

# GANDHI'S NON-VIOLENT STRATEGY: GLOBAL IMPACT AND LEGACY

\*Ekta Malik

\*\*Dolamani Sahu

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**Corresponding Author:** Ekta Malik; doi:10.46360/cosmos.ahe.520231023

## Abstract

Gandhi's non-violent strategy, rooted in the principles of Ahimsa (nonviolence) and Satyagraha (truth-force), has had an enduring global impact that extends far beyond the Indian independence movement. This strategy, characterized by peaceful resistance and moral fortitude, redefined the concept of political and social struggle. Gandhi's methods inspired a multitude of global leaders and movements advocating for civil rights, social justice, and freedom, including those led by Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela. This paper examines the core elements of Gandhi's non-violent strategy and explores its global significance and legacy in shaping modern activism. The study highlights how Gandhi's approach has become a model for peaceful resistance and ethical leadership, influencing change across various socio-political landscapes. Despite challenges and criticisms, the legacy of Gandhi's non-violence continues to resonate in contemporary movements seeking change through peaceful means.

**Keywords:** Gandhi, Non-Violence, Ahimsa, Satyagraha, Global Impact, Peaceful Resistance.

## Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent strategy, exemplified by the principles of Ahimsa (nonviolence) and Satyagraha (truth-force), represents a transformative approach to social and political change. Unlike conventional resistance movements that often relied on armed struggle or violent methods, Gandhi's leadership demonstrated that steadfast commitment to peace and moral integrity could yield powerful outcomes. His methods were instrumental in leading India to independence from British rule, proving that ethical, nonviolent resistance could effectively challenge oppression and injustice.

The significance of Gandhi's strategy did not remain confined to India; it resonated globally, influencing numerous civil rights and freedom movements around the world. Notable leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., who championed the American Civil Rights Movement, and Nelson Mandela, who fought against apartheid in South Africa, drew direct inspiration from Gandhi's philosophy. His emphasis on nonviolence as an effective strategy for achieving socio-political goals has left an indelible mark on modern activism, making Gandhi's methods a blueprint for peaceful resistance in diverse contexts.

This paper explores the core components of Gandhi's non-violent strategy, its practical applications, and the global impact and legacy it has established over the decades. By examining both the

successes and challenges associated with Gandhi's approach, this study seeks to highlight its relevance to contemporary movements and the ways in which it has shaped global discourses on peaceful resistance and ethical leadership.

## Literature Review

Mukherji (2020) The comprehension of Gandhi's views might occasionally be seriously harmed by an integrated study of his political activity, personal life, imagery, and concepts. One such example is George Orwell's (1949–2000) perception of Gandhi as a moral saint and his beliefs as "anti-humanistic." The philosopher Susan Wolf (1982), following Orwell's example, challenged the concept of moral saints in a seminal study. Gandhi is rarely discussed in scholarly moral philosophy, in large part because of his saintly reputation. Gandhi's moral ideas are saved from the apparent image of a saint by demonstrating that the picture is not relevant to his ideas.

Gandhi understood that the welfare of others was not the only interest that should be entertained, as evidenced by the firm presence of detachment in his framework. The moral implication is that when one's interests clash with another's well-being, one should put aside other interests. In this way, the intake of interests into a person's life is controlled by detachment. As we observed, prioritizing the other person's well-being in conflict situations is also generally consistent with common sense morality.

\*Research Scholar, Kalinga University, Naya Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.

\*\*Supervisor, Kalinga University, Naya Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.

Common sense is grounded in the agent's moral sense via the concept of detachment. Gandhi is not advocating for the total eradication of immoral interests, as evidenced by the arbitrating principle of detachment.

Therefore, even while Gandhi's philosophy seems to have included the idea of advancing the "welfare of the others as much as possible," it does not appear to have completely displaced non-moral interests, as Wolf contends is the case for moral saints. As a conclusion, we have emphasized Orwell's conspicuous lack of scholarly research in his depiction of Gandhi; the same criticism is leveled against Wolf, who blindly accepts Orwell's interpretation of Gandhi when, in reality, she was thinking about Mother Teresa. Orwell and Wolf omit facets of Gandhi's thinking that are essential to comprehending Gandhi's idea of moral good because of their excessive dependence on a fictitious perception of Gandhi as a moral saint, which is exacerbated by their academic constraints. As a result, Gandhi's moral reasoning lost its appeal due to the dominance of an image.

Kumar (2022) On the 153rd anniversary of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's birth, we should not only celebrate but also consider the future of the world we live in. There is a great deal of cultural and moral turmoil as a result of the 21st century's worldwide spike in the prevalence of violence, intolerance, and hatred. The tragic demise of humanitarianism and the accompanying history of moral decay worldwide are the origins of this phenomenon.

Gandhi's philosophy always awakens the moral drive to create a peaceful social order at this pivotal moment. In its purest form, Gandhi's worldview embodies an idea of an accommodating truth based on acceptance of the other as an equal and respectable soul, rather than just mutual tolerance. Gandhi's life path developed as a result of his efforts with establishing a compassionate society founded on the basic principles of satyagraha, truth, and nonviolence. Gandhi's worldview, which is based on his moral philosophy of satyagraha, will be discussed in this essay along with how it can be used as a useful countering tool and approach to comprehend the rising discourse and culture of violence in the modern world.

Cristiano (2020) With little success thus far, populism is gaining more attention, and its inherent reliance on liberal democracy is being examined in an effort to identify strategies that can stem its ascent. The implications that populism is a contemporary political concept that would not be possible without liberal democratic regimes have

received little attention. To address this study gap, this paper examines the connections among populism, democratic theory, and postcolonialism. It centers on the idea that democratic regimes are threatened by demagogic populism, which liberal ideologies are unable to counter.

In terms of liberal democracy, it provides a detailed analysis of M. K. Gandhi's intercultural democratic discourse (IDD) to determine how much it counteracts the populist movement and helps to structure a substantive and multicultural alternative democratization theory. After discussing some of the limitations of liberal multiculturalism, the article concentrates on four Gandhian categories- "civilization," "duty," "non-possession individualism," and "spirituality"-in order to address the breadth of Gandhi's ideas. Gandhi develops a strong IDD while participating in the anti-colonial fight and critical strategic discussions in intra-civilizational contexts (tradition, religion, caste, modes of production, etc.). He also develops a novel language that includes ashram, satyagraha, swaraj, and swadeshi.

## Analysis

The analysis of Gandhi's non-violent strategy reveals its depth and impact as both a philosophical and practical tool for social change. At its core, this strategy was not merely about the absence of violence but the proactive force of moral strength and truth. Gandhi's commitment to Ahimsa and Satyagraha formed the foundation for a movement that redefined resistance, moving beyond physical confrontation to a more ethical and enduring means of achieving justice.

## Principles of Ahimsa and Satyagraha

Gandhi's adherence to Ahimsa was rooted in his belief that true change could only occur through peaceful means. This principle required immense self-discipline and courage, as participants in non-violent resistance had to endure suffering without retaliation. Satyagraha, or the force of truth, complemented this by encouraging individuals to confront injustice with unwavering commitment to what is right. The combination of these principles created a strategy that was not only morally superior but also politically strategic, as it drew attention to the ethical failings of the oppressor and garnered sympathy and support from the broader public and international community.

## Application in the Indian Independence Movement

Gandhi's non-violent strategy was put to the test during India's struggle for independence. Key campaigns, such as the 1930 Salt March, illustrated the effectiveness of peaceful protest. By defying the

British monopoly on salt, Gandhi mobilized people across social and economic divides, demonstrating the power of collective action. This and other acts of civil disobedience highlighted the moral strength of the Indian population and emphasized the British colonial government's unjust policies, ultimately contributing to the weakening of British resolve and international support for their rule.

### **Global Influence and Adaptation**

The global impact of Gandhi's non-violent strategy is evident in its adoption by leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela. King adapted Gandhi's teachings during the American Civil Rights Movement, using nonviolent protest as a means to challenge systemic racism and promote civil rights for African Americans. His leadership in peaceful marches and acts of civil disobedience mirrored Gandhi's methods, emphasizing that nonviolence was not passive but a powerful act of defiance that could effect change.

Similarly, Nelson Mandela's approach in the anti-apartheid struggle incorporated elements of Gandhi's strategy. Although Mandela initially considered violent resistance, he later embraced nonviolent methods as a powerful means to fight for justice and equal rights. Gandhi's influence thus reinforced the notion that enduring change could be achieved through perseverance, strategic action, and an unwavering commitment to peace and truth.

While Gandhi's non-violent strategy has been lauded for its effectiveness, it was not without challenges. Critics argued that his methods were sometimes too idealistic and that nonviolent resistance was insufficient during more violent confrontations, such as the partition of India. Additionally, some movements inspired by Gandhi's teachings found it difficult to maintain strict adherence to nonviolence, especially in the face of violent suppression. These limitations highlighted the complex nature of applying nonviolent resistance universally and underscored the need for strong leadership and commitment to the philosophy's core principles.

### **Contemporary Relevance**

In the modern world, Gandhi's non-violent strategy continues to inspire movements advocating for peace and social justice. Environmental activists, political protestors, and human rights advocates draw from his teachings to craft movements that seek change without violence. Examples include the nonviolent demonstrations during the Arab Spring and various climate change protests that use civil disobedience as a method to bring attention to urgent issues.

Gandhi's non-violent strategy has left a legacy that underscores the power of moral authority over physical force. The principles of Ahimsa and Satyagraha have become central to understanding how nonviolence can be employed as a strategy for change in diverse contexts. His influence on global leaders has cemented nonviolent resistance as a legitimate and effective means of achieving justice, proving that peace and ethical leadership can create lasting societal transformation.

This analysis affirms that while challenges exist in applying nonviolent resistance, Gandhi's strategy remains a powerful tool in advocating for change. It serves as a reminder that enduring impact comes not from domination, but from the conviction to stand for truth and justice through peaceful means.

### **Conclusion**

Gandhi's non-violent strategy stands as a powerful testament to the enduring strength of peaceful resistance and moral conviction. By integrating the principles of Ahimsa (nonviolence) and Satyagraha (truth-force), Gandhi redefined the means by which oppressed people could challenge injustice and fight for freedom. His leadership not only propelled India toward independence but also set a precedent that influenced movements and leaders worldwide.

The ripple effects of Gandhi's approach have been witnessed in the American Civil Rights Movement led by Martin Luther King Jr., the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa with Nelson Mandela, and various peaceful protests advocating for justice and human rights globally.

The analysis of Gandhi's strategy underscores that its effectiveness lies in its ability to unify people under a shared commitment to justice without resorting to violence. Despite criticisms that it may be too idealistic or slow, Gandhi's non-violent approach has proven that ethical means can yield powerful results and inspire change even under the harshest of circumstances.

Today, Gandhi's legacy continues to resonate as a guiding framework for contemporary movements seeking to address socio-political challenges through nonviolent means. His teachings remind us that true power comes not from force, but from the steadfast pursuit of truth and justice, reinforcing the idea that peace, courage, and ethical leadership can transform societies. The continued global impact of Gandhi's non-violent strategy confirms its place as one of the most influential and enduring models for resistance and leadership in modern history.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no significant competing financial, professional, or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

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