

13. Emergence of Gandhi

The emergence of Gandhi played a pivotal role in the history of Indian Nationalism. The development of Indian Nationalism occurred in three separate phases. It was the third phase of Indian Nationalism that witnessed the rise of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

Gandhi relied on the tools of ahimsa and Satyagraha to fight the British. The first twenty years that Gandhi spent in South Africa, had a decisive influence on his later life. His political ideologies, his greatest contribution to Indian politics, took shape in South Africa. The concept of non-co-operation, found in the works of Ruskin, Tolstoy and Thoreau influenced him significantly.

▪ **Gandhiji early life:**

- Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 in Porbandar in the princely state of Kathiawar in Gujarat.
- Having studied law in England, he **returned to India in 1891**
- **He failed as a practicing lawyer** both at Rajkot and in Bombay

▪ **Gandhiji in Africa:**

- In 1893, he proceeded to Natal, South Africa in relation with a case involving his client, Dada Abdullah.
- In South Africa, he witnessed apartheid (Racial discrimination against Blacks) to which Asians who had gone to South Africa were subjected.
- He decided to stay in South Africa to organize the Indian workers to enable them to fight for their rights.
- He stayed there until 1914 after which he returned to India in Jan 1915.

Why Gandhiji opposed apartheid

- Gandhiji had never experienced racial abuse in his life neither in his native Kathiawad nor in England
- Being an educated individual, he was aware about his right. He felt deeply that by demanding equality he was only exercising his fundamental right.

- Further the humiliation that he received in South Africa during his journey from Durban to Pretoria and the treatment that he received at Johannesburg further strengthen his belief that he should work for racial equality in South Africa.

There were two strands of Gandhian politics in South Africa

(I) Moderate Phase of Struggle (1894-1906):

- During this phase, Gandhi relied on sending petitions and memorials to the authorities in South Africa and in Britain
- Hoping that once the authorities were informed of the plight of Indians, they would take sincere steps to redress their grievances as the Indians were, after all, British subjects.
- To unite different sections of Indians, he set **up Natal Indian Congress** and started a paper '**Indian opinion**'.
- In this period, **Gandhiji supported British government** in Boer War (1899) Zulu Wars (1906) and he received medal for both.

(II) Phase of Passive Resistance or Satyagraha (1906-1914):

- The second phase, which began in 1906, was characterized by the use of the method of passive resistance or civil disobedience
- Gandhi named it Satyagraha
- The major Satyagraha launched by Gandhiji in this period are-

(a) Satyagraha against Registration Certificates (1906)

- A new legislation in South Africa made it compulsory for Indians to carry at all times certificates of registration with their fingerprints.
- The Indians under Gandhi's leadership decided not to submit to this discriminatory measure.
- Gandhi formed the Passive Resistance Association to conduct the campaign.
- The Government jailed Gandhi and others who refused to register themselves.
- The Indians under the leadership of Gandhi retaliated by publicly burning their registration certificates.

(b) Campaign against Restrictions on Indian Migration

- The earlier campaign was widened to include protest against a new legislation imposing restrictions on Indian migration.
- The Indians defied this law by crossing over from one province to another and by refusing to produce licenses.

Setting up of Tolstoy Farm

As it became rather difficult to sustain the high pitch of the struggle, Gandhi decided to devote all his attention to the struggle.

The Tolstoy Farm was meant to house the families of the Satyagrahi and to give them a way to sustain themselves.

For this fund also came from India, Ratan Tata, Congress, Muslim League as well as Nizam of Hyderabad made their contribution.

(c) Campaign against Poll Tax

- A poll tax of three pounds was imposed on all ex-indentured Indians (staying in South Africa after expiry of their contracts).
- The inclusion of demands for the abolition of poll tax (which was too much for the poor ex-indentured Indians who earned less than ten shillings a month) in the ongoing struggle further widened the base of the campaign.

(d) Invalidation of Indian Marriages

- Fuel was added to the fire by a Supreme Court order, which invalidated all marriages, not conducted according to Christian rites and by the registrar of marriages.
- By implication, Hindu, Muslim and Parsi marriages were illegal and children born out of such marriages, illegitimate.
- The Indians treated this judgement as an insult to the honor of their women and many women were drawn into the movement because of this indignity.
- Even viceroy, Lord Harding, condemned the repression and called for an impartial enquiry. Eventually, through a **series of negotiations involving Gandhi, Lord Harding, C.F. Andrews and General Smuts**, an agreement was reached by which the Government of South Africa conceded the major Indian demands relating to the poll tax, the registration certificates and marriages solemnized according to Indian rites, and promised to treat the issue of Indian immigration in a sympathetic manner.

Lessons learnt by Gandhi ji in South Africa

- He had the invaluable experience of leading millions of poor and dumb people. He became aware about their capacity for sacrifice, bearing hardship, their morale in the face of repression. All this built up his faith in the capacity of the Indian masses to participate in and sacrifice for a cause that moved them.
- In South Africa, he had an opportunity to lead a multiregional and multi-religious movement. It made him aware about diversity in India.
- He learnt, the hardest way, that leadership involves facing the ire not only of enemy but also of one's follower.
- The experience in South Africa helped him in evolving his own form of politics and leadership.
- He was moved from moderate phase to Satyagraha phase in South Africa.
- Further, by putting in use the Satyagraha he learned its strength and limit.

Gandhi's Technique of Satyagraha

Gandhi evolved the technique during his stay in South Africa, which was based on truth and non-violence. Its basic tenets were —

A Satyagrahi was not to submit to what he considered as wrong, but was to always remain truthful, non-violent and fearless.

A true Satyagrahi would never bow before the evil, whatever the consequence.

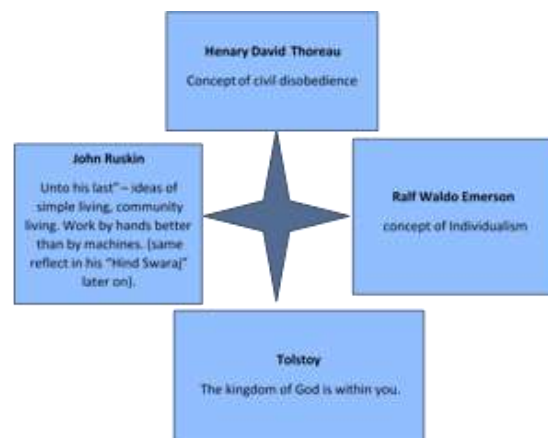
He should be ready to accept suffering in his struggle against the evil doer.

This suffering was to be a part of his love for truth.

Even while carrying out his struggle against the evil doer, a true Satyagrahi would love the evildoer; hatred would be alien to his nature.

Only the brave and strong could practice Satyagraha, which was not for the weak & cowards, even violence was preferred to cowardice.

Effect of different Authors on Gandhiji



▪ **Advent of Gandhiji In India:**

- M K Gandhi returned from South Africa (where he had lived for more than 20 years) to India in 1915.
- **On Gopal Krishna Gokhale advice and in keeping with his own style of never**

intervening in a situation without studying it with great care. He decided that for the first year he would not take a public stand on any political issue.

Initial Movements that Gandhi Participated

Protest/Movements	Important Facts
Champaran satyagraha 1917 first civil disobedience in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rajkumar Shukla invited Gandhi to look into the problems of farmers in the context of Indigo planters in Bihar. • Peasants were forced to grow indigo on 3/ 20th part of the land. (TinkathiaSystem). • European planters demanded high rents and illegal dues to maximise their profits. • A committee was constituted to look into the issue, and Gandhi was a member of the committee. • The tinkathia system was abolished and 25 percent of the compensation was provided. (Not full) • Other leaders associated were- Rajendra Prasad, Mazhar-ul-Haq, Mahadeo Desai, Narhari Parekh, J.B. Kripalani etc.
Ahmedabad Mill strike 1918 1st hunger strike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispute between cotton mill owners and workers over the issue of discontinuation of plague bonus. • Workers demanded for a rise of 50 percent in wages. • Gandhi demanded for a 35 percent hike and took a fast unto death. • Anusuya Sarabhai was a social worker who invited Gandhi to fight for workers.
Kheda Satyagraha 1918 1st non- cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crops failed in Kheda district of Gujarat. • The farmers were entitled to remission according to revenue code if yield is less than 1/4th of normal produce. • Government was adamant to the demands and ordered seizure of property if taxes were not paid. • Gandhi asked the farmers not to pay the taxes. • Other leaders associated with the movement were- Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Narhari Parekh, Shankarlal Parikh Mohanlal Pandya etc.
Rowlatt Act 1919 1st All India Mass Strike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The act officially called Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act. • It recommended imprisonment of activists without trial for two years. • Gandhi called for a mass protest at all India level. • He organized Satyagraha Sabha and roped in youngsters of Home rule leagues and Pan Islamists. • Form of protest finally chosen included observance of a nationwide hartal accompanied by fasting and prayer and civil disobedience was against specific laws etc.

▪ **Reason for huge success of Gandhiji in India:**

- Situation created by world war
 - Burden of new war taxation
 - Forced recruitment from Punjab
 - Food scarcity due to diversion of food towards allied force
 - Price rise, two consecutive year of extra ordinary crop failure
- Failure of both moderate and extremist
- Gandhi's success in Africa and creation of myth about him like
 - He has supernatural power
 - He can turn bullet into water
 - He can heal wound
- He helped people to overcome the danger associated with the might of government.
- Further, his
 - Simple attire
 - Use of colloquial Hindi
 - Reference to the popular allegory of Ramrajya
 - He never defined what really Swarajya would mean for masses so everyone can interpret it as per his/her own need.

All these made him comprehensible to general public

- Moreover, his success in the three initial movement made him more popular and acceptable to the masses.

▪ **JallianwalaBagh Massacre:**

The **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre**, also known as the **Amritsar Massacre**, took place on 13 April 1919 when troops of the British Indian Army under the command of Acting Brig-Gen Reginald Dyer fired rifles into a crowd of Punjabis who had gathered in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar and Punjab.

The civilians had assembled for a peaceful protest to condemn the arrest and deportation of two national leaders, Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kitchlew.

This incident shocked Rabindranath Tagore (First Asian Nobel Laureate) to such extent that he stated whilst refusing his knighthood that "such mass murderers aren't worthy of giving any title to anyone".

Hunter Committee:

- The **Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu**, ordered that a committee of inquiry be formed to investigate the matter of Jallianwala Bagh incident.
- On **October 14, 1919**, the GOI announced the formation of the **Disorders Inquiry Committee**, which came to be more widely and variously known as the **Hunter Committee/Commission**.
- There were **three Indians** among the members, namely, Sir Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad; Pandit Jagat Narayan and Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad Khan.
- The report stated that the **lack of notice to disperse from the Bagh** in the beginning was an error; the **length of firing** showed a grave error; Dyer's motive of producing a **sufficient moral effect** was to be condemned.
- The Hunter Committee **did not impose any penal or disciplinary action** because Dyer's actions were condoned by various superiors.

▪ **Montague-Chelmsford Reforms and Government of India Act, 1919:**

a. Executive:

- Introduction of dyarchy at the provincial level. Dyarchy implies the rule of two viz., executive councillors and popular ministers. The executive was to be headed by the governor.
- Division of subjects into two lists: Reserved list (administered by governor), Transferred list (administered by minister)

b. Legislative Council:

- The ministers were to be responsible to the legislature and had to resign if a no-confidence

motion was passed, while the executive councillors were not to be responsible to the legislature

- In case of failure of constitutional machinery in the province the governor could take over the administration of transferred subjects also
- Provincial legislatures were further expanded and 70 percent of the members were to be elected.
- The system of communal and class electorates was further consolidated, Women were also given the right to vote
- The legislative councils could initiate legislation but the governor's assent was required. The governor could veto bills and issue ordinances.

c. Central Government:

- No responsible government was envisaged for the government at the all-India level. The governor-general was to be the chief executive authority.
- There were to be two lists for administration - central and provincial.
- In the viceroy's executive council of eight, three were to be Indians.
- The governor-general retained full control over the reserved subjects in the provinces.
- A bicameral arrangement was introduced at the centre.

Congress Reaction:

The Congress met in a special session in August 1918 at Bombay under Hasan Imam's presidency and declared the reforms to be "disappointing" and "unsatisfactory" and demanded effective self-government instead.