

# *Remembering Gandhiji's Dandi March*

*Take forward the Spirit of  
Volunteering for Social  
Regeneration*

*Observe  
March 12- April 6  
as*

*Period of Awakening and  
Volunteer Action for Social  
Regeneration in India*

*Celebrate March 12  
as  
National Volunteers Day*

## Take forward the Spirit of Volunteering for Social Regeneration

Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti calls upon the nation to observe the period from **March 12 to April 6 every year** as the *“Period of Awakening and Volunteer Action for Social Regeneration in India”*.

The Period would be launched **every year on March 12**, which would be celebrated as **National Volunteers Day**.

It was on **March 12, 1930** that Gandhiji took his first step on the historic **Dandi March** to break the Salt Law. This March was one of the most powerful expression of volunteer action as Gandhiji mobilized thousands of people across the country to volunteer to take part in the protest against the unjust law. During the period support action were organized all over the country and there was considerable enthusiasm within the people for participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement. A new spirit for the attainment of ‘Swaraj’- total liberation had been ignited everywhere.

The march undertaken on foot by Gandhiji and 78 volunteers was the **most significant event in the history of the freedom movement of the country**. The volunteers had to face a difficult journey through the heat and dust of villages of Gujarat. Thousands of men, women and children accompanied the volunteers for a few miles and thousands lined the route to honor the satyagrahis. Throughout the march, Gandhiji spoke on truth and non-violence.

Gandhiji and his volunteers broke the salt law on April 6, 1930 by taking a handful of natural salt which was deposited in a small pit. While he was picking up the salt he said with that he was shaking the very foundation of the British Empire. The salt became the symbol of India’s will to freedom.

### **Remembering Dandi March in the present context**

A **similar mobilization and volunteer action** is needed today to tackle the various **social**

**evils** which are ruinous for the society and the country. Gandhi Smriti plans to **mobilize volunteer groups, student groups, citizens groups, the elderly, housewives and civil society organizations** to initiate mass contact programmes during **the Period**. The aim would be to **create awareness on social problems and organize volunteers on these issues**.

To commemorate the **60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Quit India Movement**, the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti had launched a **National Mission** to mobilize the youth to eradicate social evils through voluntary action on August 9.

The **“National Mission for Social Regeneration Through Voluntary Action”** launched as the **“Second Quit India Movement”** calls for social evils to quit India. The Mission was simultaneously launched in several parts of the country.

The aim of the **2<sup>nd</sup> Quit India movement** is to mobilize a large number of youth to take to volunteer action to fight against social evils which are ruining the country like plague. The thrust areas of this Second Quit India Movement include banishing hunger and malnutrition, eradicating all kinds of violence including domestic violence, ending female foeticide, social injustice, drug abuse and alcoholism, removing illiteracy, reversing environmental degradation etc. The movement also aspires to facilitate a process of self development and self realization of the volunteers.

As part of the **2<sup>nd</sup> Quit India Movement**, Gandhi Smriti is striving to create a national environment of innovative voluntary action which could evolve as a fulcrum to fight against the social problems. Schools, colleges, institutions, peoples groups and voluntary organizations are being involved and local ‘Community Mobilization Hubs’ are being initiated to facilitate continuous volunteer action on these social ills. Gandhi Smriti has decided

## Take forward the Spirit of Volunteering for Social Regeneration

to christen these Hubs as **Gandhi-Kasturba Volunteer Centres** which could emerge as focal points for community mobilization and social regeneration.

### **What can be done on the National Volunteers Day and during the "Period of Awakening and Volunteer Action for Social Regeneration in India" (March 12-April 6)?**

What can you do to celebrate the spirit of volunteering? What can be done to mobilize volunteers with the same intensity as was witnessed during the Dandi March? Here are just a few suggestions. While they are meant to make March 12 special and ensure the '*Period of Awakening and Volunteer Action for Social Regeneration in India*' a resounding success, there would be nothing greater than celebrating this spirit of sharing and working with commitment and belief every day of our lives. Mobilization needs to be done at village level, colony level, block level, district level, state level and ofcourse at the national level. So here we go with a few suggestions:

- \* *Remembering Dandi March, take pledge to take to volunteer action for social regeneration*
- \* *Organize volunteer camps within the community*
- \* *Organize social awareness campaigns on issues of social concern*
- \* *Organize interface with professionals, youth, students and others on key social problems*
- \* *Initiate Volunteer Hubs—'Gandhi-Kasturba Volunteer Centres' within the community to work on social problems of the area*
- \* *Organize padyatras to create awareness on the problems of the area*
- \* *Facilitate street plays, debate competitions, painting competition etc on themes like 'Volunteering for Social Regeneration'*
- \* *Support the sick by visiting hospitals, providing free medical service, assisting*

*doctors to administer medicines and treatments, donating blood or conducting free vaccination campaigns*

- \* *Conduct a time-donation campaign by which people pledge hours of volunteer service to specific campaigns or projects related to social problems.*
- \* *Perform 'shramdaan' and clean schools, community centres, hospitals and historical sites*
- \* *Perform 'shramdaan' and build roads, paths, playgrounds, schools using donated materials and with help from volunteers.*
- \* *Organize a contest on composing a volunteer anthem, song or jingle*
- \* *Launch of research studies and reports related to volunteering and volunteering efforts.*
- \* *Organize a concert to take forward the spirit of volunteering.*
- \* *Involve public utilities like the Public Transport Systems, Telephone authorities in creating awareness on various social problems and in propagating the spirit of the "Period of Awakening and Volunteer Action for Social Regeneration".*
- \* *Involve the local civic authority/ panchayat to mobilize the local community to take part in programmes and initiatives during the Period.*
- \* *Initiate mass contact programme during the Period in Universities/ Colleges/Schools/Institutes to mobilize students to volunteer and explain the objectives of the Period.*

## Take forward the Spirit of Volunteering for Social Regeneration

- \* *Developing mindfulness practice, meditation, reflection, self realization and self education amongst volunteers.*
- \* *Organizing a media campaign is important for the success of National Volunteers Day and Period of Awakening and Volunteer Action for Social Regeneration. The following could be done to make the Day a success and create massive awareness:-*
  - ⇒ *Volunteers/volunteer groups can provide journalists with volunteer story ideas and actively encourage them to publish or broadcast the news related to volunteering.*
  - ⇒ *Celebrities can be involved. Their interviews and participation can get major media coverage.*
  - ⇒ *Compile press kits on volunteering initiatives and opportunities to distribute to journalists attending National Volunteers Day initiatives.*
  - ⇒ *Organize radio or television broadcasts on volunteer issues.*
  - ⇒ *Suggest outstanding volunteers as interview partners or panelists for radio or television shows.*
  - ⇒ *Send in media advisories, news releases and photo opportunities in advance of events which would be organized during National Volunteers Day and during the Period of Awakening and Volunteer Action for Social Regeneration.*
  - ⇒ *Suggest documentaries on volunteering or volunteer projects*
    - to radio or television news programmes.*
    - ⇒ *Write and send in opinion articles or guest editorials to be featured on the op-ed (opposite editorial) pages of newspapers.*
    - ⇒ *Seek free advertising space in newspapers/radio/television.*

***Gandhi Smriti & Darshan Samiti invites all to actively participate and pledge to volunteer during the National Volunteers Day and the Period of Awakening and Volunteer Action for Social Regeneration.***

***If you have any suggestions, ideas or are planning to initiate some activities/mass contact programme during the Period, please write to: Vedabhyas Kundu, Programme Officer, GSDS.***



Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti,  
Gandhi Darshan Rajghat,  
New Delhi- 110002.  
email:march12-april6@ india.com;  
march12-april6@ indiatimes.com  
Ph: 23392278, 23392710

**Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti**

### *Quotes on Dandi March*

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay on breaking of the Salt Law: " On that memorable day thousands of women strode down to the sea like proud warriors. But instead of weapons, they bore pitchers of clay, brass and copper.... Valiantly they went forward without a trace of fear or embarrassment. They stood at street corners with little packets of salt, crying out ' We have broken the Salt Law and we are free! Who will buy the salt of freedom?' Their cries never went unheeded. Every passer-by stopped, slipped a coin into their hands and held out a tiny pinch of salt- The salt of freedom".

C F Andrews : "Gandhi felt that a handful of salt had roused the conscience of the whole nation."

Jawaharlal Nehru : "It seems as though a spring was released and the multitudes followed Gandhiji."

*Through Dandi March, Gandhiji taught the people to " make the highest sacrifice of gaining life by losing it."*