

Principles of Satyagraha

The word *Satya* means truth and *Agraha* means effort or force. *Satyagraha* stands for “the force born of truth”. Gandhi defined it as “love-force or soul-force”. Gandhi's basic ideas on *Satyagraha* were evolved from his study of the works of Tolstoy (1828-1910), a great Russian writer, as well as his study of the Hindu scriptures. The *Satyagrahis* seek to convert the evil-doers through their willingness to accept suffering cheerfully. Gandhi said, “*the hardest fibre must melt in the fire of love. If it does not melt, it is because the fire is not strong enough.*” There are different techniques of *Satyagraha*. Fasting can be one form of *Satyagraha*. Non-Cooperation with the evil-doer is another form of *Satyagraha*.

Gandhi laid down a strict moral code which states how *Satyagrahis* should behave. Under no circumstances, whatsoever, will a *Satyagrahi* resort to violence.

Non-violence (*Ahimsa*) and *Satyagraha* are closely intertwined. Gandhi said, “*non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed.*” It is not enough not to take the life of any living being. The vow of *Ahimsa* implies that one must love those whom he believes to be unjust. “Oppose tyranny but never hurt the tyrant.” Non-violence should be distinguished from cowardice. Gandhi lays stress on non-violence of the strong, not of the weak. He said, “*where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I advise violence.*”

Proposals of Cabinet Mission Plan

Having failed to bring about an agreement between the Congress and the League, the Mission put forward the following proposals:

1. There was to be a Federal Union including both British India and the Princely States. The Central Government was to have only three subjects under its jurisdiction, namely, defence, foreign affairs and communications. Of course, it would have the power to raise the finances required for these subjects.
2. All other subjects would be under the control of the Provinces. The Princely States would retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union.
3. Provinces would be free to form groups and each group would be like a Regional Union or Sub-federation. 'Group A' would include Madras, Bombay, U.P., Bihar, Central Provinces and Orissa. 'Group B' comprised Punjab, NWFP and Sindh and 'Group C' included Assam and Bengal.
4. A Constituent Assembly would frame the Union Constitution. It was to consist of 385 members—the Provinces were to elect 292 members, whereas Princely States were allocated 93 seats. After a preliminary meeting the Constituent Assembly was to split into three sections. Members of all the three groups would sit separately and frame provincial constitutions for the Provinces included in each group. They would also decide whether only Regional Constitution should be set up for those Provinces. Finally, the Constituent Assembly would meet again jointly and frame the Union Constitution. Thus the Cabinet Mission proposed a Federal Union with three tiers: the Provinces, the Regional Groups of Provinces and a Union Centre.
5. The Cabinet Mission recommended the formation of an Interim Government at the Centre. For the time being, the Viceroy would reconstitute his Executive Council consisting of representatives of all communities.

6. India would be free to remain within the British Commonwealth or secede from it.
7. It would be necessary to work out a Treaty between the Constituent Assembly and the United Kingdom for matters arising out of the transfer of power.

The Reaction of the Congress and the Muslim League

The Cabinet Mission Plan was “a most carefully worked out compromise between the conflicting claims of the League and the Congress”. Although the League's demand for Pakistan had been rejected, the Cabinet Mission sought to satisfy the League by a provision which permitted grouping of Provinces.

The Congress : The Congress Working Committee sought an assurance that the proposed Constituent Assembly would be a sovereign body and that the Provinces should be free to opt out of a Group to which they did not wish to belong. This was important in view of the fact that Assam in the proposed ‘Group C’ had a Congress government at that time. The Congress had even advised the representatives of Assam not to join the Group which they did not like.

Competency Based MCQs

1. Satyagraha was based on
 - (a) Truth
 - (b) Non-violence
 - (c) Both of these
 - (d) Only (b)
2. Choose the incorrect pair.
 - (a) Champaran Satyagraha : 1917
 - (b) Kheda Satyagraha : 1918
 - (c) Ahmedabad Satyagraha : 1918
 - (d) Khilafat Movement : 1930
3. Which of the following leaders did not join the Swaraj Party?

- (a) C.R. Das (b) Motilal Nehru
(c) Jawaharlal Nehru (d) All of these
4. The Gandhi – Irwin pact led to the suspension of which of the following movements?
- (a) Non-Cooperation movement
(b) Civil Disobedience movement
(c) Khilafat Movement
(d) Quit India Movement
5. Which of the following leaders was brutally assaulted during a Simon Commission demonstration and later on died due to injuries?
- (a) Bipin Chandra Pal (b) Lala Lajpat Rai
(c) B.G. Tilak (d) Dadabhai Naoroji
6. Identify the leader in the picture and answer the following questions.



- (i) Identify the leader shown in the picture
- (a) J.L. Nehru (b) S.C. Bose
(c) Rash Bihari Bose (d) None of these
- (ii) Which of the following slogans was given by him?
- (a) Dilli Chalo (b) Vande Mataram
(c) Inqlaab Zindabad (d) Jai Bharat
- (iii) He was elected Congress President in the year
- (a) 1938 (b) 1939
(c) Both of these (d) None of these

