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## Gandhi's struggle in South Africa and its Contemporary Relevance

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### Abstract

*Mahatma Gandhi is not of and age but for all ages. Gandhi was a man of education with character. He visited South Africa thrice and spent twenty one years there. The most of the making up of his personality and principles has taken place in South Africa. The struggles he faced and the way he was involved to deal with them prove to be of immense value in the contemporary situation. In his three visitas to South Africa M.K.Gandhi had to deal with different types of struggles centered around human discrimination, deprivation of human rights and disrespectful and insulting treatment to human beings which was very detrimental to peace and universal brotherhood. During the first visit and stay he had to face bitter experience due to colour prejudice and disrespectful treatment to indian e.g. pushing away from the train no seat inside the carriage, about dress-code and walking on foot-path. Even he had to deal with the issue of the legislative council. During his second visit he faced false allegations,attacks by youngsters and insulting treatment by a South African barber. During his 3rd visit he mainly dealt with the issues of registration of India's and cancellation of Indian marriages. He dealt with all these issues with practical understanding, prudence, persuasion, Satyagraha and asserting human approach.Today's world is dominated by technology and progressing towards globalization, aiming to bring the whole world together. But human discrimination, deprivation of human rights, minority issues, and destructive activities still exist . These need to be dealt with the way ivolved out of Gandhi's experience in South Africa- Love; truth and Non-violence . So there will be world peace and universal brotherhood so Gandhi's South Africa experience provides a frame of reference to the contemporary world. Here's a refined and polished version of your abstract with improved grammar, flow, and academic tone while keeping your original ideas intact.*

**Keywords:** Mahatma Gandhi, South Africa, Satyagraha, Non-violence, Truth, Human Rights, Discrimination, Universal Brotherhood, Peace, Globalization

### Introduction -

Mahatma Gandhi, an epoch making personality, is not of an age but for all ages. Gandhi was a man of education with character, who gave peaceful means of protest-Truth, Love and Non-violence which have proved to be the guiding path to the whole world. Of course his preaching's have evolved out of his struggle and bitter experience in his life, in India as well as in South Africa. He himself has stated that most of the making of his personality has taken place in South Africa where he spent 21 years of his life. ("Reddy E.S.1993 P.V.")

Of course, the past has to be analysed and interpreted in the context of the present and it forecasts future. Progressing to worrds globalisation in today's technology dominated world. The evils like disrespect for others, humiliation of human beings still exist, which mark the universal brotherhood and World peace. This is quite evident in extremist activities, advanced armaments, attacks, power greed ect. They need to be rooted out which M.K. Gandhi experienced and realized quite long back in South Africa. So Gandhi's struggles in South Africa is experience; and efforts to root out evils, his ways of dealing with the situations if viewed and analyzed in today's context; would definitely provide a new angle of looking at human beings; human power, women empowerment, at our country and the world of which network we are the part. The present paper is an attempt toward this. sustainable development.

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### **The Objectives of the paper -**

The present study is Undertaker with following objectives -

- 1) To know the struggle of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa.
- 2) To interpret the solution and his dealings in contemporary context and to study it's. Modern relevance.
- 3) To offer new approaches to looking at his struggles in South Africa, the human beings and the world.

### **Division of the paper :**

The present paper is divided into four parts. The first part deals with his struggle in South Africa during his stay in the first visit and its consideration of contemporary situation. The second part deals with Gandhi's struggle in South Africa during his second visit. The third part throws light on the struggle in his third visit to South Africa. Fourth part brings out the conclusions.

### **Related literature :**

Mahatma Gandhi is worldwide explored banyan tree-like personality. The present study is based on secondary sources, the autobiography of M.K. Gandhi, "My experiences with Truth"; In English and also its Marathi version provides a deep inside into his struggle, thinking and approaches. The present study is mainly based on a compilation of articles on Gandhi by eminent scholars, thinkers and even politicians in the world. The books 'Mahatma Gandhi 100 Years' Gandhi and South Africa 1914-1948 Gandhi: prisoner of hope also gives a deeper perspective and detailed information regarding Gandhi's life in South Africa.

### **M. K Gandhi's first stay in South Africa :**

M.K. Gandhi visited the South Africa started with an offer from the Meman firm, after his return from London, becoming a Barrister Meman wanted M.K. Gandhi to instruct their lawyer in a case regarding their business in South Africa claiming \$40,000. In fact this was going to South Africa somewhat as a servant but he had accepted it to have new experience, to see a new country and to send \$105 to his brother.

To interpret Gandhi's struggle in South Africa in his first visit in the contemporary. Contest provides two aspects for their relevance; the existing solution and the manners of facing the struggle. After a span of six decades the solution, though has changed for betterment marginally, has reminded us that the mind set of the people is the base for any social improvement. Technology has made today's world a global village and the internet has made both worlds much closer than never before but the answer for the questions has really globalization taken place? Takes one back to Gandhi's struggle. Apartheid -problem had at it's base -lack of human being as human beings dignified humanitarian approach which is Still prevailing respect others, to treat all human beings on equal status, no superiority complex and love for

others are the essential things for aiming at universal brotherhood are the mostly required today also. America's World trade centre and Taj hotel in India increasing extremist activities, cold blooded murders strongly assert the missing of human approach; the same Gandhi realised in South Africa. Today the world also asserts the need of treating humans in a humane way and with dignity so that world - peace will be achieved. So Gandhi's impulse to improve the condition of Indians and efforts for them matter today also. Though today the globalisation and liberalization aim at intercultural and international mineling of national still of national and cultural specificity and human empowerment still the realituly of national and cultural specificity in visible, that maybe on a small scale, the people are deprived away from their human rights, social or political. The evil aspects of human nature to maintain dignity by torturing others is seen even today. So the resemblance between Gandhi's struggle in South Africa for class prejudice and man's identity and the current condition of today's human beings.

And naturally the dealings of Gandhi with the struggles are of immense value today also . Gandhi was the most practical man and he handled the struggles prudently with full understanding. So respect for other practical ways to deal with struggles, decisions, firmness, prudence and organised efforts to deal with struggles and strong organized efforts to bring about change have immense value today also.

### **II) M.K. Gandhi's second visit to South Africa :**

In Dec. Second time M.K.Gandhi sailed for South Africa with his wife Kasturba, two sons from Durban and the only son of a widowed sister as he received cable from Durban about the opening of parliament. Another ship Naderi also sailed for Durban at the same time

In his second visit to the struggle seems individual ,it has a wider impact and contemporary relevance in a sense that one is likely to face false allegations but has to deal with the unexpected solution with prudence, practicality and patience and to come out of the solution peacefully. It affirms the strong faith in truth,it proves to all that opposition can be brought to its terms,handled with patience and belief in truth international disputes can be settled peacefully in this way.

### **III Third visit to South Africa:**

M.K. Gandhi received an unexpected cable from South Africa as chamberlain accepted him there for deputation. But Mr. Chamberlain was against Indian deputation. But Gandhi decided to start work fresh and enrolled in the Transvaal supreme court.

During his third stay in South Africa Gita's principles of aprigraha and sambhavam (equadility) gripped him and also Ruskin's book "Unto this Last" cast a magic spell on him which taught the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.

The struggle in his third visit, regarding the registration of Indians with the register of Asia tics have a contemporary relevance as they aim at peaceful

as well as stubborn resistance to unjust solutions and make the authorities bow down, with organized efforts. In today's destructive and dominating tendencies these struggles and finding solutions serve as guiding light leading to world peace and affirmation of truth.

They also prove that man's heart may be softened by events. The value of patience as well as firmness is everlasting. The struggle against marriage registration is undoubtedly the women's strength and nowadays women are treated as human resource.

### **Conclusions:**

Today's world is aiming at globalisation and coming of the whole world together with peace and happiness. Of course this is totally dependent on the mindset and approaches of people and its proven fact that evil tendencies, beliefs and especially treating each other with love and respect and not with insult and injustice. Gandhi not only realized this quite long back in South Africa but peaceful means to deal with it. Gandhi's South African experience form a frame of reference for the direction of struggle today also. His message has relevance for all time and for all mankind. Gandhi struggled very hard in South Africa to remove human discrimination and insulting and undignified treatment given to human beings based on colour prejudice. He stressed on maintaining the dignity of Man and the value of the individual. In the contemporary world the problem of human discrimination still exists. But can we solve it by changing the approaches of people towards each other and accepting the individual identity. Gandhi worked on these issues very prudently and with practical adjustment. This is applicable even today also.

Many of the tensions that exist in the world of today grow out of important conflicts of interest. They result from a lack of understanding of the feelings, needs. Purposes and objectives of the people and government. The peace which Gandhi expected is the ability to cope up with conflicts, which is of almost value today.

The issue harmful to universal brotherhood which Gandhi had to deal with in South Africa- i.g.E.g. registration of Indians ; marriage registration etc. Deprivation of human rights, undignified treatment to 'coloured class' minority issues do exist today, though, changed form. Gandhi dealt with these issues with assertion of Truth,firmness, prudence and making people understand their mistakes. Today's violent and destructive means,domination, power greediness, the widening gap rich and poor, the use of advanced means for human destruction compels us to take. review of Gandhi's preaching of love, truth and Non-violence. Only these principles can maintain respect and dignity of human beings and bring the whole world together. So Gandhi today is more essential as a saint than as a politician. Maybe he had to face failure like Christ, Buddha but has shown a very rational, peaceful way to bring the whole world together.

If the world seeks to avoid destruction and to advance the lot of mankind it must need the advice of Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi worked selflessly to give respect to Indians in South Africa and his saying 'those who want to do good are not selfish' is very apt in the contemporary solutions in the world heading towards economic progress with social justice.

Today's world looks at women as human resources. Mahatma Gandhi realized the strength of women in South Africa and used it in organized way to achieve his just aim of cancellation of registration marriage

'satyagraha' - i.e. The force of truth and love and a passive means - which he utilized for achieving his just goals, are equally essential today also to solve the problem.

Great men never die; their work lives on, Gandhi's fundamental ethics formed on South Africa experience- love is better than hate; peace is better than war, co-operation is better than conflict and persuasion is better than force are like a light- house for today, tomorrow and forever. His sincerity, integrity and warm humanity will undoubtedly have a tremendous effect on the hearts and minds of all the people in the whole world.

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### **Conflicts of interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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