

# Gandhi's perseverance

Business



Have you ever angrily hit your mother or father, when you wanted to have a toy at a young age and they wouldn't let you? From most people's experience, violence does not work when you want your parents to buy you a toy. Also, using violence can lead your parents to punish or scold you. However, if you talk to your parents in a loving and polite way, there is a greater possibility that your parents will buy you the toy with a happy smile. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi applied similar nonviolent methods to the Indian independence movement called " Satyagraha". Gandhi's use of nonviolence, fundamentally altered the trajectory of the Indian independence movement, by providing an alternative to violent reactionary measures employed by other independence movements.

To fully understand the magnitude of Gandhi's impact on both Indian and world history, one must understand his humble beginnings and how they formed his philosophy on nonviolence. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born into the Vaishya caste, a middle-tier caste reserved for merchants, on October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, India (Mahatma Gandhi Pictorial). Gandhi's nonviolent philosophies were heavily influenced by Putlibai, his mother. When someone in the family was sick, she would selflessly devote herself to their recovery. She always went to the temple, and fasting was an integral aspect of her spiritual beliefs and practices (Gandhi Mohandas). From this, Gandhi adapted his mother's methods and morals to use in his struggle for an independent and cohesive Indian state (Mahatma Gandhi Pictorial).

His nonviolent philosophies were also shaped from his journey of self-discovery during adolescence. He went through a rebellious phase of meat and cigarette consumption, both taboo in the Hindu faith, but eventually

found his own path separated from negative peer pressure (Gandhi Mohandas). Gandhi's philosophies regarding nonviolence were formed from his strong-willed mother and his own desire to become a better person. After being influenced by the experiences of his childhood and adolescence, Gandhi proceeded to be further drawn towards nonviolent resistance during his time practicing law in South Africa. He started university in India and finished studying law in London, United Kingdom.

In 1891, he returned to India to practice law in Bombay, but he struggled with public speaking (Mahatma Gandhi Spiritual). After having little success practicing law in India, he relocated to South Africa assisting minority populations with legal work. In South Africa, Gandhi faced many injustices based upon his ethnicity; his reaction to those injustices was the beginning of the formation of his nonviolent philosophies that he brought to the Indian independence movement. Gandhi was ordered by a European magistrate in the court to take off his turban. However, Gandhi felt insulted as he believed that he had the right to wear what he wanted.

He chose to leave the court in protest (Gandhi Mohandas). Soon afterwards, Gandhi traveled to Pretoria with a first-class ticket, as he used to do in London, and was asked to move to third-class by the ticket checker because of his ethnicity. Gandhi refused, and was beaten up by the ticket checker and thrown out of the first-classroom. After he arrived in Pretoria, he was denied a room at any hotel. Gandhi later found out that they didn't allow dark-skinned Indians to sleep in their hotels (Articles). His legal work assignment was only for one year, but after experiencing unequal treatment

due to segregation laws he stayed for 21 years to protest against these injustices (Gandhi Mohandas).

Eventually, his experiences with unequal treatment persuaded Gandhi to lead a more focused and concerted nonviolent social justice movement to alter the systemic racism within British law in South Africa. At the end of his one-year contract he went to Durban, preparing to sail to India. At his farewell party, he realized through reading "The Natal Mercury" that the Legislative Assembly was trying to refuse Indians in South Africa the right to vote. (Articles). Shocked by such egregious laws against a minority, Gandhi decided to stay longer to help with Natal Indian's rights. Natal Indians were Indians who lived or immigrated to a part of South Africa called Natal (Gandhi Mohandas).

After careful planning and deliberation, he created and sent petitions, signed by hundreds of Natal Indians, to the Natal Legislature and the British government. Although Gandhi failed to protect Natal Indian's rights in voting, he was successful at informing England, India, and the rest of South Africa of their unequal treatment. Gandhi achieved this by editing a newspaper called Indian Opinion to publicize Natal Indian's grievances. He also organized protests, including a strike of the Indian miners. Gandhi was arrested and detained many times by the British for his protests regarding Natal Indian's rights (Articles).

Gandhi's experiences with protesting unequal treatment in South Africa encouraged his faith in the power of nonviolent resistance, bringing these beliefs into a personal philosophy he developed and advocated for in India.

By creating the term ' Satyagraha,' a combination of the Sanskrit words for ' truth' and ' pursuit of,' Gandhi continued to define his spiritual and political beliefs regarding a nonviolent lifestyle. Settling on this word, came about after a long journey to find a term to fully capture all of his philosophies (Gandhi-His). Regarding this Gandhi once said, " life itself is a pursuit of truth" (Report). Gandhicaptured the belief that life is about following and searching for the right path, such as finding the most appropriate word to describe his all of his beliefs regarding nonviolence.

At first, he labelled his philosophies as ' civil disobedience', inspired by the writings of Thoreau. However, he eventually realized that civil disobedience cannot fully convey the complete meaning of his beliefs. Gandhi also explored the term ' passive resistance' to describe his philosophies. Passive resistance lacked a complete commitment to nonviolence, and Gandhi wanted his movement to have absolutely no violence. Also, passive resistance had a connotation of being the weapon of the weak.

He wanted his campaign for Indian independence to communicate to its followers that they are strong and also to encourage their determination. Also, Gandhi came to the conclusion that passive resistance does not require a follower to change one's spiritual beliefs. Finally, on September 11th of 1906, Gandhi and his followers named his various nonviolent philosophies as ' Satyagraha' (FAQs). According to Gandhi, " Satyagraha is a force which, if it becomes universal, would revolutionize social ideas and do away with despotism and the ever-growing militarism under which the nations of the West are groaning and are being almost crushed to death, and which fairly promises to overwhelm even the nations of the East" (Gandhi-His) . This <https://assignbuster.com/gandhis-perseverance/>

quote highlights how Satyagraha differs from passive resistance and civil disobedience by having the capacity to alter follower's perspectives to live a nonviolent lifestyle.

Gandhi also said, " In the dictionary of Satyagraha, there is no enemy" (Mahatma Gandhi Forum). This proves that Satyagraha is a spiritual and political belief, where one can love their opponent and change their whole lifestyle based on truth and nonviolence(Gandhi-His). By encouraging the Indian public to adopt Satyagraha in their struggle for independence, Gandhi was very effective in substituting war and conflict with conflict resolution and nonviolence. In leading the Indian independence movement, Gandhi applied Satyagraha and encouraged his followers of the movement to do so as well in the ' Khadi' movement. The word, ' Khadi' means handspun and handwoven cloth.

The Khadi movement was created so Indians could make their own cloth and become less dependent on the British government. This movement started because British declared a law that all Indians must buy products from Britain (Gandhi and). Gandhi said " Satyagraha does not depend on outside help; it derives all its strength from within" (Mahatma Gandhi Forum). This can be translated that a person has to devote themselves in order to achieve Satyagraha. For such a reason, Gandhi spun and wove his own cloth every day to practice self-reliance and self governing.

This was Satyagraha, for resisting buying foreign cloth, which meant not depending on foreign powers (Gandhi and). Every village planted and harvested its own cotton for yarn, and many people made their own cloth,

just like Gandhi. Spinning thereby supplied the most beneficial occupation and it could easily be learned. To make this easier for everyone, he made an improved spinning wheel. The improved spinning wheel could be easily and cheaply made .

Gandhi saw it as the end of dependency on foreign materials, or dependency on foreign powers. Raw materials from India at that time were entirely exported to England and made to expensive cloth. Britain received a huge profit from reselling materials such as cloth. Gandhi also felt that in a country where manual labor was looked down upon, it was an occupation to bring high and low, rich and poor together. A way to show them the dignity of hand-labor.

Some people also burned the foreign cloth to prove the world that India could feed itself, without the help of Britain (Khadi). Gandhi also implied Satyagraha in many other movements. The Salt March also demonstrates Gandhi's determination in Satyagraha. In 1930, the British made a new law called Britain's Salt Acts which prohibited local people from making or selling salt. In hot and humid countries like India, salt was a very essential mineral needed to fill up the energy people lost from sweating. Britain charged a heavy tax for importing salts from Britain, and forced people to buy it.

Although many people in India suffered from high tax, they bought it as salt was very important in their diet. Gandhi thought it would be a good idea to resist nonviolently and apply Satyagraha (The Salt). On March 12, 1930 Gandhi started his journey by walking 241 miles to a province called Dandi which is near the Arabian sea. This showed that Gandhi not only talked about

what people should do, but he truly believed and followed Satyagraha by walking 241 miles. This incident was directly related to Satyagraha, where they shouldn't do any harm to their opponent, but instead, protested by making their own salt.

He first started Salt Satyagraha or the Salt Act with only 78 people, but as time went by, thousands of Indians joined the Satyagraha for their right to make their salt. This showed that many Indians respected Gandhi's determination and believed that Satyagraha would work (Salt). When he arrived at the Arabian Sea, Gandhi made some salt. However, British-led Indian police came, and threw all of his salt into the mud. Many of his followers wanted to fight back, but Gandhi reminded them of the rule of Satyagraha.

Even when Gandhi was in jail, Satyagraha didn't stop. In May of 1930, several policemen beat many peaceful protesters to death. Protesters didn't fight back and this incident was known and spread through the world, starting to give "bad image" to Britain. Eventually, Gandhi's effectiveness of nonviolent resistance started to show its power. When Gandhi was released from the jail in 1931, he met with Lord Irwin, the viceroy of India.

Gandhi promised to stop Satyagraha for negotiation for discussing India's future in London. The result was disappointing, but Gandhi was successful enough to warn the British government that they shouldn't just ignore him (Gandhi Leads). Gandhi once said, "Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man" (Mahatma Gandhi Quotes). Gandhi already



knew that violence couldn't win over the power of nonviolent movement or Satyagraha.

The refusal to buy British products slowly lessened Britain's economic power, which later led to independence. Eventually, India got their independence from Britain as Britain's political and economic power lessened. When the World War 2 happened, Britain required India to join the allies as a British colony. India didn't like the idea at first, but they decided to join as this was a chance to show Britain they needed to release India to be independent. Indians were mad, and Gandhi lead many Satyagraha movements.

As the movements grew, Britain lost its economic power and their inability to rule India after the World War 2. This led British letting India to be independent on August 15th of 1947 (How). After the independence of India, Gandhi mentioned, " First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win" (Mahatma Gandhi Quotes). He knew that India couldn't fight against Britain and win with violence, but they could with the power of Satyagraha. Gandhi successfully lead India to independence without any violence. Gandhi was a great leader, who led the movement for the independence of India, without using any violence.

He was an outstanding leader and a great example for all humans to consider and follow as we move forward into the future. We are currently on a path that is leading to more and more militarized societies, obsessed with the idea that armed and violent conflicts are the only way to solve social issues and political disagreements. Gandhi's philosophy and example of its

strength show that there is an alternative to this, requiring no loss of life, property, or bloodshed.