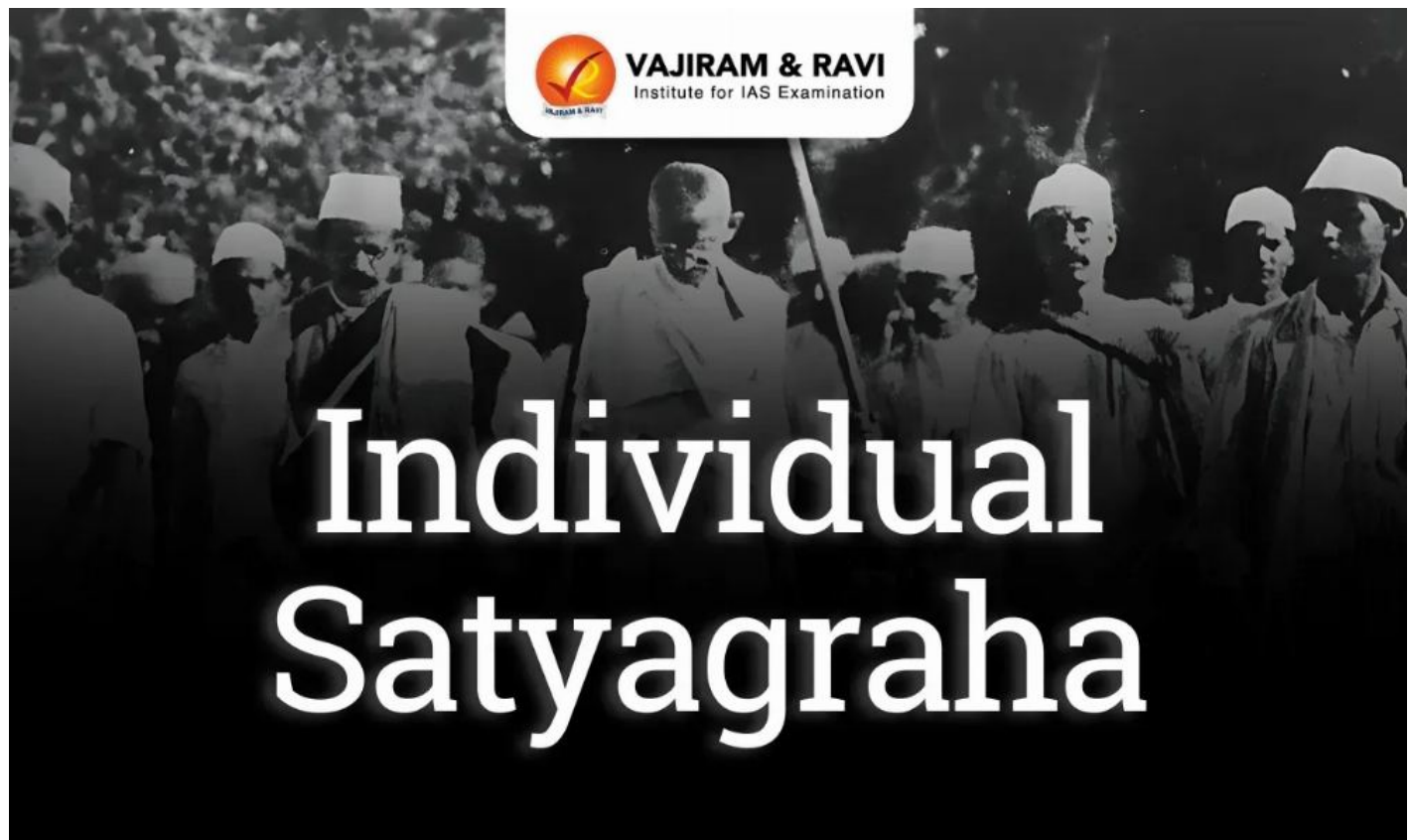


# Individual Satyagraha, Background, Objectives, Members

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The Individual Satyagraha, launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1940, was a pivotal movement in India's fight for independence. It arose in response to the British government's refusal to grant India complete independence, despite the growing demand for **self-rule**. Additionally, India was drawn into the war without consultation or any promise of independence, leading to widespread discontent.

The movement aimed to assert the **right to free speech** and express India's opposition to participating in the war without freedom. Unlike mass movements, Gandhi chose individuals to offer satyagraha one by one, maintaining **non-violence** while signalling that India's patience was strategic, not a sign of weakness.

## Individual Satyagraha Background

After the Congress's demand for **complete independence** was turned down by the British Government, the Individual Satyagraha was started in 1940. The **Congress Working Committee**, under Gandhi's leadership, decided to launch a peaceful resistance movement to protest British rule, but not on a mass scale like previous movements. Instead, it was a carefully controlled movement with individuals chosen by Gandhi to offer satyagraha,

one at a time.

## Failure of August Offer

In August 1940, **Viceroy Lord Linlithgow** made the August Offer, which included the promise of increased Indian representation in government and the creation of an **advisory war council**. However, the offer did not assure **dominion status** or immediate independence, which led Congress to reject it.

- Furthermore, the British government had taken a hardline position, stating that no constitutional advance would be made until the Congress reached an agreement with Muslim leaders.
- In addition to this, the British government issued ordinance after ordinance that restricted the freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the right to organize associations.

In response, Mahatma Gandhi decided to initiate the Individual Satyagraha as a means to peacefully challenge British authority.

## Individual Satyagraha Objectives

The Individual Satyagraha had both strategic and symbolic aims. It was a demonstration of the Indian people's dissatisfaction with British rule and their opposition to India's forced participation in **World War II**. Gandhi feared that a mass movement at this time might lead to violence, so he opted for a controlled individual protest. The main objectives of the Individual Satyagraha were:

- To assert the fundamental right to free expression in defiance of British ordinances that restricted civil liberties.
- To peacefully oppose India's participation in World War 2, without India having any say in its governance.
- To show that India's patience was not a sign of weakness but a deliberate choice.
- To provide the British government with a peaceful chance to accept Congress' demands.

## Individual Satyagraha Members

The Individual Satyagraha was not a mass movement; instead, Gandhi chose specific individuals to offer satyagraha one by one. These individuals were selected for their commitment to non-violence and the principles of the movement. The key individuals involved were:

- **Acharya Vinoba Bhave**: The first individual chosen to offer satyagraha on October 17, 1940.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru**: The second *satyagrahi*, reflecting the importance of the movement at the national level.
- **Brahma Dutt**: A close follower of Gandhi, was the third individual chosen to offer satyagraha.
- In January 1941, it was revived with some changes, and groups offered satyagrahas, and it was eventually withdrawn in August 1941.

In total, over **25,000 individuals** participated in this movement, with each one stepping forward to protest in a non-violent manner, offering satyagraha, delivering anti-war speeches, and courting arrests.

## Individual Satyagraha Impacts

The Individual Satyagraha kept the spirit of resistance alive without initiating a full-blown mass movement. This careful approach maintained Gandhi's **principle of non-violence** while opposing British policies. Although the movement involved only select individuals, their arrests attracted public attention and demonstrated the Congress' continued defiance of British rule. While the Individual Satyagraha did not immediately achieve its objectives, it set the stage for the future struggle for independence.

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