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MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI AND JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: A CONCISE COMPARATIVE STUDY

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A B S T R A C T

India was fortunate to have the charismatic and enlightened leadership of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. While these two legendary Indian leaders shared a few similarities, in most respects, they were very different. Mahatma Gandhi was one of the principal leaders of the Indian nationalist movement against British colonial rule, the father of the Indian nation, and one of the most successful and well-known practitioners of active, non-violent civil disobedience. His political strategy was emulated by Martin Luther King Jr. during the American Civil Rights Movement, feminists, environmentalists, and countless students and workers demonstrating for democratization all over the world. In contrast, Nehru was the architect of Indian democracy, rapid modernization, and one of the founding fathers of the Non-Aligned Movement. This paper compares these two famous figures from the developing world through a concise essay and unique table.

Keywords: *Ahimsa*; Congress Party, Fabian Socialism, Hinduism, Idealist, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Nai taleem, Satyagraha, Swaraj.*

INTRODUCTION

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi) and Jawaharlal Nehru profoundly impacted the Indian subcontinent and the entire world during the twentieth century. While they shared some similarities, these two famous Indian leaders were very different men whose lives took very different paths.

Gandhi's and Nehru's Hindu followers gave both leaders honorary Hindi titles. Rabindarnak Tagore, the Bengali Hindu author, artist, and musician who received the 1913 Nobel Prize for Literature, gave Gandhi the reverential title of *mahatma,* or "great soul" (Dhussa, 2012). Even though Gandhi himself was embarrassed, rather than honored, by the title, India's prophet of non-violence is better known to this day as Mahatma Gandhi, rather than his birth name of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Parel, 2006). Similarly, Nehru was given the honorific title of *pandit* (learned or enlightened teacher) because of his advanced education, knowledge, and wisdom (Ali, 1985).

Both leaders were born in India in the second half of the nineteenth century. Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 to a middle class family. He was the fourth son born to his father's fourth wife. His father served as the chief minister to the *raja* (ruler) of Porbandar, a coastal town located in northwestern India, which is in the modern-day State of Gujarat (Fisher, 1954). Gandhi's mother, a devout Hindu who frequently prayed and fasted, instilled pacifism in her children, along with vegetarianism and a respect for all living things. She was of the Pranami sect of Vaishnavist Hinduism, which syncretically combined elements of Hindu and Muslim practices and advocated religious tolerance and harmony, ideas that were incredibly formative for the young Gandhi. At that time, the Jain tradition was also particularly influential in Porbander, and the Jain concepts of *ahimsa* (non-injury) and the many-sided nature of truth affected the impressionable young Mohandas (Rynne, 2008). Gandhi himself was a practicing Hindu, who belonged to the *Vaisya* caste (Parekh, 2010).[i] In fact, the name Gandhi literally means

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"grocer" in the Hindi language. It was quite remarkable for Gandhi, who came from the third caste, to be revered later in life by even by *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* (Wolfenstein, 1971).

Nehru was an only child who was born into privilege on November 14, 1889. His father, Motilal Nehru, was a prominent and affluent attorney who gave his only child an Anglicized upbringing. Nehru's mother, a devout Hindu, frequently subjected her young son to rituals designed to ward off the evil eye. However, she had far less influence over him than his secular, educated, successful, and prosperous father (Tharoor, 2003). Indeed, after becoming India's first Prime Minister in 1947, Nehru described himself as "the last Englishman to rule India" (Nilekani, 2008). By virtue of his largely Westernized and areligious upbringing, Nehru was a non-practicing Hindu despite belonging to the priestly *Brahmin* caste (Ali, 1985).

Gandhi was an average student and received his primary and secondary education in India (Parekh, 2010). Nehru, who was younger, received private tutoring in his home until he was sixteen, at which point he continued his studies at the prestigious Harrow School in England. Both Gandhi and Nehru pursued their higher education in England, studying law. Gandhi received his law degree from the University of London in 1891 and immediately returned to India as a qualified barrister. However, his legal career in India was undistinguished and short-lived. Sixteen months later, he accepted a job as a tax accountant for a Muslim businessman in South Africa, where Gandhi lived for over twenty years, before returning to India in 1915 (Isaak, 1975; Parekh, 2010).

Beginning in 1907, Nehru attended Trinity College at Cambridge University, where he received a Natural Science degree. He then continued his education at law school, becoming a qualified barrister at the Inner Temple in London. The seven years Nehru spent in England proved to be a formative period in which he acquired a rational (though skeptical) worldview, also sampling Fabian socialism and Irish nationalism (Ali, 1985). This experience helped to reinforce and renew his patriotic dedication. Nehru, like his mentor Gandhi, returned to India in 1912 and sought a legal career. Like many lawyers in India at the time, Nehru was swept up in nationalist politics, and served as a delegate, and later in 1929, as president of the Indian National Congress (Goha, 2014).

Both leaders had influential experiences while living outside of India. In 1893, when Gandhi first went to South Africa, he experienced a humiliating instance of racial discrimination. He was forcibly expelled from a train, simply because he was sitting in the first-class compartment, which was reserved for whites only. This incident hurt his pride, dignity, and self-esteem, and helped transform him into a leader of the non-violent civil rights struggle for his Indian comrades in South Africa (Fischer, 1954). In contrast, while in England, Nehru was profoundly influenced by his visit to British-controlled Ireland, which, like India, had been brutally colonized. The Irish nationalist struggle of the Sinn Fein movement and Ireland's calls to boycott British trade goods significantly influenced the young Nehru to aggressively pursue India's independence from British colonial rule (Ali, 1985; Tharoor, 2003).

In his early thirties, when Gandhi looked back on his teenage years, he honestly admitted that he had been a domineering, jealous, and cruel husband. However, after the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902), in which the British used machine guns to massacre the Zulus, Gandhi became an advocate of nonviolence, women's emancipation and the equality of the sexes. Perhaps as a result of those experiences, Gandhi remained faithful to his wife throughout their marriage. Indeed, during India's independence movement, Gandhi's wife was his only family member to support him, even as his sons and his extended family remained uninvolved. While Gandhi narrowly escaped the sexual temptations of life in England, Nehru engaged in pre-marital affairs while studying there (Parekh, 2010). Although he consented to marry Kamila in an arranged marriage, he did not prefer or support this traditional system of matrimony. Ironically, when his daughter, Indira, wanted to marry Feroze Gandhi (no relation to the Mahatma) in a marriage based on love and not arranged, Nehru initially opposed the union because Feroze was a Parsi (Zoroastrian) and not a Hindu, but later reluctantly relented and attended the wedding. Nehru, like Gandhi, provided a strong voice for women's equality in India's burgeoning democracy, and vocally supported the women in his family (mother, sisters, wife, and daughter) in their active involvement in India's nationalist movement and political arena (Mukherjee, 1993; Ali, 198). Later, in 1955**,** as the political leader of independent India, Nehru pushed legislation to give

Hindu women inheritance and divorce rights, which had never been granted them in India before (Guha, 2011).

Another commonality between these leaders was their ability to write effectively, which was enhanced by their voracious reading. Both men utilized their time spent in prison to hone their already considerable talent. Gandhi, however, wrote and published more works than Nehru. Gandhi's literary contributions include: *Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1925); *Hind Swaraj* (1921); *Mahatma Gandhi, His Life, Writings and Speeches* (1918); *Satyagraha* (1951); *Towards Non-Violent Socialism* (1951); and, in 1922, *Young India*, 3 Volumes of collected contributions (1922) (Ashe, 1969). Nehru's most prominent works are *Glimpses of World History,* which was published in 1935 (Sheean, 1954); *Autobiography (*1936); and *Discovery of India,* published in 1946 (Ali, 1969).

When he was thirty six, Gandhi adopted the Hindu practice of *brahmacharya,* which refers to being mindful of one's thoughts, speech, and deeds at all times, as well as sexual abstinence. Gandhi believed that *kama*, or sexual energy, is a vital force, essential for physical strength, as well as mental and spiritual energy. Gandhi believed losing *kama* through sexual activity contributes to problems both spiritually and physically. Gandhi advocated total celibacy as an ideal, or *adarsiya*, though he did note that it was not feasible for every individual. At the minimum, however, Gandhi asserted that everyone should practice chastity within marriage, which was an essential part of healthy spiritual development (Parel, 2006). Nehru, on the other hand, believed that Gandhi was absolutely wrong about sexual abstinence. In Nehru's opinion, abstinence was unnatural because it inhibited one's own instincts, which could result in frustrations that, over time, would contribute to physical, psychological, and emotional complications (Grenire, 1983). Additionally, after Nehru's wife died in her mid-30s due to tuberculosis, he remained a bachelor for the rest of his life, though he did have several affairs. Circumstantial evidence even suggests Nehru had a triste with Edwina Mountbatten, the wife of Louis Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy of India (Whitehead, 1998; Tharoor, 2003). Regardless of the nature of Nehru's personal relationship with Edwina, the political relationship between Nehru and the Mountbattens was of supreme political importance during the process of Indian independence and Partition. Indeed, because of this, "two hundred years of colonial exploitation ended with warm smiles and hearty handshakes" (Keay, 2000). Gandhi also had a relatively friendly relationship with the Mountbattens, a rapport that would be essential during the turbulent time around Indo-Pakistani vivisection.

Gandhi returned to India from South Africa at the age of 45 and four years later resolved to free India from British colonial rule, a determination based upon his personal experiences and travels throughout India. Gandhi believed each individual had a responsibility to actively participate in improving one's community. He further denounced the trappings of a powerful central government, which engaged in economic transformation and social engineering. Just as the American Anti-Federalists of the late eighteenth century called for decentralizing economic, political, and social power, as well as authority, Gandhi also insisted that individuals be allowed to assume control of their own lives. Gandhi believed that decentralization avoids corrupting influences and the concentration of power and wealth, which would lead to greater independence, freedom, and democracy (Gandhi, 2009). A large centralized government was incompatible with Gandhi's theory of *swaraj* (self-rule), or local autonomy and self-sufficiency, along with individual and states' rights (Brown, 1953). However, Gandhi's younger counterpart, Nehru, had a philosophy centered on a strong central government staffed by educated and competent technocrats. Nehru believed this approach would yield rapid economic and social change and unite the heterogeneous country (Smith, 1966). Nehru wanted to use this well-staffed bureaucracy to create a carefully-controlled private sector, thus minimizing the vagaries of an unstable marketplace and allowing the country to achieve industrialization and modernization as quickly as possible (Tharoor, 2003). These technocrats would be responsible for national economic planning and rapidly modernizing the entire country. In these regards, Nehru was akin to the Federalists and Gandhi the anti-Federalists of late-1780s America.

Furthermore, Gandhi's socioeconomic and political ideology of *swaraj*, wherein liberty and power reside within each individual and not the British centralized colonial government, asserted that a large government bureaucracy, and even a representative democracy, would be unnecessary if Indians became their own rulers. A moderate and idealistic reformer, Gandhi believed the most basic human tendency was to build a

democratic and classless society with no political parties. In this respect, Gandhi identified with left-wing Socialists/Marxists, who called for the equal distribution of wealth. Unlike Marxists, however, Gandhi vehemently opposed using violence to attain equality, and as such, India's communist community, for their part, India's communists viewed the Bolshevik Revolution romantically (as the reality of its atrocities had not yet become public knowledge) and saw Gandhi's political methods, particularly *satyagraha,* as a deliberate impediment to violent revolution (Guha, 2014a). Gandhi, however, genuinely empathized with the plight of India's impoverished masses and fought to implement a more equitable, if naïve, economic order. On the other hand, Nehru asserted that Gandhi's conception of *swaraj* was utopian and completely unrealistic. Indeed, Nehru believed that if *swaraj* was realized, more harm would be done than good. The Westernized Prime Minister believed India should have a highly-developed democratic political system with a large government and representative democracy if it was to compete and develop alongside European powers (Mukhaerjee, 1993).

Gandhi wanted Indian society to remain traditional and predominantly agrarian, wherein peasants and farmers used relatively small, indigenously-produced, energy-saving, and labor-intensive technology on their farms. He was proud of Indian civilization and culture, and viewed the subcontinent's past in a decidedly positive light, which he believed could be seriously undermined by rapid modernization and Westernization. Gandhi also believed that the rapid industrialization and urbanization of society would make life so hectic that there would no longer be time for prayer or family, both essential components of one's individual spiritual development. Even though both Gandhi and Nehru assiduously struggled to free India from British imperialism, Gandhi opposed economic modernization. Nehru, on the other hand, wanted to aggressively industrialize, urbanize, and modernize India, so that its traditional society could catch up with the developed Western world he was openly enamored with. Nehru firmly believed that for India to have been so easily subjugated by European powers its society must have been inferior in some essential way, which Nehru believed came from stagnant scientific and industrial development (Tharoor, 2003). To achieve these goals, Nehru wanted to build and import modern, sophisticated, energy-intensive, and labor-saving machinery. Unlike Gandhi, Nehru was a modernizer, who was determined to undermine Indian conservatism, traditionalism, and religiosity. In this regard, Nehru played a far more influential role than Gandhi in shaping modern-day India (Shaffer, 2005; Norton, 1984). Unlike Gandhi Nehru's economic vision for India has been realized. As Prime Minister from 1947 to 1964, Nehru created a tightly regulated economy that was managed by a large bureaucracy and a planning commission that instituted Soviet-style five-year plans. This Nehruvian economic vision continued to dominate Indian economic policy into the 1990s (Sanyal, 2008).

Gandhi naively believed that revolutionary Indian leaders would inspire capitalists and landlords to become less greedy and exploitative. If Indian leadership set the correct example, he believed that landowners would pay their employees and peasants better wages. Above all, he was confident that they would make considerable contributions to society in the form of more goods and services, as well as the formation of humanitarian institutions. Gandhi further believed communal living (*ashrams)* would unite people from all different classes, professions, religions, and Hindu castes (Brown, 1953; Crocker, 1966).

On the other hand, Nehru was a principled pragmatist, a realist, and above all, a Fabian socialist (named after the Roman general Quintus Fabius Maximus, famous for his delay tactics). In 1884, a group of left-wing British intellectuals established the first Fabian Society (Ali, 1985). Around the turn of the nineteenth century, a few members of this Fabian Society formed the British Labor Party. The party's main agenda is to advocate peaceful and gradual progress toward socialism through the democratic process. Judged by today's standards, little distinguishes Fabian Socialists from other Social Democrats within the Labor Party. As its title suggests, the Fabian Society has always believed that the road to socialism is a very long and difficult one.

Nehru's admiration for Socialism originated with the socialist experiments in the Soviet Union and then the People's Republic of China (PRC). He extended his admiration for the Chinese Communists after they assumed power in 1949 because he believed India and China should be good neighbors and maintain fraternal relations as they were two of the most populous and influential Asian countries. In October 1962, Nehru was stunned when Chinese Communist radicals in Mao's

China ordered the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) to attack northwestern India. This attack occurred at precisely the same time that the U.S. and Soviet Union were preoccupied with the Cuban Missile Crisis, precluding their aid or involvement (Ali, 1985).

Gandhi, on the other hand, was a classic idealist, paying great attention to both the ends and the means of his actions. He believed the methods by which one achieved one's political goals must always be morally righteous. No goal, however noble, should be achieved through violence, as this would poison the results (Parekh, 2010). It is no wonder that Gandhi, who abhorred the use of violence in the name of change, has been called the father of active non-violent civil resistance. Two Sanskrit words, *ahimsa* (love force) and *satyagraha* (truth force), were often part of his message. Ultimately, Gandhi relied on the forces of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha* to prevail over his adversaries, regardless of their power and interests (Hall, 1929).

Gandhi and Nehru, both socialistically oriented, wanted to end poverty, inequality, and injustice in India. However, Gandhi was a devout Hindu, while Nehru was a secular agnostic. Injustice and discrimination experienced by the lowest-ranked communities in the classical caste system—referred to by Europeans as "outcastes" and "untouchables," but by the Indian government as "scheduled castes," and "*dalits*" (the broken or oppressed ones) made them want to undertake far-reaching reforms. Gandhi referred to these "untouchables" as *harijans*, or "children of god." He made a concerted effort to include them in his communal *ashrams* and helped some of them attend Hindu temples. Gandhi also encouraged the upper castes to treat members of the lower castes with kindness and generosity. Conversely, Nehru considered the caste system an anachronism and a major hindrance to the development of a modern and secular society. He envisioned an independent, free, and modern India that would transform into a socialist republic, without castes, and eventually, the class system (Shirer, 1982; Norton, 1984).

Despite vast differences in their religious outlooks, both leaders worked together closely and amicably. Nehru called Gandhi *bapu* (father) and "the soul of India." Gandhi regarded Nehru as his protégé and heir. Sometimes, Gandhi's ardent religious supporters objected to Nehru's atheism, but Gandhi believed that Jawaharlal was nearer to God than many professed worshippers (Ashe, 1969; Nanda, 1958). In an interview some years after Gandhi's death, Nehru asserted that while Gandhi "used the mildest language" he was actually "made of steel," which reflects the deep personal admiration that Nehru felt for his mentor, despite their often differing perspectives (Guha, 2014b).

Gandhi was also Nehru's *guru* (enlightened teacher), and both Indian nationalists detested and demonstrated against Western imperialism and colonialism. Consequently, their multiple imprisonments totaled over nine years for each leader (Ali, 1985). Successful leadership inspired nationalist leaders and movements in their struggles for independence against European colonial rule.

Gandhi successfully used Hindu symbolism and rhetoric to mobilize the masses. The cow, which Hindus consider sacred, became the symbol of his Congress Party. His other spiritual message included several essential concepts around which many of his actions revolved. Perhaps most central was his conception of *ahimsa,* or non-violence. This is a concept common to several South Asian religious traditions, perhaps most famously Jainism, whose ascetics are known to carry brooms to brush aside insects so as to avoid harming them. For Gandhi, however, the common conception of *ahimsa* was too inactive, and, inspired his own Western education and the writings of Tolstoy, he drew from the Christian notion of *caritas,* or charity, to help formulate his more dynamic philosophy. Gandhi's *ahimsa* required adherents to resist violence through non-violent means (the basis of *satyagraha)* and to love one's enemies, which was eloquently espoused by Jesus Christ two-thousand years ago (Parel, 2006; Parekh, 2010).

His other notable spiritual practices included not talking for one day each week, in order to remember and become closer to God. He also undertook periodic fasting for self-purification, to unite his followers, and to bring attention to critically important issues, like the savage communal violence of India's Partition, during which Gandhi fasted nearly unto death to stop the violence (Mehta, 1977). Above all, Gandhi believed that spirituality was inseparable from positive political action, and the measure of a spiritual and religious tradition was its ability to promote justice, non-violence, and peace (Parel, 2006). Gandhi further believed that *ahimsa* had to be practiced not just politically and socially, but also in one's relationship with the environment. According to him, man is the caretaker of

the natural world. Furthermore, animal life, like its human counterpart, has a divine nature. While maintaining human survival and civilization requires violence, a fact that deeply disturbed the Mahatma, he believed that nature should only be disturbed by humans when absolutely necessary and then only with great regret (Parekh, 2010).

Conversely, Nehru, having been raised as an Anglicized Indian, did not share Gandhi's religious worldview or behavior. Nehru adhered to the British democratic political tradition of secularism, which is based on the separation of religion and politics (Smith, 1966). Nehru considered Mahatma Gandhi's orthodox Hindu ideas and ideals to be a volatile mix of religion and politics. Nehru believed orthodox Hinduism would slow the growth of the nationalist movement, thereby undermining rapid modernization after it gained its independence. In fact, Nehru was particularly concerned about religio-political extremism, which could quickly contribute to inter-religious conflict and endanger India's future unity and harmony (Smith, 1966).

Not fond of performing administrative duties, Gandhi served as President of the Indian Congress Party for just one year in 1925. This was the only official position he ever held within either the Indian independence movement or the Congress Party. Unlike Gandhi, Nehru demonstrated a great talent for administration during his time in office. In contrast, Nehru began serving as the President of the Indian Congress Party in 1929 and continued to serve in that capacity after assuming office as the Prime Minister of India in 1948. He held this position for 17 consecutive years. (Manor, 1993; Tharoor, 2003).

Gandhi was an effective agitator and an astute, charismatic, and populist politician. Despite disliking administrative responsibilities, Gandhi transformed the relatively small and elitist Indian Congress Party into a mass movement, when he became its revolutionary leader in 1921. Nehru, on the other hand, was an effective and competent administrator. He had an innate talent for building social and political institutions and effectively governing them. Thanks to Nehru's enlightened, charismatic, pragmatic, and competent leadership, India ratified a secular constitution in 1950 and developed strong democratic institutions. Nehru was also responsible for India's rapid state-building (developing governmental institutions), nation-building (unifying India's diverse population), and modernization (Shaffer, 2005).

As an idealist, Gandhi was a passionate advocate of *ahimsa* (nonviolence). He believed that violence was only acceptable when one was being attacked and one's life was in imminent danger. While Nehru also accepted the idea of *ahimsa*, in theory, he was a realist who felt the world was a dangerous place in which one's enemies should not be trusted. Therefore, he believed people must be prepared to engage in violence to avoid being enslaved. For Nehru, violence was bad, but slavery was far worse (Ali, 1985; Norton, 1984). Gandhi was the father of active, non-violent, civil disobedience, which later became a strategy adopted by mass populations for progressive change. This form of peaceful protest was not only seen in India, but also emulated by other nationalists and civil rights leaders throughout the world. Nehru is considered the father of India's democratic political system and one of the leaders responsible for founding the Non-Aligned Movement (Shaffer, 2005).

Gandhi and Nehru shared a concern for furthering education in India, where much of the rural population did not receive even the most basic access to schooling. In the early twentieth century, the British educational system in India only benefited the most affluent of Indians, and the literacy rate is thought to have been as low as 17% (Rai, 2007). Gandhi asserted the notion of *Nai Taleem* (New Education) or basic and free education for all, as a fundamental part of India's development. Gandhi viewed education as essential for each individual's mental and spiritual development. He also saw it as a lifelong process that began with formal elementary schooling. For Gandhi, education was a character-building exercise that made the student into an ethical and moral human being, rather than simply being an activity through which one attained information and knowledge. Through basic education, Gandhi wanted to transform children in rural areas into model villagers. He also wanted Indian children and adults from villages and cities to appreciate and adopt all that was best and lasting in Indian civilization. To drive this change of focus, Gandhi's educational system would specialize in providing better farming techniques, studying and practicing health and hygiene, and developing cottage industries that focused on handicrafts (Allen, 2008; Parel, 2009; Gandhi, 2009).

Nehru, on the other hand, greatly admired and supported education in the sciences, and gave considerable support to their growth and development in India. As prime minister, he was responsible for the founding of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), which became a source of immense pride for the country. To the present, the IITs are some of the most prestigious institutions for science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine in the entire world. IIT graduates are now leaders in technological fields both in India and abroad, thanks to Nehru's lifelong leadership and support (Tharoor, 2007).

Gandhi was not only a theoretician, but also a practitioner and a tactical politician, who was keenly aware of short-term impacts, and yet never lost sight of his ultimate goal. Accordingly, he was regarded as a strategist and statesman with a clear vision. However, Gandhi felt it was more important to be remembered as a peaceful visionary. The Indian Congress Party's continued growth came due to Gandhi's tireless efforts, which ultimately enabled India to overthrow British colonialism.

Nehru was a modernizer, while Gandhi was a traditionalist and nativist, who was proud of his country's long history and civilization. Hopeful that India would maintain its traditional village lifestyle, Gandhi promoted the use of small scale technology and simple tools, such as the spinning wheel, in order to support cottage industries. Nehru, on the other hand, disagreed with Gandhi's austerity. He believed India needed to encourage rapidly modernizing its science, technology, agriculture, industry, and defense. Nehru firmly believed that only socialism and rapid modernization (especially industrialization and urbanization), could remedy the country's pervasive poverty and low standard of living (Ali, 1985; Shaffer, 2005).

The best political leaders combine the qualities of a healthy political theorist, agitator, organizer, and administrator. Nehru possessed all four of these attributes, while Gandhi was a great political theorist, agitator, and organizer, disliked being an administrator and thus tended to leave administrative tasks to others. He notoriously hated his brief tenure as the leader of the Congress Party, preferring the freedom of a less official position within the organization (Parekh,). Gandhi and Nehru exhibited democratic, or participatory, leadership**.** They acted according to a socially-conscious perspective that supported certain democratic attitudes, beliefs and values. For instance, they respected their followers' right to participate in matters that would affect their own lives. Democratic leadership, as we know it, is based on the acceptance that members of a group have an essential dignity, with an agreement of not only cooperation, but also in having their input heard.

Gandhi and Nehru were both outstanding statesmen. Statesmen are leaders with far-reaching vision, immense courage, and great wisdom. While, politicians, the statesmen's counterpart, are known for selfishness, short-term interests, narrow partisanship, and an obsession with winning the next election. However, statesmen, like Gandhi and Nehru, generally avoid divisive partisanship, think beyond the election cycle, do not require constant polling to inform their decisions, and often focus on the long-term goals and interests of the country, their countrymen, and the world. For these reasons, many believe Gandhi and Nehru were political giants who achieved enormous power, influence, and status, not only within India, but also on the world stage. They both assumed their positions by forcing a reluctant Britain to peacefully abandon India as a colonial acquisition. India's liberation was the beginning of the end for other European colonial empires in Asia and Africa as well. The impact and significance of Gandhi's and Nehru's accomplishments afforded them a place among the most influential political leaders who shaped the twentieth century.

Gandhi and Nehru were great political strategists and tacticians as well. The concept of strategy is derived from the Greek word for "generalship," a broad plan of conduct or action, which is a consciously arrived-at set of operations within an integrated whole for solving problems and achieving goals. Gandhi and Nehru adopted active, non-violent civil disobedience over the 27 years it took to peacefully liberate India from British colonial rule (Hall, 1929). The specifics of how a goal will be achieved, the methods of employing manpower to achieve these goals, and even devices for completing a short-term target. Tactical operations involve brief, small-scale actions, which serve a larger purpose. For example, after Gandhi's speech discouraging Indians from wearing British-made clothes, a large bonfire of these clothes was built. After that symbolic event, most of Gandhi's male followers stopped wearing typical Western attire and started wearing the native dress of *pyjamas* and *kurtas,* or white shirts (Mukharjee, 1993).

Additionally, Gandhi spent several hours every day spinning thread and making cloth on a *charka* (spinning wheel), as well as wearing the cloth he made. Also, in order to encourage resistance to Britain's imposed tax on Indian salt, Gandhi told Indians to make salt from seawater and boycott the purchase of the salt that the British authorities were taxing. He also made the much-publicized 200-mile Salt March to make salt out of water from the Indian Ocean (Shirer, 1982).

Both men, however, were not above making political blunders. The greatest of these blunders was their mutual mishandling of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League. In the lead up to Britain's withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent, both Gandhi and Nehru failed to respond to the Muslim League's growing power among Indian Muslims, even as many former Muslim members of the Congress began to shift their support. While the Congress remained neutral in World War II as a protest against British imperialism, Jinnah shrewdly aided the British, thus buying himself considerable influence over the decision making process after Britain left India. For their part, Gandhi and Nehru both consistently underestimated Jinnah's growing power and influence until it was much too late (Guha, 2007). When it became clear that India's Partition was inevitable, Gandhi was even willing to make Jinnah the leader of all of united India to maintain peace and unity. However, Nehru and other Congress leaders gave this suggestion very little credence, as Nehru had seriously miscalculated Britain's intentions with negotiations. By the time of the Simla Conference in 1945, Nehru's considerable time in jail had cut him off from the political reality of a weakened Britain that wanted to quit India as quickly as possible. He was not aware that Britain wanted to leave India whatever the consequences, including a bloody Partition and the creation of an independent state called Pakistan. He still considered the United Kingdom a hegemonic colonial power bent on dominating India in order to account for Britain's willingness to bend to Jinnah's will. The U.K. ultimately appeased Jinnah by separating India and Pakistan and instigating many years of conflict between those two nations (Tharoor, 2003).

In conclusion, Mahatma Gandhi has been viewed by many of his followers around the world as a saintly figure. He was the charismatic leader who converted the elitist Indian Congress Party into a mass movement, and the great organizer who held it together for more than a quarter century. Gandhi is revered as the father of the Indian nation and one of the principal architects of India's independence. To the rest of the world, Mahatma Gandhi was one of the most successful practitioners of active, non-violent civil disobedience (Isaak, 1975). Not only did his political strategy succeed in ending British colonialism in the Indian subcontinent, but it has also been famously emulated by many people around the world. His effective strategy can be seen in groups, such as Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights protestors, feminists, the National Organization for Women (NOW), environmentalists, as well as countless students and workers demonstrating for democratization all over the world. In contrast, Pandit Nehru is remembered for using his charisma to build robust and enduring democratic institutions that have withstood many challenges and crises. It is to Nehru's credit that India has enjoyed the praiseworthy distinction of being the most populous democracy, since gaining its independence from British colonial rule in 1947. Nehru was also the principal architect of India's rapid modernization and one of the fathers of the Non-Aligned Movement. Thanks to him, India is one of the few shining examples of sustained democracy in the post-colonial developing world (Ali, 1985). See table 1 for India's Legendary Political Giants: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

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Table 1.

India's Legendary Political Giants: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru		
	Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi	**Jawaharlal Nehru**
Personal		
Birth	• Porbandar, Gujrat province, India, on October 2, 1869 • Fourth son of fourth wife	• Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh province, India, on November 14, 1889 • Only son
Influential Parent	• Although father was chief minister to the raja (ruler) of Porbandar, it was his devout Hindu mother who profoundly influenced him.	• Profoundly influence by his father who was a highly educated, Anglicized, wealthy, and politically influential lawyer.
Religious Faith Hindu Caste	• Practicing Hindu • Vaisya caste (third caste); Gandhi's family came from the middle-class trader caste.	• Non-practicing/secular Hindu • Brahmin caste (upper-most caste); Nehru's family came from the apex of Indian society.
Languages	• Spoke Gujrati (first language), English, and Hindi.	• Spoke English (first language) and Hindi.
Primary and Secondary Education	• Attended India's public schools until 18. • He was an average student.	• Tutored at home until 16; then, attended Harrow, an elite boarding school, in England (1905-1907) • He was a good student.
Higher Education	• Law degree from the University of London (1888-1891).	• Natural science and law degrees from Trinity College at Cambridge University (1907-1910); law school at the University of London (1910-1912).
Marriage Family Life	• Arranged marriage to Kastarbai. • Long absences from family due to struggles for India's independence and periods spent in prison; engaged in public service after winning India's independence.	• Arranged marriage to Kamila.
Early Career	• Unsuccessful barrister in India (1892-1893). • Became tax accountant and civil rights leader in South Africa (1893-1915).	• Successful lawyer (1912-1936). • Delegate in Indian National Congress Party (1920) and political activist in India.
Final Return to India	• 1915—Age 45	• 1912—Age 23
Relationship	• Nehru's mentor	• Gandhi's right-hand man and protégé.
Time in Prison	• 10 years, intermittently	• 9 years, intermittently.
Writings	• Several informative articles, pamphlets, and books.	
Death	• January 30, 1948 • Assassinated by Hindu fanatic at age 79.	• May 27, 1964. • Died of a stroke at age 75 while he was asleep.
Political Beliefs		
Ideological Outlook	• Idealist, Pacifist, Nativist, and Conservative	• Realist, Modernist, and Liberal
Government Envisioned	• Limited, weak central and regional governments. • Local governance by village elders.	• Strong centralized government run by educated technocrats. • Emphasized modernization.
Type of Democracy Advocated	• Emphasized and promoted participatory democracy. • Direct democracy	• Representative democracy
Economic Policy	• Autarky (self-reliance) • Advocated simplicity, austerity, self-sufficiency, freedom, and communal living.	• Fabian socialist. • Advocated modernization as well as socioeconomic equity and justice.
Preferred Technology	• Favored small, indigenous, inexpensive, energy-saving, and labor-intensive technology.	• Favored modern, sophisticated, expensive, energy-intensive, and labor-saving Western technology.

Desired Path for Change	• Emphasized traditional, simple, and inexpensive rural development, along with subsistence or communal farming	• Emphasized mechanization, industrialization, urbanization, and commercial farming.
Religious Worldview	• Religious • Harnessed Hindu ideals and symbols to mobilize and unify the masses.	• Secular. • Saw religion as an impediment to modernization and promoted secularism.
Leadership Roles		
Honorific Title	• *Mahatma* ("great soul" in Hindi)	• *Pandit* ("enlightened teacher" in Hindi)
Sources of Legitimacy	• Successful civil rights leader for South African Indians. • Manipulated Hindu ideals and suffered for India's independence through imprisonment.	• Successful and wealthy Brahmin; associated with Mahatma Gandhi. • Used his wealth and suffered imprisonment.
	• International acclaim. • Eloquent communicators; treated their countrymen with kindness, compassion, and fairness.	
Leadership Qualities	• Charismatic, populist, and visionary statesmen. • Mobilized and unified the Indian masses.	
Political Strategy	• Promoted *satyagraha* (active, non-violent, civil disobedience).	
Political Style	• Disliked administrative tasks; served less than a year as President of the Indian Congress Party (1925).	• Competent administrator; President of the Indian Congress Party (1929-1964); Prime Minister of India for 17 years (1947-1964).
Legacy	• Instrumental in reshaping the All-India Congress Party into the Indian Congress Party, a mass party that he kept unified for over 27 years. • Leader of the Indian nationalist movement that helped India achieve its independence from British colonial rule. • Father of the Indian nation. • Architect of active, non-violent, civil disobedience.	• Established India's secular constitution. • Father of India's democratic political system. • Significantly contributed to India's modernization. • One of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Source: Original table developed by the author of this paper

[i] The Hindu caste system of social stratification was developed during the Vedic Age (1500 BCE to 600 BCE). The Brahmins are the uppermost caste and, composed of priests and professionals. Kshatriyas are the second highest caste in the pyramid, comprising warriors during times of war and administrators during times of peace. Vaisyas are the third caste, and are composed mainly of merchants, traders, and small farmers. Sudras are the fourth caste, comprising the servants and manual labourers. Finally, outside of the caste system are the "untouchables" or dalits, who did all of the unpleasant and unclean manual labour that members of the other castes did not do.