace Army) to promote harmony and resolve conflicts through non-violence. He worked tirelessly for rural development, social justice, and moral upliftment of society. Vinoba Bhave passed away on 15 November 1982, leaving a legacy of compassion, service, and Gandhian values.



Ask students to write a short paragraph:

“If the Bhoodan Movement were started today, how could it help rural communities?”

Shanti Sena

To establish a society dominated by peace and non-violence, Gandhi desired to organise a non-violent force called Shanti Sena. Gandhi considered it as a means to build up a Sarvodaya society. It would act as an intermediary force to bring about peace during conflicts and communal strife. “On 18 March 1938, Gandhi enunciated the concept of Shanti Sena through Harijan. Vinoba realised the importance of it. During his southern tour, he established the first unit on 27 August, 1957. Gradually the concept and message of Santhi Sena spread to various parts of the country”.

It was a volunteer-based movement where members acted as mediators to resolve disputes without using violence. The major activities of Shanti Sena included mediating conflicts in villages and towns, preventing communal clashes, and maintaining peace during local tensions or crises. The volunteers also organized awareness campaigns, workshops, and peace marches to spread Gandhian ideals, and assisted in fostering cooperation and development in villages. Additionally, Shanti Sena trained youth to practice truth, patience, and selfless service, emphasizing ethical and moral values. M. Aram refers to the selfless service and voluntary work undertaken by members of Shanti Sena in villages and communities. It involved activities such as helping the poor, promoting education, assisting during local crises, and fostering cooperation and harmony. Through Aram and Shanti Sena, Vinoba Bhave emphasized that peace and social development require active, non-violent participation from every member of society. Through these activities, Shanti Sena played an important role in Indian history by demonstrating how peaceful, non-violent action could resolve social and political conflicts while promoting the welfare of all.

Total Revolution

Jayaprakash Narayan’s concept of Total Revolution, coined during the Bihar Movement of 1974, represents a bold and holistic vision of social transformation that goes far beyond mere political change. According to JP, the crisis India faced in the mid 1970s was not just institutional, rooted in corruption, centralisation of power, and moral decay but deeply structural and moral, affecting every sphere of life. His revolutionary programme therefore encompassed seven interconnected dimensions (though he allowed that this number is flexible): social, economic, political, cultural, ideological/ intellectual, educational, and spiritual.



Jayaprakash Narayan

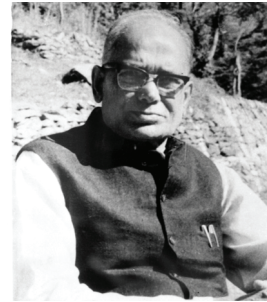


Fig. 8:15 :
Jayaprakash Narayan

Jayaprakash Narayan, popularly known as JP and Lok Naik, was born on 4 October 1902 in Sitabdiara, Bihar, India.

He was a

prominent freedom fighter, social reformer, and political leader. JP studied in the United States and returned to India inspired to work for social justice and political change. He became a devoted follower of Mahatma Gandhi and actively participated in India's freedom struggle, including the Quit India Movement. After independence, he worked for rural reconstruction, social reform, and the upliftment of the poor. In the 1970s, JP led the Total Revolution (Sampoorna Kranti) movement against corruption, misgovernance, and social inequality, calling for reforms in politics, society, economy, and education. He is remembered as a champion of truth, non-violence, and integrity, and passed away on 8 October 1979. JP's moral authority, personal integrity, and readiness to sacrifice made people follow him voluntarily. He emerged not as a ruler over the people, but as their conscience and guide. Thus, the name "Lok Nayak" became symbolic of his role as a selfless mass leader who drew strength from the people and worked solely for their welfare.

In his formulation, the social revolution sought to uproot caste discrimination, gender inequality, and other entrenched social hierarchies; the economic revolution was to decentralise economic power, encourage self-reliance (especially in villages), and ensure more equitable distribution of wealth.

Politically, JP advocated participatory democracy: he envisioned devolution of power, greater accountability, and a "party-less" model which would limit the dominance of centralised bureaucracies. On the cultural-ideological front, he emphasised renewing moral values, critical thinking, and a communal ethos, while his educational revolution called for a drastically reformed education system — one aligned to local needs, vocational realities, and ethical development. Crucially, JP's spiritual revolution pointed to inner change: he argued that lasting social transformation must be rooted in personal integrity, non-violence, and self-discipline. JP saw Total Revolution as a continuous dual process struggle and constructive work must proceed simultaneously. He did not believe in violent overthrow but insisted on non violent methods such as civil disobedience, satyagraha, and mass mobilisation, coupled with grassroots institution-building. For him, revolution was not an event but a permanent evolution even after structural changes, the process must self-renew, adapting to changing needs of society.

Philosophically, Total Revolution is rooted in Gandhian ideals as well as Sarvodaya, but JP also brought in his own socialist and democratic egalitarian thinking. His critique was not just of political corruption but of the moral bankruptcy of society; hence his emphasis on inner transformation as critical to external change. Total Revolution is a far-reaching, multidimensional strategy for rebuilding India. Not merely by changing its government, but by regenerating its social fabric, economy, culture, education, ideas, and individual consciousness. It underscores that for democracy to be genuine and stable, it must be rooted in moral values, decentralisation, non-violence, and broad-based people's participation.



Draw a concept map showing the key elements of Total Revolution: Social reform, Political reform, Economic reform, Educational reform, Moral and cultural reform. Students should indicate how these reforms are connected to creating a just and corruption-free society.

Sarvodaya in the 21st Century

Like Gandhi's satyagraha his concept of Sarvodaya, too attracted international attention and practice. Sarvodaya which incorporates his idea of non-violence, self-reliance, decentralisation, and compassion offers an alternative model of development based on human dignity and harmony with nature. Today, Sarvodaya encourages societies to rethink ideas of progress and to prioritize justice, peace, sustainability, and collective well-being.

The community of Ark is a great experiment on Gandhian lines in France initiated by Lanza del Vasto. He was the first disciple of Gandhi in the West. The Ark community practised bread labour and also tried to achieve self-sufficiency by producing most of the goods necessary for life. It is the finest example of community living. They followed non-violence, practising the value of truth, love and mutual tolerance. The members live together with complete devotion. Simple living is the speciality of this community. The ark has centres in Spain, Italy and Quebec.

The influence of Sarvodaya can be seen in many movements across the world. In Sri Lanka, the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement remains one of the largest grassroots development organizations, promoting community empowerment and participatory democracy. Founded in 1958 by A.T. Ariyaratne, it aims to empower rural communities. The movement focuses on education, health, agriculture, and social harmony, encouraging villagers to work together to improve their living conditions. It reflects Gandhi's ideas of decentralisation, simple living, and collective welfare, and has influenced many similar initiatives worldwide.

Across Europe, the Transition Towns Movement seeks local self-reliance and sustainable living, echoing Gandhian ideas on decentralised economies. The Buen Vivir (Good Living) initiatives in Latin America, especially in Ecuador and Bolivia, promote community welfare, environmental balance, and indigenous wisdom, values that are very close to Sarvodaya.

Environmental and social experiments worldwide also reflect Sarvodaya's spirit in new forms. Eco-village networks, permaculture movements, community-supported agriculture, and Zero-Waste campaigns in countries like Japan, Denmark, Germany, and the United States encourage simple living, cooperation, and responsible consumption. Peace movements such as the

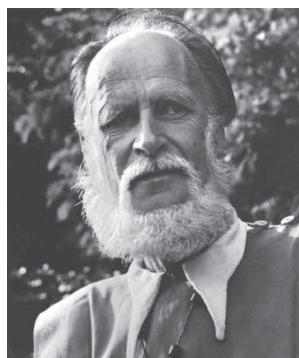


Fig. 8:16 :
Lanza del Vasto

Lanza del Vasto

Lanza del Vasto (1901–1981) was an Italian philosopher, poet, and social reformer who became a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and a follower of his principles of non-violence and truth. Inspired by Gandhian ideals, he founded the Community of the Ark Lanza del Vasto. He also organised peace campaigns, non-violent resistance movements, and educational programmes, spreading Gandhian philosophy in Europe. His work left a lasting impact on communal living, environmental awareness, and global non-violent movements.

Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne



Fig. 8:17 : Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne

Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne (1931–2024), widely revered as the “Gandhi of Sri Lanka,” was a visionary social reformer who founded the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in 1958. He sought to apply Gandhian principles of non-violence and self-reliance within a Buddhist cultural framework, focusing on the “Awakening of All. Throughout the Sri Lankan Civil War, he remained a steadfast advocate for peace, organising massive non-violent meditation marches and “peace walks” involving thousands of citizens.

Design a mini-poster, infographic, or sketch showing:

- *Global influence of Sarvodaya*
- *How communities around the world apply Gandhi's principles*
- *Could include eco-villages, peace movements, Bhoodan/Gramdan, or Buen Vivir initiatives.*



World Without War campaign in South Korea and community reconciliation efforts in Rwanda after the genocide also embody Sarvodaya's commitment to non-violence and healing.

In this way, Sarvodaya continues to inspire global action. Whether through sustainable development, grassroots democracy, peaceful resistance, or community-led initiatives, people around the world are rediscovering Gandhi's idea that true progress is possible only when the welfare of each person contributes to the welfare of all.



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. *Assign groups to research modern organisations influenced by Gandhi. They should present a report on how these organisations use non-violence or decentralisation to solve social problems today.*
2. *Design a poster for a modern ideal village based on Sarvodaya. They must include plans for sustainable energy, waste management, cottage industries, and Panchayati raj.*
3. *Conduct a simple community survey to study issues of social inequality, cleanliness, or self-reliance and prepare a report linking their observations with Gandhi's social ideas.*
4. *Prepare a project on specific aspects of Gandhi's social ideas such as removal of untouchability, upliftment of women, or social equality.*
5. *Prepare posters, charts, or presentations showing the relevance of Gandhian social ideas in contemporary society.*

Satyagraha

Satyagraha is considered as the most revolutionary contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to humanity. As we have already seen, Gandhi developed Satyagraha in South Africa in his fight for the rights of the Indians there. Later he used it successfully in Indian freedom struggle. He also used it in his fight against social injustice and corruption. This chapter discusses the theory, practice and relevance of Satyagraha.

Satyagraha – Meaning and Aims

The term Satyagraha means “holding on to truth,” and it emphasised peaceful resistance against injustice rather than violence or hatred. Gandhi believed that true strength lies in self-discipline, patience, and the willingness to suffer for a just cause. Through Satyagraha, he transformed ordinary people into active participants in the struggle for freedom and demonstrated that social and political change could be achieved through non violent means. Satyagraha played a crucial role not only in India’s freedom struggle but also in the civil rights and freedom movements across the world.

Gandhi initially referred to his method of non-violent protest as passive resistance. However, later, in 1906, he coined the term Satyagraha after realising that “passive resistance” did not fully capture the spirit and depth of his approach. Gandhi developed Satyagraha to highlight the active power of “truth force” or “soul force” — a philosophy deeply rooted in nonviolence, love, and moral strength rather than mere political strategy.

Satyagraha is considered as the most revolutionary contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to humanity. This chapter discusses the theory, practice and relevance of Satyagraha.



Students will work in small groups to study different phases in the evolution of Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha, from its beginnings in South Africa to its major movements in India. Each group will prepare a brief timeline or concept chart showing the context, causes, methods, and outcomes of their assigned phase. Group presentations will be followed by a guided discussion on how the aims and methods of Satyagraha changed over time.



Fig. 9:01 :
Gandhiji as a Satyagrahi in South Africa

The Empire Theatre Vow (Sept 11, 1906)



The first official Satyagraha was launched at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg. Over 3,000 Indians gathered to protest the "Black Act," which mandated Asians to carry registration certificates and give fingerprints. The crowd took a solemn oath in the name of God to go to jail rather than submit.

Satyagraha aims to:

Establish truth and justice – by appealing to the conscience of the oppressor through peaceful resistance.

Promote non-violent action – encouraging individuals to oppose evil without resorting to violence.

Bring about moral and social change – by transforming both the oppressor and the oppressed through self-suffering and compassion.

Achieve self-rule (Swaraj) – not merely political freedom, but also personal and spiritual self-discipline and freedom.

In short, Satyagraha sought to replace violent conflict and hatred with understanding and love, demonstrating that enduring change can only be realised through truth and non-violence.

Thus, Satyagraha strives for a mutual victory, a win-win solution and not a one-sided triumph. The aim shapes the method: no deliberate harm—whether in thought, word, or deed—should ever be inflicted. A satyagrahi must constantly respond to evil with good, anger with love, falsehood with truth, and violence with nonviolence. Ultimately, the opponent is to be regarded with the same respect and care as a member of one's own family.

Satyagraha: Dimensions and Basic Principles

Scholars who have interpreted Satyagraha have highlighted its three dimensions- as a basis of personal life, as a method of struggle and as a means of social reconstruction. Satyagraha as basis of personal life implies being truthful in thought, word and actions, which means an unwavering observance of truth in every transaction. What we focus in this chapter is an exploration of how Gandhi used truth and nonviolence in his fight against injustice. As a prelude to such a study we will first begin by understanding the basic principles of Satyagraha.

Truth

Truth for Gandhi is not only mere correspondence to fact but the Ultimate Reality or God. Satyagraha, in the sense of adherence to truth indicates an unflinching faith in the value of truth and the need to uphold it in all situations, no matter what the price might be. And upholding truth also suggests vindication of truth. How does or how shall a votary of truth vindicate truth? This question had baffled Gandhi for sometime but the study of religions convinced Gandhi that the only right way to vindicate truth was through Nonviolence. Thus for Gandhi, Satyagraha meant vindication of truth through Nonviolence.

Nonviolence

Gandhi became convinced by the study of history and religion that violence is absolutely futile and nonviolence is the cohesive force holding humanity together. People resorted to violence under the impression that violence is useful and easy. They seem to believe the violence could solve the problems. But historical experiences have demonstrated that violence creates more problems that it seem to solve. There is also the question of what Gandhi called the paradox of violence. There are instances where violence was used to eliminate existing violence. But the result always had been that in order to sustain the outcome of the use of violence more intense forms of violence had to be used. This has led to what is called the institutionalisation of violence. Gandhi had a more fundamental reason for his insistence on renouncing violence.

As stated earlier Gandhi believed in the oneness of life. And therefore, committing violence on another person amounted to committing injury upon oneself. Any one who realises this truth will certainly abstain from resorting to violence. For the above, and more reasons, Gandhi insisted on giving up violence and practising nonviolence in thought, word and deed.

Gandhi had another reason for his insistence on nonviolence in the vindication of truth, in resisting social evils and in reconstructing social life. Human beings cannot have a full comprehension of truth because of the inherent limitations of human intellect. Therefore, one must admit that his understanding of truth may be wrong and that of the opponent may be right. Hence one cannot impose one's truth on the other person. Instead one must be prepared to suffer all the consequences of one's insistence on truth upon oneself. So Gandhi formulated that: truth is the end and nonviolence the means. This statement is axiomatic in Satyagraha.

Faith in human goodness

Satyagraha is based on the assumption that human beings are basically and inherently good. Gandhi argued that as human beings are basically good if you

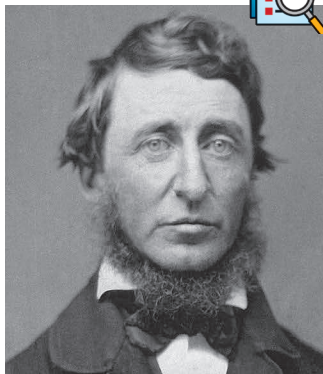


Fig. 9:02 : Henry David Thoreau

Henry David Thoreau's Civil Disobedience (1849)

Civil Disobedience, originally titled Resistance to Civil Government, is a seminal political and moral essay written by American thinker Henry David Thoreau in 1849. The essay emerged from Thoreau's personal protest against the American government, particularly its support of slavery and its involvement in the Mexican–American War. His refusal to pay the poll tax, which led to a brief imprisonment, became the immediate context for articulating his ideas.

appeal to that goodness appropriately it will respond positively. And by appropriate appeal Gandhi meant nonviolent appeal. Satyagraha believes in convincing and converting the opponent and not defeating him/her and the most effective way to convince is to appeal to the mind and heart of the opponent. Reaching the head through the heart is part of the method of Satyagraha.

Efficacy of suffering

Satyagraha is also based on firm belief in the efficacy of self suffering. As mentioned earlier, a satyagrahi does not impose his/her views on the opponent. On the contrary, s/he should be willing to suffer for the sake of one's truth, and that too without resentment or ill-will. One must suffer cheerfully for one's truth. A willing and cheerful acceptance of suffering by the satyagrahi will have a positive impact on the conscience of the opponent, resulting in a positive change of attitude.

Fearlessness

According to Gandhi, a satyagrahi must be absolutely fearless. Such fearlessness is possible when one fears only God and no one else. For Gandhi, faith in God is an indispensable precondition for being fearless. A coward will never be able to be nonviolent, and hence a satyagrahi.

Distinguishing between evil and the evil-doer

A satyagrahi must learn to distinguish between the evil that a person commits and the person per se. It is wrong to identify a person fully with the evil s/he commits. At any point of time he may realise his mistake, correct himself and deliver himself from evil. So, a satyagrahi must learn to disapprove and even hate the evil but not the person who commits it. This, in fact echoes the exhortation of Jesus to love your enemy as you love yourself.



Provide students with a worksheet containing two columns: one listing the principles of Satyagraha and the other listing their descriptions and examples in mixed order. Students match each component with the correct description and then write one sentence explaining its importance.

Sources of Influence

Here the attention of the students is drawn to the part in Chapter 3, where the influence of thinkers and activists like Leo Tolstoy, Henry David Thoreau in shaping the weapon of Satyagraha is discussed.

Rules for Satyagrahi

Satyagraha is basically a way of life that guides the political activism methods used by Satyagrahis. On a personal level, it involves committing to truth, purity, detachment, and hard work. From a political standpoint, Satyagraha emphasizes non-violent strategies to engage with opponents, seeking to shift their views rather than compel them to submit. Therefore, it requires certain guidelines, so let's talk about Gandhi's principles for Satyagraha.

Practice principled nonviolence: Refrain from retaliating, cursing, insulting, or harbouring anger towards your opponent.

Protect everyone non-violently: Safeguard even your opponent (and anyone in peril) from insult or assault.

Accept suffering willingly: Voluntarily submit to arrest, punishment, and the loss of personal property.

Respectful conduct: Always behave courteously, even in prison; do not request any special privileges.

Maintain moral discipline: Avoid fasting or employing any pressure tactics to obtain conveniences or advantages.

Obey leadership fully: Joyfully adhere to all campaign orders; if you cannot accept the movement's direction, withdraw completely.

Fulfil responsibility for entrusted property: Defend property held in trust (non-violently) even at significant personal risk.

Act without expectation: Do not impose your family responsibilities on comrades during the campaign or imprisonment.

Promote communal harmony: Steer clear of actions or situations that could incite religious or community conflict; do not participate in any procession that may offend religious sentiments.

Show dignified neutrality: Neither salute nor insult the symbols or leaders of your opponent; maintain self-respect without animosity.

Code of discipline

If Satyagraha requires intense preparation, it demands even stricter discipline. There can be no punishment or use of force against those who lack discipline — only self-control and moral strength. Mahatma Gandhi often emphasized the value of discipline. He said, "There is no deliverance and no hope without sacrifice, discipline, and self-control. Mere sacrifice without discipline will be of no use."

Speaking to a group of school children in Ahmedabad, Gandhi reminded them, “It is discipline and self-control that separate us from animals.” His own life was a perfect example of strict discipline. He never missed his morning or evening prayers, his spinning, or his vow of silence. Whether he was healthy or sick, free or in prison, he always woke up at 4 a.m. for his prayers. He even refused to eat if he had not completed his daily spinning work. In short, discipline means obedience and order. Every organisation depends on it — without discipline, no group or movement can succeed.

Qualifications of a Satyagrahi

Mahatma Gandhi thought that the success of Satyagraha relied not just on the justice of the cause but also on the moral integrity of the people involved. For him, a Satyagrahi was more than just a protester; they were a disciplined truth-seeker, driven by self-discipline, bravery, and a steadfast dedication to nonviolence. To keep Satyagraha as a pure and transformative movement, Gandhi established certain standards that every participant needed to develop. These standards focused on ethical behaviour, inner strength, and a willingness to serve, allowing Satyagrahi’s to face injustice with dignity and inspire change through moral leadership instead of force.

In the article “Qualifications of a Satyagrahi,” published in Young India on, 1929, Mahatma Gandhi codified the specific moral and physical requirements for those participating in the Indian freedom struggle.

Let’s see a Satyagrahi’s qualifications put forward by Mahatma Gandhi.

1. He must have a living faith in God.
2. He must believe in truth and nonviolence.
3. He must be leading a chaste life.
4. He must be a habitual khadi wearer and spinner.
5. He must be a teetotaler.
6. He must carry on with a willing heart of all the rules of discipline as may be laid down from time to time.
7. He should carry out the Jail rules unless they are specially devised to hurt his self-respect.



The teacher assigns different roles to students, such as a Satyagrahi, an authority figure, and a common citizen facing injustice. Students enact a short role-play demonstrating how the Satyagrahi responds to the situation by practising truth, non-violence, self-control, tolerance, and a readiness to suffer without hatred. After the role-play, the class discusses which qualifications were demonstrated and how they helped in resolving the conflict.

Stages of offering Satyagraha

Satyagraha, can be applied to any social, economic, or political conflict. The process begins when a practitioner, or *satyagrahi*, identifies a genuine injustice. After a truthful investigation, they must ensure the affected community is willing to act.

Satyagrahis should then gently alert the wrongdoers and appeal to their conscience. If this fails, the facts are publicised truthfully to build peaceful agitation. The community must be prepared to suffer for the cause. If a majority agrees, they take a pledge and begin self-purification to strengthen their resolve. Finally, after all other options are exhausted and proper notice is given, Satyagraha is launched. The chosen form must be morally superior, inclusive, and suited to the situation. Success depends on unwavering faith in the cause, a commitment to nonviolence, and a readiness to endure without hatred.

In conclusion, a typical Satyagraha may pass through some or all of the following stages.

1. Identify and express the unfairness—fully grasp the wrong and share your feelings honestly.
2. Engage with the opponent—lay out your argument, ask for a fix, and look for a fair answer.
3. Inform and rally the community so that they could grasp the problem and its ethical importance.
4. Start a peaceful demonstration, moving to non-violent direct action if convincing doesn't work.
5. Embrace voluntary suffering with a positive attitude to show your commitment and stir awareness.
6. Keep everyone united and disciplined among all Satyagrahis during the fight.
7. Ensure open communication—keep talking, don't take advantage of weaknesses, and stay respectful.
8. Aim for a fair resolution, including mediation or direct talks when it's possible.

Present students with a short case study of a social or political injustice. In groups, students identify which stages of Satyagraha should be followed at each stage and justify their choices. Each group briefly explains how non-violence, communication, and self-suffering are maintained throughout the process.



9. Agree to a ceasefire and strive for real change that brings back justice and respects everyone involved.
10. Acknowledge achievements with modesty, showing appreciation instead of boasting.

We can see all these stages in various satyagraha movements launched by Gandhi in South Africa and India.

Forms of Satyagraha

Mahatma Gandhi practiced his principles through three main forms of Satyagraha. Constructive Satyagraha involved building alternatives through his Constructive Programme. Purificatory Satyagraha, such as fasting and prayer, focused on self-purification. Finally, Aggressive Satyagraha was a direct, proactive breach of unjust laws, where the practitioner willingly faced severe repression to destroy an evil.

a. Non violent Non-Cooperation

“The principle of non-cooperation in Satyagraha rests on a core belief: exploitation cannot persist without the victim’s consent. Therefore, the most direct way to end oppression is for the victim to withdraw their cooperation. For Gandhi, this act had to be fundamentally non-violent. He asserted that non-violence was the very soul of non-cooperation, stating, ‘We may fail in everything else, and still continue our battle if we remain non-violent. But we capitulate miserably if we fail in adhering to nonviolence.’ Consequently, a satyagrahi must first be certain of the righteousness of their cause. Through humility, they must demonstrate their peaceful intentions to the opponent. It is understood that non-cooperation will likely cause inconvenience and provoke the anger of the authorities. Thus, the practitioner must be prepared to endure severe hardship. This path should only be chosen after careful preparation; as hasty action can lead to harmful consequences.”

b. Civil Disobedience

Mahatma Gandhi believed it was a sacred duty for every satyagrahi to disobey unjust and immoral laws. However, he insisted this disobedience must be civil—characterised by politeness, respect, and a steadfast commitment to nonviolence. He argued that civil disobedience is an inherent right of the citizen, one that should never be surrendered. This principle could be applied on any scale: a son against an overbearing father, or a people against a lawless, autocratic state. Yet, Gandhi warned that civil disobedience is as sharp as a knife; it is a powerful instrument that must be used with utmost care and restraint.



While mass civil disobedience is sometimes necessary, it risks being manipulated for selfish ends. Therefore, it must be organized calmly and participants must be as disciplined as soldiers, prepared to face severe trials and suffering. In fact, Gandhi considered civil disobedience more formidable than an armed rebellion, as it cannot be suppressed if resisters are prepared to endure extreme hardship. It is founded on an unwavering belief in the transformative power of innocent suffering. When disobedience is combined with love, it becomes the purest form of agitation. If organised according to its moral principles, it stands as the quickest and most effective remedy for rooting out injustice.

c. Fasting

Fasting is the most powerful and last weapon in the armoury of the satyagrahi. Fasting in Satyagraha is a hunger strike undertaken in protest. It is not a fast undertaken for purification, penitence or health. The goal of this type of fast is to persuade rather than coerce. Among the tools of the satyagrahi, Gandhi considered fasting the ultimate, and one that should not be entered upon lightly. Gandhi carried out about a dozen fasts. He did not consider a fast successful unless it changed the disposition of the people, not simply their behaviour. Gandhi said, “fasts may be limited or unto death. Either way, it is a fiery weapon and has its own science. No one as far as I am aware, has a perfect knowledge of it”. Yet it cannot be undertaken by everyone. One must earn a right to fast by devotedly following the laws of Ahimsa and thus achieving complete self-purification. Without a living faith in God accompanied by infinite patience, firm resolve, single mindedness of purpose, perfect calm and no anger or ill will, no one can attempt to undertake it. One must be pure in body, mind and spirit to deserve the right to fast.

Fasting unto death must be handled with extreme care and devotion. Gandhi had reminded: “It is a sacred thing. But it must be accepted with all its implications. It is not the fast itself but what it implies that matters”. In spite of all the training and discipline and purest of motives, fasts can become compulsive. Gandhi’s fasts were acts of obedience to the dictates of his conscience. Still in his Rajkot fast an element of force crept in. This throws light on how difficult and risky a task is to undertake a fast, whether limited or unto death.

Gandhi’s First Fast

Mahatma Gandhi’s first fast was undertaken in 1913 in South Africa, during the Indian workers’ struggle against racial discrimination. He fasted to promote unity, discipline, and moral strength among the satyagrahis, not to coerce the opponent. Gandhi’s first fast in India took place in 1918 at Ahmedabad during the textile mill workers’ strike. The workers were demanding better wages, and violence had begun to break out during the protest. Gandhi fasted to appeal to both the workers and the mill owners, urging non-violence and peaceful resolution.

Kerala Gandhi

K. Kelappan (1889–1971) was a prominent freedom fighter and social reformer from Kerala, widely known as the “Kerala Gandhi.” He actively participated in the Indian independence movement, including the Non-Cooperation Movement and the Vaikom Satyagraha, advocating for social equality and the upliftment of marginalised communities. A close follower of Mahatma Gandhi, Kelappan promoted Khadi, non-violence, and education as tools for social and political reform. He also worked tirelessly for temple entry for all castes and rural development in Kerala, leaving a lasting legacy as a moral and political leader.

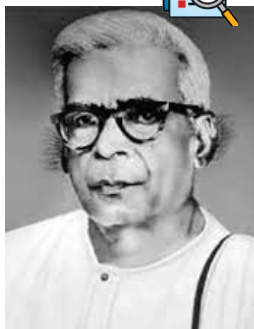


Fig. 9:03 : K. Kelappan

Savarna Jatha

Savarna Jatha Led by Mannathu Padmanabhan in 1924, was a historic non-violent march from Vaikom to Thiruvananthapuram organised during the Vaikom Satyagraha. Following Mahatma Gandhi's suggestion, thousands of upper-caste Hindus marched to show solidarity with marginalised communities. The journey culminated in the submission of a petition signed by over 25,000 Savarnas to the Regent Maharani, demanding equal access to public roads. Although initially rejected by the legislature, the Jatha successfully transformed the movement into a collective moral struggle, laying the vital groundwork for the Temple Entry Proclamation.



Fig. 9:04 : Mannathu Padmanabhan

Gandhian Satyagraha in Kerala

The Vaikom and Guruvayur Satyagraha movements served as crucial testing grounds for the Gandhian principles of Satyagraha, as well as for the incorporation of anti-untouchability issues into the broader national movement. The Temple Entry Movement in India, which began in the 1920s, represented a significant social reform initiative aimed at guaranteeing equal access to Hindu temples for individuals from lower castes. The activities surrounding the Vaikom and Guruvayur Temples heightened awareness regarding the rights of these individuals. Ultimately, the movement culminated in the Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936, which permitted lower castes to enter state-owned temples.

Vaikom Satyagraha (1924)

Vaikom is a large village located in Travancore, which is now part of the Kottayam district in the state of Kerala. A well-known temple is situated there, bordered by public roads on all four sides. For many centuries, the untouchables were prohibited from using these public roads. In 1924, T.K. Madhavan, Krishna Swami, and Kelappan established an anti-untouchability committee. They initiated a Satyagraha movement against untouchability. The Congress anti-untouchability committee resolved to participate in a procession of individuals from various castes along the restricted roads. They also submitted representations to the Travancore Durbar, urging prompt actions to safeguard the Vaikom temple from untouchability. The anti-untouchability committee decided to dispatch 3-4 volunteers at a time along the restricted road on March 30, 1924. When the first group marched forward, they were halted

by the police and subsequently imprisoned. Other groups faced the same outcome. Gandhi sent a message commending the volunteers who willingly faced arrest for a noble cause. Meetings were organised throughout the state to promote the principles of Satyagraha. Individuals from all communities attended these gatherings to demonstrate inter-caste solidarity. A significant aspect of the satyagraha was the Savarna Jadhya, which was organised under the guidance of Mannath Padmanabhan, by the caste Hindus who endorsed the movement.

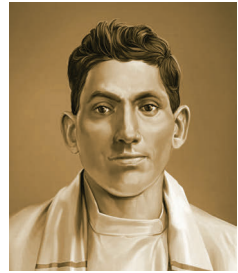


Fig. 9:05
T.K. Madhavan

Mahatma Gandhi, along with his associates, including his private secretary Mahadev Desai, his son Ramadas Gandhi, C. Rajagopalachari, and others, arrived in Vaikom. They sought to alter the mind-set of orthodox Hindus regarding the Satyagraha. In March 1925, Gandhi met with the Maharani Regent, Sree Narayana Guru and orthodox leaders to discuss the specifics of the Satyagraha. Ultimately, based on an agreement, the Satyagraha was concluded on November 23, 1925. The agreement stipulated that all roads surrounding the Vaikom temple, with the exception of two lanes, would be accessible to all castes without discrimination. K. Kelappan, known as Kerala Gandhi, expressed his satisfaction with this agreement. The Vaikom Satyagraha had a significant impact on the Temple Entry Proclamation issued by Sree Chithira Thirunal Bala Rama Varma in 1936. This Satyagraha represented an effort to combat the social injustice of untouchability.

Divide the students into small groups and assign each group a theme, such as causes, key leaders, methods of protest, challenges, or impact. Each group prepares a visual presentation using posters, charts, or slides, including images, timelines, and brief explanations. Groups present their visuals to the class and explain how non-violence, unity, and moral leadership contributed to the movement. Finally, the class discusses the significance of Vaikom Satyagraha in Kerala's social reform history.



Guruvayur Satyagraha (1931-32)

The Guruvayur Satyagraha represented a significant movement against untouchability. Initiated on November 1, 1931, by the Kerala Provincial Congress, the aim was to secure access to the Guruvayur temple for all Hindus. K. Kelappan served as the leader of the Satyagraha, while A.K. Gopalan held the position of captain of the Volunteer Corps. This movement garnered nationwide attention, attracting political activists from across India to Guruvayur. The Zamorin, the temple's trustee, vehemently opposed this demand. In November 1931, T. Subramanian Tirumumbu, who led the temple entry campaign, was arrested. Additionally, P. Krishna Pillai faced severe violence from temple officials for ringing the bell in front of the Sreekovil, a privilege reserved for Brahmins. A notable event during the Satyagraha was the attack on A.K. Gopalan on December 26, which incited public outrage and led to attempts to forcibly enter the



Fig. 9:06 :
A.K. Gopalan



Ponnani Referendum

The Ponnani Referendum of December 1932 was a landmark democratic poll led by C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) and K. Kelappan under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. Following the Guruvayur Satyagraha, Gandhi proposed this vote to prove that the majority of “Savarna” (upper-caste) Hindus supported temple entry for “Avarnas” (marginalised castes). Prominent leaders like Kasturba Gandhi and A.K. Gopalan campaigned extensively across Ponnani Taluk to mobilise the public. The result of Referendum shattered the claim that orthodox Hindus opposed reform and provided the moral authority needed for the eventual Temple Entry Proclamation.

temple by dismantling barricades. Consequently, the temple was closed, and all Pujas were suspended for approximately one month. On September 21, 1932, K. Kelappan commenced an indefinite fast outside the temple, which he concluded on October 2, 1932, following Gandhi’s counsel. Subsequently, a limited referendum was conducted among the Hindus of Ponnani Taluk to gauge public opinion on the matter. Approximately 77% of respondents, predominantly women, supported temple entry for Harijans. Therefore, the Guruvayur Satyagraha played a crucial role in fostering an environment conducive to the abolition of untouchability, enhancing public awareness of the Satyagraha concept, and shifting women’s perspectives on the caste system.



Ask students to work in small groups to create a concept map of the Guruvayur Satyagraha. The map should include: Causes, Leaders, Methods, Community Role, Outcomes. After completing the maps, each group presents their concept map to the class, explaining the connections between causes, actions, and outcomes.

Satyagraha and Constructive Programme

Gandhi’s strategy for confronting systemic injustice was two fold, comprising both public resistance and behind-the-scenes building of alternatives. While “front-stage” Satyagraha—active nonviolent resistance—was visible and direct, he considered the “constructive work” of creating new, self-reliant systems to be far more critical in the quest for true emancipation (Swaraj).

He argued that by successfully implementing the constructive programme, such as empowering villages to become self-sufficient, people would develop the capacity to secure their own rights and freedom. In fact, Gandhi believed this foundational work was so powerful that he told his colleagues in 1944 that if it were fully realized, India could achieve Swaraj without ever needing to resort to civil disobedience.

For Gandhi, the true engine of social transformation was not public protest alone, but the silent, active work of building alternatives. He argued that the

energy for effective non-violence, or Satyagraha, must be generated through a “process of corporate cleansing”—a collective effort dedicated to the common good. This was achieved through a detailed Constructive Programme.

Gandhi saw this programme as a dual-purpose tool. While the work such as promoting communal harmony, removing untouchability, adult education, and village economic upliftment was valuable for its own sake, it also served a crucial political function. He believed that the capacity for self-rule would grow “in exact proportion to the ability to achieve success in the constructive effort.” It was the essential foundation for a system of non-violent self-rule, training people in the discipline and cooperation required for responsible government.

Gandhi drew a clear distinction between the roles of constructive work and civil disobedience. He saw civil disobedience as highly effective for addressing specific local injustices and arousing public conscience. However, it could never replace the broad, foundational work of the Constructive Programme. In fact, he described constructive work as “the best training for proper civil disobedience,” viewing it as a full non-violent substitute for armed revolt.

In a Satyagraha campaign, the choice of tactics—whether civil resistance or constructive service—is determined by the needs of the situation. A Satyagrahi must execute any plan with cool determination, free from excitement or depression. Thus, while rooted in eternal moral principles, Gandhi’s concept of Satyagraha emerges as a profoundly original and practical approach to resolving conflict at every level of human society.

Non-Violent Direct Action and Gandhian Satyagraha

Non-violent direct action is a coordinated effort by groups of people to influence or change government policy through peaceful means. This approach includes a range of activities, from public demonstrations, protests, and lobbying to media campaigns. The techniques employed involve applying non-violent pressure through methods like sit-ins, blockades, persuasion, and garnering public sympathy, sometimes extending to civil disobedience. While the pure, principled form envisioned by Gandhi is rare, the use of his methods in various non-violent movements is increasing worldwide.

Gandhi’s own movements, such as the Salt March (1930) and the Quit India Movement (1942), are classic examples. These actions aimed to publicly expose injustice and create moral pressure for change without harming opponents. This philosophy and strategy later inspired global leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States and Nelson Mandela in South Africa in their fights against racial and political oppression.

As both a moral philosophy and a practical strategy, non-violent direct action rejects violence as a solution. It insists that true peace is achieved through

justice, love, and understanding, and that lasting social change comes from converting opponents with truth and compassion, not from destroying them. Gandhi proved that non-violence, practiced with courage, is a powerful weapon for truth and justice.

What sets Gandhian Satyagraha apart is its unwavering commitment to nonviolence as an inviolable principle, not merely a convenient tactic. This contrasts with many other movements where nonviolence is adopted as a strategy to defeat an opponent, without a deeper ethical commitment. This distinction is evident in the work of scholars like Gene Sharp, who has popularised non-violent action globally, often separating it from its foundational moral and spiritual philosophy.

Methods of Non-Violent Action: The Gene Sharp Framework

Gene Sharp, a seminal theorist of non-violent resistance, categorized its methods into a progression of three core types of action. The first involves



Fig. 9:07 : Gene Sharp

Gene Sharp

*Gene Sharp (1928–2018) was an American political scientist and a leading authority on non-violent resistance. He authored many books, the most famous being *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, in which he outlined the methods of non-violent protest and civil disobedience. Sharp's research emphasised that political power depends on the consent of the governed, and non-violent action can effectively challenge oppressive regimes. His work has influenced numerous social and political movements worldwide, including struggles for democracy in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.*

symbolic protest, such as marches and vigils, aimed at persuasion. The second is non-cooperation, where participants withdraw their consent by refusing to engage in economic, social, or political activities, exemplified by boycotts and strikes. The third and most direct form is non-violent intervention, which actively disrupts a system through methods like sit-ins, hunger strikes, and the establishment of parallel institutions. A fundamental principle of Sharp's analysis is that these methods are defined by the action itself, not the user's motives, making them a versatile toolkit for diverse groups without requiring a commitment to principled non-violence. By interpreting nonviolence in strategic rather than moral terms and cataloging 198 specific methods, Sharp's work has provided a practical foundation for pro-democracy movements worldwide, distinguishing his tactical approach from the ethically-bound Satyagraha of Gandhi.

Satyagraha in the 21st century

In the 21st century, Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha has evolved beyond the traditional struggle for political freedom to address social justice, environmental issues, and human rights worldwide. In India, the Sarvodaya and Bhoodan movements were organised in the 1950s. In the 1970s, Jayaprakash Narayan

led the ‘total revolution’ campaign against several issues, corruption being one. There were anti-liquor movements in several parts of India such as in the present state of Uttarakhand in the late 1960s and early 70s, in Maharashtra in the early 1970s and in Andhra Pradesh in the early 1990s. Another significant movement was the Chipko Andolan against deforestation led mainly by women and Sarvodaya workers like Sunderlal Bahuguna. Since the 1980s, Narmada Bachao Andolan, a campaign led by Medha Patkar, has been protesting against the construction of a huge dam on the Narmada River.



Fig. 9:08 :
Martin Luther King Jr.

Outside India, several campaigns have been inspired by Gandhi. Notable among those are the African-American struggle in the USA led by Martin Luther King Jr. King adopted the methods of Satyagraha in his fight against racial discrimination and in favour of civil rights in the 1950s and 60s. Another major campaign was against Apartheid in South Africa led by African National Congress (ANC) under the leadership Nelson Mandela.

Gandhi has influenced and continues to influence new social movements in India – of environmentalists, anti-war campaigners, feminists and human rights activists among others. As mentioned earlier, some prominent figures led nonviolent campaigns in the 20th century; some others continue to do so in the 21st century. Prominent among the latter is Dalai Lama who continues to wage a nonviolent resistance against the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Gandhi’s Satyagraha is a powerful idea and a key tool for freedom, and it still serves as the foundation for all peaceful fights against injustice. Over the last 30 years, we have seen non-violent movements in different parts of the world.

Eventhough many of these efforts faced violent backlash from stubborn authoritarian leaders and didn’t succeed, using violence against innocent people is even less effective. Because of this, the foreign policy community, along with global civil society that connects many of these movements through shared goals, is increasingly looking to Gandhian non-violent methods for those who are under constant oppression.



Fig. 9:09 :
Nelson Mandela

While some Satyagraha campaigns may not have achieved their desired outcomes, this does not render the concept irrelevant in today’s context. The challenges faced do not arise from the principles of Satyagraha itself but rather from the practitioners navigating an imperfect world. Although

achieving perfect non-violence is unattainable—since life inherently involves some degree of violence—Satyagraha provides a framework for reducing harm through nonviolent struggle.

The 21st century offers us the opportunity to embrace the wisdom of Satyagraha, not only as a means of addressing specific injustices but as a way of living. Whether in the fight against climate change, social inequality, or global conflicts, Gandhi's message of truth, nonviolence, and moral courage continues to be a beacon of hope and a guide toward a more just and compassionate world.

The relevance of Gandhian Satyagraha is arguably greater in the 21st century than during Gandhi's own time, as the world still lacks viable alternatives to combat pervasive issues like terrorism and systemic violence. History repeatedly demonstrates that the power of the gun ultimately fails before the power of a united people. Furthermore, Satyagraha's inclusivity is one of its greatest strengths; unlike violent resistance, which values physical prowess, it empowers everyone—women, children, and the elderly alike—to participate fully, a fact evidenced by the prominent role of women in Gandhi's campaigns.

While some sceptics argue that Satyagraha succeeded against the British due to their democratic sensibilities and would fail against a modern tyrant, Gandhi himself maintained that persistent, truthful pressure could “melt” even the hardest heart. This stems from the core philosophy of Satyagraha: the goal is not to defeat the opponent, but to win over their heart and mind, viewing them as a potential friend. The method involves voluntary self-suffering. Rather than inflicting harm on the wrongdoer, the Satyagrahi chooses to suffer for the wrongdoer's errors. This ensures that if one is mistaken, the irreversible damage of unjust violence is avoided, and the practitioner alone bears the cost of their own miscalculation.

The Way is the Goal: Satyagraha and Sarvodaya

In practice, Satyagraha and Sarvodaya were deeply interwoven in Gandhi's work. Satyagraha was not merely a political weapon but a method of social reform aimed at awakening conscience and restoring moral order. Gandhi's Satyagrahas in South Africa and India—against racial injustice, untouchability, and economic exploitation—were attempts to establish truth and justice through peaceful means. These movements demonstrated how moral resistance could bring about political and social change without violence.

The Constructive Programme formed the practical bridge between Satyagraha and Sarvodaya. Gandhi urged people to engage in activities such as spinning khadi, promoting village industries, education, sanitation, and communal

harmony. These efforts embodied the spirit of Satyagraha in everyday life and helped to lay the groundwork for a Sarvodaya society - one that is self-reliant, cooperative, and non-exploitative. Thus, while Satyagraha fought against injustice, the constructive programme worked to build the positive conditions of justice and equality that define Sarvodaya.

The relationship between Satyagraha and Sarvodaya is both philosophical and practical, revealing two aspects of Gandhi's vision for moral and social regeneration. Satyagraha is the path of action, guided by truth and nonviolence, which aims to awaken the moral conscience of individuals and communities. Sarvodaya is the goal, the ideal of welfare of all, equality, and harmony. In Gandhi's view, social and political freedom have no meaning unless they are rooted in moral and spiritual values and ensures a just social order. Therefore, Satyagraha has to be understood, not merely as a method of struggle, but the means to create a new civilisation — the Sarvodaya civilisation.

students mark on a world map major contemporary nonviolent movements inspired by Gandhian principles. Each marking is accompanied by a brief note explaining how truth and nonviolence are practised in that movement.



Fig. 9.10 :
Gandhi at Juhu Beach



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. *Prepare a case study of a modern nonviolent movement and explain how Gandhian principles of truth and nonviolence are applied in it.*
2. *Create a poster or chart illustrating the core principles of Satyagraha with relevant quotations from Gandhi.*
3. *Write a reflective essay on the relevance of Satyagraha in resolving present-day social or political conflicts.*
4. *Prepare a biographical sketch of a leader influenced by Gandhian nonviolence and explain the impact of Satyagraha on their actions.*
5. *Analyse a historical event (such as Champaran or Salt Satyagraha) and identify the principles of Satyagraha involved.*
6. *Collect and present photographs, newspaper reports, or archival materials related to Vaikom and Guruvayur Satyagrahas with brief explanations.*
7. *Collect news reports of peaceful protests and present how Gandhian ideas are reflected in them.*
8. *Design a timeline showing the evolution of Satyagraha from Gandhi's time to the present.*
9. *Conduct a survey or interview in the community to find opinions on the relevance of Gandhian nonviolence today.*