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Study on Gandhi: Indian Independence Movement

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Abstract

Gandhi spent a significant portion of his formative years at Porbandar, which influenced his views, ideals, and worldview. His mother's religious convictions and his exposure to these ideas, in particular, had a significant influence on him, paving the road for him to develop into a leader and change-advocate. We'll examine how Gandhi's early interactions shaped his beliefs and actions as we learn more about his life. The foundation of Gandhi's later ideas and actions were formed by his early encounters with religion, ethics, and social goals. His mother's instruction, the serenity of Jainism, and his exposure to texts that encouraged good behaviour all contributed to the development of his strong moral foundation. This article will be summarized information regarding role of Gandhi in Indian independence movement.

Keywords: Ethics, Gandhi, Indian, leadership, religion

1. Introduction

1.1 Early Life and Influences

1.1.1 Childhood and Upbringing in Porbandar

Mahatma Gandhi's formative years were spent at the seaside town of Porbandar, which is located in the Indian state of Gujarat (Brown, 2013) ^[1]. Gandhi was given the name Mohandas Karamchand when he was born on October 2, 1869, into a devoted Hindu household (Desai, 1948). His father, Karamchand Gandhi, was a reputable person as the diwan {prime minister} of Porbandar. His family belonged to the Vaishya caste, which is historically connected to commerce and business (Guha, 2018) ^[10].

Gandhi was raised in a straightforward and morally upright atmosphere. Despite his father's status, the Gandhi family maintained a modest lifestyle that placed a premium on moral rectitude and modesty (Nanda, 2009) ^[12]. Gandhi's eventual beliefs and deeds will be strongly influenced by these early influences.

Gandhi's mother Putlibai had a significant effect on him growing up. She was very spiritual, and Gandhi's youthful mind was forever changed by her dedication to her religion (Parekh, 2001) ^[13-14]. She taught him to the Hindu epics, scriptures, and sacred writings via her storytelling and lessons (Dalton, 2012) ^[4]. From a young age, Gandhi's mother instilled in him a sense of ethical duty via her focus on truth, compassion, and self-control.

In Porbandar, the teachings of Jainism, a religion distinguished by its emphasis on nonviolence, were also widely practiced. Gandhi was exposed to the idea of "ahimsa," or nonviolence, via frequent visits by Jain monks and intellectuals (Fischer, 2013) ^[7]. His eventual dedication to nonviolent resistance as a strategy for social and political change would be shaped by these early inspirations.

Gandhi was exposed to the rich tapestry of Indian society throughout his youth in Porbandar. He started to acquire a strong sense of empathy for those who are poor and dealing with societal injustices as a result of seeing both the advantages of his family's position and the difficulties experienced by the less fortunate (Gandhi & Gandhi, 2019) ^[8]. His interest in social injustices and potential solutions was piqued by these early observations.

1.2 Early exposure to religion, ethics, and social values

Gandhi's early exposure to a complex tapestry of religion, ethics, and social ideals had a significant impact on his formative years. His encounters with his family, friends, and

cultural surrounds when he was growing up in Porbandar were crucial in forming his moral compass and guiding beliefs (Easwaran, 2015) ^[6].

a) Religion's Origins and the Effect of Jainism

Putlibai, Gandhi's mother, became a key factor in his early spiritual growth. She not only gave young Gandhi a link to his religious ancestry via her tales of Hindu epics and scriptures, but she also taught in him the value of truth and morality (Parekh, 2001) ^[13-14]. His unshakeable dedication to honesty and morality was founded on these early beliefs.

Gandhi's ethical perspective was also greatly influenced by Jainism, a religion well-known for emphasizing nonviolence and self-control, which was present in Porbandar (Dalton, 2012) ^[4]. In his later philosophy, the concept of "ahimsa" (nonviolence), which he first met via Jainism, served as a fulcrum.

b) The Simple and Self-Controlled Way

Beyond formal scripture studies, Gandhi was exposed to a variety of religious teachings. In particular, the Vaishnava tradition stressed the values of self-control, giving up worldly cravings, and distancing oneself from material goods (Nanda, 2009) ^[12]. Gandhi's commitment to living a simple and austere life and his personal decisions were impacted by these teachings.

c) Influence of thought and literature

Gandhi's thirst for knowledge grew as he got older, inspiring him to read widely. He delved into writings that promoted moral behavior and social justice, influenced by Western thinkers like Leo Tolstoy and John Ruskin (Fischer, 2013) ^[7]. Gandhi's devotion to the ideas of nonviolence and compassion was further cemented by Tolstoy's works on "ahimsa" and the moral duty to lessen other people's suffering.

d) Empathy and Social Sensitivity

Gandhi's early exposure to the socioeconomic divide in Indian culture had a significant influence on how well he understood social concerns. His desire for social justice was stoked by intimate exposure to the caste system's hierarchy and the hardships of the impoverished (Gandhi & Gandhi, 2019) ^[8]. His exposure to the struggles of the underprivileged would later spur him on to work to close the gap between various social classes.

1.3 Journey to London for Education

At the age of 18, Gandhi began a life-changing adventure that would test his ideas and worldview while also broadening his intellectual horizons. He made a significant life change when he left India's coasts to seek further studies in London.

a) Leaving Well-Known Shores

Gandhi sailed for London in 1888 to pursue a legal education (Guha, 2018) ^[10]. His first substantial departure from the comfort of his own country occurred during this tour. Gandhi was pushed into an entirely new setting after leaving behind his close-knit family and the Indian cultural surroundings. He must have gained fresh insights and experiences from the dramatic contrast between his childhood in Porbandar and the busy city of London.

b) Getting Around a New Cultural Terrain

Gandhi experienced a wide range of cultures, thoughts, and worldviews while studying law in London. The complexity of Western politics, culture, and education were made clear to him (Dalton, 2012) ^[4]. He found it both fascinating and difficult to make his way through this strange cultural environment.

Gandhi's intellectual horizons were broadened through his encounters with individuals from various backgrounds and exposure to a variety of viewpoints. He was exposed to a universe of ideas that were often in sharp contrast to his own background by the vibrant academic and intellectual culture in London.

c) Individual Transformations

Gandhi endured personal changes when he was living in London that would affect his eventual perspective on life. He looked into vegetarianism, which for him was a moral and practical decision (Fischer, 2013) ^[7]. In an effort to balance the demands of a Western culture with his Indian background, he also started to experiment with other facets of his identity, including his look and attire.

d) Conflicts between cultures and introspection

Gandhi had difficulties while living in London. He saw cases of racism and discrimination, which made him more conscious of societal injustices (Brown, 2013) ^[1]. His thorough reflection on problems of identity, justice, and equality was prompted by these encounters.

Gandhi's perspective on the world was changing in the middle of London. He was exposed to Western concepts and beliefs in the city, which served as a think tank for him and shaped his future views on social justice, human rights, and the place of people in society.

Gandhi's trip to London for his schooling was a pivotal moment in his life. His views were enlarged intellectually and philosophically by being exposed to different concepts, cultures, and difficulties. As we learn more about Gandhi's life, we'll discover how these encounters shaped his activism style and his idea of what social change should look like.

1.4 Shaping Experiences in England and South Africa

Gandhi's experiences in South Africa and England were crucial in forming his viewpoints and accelerating his development as a transformational leader and supporter of social change. These interactions had a big impact on his beliefs and methods for fighting social injustice.

a) Studying Western ideals and values

Gandhi steeped himself in Western ideals and ideologies when he was living in England. He read the writings of authors like Henry David Thoreau and John Ruskin, embracing concepts of self-reliance and civic disobedience that had a long-lasting impact on his ethical framework (Parekh, 2001; Dalton, 2012) ^[13-14, 4].

b) Understanding South African Discrimination

A significant turning point in Gandhi's life occurred when he arrived in South Africa in 1893. He saw the harsh reality of racial prejudice personally in a divided country. His understanding of the need to combat structural injustice was strengthened by these encounters, which also strengthened his commitment to social justice (Fischer, 2013; Guha, 2014) ^[9, 7].

c) Getting Awake to Nonviolence

Gandhi made his early forays towards peaceful resistance during his time in South Africa. His 'Satyagraha' concept, based on peaceful protest and civic disobedience, developed through time. This strategy formed the foundation of his activity and had an impact on movements all across the world (Parekh, 2001; Dalton, 2012) ^[13-14, 4].

d) Advocacy and Leadership

Gandhi's time in South Africa helped him develop his advocacy and leadership abilities. His fights against discriminatory legislation demonstrated his capacity to enlist community support without resorting to force. His leadership in India's independence struggle was made possible by these battles and the legal triumphs that accompanied them (Fischer, 2013; Guha, 2014) ^[7, 9].

e) Bring a vision back to India

Gandhi visited England and South Africa and brought back priceless knowledge to India. His attempts to overthrow British colonial control were based on his understanding of peaceful resistance, civil disobedience, and the battle against inequality. He was able to inspire a country and subvert conventions thanks to his encounters (Parekh, 2001; Dalton, 2012; Fischer, 2013) ^[13-14, 4, 7].

Gandhi's early experiences in England and South Africa had a profound impact on him, helping to shape both his philosophy of nonviolent resistance and his identity as a leader. These encounters made him more conscious of social inequities and gave him the knowledge and skills necessary to overthrow repressive institutions and create a fairer society.

2. The Journey to Nonviolence

2.1 Encounter with Literature on Nonviolence and Philosophy

Gandhi's study of writings from many philosophical systems had a significant impact on his path towards nonviolence. His idea of the transforming power of nonviolent resistance was greatly influenced by his interactions with writings, both Eastern and Western.

f) Religious texts' insights on Eastern wisdom

Gandhi's exposure to Eastern philosophy, especially via sacred writings like the Bhagavad Gita, had a significant impact on the development of his moral code. Gandhi's changing beliefs were strongly influenced by the Bhagavad Gita's lessons on responsibility, detachment, and selflessness (Chadha, 2000) ^[2].

g) Accepting Western Philosophy: The Influence of Thoreau

Gandhi also found inspiration in Western ideas as he pursued nonviolence. Gandhi's philosophy of peaceful resistance was profoundly influenced by Henry David Thoreau's essay "Civil Disobedience" {1860}. Gandhi's growing ideology was in line with Thoreau's focus on individual conscience and defiance of unjust laws (Iyer, 2000) ^[11].

h) Understanding Tolstoy's Wisdom

Gandhi's involvement with Leo Tolstoy's writings furthered the development of his peaceful philosophy. Gandhi's view of nonviolence as a way of life was profoundly impacted by

Tolstoy's focus on love, humility, and the pursuit of moral purity (Fischer, 2013) ^[7].

i) Putting a Unique Philosophy Together

Gandhi interacted with a variety of philosophical systems, which helped him combine them into a coherent nonviolent philosophy. He was able to develop a distinctive strategy for bringing about social change because to his openness to rely on both Eastern spirituality and Western ideas of justice and morality (Chadha, 2000; Iyer, 2000; Fischer, 2013) ^[2, 7, 11]. Gandhi, in essence, crossed geographical limits in his involvement with nonviolence and philosophy books, allowing him to build a variegated tapestry of ideas that would later serve as the foundation of his philosophy. We'll see how these philosophical ideas shaped his incredible career of activism and social change when we learn more about his life.

2.2 Concept of Satyagraha and Its Initial Stages

The idea of Satyagraha, which translates as "truth force" or "soul force," was essential to Gandhi's nonviolent ideology. This fundamental idea underwent modification and served as the cornerstone of his strategy for peacefully opposing injustice.

a) Nonviolence and the Truth

Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha was founded on the pursuit of the truth and nonviolence. It represented a dedication to bear pain while maintaining the moral and fair laws (Parekh, 2001) ^[13-14].

b) Movements in Champaran and Kheda

During the Champaran and Kheda revolutions, Gandhi's early attempts with Satyagraha in India had considerable results. These movements showed the effectiveness of mass nonviolent resistance in combating repressive norms. The accomplishment of these campaigns signaled the beginning stages of Gandhi's use of Satyagraha as a strategy for social change (Dalton, 2012) ^[4].

c) The Influence of Group Action

The Satyagraha movement highlighted the power of group action and people's ability to stand together in opposition to injustice without using violence. It served as an example of how common people may affect change on a larger scale when brought together by a shared commitment to nonviolence (Brown, 2013) ^[1].

d) Obstacles and Lessons

Early Satyagraha efforts by Gandhi weren't without difficulties. These events taught me a lot about commitment, discipline, and strategic planning. Each campaign acted as a cornerstone, helping to hone and develop the idea (Parekh, 2001; Dalton, 2012) ^[13-14, 4].

The idea of Satyagraha essentially signaled a paradigm change from passive resistance to active, moral engagement with repressive regimes. As we learn more about Gandhi's life, we'll see how the Satyagraha ideal developed over time, directing him toward significant societal change.

2.3 Experiments in Ashram Life and Self-Sufficiency

Gandhi was devoted to nonviolence in practice as well as in principle, as shown by his life at the ashram. He set out to embody his ideals and provide a model for a decent and

equitable society via deliberate experiments in self-sufficiency and basic life.

a) **The Farm and Self-Reliance of Tolstoy**

Gandhi learned a great deal from his time at the Tolstoy Farm in South Africa. Leo Tolstoy's works had an impact on him, and he envisioned a life based on independence and little consumerism. The Tolstoy Farm was used as a test site for these ideas and as a showcase for social peace and ecological living (Chadha, 2008) ^[3].

b) **The Self-Sufficiency Principle**

Gandhi's aim of self-sufficiency was consistent with his larger nonviolent social change ideology. He thought that people may develop inner strength, advance equality, and lessen exploitation by decreasing their reliance on outside resources (Nanda, 2009) ^[12].

c) **Investigations towards Communal Harmony**

Gandhi's ashrams served as miniature representations of his idea of a peaceful society. These societies were based on shared duty, equality, and respect for one another. Gandhi intended to show through communal living the viability of a way of life focused on collaboration rather than competition (Fischer, 2013) ^[7].

d) **Experiment-Related Learning**

Gandhi learned important insights about the difficulties and benefits of sustainable living via his experiences living in an ashram. Self-sufficiency needed perseverance, ingenuity, and a dedication to common ideals. Later, these lessons would guide his plans for more significant social and economic change (Chadha, 2008; Fischer, 2013) ^[3, 7].

In essence, Gandhi's experiences with ashram life and self-sufficiency weren't just for him; they served as testing grounds for how his nonviolent ideas really applied in real-world situations. We'll see how these experiments served as the foundation for his advocacy and his idea of a fair and caring society as we continue to follow his path.

3. Championing Civil Rights in South Africa

3.1 Gandhi's Arrival in South Africa and Early Activism

Gandhi's departure for South Africa in 1893 was a pivotal period in his life and served as a testing ground for his early activities. During this stage of his journey, he would develop his own beliefs and establish the foundation for a lifetime commitment to nonviolent resistance and justice.

a) **South Africa: A Change Catalyst**

Gandhi originally planned for his relocation to South Africa to be a transitory endeavor. However, he was exposed to the harsh reality of racial prejudice and discrimination as a result of his experiences growing up in a segregated environment (Fischer, 2013) ^[7].

b) **Growth of a Leader**

Early on, Gandhi's activity in South Africa focused on defending the rights of the Indian population against prejudiced policies and procedures. He created campaigns and rallied people to fight against repressive laws, demonstrating his developing leadership and organizing abilities (Brown, 2013) ^[1].

c) **The Satyagraha Spark**

During his sojourn in South Africa, Gandhi started to create the groundwork for his nonviolent opposition doctrine, known as Satyagraha. He began to experiment with nonviolent demonstrations and civil disobedience as effective means for effecting change after being exposed to racial injustice and discrimination (Guha, 2018) ^[10].

d) **Taking Lessons from Failure**

Gandhi learned valuable skills in negotiation, tenacity, and strategic opposition during his early activity in South Africa. His knowledge of the value of cooperation, empathy, and moral conviction in the face of difficulty was reinforced by the difficulties he encountered during this time (Fischer, 2013; Brown, 2013) ^[7, 1].

In a sense, Gandhi's path as an activist began with his arrival in South Africa. His encounters with the inequities of racial prejudice in this unfamiliar setting inspired him to create his peaceful resistance ideology. We will see how these formative events impacted his trajectory and directed his quest for justice and equality as we learn more about his life.

3.2 Fight against Discriminatory Laws and Racial Prejudice

Gandhi's early work in South Africa was distinguished by his unrelenting dedication to opposing racial prejudice and discriminatory legislation. These initiatives served as the cornerstone for his ongoing fight against injustice and tyranny and reflected the fundamental values that would come to characterize his legacy.

a) **Discrimination based on race in South Africa**

Gandhi saw the harsh reality of racial segregation and discrimination upon his arrival in South Africa. He became determined to fight systematic injustice after experiencing the hardships endured by Indians and other non-white populations (Guha, 2018) ^[10].

b) **Support for civil rights**

Gandhi's early activity was focused on supporting the Indian community's civil rights. He bravely challenged discriminatory laws and practices, fighting for equitable treatment for everyone via court fights and public demonstrations (Fischer, 2013) ^[7].

c) **Opposition and Satyagraha**

Gandhi's battles against racial prejudice in South Africa were the sowing ground for his peaceful ideology of resistance, Satyagraha. As he campaigned against many types of tyranny, his willingness to disobey unjust laws and his faith in the effectiveness of passive resistance took shape (Brown, 2013) ^[1].

d) **Communities mobilizing**

Gandhi's leadership became apparent when he organized the Indian community and stoked opposition to discriminatory policies. He coordinated strikes, boycotts, and open rallies, showcasing his capacity to bring disparate groups together in support of a shared goal (Parekh, 2001) ^[13-14].

Gandhi essentially shown his persistent dedication to justice and equality during his early efforts in South Africa. His campaigns against racial prejudice and discriminatory legislation laid the groundwork for his peaceful resistance concept. We'll see how these difficulties equipped him for

the bigger obstacles that awaited him in India and beyond as we continue to follow his adventure

3.3 Development of Satyagraha in the Context of South African Struggles

Gandhi's early involvement in South Africa was crucial to the formation and development of his nonviolent resistance doctrine, known as Satyagraha. His involvement in the South African uprisings served as the forging ground for the tenets of Satyagraha.

a) Background to South African Conflicts

Gandhi's support for racial equality in South Africa served as a foundation for the development of Satyagraha. He was inspired to look into nonviolent alternatives to traditional forms of protest by the systemic injustices he saw (Fischer, 2013) ^[7].

b) Moving from passive to active nonviolence

Early encounters with Gandhi in South Africa signaled a change from passive opposition to active nonviolent action. He established the idea of Satyagraha by realizing that although resistance was vital, it needed to be based on moral ideals and empathy.

c) Nonviolent Protest Experiments

Gandhi tried out nonviolent tactics via a number of rallies, strikes, and marches. His views about the effectiveness of truth and love as forces for social transformation served as the cornerstone for his use of Satyagraha in the fight against injustice (Dalton, 2012) ^[4].

d) Aspects of Satyagraha

The evolution of Satyagraha in the South African setting brought to light its fundamental principles of nonviolent resistance, civil disobedience, and a dedication to the truth. Gandhi's attempts to put these ideas into practice in the face of racial injustice signaled the start of his lifetime commitment to adopting nonviolence as a tool for change (Iyer, 2000) ^[11].

In essence, Gandhi's experiences in South Africa had a significant role in forming the Satyagraha school of thought. His activities in India and across the globe would not have been possible without his fights against racial discrimination and his experiments with nonviolent resistance. We'll see how Satyagraha continues to develop and shaped his approach to activism and change as we go further into his life.

4. Return to India: The Birth of a Leader

4.1 Gandhi's Return to India and Observation of Societal Conditions

Gandhi's return to Hindustan in 1915 was a turning point that profoundly affected both his action and philosophical outlook. The complex web of social, economic, and political factors that constituted India under British colonial authority were revealed to Gandhi upon his return to his native country after over twenty years outside (Chadha, 2000; Iyer, 2000; Brown, 2013) ^[3, 1, 11].

More than just a physical homecoming, his entry marked a reconnecting with the country's spirit and soul. Gandhi went out to address the many issues that India was facing, armed with his experiences in South Africa and an increasing dedication to nonviolence (Chadha, 2000) ^[2].

Gandhi was met with a broad and varied set of social situations. He saw firsthand the glaring contrast between wealth and squalor, the entrenched caste systems, and the rifts in social cohesion. In addition to economically exploiting India, the colonial government also permanently altered the country's social and cultural landscape (Iyer, 2000) ^[11].

Gandhi saw the harsh realities of poverty, untouchability, and prejudice in his dealings with rural people, city residents, and underprivileged groups in society. These meetings left a lasting impression on him, emphasizing the need of radical change as well as the tremendous pain endured by the majority of people (Fischer, 2013) ^[7].

Gandhi's views lit a flame of hope among these difficulties. He saw the possibility for cooperation among many cultures and the strength of coordinated resistance against colonial tyranny. His realization that the governed helped colonial rulers keep control led him to believe that mass mobilization and peaceful resistance might topple the established order (Brown, 2013) ^[1].

Gandhi's observations as he immersed himself in India's complicated environment crystallized into a vision: a vision of a free and fair India where each person's rights and dignity were maintained. In addition to being a physical homecoming, his return was also a spiritual reawakening that prepared him for his transforming journey to confront the repressive forces that ruled the country (Chadha, 2000; Iyer, 2000; Fischer, 2013) ^[2, 7, 11].

4.2 Involvement in Local Issues and Initial Role in the Indian National Congress

Gandhi's homecoming to Bharat was not just a physical trip but also a profound engagement with the social and political environment of the nation. He began a new phase of his activism by becoming involved in local problems and joining the Indian National Congress (INC), which indicated his dedication to igniting change from within (Chadha, 2000; Iyer, 2000; Brown, 2013; Guha, 2018) ^[2, 10, 11].

Gandhi adopted a grassroots change mindset and understood the need of resolving local issues in order to promote bigger development. His experiences with peasants, laborers, and other socially excluded groups made him aware of the many nuances of their conflicts and strengthened his desire to fight for their rights (Iyer, 2000) ^[11].

Gandhi had a forum to further his campaign for justice and self-determination after joining the Indian National Congress in 1919. His early work in the INC was marked by his attempts to close the gap between the party's elite and the general populace, establishing him as a voice for their concerns (Fischer, 2013) ^[7].

His participation in several neighborhood activities strengthened his reputation as a supporter of the oppressed. Gandhi was in the vanguard, articulating the needs of the people and using nonviolent methods to defend their rights, whether it was the mill workers' strike in Ahmedabad or the peasants' battle in Kheda (Brown, 2013; Guha, 2018) ^[1, 10].

Gandhi's strategy inside the INC was distinguished by his focus on cooperation, peaceful action, and beneficial labor. In order to achieve his vision of a country where justice and equality were the norm, he saw the party as a tool for social reform (Chadha, 2000) ^[2].

Conclusion

In conclusion, Gandhi devoted his formative years in the town of Porbandar, which shaped his beliefs, ideals, and worldview. His parents' impact, notably his mother's

religious convictions and his exposure to these concepts, helped pave the way for him to become a leader and change-advocate. As we learn more about Gandhi's life, we will look at how these early interactions influenced his ideas and behaviour. Gandhi's early experiences with religion, ethics, and social ideals became the cornerstone of his later beliefs and deeds. His solid moral basis was shaped by his mother's guidance, the peacefulness of Jainism, and his exposure to books that promoted good behavior. We shall see how these early influences steered Gandhi toward his path of nonviolent action and transformational leadership as we continue to examine his life. Gandhi's advocacy developed in the fiery environment of neighborhood problems and the Indian National Congress. He learned the importance of hearing the voices of the downtrodden via his engagement in grassroots battles, and his position within the INC gave him a platform to magnify their voices. We will see how these early initiatives prepared the way for his bigger vision of a free and fair India as we learn more about his journey.

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