



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

RELEVANCE OF GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY IN 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract: The 21st century is the era of industrialization and modernization. It is called the era of Information and communication technology (ICT), internet, and knowledge. These technologies have now become so essential for people to survive. Without the existence of these technologies it is very tough to imagine about an idealistic life. In such an era, Gandhian philosophy and principles can work as a beam of light in the lives of the people. In this present era of exploitation and instability where the countries of the world are engaged in the competition of collecting war weapons, Gandhian principles and philosophy (Gandhianism) has now become more important than ever for the establishment of world peace and human values. The society of 21st century facing the devastating effects of climate change, economic and social injustice, fear and insecurity, nuclear threat, terrorism etc. the commercialized western culture is bringing problems in the lifestyles through the over use of technology. But, a state of violence and bullying are not the answers to these situations. Answer to these questions is the adoption of Gandhian principles of philosophy. In the present century Gandhiji's philosophy of non-violence, satyagraha, sarvodya, economic and basic education has great relevancy to re-establish human values and peace among the human beings.

Index Terms - 21st century, non-violence, satyagraha, sarvodya, basic education.

I. INTRODUCTION

M. K. Gandhi is one of those great men in the human history, who even after his death is still idolized, remembered and recognized. He was a great leader, philosopher and a social reformer. It is because of his struggle and sacrifices, we got freedom from the colonial rule. He dreamt of a society free from exploitation, injustice and a society based on moral and equitable principles. He was a practitioner of idealism and spiritualism as his philosophy of life was based on truth and non-violence. Due to his idealistic and religious thinking, he was honored as 'Mahatma' by Rabindra Nath Tagore. His philosophy of truth and non-violence is popularly called as 'Gandhianism'.

The 21st century is the era of industrialization and modernization. It is called the era of Information and communication technology, internet, and knowledge. These technologies have now become so essential for people to survive. Without the existence of these technologies it is very tough to imagine about an idealistic life. In such an era, Gandhian philosophy and principles can work as a beam of light in the lives of the people. In this present era of exploitation and instability where the countries of the world are engaged in the competition of collecting war weapons, Gandhian principles and philosophy (Gandhianism) has now become more important than ever for the establishment of world peace and human values.

Relevance Of Gandhian Philosophy In 21st Century

The society of 21st century facing the devastating effects of climate change, economic and social injustice, fear and insecurity, nuclear threat, terrorism etc. the commercialized western culture is bringing problems in the lifestyles through the over use of technology. But, a state of violence and bullying are not the answers to these situations. Answer to these questions is the adoption of Gandhian principles of philosophy. Gandhian thinking is the sustainable way of life, and economic system based on trusteeship or servant leadership for universal welfare. It is a complex, inter-related system of thought.

(i) NON-VIOLENCE

Non-violence is the personal practice of not harming others under any condition. It comes from the belief that causing harm to people, animals is unnecessary to achieve an outcome. Problems cannot be solved with the mindset that has created them. To solve such problems we need to adopt a non-violent way of thinking. Hatred against hatred cannot solve the problem.

There was a period in human history called 'Satyuga' or heaven when people lived with completely non-violent attitude. But, the entire human being today has become the user of violent forces such as anger, lust, attachment, ego, exploitation, being immoral etc. to re-establish the human values and non-violent attitude of human beings we must follow non-violence. But, it has become a trend/fashion of the world to treat evil with more evil. Using forces to discipline a wrong doer has been adopted normally by all the nations. But, history is witness to the fact that violent leads to more violence. We can dominate our enemies by arm forces and power but can we neutralize hatred? The only answer to this question is to promote a culture of non-violence. If non-violence is practiced as the highest human value and way of life by all the nations then our world is going to be a paradise. If all the nations and their citizens adopt non-violence in their attitude there will be progress at all levels of human existence. Nations will have no need to produce arm forces; they will not devote time, energy, money in the development of sophisticated arms. People will not be killed; they will not loss their lives as a result of violent incidents. When survival, human rights and security are threatened, no society will progress. When there is no threat of violence it will facilitate law and order in the society.

Therefore, we need non-violence worldwide, non-violence towards nature, women and labors.

(ii) ENDS AND MEANS

This theory justifies that action can never be separated from thoughts. Gandhi had a strong belief that both ends and means of an action should justify each other. Even if we do a good work in a bad way then that work can never be justified as a good work. According to Gandhi there is an organic unity between ends and means (Singh, 2018). So, any destination should only be achieved by pious means.

This theory of Gandhiji is most relevant in the present day scenario. The present day society is based on the concept that end is more important than the means and this is the root of all the evils. Everyone is eager to achieve the determined destination without knowing and considering the means because, he believes that end is more important than means. This theory is most relevant in the present day politics. The main agenda of politicians are to grab power by hook or crook. More precisely they never bother about the means to get power. Their only objective is to come in power and make money. That's why they make false promises during elections. Not only in politics, but in every walks of life this concept is prevalent. Everyone focuses on the outcome rather than on the means of achieving that. That's why this theory is very important in the present day to enlighten the society. If people will start to follow pious means to achieve pious destination then the whole society will change.

(iii) SATYAGRAHA

(As cited in Singh, 2018) according to Gandhi, Satyagraha is the most difficult means to stand for truth but it is the most powerful and strong way to win for truth. The follower of Satyagraha can never hurt anyone but he will bear the pain himself for truth. A person who can sacrifice for the right is the real Satyagrahi. Satyagraha means to have strong faith in the virtue of truth.

The present day society is infected with fear, selfishness, dishonesty, lies, exploitation and corruption. That's why this theory of Satyagraha is most relevant in the modern day society to resolve these problems. In the present day individuals have become self-centered. Fulfillment of self-interests without considering about others is the only objective of individuals. In such a situation the powerful and dominant bourgeoisie section of the society has been dominating and exploiting the proletariat section without any fear, because they know that nobody is going to oppose them. The need of the hour is to follow the path of satyagraha to put a stop for such types of evils.

(iv) SARVODYA

Sarvodya means the development of all the section of the society irrespective of caste, creed, colour, sex and religion. Everyone will get equal opportunity to develop himself. No section of the society will get a chance to exploit the other. Gandhi wanted to create a classless society. Growth of all the parts is essential for the development of a healthy body. Similarly, the growth of the society depends upon the growth of all the sections i.e., upper, lower and middle class people. The society of present day is rusted with various evils and sins. Selfishness and self centricism is the base of the present society. Some section of the society is growing so faster and some section of the society is living a very miserable life.

The concept of Sarvodya can be very useful in the present day society, especially in the Indian society where people are discriminated on the basis of case, creed, religion, gender and color. So, in such a situation the concept of Sarvodya can be very influential. This concept can help in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.

(v) ECONOMY PHILOSOPHY

To tackle the economic problems of India Gandhi had his own approach. He did not believe in promoting large scale industries. He adopted khadi dresses for the Indians. His adoption of Khadi, or homespun cloth was intended to help small scale industries and to eradicate poverty, social and economic discrimination.

Gandhian approach to economy is still relevant to the present day society. He was not against machinery at all, but he afraid that the use of machinery in large scale would result in unemployment. In India economic development has been confined to the urban areas only. But, India is an underdeveloped country where almost 70% of the people live in the rural areas. In such circumstance Gandhiji's philosophy of rural development is most importance, through which it is possible to establish small-scale and medium scale factories in the villages and the remote areas of the country. This will lead to the development of the rural areas and their people. Without the development of the rural areas, national development cannot be imagined. That's why Gandhiji's economy philosophy is relevant in the present day society.

(vi) BASIC EDUCATION

Basic education is generally interpreted as education through craft. Holistic development of the child is one of the goals of basic education, and the most important characteristic of basic education is education through action. The world population is growing higher and the rate of unemployment is growing similarly.

Gandhiji's education is needed to overcome this unemployment. Because students will earn their education expenses with the help of their own handicrafts and they will get some relief from unemployment. Alongside it will promote the local industries and crafts. That's why committees like Sergeant Committee; Kothari Commission focused more on Gandhiji's basic education.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion we can say that most of the teachings of Gandhiji' hold relevance even in the world of technology today. The path shown by Mahatma Gandhi at that time is still very valid. To have a life of peaceful coexistence, economic independence, respect for women, child centered education, and universal brotherhood we must follow Gandhian philosophy. Gandhian ideologies and principles seem to be the only solution to overcome the ever changing present day problems.

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