

Mahatma Gandhi: The Man Who Led His Country to Fight for Rights Responsibly

**Anusha Vemuri
Pratyusha Vemuri
Senior Division
Group Website**

Hoping to learn about our Indian heritage and history as well as to find a fitting topic for this year's theme, we chose to study Mahatma Gandhi's contributions to the Indian freedom struggle. 'Rights and Responsibilities' are values that emanate from Gandhi's life. He proved that fighting for a cause the responsible way, is the right way. Gandhi was a father to some and a friend to others, but for all, he was an icon of liberty and peace.

Portraying Gandhi's numerous contributions through one of his campaigns did not justify his entire mission of fighting for rights responsibly. Therefore, to show his responsible leadership in attaining rights in each instance versus the practical details of each movement, we used all the major events in the Indian Independence struggle. We started our research with an 'Official Mahatma Gandhi e-archive.' Obtaining interviews was difficult, but three Gandhian experts: Dr. Nico Slate, Dr. Vinay Lal, and Ms. Carrie Trybulec gave their valuable insights. Dr. Nico Slate, Associate Professor in Carnegie Mellon University, guided us by connecting the theme with the topic. He was in one of Gandhi's ashrams, in Wardha, India, when we interviewed him. Professor Vinay Lal, Associate Professor in UCLA, gave us in-depth knowledge on the essence of Gandhi. Carrie Trybulec, Director of Gandhi Memorial Center in Maryland, focused on modern-day relevance of Gandhian philosophy. Their feedback, primary internet archives, online libraries, and Gandhi's copious writings illuminated our path.

This is the first time we ventured into the website realm of NHD. We learned the intricate system of a website. We used tutoring videos to experiment with new techniques and effects to make our website appealing. We created a mosaic, of a hundred primary photographs, to not only show a new portrayal of Gandhi's image, but also to symbolize that Gandhi's life was his message, a blend of responsible leadership and a genuine fight for rights. We used orange, white, and green to represent Indian colors. Our website has a white backdrop with an orange hue to

show non-violence, truth, and simplicity. The moving wheel in the background represents Gandhi's revolutionary Khadi Movement and it symbolizes that Gandhi's successors used his strategies too.

Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the Nation, embodiment of *Ahimsa* (non-violence), advocate of *Satyagraha* (adherence to truth), led India in her fight for *Swaraj* (political liberty-1947), social justice, and *Swadeshi* (self-reliance). To establish rights, Gandhi called for nationwide boycott of foreign goods and orchestrated the defiance of oppressive laws like the Rowlatt Act (1919) and the Salt Tax (1930). Likewise, to spur the nation towards its responsibilities, he championed the poor and the outcasts, strived for communal harmony, set an example for simple living, and ushered the concept of self-reliance through the *Khadi* (hand-spun cloth) and *Swadeshi* Movements. Thus, he validated that rights and responsibilities go hand in hand.

(494 words)