

## The Champaran Satyagraha: A Revolution in Resistance

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Group Website  
Process Paper Word Count: 499  
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Our group spent a week in November looking into possible topics for our project. One of our goals was to find a topic involving change that continues to impact the world today, so we looked for topics with long-lasting effects. During this process, we found Gandhi's Champaran Satyagraha, his first nonviolent movement to combat injustice in India. When we learned that this revolution not only sparked reactions from varying peoples and resulted in positive change in India but also inspired Martin Luther King, a future activist, to use nonviolent resistance, we knew our topic fit the theme of Revolution, Reaction Reform, and connected to the use of peaceful protest globally today.

Because he was the driving force behind it, we began researching Mahatma Gandhi's work prior to the Champaran Satyagraha to establish an understanding of his values. We found and examined letters, articles and books including *Satyagraha in South Africa*, in which Gandhi explained the importance of nonviolent methods of protest; he called this philosophy "satyagraha", and used it to create change in South Africa prior to doing so in India. We found diary entries further describing the effects of specific satyagrahas in various countries, and we studied Martin Luther King's account of his journey to India, in which he explained how Gandhi's satyagrahas inspired his own work.

After completing our research, we began putting together a concise outline of our project. We spent hours assessing which information was crucial to explaining the lead up to the Champaran Satyagraha in India and which best illustrated the positive effects of the movement. We had found a great deal of information on Gandhi's life, work and legacy; now, our goal was to condense it into a six page outline.

We began building our website once we were happy with the completed outline. We brainstormed the best way to arrange the sections of our website and incorporated quotes from Gandhi and other figures involved in the Champaran Satyagraha to provide different perspectives throughout the sections. We wanted to guide viewers through the revolution itself,

the reactions of various groups to it and most importantly, the changes it caused in India and around the world.

Indian farmers suffered for decades under the harsh control of European planters and the exploitative Tinkathia System which facilitated the unfair treatment. To be rid of the oppression, they needed to get rid of the system. Mahatma Gandhi was the leader of the Champaran Satyagraha, the movement that led to the dismantling of the system. While working in India, he spoke with farmers about their grievances, encouraged them to remain hopeful and shared his philosophy about the strength of peaceful resistance. The locals looked up to and supported him, and his call for change was successful. By using nonviolent protest to create a change that improved the lives of locals and inspired future Indian campaigns and global activists to do the same, Gandhi sparked a change in the way injustice is fought. He led a revolution in resistance.