

Analytical study of Gandhiji's contribution in Indian Politics



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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi is a globally recognized figure for non-violence, tolerance, pacifier and high humanism. He has been globally accepted as a role model due to his personal characteristics, beliefs, views of life and way of struggling in Indian politics. Gandhian political life was mainly impacted by two political perspectives. First, he was many times influenced by Western and Eastern traditions and Second, he was an original thinker of his own. He was an innovative thinker and contributor in Indian politics on the basis of the then Indian conditions. The concept of Gandhiji on decentralization, democracy, rights and duties have great relevance in today's political era. In this paper, the focus has been envisaged on the essential character of Gandhian political thoughts which are pouring great hopes in recent emerging challenges of the present conditions of the society.

Keywords: Democracy, Decentralization, Non-Violence, Ahimsa, Upliftment, Rights, Duties, Equality, Public Service

It is well known detail to most of the people that Gandhiji was a miraculous revolutionary leader who motivated to Indian people to win in national freedom struggle through the practice of truth, self-sacrifice, tolerance, feeling of equality, upliftment of downtrodden and non-violence. He never pretended to establish a new political philosophy or any new political theory. He promoted the truth and visualized how Indians can be led a peaceful life without the feeling of caste and creed. He promulgated a fundamental base where people may realize a better and soothing society.

Mahatma Gandhi was one of the key factors and progressive leader in the national movement and his figure was a civil rights pioneer in line with architecting non-violent form of civil disobedience. Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2nd October 1869 in Porbandar, Kathiawar, India and grew up worshipping the Hindu gods as his mother was very religious lady. He followed Jainism, a morally rigorous ancient Indian religion that advocated non-violence, fasting, meditation and vegetarianism in his personality. Gandhi returned to India in 1891, he gained good success in his attempts to practice law. On the part of an offer, he accepted a position in South Africa for a year where he practiced law and assisted the India facing multiple problems. In South Africa, he became involved in efforts to end discrimination against the Indian minority who were oppressed by the British in a large deal. He then returned to India and set up a nonviolent movement based on his experiences experienced from South Africa. His goal was to make India free from British rule and to gain self-respect and confidence for his Indian people. He

supposed unwaveringly in a few things like passive resistance, truth, non-violence and creation of Indian people in their original roots as they were in olden times.

Gandhiji opined that "We should wipe away tears from every eye." His views were innovative on politics, rights, duties and democracy. He has always been a democratic decentralist in his political philosophy. He always acted in moral means while dealing in politics and said that these rules should be made on the basis of mankind. The Legitimacy of authority cannot be forced by laws, bylaws, constitution, parliament and terror, this should be based on human acceptance without any physical force. He always advocated for party less people and criticized the role of the political parties. He believed in the democratic system where people should be at front core. He propagated the concept of "Swaraj" where people have all the authority in themselves, they get power from people and that power is used for people. Gandhiji's political philosophy of non-violence can be studied in the perspective of his early many years spent in England, South Africa and India. More over the social, political and religious conditions of the society where he spent most of the years of his life. His non-violence practice and peaceful resistance are a corollary which shows his different contribution in Indian politics. He adopted the core of truth and related it with God. He preached in his political philosophy to accept and follow the path of truth which may bring the greatest good of all the demands.

Gandhiji's envisaged and propagated an idea for stateless democracy which protects freedom of village community and functions on the basis of cooperation along with peaceful co-existence. It is a mark of perfect democracy where social life is self-regulated and self-sufficient. He strongly opposes the process of centralization as it snatches the rights of individual. He advocates decentralization which leads to the rights and duties of each individual with proper division of the available resources. He focused a lot on village panchayats and believed that real India can be framed from the development of villages which should be self-governed by the people living in those villages. He focused on self-realization which is the realization of spirituality. He stressed upon that everyone may not know his rights but it is necessary for them to know their duties.

He always focused on the actions of passive resistance which presented a great force upon the British ruler. The idea of passive resistance was not worked well at the initial stage but worked well at the end. Gandhi practiced protesting, fasting, and the boycotting of British goods. To accomplish the last, he made his own clothes that were simple and made from hand-woven wool. He helped to glimmer the blaze that once was weak and now burned brightly. By his actions and protests and rallies for nationalism, he helped to try to unite Muslim and Hindu against their oppressors. Gandhi delivered his speeches on god attempting to show him as one entity as opposed to being separate through religion. These speeches helped to give Muslims and Hindus common ground on which to fight. The distinctive features of Gandhian political theory, specifically the conceptual analysis of political and moral categories, presented as a separate entity in which one can recognize the specialty of Gandhi as a political thinker and a practitioner of intellectual individual of Indian tradition. The distinctiveness of an idea of Indian political theory is inherently rooted in the distinctiveness of the social and cultural traditions of India. Colonial rule in the nineteenth and twentieth century inculcated western spirit and values to the traditions of India. The western ideas guided by the enlightenment influenced the pattern of British hegemony over non- western societies through colonial and imperial domination.

The Gandhian political contribution has given a definite shape to the Indian political platform in pre-independence and post-independence era. The understanding of Satyagraha and Ahimsa, which marked its trace on history, meant reaching the truth without violence, and a passive resistance without fight and violence in the process. According to Gandhiji's understanding of Ahimsa, violence was not a marvel that can be deliberated within the dimensions of vengeance. Violence could not be responded with violence, and cruelty, with cruelty, and this mentality constituted Gandhi's philosophy of passive resistance. As Malik et al. (2011) states, Gandhi had a strong belief in passive resistance (Ahimsa), and it was his decision to neutralize the motives for violence. The philosophy of Satyagraha, on the other hand, involves an approach strongly tied with the understanding of Ahimsa. In this context, the philosophy of Satyagraha can be defined as a philosophical view that represents a nonviolent bearing without instigating a war, yet with love and determination against evil and cruelty, by holding on to the fact of truth.

The political contribution of Gandhiji laid the way to make India free and his many ideals can be seen in directive principles of state policy enshrined in Indian Constitution where his aspirations have been included like Panchayati raj system, equal treatment, decentralization, promotion of economic interest and many more. The concept of Secularism came across through national movement for independence and later on incorporated in the Constitution which was not grown as encounter as in the West. The secularism in India was grown as an integral concept which was the consequence of the reformation process of the prevailing Indian condition of the society and the suppressed condition of the population.

It is noteworthy to analyze the relevance of Gandhiji's political contributions in contemporary scenario with the pace of society footsteps. India is a vast country with unity in diversity where State needs to govern it with an effective way. Gandhian concept of democracy has deep rooted in the governance with the concept of non-violence which cannot be seen in any country of the world as in India in the present era. His concept of Panchayati raj system, voluntary cooperation and peaceful co-existence are very much relevant in the present context of Indian democracy and Governments are leading the social, political, religious and economic pathway on the same doctrines in present days. Gandhiji said "there is no politics devoid of any religion" which mean a universal religion and right to religion. In his views of Right to citizens, there are right to speech, right to expression, right to conscience, right to public service and right to create culture and language and many more which got expressions after freedom and were incorporated in Indian Constitution. All these principles are working in fascination in the present time and society and are serving Indian politics to the great extent.

Gandhiji has not only contributed in Indian politics but also his thoughts have greater relevance in contemporary period and have served as message of life. There is great relevance of Gandhiji's political ideals of democracy, decentralization, freedom of speech, morality in politics and upliftment of downtrodden in present era of increased violence. A L Bassam has expressed in 'A heritage of India' that "Mahatma Gandhi has all his thoughts from his minds on the conditions of Indian people but he has great impact of Western thoughts on his thinking. Originally, he practiced non-violence, peaceful resistance and tolerance in his stature but he showed high influence of the Western principles in his mind. However, he propounded the innovative ideals and carved a heritage to Indians which suited them well".

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