

Q "Gandhi restrained mass movements, yet he retained his popularity among the masses". Comment.

At many times Gandhi called off mass movements during the independence movement, be it Non-Cooperation Movement or the Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi believed in a strategy of Struggle-truce-Struggle. Phases of a vigorous extra legal mass movement alternate with phases when direct confrontation is withdrawn & silent political & social work is carried on among the masses to prepare them for the next phase of struggle. Gandhi ~~was~~ remained popular among the masses because -

i.) He remained constantly in touch of the masses through his constructive works like making the masses politically more aware through various public meetings.

ii.) Made khadi popular which had a direct impact on the livelihood of many people, especially those living in rural areas.

iii.) He took measures to uplift the 'untouchables'. He gave them a new name - 'Harijan'. He himself cleaned toilets to remove the social stigma attached with Harijans.

iv.) He was also popular among the masses because of his simple clothing. Common people wearing dhoti could identify themselves with him.

v) People also had faith in his philosophy of Ahimsa & Satyagraha because through these he achieved success in South Africa.

vi) Gandhi also called the women of India to come forward & participate in the national movement.

Thus, all these things made Gandhi very popular among the masses, he was truly a mass leader. Even when there were no mass movements, Gandhi remained in contact of the common people & that is why he had the knowledge about the real problems of the masses and thus raised issues which affected them, such as the problem of salt tax & problem of foreign clothes ruining indigenous cottage industries etc. He prepared the masses to attain their independence by their own & instilled a sense of self reliance & self-confidence in them. Therefore, it is true that Gandhi restrained mass movements yet he retained his popularity among the masses.