

# Role of Mahatma Gandhi in freedom struggle

Mahatma Gandhi made significant contributions to the expansion and prosperity of India. He employed non-violent resistance to lead a successful campaign for the country's independence from British rule.

Gandhi spent more than 20 years in South Africa. He had to face discrimination from the Britishers. After he returned to India in 1915, he started a peaceful agitation against the discrimination faced by the Indians. He became a respected leader by being the voice of the suppressants.

## Activities Taken Up By Mahatma Gandhi In The Freedom Struggle

Gandhi led three Satyagraha movements in his initial days, i.e., Champaran satyagraha in 1917, Kheda Satyagraha in 1918, and Ahmedabad Mill strike in 1918. All movements of Mahatma Gandhi with dates are given below.

- Champaran Satyagraha (1917)
- Kheda Satyagraha (1917 -1918) - Ahmedabad Satyagraha
- Khilafat Movement (1919)
- Non-Cooperation Movement (1920)
- Dandi March (1930)
- Civil-Disobedience Movement (1930)
- Gandhi Irwin Pact (1931)
- Quit India Movement (1942)

## Champaran Satyagraha (1917)

M K Gandhi started his struggle for freedom with the civil disobedience movement, the first being the Champaran Satyagraha in 1917. Read in detail What was Mahatma Gandhi's Technique of Satyagraha?

As there were poor conditions for the farmers in the country then, Gandhi went to Champaran to investigate the requirements of the poor farmers. The Britishers established an exploitative system where the farmers had to pay heavy taxes. As indigo was in high demand, those farmers were forced to grow indigo under the tinkathia system.

However, being an Indian, he was not allowed to look into the matter. Perhaps Gandhi refused to go back and managed to gather the support of the masses, especially the suffering farmers.

He took the issue to the court and, surprisingly, was accompanied by more than 2000 locals. After the court dropped the case, Gandhi was allowed to conduct the mandatory inquiry. He began a protest against the landlords and the planters.

He successfully impacted the Britishers, and the government agreed to abolish the tinkathia system that was used to exploit the farmers. He compelled the government to cancel the system, and the peasants were provided with compensation. After his success, the locals gave him the title of Bapu and Mahatma.

## Kheda Satyagraha (1918)

In the early 20th century, Gujarat faced droughts that resulted in multiple failed crops. However, Mohan Lal Pandey led a no-tax campaign in 1917. In this campaign, he demanded the remission of the taxes paid by the poor farmers even when they had to face poor harvests or crop failure in Kheda, Gujarat.

The campaign was joined by Gandhi on 22 March 1918. His interest in the movement ignited the fire to which he started the Satyagraha. The Kheda Satyagraha was joined by great leaders like Indulal Yagnik and Vallabhbhai Patel. The country's prominent leaders and people of different castes and ethnicities supported his peaceful protest. He made the Britishers listen to their grievances as a result to which, the Britishers fulfilled their demands and gave concessions to the farmers.

## Ahmedabad Mill Strike (1918)

Again, in 1918, Gandhi used his weapons of hunger strike and Satyagraha against the industrial owners. The region had experienced a heavy monsoon, which destroyed the crops and plague. It took more than 10% of lives in Ahmedabad. Seeing the condition of the workers, the owners or employers grants the plague bonus to the workers to support their livelihood. Perhaps after the epidemic was over, the employers stopped the bonus.

As a result, the workers turned against them and demanded dearness allowances of 50% of their salaries. But they refused to grant it to the workers, and these workers reached a famous social worker, Anusuyya Sarabhai. He requested Gandhi to look into the matter. After understanding the condition of the workers, Gandhi organized a peaceful hunger strike. As a result of the Ahmedabad Mill Strike, the owners agreed on granting a 35% wage hike.

## Non-Cooperation Movement (1919)

Non-cooperation movements were one of the mass movements led by Gandhi to oppose the rule of the East India Company in India from 1919 to 1922. He manifested to adopt the

swadeshi principles. Also, he influenced the masses to relinquish their titles and asked them to resign from government offices. The primary demand of the Non-cooperation Movement was self-government or Swarajya. The movement became necessary for the freedom struggle and showcased communal harmony in India.

But, he called off the movement because of the Chauri Chaura incident, where 22 policemen were killed because of the clash between the protestors and police. However, leaders like CR Das and Motilal Nehru were against the suspension.

