



Mahatma's Philosophy in the Present Scenario

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Abstract: This paper focuses on democracy, education for youth empowerment, conflict resolution, sanitation, women empowerment and Gram Swaraj which were prescribed by Gandhiji and the relevance in solving modern problems. Now New Global Community is on the way to rediscover the relevance of the eternal message of Mahatma Gandhi for fighting conflict, violence and terrorism. It is route map to prosperity, social justice and balanced growth because it is a penance for all economic and social problems arising in recent years due to the growth of violence, bringing wars in the minds of man and resultant occurrence of jobless, ruthless, rootless, voiceless and future less growth. In fine, there is a need to increase people's awareness of Gandhian philosophy and relevance of his ideas to the world. Here it is not the question of relevance of Gandhian thought; it is a matter how much we can practice in reality is a million dollar question. It is impossible to cover all aspects of Gandhian Philosophy, which are of relevance to our own times and environment. Here this paper focuses on few things which are of utmost importance. This paper examines the relevance of Gandhian Philosophy in the context of democracy, education for youth empowerment, conflict resolution, sanitation, women empowerment and Gram Swaraj.

Introduction

India as one of the largest and most vibrant democracies in the world enjoys a unique place among the comity of nation. As a nation, we have every reason to be proud of the fact that despite tremendous socio-economic challenges our democratic system has emerged from strength to strength over the last 69 years and the rest of the world look upon India with admiration for its democratic values. In the contemporary democratic government people are at the centre stage of development and development should be from grass root level. This was identified by Gandhiji long years ago.

Gandhiji ideologies which can be taken note of here is his institution on the resolution of all conflicts by peaceful means. He opines specific devices should

be formed and provides ways to resolve conflicts through negotiation, mediation, arbitration and tribunals. It does not need any argument to provide that this teaching of Gandhi is relevant as long as conflicts are sought to be resolved through the destructive use of weapons and missiles. In this context the philosophy of non-violence has a great relevancy in the contemporary India. In India most of the conflicts and extremist revolutions already settled and some are going to be settled by nonviolence and peaceful means. For conflict resolution nonviolence is used as a weapon even in the present world. Peace process in extremist movement for example – movement for Khalistan in Punjab, movement of Bodo Liberation Tigers in Assam, Telangana movement in Andhra Pradesh, United Liberation Front of Assam, showed their interest in settling



their problems through peaceful means and the government also taken the initiative to settle the problems.

Gandhiji said "Sanitation is more important than independence". Cleanliness is most important for physical wellbeing and a healthy environment. Even after decades of independence, Clean India is still unfulfilled. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a nationwide cleanliness programme in the name of Swachh Bharat to provide sanitation facilities to every family including toilets, solid and liquid waste disposal system, safe and adequate drinking water. Gandhiji felt it is the responsibility of people to protect the environment through cleanliness. Very long time back during Wardha Conference on 22nd and 23rd October 1937, Gandhiji opined that the present system of education does not meet the requirements of the country. For the all-round development of boys and girls all training should as far as possible to be given through a profit yield education. Higher education should be left to private enterprise and should be to meet the national requirements whether in various industries technical arts, belles – letters or fine arts. In other words Gandhi's educational philosophy was born out of his intense need to better the conditions of rural India.

As Kumarappa puts it "Gandhiji saw that the only way to revive village economic life and to relate education to it". Education was to be a village occupation. The child was to be trained to be a producer. Thus the Kothari Commission also followed Gandhi's ideal of vocational training in education. This commission re-emphasized the Gandhian principle of learning by doing in the modern education. The Government is

also stressing on the need for life skills development education, which was emphasized by Gandhi on work culture to students from primary stage to higher stage to enable them to start producing from the time he started his training. Thus his concept of vocational education and training is applicable even today. The present Indian education system has been churning our brilliant minds but lacking in the skill sets required for specific jobs. There is a huge gap between the talents that is coming out of colleges and universities and its stability in terms of scope and employable skills. The concept of vocational training of Gandhiji once again identified by the government Pradhanamantri Koushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is the flagship outcome based on skill training scheme of the Government of India implemented through the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. Gandhiji said "India lives in villages". Instruction must be linked up with some basic craft. There is a need for job creation in 'rural India'. In his view education has got to be revolutionized. He says brain must be educated through the hand. His underlying principle of vocational education reiterated through formation of ecosystem in rural India for sustainable and respectable livelihood in the name of Make in India, start up and stand ups.

Now everywhere in the education system the emphasis is on studying any subject with interdisciplinary nature. This was explained by Gandhiji how the mind could be trained through hands. Here gave an example in this context how we can teach the child geography and history. History explains how and when



cotton was first grown the stages of development the cotton trade between different countries etc, under whose reign the different commercial treaties were signed during the different periods, why it is exported to different countries, why it cannot be grown in all places. This means a revolution in the method of teaching and a revolution in the teacher's outlook for holistic development is required which is the need of the hour. Gandhiji as a humanist firmly believed and expressed that man is neither mere intellect nor the gross animal body, nor heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious contribution of all the three is required for making the whole man and constitutes the future economics of education. Now, the same was realized at the national and state level that human values and ethics play a vital role to bring a peaceful and harmonious society. Hence it was made mandatory and integral part of curriculum at UG level throughout the country. Today there are multiple problems in society from all sides like crime, hunger, unemployment, poverty, polluted environment, terrorism, drug trafficking, Aids etc. These are creating grave danger to peace. This crisis is more severe than the crisis occurred during the time of Gandhiji.

In the present day conflicts are taking place between individuals, countries, regions, locally and globally. The root cause of these conflicts is that knowledge has been separated in thought, in life as well as in market values by faulty psychology, faulty sociology, and faulty economics respectively. Work and education should go together is the Gandhian concept of education. This concept is quite significant in the contemporary world. His education system focuses on the

culture of peace, sincere work, dedication to the cause of nation, social minded work culture which can provide the necessary economic self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

Today participatory development and people centered development are the nucleus of all governmental programmes and policies. But this is conceived and popularized by Mahatma in India, even decades before independence. A participatory structure of local governance originating at the level of village Panchayats and integration at success higher level going up to the centre was part of the Gandhian constitution for Free India formulate in 1934 itself (See Shriman Narayan, Gandhian constitution for free India). He followed the principle of decentralization in his democracy where power should not be concentrated in a single authority. Gandhian democracy is still relevant to India. It is clear from the 73rd constitutional amendment of the constitution, that power is transfer to the people living at village level.

Now, it has become a buzz world, for the government to use the terms like holistic development, sustainable development and inclusive development. Gandhiji understood the concept of inclusive growth and challenges in the new millennium and propounded the principles of interdependence, complementary treatments and consensus and participatory management in his ideology. He opined inclusive growth only will lead to sustainable development. For this, the plans for economic development should begin from the bottom of the pyramid with the people who were marginalized. His economic model through self-help led to the formation of self-help groups for rural



development and collective empowerment of people living in rural areas.

The formation of self-help groups removed deprivation and social exclusion of rural poor. Gandhiji opined that poverty itself is a form of violence. His model is based on the notion that the marginalized should be better equipped to overcome the negative social pressures against them through their group identity and activity. This paradigm of development is based on Gandhian principles like Sarvodaya, Anthyodaya, Co-operation, Collective endeavour, trusteeship and decentralization with a thrust on community welfare and villages. In this context it is worthwhile to mention the new concept. Subka Sath, Subka Vikas in the name of Pradhanamantri Janadhan Yojana launched on 28th August, 2014 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi which means everyone and development of everyone and it is a nation mission to remove socio-economic disparities. This aims to cover large sections of population especially the rural areas. For the socio-economic wellbeing of rural labourers to bring major changes of the rural people lives, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee act was initiated to create permanent assets to rural areas for future needs. This includes Water Conservation, water harvesting including afforestation and tree plantation. This act has now emerged as one of the important tools for rural development and for combating hunger and unemployment. In his view, economic growth necessarily be consistent with the imperatives of environmental conservation and protection long before modern environmentalists ever thought of the same.

In our Five Year Plans also the thrust area is poverty alleviation. At this juncture context Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) strengths the natural resource management and address the causes of chronic poverty. It is not an employment guarantee scheme but encompasses building of rural hospitals, schools in villages, and canals for irrigation projects. Micro finance through rural self-help groups is a significant media of poverty alleviation and empowerment. Here it may be noted that Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Independent India was a nation free of exploitation of the poor and rich of the masses by the classes. His idea of Swaraj was freedom from hunger, unemployment, fear and hatred. He offered a talisman "according to which the litmus test of any policy was how it would affect the most vulnerable" (Axel rod, 2010). According to him the true wealth of a nation community lies in the wellbeing of its members. Sarvodaya means "development of all". Gandhiji envisaged Gram Swaraj means power resides in the people and every village has to be self-sufficient and capable of managing its own affairs. Gram Swaraj was established for ensuring economic development, social justice, Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) is entrusted with several states and centrally sponsored rural development programmes. PRI share the means to fulfill the dreams of Gram Swaraj of Mahatma Gandhi.

Agriculture is the back bone of Indian economy and farming community. The Pradhanmantri Fasal Bhima Yojana aims to stabilize farmer's income, encourage them to adopt innovative and modern agricultural practices and ensure flow of credit. Prime Minister Krishi



Sanchay Yojana is yet another programme to rejuvenate the agriculture sector of India.

Today the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century. Mahatma Gandhi said that women is more fitted than man to make exploration and take bolder steps in decision making or whatever field they are entrusted with. Gandhiji's works awakens women and made them shed their deep rooted sense of inferiority and raise them to dignity and self-esteem. To achieve the twin goals of gender equality and woman empowerment, even today Gandhian literature will continue to be a prescription for many years to come.

After many years martyrdom, Gandhian philosophy is remembered more with reverence than with mere causality. His ideas are revolutionary and they are applicable in our day to day life with our new challenges and situations. In this context it is very refreshing to note that Sri Narendra Modi, ever since he became the Prime Minister, has accepted by asserted that he was inspired by Gandhiji's teachings and saw their relevance to the country and world at large. He asserted unequivocally that he and his government have "no tolerance for intolerance", reflecting the pluralistic perspective, anekantavada of Mahatma Gandhi. He actually planted new ideas to implement several constructive programmes like Swatch Bharath, Clean India Mission, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana.

Now New Global Community is on the way to rediscover the relevance of the eternal message of Mahatma Gandhi for fighting conflict, violence and terrorism. It is route map to prosperity,

social justice and balanced growth because it is a penance for all economic and social problems arising in recent years due to the growth of violence, bringing wars in the minds of man and resultant occurrence of jobless, ruthless, rootless, voiceless and future less growth. In fine, there is a need to increase people's awareness of Gandhian philosophy and relevance of his ideas to the world. Here it is not the question of relevance of Gandhian thought; it is a matter how much we can practice in reality is a million dollar question.

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