



## Gandhian Concept of Satyagrah & ITS Relevance for Contemporary Socio-Polity of India

### KEYWORDS

Gandhian, Satyagrah, Non-violence, Ethics, Societies, Politics

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**ABSTRACT** *The concept of Satyagrah by Gandhi can be applied to today's society and politics (both internal and external) for well-being of mankind. This powerful concept not only connotes the power of truth; but also the application of truth for attainment of noble goals. Satyagrah was indispensable for freedom struggle and has valid relevance for social reforms. This concept can be applicable for international peace process and can be a part of foreign policy reform of India or other nations as whole. This article expresses possible utilities of the concept of Satyagrah in Indian and overseas scenario.*

Mohandas Karmchand Gandhi is single handedly responsible for the independence of our nation from the clutch of British colonialism. If the assertion is true, it is only for the mass acceptance of the Gandhian philosophy of Satyagrah by the Indian freedom fighters and this is why they are connoted as satyagrahis in India's struggle for independence. Can an inert attitude of a person be powerful enough to drive those Britishers out from the nation? Why did all those small violent rebellions break out in nooks and corners of India seem pale before the philosophy of a single man? These questions vibrate our mind at one hand and raise interest to endeavour the concept of Satyagrah at the other.

Gandhi confesses in his autobiography, "The story of my experiment of truth", that Satyagrah was pre-existent to the etymological up-coming and understood as passive resistance. The term itself raises ambiguity as how resistance be passive in nature. Resistance, on the contrary refers to active protection against any force. This is exactly what Gandhi observed during a meeting with Britishers. It was mistaken as the act of cowards. Gandhi defies this misconception with examples of his own day to day life which vividly depicted in his autobiography.

Satyagrah is not completely synonymous to non-violence, Gandhian Satyagrah more or less proceeds ahead with non-violence. Gandhi predicts Satyagrah as firmness for truth which implies interest to favour the truth and non-violence. Gandhi did not find it his duty to aware the Indians about this sensibility of his own as he found this sentiment quite common and natural within himself. In fact, during the struggle of independence, Gandhi performed this attitude in each step than rendering it by voice. This only helped the million and million of freedom fighters to realize their inherent firmness for truth and the application of which led India to its independence. This was the only guideline before the fighters and their only motto. Satyagrah proved its positiveness through the freedom struggle. If it was a faulty weapon of cowards, the goal would have been a dream. Satyagrah prevails among the satyagrahis in struggle for independence and showed them the way out against the British agitation. Satyagrah, thus proved itself as a powerful weapon that can lead a nation ahead.

Now the question arises what happened to Gandhian Satyagrah after the assassination of Gandhi? How come this invincible weapon vanished instantly? Or does it still exist in disguise? This issue arises more questions than answers. Satyagrah was existent prior to Gandhi and will unquestionably prevail after him too. The disciples of Satyagrah have no more faith on it. Then who are the disciples of this faith? It is we the Indians who must take the responsibility for the survival of this undercurrent of our nation. Thus came the issue of relevance of Satyagrah in post-independent India.

India could have saved from partition had Satyagrah been prevalent in the heart of every Indian. Alas! this powerful weapon of Indians was masked by the Britishers' definition of Satyagrah. As soon as, India turned to be a republic, this incarnation of honesty, was no more the motto of the Indians and leaders (Exceptions were few). Constitutionally, India got secularism; but socially communalism arose. All forgot of the unifying force in the pre-independent India. Social values existed in form of fundamentalism and casteism. With the political and economic escalation of our nation, the inherent values gradually began to diminish. Let the Satyagrah, the faith on the truth gradually seemed pale. Under this scenario, our nation marched ahead to celebrate the golden jubilee of its independence and stepped into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Placing an analogy between the pre-independent India and post-independent India, a singular proposition can be deduced that India remained diversified in both the phases. Previously, it was the rulers of Bharat, who fought among themselves for enhancement of their empire and post-independently communalism maintains the flow. If the era of British imperialism and India's freedom movement taken together, another conclusion may be reached i.e. during this period, two pivotal forces did bind India into a unifying nation namely British imperialism and Satyagrah. Satyagrah was the psychic unity of the Indians to revolt against the Britishers. Gandhi might be leading the struggle in his 60s but Satyagrah was fresh among the Indians. Unabiding this unifying force after independence, communalism came into existence. All these settings signify the loss of Satyagrah after Gandhi, though not suddenly but in a descending array.

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reform is the root cause of the loss of value system in India. Though this was not been observed in its initial state, it is vividly observed in the present day India. After inquisitively synthesizing the rise and fall of Gandhian Satyagrah in India (Not in South African racial obstruction), it is indeed impossible to project forward the role of this age-old philosophy in 21<sup>st</sup> century India.

Present India has lost almost all the components of Gandhi's India. Gandhi rightly perceived India of his time can be converted to Ramarajya. But this logic may not be equally applicable for the India we are residing. The socio-political picture of modern day India visualizes a kaleidoscope of irrationality, violence and loss of social norms. In fact the modern day Indian society may not be termed as a society at all, if anthropological parameters are taken into account. Mass cultural diffusion and growing sense for Americanisation may be sited as the two prime cause for this fatal effect. A nation can not sustain without the values of its own. Uncommon in common is the ray of identity. Thus contemporary Indian society is marching forward to a lost state of cultural identity. This social state arise due to the loss of value system that was existing as a strength of the nation and Satyagrah was such a value which has not been found in the heart of an Indian.

Politically, India, definitely achieved certain goals to get a rank in among the leading countries of the world. Both intra – nation and inter-nation politics has evolved enough to designate India as a developed nation. State constitutions and foreign policy have been revived time and again for a soothing international relations. If everything is fine, then what the political set up in Neheruvian era and now-a-days India? The simple and straight forward answer is value system, rationality and honesty. Leaders of those days were accomplishing their duty for the sake of the nation and formulating policy conducive for the purely favouring peoples. Not a single trace of selfishness was observed in their service to nation. The leaders were the leaders in the freedom movement and loved India more than their own lives. This sincerity is purely lacking among the present day political leaders. Politics is no more the profession of the honest leaders rather it is in claw of the hooligans. Indian polity is evolved from a purely honest state to an absolute corrupt phase.

Completely analyzing the socio-political scenario of contemporary India, again the question arise can the Gandhian concept of Ramarajya be at least minimally materialized? The answer form lay man would be a big negation. Ramarajya concept may be a projection in pre-independence India; but present day India is completely an anti – thesis to it. Thus what could be the role of Satyagrah in India today? The relevance of Satyagrah in present day India can be predicted in a reformatory perspective than a developmental approach. Reformation may not refer to a drastic change in a short term period rather a slow and gradual process of continuous reformation. Institutional strengthening, either political or social, can be brought forward by applying Gandhian principle of Satyagrah.

Gandhian principle of Satyagrah may be applied to present day India with a different approach. As our national emblem reads "Truth always Triumph" need to be adopted to the day to day lives of common mass. The basic principle of truth should be borne in the hearts of we the Indians. The metamorphosis of useless truth in our society need to controlled. The inter-personal relation in the

society can be secure if truth and simplicity be maintained. Uniformly, honesty is the policy to be followed from the elite sections to those of downtrodden. This will unquestionably strengthen the social institutions. Media has to perform a pivotal role for maintenance of social harmony. Issues on truth and honesty is exigent to be brought to the public for sincere awareness.

In this contemporary situation is it indeed possible to adopt Gandhian principle of Satyagrah for social reforms? If not possible let us march to hell. None of us has the right to ask this question as we have to materialize a value added society with the adoption of the principle in heart. In fact, practically analyzing it seems sound that present day Indian find it difficult to adopt this value suddenly. But, fear not, as we can bear the least of this principle, that will suffice to held our head high. There is no compulsion for this. A sense of interest ought to be their in our heart and mind to go far truth in each state of life will lay enough incentives for the sustenance of this age –old value system.

If we think over the devolution of Gandhian Satyagrah in our nation, we may find ourselves the prime culprit. Gandhi was the role model in pre-independent India where as the statistics of Gandhian philosophers is descending in India and escalating in other parts of globe. It is only for our lack of interest and faith for the principles. We find it difficult to adopt passive resistance in the era of advanced armaments. But it must be borne in mind that war is not indispensable. Peaceful proceedings will proved to be fruitful to avoid the chance of war. In national scenario, communal riot can be blocked with brotherhood and love. The fundamentalist attitude can only be controlled through love and brotherhood. Thus applied Satyagrah will connotes these values as a whole and ought to aims forward to regenerate rational values by diminishing the inhumane psychosis .

Strictly confess the principle of Satyagrah may not be passed as an act in the constitution to be imposed on the citizens. This will violate the postulation of Gandhi himself as for him, non-violence and truth exists from yore and it will be absurd to propagate a pre-existing principle among the people. If we gain faith on truth, that will be enough for the survivability of Satyagrah within us. The pluses of Satyagrah can be felt only if it is adopted in the heart of the people. This will lead to social harmony and political perfection.

Let us discuss how far this principle be helpful for combating global intolerance and international conflicts. Global turmoils are prevalent on orientals by the occidentals, powerful nations on that of weaker nations. This is due to the mask of imperialism and dying Marxism. The conflicts often end with the conquering of the powerful nation over the weaker one. Exemplifying the war between US and Iraq and the negotiation bond between Palestine and Israel clears the fact that war can be avoided and also came to an end with friendly negotiation rather than loss of lives and wealth. This signifies the insight of Satyagrah not only lead to smooth nationalization rather will be helpful to forbid international turmoils.

Present day India demands the support of Gandhian Satyagrah for the socio-political reform i.e. strengthening social institutions and rectifying the corruption of modern politics. Had this not been so, the social institutions will soon gonna to be collapsed without human values as society is based on human values not on materialistic luxuries. In

current politics, a leader with human values can only bring about reform to some extent than the so-called politicians. And these value systems are a part of culture or society that nourishes the process of socialization. Thus both society and present day polity need reformation through the Gandhian ethics.

Gandhi is no more; but let's not Gandhism die. Gandhian ethics of non-violence unquestionably got relevance for all the nations of the world and will be relevant for the years to come. For Gandhi, "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as hills", itself reveals Gandhian values are inborn and normal. But the realization and the performance does matter. Truth is the best policy to be adopted and it will always support one to excel in life and take his nation ahead. It will be foolish to confess the complete uprooting of the Gandhian values from the heart of Indians. The values are in fact used to be there and will prevail for ever. These Gandhian values will always lead the foundation and help the nation to progress ahead in a noble path. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, being the father of the nation, will survive by his ethics for ever in the heart of each Indian and guide India to follow the path of truth and non-violence. Gandhian Satyagrah will remain through truth and non-violence till the day of doom and guide nations to achieve international peace and harmony.

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