



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2018; 4(9): 291-292
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 22-07-2018
Accepted: 25-08-2018

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Importance of Mahatma Gandhi's four pillars in 21st century: Swaraj, Non-violence, Swadeshi, Sarvodaya

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Abstract

Gandhiji's Hind- Swaraj is a manifesto for a new world order based on morality. It is now after 100 years since Gandhi wrote Hind Swaraj yet the book has remained relevant to this day because the problems and issues, which inspired him to write it have not disappeared the crisis which gripped the society then has rather deepened. As Gandhi pointed out in Hind Swaraj, sensual and desirable things spread fast and spiritual and desirable things move at snail's pace. He wanted Sarvodaya, the Uday (rise) of all, he wanted India to follow the path laid by its own civilization, the middle path.

Keywords: Karmayogi, Magna- carta, Swaraj, Non-violence, Swadeshi, Sarvodaya

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi was no doubt primarily a man of God, but he was also a practical man. He was a practical philosopher who transcended all disciplinary limitations and barriers. He considered the roots of the problems we face today in the twist and turns of our evolutionary journey. He was a thinker, synthesizer, creative genius and Karmayogi in the true sense of the term. He has written a lot on spirituality, religion, Dharma, ethics, unity of means and ends. In fact his interest range from cosmology to cleanliness. His main purpose was to guide the individual to find his own path of self-actualization, which alone can lead to a higher level of consciousness. Truth alone was his pole star and the words he spoke- the ideas he expressed are to be studied always in relation to his religion of truth and his Karmayoga.

Gandhiji's Hind- Swaraj is a manifesto for a new world order based on morality. It is now after 100 years since Gandhi wrote Hind Swaraj yet the book has remained relevant to this day because the problems and issues, which inspired him to write it have not disappeared the crisis which gripped the society then has rather deepened. As Gandhi pointed out in Hind Swaraj, sensual and desirable things spread fast and spiritual and desirable things move at snail's pace. Violence has spread everywhere, no one is out of reach of Osama-Bin-Laden and his likes. Indirect violence in the form of hunger, exploitation and denial of human rights has maimed millions of people. Gandhi wished India to move forward on spiritual front while not neglecting the economic and social fronts. He wanted Sarvodaya, the Uday (rise) of all, he wanted India to follow the path laid by its own civilization, the middle path.

Gandhiji put forward four main pillars before humanity. So as to move towards its destiny. These four pillars are very much relevant in today's society; it's only a matter of how we use these pillars for society's upliftment. These are Swaraj, Non-violence, Swadeshi and Sarvodaya. According to Gandhi Swaraj did not convey just political independence, it conveyed the meaning of self-control. Self-control comes from self- realisation which comes through self-sacrifice and service to others; through self-denial and freedom of all, through truth, non-violence, love and compassion, as well as through Swaraj, Swadeshi, Swadharma and Sarvodaya. Gandhi's Hind-Swaraj is a Magna-carta of freedom- freedom for humanity and each individual human being free from fear-fear of hunger, of other human beings, of government, of even death. According to Gandhi, fearlessness is the first quality of a cultured person. A free man follows the dictates of his conscience, his Dharma. Today man should be free because free man is an Anasakta, he does not care for the consequences of his actions for his welfare. Whatever is right it must be done, 'Karmanye Vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana.'

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According to Gandhi, the object of basic education is the physical, intellectual and moral development of the children through the medium of a handicraft. For instance, we can teach our children to make clay toys that are to be destroyed afterwards that too will develop their intellect. But it will neglect a very important moral principle, viz, that human labour and material should never be used in a wasteful or unproductive way. The emphasis laid on the principle of spending every minute of one's life usefully is the best education for citizenship and incidentally makes best education self-sufficient. Education, as it is important today, is not an instrument of gaining Swaraj because it just prepared the youth for self-indulgence. In ancient school system, the basic function of education is character building. A building created on that foundation will last but unfortunately, this basic function of education is lost today. According to Gandhi right kind of education as imparted by the parents, family members, community members and schools etc. was the very foundation of Swaraj. Swaraj cannot be given; it has to be taken and own. Only those who are brave can secure it. Walking on the path of Swaraj brings man nearer to it. The most important means to set on the path of Swaraj is the observance of nonviolence.

Gandhiji has presented non-violence in a new form and shape before the world. Form of his nonviolence is no escape but resistance. He has marched forward to use nonviolence as the fiercest rebellion to morality against immortality, humanity against inhumanity and justice and fearlessness against injustice and tyranny. Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to will of the evil-doer, but it means putting off one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his labour, his religion, his soul and lay the foundation for that empire's fall for its regeneration.

Today no country or individual is in peace. Wars are waged to bring peace; people are killed to save people and cultures are destroyed to save cultures. The Taliban of Afghanistan killed thousands of their co-religionist to save Islam and destroyed their cultural heritage in the Bameyani Buddha. But in reality where is peace? Talibans are gone but Afghanistan and its people are still suffering. Each war is fought ostensibly for a 'just cause' without realising that war is an unjust means even for a just cause. At present the dangers of nuclear annihilation and chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction and global climatic changes threaten the very existence of life on the earth. The real solution for all those problems is Gandhi's weapon i.e. non-violence which is accessible to all: strong or weak.

One of the major thrusts of Gandhi was self-reliance through Swadeshi. In fact he wanted the government's role in day today life of the people to be limited to support when so required. People should develop their own institutions and manage their own affairs. This means that the local resources should be transferred to the local units; village Panchayats and city municipalities. Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restrict us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of more remote. Much of the poverty of the masses is due to the ruinous departure from Swadeshi in the economic and industrial life.

Sarvodaya is a term meaning 'Universal Uplift' or 'Progress of all'. The term was first coined by Gandhi as the title of his 1908 translation of John Ruskin track on political economy

'Unto This Last', and Gandhi came to use the term for the ideal of his own political philosophy. Sarvodaya means multi-faceted development of the individuals, families, groups, societies and humanity as a whole. Gandhi suggested Sarvodaya, which minimizes wants and thus makes men wantless. In Gandhiji's Sarvodaya society dreams, every member will be free from any greed for limitless acquisition of material wealth and more and more luxurious living and they will follow the motto of 'simple living and high thinking'. Everyone will thus, get ample opportunities to produce and earn sufficiently through honest work for a decent and dignified living. Consequently there will be no problem of unemployment.

In Sarvodaya all people will be imbued with the spirit of love, fraternity, truth, non-violence and self-sacrifices. Society will function on the basis of non-violence. The Sarvodaya society is based on equality and liberty. There is no room in it for unwholesome competition, exploitation and class-hatred. There will be no party system and majority rule and society will be free from the evil of the tyranny of the majority. So the ideals of Sarvodaya will be noble.

In 21st century great social worker Anna Hajare following all principles, ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and his effect on all society is successful. Anna Hajare's Satyagrah results into Right to Information act, and secondly passed the Janmat Lokpal act and government also accepted after Anna Hajare's Satyagrah. Gandhi stimulated consciousness among all classes of people that their interest lay in making independent of British rule. But he did not limit himself to the simple phenomena of separating British from Indian sovereignty. He tried to enable society to liberate itself from various forms of bondage-those imposed by outsiders. Gandhiji's Hind Swaraj is not only a book on how to win political freedom for India but it is a Magna-carta for the freedom of mind and the evolution of human species from conscious and material beings to super conscious and moral beings.

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