

Every Gandhi Jayanti, we remember Mahatma Gandhi through speeches, photographs and ceremonies. But remembrance becomes meaningful only when it leads to inquiry. Gandhi did not ask young people to follow authority blindly. His life encourages them to question power, examine injustice and search courageously for truth.

Gandhi held no government office, commanded no army and possessed little wealth. Yet he awakened millions and challenged a powerful empire. His authority came not from position, security forces or publicity, but from the integration of thought, character and action.

A real leader

This raises the first question: What makes a person a real leader? Is leadership merely the ability to win elections, defeat opponents and retain power? Or is it the capacity to awaken confidence, responsibility and moral strength within ordinary citizens? Does a leader exercise power over people, or help people discover the power within themselves?

For Gandhi, truth was not an abstract idea. It had to guide every thought, word, relationship and public decision. Therefore, young citizens must ask whether leaders speak truth even when it is inconvenient. A political party may enjoy majority support and still act unjustly. Numbers cannot transform injustice into justice.

Gandhi's Salt March demonstrated the power of truthful communication. Salt was a simple necessity used by everyone. By walking to Dandi and making salt, Gandhi conveyed that ordinary people could peacefully withdraw their cooperation from an unjust system. His action communicated dignity, unity and self-reliance without degrading anyone.

What message is created?

Today's youth must ask: What symbols and messages are political leaders creating? Do their words bring diverse people together, or divide them into supporters and enemies?

The questions young India must ask

Gandhi's life invites young people not merely to admire a national leader, but to examine leadership itself— and to practise the values they expect from others.

S. Kulandaisamy



Non-violence means more than avoiding physical injury. Hatred, revenge, humiliation, prejudice, exploitation and deliberate misinformation are also forms of violence. A cruel speech may wound society long before physical conflict begins. Young people must therefore examine the language, gestures and digital messages used by leaders. Do they explain policies clearly and respectfully, or promote fear and hostility? Do they criticise an idea, or insult the person expressing it?

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Courage is another essential quality of leadership. Courage is not loudness, aggression or the ability to command a police force. It includes listening patiently to another viewpoint, speaking firmly without humiliation, admitting mistakes and seeking reconciliation directly. A courageous leader does not spread gossip about opponents or employ others to ridicule them through social media. Nor does such a leader hide every failure and claim credit

for every success.

Acknowledging mistake

Gandhi sometimes acknowledged his errors publicly. This did not weaken him. It made his leadership more trustworthy. Young people should ask every leader—and themselves: Can you admit a mistake, apologise, repair the harm and resolve not to repeat it? A leader's relationship with the poorest person is equally important.

Gandhi identified himself with India's poor through his clothing, food, physical labour and simple living. Young people must question excessive luxury and self-glorification in public life. Do leaders understand the daily experiences of workers, farmers, pedestrians and families struggling for basic necessities? Even the condition of our footpaths presents a moral question. Millions walk because they cannot afford another means of transport.

Yet they face broken pavements, open drains, encroachments and dangerous traffic. Development must be judged not only by impressive buildings, highways or technology, but also by whether the poorest person can walk safely and live with dignity. **Site of decision making** Young people must also ask where decisions are made. Gandhi's Gram Swaraj envisioned power growing

from responsible individuals and self-reliant villages. Does present leadership strengthen local communities, or concentrate every decision around one powerful personality? A great leader creates thousands of capable leaders rather than making everyone dependent upon central authority. Patriotism, for Gandhi, never meant hatred towards another nation. He loved India but refused to injure other people in India's name. He respected different religions while rejecting any interpretation that denied equality and human dignity. His Swaraj could never mean majority domination over minorities.

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Patriotism

Therefore, young Indians must ask whether patriotism enlarges friendship or produces hostility. Does national strength serve humanity? Are scientific progress, economic development and political power directed towards peace and the welfare of all? Questioning leaders is necessary, but it is not enough. Every question must finally turn inward. Do we listen without interrupting? Do we refuse gossip? Do we admit mistakes? Do we protect someone who is excluded? Do we challenge injustice without hatred? The finest Gandhi Jayanti tribute would be the emergence of a questioning and compassionate generation—a Generation of Peace. Real leadership begins whenever a young person chooses truth over advantage, service over publicity, reconciliation over revenge and non-violence over domination. (The author is the Secretary of Gandhi Peace Foundation, Madras)

YouTube ecosystem adds over ₹18,000 cr to India's GDP

YouTube supported 9.6 lakh jobs in the country in 2025

NEW DELHI: Video-sharing platform YouTube's creative ecosystem contributed over Rs 18,000 crore to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and supported over 9.6 lakh full-time equivalent jobs in the country in 2025, according to a report by Oxford Economics.

The findings point to a significant shift in India's digital creator landscape, where independent content creators are increasingly evolving into full-fledged media enterprises, driving employment and local economic activity across both metropolitan centres and smaller towns.

Monetising content

According to the report, the number of YouTube channels in India generating six figures or more in revenue (INR) rose by over 30 % year-on-year. Furthermore, over 18,000 Indian channels have crossed the threshold of one million subscribers.

The report noted that 73% of creators who monetise content on YouTube consider the platform to be their primary source of income. Beyond direct earnings, monetising creators supported more than 3 lakh apprentices over the past year. Creative clusters have sprung up in non-metro hubs such as Jaipur, Lucknow and Kochi, generating local demand for video editors,



73% of creators who monetise content on YouTube consider the platform to be their primary source of income.

PHOTO: UNSPLASH IMAGES

camera operators and scriptwriters.

Local and regional

The platform highlighted that hyper-local and regional-language content is gaining significant traction

internationally, with over 15% of watch time on content produced by Indian channels coming from viewers outside the country. Additionally, 81% of media companies with a presence on the platform said that YouTube assisted them in reaching global audiences. Over 160 million hours of content were uploaded by Indian channels in the past year, the report said.

Digital skilling

YouTube said it is collaborating with the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT) to advance national digital skilling under the "Create with AI" initiative. It is also partnering with the Ministry of Culture to preserve heritage and promote traditional folk and tribal music on the global stage. On the product front, the company is rolling out artificial intelligence-driven production tools, including conversational AI editing for Shorts and agentic channel management features in Ask Studio. To address digital authenticity, the platform said it is introducing 'AI Likeness Detection' alongside clear labels and disclosures for synthetic content. **PH**

LEARNING TREE

What is symbiosis?

Symbiosis is a close long-term relationship between two species, where at least one benefits in the relationship.



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TODAY'S QUIZ: ANSWERS

- 1. A strawman fallacy
- 2. 21°C
- 3. Neeru Dhanda
- 4. Orthopaedics
- 5. Maharashtra