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Mahatma Gandhi after 150 years – Ahimsa and its contradictions and its Relevance

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ABSTRACT

It was just few months back that the entire country celebrated 150 years of – Mahatma Gandhi. It would be worthy to do a study on one of his very precious principles that is Ahimsa. It was Ahimsa which helped us to get our nation free from the clutches of the Britishers. Not to be forgotten we were colony under the Britishers for nearly two centuries. As we look into the principle of ahimsa it would be good to analyse the relevance of Ahimsa in 21st century and also whether Gandhi stands relevant in his own nation.

We have people all over the world quoting the thought and principles of Mahatma Gandhi. He is held in awe and respect everywhere around India but is he held in high respect in his birthplace. Is Gandhi Relevant today? Do we see Ahimsa being followed as a principle? It is sad that in this country of Gandhi –Ahimsa –we have himsa in form of mob lynching of Dalit's, communal violence, rape , murder etc the list goes on . Let us try to do an analysis of Gandhi's principle of ahimsa and its relevance today. My objective is to

- 1) To study what was Gandhi's view on Ahimsa
- 2) Critique and Contradictions of Gandhi's Ahimsa
- 3) Ahimsa as an ideology does it stand relevant.

Introduction

Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi, the father of the nation was not only a figurehead in politics, freedom fighter but also a crusader for reforms in society. He was initially addressed as 'Father of Nation' by Rabindranath Tagore, Subash Chandra Bose. These were more than adjectives to his name and these were of great value which Gandhi stood for and gave up his entire span of life. He is not with us but his

principles are there to edify everyone so it holds , still holds pertinence in various spheres of life of Indians and more so in the world.

Gandhism is a fusion of Mahatma's opinions and practice which encompasses around Ahimsa - the non -aggression .Gandhi had no armament but non -violence and it is this weapon which made the strong and stubborn British Empire to crumble down.

Ahimsa –also spelled as ahinsa is the ancient principle of not doing violence. This was the focal point of Gandhi's philosophy.

Precisely interpreted ahimsa means innocuous to be gentle, not only to individuals but to entire humanity. So, its inferences are more broader than only not doing himsa , it is a lifestyle in itself The concept of ahimsa involves the entire universe .. With Gandhi the meaning of Non Violence had a significant position.

So, we have an overtone to Ahimsa which is not explained clearly in English word non - violence. Firstly, unyielding from doing away from bad, but with aggressive methods. Secondly, it talks of offences and injury.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- 1) To study what was Gandhi's view on Ahimsa
- 2) Critique and Contradictions of Gandhi's Ahimsa
- 3) Ahimsa as an ideology does it stands relevant

SCOPE OF STUDY:

View of Gandhi on Ahimsa

Gandhi preached non -violence – he was stirred by the famous concept from Mahabharata- meaning non- violence is the foremost righteousness.

. The notion of non- violence is based on the faith in mankind's righteousness and presumption that humanness is fundamentally to love. Love or non- violence encompasses variety of nuance. It includes affection, sympathy, mercy, generosity, service and self-sacrifice, non- violence or non-injury .It is not a negative state of harmless (Young India, 1921, Jan19). Gandhi himself directly broached that he was enormously affected by various religious and other political sources.

Gandhi was of the opinion to reward the enemies even if they were targeted and ambushed .Gandhi should to be given the credit for turning the obsolete view of non-violence into execution. For him, non-violence stood as means to achieve the end, that which Gandhi followed was not just a lame idea or belief but it was based on the coordination and engagement of entire human body.

It unfolded through non possession of property or any other unearthly espousal of the proposition of retrocede, abolition of untouchability, tranquilly and above all prominence of leading a life based on moral principles thus it was not as simple as just non use of force.

It had a larger meaning it meant first that Gandhi based his principle of ahimsa on religious and spiritual grounds. He expected churches, mosques, monasteries to imbibe it on individuals to a level where it will be a whole lifestyle and this lifestyle will challenge the order of the society. It is sad that it had contradictions and was not realistic.

Limitation of the study

Gandhi when did a self -evaluation of Ahimsa, he corresponded or pronounced that it does not founder Ahimsa, but it stands as non-fulfilment and erroneous as Ahimsa was but civil disobedience of the fragile, and it was an event in isolated perception . Gandhi did realize that there needs to be line made to insulate aggression from non-aggression; the whole philosophy would be obscure.

Critique and Contradictions in Gandhi's Ahimsa

Gandhi's Ahimsa has been challenged where few critiques have presented the argument of contradictions that aggression is not only conventional, but preferable mode of expression .These arguments are built on three postulates. First principle is , ostensible which means stated value for example when an educator inflicts spanking on the pupils or a Madre that is mom in French reprimanding their child are also culpable of aggression .it is himsa and deviates from Gandhi's ideology of ahimsa but this cannot be negated .

The second principle is where the reinforcement of himsa is grounded on the fall back altercation that himsa can be instrumental if where by a miniature himsa greater violence is circumvent. Nonviolence cannot be justified and must be in the backburner According to (Ellul1969) justifies war on the basis of some reasons in his book?

Thirdly. the modus operandi of aggression is efficacious, coherent than the technique of brutality.

Mamali suggests there is no study which can deny that non-violence or ahimsa was what led to the freedom of India from clutches of British Rule. But that does not mean that non-violence will be effective and will be followed in all situations.

We see that Ahimsa is not possible in its unadulterated configuration and in all state of affairs.

Gandhis faith in non-aggression was grounded and he believed in validation of only peace. He did not believe that it should be happening and continuing.

It is seen that in, Gandhi's conjecture and day after day mutual and individual application, the objective and method are merged, a pious objective cannot be served by aggressive methods . Ahimsa the truth is was very dear and close to his heart.

We can reject both the arguments of Gandhi in relation to Ahimsa and its contradictions and relevance – His first argument is rejected because of its background that violence is always bad as it is equivalent to evil. Hence, the argument is circular.

His second dissension that means and ends are ravelled is repudiated on viable grounds. If this is practical than what to do when mothers take their children for task The punishment many times change the behaviour of children in their coming days Hence , universality of Ahimsa is unacceptable and cannot be impregnable . Gandhi's explanation of non-violence seems to be more dependent on his religious texts than on psycho- social considerations. This is a major critical point that may be raised against the Gandhian conception of non- violence.

Relevance of Gandhi

There is an argument that Gandhi is not relevant. It appears that Gandhi's followers

have dwindled.

Gandhi was born in India but his principles and ideology stands for everyone –the entire universe. But his principle of Ahimsa is relevant or not in this era of terrorism, mob lynching of Dalit's, communal violence, rape, murder etc. the list goes on.

2nd October 2019 was a day in India commemorated as 150th birth anniversary of the father of nation Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi. Not only that the day was observed as International day of non- violence.

To practice Gandhi's ideology is strenuous. The significant ingredient here is non-violence. It was the medium of warfare used by him during British colonialism.

Barack Obama, the former US President, sees Mahatma Gandhi as an motivator. He had quoted , "In my life, I have always looked to Mahatma Gandhi as an inspiration, because he embodies the kind of transformational change that can be made when ordinary people come together to do extraordinary things."

Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese leader who was under house arrest for many years, strengthened herself from Gandhi. From Gandhi she was encouraged for a doctrine of peace and reconciliation to be converted into practice, one absolute condition needed is being gallant .

And so Gandhism is living in the contemporary world. Gandhi has galvanized and will continue to inspire many political, social and religious leaders all over the world.

CONCLUSION:

Gandhi strived to lead the country to not just political independence, but to a better India and a society free of caste, religious, economic and even gender prejudices, he said while chairing the first meeting of the national committee for the commemoration of the 150th birth anniversary of the father of the nation.

"Mahatma Gandhi was India's conscience keeper. The Mahatma is our past, he is our present and he is also our future," the president Ram Nath Kovind said

"The Mahatma continues to be of significance for all of us in all countries. The world needs to incorporate his ideas in the building of a 21st century that is marked by justice and equality, by peace and wisdom, and by the elimination of poverty," he said.

Round about 64 per cent members of the committee attended the meeting at the Rashtrapati Bhavan to discuss propositions for collating plethora of events to observe the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi.

In this new world is a global world. . We are not in an era of Isolation. With this no isolation we can see that every small instance of violence in part of the world affects the other areas . Sometimes this violence is becoming a chain process. Similar tactics of violence is used to get out of a particular situation.

Gandhi who is respected for his principle of Ahimsa in the world can bring lots of substantial changes .Now also as we need to adopt the principle for development and growth.

Let us acknowledge that Gandhi conviction impacted numerous leaders for instance Nelson Mandela, the South African crusader for freedom.. The truth is from Dalai Lama to Desmond Tutu and from Martin Luther King to Nelson Mandela, many world leaders were stimulated by Mahatma Gandhi, all in their own divergent ways

We can hold that Gandhi is not totally irrelevant and sensitization and awareness and the benefits of Ahimsa can be thought of. Times have changed but himsa cannot be the means and it cannot bring any solution for peaceful global order.

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