

# A Historical evolution of the Civil Disobedience movement in India



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## **Abstract**

David Henry Thoreau created the idea of civil disobedience in 1849 as a result of his experiences fighting the American slavery system. The purpose of this essay is to talk about the idea of civil disobedience and examine how it is used in Malaysia. This essay is supported by an interview and content analysis. First, the research demonstrates that a number of factors exist that support the occurrence of acts of civil disobedience in society. Second, the idea of civil disobedience is novel in Malaysia. This is due to the fact that resistance is often indicated by the phrase "opposition." While civil disobedience encompasses larger components including opposition parties, non-governmental groups, civil society, and activists to raise public awareness for the battle against government injustice, opposition simply refers to the struggle for political goals. Civil disobedience, however, has existed in Malaysia in actuality since before independence. As a result, this article analyses civil disobedience in Malaysia from a wider perspective, with discussion concentrating on historical elements and present practice.

**Keywords:** Civil disobedience, non-governmental organizations,

## **Introduction**

People who believe their rights and freedoms are being violated by the decisions and actions of sovereign states that limit their rights and freedoms respond in a number of ways. Resistance against oppression is the term used to describe these responses generally. It will be helpful to clarify these ideas in order to establish where civil disobedience fits within the process that begins with struggle against tyranny and ends with revolution. Resistance is described as "to persist on an idea or a topic" in Velieceoglu's lexicon, which he prepared in line with the Turkish Language Association. Revolution is described as "radical change, the rapid shift from one state to another" in Asukin's Dictionary of Politics. This extreme change-seeking movement may be violent. On the other hand, resistance is a need of human nature and is the physical manifestation of a response to a circumstance, a law, or a ruler. But there are occasions when violence may equally be a part of resistance. Therefore, it could sometimes be challenging to tell the two apart. There are two kinds of opposition against tyranny. "Active resistance" and "passive resistance" are these. Rebellion and insurrection are regarded forms of active resistance, while calmly protesting a single, particular wrong is called passive resistance. Active resistance occurs when one uses force in certain ways. Since passive resistance depends on the idea of not retaliating and is peaceful, it hasn't been particularly well-liked and has a propensity to be forgotten. Passive resistance also takes patience, serenity, and steadiness. Perhaps this is due to the fact that peaceful forms of resistance, such as passive resistance, are less often discussed in public discourse than violent forms of opposition. People who believe they are right and that they should stand up for what they believe to be right want to be heard and get support from the general population. Fortunately, the rise of civil disobedience, a kind of passive resistance, altered people's perceptions of passive resistance since it was a powerful form of protest. In Turkish, "sivil itaatsizlik" is equivalent to the concept known as "civil disobedience" in English. When the term "civil disobedience" is broken down word by word, a conceptual analysis of it is conceivable. According to the Password Dictionary (2004), the definition of civil in English is "of or pertaining to the state or its people, relating to citizens, and being civilised," while the definition of disobedience is "refusal to respect laws". The English translation of this expression conveys the idea's full meaning.

## **Civil Disobedience**

### **Fundamentals of Civil Disobedience**

The movement of resistance against injustice has its roots in very early periods. However, it is conceivable to trace the origins of civil disobedience in Socrates' legal defence as a type of passive resistance against injustice. Henry David Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King became the movement's theorists and practitioners after Socrates. One of the key proponents of civil disobedience, Martin Luther King, responded to

the judge's inquiries in his defence by defining what civil disobedience is not rather than what it is and outlining its components. King explained to the court that such individuals rejected just a portion of the law and did not support a state that did not exist at all, equating delinquents to those who demanded its disappearance. The fact that they accepted the possibility of being detained and imprisoned as a consequence of their acts is another proof of their respect for the law. King also makes the argument that redressing individual injustices improves the legitimacy of law. The nonviolent approach used to expose these injustices is crucial in this situation. King also underlined that the use of civil disobedience is a last option for altering the law. King's classification is as follows in conclusion: Is there a legitimate foundation for the complaint? Are all legitimate remedies exhausted? Is it possible to accept the outcome of the actions? Does the activity not cause damage to any unintended parties? The dialogue makes clear that civil disobedience is not a common course of action. It has unique objectives, philosophies, and guidelines. Only the action including all of these components qualifies as civil disobedience breaking the law. A single legal standard is violated when civil disobedience occurs. Not against the body of laws as a whole, but rather against a law that is seen to be unfair. When the results are unfavorable, even when every legal action is taken to prevent an unfair implementation, people may participate in an act of civil disobedience. Gandhi, one of the most significant civil disobedience pioneers, protested the Salt Law, which forbade Indians from mining salt, in his well-known act, the Salt March, and thousands of other Indians joined him in breaking the law promotion and forecasting. Civil disobedience is not performed in secret, despite the fact that it is against the law; on the contrary, it is committed in public.

The act must be performed in public in order for the public to see it. This attempt to convince one's opponents can only find support if it is made public. Additionally, the dissenter who is prepared to take responsibility for her actions does not feel the need to conceal herself. This makes publicizing the least contentious aspect of civil disobedience and one that is usually accepted. Prediction is the alignment of what was stated before the deed with the outcome. An alternative to a sit-in cannot be used if it has been determined to take action in the form of a sit-in against a legislation that is deemed unjust or an event that has to be avoided. An activity that was originally intended to benefit the environment cannot turn around and become about something else. The things that have been spoken should match the things that have been done accepting responsibility for the deed done. The most fundamental aspect of civil disobedience may be for the dissenter to accept responsibility for the action she took. The offender endured the consequences of their actions. Additionally, it would be deemed immoral for the individual to continue acting in a civil disobedient manner if she is not made to suffer the legal repercussions of her actions. Considered together, the early proponents of civil disobedience all received jail

sentences. Mandela, who was renowned for being a strong proponent of civil disobedience, may be used as an example to illustrate the concept. The South Africa Act of 1909 made clear that black and white people were discriminated against. Black people opposed this rule and battled for the nation's independence in order to be emancipated from the dominance of the white, with Mandela leading the way. He spent 27 years of his life in jail to achieve this goal.

### **Conclusion**

Actions against the government or its agents are considered acts of civil disobedience. This is due to a policy or piece of law that is seen to be unjust to the general people. For instance, the Internal Security Acts, University and University College Act, Printing Presses and Publication Act, and Official Secret Acts. Pro-democracy organisations in Malaysia engage in civil disobedience to press for changes in the government with regard to questions of political and administrative policy. Street protests are one way to express opposition. Because Anwar Ibrahim was fired in 1998, there was a surge of civil disobedience. While civil disobedience had place under the regimes of Abdullah Badawi and Najib Razak because of problems with the political, economic, and electoral systems.

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