



Gandhian Views on Peace and Non-Violence

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Abstract

Gandhi wanted people to get back to villages and wanted "Village Republic" to function. He supported Swadeshi Movement. Satyagraha, according to Gandhi, is a passive resistance movement to attain truth and justice. Swaraj, should be poorna Swaraj or complete independence said Gandhiji. He said that power and authority should be in the hands of all but not in the hands of a few. He was an optimist. In 1920 he said Swaraj in one year, in 1930 he said now or never and in 1942, when the Quit India movement he said Do or Die. He experimented his concept of Nonviolence at the village Navkhali to put down fights between Muslims and Hindus. He succeeded. But after attaining independence he was assassinated for propagating Hindu-Muslim unity by one Nathuram Godse on 30th of January, 1948. Gandhiji, a great man, who free India from the foreign yoke, sacrificed his life for the unity of India. He is therefore rightly called the Father of Nation. Gandhiji is dead but Gandhism lives.

Key words: Truth, Non Violence, Satyagraha

Introduction

*Education is the manifestation of the
perfection already in man - Swamy
Vivenanada*

Gandhi's Philosophy of life is based upon the philosophy of Idealism. He believed in God implicitly. According to him, though individuals have different bodies, yet the same soul pervades in all of us. This soul is a part of that bigger entity which we call as god, Raheem or Christ. Gandhiji advocated that as the source of all the rays of the sun is the sun absolute and own whole, in the same way though the persons are different and innumerable; yet the same soul pervades in all of them. In short, Gandhiji experienced and realized Unity in Diversity. His Philosophy of Life has four elements namely - 1) Truth 2) Non-violence 3) Fearlessness and 4)

Satyagraha. We discuss these elements in some details as under:

1. Truth – Gandhiji's aim of life was to realize God. He firmly believed that this creation is mortal. Only God is immortal. Hence, the ultimate aim of life should be to realize God. According to him, truth is the only way to realize God. To Gandhiji truth is the supreme principle. In it other principles namely Beauty and Goodness become imbedded. To Gandhiji, there is no difference between Truth and God. According to him if somebody uses truth in his mind, words and deeds and uses it together with Ahinsa sincerely and constantly, he will be able to realize God someday. In this way, according to Gandhiji Truth does not mean truthfulness of words or speech only but its field is very wide. This principles of Truth should be employed in all fields of life. Hence, gandhiji devoted all his life in search to Truth.



2. Non-Violence – Non Violence or Ahinsa is the second main tenet of Gandhiji's philosophy of life. Gandhiji was of firm view that devotion to truth can only be practiced through devotion and strict adherence to Ahinsa. To him Truth and Ahinsa are the two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other. Gandhiji has insisted that the supreme aim of life is to realize God and the only effective way to realize that is to practice Ahinsa by thoughts, words and deeds. Gandhiji has explained the meaning of Ahinsa as – "Ahinsa is complete absence of ill-will against all that lives. In its dynamic condition, it means conscious suffering. Non-violence is, in its active form, good – will towards all life. It is pure love."

3. Satyagraha – Gandhiji's Ahinsa was not negative tendency. It was positive capacity which included two other attributes namely – 1) Fearlessness and 2) Satyagraha. Thus, fearlessness is the third element in Gandhiji's it is practically impossible to practice Truth and Ahinsa. A coward person cannot adhere to these principles of Truth and Ahinsa. Explaining his concept of fearlessness Gandhiji has written – "Fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fear-fear of disease, bodily injury and death, or dispossession of losing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation or giving offence, and so on."

4. Satyagraha – Gandhiji explained Satyagraha as hold fast to death. This principle is based on truth and love. Herein the opponent is not given any pain, mental or physical, but he is made rather persuaded to accept truth by the effect of one's own experiencing pain or loss. It is to achieve change of heart by self-suffering of the adherence of truth and non-violence. In the words of Gandhiji "So the Doctrine came to mean

vindication of truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's self".

Aims of Gandhian Education

Gandhiji's has divided educational aims into two categories as under:

Immediate Aims of Education

Ultimate Aims of Education

Immediate Aims of Gandhian Education

Immediate aims of Gandhiji's education are give below:-

1) Vocational Aim – Gandhiji's wished that each child should, through his education, be able to learn a productive craft to meet his future needs of life by adopting some industry or business. Hence, he advocated education for self-reliance and capacity to earn one's livelihood as the main aim of education. By this aim he did not mean to make the child a laborer. He wished that each child should earn while engaged in learning and gain some learning as he is busy with earning.

2) Cultural Aim – Gandhiji wished that education should develop Indian culture. Hence, he advocated that together with vocational education, cultural advancement should also be achieved. The two aspects of development should go together side by side. He exhorted – "I consider the cultural aspect of education as more essential than its academic aspect. Culture is the main foundation and an essential and special part of education. Hence, all types of human activities should bear the imprint of culture and refinement."

3) Perfect development Aim – Gandhiji insisted that education should develop all aspects of individuality harmoniously. Thus, writing in his famous magazine "Harijan" on 11th September, 1937 he writes – "The real



education is that which fully develops the body, mind and soul of children.”

4) Moral or Character Development

– Like Herbart, Gandhiji also believed that one of the essential aims of education is the moral development or character development. About this Gandhiji has written in his autobiography – “I have always given top position to culture of heart and character development in the process of education. I consider character building as the main and essential basis of educational development.”

5) Liberation Aim – The fifth aim of education according to Gandhiji is that education should liberate body, mind and soul. By liberation he meant two kinds of liberation. One was the liberation from all kinds of economic, social, political and mental slavery. The second was, the liberation of the soul from worldly pursuits and devote itself to higher forms of spiritual living. Education should provide this spiritual freedom for self-growth and realization of the self.

Ultimate Aim of Education: According to Gandhiji, the ultimate aim of education is to realize god. All other aims are subservient to this supreme aim. It is the same aim of self-realization which is coming down since the very early times of India wisdom and which constitutes the essence of Indian Philosophy. Gandhiji wishes that every child should grow into a divine human being by realizing Goodliness in his self. Gandhiji's himself writes. “To develop the self is to build character and to prepare the self for complete realization and realization of Goodliness.

Consisting of three distinct institutions viz., Gandhigram Trust, Gandhigram Rural Institute of Rural

health and Family Welfare Trust, Gandhigram right from the beginning focused on agriculture development, promotion of Khadi and Village Industries, rural housing, training – cum research in rural health, environmental sanitation, family welfare maternity and child welfare, pre-school education and taking higher education to rural areas and so on. Over the years, its contribution to rural development in providing a new strain of life has been substantial.

Genesis of Gandhigram Ruaral Institute:

With a view to providing a rural and rural problem – centered education to rural youth and to train them as social engineers for serving in rural areas, a Rural Institute of Higher Education was established to Gandhigram in 1956 as part of a national experiment which included fourteen other centers. The experiment was based on Gandhiji's revolutionary concept of Nai Talim system of education. This program of rural higher education we considered to be a healthy deviation from the mainstream traditional higher education in India. While most of the centers of rural higher education got affiliated to conventional universities. Gandhigram Rural institute stuck steadfastly to its original vision, and after 20 years of yeoman service in the field of rural higher education it became a Deemed University in 1976.

The institute stands for Gandhian ideas of education with the following objectives: i) to provide for instruction and training in branches of learning that will promote a classless and casteless society: ii) to undertake research and help in the advancement



and dissemination of knowledge; and iii) to function as a center for objectives, the institute has adopted a three-pronged strategy viz., offering academic programs with a rural bias, rural-oriented action research and pro-poor extension activities. The Institute gives equal weightage to all the three components as all of them are interrelated and interdependent.

Gandhiji's Views on the Teachers:

Gandhiji's advocated devotion to the teacher (Guru-Bhakti). He says, "Education of the heart could only be done through the living touch of the teacher." Education becomes effective and faithful only to the extent to which there is a personal touch between the teacher and the taught. A flower in bloom is loved by all and in this lies its glory. Similarly man may be viewed as having achieved everything in life when he becomes perfect in character. If the best flowers among mankind take to teaching., society is abundantly enriched, their fragrance and beauty and then made the best use of. Therefore, teachers should develop such character which will help them to elicit devotion from the students. It will be very difficult to achieve character building in the absence of devotion to the teacher". Gandhiji anticipated a nonviolent personality in the teacher. He should have devotion to duty, to the students and to God. He is to play the role of a mother. Therefore, Gandhi in his book, My views of Education, Says, 'One who cannot take the place of a mother cannot be a teacher'. In his book, "True Education" he says, "I have not used the word teacher in this article. I, throughout, used the word 'mother teacher' in its place, because the teacher must really by a

mother to the children. The child should never feel that he is being taught. Let her simply keep her eye upon him and guide him."

I deal with Trust first of all, as the Satyagraha Ashram owes its very existence to the pursuit and the attempted practice of Truth. The word Satya (Truth) is derived from Sat, Which means 'being' . "Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why sat or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God. In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is god, than to say that God is Truth. But as we cannot do without a ruler or a general, such names of God as 'King of Kings' or 'The Almighty' are and will remain generally current. On deeper thinking, however, it will be realized, that Sat or Satya is the only correct and fully significant name of God.

And where there is Truth, there also is knowledge which is true. Where there is no Truth, there can be no true knowledge that is why the word Chit or Knowledge is associated with the name of God. And where there is true knowledge, there is always bliss (Ananda). Their sorrow has no place. And even as Truth is eternal, so is the bliss derived from it. Hence we know God as Sat-chit-ananda. One who combines in Himself Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. Devotion to this Truth is the sole justification for our existence. All our activities should be centered in Truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life.

Peace Education: Webster Dictionary defines peace as a state of quiet and tranquility, clam or repose, freedom from war or the absence of strife. Peace is also interpreted as a divine and ultimate



source of eternal calm and happiness. The actual peace is that state of mind or attitude when the men stay calm and composed amid all the mental, physical and natural chaos. Peace in reality is a feeling that transcends all the mundane barriers and fills the man with smugness. This peace, in fact is a bent of mind that entails the values of 3Fs Viz., Fortitude, Forbearance, and Fraternity. Peace inculcates the 3Fs and defies the human instincts that are detrimental to the interests of the society. In a way, it is elimination of the erosion of values that contributes toward peace in society.

Peace Education: The prevalence of peace in the society is closely related to the elimination of the erosion of values or the inculcation of values in children, and of course, adults. As peace demands the total shaping up of the mental framework and attitudes, peace education should be started at an early age. To make sure that the generations that follow are oriented towards peace, peace education should be included in the school curriculum. Since curriculum nowadays is not only meant for teaching school subjects but also includes co-curricular activities, these activities can be fruitfully utilized to promote international peace. It is through peace that the world or the individual can realize the dream of progress and development so it is absolutely essential to integrate peace educational in the curriculum.

Curriculum is the only way through which one can transform the minds of the students. One should, however, remember that the students might now show much interest in peace education if they are introduced to the subject directly. On the other hand, if we make them to participate in different

activities that include peace education, they would definitely realize the importance of peace and the need for it. Mere statements like 'violence should be avoided' or 'violence leads to more violence' can never put an end to violence and results in peace. But if we succeed through absorbing activities, in making the students understand the importance of peace and the ultimate of peace, then the chances of achieving the ultimate aim of peace are enhanced.

Conclusion:

Peace to become a reality, one's mind must be peaceful, cool and calm. This attitude and change of mindset can be achieved only by integrating the peace component in the curriculum at an early stage of school education. In the early childhood, it is the family, the main agency that has an everlasting impression on the mind of the child. As such, the family should discharge its responsibility if the efforts of the school in promoting peace education are to have a better chance of success.

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