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GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY: ITS PRESENT RELEVANCE

KEY WORDS: Gandhiji, Sarvodaya, Nonviolence, Sathyagraha, Gramswaraj, Democracy, State, Violence

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ABSTRACT

This article attempts to investigate and verify whether Gandhian philosophy has lost its importance at present time or it has relevance today. But author finds that Gandhism becomes more and more relevant, not only for India but for the entire world. The reason behind, he rehearsed certain values first and then preached. His concepts and definitions of truth, non-violence, sathyagraha and sarvodaya are evergreen absolute values especially not just for better co-existence but enhanced quality of life for all and a strife-free world.

Introduction:

The fundamental doctrine of Gandhian philosophy is more relevant today when caste, class and religious differences are so pronounced. But people in India pay lip service to Gandhi and use him for non-Gandhian and anti-Gandhian purposes. Gandhism becomes more and more relevant, not only for India but for the entire world. The reason behind, he rehearsed certain values first and then preached. When some person asked for his message to humanity, Gandhi rightly said, "My life is my message". In this perspective, Gandhism identified certain sins viz., politics without standard principle, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, science without humanity, commerce without morality and worship without forfeit. The event of 150th birth anniversary celebration has provided an opportunity to rethink the efficacy of the message of Mahatma Gandhi. In this paper author attempts to analyze the concepts like Sarvodaya, Nonviolence and Sathyagraha and its contemporary relevance.

Sarvodaya – Welfare of all

It was Mahatma Gandhi who first used the word Sarvodaya in modern times. Etymologically speaking, Sarvodaya means 'the rise or welfare of all'. Gandhiji borrowed this concept from John Ruskin's Unto This Last. The proper rendering of Unto This Last would be Antyodaya (uplift of the last) rather than Sarvodaya. For Gandhiji, Sarvodaya is the true universal remedy for all types of social or political problems experienced by Indian society. After the death of Gandhiji, Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan have highlighted the essentials of Sarvodaya in their own light. Sarvodaya seeks the happiness of each and all. Hence it is superior to the utilitarian concept of 'greatest happiness of the greatest number.

It considers the character of the human being as sacred. It believes that values like equality, freedom and fraternity have great relevance for the development of the society. Sarvodaya aims at replacing politics of power with politics of cooperation. Sarvodaya implies the welfare of all the citizens and the society as a whole. It treats all human beings in a similar manner, be they white or black, peasants or princes, Hindus or Muslims, forward class or the backward class, saints or sinners. This theory reflects a mix of Gandhian and socialist philosophies, and spiritualism as well as materialism.

Gandhis's Sarvodaya is relevant because it is simple, positive, constructive and practical approach towards the well-being of all. This philosophy is really an inspiration for the state to plan policies for the fullest development of all individuals. It not only imposes restriction on state but also on individuals to do their responsibilities. We find that emphasis today has shifted from duties to rights. Men, women, minorities all are claiming their constitutional rights. But what about the duties? So Gandhi's Sarvodaya principle is very apt for the individuals to render back unto society what he is, in fact owes to society on the one side and on the other side it is helpful for the state to perform its constitutional duties for the well-being of all.

Non-Violence: technique of refraining from the use of violence

Nonviolence is a philosophy, an existing theory, practice, a lifestyle and a means of social, political and economic struggle. Gandhi was the follower of this great principle Non Violence or Ahimsa. He successfully implemented the rule of nonviolence in the struggle for Indian Independence. His philosophy demands universal love, kindness to all creatures. The requisites of non-violence are truth, inner purity, fearlessness, non-possession and determination.

If we look into the present society from the practical point of view, we can realize that the concept of non-violence is irrelevant for today's complex problems. Nobody is interested to practice this ideology. But it is true that for the survival of mankind, for establishment of peace and harmony, for the development of civilizations this philosophy is the only solution through which we can construct a fearless peace full and secured society. Violence always creates more violence. We can subjugate an enemy by use of force but can we subjugate hatredness, resentment, mistrust, and wickedness through force? So this ideology is very relevant in today's world, which is experiencing violence in the form of terrorism and other caste, class, colour, gender and religion related conflicts. It can redress almost all problems of the world –ecological, economic, political, social, cultural and religious. Anna Harare's non-violent protest against corruption at government level is the stunning example for relevance of the concept of nonviolence at present. We have witnessed the young generation of India came out to the street and supported Anna hazere's nonviolent protest against corruption by wearing the Gandhi topi.

Sathyagraha: A peaceful protest for justice

Sathyagraha is the most important contribution of Gandhi to social philosophy and Movement. It emerged as a weapon of conflict resolution. Sathyagraha was the technique of resisting all unjust, impure, untrue and cruel evil by love, self-suffering, self-purification method. In real sense it was defined as continuous struggle for truth, or winning the enemy by peaceful protest. Gandhi called it as love-force or soul force of the strongest and bravest against unjust and unconstitutional activities. It was aimed at achieving of social, economic, political and cultural transformation. This ideology is purely based on the concept of suffering. According to him suffering saves three purposes. i) It purifies the sufferer ii) it intensifies favorable public opinion.iii) It makes a direct appeal to the soul of the oppressor. He identified Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, Hijarat, Fasting, and Strike as techniques of Sathyagraha.

Sathyagraha is gentle philosophy, it never wounds to anyone. It teaches us the art of living and art of facing challenges in life. Many of the contemporary challenges related to war and peace, terrorism, human rights, sustainable development, climate changes, Administrative Corruption could be faced through adoption of the Gandhian way. This philosophy is really an inspiration for all worldwide social movements to adopt constitutional and peaceful methods to fight against all types of

unconstitutional inhuman activities.

Conclusion:

Gandhi was an advocator of Inclusive, Pluralistic democratic system in which people do not just tolerate but also respect others. Gandhism is relevant in every policy of the country such as swatcha bharat, inclusive growth, Gram Swaraj, Empowerment of women, Concern for less-privileged groups, and sustainable development. The article finally argues that the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi are still relevant in country vexed with intolerance and extremism.

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