

# Research paper on mahatma gandhi a political leader or social reformer

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The history of Mahatma Gandhi is dated back in October 2 1869, when he was born in Porbandar India. He rose to become among the most respected political and spiritual leader in India. History has it that he played an essential role in the fight for independence of India from the British colonial rule. He led the Indian people in the nonviolent resistance against the rule of colonialism. The name Mahatma was developed by the Indians to mean great soul. This shows that Mahatma Gandhi had a great love for the people. Therefore, mahatma Gandhi can be described a political figure a seasoned social reformer due to his attitude and goal of ensuring peace and common sense for the society (Goethals, Burns and Sorenson 67). Therefore, he can be described as more of a social reformer rather than a political leader since his linkages with society were more than the links with the government. Mohandas K. Gandhi was born in a political family since his father was the Diwan of a small princely state of Porbandar. The political seat held by his father was the combination of both prime minister and chief administrator. The political leadership was hereditary, and functions of his father were passed through the family. After the death of his father, when he was finishing high school, he was perceived as the inheritor and administrator. The people could see his potential not only to lead the state, but also country wide political influence. As the control of British control in the country increased, the administrators were required to have a degree in English law (Chakrabarty 91). Therefore, in 1888 he went to England to pursue a degree in law and he studied hard emerging among the top candidates. This led to his acquisition of jurisprudence for arguing his cases in a legal manner.

Having been brought up in a strict vegetarian diet family he established vegetarian hotel while in London, which led to making of friends with many people. This also led to his entry into the journal of vegetarians as an editorial board member after he started writing journals on Indian foods. It is noted that Mahatma may have started learning to be a social reformer while in England as the editor of the journal was a practicing social reformer and barrister. Through these connections, he was able to meet with various important people who shaped his life not only as a political leader but also as a social reformer. For example, through the chief editor of the vegetarian journal, he was able to meet with Edwin Arnold the author of a verse bibliography of Buddha. The association with the vegetarian journal chief editor and the whole society also led to his introduction into the theosophical society, where he met with Madame Blavatsky who was the author of the publication "The voice of Silence". The Voice of Silence was a collection of aphorisms elaborating the doctrine of liberation through the provision of service to others (Anonymous para 5). It also led to the introduction of the Buddhist concept theosophy concept of, which illustrated his entry into the nirvana for the purpose of serving others.

Therefore, in London the relations established by Gandhi laid the basis for his entry as a social reformer driven by the need to serve others. After returning to India, he was called to represent Indian merchants in a civil suit in South Africa, where he spent 21 years. When he was leaving, he had already developed an international reputation, and set his work for the purpose of developing India. While, in South Africa, he was able to secure the right of the Indian people, He claimed that he was being abused, and other Indians

also suffered the same treatments. He developed a platform and direct social action methodology based on the principles of courage, nonviolence and truth (Tidrick 38). The methodology of his social action was named Satyagraha based on the concept that the behavior of people is more essential than their achievements. Therefore, to achieve political freedom of the Indian people, Mahatma Gandhi used the nonviolence and civil obedience to achieve both social and political objectives.

Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1915 and gained the position of the leader of Indian nationalist movement after fifteen years. As the leader of the Indian nationalist movement, he propagated the ideologies of Satyagraha leading the campaign for the liberation of the Indian people from the colonial rule. As a result of his liberation and civil disobedience, Gandhi was arrested numerous times by the British in both South Africa and India (Brown 52). However, he stated that going to jail was honorable, when one was being imprisoned for a just reason or cause. To impress the need for use of nonviolence means in achieving independence, he constantly fasted. After persistent civil disobedience and nonviolence means of fighting for independence India achieved its independence in 1947, which led to partitioning of the country into India and Pakistan. This led to up rise of violent rioting between Hindus and Muslims. However, as an advocate of united India where the Hindus and Muslims lived together in peace, he embarked on a mission at the age of 78 to stop the bloodshed. After five years of fighting, he was able to bring the opposing leaders into an agreement, which led to stoppage of fighting (Ghose 95). However, just after twelve days of uniting the Hindus and Muslims he was assassinated by a

Hindu fanatic, who was in opposition of his programs and ideologies of tolerance for different creeds and religions.

Gandhi philosophy was hence based on nonviolence methods of achieving social and political freedom. There have been various authors describing the life of Mahatma Gandhi and his ideologies on the need to create peaceful coexistence between different communities. For example, some described him as simple, pure and modest, with his struggles hallowed by religious serenity. Based on his methodology of Satyagraha, which was based on the need for searching the truth and nonviolence modes of achieving social and political freedom he was able to ensure use non violence mean in his strives. Mahatma Gandhi has been able to rise in the global arena as a champion of moral hero and use of spirituality in dealing with various issues affecting the people. For example, in the current global economies characterized with increased use of violence such as terrorism to achieve religious and political miles. The teachings and moral standings of Mahatma Gandhi play an essential role in helping leaders understand the need of using non violence means of achieving political and religious gains (Chakrabarty 49).

Gandhi stated that his struggle was not only based on the need for political achievements. Rather he stated that his struggle was more spiritual and religious hence it was pure. His beliefs and ideas draw different ideologies and dimensions from the common beliefs of man. His struggles were more of a social reformer, based on teaching and educating the communities, on the need of using nonviolent means of achieving political and social goals.

Gandhi's life presents a case for the beliefs established by his ideologies, expression of personal behaviors and political views (Brown 78). For

example, his ideologies about relationships and sexuality and the need for spiritual power without which could lead to scandalous behaviors.

His life ideologies are more in pursuant of a social reform rather than political account and achievements. Some authors describe him as a man who was self-obsessed with the need and dream to change the world's destiny. His ideologies and religious influences are dated back when he was a law student in England. It was there where he learned the need for a liberated society, in which he conceived the Indian struggle for independence in the liberation teachings he was exposed. Throughout his life, he had a struggle of balancing the rising demands from his spiritual; discipline, personal leadership, participation as the national leader of the independence movement. Gandhi's teachings and moral standings were both provocative and penetrating. They have been significant in both spiritual leadership, as well as political leadership (Dasgupta 3). As a social reformer, Mahatma Gandhi recognized his role of changing the nature of political and social strife methodologies.

He was able to use his in-depth spirituality in providing political and social guidance to the people. Mahatma Gandhi understood the concept of being the change an individual wants to see in the world. He led the people in showing the need for use of civil disobedience and nonviolent means of achieving political and social goals. Although he was actively involved in the fight for independence, he was little involved in running the government as well as political offices (Tidrick 24). As a social reformer, Gandhi's main objective was changing the nature and lives of men and women and thus connecting with their social developments.

Gandhi used various tools and techniques of mobilizing the people at both local and national level. For example, he used the masses in direct political campaigns and social work to push for agendas of social and national importance. Authors argue that it has been impossible to develop a thesis about Gandhi's teaching and moral standing due to the untidiness of his collections. His writings are found in numerous letters to fellow politicians, articles in newspapers and journals (Anonymous para 5). His cause of fighting for freedom was not only based on the educated people in the cities, but also for the simple and poor, illiterate peasants. He aimed at creating a better society creating better and happier villages driven by virtues. In conclusion, one can state confidently that although Mahatma Gandhi was a political leader for the fight against colonial rule, he was more of a social reformer. This can be based on his social and moral standing and beliefs. For example, the Satyagraha methodologies used in the fight against British imperialism, and also in the fight for social justice of the Indian people in South Africa illustrates his modest approach to political and social ideologies. His education also presents a case where he learned the basics of his character and approach about his career. The interactions with various global social reformers and liberal minds led to the development of his ideologies, which have transformed the global leadership.

## **Works Cited**

Anonymous. " Gandhi: A Political and Spiritual Life." 11 August 2008. 21 April 2013 .

This article is from the theosophical society and order of service in the USA.

It describes the origin of Gandhi theosophical ideologies and where the

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ideologies of his life originated. The article describes the interactions of Mahatma in London school of law. The interactions with various liberation books and articles authors led to the formation of his ideologies in life. It also provides a description of his life in South Africa where he was fighting for the rights of Indians

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Chakrabarty, Bidyut. *Social and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

This book provides the various quotes and writings such as newspapers articles and journal articles of Mahatma Gandhi. The book provides historical perspectives of Mahatma Gandhi's life and ideologies of life. The book also provides essential writing by various peoples who played imperative roles in the life of his life.

Dasgupta, R K. " Gandhi's Political Philosophy." *The Sunday Statesman*, Kolkata 8 February 2004.

This periodical provides an overview of the present thought and application of Mahatma Gandhi's in the current political and social lives in the global society. The article provides current thought and ideologies on the approach used by political religious leaders. For example, the increased terrorism activities and political strive. The article illustrates that if people adopted the Gandhi's philosophy there would be better means of dealing with the current global social and political problems.

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political leader, social reformer and religious leader. It provides a description of his ideologies and approach on life and dealing with political and social strife. It describes the principles used by the leader in when fighting for the right of Indian people and support for peaceful coexistence.

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Tidrick, Kathryn. Gandhi: A Political and Spiritual Life. London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2006.

Kathryn provides a description of the spiritual and political life of Mahatma Gandhi. She provides the historical background of the Mahatma Gandhi's ideologies and view of life. She describes his educational background and his strife for peaceful coexistence between people from different religious groups and races. She provides the modest character of Mahatma and his peaceful leadership towards achievement of India's independence.