

Mahatma Gandhi Biography

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Mahatma Gandhi (Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi) played an important role in India's struggle for freedom. Mahatma Gandhi is known for his policy of truth and non-violence.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi was a major political and spiritual leader of India who led the country in the non-cooperation movement in 1922 and Salt march in 1930 and later in Quit India movement in 1942 during its struggle for independence. Known as Beloved Baapu in India, Mahatma Gandhi adopted the policy of mass disobedience and non-violent resistance as weapons against the British Rule in India and followed a principle of Ahimsa (total Non-Violence). He endured several hardships, was arrested and occasionally beaten in his journey and struggle to Justice and Freedom. However, his struggle does not restrict to India itself, as the leader played a key role in the Civil Rights movement in South Africa and secured them the right to justice and equality. His birthday 2 October is commemorated as Gandhi Jayanti, a national holiday and as the International Non-Violence day across the world.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Porbandar, a town in Gujarat in western India on 2 October 1869. His father Karamchand Gandhi was the Diwan of Porbandar state of British India. His mother Putlibai was Karamchand's fourth wife. Having born in a Hindu family Gandhi strictly followed vegetarianism and fasting as means of self-purification. At the age of 13 he was married to one year older Kasturba. In 1885, Kasturba gave birth to their first child who survived only few days. Later the couple had four sons. All along his schooling days Gandhi was an average student and passed his matriculation exam from Samaldas College, Gujarat with some difficulty. On 4th September 1888, he traveled to England to study law at the university College London and to train as a barrister, as his family wanted him to be a barrister.

Famous as	For His Philosophy of Truth and Non-violence
Nationality	Indian
Religion	Hinduism
Born on	02 October 1869 AD
Zodiac Sign	Libra
Born in	Porbandar, Kathiawar Agency, British Indian Empire
Died on	30 January 1948 AD
Place of death	New Delhi, Dominion of India
Eepitaphs	Hey Ram
Father	Karamchand Gandhi
Mother	Putlibai Gandhi
Spouse	Kasturba Gandhi

Children	Harilal, Manilal, Ramdas, Devdas
Education	University College London, Alfred High School
Works & Achievements	Key Role in Indian Freedom Struggle, Philosophy of Truth and Non-violence
Awards	1930 - Man of the Year by Time magazine

Civil Rights Movement in South Africa

In South Africa, he had a first hand experience of racial discrimination and prejudice directed at Indians and the injustice imposed on them. Gandhi himself experienced the humiliation and disgrace while in South Africa. Initially he was thrown off a train for refusing to travel in a third class coach while holding a first class ticket. Other similar events including being barred from many hotels in South Africa moved him and encouraged him to work for Indian people there. As a result he extended his original period of stay to protest a bill passed by the South African government to deny them the right to vote.

In 1906, the Transvaal government launched a new act forcing registration of Indian population. Enraged by the act, a mass protest meeting was held in Johannesburg on 11 September in which Gandhi called on Indian people to resist the new act through non-violent and peaceful means. His methodology of Satyagraha (devotion to truth) was adopted by thousands of his followers and during the seven-year long struggle; thousands of Indians were jailed (including Gandhi), beaten and punished for striking and refusing to register. Though the government successfully repressed the protest through its harsh methods, the impact of this protest forced the government to initiate for a compromise with Gandhi. Gandhi's idea of non-violence and truth developed during this period.

Indian Independence struggle and Gandhi (1916-1945)

Gandhi's Satyagraha started from Champaran and kheda, where the condition of farmers was worsened by landlords (mostly British) by imposing taxes and leaving them in an abject poverty. The peasants were forced to grow cash crops instead of food crops necessary for their survival, and this led to a situation of famine there.

To end that devastating famine and poverty Gandhi organized detailed survey and study, based upon which he began leading the cleaning of the villages, building of schools and hospitals, encouraging villagers to condemn and combat many social evils including pardah and untouchability. Gandhi organized protests and strikes against the landlords that resulted in to the cancellation of the revenue hikes and collection of taxes until the famine ended.

Non-cooperation Movement

Gandhi employed non-cooperation, non-violence and peaceful resistance as the most effective weapons against the British rule. It was the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the violence that followed, after which Gandhi felt an immediate need of a selfcontrolled government and total control over all Indian government institutions. The concept of Swaraj or complete individual, spiritual and political freedom evolved after this. Gandhi urged the people to boycott foreign made goods, cloths, to resign from government employment and to forsake British titles and honors. He encouraged people to wear khadi clothes instead of foreign made clothes. Gandhi himself wore a traditional Indian dhoti and shawl, made with yarn he himself spun on a Charkha.

The campaign was a big success nationwide and people from all sectors, including women of India participated in it. The movement ended in Feb 1922, when a violent clash in broke in Chauri chaura,

Uttar Pradesh. Gandhi was arrested in March, tried for sedition and was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment. During his years in prison the Indian National Congress began to split into two parts, one led by Chitta Ranjan Das and Motilal Nehru and the other led by Chakravarty Rajgopalachari. Cooperation among Hindu and Muslims also weakened during this period. All efforts made by Gandhi to bridge the differences had little impact on them.

Salt March & Demand for Swaraj

The British government appointed a new constitutional reform under Sir John Simon which did not include any Indian and the result was a boycott of the commission by all Indian political leaders. In December 1928 Gandhi demanded the British government to grant India a dominion status and warned them to face a new non-cooperation campaign with a complete freedom as its goal, if their demands were not met. On 31st December 1929 Indian flag was unfurled in Lahore and next year, 26 January was celebrated as the Independence Day by the National Congress Party which was commemorated by almost every Indian organization. In 1930, Gandhi launched a new Satyagraha protesting the tax on salt. He marched from Ahmadabad to Dandi, Gujarat to make salt himself. Thousands of Indian people joined him in this 400km march which was marked as his most successful campaign against the British hold.

In March 1931 the Irwin-Gandhi pact was signed according to which the British government agreed to free political prisoners if Gandhi denounced the civil disobedience movement. In 1932, the government granted untouchables separate electorates under the new constitution. Gandhi started a new campaign to improve the lives of untouchables, whom he called Harijan, the children of God. Equality and justice for Untouchables became his prime goal and it was a result of Gandhi's constant effort that in September 1932 the government agreed to adopt a more unbiased and fair arrangement via negotiation.

Freedom and Partition of India

During world war II in 1939, Gandhi opposed the inclusion of India in the war stating that India cannot be a part of the war being fought for the democratic freedom, while freedom was denied to India itself. Gandhi and other Congressmen intensified their movement for a complete freedom demanding the British to 'Quit India'. It was the most vigorous movement in the history of Indian Independence struggle in which thousands of freedom fighters were killed, imprisoned and injured and violent clashes broke in every part of India. The demand this time was a complete freedom and immediate exit of the British from India. Though Gandhi appealed to maintain discipline, he made it clear that even violent acts wouldn't stop their movement this time, as it was a time to Do or Die.

Gandhi and the committee of congress were arrested on 9 August 1942, and Gandhi was held in Aga Khan Palace for 2 years. During that period his wife Kasturba Gandhi died after 18 months of prison on 22 February 1944. At the end of the world war, Gandhi called off his struggle. Time had come to see an Independent India. Gandhi had always dreamed of India as a place where Hindu and Muslims lived in harmony and thus he was opposed to any plan that partitioned India into two different countries. A majority of Muslims living in India were in favor of the partition, including Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The partition plan was approved by the Congress leadership as they knew it was the only way to avoid a looming Hindu Muslim civil war. Against the wish of Gandhi, British India broke into two parts, an Independent India and Pakistan.

Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi was assassinated on 30 January 1948 on the grounds of Birla house, New Delhi. The assassin, Nathuram Godse, who had links to the extremist Hindu group Hindu Mahasabha shot him dead because he was against Gandhi's sympathy for Pakistan. Godse and his co-conspirator

Narayan Apte were tried and executed on 15 November 1949. Gandhi's memorial on rajghat, New Delhi bears his last words He Ram!

The Development of Satyagraha

When he moved to South Africa in 1893, Gandhi quickly encountered racial discrimination. In a Durban court he was asked by the European magistrate to take off his turban; he refused and left the courtroom. A few days later, while traveling to Pretoria, he was thrown out of a first-class railway compartment and was later beaten up by the white driver of a stagecoach because he would not travel on the footboard to make room for a European passenger. He was also barred from hotels reserved “for Europeans only.” But something happened to Gandhi as he smarted under the insults heaped upon him. That journey from Durban to Pretoria was his moment of truth. Henceforth he would not accept injustice. He would defend his dignity as an Indian and as a man. Gandhi fought with mixed success against South Africa’s system of discrimination. He founded the Natal Indian Congress, and his writings exposed to the world the injustices suffered by Indians and others. In 1906 satyagraha (“devotion to truth”) was born as a technique of nonviolent resistance. By the time Gandhi returned to India in 1915, he had developed satyagraha into an effective tool in the fight for social justice.

Achieving India’s Independence



[Salt March](#) A sculpture in New Delhi, India, depicts Gandhi leading the Salt March, a nonviolent protest action against the British tax on salt.

© [pikoso.kz/stock.adobe.com](#) By 1920 Gandhi was India's dominant political figure, exerting a broad influence over the Indian population. The [Indian National Congress](#) (Congress Party) became a mass organization that Gandhi led in nonviolent actions. These included boycotts of British goods as well as British legislatures, courts, offices, and schools. In 1930 Gandhi launched the [Salt March](#) as a protest against a British tax on salt. The march was one of the most successful of Gandhi's campaigns. Yet by 1934 he had become disillusioned with the infighting among Congress Party members. He turned to building the nation "from the bottom up." By emphasizing rural education, social equality, and cottage industries, Gandhi believed India could become peaceful and self-sufficient. The final struggle for Indian independence began in 1942. Gandhi demanded an immediate British withdrawal from India, known as the Quit India Movement. Over the next five years Gandhi struggled to help Muslim, Hindu, and British leaders negotiate Indian independence. He was unable to block the Mountbatten Plan, which divided the subcontinent into a Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority East and West [Pakistan](#). On August 15, 1947, India achieved its independence. Gandhi worked to stop the Muslim-Hindu riots that followed. On January 30, 1948, he was assassinated by a Hindu radical who was upset by Gandhi's efforts to reconcile Hindus and Muslims.

Gandhi's Legacy

