



Relevance of Gandhian Principles in Contemporary India

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Dr. L.P. Raju

Associate Professor, Dept. of History and Archeology, Tumkur University, B.H.Road, Tumkur – 572103, Karnataka.

ABSTRACT *Undoubtedly Mahatma Gandhi was the greatest personality of this world during the 20th century. Gandhi has been called as the leader of freedom struggle, philosopher, politician, visionary, Mahatma and so on. Gandhi's life has become a part and parcel of the nation so much that, for foreign countries Gandhi means India and India means Gandhi. This paper examines the Relevance the Gandhi's principles.*

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly Mahatma Gandhi was the greatest personality of this world during the 20th century. It's difficult to find an answer to the question, how much relevance at present the ideals of Gandhi? The reason is that, there are pro and anti opinions related to this. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan writes, "It's not his aggressive fight is responsible for his greatness, but his simple and sacred life". Great scholar, George Bernard Shaw says, "Gandhi was the most influential political personality, he was not an ordinary person but a person of unique ability". Gandhiji was not only a leader of India's struggle for freedom, but also a teacher to the world. He wanted liberty to the entire mankind. He was a man of spirituality. Religion was opium to Karl Marx, where as religion was inspiration to Gandhi's activities. But, Gandhi's understanding of religion was never fundamental.

RELEVANCE OF GANDHIAN PRINCIPLES

The principles of Gandhi are important even today. His principle of Truth and Non-violence are two faces of the same coin. These principles are basic to human life. Non-violence is a power, which is very essential for universal love and peace. Gandhi oriented his life based on Truth and Non-violence. It's a known fact that these principles only liberated India from the shackles of imperialism. John Hume, who followed these principles, became voice to the people of Ireland, who were deprived of civil rights. Martin Luther King in America and Nelson Mandela in South Africa were influenced by the Gandhi's ideals and are also successful in their fight. Though there is suspicion regarding the usefulness of Non-violence the global arena, but when we look at the escalating Terrorism, Communalism, insecurity and instability, there is no doubt that the ideals of Mahatma are useful even to this day.

Nobody can dispute the usefulness of Gandhian ideals, when we look at the , September 11 attack on world Trade center by the Islamic fundamentalists, the destruction of Baemiyah Buddha status in Afghanistan, violence by Maoists in Nepal, racial struggle in Sri Lanka, genocide in Rwanda are few examples of uneasiness. Not only in the foreign countries, but in the land where the Mahatma was born, Ayodhya dispute, Gujarat incident, Idga Ground dispute, DattaPeetha and other issues.

TRUTH AND NON-VIOLENCE

Truth and Non-violence are not new concepts, they are age old ideals, but Gandhi has shown us the way to solve social, political economic and global problems using these ideals. In solving the issues he has personally practiced what he has taught and has gained success also. By discarding war and violence, through the path of peace any global problem can be set right. The powerful countries of the world, USA, England, Russia, France have continued to pile up armaments, despite knowing that it will result in a great calamity.

Therefore it's natural that Gandhi had a negligence attitude towards the state. Gandhi believed that state should not be bestowed with unlimited powers. Though Gandhi was under the influence of Plato, but he is averse to the sovereign power of the state. Gandhi has rejected the state direction and interference. He always felt that state should perform limited works and the power need to be decentralized. Self help institutions should have more activities to play. Each and every activity of the state should be seen from the public welfare view. Like this Gandhi has drastically curbed the boundary of the state. If the people are to lead the life with self control, than there is no necessity of the state. Everyone should lead a moral life and not disturbing the others. Again the scope of the state will be minimal. Thus a society based on Truth and Non-violent ideals ignores the existence of the state. But, at present the real welfare is possible only by the state; therefore state's powers have increased. So, we can say that Gandhi's reduced state involvement does not hold good.

GANDHI'S THEORY OF STATELESS SOCIETY

Gandhi's theory of stateless society does not hold good. Gandhi opposes state because, the state's sovereign power may result in imposing its own ideas on the public. It may curb the liberty of an individual and his development. In his opinion state destroys the spiritual and personal growth. The high handedness of the government in South Africa and in India may have made Gandhi to have negative opinion.

GANDHI'S ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES

Gandhi's Economic principles do not hold well in industrialized society. Pandit Nehru and Sir M. Visveswaraiah were in favour of heavy industries, while Gandhi opposed use of heavy machinery as this will reduce employment opportunities. Amidst Nuclear Bombs, Hydrogen Bombs, missiles it is impossible to live in peace. Stable peace possible only with peaceful and non-violent means of Mahatma. This need to be an ideal for all the countries.

GANDHI'S OPINION ON POLITICS

He believed that politics be controlled by Ethical, spiritual and religious base. But present world says that politics and religion are two separate entities. India also has upheld the idea of secularism. From this angle one may think that Gandhi's concepts have lost importance and also spiritualism in politics is against socialism. But Gandhi never opposed equality and he propagated secularism and lived up to. Today politics is the home of corrupt and liars. Politics need to be purged from these evils. Here the Gandhi's ideas are more relevant.

Gandhi's weapons of No Tax campaign, civil resistance for achieving our national independence cannot be applied now. Such resistance is alright against a colonial government, but not against our own democratic government. Then it is like

use of such weapons on ourselves.

GANDHI OPINION ABOUT COMMUNALISM

The principles of Gandhi are against Communalism, corruption, Apartheid principles; hence they are guidelines to the present society. But, Gandhi's stateless society and some of the economic ideas are not relevant. Most of his principles can be adopted but few of them cannot be executed. But his Truth, Non-violence, Satyagraha may have only few takers but strongly relevant.

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