

GANDHI AND INDIA: THE DREAM AND REALITY OF INDIA

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Contents

ABSTRACT	3
INTRODUCTION	4
The Rise of Mahatma Gandhi	7
Satyagraha (Non-Violent Resistance)	9
The hopes and dreams for India	13
India after Gandhi	20
The people of India	30
CONCLUSION	36
WORKS CITED	38

Abstract

India has been one of the fastest growing nations in the world in the past couple of decades. India, like the United States, was once under British rule. M.K. Gandhi and many others tried and were successful in pushing British rule out of their country and forging their own nation. Once India was freed from British rule, many of India's prominent figures had views and dreams for the course the country would take, especially Gandhi. Today, India is a thriving country, with a population of over a billion, and is a major player in world political affairs. However, some wonder if Gandhi's dream for India came true or if it is still a work in progress. This paper attempts to examine the ideal that Gandhi had in mind during the final years of his life and compare it to today's modern day India. By looking at Gandhi's own original work from his autobiography, his other writings and some sources from individuals that he worked with, it will give a picture of what Gandhi might have wanted for India. I will compare this to today's modern day India by looking at the progress it has made over the last 60 years since Gandhi passed away. I will discuss the economic, religious and political changes it has made since then by looking at the *World Values Survey* and other sources to see how this change has happened. This will give an overall idea if this is the India that Gandhi dreamed would have evolved or if it is an India that he would disappoint him.

Introduction

In 1947, after almost two centuries under British rule, India as well as Pakistan became an independent nation. Almost a year later, India held its first election, electing Gandhi's congress, the Indian National Congress, and its first president, Jawaharlal Nehru. In this election, everyone across the nation was eligible to vote. There was no voting restrictions, no penalties, no problems, just many political parties fighting among themselves for control of India's government. The largest democracy in the world was allowing everybody to be equal and cast a vote in one of the most important events that would shape India into a nation that it is today.

This was in all one of the greatest achievements ever in democracy, in Asia and even in the world. This outshined even the United States, which by this time had already been a nation for over 170 years and still had voting restrictions against people under the age of 21. In essence, a country that just started to allow its women population the ability to vote and still held firm against the ability of some minorities, notably Asian and Mexican-Americans, to vote in elections. Gandhi was a major player in pushing for equality for all, not only for Hindus, women and the lower caste system, but for the Muslims as well. He hoped for things to get better for India, but would India be obliged to see his ideals, teachings and his beliefs through?

In all regions of the earth, there have been many individuals who have influenced and changed their parts of the world. People try to help their people in a time of need, to help better or advance their nation, and/or try to bring peace and balance to their nation and to the world. Mahatma Gandhi is one of the many individuals who tried to transform and even more to help shape and change India in hopes for a better tomorrow. However, for those individuals who do

succeed, but how long do these ideals and changes last for a country, nation or for the world?

Gandhi tried to instill many ideals into his nation in hopes of India becoming a better nation. He taught a form of non-violent resistance (*Satyagraha*) that he learned from his travels abroad. Gandhi also tried to bring peace between two groups of people who differed by religion, the Hindus and Muslims. Gandhi gave inspiration not only to his people to change and better themselves, but to others who visited India from other countries. People all over the world came and visited him, especially two individuals, E. Stanley Jones and Louis Fischer who would become friends with Gandhi and help him through some difficult times.

Change is evident over time once an inspirational leader, like Gandhi, passes away. These changes can be good or bad for that nation. In the case of India, these changes would have lasting consequences that would not only shape India but its neighbors as well, particularly Pakistan. These two countries would clash many times due to their differences that Gandhi hoped would have been put aside. India would also change within their nation in particular in its demographic composition. However, this would not stop India from becoming the largest democracy in the world.

However, the question needs to be answered is. Is India still following the teachings and ideals that Gandhi tried to instill into his nation, or is India moving on? Studying today's India can shed light on this matter. In observing the actions of India's government, the Indian National Congress, it can show us if Gandhi's teachings and ideals are still being followed. Another course is observing the rest of India, by looking at the demographics of its people, specifically the relations between the Hindus and Muslims. Other areas of study include, from the World Values Survey asks questions about how the people of India perceive other ethnic groups within

and beyond its border, to see how relations are between these groups, the feelings of each group towards the government and how each group perceives themselves. With research, the question of whether or not India is or is not on the path that Gandhi had hoped for can be answered.

The Rise of Mahatma Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (also known as Mahatma Gandhi) was born on October 2nd, 1869, in the city of Porbander (Sudamapuri) in India.¹ He was raised by his father, Kaba Gandhi, and his mother, Putlibai. Gandhi's family was not wealthy but was one of the most well respected families in Porbander, a city in the province of Gujarat in western India. Kaba Gandhi had no ambition for riches when Gandhi was growing up. Gandhi was put through schooling, and although he struggled from time to time in some subject areas that were offered, he always tried hard to learn and never became tempted to 'copy' or cheat, no matter what the circumstances were.² Later on in his childhood, Gandhi would develop a love of reading when his father purchased Gandhi his first book, *Shranana Pitribhakti Nataka*.

It was at this time that Gandhi started to excel in education. He began to win awards and certificates at the high school level. Gandhi would eventually head to Ahmedabad, India to take the matriculation exams in order to head off to college.³ A friend of the Gandhi family advised that Gandhi should go to England to get a better education than what was offered in India. Gandhi's trip to England would change his life forever and lead him down a path that would eventually end with him becoming a spiritual leader in India.

It was not until Gandhi's time in London that he was introduced to the ideals and teachings of other religions. He was introduced to a book called *Gita*. This book would be

¹ M.K. Gandhi, *Gandhi's Autobiography: The Story of my Experiments with Truth* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1960), 14.

² Ibid, 16.

³ Ibid, 52.

considered by Gandhi as ‘par excellence’ for the knowledge of truth.⁴ He carried with him for the rest of his life a verse from the second chapter:

“If one ponders on objects of the sense, there springs attraction; from attraction grows desire. Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds recklessness, then the memory-all betrayed-lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind, till purpose, mind and man are all undone.”⁵

Gandhi was also introduced to the bible by Christians that he met in London. After reading the book, he took it upon himself to become acquainted with all the world’s major religions and gain a basic understanding of their ideals and beliefs.⁶ Gandhi did take a negative stance towards atheism and when he witnessed atheists heckling clergyman about their beliefs in God. Though Gandhi did not fully hate all religions, he decided that he needed to understand more about other religions, especially his, Hinduism in hopes of bettering himself. It would not be until his travels to Africa that he would understand the struggles that his people have and what he could do to help.

⁴ Ibid, 90.

⁵ Ibid, 52.

⁶ Louis Fischer, *Gandhi, his life and message for the world* (New York: New American Library, 1954), 15.

Satyagraha (Non-Violent Resistance)

The principle of *Satyagraha* existed before it was named. Gandhi first described it to Europeans in 1906 as “passive resistance”. It was misconstrued by the Europeans as a ‘weapon’ used by the weak.⁷ Passive resistance was characterized as hatred towards ones oppressors and the Europeans believed that Gandhi was going to use violence. Gandhi had to explain why this movement was different than that of a “passive resistance” movement that incorporates violence. He had to figure out a word that would signify or designate the Indian struggle of being non-violent.

Mahatma Gandhi was not the individual who coined up the term *Satyagraha*. He used his paper that he published in Africa called the *Indian Opinion* which he asked his readers to come up with a term that could signify there movement and cause for using non-violent resistance.⁸ An individual named Maganlal Gandhi coined up the word “Sadagraha”. It was later changed, by Mahatma Gandhi himself to the current word “Satyagraha” which when broken down ‘Sat’ means ‘truth’ and “Agraha’ means firmness from the Gujarati to English translation.⁹ In other terms, it is known as truth-force.

This form of non-violent resistance that Gandhi himself learned in South Africa excludes the use of violence because Gandhi believed that man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth, therefore man can not competent to punish others.¹⁰ Gandhi also believed that this was not a weapon used by the weak but used by the strong willed, who were willing to resist British rule. This type of non-violent resistance has always been distinguished from other forms of armed

⁷ Gandhi, *Gandhi's Autobiography*, 389.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ M.K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance (Satyagraha)* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 3.

resistance such as passive resistance and civil disobedience that the populous of an oppressed minority resort to violence to get their claims and voices heard. Gandhi did not want this to happen in India.

In order to be a true *Satyagraha*, one had to follow eleven principles. These were eleven vows that Gandhi believed everyone had to follow in their daily life. These vows consisted of Truth, Non-Violence, Chastity, Non-Possession, Fearlessness, Control of the Palate, Non-Stealing, Bread-Labour, Equality of Religions, Anti-Untouchability (no social classes in India) and *Swadeshi* (self-sufficiency or boycotts of British materials).¹¹ These eleven vows made the individual stronger. Gandhi urged many of his countrymen to take these vows. Some believed these vows were a sign of weakness but Gandhi and others showed through practice giving up their possessions, being truthful and helping one another out, that these vows were the strengths of their non-violent movement. Some believed though that there were limits to being a true *Satyagraha* that someone could only do so much or go so far in practicing the eleven vows without questioning themselves. Gandhi reacted by saying that no one should doubt the necessity of vows for the purpose of self-purification and self-realization to obtain true beliefs and principles that he was distilling into his people.¹²

For thirty years, from 1910 to 1940, Gandhi was preaching and practicing *Satyagraha*. Gandhi himself believed that this was a weapon of the strongest and he and his followers excluded the use of violence in order to show that they were peaceful and only wanted freedom. The main tactic of this movement was not to administer violence onto another human being but

¹¹ Ibid, 37.

¹² Ibid, 38.

that the individual must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy.¹³ For what appears to be truth to one individual may appear to be wrong to the other. By using patience and other virtues, Gandhi showed that by not forcing the truth on others but on themselves, the other side would eventually see the truth.

Gandhi gave an example to help explain the idea of *Satyagraha*. He used the paradigm of a robber breaking into a home and the differences in homeowner's reactions to catching the robber who broke into their house. He discussed how many people would normally react in two different ways. We would go after the robber in anger and hatred or we would let the robber take what he pleases because he may be armed. However, Gandhi gives another option: to take pity on the robber and try to help that individual out by allowing him to take what he pleases with no confrontation. Gandhi discusses this sort of possibility:

“ You set this armed robber down as an ignorant brother; you intend to reason with him at a suitable opportunity; you argue that he is, after all, a fellow man; you do not know what prompted him to steal. You, therefore, decide that when you can, you will destroy the man's motive for stealing. Whilst you are thus reasoning with yourself, the man comes again to steal. Instead of being angry with him you take pity on him. You think that this stealing habit must be a disease with him. Henceforth, you, therefore, keep your doors and windows open, you change your sleeping-place, and you keep your things in a manner most accessible to him. The robber comes again and is confused as all this is new to him; nevertheless, he takes away your things. But his mind is agitated. He inquires about you in village, he comes to learn about your broad and loving heart, he repents, he begs your pardon, returns you your things, and leaves off the stealing habit. He becomes your servant; you will find for him honourable[sic] employment.”¹⁴

This demonstrates how Gandhi perceived *Satyagraha*. Gandhi felt these actions worked to change the error of another in order to show them what truth is. Gandhi also gave another

¹³ Ibid, 6.

¹⁴ Ibid, 12-13.

example of how to understand *Satyagraha* by comparing it to the spinning wheel that he used to make his own clothes. Gandhi said “It may look ineffective at first, but it really is intensively active and most effective at its final result.”¹⁵ This was another great paradigm that he used to show to his people and followers how *Satyagraha* works.

Gandhi also addressed that sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others. Moreover, if this kind of sacrifice is used in a cause that is unjust, only the person that is using it is suffering, not others.¹⁶ Gandhi believed that one person should not make others suffer for his/her mistakes. Individuals should do what they know is right, and suffer the consequence, whatever they may be. This is what Gandhi believed was key to *Satyagraha* being used in the right way.

Gandhi believed that *Satyagraha* is one of strongest weapons that mankind can wield. It was a weapon that if used wisely could serve a greater purpose for all. Gandhi also compared it to the atomic bomb. But while the force of the bomb was physical and material, the force of *Satyagraha* was spiritual and moral.¹⁷ Thus, Gandhi again showed to his followers and to his country that violent resistance was not the path that India should take, but rather they should use non-violent resistance, *Satyagraha*.

¹⁵ M.K. Gandhi, *Towards Lasting Peace* (Bombay, India: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1966), 15.

¹⁶ M.K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, 17.

¹⁷ M.K. Gandhi, *Towards Lasting Peace*, 209.

The Hopes and Dreams for India

Satyagraha was one of the many beliefs Gandhi would teach to others throughout India and the world. This would give rise to his dreams he hoped would come true for his country; an India free from British rule and unity amongst the people. He discussed these ideals with his own people and with visitors from across the world while talking about how he would accomplish these goals and at what cost.

Gandhi did not want to be freed from British rule, but through other means that would benefit India and its people. Gandhi believed that gaining independence by using force would not benefit India, but by using *Satyagraha*, it would help India to obtain its true goal of independence.¹⁸ Gandhi also believed that real home-rule is self-rule or self-control, one of his many teachings that came from *Satyagraha*. He believed that home-rule should consist of giving up things that were harmful to the culture of India, especially western technologies that British influence had instilled into the daily lives of Indians.¹⁹

Gandhi won a victory in 1937, when the British allowed India to have provincial self-government.²⁰ This was a major victory indeed for Gandhi's goal to completely free India from British rule. Many in India believed that this new formation of government would be comprised mostly of Hindus and not of Muslims. This went against Gandhi's goals for the new government, and Gandhi tried to figure out a way to make sure that the dream for a India free and united would come true.

¹⁸ Mahatma Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj; or, Indian Home Rule* (Gloucester, United Kingdom: Dodo Press, 1906), 65.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 70.

²⁰ E. Stanley Jones, *Gandhi: Portrayal of a friend* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1948), 43.

The relationship between the Hindus and Muslims of India during British rule was very tense. Gandhi had dreamed of a unity or a “brotherhood” of religions throughout India, notably Hindu and Muslim working side by side. But once India gained the ability to self-govern itself under the supervision of the British, the Muslims had a different agenda than the Hindus in fulfilling their own dreams of self-rule. Gandhi would try to gain the support of the Muslims by showing them that he was not their enemy but a friend.

Gandhi tried many things throughout his life to bring the two groups of people together in order to see his ideal future for India come to life. To do this, Gandhi needed to try to bring the good out of people using the ideal of *Satyagraha*. Gandhi decided that he would fast for twenty-one days during October, 1924.²¹ Gandhi believed that by doing this, the unity or “brotherhood” between these cultures could be sustained and that peace could finally at last come to India. However, after the twenty one days of fasting, it seemed that it did little to bring the two people together. Gandhi, frustrated with his failure, believed that in due time his actions would show the need for unity and brotherhood in India. His fasting did bring a new sense of urgency of the importance of nationalism as the only means for gaining Indian independence.

The Muslims did not want to be the minority of a newly created nation. The Muslims wanted be the majority, and sought to split India into two countries because of their religious differences.²² Many of the Muslim political leaders sought for more power and control of their own lands from the British and the Hindus. The reason for this was because the British felt insecure with their control over India and took advantage of the Hindu-Muslim friction in order

²¹ Fischer, *Gandhi*, 76.

²² Jones, *Gandhi*, 42-43.

to rule more easily rather than uniting both of the regions.²³ This would last for many years, and Gandhi's ideal of a unified India seemed out of reach and even made Gandhi ponder over the existence of a nation of Muslims next to India.

Author Louis Fischer had the pleasure of meeting Gandhi and spending a whole week with him and asking him about British rule. In the year 1942, Fischer had the opportunity to talk to Gandhi about his feelings about Muslims, the British Empire and the future for India. Gandhi told him that it was the British that were forcing the Hindus and Muslims to be separated because of religion, by recognizing India and Pakistan as separate nations.²⁴ This ploy by the British has made it easy for them to keep on pressuring both sides to separate even more in order to bring balance and peace. This was a turning point in Gandhi switching from the goal of a unified India with Pakistan apart of it, to supporting an Indian National government in hopes of becoming free from British rule.²⁵ This issue would be brought up again by another person who would meet Gandhi, but by that time Gandhi had started to show a decline in his hope for a unified India.

A man by the name of E. Stanley Jones, an American Christian Missionary, helped Gandhi by suggesting to him that India should proceed with the delicate matter of Pakistan. The suggestions that he made were (1) that Pakistan should be allowed to have its own constitutional assembly to create a similar constitution to that of the Congress of India, (2) that both of these constitutional assemblies should work together to form a federal union, and (3) that once both

²³ Fischer, *Gandhi*, 80.

²⁴ Fischer, *A week with Gandhi*, 17.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 84.

Pakistan and India formed a federal union, Pakistan should be considered a separate state within that union.²⁶

Gandhi dismissed the ideas that Mr. Jones brought to him. Gandhi said that the Congress of India would keep such a thing from happening and it would be considered a “sin”.²⁷ Though Gandhi started to not trust the Muslim people after his many failed attempts to unit India, the realization of Hindus and Muslims working together in the future blink. The reason for this was the major difference between the two cultures and their beliefs. Hindus and Muslims could not cooperate under the same rules. Hindus have the ability to make a will and pass along their home, property and belongings to relatives. The Muslims could not make a will, and had to put up property to auction, not pass it along through the family.²⁸ These differences and many other issues frustrated Gandhi and his hope for a united India.

Mr. Jones agreed with Gandhi that if Pakistan was formed, it would be a “sin”. Though tensions between India and Pakistan had risen over the last decade, the Hindus in India were getting frustrated with the situation. India, though still under British rule, had a difficult choice; gain independence, losing Pakistan in the process, or maintain unity under British rule.²⁹ It was a tough decision that made it difficult for many to know what actions to take. On June 15, 1947, with a vote of 153 to 29, the all-Indian Congress voted to recognize Pakistan as an independent nation.³⁰ Gandhi had lost and found that many of his own countrymen had abandoned him and

²⁶ Jones, *Gandhi*, 44.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 44.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 46.

²⁹ Fischer, *Gandhi*, 173.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 174-175.

his dream for a unified India. This was a major blow to Gandhi and the ideals he had tried to inspire in the minds of all Indians.

Gandhi was right, in the words of Mr. Jones, in that Pakistan was born out of sin. Pakistan was conceived in distrust by the British, it was born out of fear that this area of the world would be unstable, and it was nurtured by hate as Muslim politicians pushed for their own country and not for a country in which they would be the minority.³¹ Gandhi did not hate the Muslims for this, he only hated how the country came to be. Gandhi tried everything to stop the hatred that his people had been inflicting on the Muslims in order to bring his dream alive even fasting for the Muslims. In the end, Gandhi just saw sin in Pakistan and hoped that one day Muslims would see this mistake and try to correct it.

It took Gandhi almost 32 years of hard work to realize his dream of unifying India, unifying Muslim and Hindu, but it came to an inglorious end.³² Though it took Gandhi awhile to realize this, it took a great amount of courage and support for him to publicly address this to his followers and to his people. It took an even greater amount of courage to continue to work through this ordeal on his 'lifetime labor' of trying to better India through his teachings.³³ This made Gandhi even more of a national icon than ever and brought him to the highest point in his life. Gandhi's efforts, his hard work, his lifelong goal to try and unify India with its brothers, the Muslims would not come to past during his lifetime. Gandhi foresaw and even greater issue, the end to *Satyagraha*.

³¹ Jones, *Gandhi*, 50.

³² Fischer, *Gandhi*, 175.

³³ *Ibid*, 175.

Gandhi would never see the India that flourished after his passing. He did not know what the world was like after he passed away. He did have a prediction about the future of the use of *Satyagraha*. Gandhi was quoted in saying that “When society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of non-violence, its structure will be different in material particular from what it is today.”³⁴ Gandhi’s feeling about the end for *Satyagraha* would come true, but it would not be what everyone expected, it would be something that no one would see coming, a conflict between India and Pakistan that would set in motion a course of events that would eventually lead to the death of Gandhi.

Gandhi had feelings about the conflict between India and Pakistan if the situation continued on its course. Gandhi publicly addressed, prior to 1946, warned that India was not yet in a midst of a civil war, but was nearing one.³⁵ The course on which India was headed, if continued, be unstoppable for Gandhi or anybody else to intervene in order to try to bring peace and stability to India and Pakistan. However, this warning from Gandhi would come true but it would not be caused by the fear of war, but the aftermath of his passing.

His assassination did not set off a war, but if Gandhi had been assassinated by a Muslim, it could have lead to war. “It was mercy that no Muslim did it; for if one had, there would probably have been a terrible retaliation upon the forty million Muslims left in India who did not migrate to Pakistan. They would have been at the mercy of the overwhelming Hindu majority.”³⁶ Mr. Jones made this quote when Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated on January 30, 1948. Though, Mr. Jones was right that it was not a Muslim, but a Hindu, this act would have a

³⁴ M.K. Gandhi, *Towards Lasting Peace* (Bombay, India: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1966), 67.

³⁵ Khan. *The Great Partition*, 79.

³⁶ Jones, *Gandhi*, 35.

lasting impact on India. The Hindu who committed this act was Nathuram Vinayak Godse who killed Gandhi with a pistol.³⁷ Godse did not believe in Gandhi's ideal India, an India for everyone. Instead, he believed in an India under a secular democratic state, in other words, a Hindu democratic state. The death of Gandhi would eventually have a lasting impact on India in the following decades and would strain relationships between Muslims and Hindus, and political parties within India.

Just six months after Gandhi's assassination, both Pakistan and India would start their first war against one another. It was Gandhi who predicted this would happen. The two nations would increase their military expenditures in order to fight themselves to gain the initiative over the other in hopes of a quick victory.³⁸ This war would be fought over the province of Kashmir, and would strain Pakistani/Indian relations for many decades to follow.

³⁷ Fischer, *Gandhi*, 188.

³⁸ Khan. *The Great Partition*, 183.

India after Gandhi

India, after almost a century of being under the control of the British, was finally free. On August 15th, 1947, India celebrated its independence and began planning for the future. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and the rest of India were celebrating, knowing that now they had full control over their destiny. It was Gandhi, and others, who pushed so hard throughout the years for this to become a reality, but in the end Gandhi would not see the shape India would take in the future; how many of his ideals, his teachings, and his dreams would and would not come true.

The book, *India after Gandhi*, by Ramachandra Guha, provides a great depiction of the aftermath of Gandhi's passing. He divides the decades following Gandhi's death into five parts. Each part goes into detail about the leaders that would follow after Gandhi, political movements, the use of Gandhi's teachings and the government that Gandhi help empower, the Indian National Congress. Another book, *The Great Partition*, by Yasmin Khan, provide a great narrative about what happened after India becomes a free nation and its first couple of years of struggle. Both of these books show how India changed from a passive, peaceful, non-violent nation into a dominant economical and military power in Southern Asia.

The beginning of Guha's book depicts the end of British rule over the lands of India and Pakistan, illustrating how both these nations came to be and how both sides bickered over what territories should be a part of their nation. Khan also addresses this issue between both nations. Pakistan was a term coined by the Muslims and their organization, the Muslim League, in hopes

of having their own country in which they were the dominant ethnic group in.³⁹ Pakistan would become a nation of two parts, one in the northwest part of India called West Pakistan and the other to the east of India called East Pakistan, current day Bangladesh. India suffered a tough blow in losing one of its political, cultural and spiritual icons in the process: Gandhi. Though Gandhi was not killed by a Muslim, his death would be seen in the eyes of many as an assault on one of the greatest Hindu's who ever lived. Gandhi's death was at the hands of a Hindu extremist, who did not want to be equals with Muslims. This caused a great mourning across India and Pakistan, and an end of partition.⁴⁰

Gandhi's death would lead two individuals, Vallabhbhai Patel, Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of India from 1947-1950, and Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of India from 1947-1964, into the national spotlight to lead their nation into the future. Both of them promised India that they would continue on with Gandhi's traditions and ways. Patel spoke to the people saying,

“Not to think of revenge but to carry the message of love and non-violence enunciated by Mahatmaji (Mahatma Gandhi). It is a shame for us that the greatest man of the world has had to pay with his life for the sins which we have committed. We did not follow him when he was alive; let us at least follow his steps now he is dead.”⁴¹

Nehru also spoke about Gandhi, saying that, “We have had our lesson at a terrible cost. Is there anyone amongst us now who will not pledge himself after Gandhi's death to fulfill his mission? Indians had now to hold together and fight that terrible poison of communalism that has killed the greatest man of our age.”⁴²

³⁹ Yasmin Khan. *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 40.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 181.

⁴¹ Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (New York,: Harper Collins Publisher, 2008), 38-39.

⁴² Guha, *India after Gandhi*, 39.

These two individuals would shape India in ways that would have lasting impact to this day.

In the early chapters of Guha's book, would see the beginning of the end to one of Gandhi's dreams, that of unity amongst the religions in India. In a disputed territory between India and Pakistan lies a province that is known as Kashmir. Though the Muslims dominated this area, there was another group, called Sikhs that did not have ties to either Muslim or Hind. This group of people deliberated which side to join, either Pakistan or India when both of the nations formed in 1947⁴³. One individual who had become a symbol of hope for Kashmir and its people was Sheikh Abdullah. Abdullah was intrigued by Gandhi's teachings and incorporated them into pressing the issue of becoming an independent nation to both India and Pakistan. This did not go over well with Pakistan, which sent militias and vigilantes to Kashmir on October 22, 1947.⁴⁴ Though Pakistan did not take full responsibility, India responded with help to the people living in Kashmir. After the fighting ended, Gandhi spoke highly of Abdullah trying to stem the violence between Hindu and Sikh, as well as Hindu and Muslim by saying that "Abdullah had invited the evil-doers [Muslims] to forget about the past and repent over the evil they had done. The Hindus and the Sikhs listened to him, and the Muslims did too and are fighting together to defend the beautiful valley of Kashmir."⁴⁵ The issue of Kashmir would be a hot topic for the years and decades to follow, and tensions would eventually strain between the three groups living in this area.

⁴³ Khan. *The Great Partition*, 183.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Guha, *India after Gandhi*, 85.

Tensions were also high amongst the Hindus as well. After India became a country, many Hindu political groups began to surface in hopes of bettering their nation and becoming a world power. One group in particular began to rise from the depths of India's political system, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh or R.S.S., a communist group that banded together in hopes of spreading the ideals of Marxism and improving relations with Communist China and the Soviet Union. It was not until Gandhi was assassinated that this organization was implemented to having connections with the assassin, Nathuram Vinayak Godse. Although the R.S.S. was never found to be involved with the assassination of Gandhi, R.S.S was able to make drastic changes occur in their favor by becoming member of the Congress Party. This was later revoked however the damage was done and strengthened the Marxist ideal in India at the early part of independence.⁴⁶ Nehru disliked the R.S.S. and said, "We have had enough suffering already in India because of the activities of the R.S.S. and like groups... these people have the blood of Mahatma Gandhi on their hands, and pious disclaimers and disassociation now have no meaning."⁴⁷ The tensions between democracy and communism would be prevalent throughout India's history in politics, diplomacy and internal struggles within the country.

Guhu's concludes the beginning of his book with "Ideas of India". This section discussed the process by which India adopted a working constitution that everybody could agree upon. India's constitution is the world's largest, with 395 articles and eight schedules. Within this constitution are issues that cover religious rights, freedoms, adult suffrage, tax laws, branches of the government, and rules and regulations. Gandhi hoped that one day India could have a political system in which villages would have control over certain aspects in the

⁴⁶ Khan. *The Great Partition*, 182.

⁴⁷ Guha, *India after Gandhi*, 111.

government. This would not come true, even more shockingly, none of Gandhi's ideals was even installed into the constitution.⁴⁸ This would have a lasting effect on the government.

Although many of the members preached that they were following in Gandhi's footsteps, but in actuality they were trying to keep a diverse nation together.

The second part of India after Gandhi discussed the issues that Nehru faced as the first leader of India. With Patel's death in 1950, India's politics became a one man show, and Nehru used this to his advantage to rebuild India in hopes for a better tomorrow. Nehru hoped to revitalize India's economy with leasing out agreements to nations, such as the U.S.S.R and the U.S.A., to build and help start up projects to modernize India, especially power plants, industries and agriculture. Nehru and the Indian National Congress had better relations with the Soviets than the Americans, because agricultural hardships the Soviet Union sent 50,000 tons of wheat to help aid India, while the America Congress debated this request.⁴⁹ One of the ideals that Gandhi preached was that "Asia [India] has to conquer the west through love and truth."⁵⁰ This was showing with its relations with one of its neighboring nations, U.S.S.R. India's relation with America would be tense throughout Nehru's tenure as leader, but would improve over the decades.

The third part of Guha's book discusses the second elections that India had gone through in the mid-1950's, noting that Nehru and the Indian National Congress remained in power. It also discusses tense situations in dealing with other countries that borders India, notably Communist China. China seized control of Tibet, leading the Dalai Lama to flee into India.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 121.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 171.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 163.

Both sides built up their forces on the Himalayas from 1959 to 1962 with both sides exchanging fire. Finally, on October 19th, 1962, the Chinese simultaneously invaded India along a 500 mile front, taking over major Indian positions and surprising India and the world.⁵¹ With India taken completely by surprise, in a matter of days China was threatening the interior of India. However, for some reason, many people believe because of the coming winter, China retreated back across its borders.⁵² After this major event, relations between both of the nations would be tense for many years to come. It also forced India to recognize Tibet as a conquered territory for China after China was able to show in force that they were far superior than India. Realizing their mistakes, Nehru and India took steps in modernizing their weapons program and defenses amongst their borders.

The fourth part of the book discusses the end of the leadership and guidance of Nehru and the rise of his daughter, Indira Gandhi. She would become the third prime minister of India and one of the first female leaders in the world. While in office, she faced during her time in office was the issue of China and its development and actual testing of a nuclear weapon in October 16th, 1964. This forced India into a difficult decision; either to continue on with the traditions of Gandhi and Nehru or protect their nation from an enemy that had shown aggression in the past.⁵³ The Indian National Congress decided it was imperative for their nation to develop these weapons, but it would not be until May of 1998, almost three decades later after China, that India would develop one of their own, that India would successfully test a nuclear weapon.

⁵¹ Ibid, 338.

⁵² Ibid, 339.

⁵³ Ibid, 392.

Another issue that Indira faced was another confrontation with Pakistan. This war would be different from the last conflict, the incident with Kashmir, because this time India would be the victors and liberate a nation under Pakistani control. The Soviet Union, helped supply the Indian military with modernized weapons to ensure victory. In the year 1971, India intervened in East Pakistan (Bangladesh) and helped the rebels overthrow Pakistani rule and set up their own government.⁵⁴ The nations that supported Pakistan, China and the U.S., did not recognize the creation of this nation. This victory was what India needed after its devastating lose to China to show the rest of the world, notably China and Pakistan, what their nation had become.

There were also many things that were changing in India, especially the views of Indira Gandhi and the government of India. It would not be until the late 1970's that India's foreign policy would start to shift gradually from dealing with its neighbor to the north, the Soviet Union to the other largest democracy in the world, the United States. It would be during this period that United States Presidents, notably Jimmy Carter, would visit India and address common issues that both nations were dealing with. President Carter would also pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi for his struggle during his lifetime and his ideals that made their way into Americans, especially in the case of Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights movement that began in the late 1960's.⁵⁵ Over the next couple of decades, India and U.S. relations would begin to improve and eventually lead U.S. to change its views on Pakistan as well.

Guha concludes the fourth part of his book by discussing the assassination of Indira and the rise of her son Rajiv Gandhi. The assassination took place on October 31st, 1984, which was a boost for the Indian National Congress to win the election. Her assassination sparked a wave

⁵⁴ Ibid, 459.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 524.

of violence by Hindus against Sikhs all across the nation due to the assassin being of Sikh descent. This was completely different from what occurred when Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated; it halted all violence between the Hindus and Muslims in order to mourn the loss of one of their beloved leaders.⁵⁶ This highlighted the great difference between Mahatma Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi not only from politics, but also attire that one observer noticed

“a vast traverse in political ethic, the dhoti, a garment, is out, so is the walking stick, wooden sandals and traveling in third class railway compartments. Gucci shoes, Cartier sunglasses, bullet-proof vests, Mercedes-Benz cars and state helicopters are in. Indian politics no longer smells of sweat, nor is it particularly clean and odorless-it reeks of an aftershave.”⁵⁷

This would become the norm for all Indian politicians and leaders, by stepping away from what was once considered the typical Indian politician style to a modern western style of clothing.

In the fifth and last part of Guha’s book, he details major events that evolve in the late 1980’s and continue into 2006. The biggest issue during this period was India and Pakistan simultaneously entering the exclusive club of being a nuclear power, the second week in May 1998 for India and May 28th, 1998 for Pakistan.⁵⁸ India’s nuclear bomb was entirely indigenous, produced without any outside help from other nuclear powers or organizations. This would eventually lead India and Pakistan into another conflict, known as the Kargil conflict with Pakistan invading India. This war eventually was another victory for the Indian forces. They recaptured their lost territory and forced Pakistan to seek assistance from their allies, notably the U.S., in hopes of ending this conflict and bringing peace back to the region.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 569.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 582.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 665.

Gahu concludes this final section of his book by addressing entertainment in India. In the 1950's India would become very interested in movies, and began to work on their own projects. One face about the Indian movie industry was that most of the movie stars were minorities, notably Muslims. This was a refuge for Muslims in hopes of showing to others, especially Hindus, that they are not evil. They portrayed themselves as ordinary individuals who are just looking for acceptance and also to entertain others. At first, many Muslims had to change their names from Muslim to Hindu, such as Yusuf Khan, a famous actor in the 1950's and 60's, who changed his name to Dilip Kumar.⁵⁹ Later on, Muslim actors would not be forced to take such drastic measures such as changing their names in hopes of getting big roles. Muslims would also be the big time stars in the later 1990's and the early parts of the 21st century. The top three male stars in Hindi films were three Muslims with the surname of Khan.⁶⁰ This was one hope of Gandhi, that Muslims would be accepted by Hindus, which took almost 50 years to happen.

Guha's book touched on matters that had plagued India for quite some time and still do today. Khan's book also touched on many matters early on when India and Pakistan split focusing on the tension between the two nations in the 1950's. It went into some detail about how some of the ideals Gandhi believed in were being changed after his death and some that are still a part of everyday life in India. However, Guha and Khan does not give us an idea of who Gandhi was and how many of his ideals still exist in India. It also does not discuss statistics on how Hindus feel about the Muslims and other ethnic groups in India or how they felt about the government. These issues need to be explored to show that without this information, we would not

⁵⁹ Ibid, 717.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 718.

know how these things played an important role in how Gandhi rose to be an icon not only to Hindus, but to other groups across the world.

The People of India

Gandhi always wanted the best for his people in hopes of a better tomorrow for India and the world. One area of research that was not brought up in Guha's book was studying how the people of India feel about their country during the 1990's, how they identified themselves by ethnic background, and what their feelings were towards certain ethnic groups, such as Pakistanis, Hindus and Non-Hindu groups within India. The following surveys give a more in-depth look into India, by going right to the source, its own people, and by showing how India has changed over time but still shows some similarities to the past.

Table 1: What Should Be the Aims of the Country: First Their Choice⁶¹

	Total		India 1990		India 1995		India 2001	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
A high level of economic Growth	3699	56.5%	1252	50.1%	1528	74.9%	919	45.9%
Strong defense force	1191	18.2%	667	26.7%	228	11.2%	296	14.8%
People have more say about how things are done	430	6.6%	201	8.0%	63	3.1%	166	8.3%
Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful	539	8.2%	200	8.0%	27	1.3%	312	15.6%
Don't Know	682	10.4%	180	7.2%	194	9.5%	308	15.4%
No answer	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Total	6542	100%	2500	100%	2040	100%	2002	100%

⁶¹ Sandeep Shastri, *India Survey's from 1990, 1995, and 2001.*, The World Values Survey. <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/> accessed March 6, 2009.

Figure 1 shows what the people of India deem necessary and important for their nation to prosper. The first two surveys, 1990 and 1995, show that the majority of people are most concerned with economic growth followed by a strong military defense force. However, in the 2001 survey, there is a shift in the people's concern with the desire to focus on cleaning up the cities edging out the concern of having a strong military force to protect the nation. This goes hand in hand with what Gandhi wanted; a beautiful nation.

The following survey asked the population of India how they best describe themselves.

Table 2: Which of the following best describes you?⁶²

	Total		India 1995		India 2001	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
First of all (Regional Term)	512	7.8%	0	0%	512	25.6%
Indian first, a member of my ethnic group second	2061	31.5%	593	29.1%	1468	73.3%
Hindu	429	6.6%	429	21.0%	0	0%
Muslim	89	1.4%	89	4.4%	0	0%
OBC	30	0.5%	30	1.5%	0	0%
Indian	846	12.9%	846	41.5%	0	0%
Dalit	53	0.8%	53	2.6%	0	0%
Don't Know	17	0.3%	0	0%	17	0.8%
No Answer	5	0.1%	0	0%	5	0.2%
Not asked in Survey	2500	38.2%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	6542	100%	2040	100%	2002	100%

⁶² Ibid.

In 1995 the most respondents, (41.5%) claimed that they were Indian, while 29.1% claimed they were Indian first and a member of another ethnic group second and 21% claimed that they were best described as Hindu. In the 2001 survey, there was a dramatic shift in identification amongst India's population as an overwhelming majority (73.3%) claim that what best described them was Indian first and a member of another ethnic group second while 25.6% claimed that what best described them was what region they were from, like Kashmir or Punjab. These results show how self-identification has changed in a span of six years due to changing times and an increased feeling about national identity rather than regional identity.

The World Values Survey also asked the Indian population how well they feel they can trust the other ethnic groups that are bordering their nation or within their own country.

Table 3: Trust: Indian Hindus⁶³

	India 1990	
	#	%
Trust Completely	1280	51.2%
Trust a little	888	35.5%
Neither	261	10.4%
Not trust very much	34	1.4%
Not trust at all	12	0.5%
Don't know	25	1.0%
Not asked in survey	0	0%
Total	2500	100%

⁶³ Ibid.

Table 4: Trust: Pakistanis⁶⁴

	India 1990	
	#	%
Trust Completely	55	2.2%
Trust a little	263	10.5%
Neither	571	22.8%
Not trust very much	433	17.3%
Not trust at all	906	36.2%
Don't know	272	10.9%
Not asked in survey	0	0%
Total	2500	100%

Table 5: Trust: Indian Non-Hindus⁶⁵

	India 1990	
	#	%
Trust Completely	619	24.8%
Trust a little	1080	43.2%
Neither	469	18.8%
Not trust very much	165	6.6%
Not trust at all	113	4.5%
Don't know	54	2.2%
Not asked in survey	0	0%
Total	2500	100%

These three tables show how citizens of India feel about their own people and other ethnic groups. Table 3 shows that the majority of the respondents feel they can trust completely

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

or have little trust in the Hindu population of India. Table 4 shows how Indian citizens feel about Pakistanis. The responses were much more varied, about 36.2% saying that they would not trust Pakistanis, while about 22.8% neither trust nor could not trust them and about 17.3% can not trust the Pakistanis that much. Because this survey was taken in 1990, the numbers could have changed in the time since. Table 5 illustrates the trust placed in Non-Hindus, though this is a very broad designation. The result was similar to table 3, showing that 42% of the population would trust a little, while about a quarter would completely trust Non-Hindus and about 19% were neither for nor against.

These five survey questions show the feelings the people of India have toward their government, toward each other, and towards their neighbors. If the World Values Survey had asked India, “Is any ideals of Gandhi still being followed to this day?”, these tables show that many of the India people are starting to show some trust amongst one another, and that they feel their government should change their political outlook for the future. Though, many throughout India still do not trust Pakistanis, which was a major problem during Gandhi’s era and still is in current day.

Conclusion

India has come a long way in the last 100 years, from being under British rule to becoming the world's largest democracy. Through adversity, one man helped shape India into the country it is today. A nation that has risen to every challenge, a nation that has become a rising power throughout the world, a nation that is diverse and a nation that is democratic. Gandhi did not do this all by himself, he had help from many others, like many other leaders across the Earth have had. With this help, he was able to instill his beliefs, his ideals and teachings to many people, and after he passed away many of them continued to follow in his footsteps. However, like many nations throughout the world, India changed, morphed, and adapted to the changes that occurred after Gandhi's death. India began to fall away from Gandhi's teachings.

Even though a nation changes, matures, and grows away from its original standards, it still retains people who are willing to continue on the course. Many of India's leaders, including Nehru, Indira and others, continued to believe in some of Gandhi's teachings, even the hope of one day achieving unity between Hindus and Muslims, but some of his beliefs began to fade with the times, especially *Satyagraha*. Though, these age old beliefs of how to peacefully resist faded, new changes came into play that benefited not only a few, but a nation.

Today, India is a nation that still, like the rest of the world, has its own problems. Instead of solving them through violence and hatred, they try to solve them through their government, through democracy. India is a rising power that many believe will one day be a major player in world affairs and possible become a super power. Its people, though, hope that India will solve its own problems first, especially the problem of trying to restore beauty to its nation and to its

cities. There are also hopes that the hatred between Hindus and Muslims can be resolved and one day both these groups can coexist peacefully in India. This will take some time and patience on both sides. Gandhi taught in the past but if it can be achieved; India will become a nation that other nations look at in awe because of its ability to grow from its mistakes.

When India had its first election ever in 1948, it did something that even the powerful United States had not yet achieved, by allowing for universal suffrage. If it was not for this, India could have been in a different position than it is today. This, in addition to many other historical events, has changed India. Though it may be debated whether these changes were for the best or for the worst, none of it could have happened if it was not for one man, a man who had a vision like many others before him and after him, who hoped that his nation would become something: A democratic nation.

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