

Foreword

The long sojourn in South Africa shaped Gandhiji's life in myriad ways, giving him, above all, the mission of his life and the methodology to fulfil it. The fight against oppression and exploitation, and the development of the *Satyagraha* as a political and moral weapon contributed to his transformation into a *Mahatma* (the great soul) – and eventually “the Father of the (Indian) Nation”.

Gandhiji, in turn, left behind a powerful legacy in South Africa. His lasting influence on the country's struggle against racial discrimination and for freedom has often been lauded by top leaders and common people alike.

During the past two years (2006-2008) South Africa hosted and witnessed numerous activities celebrating the centenary of the launch of the *Satyagraha*. It was a precious privilege of India's diplomatic representation to organise and be associated with these celebrations. Who would have imagined back in September 1906 that simple but innovative acts of defiance against unjust laws would inspire revolutions in diverse lands of Asia and Africa, which would be remembered and celebrated by successive generations?

Among various commemorative activities, the Gandhi centenary colloquium, organised by the University of the Witwatersrand, stood out as a seminal event. The colloquium as well as the Gandhi peace march and other related events helped in reinforcing the continued relevance of Gandhiji's message. We are delighted that a compilation of papers presented at the colloquium finds place in a special issue of this prestigious journal. It is meant for a larger audience.

Isabel Hofmeyr and *Raymond Suttner* deserve our warm congratulations and gratitude for the thoughtful initiative.

R.K. Bhatia
High Commissioner
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