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Gandhi Swaraj and Satyagraha

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Abstract

Gandhi's theory of Satyagraha (non-violent resistance) and Swaraj (self-rule) have attracted considerable scholarly attention, the intimate relationship between the two concepts has not been analysed as fully as it deserves. Since the beginning of the 20th century, both in Africa and in India. The idea of Satyagraha basically emphasised the power of truth and the demand to search for truth. While the word Swaraj means self-rule, Gandhi gave it the content of an integral revolution that surrounded all spheres of life. Gandhi's viewed it as a relationship between a mother and an offspring. Swaraj being the mother Satyagraha the offspring is inseparable.

It was different from the Typical Liberal and Marxian Discourse of Substituted Development as its Philosophy was derived from India's past and was uniquely premised on imagined, historical, ideal society of small Traditional Peasants located in Autonomous Villages, situated amidst Nature and guided by Sanatani ethics and scriptures. The concept of Swaraj and Ramrajya, encouraged by Gandhi, was based on the idea of Governance by an ideal state and regulated by elementary.

Keywords: Gandhi Swaraj, Satyagraha

Introduction

"I want India's rise so that the whole world may benefit. I do not want India to rise on the ruins of other Nations. I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My Patriotism includes the service of Humanity. I would like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself as a willing and pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi is scrutinized to be one of the unequalled leaders of all ages and all countries. His personality and Philosophy have encouraged millions of people of the whole world. Mahatma Gandhi, byname of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, (born October 2, 1869, Porbander, India- died January 30, 1948, Delhi). His wealthy family was from one of the higher castes (Indian social classes). He was the fourth child of Karamchand Gandhi, PM to the ruler of three small city-states and Purlibai, his fourth wife. Gandhi describe his mother as a deeply religious women who attended a place for religious worship service daily. At the age of thirteen he did not even know in advance that he was to marry Kasturabai and a girl his own age. After marriage Mahandas finished his high school and tutored his wife.

Mohatma Gandhi was an Indian revolutionary and religious leader who used his religious power for political and social reform. Although he held no governmental office, he was the main force behind the second-largest nation in the World's struggle for independence. He was an Indian lawyer, politician, social activist, and writer became the leader of the nationalist movement against the British rule of India.

In 1893 Gandhi received an offer from a firm of Muslims to represent them lawfully in Pretoria the capital of Transvaal in the union of South Africa. He asserted that he head a first class ticket had every right to undertake the journey. His complaint was meaningless, rather he was thrown out of the section. His only fault was that he was an Indian and the colour of this skin was black. Without having adequate warm clothes, he spent the bitterly cold night in complete darkness in the waiting room of Maritzburg Railway station.

Mahatma Gandhi was much influenced by Thoreau's essay on civil Disobedience. He tried to enlarge the techniques of non-violent resistance to the wrongful and unjust deeds. He typically called this technique "Satyagraha" which aims at remarking the inhuman heart of the Opponent or the enemy by accepting the suffering cheerfully. He started practising

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Satyagraha right in South Africa itself. But his major successes on this demonstration were achieved in India and those made him all the expansive. By Swaraj Gandhi meant freedom and self-rule for the teeming millions of India. It is the political prerogative honestly available to all without differentiation or inequality. Gandhi prevented the existing political set-up as it was based on consolidation of power and authority. This was definitely deleterious for the people as it did not allow people to enjoy real freedom of self-rule or Swaraj.

Swaraj

Gandhi Swaraj had developed out of the combination of his Indian roots, his reading and his early Experiences in London promoted him to pen down his vision of Swaraj for India.

During the period when Gandhi's freedom Movement obtained its mass base, he again and again described and explained the concept of Swaraj as the goal of freedom struggle, in terms of political, economic, social, and moral right of the downtrodden and exploited Indian masses. By Swaraj, he meant freedom and self-rule which should be practiced at three levels,

- In case of individual Swaraj, it is self-control or Swaraj, it is self-control or Swaraj of the self.
- In case of the country, it is the freedom of India from the British clutch,
- In case of community level, it is Gram Swaraj or freedom of village.

Gandhi viewed Swaraj or self-rule necessarily, as a mode of conduct which points out their duty the path of control over aspiration and the path of "Mastery over (their) minds and passions". It meant the knowledge of left and living within bounds.

Political liberty was a required precondition of the Swaraj. It is the first step to realise the goal of Swaraj for political self-government of the people Gandhi had valuable contributions and for that he worked with and through the India National Congress. Of course, there were critical Philosophical and ideological differences between Gandhi and other prominent leaders of the congress, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru. Gandhi Visualized a model of Swaraj and that model was Developed and enunciated in his Hind Swaraj (1909). It was his Manifesto but his strategy of Swaraj was unacceptable to Nehru another Congress leaders.

Gandhi believed that social Swaraj comes prior to political Swaraj. It is to be given to our enslaved brother and sisters. If we do not give importance to the Swaraj of others, we lose our moral claim of freedom from the Britishers. He wrote in this connection,

Swaraj for me mean freedom for the meanest of our Countrymen. If the lot of the Panchama (untouchable). Is not improve when we are all suffering, it is not likely to be better under inebriation of Swaraj. If it is necessary for us to buy peace with the Musalmans as condition of Swaraj, it is equally necessary for us to give peace to the Panchama before we can with any show of justice or self-respect talk of Swaraj. I am not interested in freeing India from the English yoke, I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke, I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke what so ever".

Gandhi believed in the real freedom which is not only in the removal of Untouchability but also in the promotion of heart unity between all the sections of society and removal of all

other social evils. He said "Swaraj cannot be had so long as the walls of Prejudice, passion and superstition continue to stifle the growth of that stately oak.

Swaraj means Sarvodya in economic terms or the welfare of all and it is possible through economic equality and non-violent, independence and political freedom is merely a prelude. Gandhi clarified the concept of Swaraj in a geometrical way in Harijan. He writes,

"Let there be no mistake about my concept of 'Swaraj'.

It is complete independence of alien control and complete

Economic independence, so at one end you have political independence, at the other economic. It has two other ends. One of them is moral and social the corresponding end is 'dharma', that religion in the highest sense of the term. It includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. but is superior to them all....

Let us call this the square of Swaraj, which will be out of shape, if any of its angles in untrue".

Gandhi's conception of Swaraj provides a complete meaning covering all essential aspects of freedom, that internal freedom as moral Swaraj and external Swaraj as social, economic and political freedom. Without moral and spiritual Swaraj all other aspects of Swaraj are Meaningless. He conceptualized a classless and casteless Society.

In summary, the entire focus of Swaraj was on self-reliance of the individual, village, taluka, district, province and nation in that order. Its soul was disintegration of power and economy leading to a gradual reduction of the role of the state in society and an enlarged role of the individual and of the local community in their praxis.

Satyagraha

Satyagraha is the original innovation of Mahatma Gandhi. He used it first in South Africa in 1906 resist the racial differentiation and maltreatment to Indians there. The word Satyagraha is a combination of two words satya (truth) and Agraaha (insistence), which when combined means 'insisting on holding firmly to truth' it is a force emerging out of love for truth and necessarily means belief in a well cause . Gandhi also discussed this word as a soul-force and said it was disparate from passive resistance. According to Gandhi Satyagraha is the Philosophy of life.

Satyagraha, popularly known as a "technique of non-violent public protest", is one of the valuable contributions Gandhi made to the modern world. Gandhi's contribution was especial in that it offered a solution to conflicts without the use of Physical force. Further in contrast to the Traditional means Physical force or violence, Satyagraha emphasized more on the means – non- violence than on the end attainment of truth. Gandhi's intransigent insistence on non-violence in the pursuit of Satyagraha made it a distinctive as well as a arguable technique of social and political change.

The aim of Gandhi's life was the realization of truth. According to every man, truth must be the goal of his life and his goal can be attained through ahimsa only. Gandhi's Satyagraha is the Philosophy of life. If man has to visualize truth while living in this world then Satyagraha is the only way of life. Satyagraha is not the ideal world, where man can meditate and concentrate on God.

The true meaning of Satyagraha cannot be interpreted

without exploring the Gandhian meaning of the concepts of truth, non-violence and self-suffering.

Truth

According to Gandhi, Satyagraha is literally on to Truth and it means therefore Truth-force. Truth for Gandhi was God. He defined his Personal goal as to 'seeing God to face'. Although Gandhi's personal goal was the realization of the Truth, the truth element Gandhi referred to in Satyagraha a technique for social and political change was not that of the Absolute.

Ahimsa

The Sanskrit word Ahimsa is translated as non-violence. Non-violence is one of the basic ingredients of Mahatma Gandhi's political Philosophy. Gandhi did not create originally the concept of non-violence but the first time used it in a mass scale and more particularly in political field. Negatively speaking non-violence or Ahimsa means not to do harm or injury to anybody by following violence or Ahimsa. But Gandhi's concern in this regard is more positive than negative. According to Gandhi non-violence is composed of certain ingredient like truth, inner purity, fasting, fearlessness, non-possession and perseverance.

Self-suffering

In Satyagraha, self-suffering is willingly accepted by the Satyagrahi himself with the specific intention of the moral persuasion of the enemy. Self-suffering is neither an inability to win over the opponent through violence nor a meek submission to the will of the evil-doer. Gandhi says, "Non-violence cannot be taught to a person who fears to die and has no power of resistance". Self-suffering, in Satyagraha, is directed to resisting humiliation as well. Gandhi gave supreme value to the dignity of a person. It is integral to non-violence as it is a means in Satyagraha to overcome fear.

Thus, Satyagraha was to be the silent and unreserved action of truth and love that produced far more permanent and abiding results than many other methods of struggle. It transcended the boundary of nations and was applicable across all sections of humanity. Since it cultivated family-feeling and strove for self-purification and, through it, transformation of social consciousness, it was the most potent weapon for the creation of an ideal society.

Conclusion

Gandhi's Swaraj and Satyagraha were the philosophical expressions of peasant's idealized praxis which were not recognized in public discourse as predominant ideals of social Existence under the expanding capitalism. Gandhi demonstrated through limited mass praxis that the peasants' dream could be realized once their Consciousness was transformed and that it was a better mode of social living than the capitalist civilization, as it provided a contended and unalienated life. But he acknowledged frankly that his was a sheikh chilli's dream which was difficult to realize, although he struggled valiantly for it till the last day of his life. He had noticed his marginalization and witnessed history by passing him after the Second World War. It was inevitable, not ironical, as his peasant base itself was being marginalized under expanding capitalism. The shrinkage of this base in post-colonial development has further reduced him to a distant historical figure to be idolized only by the

mantra chanting political-academic bards who argue about his relevance without applying his mantras. It is the negation of his Ramrajya.

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