



Mains Practice Question

Q. What was Mahatma Gandhi's contribution to the Indian freedom struggle and how did his ideologies and tactics shape the course of India's struggle for independence? (250 words)

17 Apr, 2023 GS Paper 1 History

Approach

- Start your answer by briefly introducing the role of Mahatma Gandhi in freedom struggle.
- Discuss how his ideologies and tactics shape the course of India's struggle for independence.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi **played a pivotal role in the Indian independence movement** against British colonial rule. He emerged as a leading figure in the Indian National Congress in the 1920s and became known for his principles of nonviolent civil disobedience.

Gandhi led **many successful campaigns, including the Salt March in 1930**, where he and his followers marched to the Arabian Sea to protest the British monopoly on salt production. This **campaign resulted in the Indian Salt Act** being repealed and the British government conceding to Indian demands for greater autonomy.

Body

Ideologies and Tactics that Shape the Course of India's struggle for independence

- **Non-violence:**
 - Gandhi's philosophy of **non-violence, also known as "ahimsa,"** was at the core of his political and social beliefs. He believed that **violence only begets more violence**, and that non-violent resistance was a more effective way of bringing about change in society.
 - **Gandhi's non-violent approach influenced many other civil rights** and liberation movements around the world.
- **Satyagraha:**
 - Satyagraha, which means "truth force" or "soul force," **was a method of non-violent resistance that Gandhi developed** and used extensively in India's independence struggle.
 - It **involved the use of civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts, and other non-violent means** to challenge unjust laws and oppressive policies.
 - Satyagraha **aimed at converting the oppressor through persuasion** and appeals to their conscience rather than through force or coercion.
- **Non-cooperation:**
 - Non-cooperation was **another strategy that Gandhi used to challenge British authority in India.** He called on **Indians to boycott British goods, institutions, and laws**, and to refuse to pay taxes or participate in British-run elections. The **non-cooperation movement aimed to make India ungovernable and to force the British** to negotiate for Indian independence.

▪ **Civil Disobedience:**

- Civil disobedience was a **form of non-violent resistance that involved breaking unjust laws or regulations and accepting the consequences** of those actions.
- Gandhi famously led the **Salt March in 1930**, in which he and thousands of followers marched to the Arabian Sea to make their own salt in defiance of British salt laws.
- Civil disobedience was a **powerful tool in Gandhi's arsenal and helped to mobilize mass support** for the independence movement.

Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi's contribution to the Indian freedom struggle was immense. His philosophy of non-violence and civil disobedience, his tactics of non-cooperation and civil disobedience, and his leadership united the Indian masses and forced the British to confront the demands of the Indian people. Gandhi's legacy continues to inspire people all over the world to fight for justice and freedom.

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