

Individuals as mechanisms of social governmental change



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Gandhi, Mandela, Luther and Anthony Individuals as Catalysts of Social Change Social changes through revolutions, discourse functions, and paradigm shifts (see Kuhn, 1962) are the steering power of the world historical evolution as it moves forward for development and progress. Throughout the history of humanity, fascinating acts of leadership and heroism of certain individuals became known as they successfully provide the mechanism and influencing motivation to initiate social change locally and internationally. Peace movement, anti-racism, liberalism, and women's rights movements are some of the then new form of influential ideologies that became widespread because of certain individuals who gave tremendous efforts and sacrifices in order to promote change in their societies. The works and teachings of Mohandas Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Susan Anthony are too great that they inevitably became the source of power of the people who then overthrow the old discriminatory and backward practices and replace them with a new line of thinking re-establishing new patterns for social development. Peace and Anti-Racism Movements Peace acts and anti-racism are some of the major social movements that were popularly initiated by Gandhi and Mandela to promote better world society. Non-violence and the principle of simplicity in living reconstituted by Gandhi's (1960) teaching influenced many social advocates in India and in the world. Gandhi's thoughts about the equality and the brotherly bonds among men swayed racist and violent practices against minority groups present in his time. His ancient but noble ideas about human nature and non-violence were popularized as he made some

speeches about a better way of living while attending some business and political meetings held internationally. Gandhi's convictions against racial discrimination also became influential as his teachings and published writings became known to people. His experiences and enlightening words convinced people to stop discrimination and violence in many forms, particularly in India and South Africa (Sofri, 1999). The massive anti-racism movement that started during the Apartheid period in South Africa was a successful revolution supported by many individuals and organizations from different parts of the world. One of the icons of this movement which particularly addresses discrimination of black population in Africa was Mandela, the movement leader and the chief of African National Congress (Smith, 2010). Through his numerous political speeches addressing the discrimination, Mandela was able to harbor people's consciousness about the said issue. His life experiences and works persuade people and made them conscious of the racial discrimination happening not only in South Africa but also in other parts of world. Through Mandela and Gandhi, movements advocating equal treatment among different ethnicities and races were established and became known. Liberalism and Feminism in America Civil and women's rights movements are two fundamental social and political events that re-structured America's constitution and its people in the past decades. Because of these movements, many social changes in the United States had been established which promoted awareness and social welfare in the country. Martin Luther King Jr., an American civil rights advocate and Susan Anthony, a women's right movement icon, were the two catalysts of these social changes. King's radical reformist movement made possible the creation of laws addressing equal employment opportunities and trade union

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rights (Jackson, 2007). His philosophy shaped by his religious background and the influences of other revolutionary thinking like the 'African-American social gospel, socialism, left-New Deal liberalism, Gandhian philosophy, and Popular Front internationalism' (Jackson, 2007) made him famous and very influential among other social welfare advocates and politicians. Susan Anthony, an advocate of women's rights in the United States was particularly concerned about the equal rights of everybody to meddle with the economic and political matters in the state. She delivered many speeches echoing this advocacy. She co-founded *The Revolution*, a newspaper promoting women's and African American's right to vote (Sherr, 1995). Through her speeches and radical writings, Anthony with other feminist advocates, was able to highlight the need to change the laws that discriminate African American and all of the women. Her influences in the America's social development were later established as women's equal rights were deliberated in the United States. Individuals as agents of social discourse (Giddens, 1984) represented by Gandhi, Mandela, King, and Anthony can help the society by initiating and implementing positive changes. In our history, we can see how these individuals inspired people as they introduced new ideologies which reframed the structure of the new society. Though each faced downing discrimination and social judgment, these people did not give up their aspirations. They stand for the benefit of humanity and became catalysts of social change. Thus, looking at them as examples, humans as members of the society are active agents that can initiate change and development in their local community and in the world. Works Cited Gandhi, M. (1960). *All Men are Brothers*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Trust. Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society*. California: University of California Press. Jackson, T. <https://assignbuster.com/individuals-as-mechanisms-of-socialgovernmental-change/>

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