

# Gandhi's Vision of Swaraj: Relevance in India's Independence Movement

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**Abstract-** This paper critically examines the role of Mahatma Gandhi in India's struggle for independence from British colonial rule, highlighting his philosophy, methods, and enduring impact. Gandhi transformed the Indian National Congress from an elite organization into a mass-based movement, empowering peasants, workers, women, and marginalized communities to participate in the freedom struggle. His philosophy of Satyagraha (truth-force) and Ahimsa (non-violence) became central to the Indian resistance, emphasizing moral discipline, peaceful protest, and civil disobedience as effective tools against colonial oppression. The study explores key movements led by Gandhi, including the Champaran and Kheda Satyagrahas, the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Salt March, and the Quit India Movement, illustrating how these campaigns combined political objectives with social reform, addressing issues such as untouchability, rural poverty, and communal harmony. The paper also critically engages with challenges to Gandhi's leadership, including critiques from Subhas Chandra Bose and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and examines the limitations of non-violence in the context of rising communal tensions leading to Partition.

Furthermore, the paper assesses Gandhi's global legacy, analyzing how his methods inspired civil rights movements led by Martin Luther King Jr., anti-apartheid struggles under Nelson Mandela, and various non-violent resistance movements worldwide. Gandhi's vision of ethical politics, economic self-reliance, and peaceful coexistence continues to offer pathways for addressing contemporary issues of injustice, environmental degradation, and social inequality. The study concludes that while Gandhi's approach faced limitations, his commitment to non-violence and social justice redefined the nature of resistance and left a lasting impact on India and the world, positioning him as a timeless symbol of hope and moral courage in the pursuit of freedom.

## 1: INTRODUCTION

The Indian freedom struggle against British colonial rule stands as one of the largest and most impactful

movements of the twentieth century. Among its many leaders, Mahatma Gandhi emerged as the most significant figure, redefining the methods of resistance and the structure of the Indian nationalist movement. Gandhi's commitment to non-violence (ahimsa) and civil disobedience (satyagraha) transformed the Indian National Congress from a moderate, elite-dominated body into a mass-based movement, bringing peasants, workers, and women into active participation.

Born as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in Porbandar, Gujarat, in 1869, Gandhi's early exposure to religious teachings of Jainism and Vaishnavism, emphasizing non-violence and truth, laid the foundation of his later philosophy. His education in England, coupled with his experiences of racial discrimination in South Africa, shaped his approach toward resistance through non-violence and civil disobedience. Gandhi's methods were influenced by his readings of Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin, and Henry David Thoreau, whose writings on civil disobedience and ethical living resonated deeply with him. Under Gandhi's leadership, the freedom struggle saw the emergence of mass movements such as the Champaran Satyagraha (1917), the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920), the Salt March (1930), and the Quit India Movement (1942). These movements not only challenged British authority but also aimed to instill self-reliance and moral discipline among Indians, emphasizing khadi, the removal of untouchability, and communal harmony. Gandhi's role was not limited to political agitation; he also envisioned social transformation, aiming for the upliftment of marginalized communities and promoting rural self-sufficiency. However, Gandhi's methods and ideologies were not without criticism. Leaders like Subhas Chandra Bose advocated armed struggle, while B.R. Ambedkar criticized Gandhi's stance on caste and untouchability, arguing that it did not adequately address the structural inequalities of the caste system. Despite these

challenges, Gandhi's influence on India's freedom movement and his legacy in promoting non-violent resistance have had global resonance, inspiring leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Cesar Chavez. Gandhi's insistence on moral principles in politics and his methods of non-violent resistance continue to offer valuable lessons in addressing injustice and oppression in contemporary society.

This paper critically examines Gandhi's multifaceted role in India's freedom struggle, analyzing his philosophy, methods, major movements led by him, his relationships with other leaders, the criticisms he faced, and his enduring legacy in the global context of non-violent resistance movements.

## 2: EARLY LIFE AND PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES

Mahatma Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, a coastal town in Gujarat, into a family deeply rooted in the values of devotion and simplicity. His father, Karamchand Gandhi, served as the Diwan (Prime Minister) of Porbandar, while his mother, Putlibai, was a deeply religious woman whose Jain-influenced lifestyle emphasized fasting, prayer, and non-violence, profoundly shaping Gandhi's character.

### Education and Early Experiences

At the age of 13, Gandhi was married to Kasturba, a relationship that would evolve into a partnership of mutual respect and struggle. Gandhi completed his primary education in Rajkot and later traveled to England in 1888 to study law at the Inner Temple, London. During his stay in England, Gandhi encountered a variety of Western philosophical and ethical ideas, which broadened his perspective while reinforcing his commitment to simplicity and truth. Gandhi was deeply influenced by the Bible, especially the Sermon on the Mount, which emphasized love and forgiveness, resonating with the ideals of his upbringing. He also read Henry David Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience," John Ruskin's "Unto This Last," and Leo Tolstoy's works, which collectively provided a foundation for his philosophy of non-violent resistance and commitment to ethical living.

### Influence of South Africa

Gandhi's experiences in South Africa (1893–1915) proved pivotal in shaping his future role in India's freedom struggle. Arriving in South Africa to serve as a legal advisor for an Indian firm, Gandhi was subjected to racial discrimination, most notably when he was thrown off a train at Pietermaritzburg despite having a valid first-class ticket. This incident ignited Gandhi's resolve to fight against injustice using non-violent methods. In South Africa, Gandhi developed the concept of Satyagraha (holding onto truth), advocating for civil rights through non-violent resistance. The 1906 Transvaal Ordinance requiring Asians to register was met with Gandhi's first organized resistance, where he encouraged Indians to defy the law peacefully. His successful campaigns against racial injustice in South Africa demonstrated the effectiveness of non-violent mass mobilization and laid the groundwork for his strategies in India.

### Spiritual and Philosophical Foundations

Gandhi's spiritual philosophy was a synthesis of various influences:

- Hindu Scriptures (Bhagavad Gita): Taught him about duty, selfless action, and the pursuit of truth.
- Jainism: Reinforced his commitment to non-violence and self-restraint.
- Tolstoy's Christian Anarchism: Inspired his belief in the power of love and moral resistance against oppression.
- Ruskin's Economic Philosophy: Shaped his views on the dignity of labor and the importance of rural self-sufficiency.

Gandhi's approach to life was rooted in truth (Satya), non-violence (Ahimsa), and self-sacrifice, which he considered essential for spiritual and social progress. His concept of trusteeship emphasized that wealth and power should be held in trust for the welfare of society, a principle that challenged the exploitative structures of colonialism and capitalism.

### Return to India

Upon returning to India in 1915, Gandhi was welcomed as a hero by nationalist leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who advised him to first understand India's socio-political conditions before plunging into

the freedom movement. Gandhi embarked on extensive tours across India, observing the poverty, social inequalities, and the exploitative nature of British colonial rule. These experiences convinced him that India's freedom struggle must also address social issues such as untouchability, poverty, and the need for communal harmony.

### Chapter 3: Gandhian Philosophy and Methods

Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy was not merely a theoretical construct but a practical guide for mass mobilization and social transformation. Rooted in the principles of truth, non-violence, and self-suffering, Gandhi's methods redefined the dynamics of resistance, enabling the Indian freedom movement to gain moral legitimacy and mass participation.

#### Satyagraha: The Power of Truth

At the heart of Gandhi's methods was Satyagraha, derived from Satya (truth) and Agraha (firmness or insistence), which he described as the "force born of truth and non-violence." Unlike passive resistance, which could be strategic or temporary, Satyagraha was both a spiritual and political tool that demanded adherence to non-violence, the willingness to suffer, and the relentless pursuit of truth. Gandhi first developed and tested this method in South Africa, using it against discriminatory laws, and later applied it in India to address social injustices and challenge colonial authority. The essence of Satyagraha lay in appealing to the conscience of the oppressor through non-violent resistance, making it morally difficult for oppressive authorities to continue their actions without scrutiny.

#### Ahimsa: Non-Violence as a Creed

For Gandhi, Ahimsa (non-violence) was not a tactic but a way of life, deeply rooted in spiritual conviction. He believed that non-violence was the weapon of the strong, requiring immense courage and discipline. According to Gandhi, violence only perpetuated cycles of hatred and oppression, while non-violence had the power to transform hearts and achieve true freedom. Ahimsa, for Gandhi, was expansive, extending to thought, word, and deed. He argued that

the freedom struggle could not be successful if it relied on violent means, as it would compromise the moral foundation necessary for a just society post-independence.

#### Civil Disobedience and Non-Cooperation

Gandhi's civil disobedience campaigns were a practical application of Satyagraha and Ahimsa. Civil disobedience involved the deliberate and public refusal to obey unjust laws while accepting the legal consequences, thereby exposing the moral bankruptcy of the laws and the regime enforcing them. In the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22), Gandhi urged Indians to boycott British goods, institutions, and honours, encouraging them to resign from government positions, withdraw children from government schools, and refuse to pay taxes. This movement, though called off after the Chauri Chaura incident, demonstrated the power of collective non-cooperation in destabilizing colonial authority.

#### Constructive Programme

Alongside direct resistance, Gandhi emphasized constructive programmes as a means to prepare society for Swaraj (self-rule). These programmes included:

- Promotion of Khadi: Spinning and wearing hand-spun cloth to boycott British textiles and revive village industries.
- Removal of Untouchability: Advocating for the rights of Dalits (whom Gandhi referred to as Harijans, or "children of God") and integrating them into social and religious spaces.
- Rural Upliftment: Encouraging self-sufficiency in villages, improving sanitation, and promoting education and health care.

Gandhi believed that political freedom was incomplete without social and economic freedom, and the constructive programme was integral to preparing India for independence.

#### Spirituality and Politics

Gandhi's philosophy blurred the lines between spirituality and politics. For him, politics was an extension of spiritual life, and ethical considerations were central to public actions. His commitment to truth required constant self-examination, and he often undertook fasts as a means of self-purification and moral persuasion. Gandhi's integration of spirituality in politics was evident in his call for communal harmony and his efforts to bring Hindus and Muslims together, despite the growing communal tensions during the freedom struggle.

#### 4: MAJOR MOVEMENTS LED BY GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi's leadership in India's freedom struggle is best understood through the major movements he led, which showcased his methods of non-violence, civil disobedience, and mass mobilization, transforming India's nationalist movement into a people's movement.

##### 1. Champaran Satyagraha (1917)

The Champaran Satyagraha marked Gandhi's first major intervention in Indian politics. Indigo farmers in Champaran, Bihar, were subjected to the exploitative Tinkathia system, forcing them to grow indigo under harsh conditions. Gandhi was invited by local leaders like Raj Kumar Shukla to address their grievances. Gandhi's approach combined non-violent resistance with detailed investigation, organizing peasants to resist oppressive plantation policies while negotiating with British authorities. The success of Champaran Satyagraha led to the abolition of the system and established Gandhi as a mass leader committed to grassroots struggles.

##### 2. Kheda Satyagraha (1918)

Following Champaran, Gandhi led the Kheda Satyagraha in Gujarat, where peasants faced famine and crop failure but were still required to pay taxes. Gandhi, alongside leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, organized peasants to withhold tax payments through non-violent resistance. The government eventually agreed to suspend tax collection, marking another victory for Gandhi's method of peaceful

resistance and strengthening the credibility of Satyagraha as a tool for mass mobilization.

##### 3. Ahmedabad Mill Strike (1918)

In the same year, Gandhi mediated between mill workers and owners in Ahmedabad, demanding a fair wage for workers. When negotiations stalled, Gandhi undertook a hunger strike, demonstrating the use of personal sacrifice to bring about resolution. The mill owners eventually agreed to the workers' demands, emphasizing the moral power of non-violent protest.

##### 4. Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-1922)

In response to the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (1919) and the Rowlatt Act, Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation Movement, urging Indians to boycott British goods, institutions, and honours, and to promote Swadeshi and Khadi. The movement saw mass participation across regions, classes, and communities, turning the Congress into a mass organization. However, the movement was called off in 1922 following the Chauri Chaura incident, where a violent clash led to the death of police officers, underscoring Gandhi's unwavering commitment to non-violence.

##### 5. Salt March and Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-1934)

The Salt March (Dandi March) was one of Gandhi's most iconic protests, symbolizing defiance against British salt laws. Beginning on March 12, 1930, Gandhi walked 240 miles from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi, where he produced salt, openly violating colonial laws. This sparked the Civil Disobedience Movement, with Indians across the country engaging in non-payment of taxes, boycotting foreign goods, and picketing liquor shops. The movement showcased the effectiveness of non-violent mass protests in challenging colonial authority.

##### 6. Quit India Movement (1942)

Launched on August 8, 1942, during World War II, the Quit India Movement called for immediate British withdrawal, with the slogan "Do or Die." Gandhi's call

united Indians across regions and communities in a final mass protest against colonial rule. Despite severe repression, including the arrest of Gandhi and other leaders, the movement demonstrated the irreversible demand for complete independence and set the stage for India's freedom in 1947.

#### Impact of Gandhi's Leadership in Movements

- **Mass Mobilization:** Gandhi's methods brought peasants, workers, women, and marginalized communities into the freedom struggle.
- **Moral High Ground:** His insistence on non-violence maintained the ethical legitimacy of the movement.
- **Grassroots Connection:** Gandhi's focus on rural issues ensured that the struggle addressed social and economic injustices alongside political freedom.

### 5: GANDHI AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Mahatma Gandhi's arrival on India's political scene transformed the Indian National Congress (INC) from an organization of elite, urban moderates into a mass-based, people-centered movement that aligned itself with the everyday struggles of India's diverse population.

#### Gandhi's Entry and the Transformation of Congress

Before Gandhi, the Congress primarily focused on constitutional reforms through petitions and negotiations with the British government, often limiting its participation to the English-educated middle class. Gandhi's arrival in 1915, and his deep understanding of India's grassroots realities, gradually shifted the Congress towards direct action, mass mobilization, and the incorporation of social reform into the national struggle.

Under his influence, the Congress:

- Adopted non-cooperation and civil disobedience as methods of protest.
- Began advocating for Swaraj (self-rule) as its primary objective.

- Embraced Khadi and Swadeshi as symbols of economic independence.
- Integrated issues such as untouchability removal and communal harmony into its agenda.

Gandhi encouraged Congress leaders to engage directly with peasants and workers, ensuring that the freedom struggle addressed not only political independence but also social and economic injustices.

#### Gandhi and Other Leaders: Nehru, Patel, and Bose

Gandhi's leadership was marked by his relationships with other prominent Congress leaders, shaping the organization's direction while allowing space for ideological diversity.

#### Jawaharlal Nehru

Nehru shared Gandhi's vision of an independent India but leaned towards socialist ideals and rapid industrialization. Gandhi respected Nehru's commitment to secularism and modernity, and despite differences in approach, their collaboration was central to the Congress's unity. Gandhi's moral authority often acted as a bridge between the Congress's moderate and radical factions.

#### Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Patel aligned closely with Gandhi on many issues, particularly in organizational discipline and the importance of non-violent resistance. Patel played a crucial role in implementing Congress's decisions during movements like the Quit India Movement and was instrumental in maintaining organizational stability during critical phases.

#### Subhas Chandra Bose

Bose admired Gandhi but differed significantly on strategies for achieving independence, advocating armed struggle and seeking alliances with Axis powers during World War II. Their ideological differences led to Bose resigning as Congress President in 1939. Despite disagreements, Gandhi acknowledged Bose's patriotism, illustrating the

pluralism within the Congress under Gandhi's leadership.

#### Internal Challenges and Gandhi's Leadership

Gandhi faced the complex task of balancing:

- The radical impatience of youth and revolutionaries.
- The pragmatism of leaders seeking negotiations with the British.
- The social tensions between caste Hindus and marginalized communities.
- The communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims.

Gandhi's emphasis on non-violence, moral integrity, and unity helped navigate these challenges, even though tensions, particularly communal ones, would later escalate during Partition.

#### Communal Harmony and the Congress

Gandhi consistently sought Hindu-Muslim unity, considering it essential for India's independence and future stability. His support for the Khilafat Movement (1919-1924) reflected his commitment to Muslim concerns, although the movement's collapse and rising communal tensions later complicated these efforts. Gandhi's attempts at communal reconciliation, including his fasts and negotiations, underscored his belief that India's freedom was incomplete without communal peace. However, the increasing divide between the Congress and the Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, challenged Gandhi's vision, ultimately leading to the Partition of India in 1947.

### 6: CRITICISMS AND CHALLENGES TO GANDHI'S LEADERSHIP

While Mahatma Gandhi's leadership in India's independence movement earned him reverence as the "Father of the Nation," it was also subject to significant criticism from contemporaries and scholars. These critiques were centered around his methods, his handling of social issues like caste and untouchability, and his approach to communal tensions and Partition.

#### 1. Critiques of Non-Violence and Satyagraha

Gandhi's unwavering commitment to non-violence and Satyagraha was seen by some as impractical and ineffective in the face of colonial repression.

- Subhas Chandra Bose argued that non-violence was inadequate against a colonial power determined to maintain control through force. Bose favored armed resistance and sought international alliances, emphasizing that only a militant approach could secure India's freedom rapidly.
- Revolutionary groups like Bhagat Singh's Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) viewed Gandhi's suspension of movements after incidents of violence, such as the Chauri Chaura incident, as a betrayal of the sacrifices made by the youth in the freedom struggle.

Gandhi defended his stance by emphasizing the moral strength and long-term sustainability of non-violent resistance, believing that violence would undermine the ethical foundation of the freedom struggle.

#### 2. Gandhi and the Caste System

Gandhi's stance on caste and untouchability was another area of criticism, particularly from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and a prominent leader of the Dalits.

- Gandhi advocated for the removal of untouchability, referring to Dalits as "Harijans" (Children of God) and working towards their integration into society.
- However, Gandhi did not oppose the Varna system itself, advocating for reform within the system rather than its complete abolition. Ambedkar argued that this approach was insufficient, as it failed to address the systemic oppression and social inequality inherent in the caste system.

The Poona Pact (1932), signed between Gandhi and Ambedkar under contentious circumstances, reflected these tensions. While it secured reserved seats for

Dalits within the Hindu electorate instead of separate electorates, Ambedkar remained critical of Gandhi's methods, emphasizing the need for social justice alongside political freedom.

### 3. Challenges During Partition

Gandhi's commitment to Hindu-Muslim unity faced its greatest challenge during the years leading to Partition. While Gandhi worked tirelessly to prevent communal violence and opposed the idea of dividing India along religious lines, the demand for a separate Pakistan by the Muslim League under Muhammad Ali Jinnah grew stronger.

Gandhi's efforts to maintain unity, including:

- Supporting the Khilafat Movement,
- Engaging in negotiations with Muslim leaders,
- Undertaking fasts for communal harmony,

were ultimately unsuccessful in preventing Partition, which led to widespread violence and displacement in 1947. Critics argue that Gandhi's idealism and moral persuasion could not counter the political realities and communal tensions that had intensified over the decades.

### 4. Gender and Gandhi's Leadership

Gandhi's views on women's roles were complex. While he encouraged women to participate in the freedom struggle, recognizing their potential in non-violent activism, his views on women's roles within the family and society often reflected traditional patriarchal notions. Despite this, Gandhi's call for women's participation in movements like the Salt March enabled thousands of women to step into the public sphere, marking a significant shift in the gender dynamics of the freedom struggle.

## 7: GANDHI'S LEGACY AND GLOBAL IMPACT

### 1. Gandhi and Global Leaders

- Martin Luther King Jr. (USA): During the American Civil Rights Movement, Dr. King adopted Gandhi's principles of non-violent

resistance to challenge racial segregation and systemic racism. King credited Gandhi's methods for providing the moral framework and practical tactics for movements such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955–1956) and the Birmingham Campaign (1963), emphasizing that non-violence was “not a method for cowards” but “a powerful and just weapon.”

- Nelson Mandela (South Africa): Mandela and the African National Congress were influenced by Gandhian principles in their initial strategies to resist apartheid. Although Mandela later adopted armed resistance due to the brutal repression by the apartheid regime, he continued to emphasize reconciliation and non-violence in the post-apartheid transition, reflecting Gandhi's legacy of prioritizing peace and justice.
- Cesar Chavez (USA): The labor leader and activist for farm workers' rights in the United States explicitly followed Gandhian principles, using fasting and non-violent protests to advance the cause of fair wages and working conditions for farm laborers.

These leaders, among many others, viewed Gandhi's non-violent philosophy as not merely a political tactic but a transformative moral stance, empowering oppressed communities to challenge systemic injustice without perpetuating cycles of violence.

### 2. Influence on Global Movements

Gandhi's strategies of civil disobedience, boycott, and non-cooperation have been employed in various contexts worldwide:

- The Solidarity Movement in Poland, led by Lech Wałęsa, used non-violent resistance to challenge communist rule.
- The Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia (1989) adopted peaceful protests to end authoritarian governance.
- The Otpor Movement in Serbia (2000), which led to the overthrow of Slobodan Milošević, studied Gandhian tactics for non-violent resistance.
- Environmental movements, anti-nuclear protests, and indigenous rights campaigns globally have

drawn inspiration from Gandhi's approach to resisting injustice through non-violent means.

ongoing dialogue about justice, equality, and the methods needed to achieve them

### 3. Gandhi's Relevance in Contemporary India

### CONCLUSION

In India, Gandhi's legacy continues to shape:

Mahatma Gandhi's role in India's independence movement was transformative, not only in its political objectives but also in redefining the methods and ethical foundations of the freedom struggle. Gandhi's emphasis on Satyagraha, Ahimsa, and truth established a new paradigm of resistance, one that relied on the moral force of non-violence rather than armed confrontation.

- Grassroots movements, such as those advocating for land rights, environmental justice, and anti-corruption.
- Educational curricula, where Gandhian studies are included to teach values of non-violence, simplicity, and ethical living.
- Debates around economic policies, where Gandhian principles of rural development and self-sufficiency are revisited as alternatives to unchecked industrialization.

Gandhi's Contributions Summarized:

However, contemporary challenges such as communal tensions, socio-economic disparities, and political violence often test the relevance of Gandhi's principles in practical governance. While his ideals are celebrated annually on October 2nd (Gandhi Jayanti), their full realization in society remains a work in progress.

- Mass Mobilization: Gandhi's leadership brought the Indian National Congress out of elite circles and into the villages, engaging peasants, workers, women, and marginalized communities in the freedom movement.
- Non-Violence as Strategy and Principle: Gandhi's commitment to non-violence was both a moral stance and a practical strategy, enabling large-scale resistance without descending into cycles of violent repression.
- Social Reform within Political Struggle: Gandhi believed that political freedom was incomplete without social and economic justice, advocating for the eradication of untouchability, the upliftment of marginalized groups, and the promotion of khadi and self-reliance.
- Symbolic Protests: Movements such as the Salt March demonstrated the power of symbolic, non-violent action in undermining the moral legitimacy of colonial laws.
- Commitment to Communal Harmony: Despite challenges, Gandhi consistently emphasized Hindu-Muslim unity, recognizing that India's future required communal peace.

### 4. Gandhi's Critiques and Their Impact on His Legacy

Gandhi's legacy is also examined critically in contemporary discourse:

Complexities and Challenges:

- Caste and Social Justice: Critics like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar argued that Gandhi's methods did not sufficiently dismantle caste hierarchies, emphasizing the need for structural reforms.
- Economic Philosophy: Gandhi's advocacy for village industries and self-reliance is critiqued as impractical in the modern industrial economy, although it finds relevance in sustainable development debates.
- Gender Issues: Gandhi's perspectives on women, while progressive for his time, reflected patriarchal notions, and contemporary gender activists critique these limitations.

Gandhi's leadership was not without challenges:

These critiques do not diminish Gandhi's legacy but rather contextualize his contributions, encouraging

- His strict adherence to non-violence was critiqued by revolutionaries who believed that armed struggle was necessary.

- His approach to caste issues was seen as insufficient by leaders like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who called for structural change rather than reform within the system.
- His efforts to prevent Partition, though earnest, could not overcome the political realities of rising communalism, leading to one of the most tragic chapters in South Asian history.

Yet, Gandhi's ability to hold together a diverse movement under the banner of non-violence, even in the face of severe repression, remains one of his most significant achievements.

Global Relevance of Gandhi's Philosophy:

Gandhi's influence extended far beyond India:

- Civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., anti-apartheid activists like Nelson Mandela, and grassroots leaders like Cesar Chavez found inspiration in Gandhi's methods.
- Movements for democracy, environmental justice, and peace have adopted Gandhian tactics of non-violent resistance to challenge oppressive systems.
- In contemporary times, Gandhi's teachings are invoked in addressing climate change, inequality, and conflicts, emphasizing ethical living and peaceful coexistence.

Gandhi's legacy challenges us to reconsider the role of morality in politics, the power of non-violence, and the pursuit of justice in a deeply divided world. His methods provide not just a toolkit for resistance but a vision for building societies rooted in compassion, truth, and equity. While India's journey post-independence has been marked by achievements and challenges, Gandhi's ideals continue to serve as a moral compass, reminding citizens and leaders of the values that must underpin a truly free and just society. Mahatma Gandhi's role in India's independence movement was far more than a fight against colonial rule; it was a moral revolution that sought to transform individuals and society. His legacy invites us to understand that true freedom involves not only the removal of external oppression but also the dismantling of internal injustices within society. In a

world still grappling with violence and inequality, Gandhi's message remains relevant, offering a path of hope that change is possible through non-violence, truth, and the collective will of people to build a more just and compassionate world.

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