

THE GANDHIAN VISION IN 21 CENTURY: NON-VIOLENCE IN A VIOLENCE WORLD

Dr. Hemlata Sharma

Dept. of Political Science

Vaish college of law Rohtak

Email id: drhemlata8@gmail.com

Abstract: Gandhi was a karma yogi, whose words and deeds carried no dualism. Gandhi Ji belongs to the class of great thinkers and visionaries like Socrates and Jesus Christ. The most magnificent achievement in the world history of the struggle for freedom is Gandhi's weapons of truth and non-violence. No doubt, he remembered all over the world. His views are still vital and relevant in facing the 21st century's major challenges as Terrorism, nuclear menace and environmental imbalances which it inherited from the previous century. Gandhi, the notion of Nonviolence attained a special status. He adopted non-violence as a philosophy & an ideal way of life. Gandhi is however called the Father of non-violence. Gandhian non-violence is a philosophy & strategy for social change that rejects the use of violence. Non-violence is an alternative to passive acceptance of oppression or of armed struggle against it. Gandhi teaches that the one who possess nonviolence is blessed. He became an immortal spirit who guides through the path of peace & non-violence.

Keywords:

Satyagrahi: Seeker to convert the opponent to the Truth through self-suffering and sacrifice.

Violence: behaviour which harms or damages.

1.0 Introduction:

Mahatama Gandhi a saint, a seer, a prophet, a buddha, a karm yogi, his actions are not guided by any fixed theory. He did not "claim to have originated any new principle". Gandhian way of life which possesses a philosophy of life, certain basic principles and techniques of solving national and international tensions. He is unique in giving to the people a new weapon of non-violence to restore justice in society. In the history, the principles of non violence and love are always up held at present time, its no longer a choice between violence and non violence in this world. It is violence and nonexistence.ⁱⁱ In 21 century U.N.O. declared to observe '2nd October' as International non-violence day.

Nonviolence means that one should not follow those professions which involve violence the profession of a butcher or a hunter. In a profession one should not exploit others too. If a man avoids violence willingly or knowingly, he is near the concept of perfect ahimsa or non-violence. He believed that the highest form of non-violence was a sufficiently good answer to the widest variety of violence As:-

Negatively, Nonviolence does not mean abstention from killing it means non injury to everything on earth in thought, words and deeds. Gandhi regarded lust cruelty, exploitation of man, animal and their slow tortures as forms of violence.

Positively, Non-violence means goodwill towards everything that exists in this world, for plants, animals and insects also.

According Gandhiji- "Non-violence is the law of our species, as the violence is the law of brute, otherwise the human society could have not progressed."ⁱⁱⁱ

Gandhi offers non-violence as a good alternative to violent solutions to the problems of world. Gandhian approach would need both, courage and freedom from ill-will. Before launching Satyagraha and during the course of Satyagraha he was ever ready to negotiate and discuss. In the late twenties he was opposed to the exploitation of the textile workers of Ahmedabad by the mill-owners, but he was not for a strike to end it. In it, and in all other matters of dispute, whether they were small or big in nature or local or national in level, he advocated discussions, negotiations or dialogues, conciliations, arbitrations and adjudication as a last resort. He applied the same method in actions taken for the independence of the country. He inspired confidence and faith with his words; he was always

dependable. Even today in changed circumstances it is necessary that when we talk of Ahimsa, non- violence and Satyagraha, we should bear this background in our minds. Today most the counties of the world are facing various kinds of internal and external crisis.^{iv}

The world we live in, is suffering from rise of rampant violence in form of terrorism, nuclear weapons and environmental imbalances. He has a holistic approach to the human problems, "In which reform or reconstruction should take place at all levels of human existence individual, local, national and international. He believed in evolving a normal international order through now violent national order."^v

A common definition of terrorism is the systematic use of threatened use of violence to immediate a population or government for political, religious or ideological goals.^{vi}

In Gandhian terms, it is most heinous form of violence. Combating terrorism shows two options:-

- To counter force with force, to overpower terror with superior terror. Retributive theory of 'tooth for a tooth' has not-yielded the desired outcome. 'Global war on terror' and India's own efforts to contain terrorism through this way have proved to be unfruitful. No doubt, is one approach against terrorism.
- Hospitality could be an alternative to hostility "our basic instincts are that of hospitality but our tastes are conditioned by the culture of hostility. So, let us give a chance nonviolence also. Unfortunately Gandhian spirit of nonviolence find place in society.

Now a day the tolerance level of the people is receding. The approach of violence as a counter terrorism strategy attacks the enemy (terrorists) who in turn; attack the innocent human beings because terrorist cannot get their enemy.

Unemployment, poverty, sense of injustice and exclusion, oppression and lack of education are other causes of terrorism exploitative world order, Gandhi wrote in plenty hence if we can create a world in which all people have access to at a minimum the opportunity to live beyond starvation, to receive education and to have realistic hopes for better future. In this way Gandhian spirit of cooperative and collective efforts by all states to face the menace of terrorism. No doubt, terrorism poses a serious law and order problem and leads to disintegration of the whole world. The incident of murder, torture, mutilation, kidnapping arson and extortion create atmosphere of suspicion fear and panic all around. In this way there is short and long term impact of terrorism effect the whole world.

1.1 Political:-

- Tightening of border security and immigration clearance.
- Counter terrorism legislation that infringe on individual freedom and personal privacy.

1.2 Economic:-

- Loss of life and property from September 2011, cost insurance companies USS 40 billion.
- Loss of business for the airlines industry had to be 'cured' through huge government bail outs.

1.3 Social:-

- Knee jerk reactions to crises.
- Extremist rhetoric and sensitive political developments over people.
- Preparing Singaporeans to be psychologically and socially resilient.^{vii}

Really, Gandhi ji is the harbinger of a new civilization, a saviour of fast decaying of the whole world in tempestuous times. Einstein rightly said, "Generations to come it may be, will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth."^{viii}

Gandhi was unique in showing a new way to the solution of complicated problems of the world, when non-violence occupied the top most place in his life. It was really a great mission of his life to educate the people in non-violence Gandhi "wanted the soul of India to blossom forth in all its glory"^{ix}

A nuclear weapon is an explosive device that derives its destructive force from nuclear reactions either fission (fission bomb) or a combination of fission and fusion (the rmo nuclear weapon). Both reactions release large quantities of energy from relatively small amounts of matter.^x

Peace is an urgent need for which Gandhi stood firmly. He ridiculed the idea of war to end wars. Gandhi was first to criticize nuclear attack of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He said, "The atom bombs have dead end the finest feeling which have sustained the mankind for ages".^{xi}

The detonation of atomic bombs over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 resulted in horrific casualties and devastation. The long term effects of radiation exposure also increased cancer rates in the survivors.^{xii}

The energy released from a nuclear weapon detonated in the troposphere can be divided into four basic categories:-

- Blast – 40-50% of total energy.
- Thermal radiation 30-50% of total energy.
- Ionizing radiation 5% of total energy (more in a neutron bomb).^{xiii}

The effects of nuclear weapons blast thermal radiation and prompt ionizing radiation cause significant destruction within seconds or minutes of a nuclear detonation. The delayed effects, such as radioactive fallout and such as radioactive fallout and other environmental effects, inflict damage over an extended period ranging from hours to years.”

At present, we are at the cross a roads when the world is in a crisis Mankind, today is faced with a question which is directly relevant to its very survival. In this context Gandhi was against the use of violence to oppose violence. Violence should be opposed by non-violence. Otherwise the result would be bloodshed. In this way, Mahatma Gandhi in his non violence emphasized the purity of thought and action.

Gandhi Ji was a far sighted environmentalist. Today, when we have moved away from nature, Gandhi Ji’s suggestion to live in proximity to the basic elements is worth emulating. Being a firm believer in natural living, Gandhi Ji stressed the importance of the five elements of nature, i.e. air, water, earth, light and sky, which are essential for life. Though he did not talk directly on environment because his thinking was formed according to the social situation of those days and also the problem of environment was not so grave and acute at that time, as it is today. In entire Gandhian philosophy ‘appeal to the soul’ finds very profound place. Appeal to save environment by adopting measures, simple life and most importantly to cut GHG’s emission and population control, would lead to desired results. We can appeal to people to change their habits. In fact Gandhi Ji pointed out, “Nature is lenient it does not punish us for our sins immediately.”^{xiv} Again he said, “Nature has provided us with sufficient reserve of vitality, But for that man would have long ago disappeared from the face of earth because his of own mistake.”^{xv}

Environmental degradation comes about due to erosion and decline of the quality of the natural environment continued environmental degradation can completely destroy the various aspects of the environment such as biodiversity eco system, natural resources and habitats.^{xvi}

2.0 Impact of Nonviolence:

Nonviolence is a philosophy, an existing theory and a practice, a lifestyle, and a means of social, political and economic struggle as old as history itself. From ancient times to the present times, people have renounced violence as a means of resolving disputes. They have opted instead for negotiation, mediation and reconciliation, thereby resisting violence with a militant and uncompromising nonviolence and respect for the integrity of all human beings, friends and enemies alike. Nonviolence provides us with tools, the positive means to oppose and stop wars and preparations for war, to resist violence, to struggle against racial, sexual and economic oppression and discrimination and to seek social justice and genuine democracy for people throughout the world. In a very real sense, nonviolence is the leaven for the bread that is a new society freed from oppression and bloodshed, a world in which persons can fulfill their individual potentials to the fullest. At a present time the essence of non-violence being the high moral courage and spiritual strength of the participant. The whole world has the great potential to acquire the trial of peace security and happiness which mankind has been seeking for so long. Violence is highly undesirable. People do not want it. Time has come now when leaders of different countries have to search for a permanent solution to the problems of the world and find a way towards peace. Gandhi believed that non- violence could solve all the ills as terrorism, nuclear means and environmental imbalances of the world as:-

It has been the past experience that the results of violence do not last long. It is certain that sooner than later humanity as a whole has to take to non-violence. If the human civilization has to continue the answer to world peace, according to Gandhi is non violence. No doubt, time has come now when, “we must clarify principles among over selves and arrive at axiomatic definitions as to what causes war and what creates peace in human society.” Gandhi’s non-violence has a very valuable message to the world that is for the present generations in a frustrated and strife torn world.

3.0 CONCLUSION:

Gandhi’s revolutionary thinking is still valid . His concept of non- violent Satyagraha is relevant beyond time and space . Nonviolent methods of action have been a powerful tool for social protest and revolutionary social and political change. Growth , Science and Technology has helped humanity in Horizontal Development and Progress ,

but it is partial truth of life , it will be wholesome only when we also start the process of “ Vertical Growth “. Gandhian methods as such are still relevant for all global problems including terrorism and institutional conflicts.

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