
Relevance of Gandhian Values in Modern Indian Polity

Sunil Dutt Sharma

(Research Scholar),

Department of Public Administration, CDLU, Sirsa

Abstract:

Today majority of the countries across the world happens to be under democratic system of Government. Theoretically, this system is considered to be the best so far. It is the best because people are connected with it directly or indirectly at every level and it ensures popular participation horizontally and vertically. Also it provides maximum opportunities of public progress and development. People can themselves decide in this system the mode of their welfare. However, even though being theoretically the best system of government, if we peruse the democratic nations, we first of all find that there is non-equal development of the citizens and socio-economic and political disparity among individuals and nations. They are under clutches of regionalism, terrorism and communalism. There is degradation of moral and ethical values. There are other vivid problems akin to mentioned above and peace is far away so long as these problems exist. If these nations want to get rid of these problems in a holistic way, all citizens of them must have equal development and they should have communal harmony towards making all citizens collective and unified partners in progress. But, reality is far from these wishful ideals to be achieved.

Though, now people are more aware of their rights than ever before. They are essential so Indian polity theoretically recognizes the prime importance of the concept of human rights. However, from the practical aspect of our political system, the Indian society is known for its inequality, social hierarchy and the rich and poor divide. Here in this context Gandhiji's outlook towards human beings deserve great attention. He believed they must equally accept and respect each other without having any discrimination based on caste, colour, creed, tribe, sex.

Gandhian non-violence is immensely significant in system of today's governance, especially in a democratic system. Mahatma Gandhi said in this context, "If they are to be truly made democratic, they must be valiantly non-violent". In case of absence of this attribute, democracy shall be there for namesake only and it would be better for it to...clearly be supporter of dictatorship. Polity must be fearless, full of equality, providing protection to all eternal values and only then it can be pro-people. Man can contribute to world peace only in such a system of government along with gaining his goal.

Gandhism calls upon modern polities to march in this direction and to make them habitual to non-violence. This is really welfaristic. We cannot at all minimize significance of Gandhian non-violence in modern polity. Today the problem of falling standards of morality in public life accentuated by inequalities, violations of human rights, corruption, terrorism, communalism, regionalism need for "a new moral leadership" guided by reassertion of "Gandhian values and ideals" for rejuvenating the Indian Polity.

Keywords : Democratic system, Polity, Human Rights, Governance

Today majority of the countries across the world happens to be under democratic system of Government. Theoretically, this system is considered to be the best so far. It is the best because people are connected with it directly or indirectly at every level and it ensures popular participation horizontally and vertically. Also it provides maximum opportunities of public progress and development. People can themselves decide in this system the mode of their welfare. However, even though being theoretically the best system of government, if we peruse the democratic nations, we first of all find that there is non-equal development of the citizens and socio-economic and political disparity among individuals and nations. We subsequently find that these nations are more or less victimized by regionalism. They have problem relating to language. They are under clutches of terrorism and communalism. There is also the problem of negation of human rights in these nations, degradation of moral and ethical values. Questions of morality and ethics become more relevant than ever before. It is fairly well known that several critics from diverse political perspective have often lamented the falling standards of morality in public life. There are other vivid problems akin to mentioned above and peace is far away so long as these problems exist. If these nations want to get rid of these problems in a holistic way, all citizens of them must have equal development and they should have communal harmony towards making all citizens collective and unified partners in progress. But, reality is far from these wishful ideals to be achieved.

Though, now people of the world are more aware of their rights than ever before but still full accomplishment of these rights is still a distant dream. Human rights have been described as the minimum rights and are inalienable. In the world today, one of the major concerns is to recognize and respect the dignity of men and the equal rights of man and woman. They are essential for the development of an overall personality. Without recognizing the concept of human rights no polity can be a democratic one. Undoubtedly the concept of human rights has always been regarded as the backbone of every democratic set up. Indian polity too theoretically recognizes the prime importance of the concept of human rights. However, from the practical aspect of our political system, the Indian society is known for its inequality, social hierarchy and the rich and poor divide. 'The social hierarchy is the result of the caste system, which still exists in India. It is an open human rights violation which is prevalent in the Indian society. And moreover, it hurts the fundamental right of the citizen, 'the right to live with dignity'.

Caste conflicts destruct the social security and peace among the people. The atrocities and human rights violations against the lower castes can be controlled only through a culture of equality of human beings. Here in this context Gandhiji's outlook towards human beings deserve great attention. Gandhiji believed all human beings belong to one family and one father. The family is the humanity as a whole and the father is God - the creator. And moreover, they must equally accept and respect each other without having any discrimination based on caste, colour, creed, tribe, sex. Gandhiji believed and

dreamed: "The moment, we have restored real living equality between men and man; we shall be able to establish equality between men and the whole creation. When that day comes, we shall have peace on earth and goodwill among men". So, Gandhian philosophy in practice will pave a way for real democracy in India.

It is essential that the nations of democratic system of government should be free from above-mentioned problems, must be capable of ensuring equal development of their all citizens and the citizens concerned must march forward on path of progress in unified way along with rendering contribution to world peace. Gandhism is very much contextual today on this front of polity and governance and thus ensuring a truly democratic country of Gandhian dreams.

While accepting dictum of all-welfare as basis and not that of majority, Mahatma Gandhi is certainly a staunch supporter of democracy and along with that, he wants that it should be intermingled with non-violence in every manner. In such a democracy, "Quantum of interference in liberty of people happens to be minimum." In fact, Mahatma Gandhi takes real democracy to be that admits governmental interference at the minimum, which has peace at the maximum and all progress on the basis of equality. It is possible only when non-violence is imparted the supreme status in practice as well as in principle and at social as well as individual plane. Only such a democracy can be successful in its real goal.

We could clearly know that it is only non-violence, which can make life prosperous at every level. When it is so why should not the democratic countries make themselves prone to non-violence in the event that these countries with democratic governance system accept welfare of all citizens to be their ambition or goal? Mahatma Gandhi wants this very all out of the system of government and it is really a thing of significance. It is such a significant matter that this reality cannot be denied by you or me. It is on this front that Gandhian non-violence is immensely significant in system of today's governance, especially in a democratic system.

Presently, the democratic system in operation in worldly nations is not according to Gandhian principle. We are not getting what Mahatma Gandhi ultimately cherished from democracy. If these principles would have been practiced there could not have been atmosphere of violence and fear marred by corruption and divided human society. There could not have been problems pertaining to terrorism, communalism, regionalism and problems relating to languages. More than this all, there could not have been observance of ethical and moral degradation in public life. Such degradation is being observed constantly. The main cause after all these things remain that all activities of these nations are not non-violent. There cannot be any possibility of violence while there is Gandhism in democracy. Violence is not sacred, pure or welfaristic from any point of view. Whatever is gained on the

basis of it is impure and temporary. It is on this issue that it cannot pace with democracy even for a moment. Mahatma Gandhi says, "Democracy and violence can never be mutual".

Basis of democracy is non-violence in toto. And, there cannot be any diminution in it. Non-violence should be real; not merely titular. Democracy shall be pro-people only while so. Mahatma Gandhi said in this context, "If they are to be truly made democratic, they must be valiantly non-violent". In case of absence of this attribute, democracy shall be there for namesake only and it would be better for it to...clearly be supporter of dictatorship.

Now, the question arises before us as to how to guide modern system of governance, especially democracy, towards Gandhian way, which undoubtedly has non-violence as its basic root. Then, it is to be made and quotable towards equal development of all citizens. This democracy must be such that "it should not warrant power of punishment". In it, "... people will certainly be conscious regarding their duties: they may sometimes, of course, be ignorant towards their rights". In case there is something anti-people in it, the people shall make it favourable to them through non-violent means. Mahatma Gandhi is in favour of spontaneous development of non-violence. To make democracy ultimately in accordance with non-violence remains to be his goal. This is possible. He rightly said in this regard, "... Non-violence is not merely an individual concept. It is social concept also. It must be developed in this form".

Development is essential and it is in sight. He again states in this regard along with citing a nice example, "Mutual practices in society are regulated by non-violence to a considerable extent. I want it to be at development at larger scale". This should of course, be done in right direction and with truthful spirit. It is the inference that the non-violence permanently present in human nature should be developed in practice from its present state towards progressive one in right direction per truthful spirit. A true and cherished democracy shall be established only in such a condition. A system shall be commendable in proportion to non-violence in it. This is important regarding every system, however, the government of the people-democracy-remains foremost in this chain. On governance and administrative domain also he provides a deep insight on themes like Trusteeship and Truth and exploring their linkages to corporate stewardship, accountability, transparency and communication. His philosophy has profound influence on corporate governance and responsibility in matters such as corporate reputation, inclusive development, shareholder wealth creation, stakeholder concern, and other contemporary concerns.

Polity must be fearless, full of equality, providing protection to all eternal values and only then it can be pro-people. It can accord apt dimension to development. Man can contribute to world peace only in such a system of government along with gaining his goal. Government should be welfaristic to people and above being non-violent as enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhian principle of non-violence is

very much significant in modern system of government from this point of view. This significance is likely to be of permanent nature perpetually.

Yes, the democracy of Mahatma Gandhi's imagination-fully encircled with non-violence exists in no nation of the world as up to now. Democracy of his imagination happens to be one, which does not have any provision of punishment and even an organization like 'State' happens to be obsolete in it. This is because Mahatma Gandhi holds, "...State is symbolical of centralized and organized violence". As non-violence is connected with human soul, man can be non-violent whereas in opposition to it, "... State is a soul-less machine. On this accord, it is impossible to get rid of violence. Its very existence depends upon violence". Non-existence of state as cherished by Mahatma Gandhi is impossible instantly or in near future. Even then, it is incumbent on the people, who are living in state organizations, to develop non-violence that is permanently present in their nature and to enhance it gradually up to adequate level. Along with that, all systems especially democracy should, work in direction of development of non-violence at individual, community, social and national levels.

The atmosphere of fear which we see, the diminution of values in life and the problems having cropped up vividly cannot be eradicated without developing it. There is no alternative to non-violence. The whole human history is within our purview. Whenever polities were under clutches of violence, tacitly or expressively, they could not get anything except doom and disaster to their citizens. Their own peace was fully shattered per this doom and others were also badly affected. It is in this regard that in accordance with philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, non-violence should be admitted as invariable part of our life and it is on the basis of this dictum that modern polities must operate.

Though, polities and governance cannot operate as per expectation of the Great Mahatma Gandhi all of a sudden. Non-violence cannot be a part of conduct instantly, but Mahatma Gandhi's suggestion is very important in this regard. However, the polities must forward certainly in this direction. Needless to say that non-violence is true, natural, and enemy of fearfulness, stands at top amongst eternal values including the equality and has been gradually progressive. We clearly see that in spite of differences to whatsoever extent, ultimately there is an innovative desire for peace. It is because non-violence happens to be in human nature and human being likes it.

Gandhism calls upon modern polities to march in this direction and to make them habitual to non-violence. This is really welfaristic. We cannot at all minimize significance of Gandhian non-violence in modern polity. Today the problem of falling standards of morality in public life accentuated by inequalities, violations of human rights, corruption, terrorism, communalism, regionalism need for "a new moral leadership" guided by reassertion of "Gandhian values and ideals" for rejuvenating the Indian Polity.

References:

1. Ramchandra Guha: Gandhi Before India, 2013
2. M. K.Gandhi: Mahatma Gandhi: The Man and his Philosophy
3. M.K.Gandhi: An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1991
4. M.K.Gandhi: Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1945
5. G.Dhawan: The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1957