

In what way did Mahatma Gandhi transform the nature of the national movement?

By the time Mahatma Gandhi arrived in India in 1915, he had sufficient successes and lessons from his novel methods in South Africa, which when implemented in India gradually transformed the Indian national movement in the following ways:

- **Mass movements:** Gandhiji extended the scope of national movement from elitist groups and individual heroes to masses, which were hitherto not participating. (Non Cooperation Movement)
- **Participation of women:** He believed in equal rights of freedom and liberty for women. Mahatma Gandhi was the first man to encourage participation of women in politics, as witnessed by the mass participation of women in Quit India Movement.
- **Social reforms:** Gandhiji supported the Varna system without hierarchical occupation and was against the caste system including the practice of untouchability, purdah practice and child marriage.
✓ He remarked "To live with untouchability, Gandhi said, was "like a cup of poison" to him."
- **New methods of struggle:** Satyagraha experiment (passive resistance and civil disobedience), non-violence and non-cooperation formed the basis of the national movement post World War I.
- **Hindu-Muslim Unity:** He believed that religion doesn't teach hatred. From Non Cooperation Khilafat Movement till the eve of independence, Gandhiji stood firmly for Hindu-Muslim unity.
- **All India character:** Gandhiji provided a national vision to the struggle. His engagement with people at grass-root level gave him access to different nationalist groups all over India – peasants, factory workers, industrialists, moderates and extremists.
- **Idea of Swadeshi:** Khadi was a means of uniting the Indians, of acquiring economic freedom and equality. It marked the decentralisation of production and distribution of the necessities of life.

Gandhian techniques not only helped India gain independence, but his ideology also shaped the future of the Indian Republic that came into being and as we know it today.