



Changing the Political Strategy of Indian National Congress during Emergence of Gandhi

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Abstract

The Indian national movement had been changed greatly with the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian politics. The politics of urban educated elite class politics was shifted in mass politics with Gandhi emerged as the sole leader of the congress. This transformation of Indian politics was not sudden, but evolutionary. The moderate politics was viewed tangible change with the advent of the extremist in Indian politics. Gandhi expanded this tangible change and made it the politics of the masses. This was totally the rejection of moderate policy of 3P's and the agitation within four corners of the colonial constitution. The introduction and experimentation of Satyagraha was considered significant change in the politics of strategy in the struggle with foreigners.

Key Words – Gandhi, Moderate, Politics, Extremist, Satyagraha, Mass, Colonial, Government, Strategy, Swadeshi

Introduction

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a man of a millennium and one of the rare citizens of this globe who imparts this same lesson of truth, non-violence, and peace not just in India but also throughout the globe, was a single person to fight against by the mighty British with the weapon of non-violence by persuading fellow men to walk on the path of non-violence. He was a single place to defend against the great and powerful British with the weapon of non-violence. Gandhi is spearheading a nonviolent resistance movement in India against by the metal colonial authority at the time, which finally resulted inside the country's gaining independence in 1947. The British government had surrendered again and again to his political wisdom, took opportunities again and again for his simplicity, yet he reached his destination to achieve Indian freedom. In the political field he had harvested so many strategies and techniques and nurtured it leaving the strategies of Moderates and the Extremist against the struggle with colonial government in the very initial phase of his political career. The success of the political strategy made him as 'Gandhi' – 'Gandhi Deota'. (Moin, 1990)

First World War was one of the turning points of the anti – colonial movement in India as this international crisis brought the favourable condition towards Indian freedom movement. It enhanced possibilities to get dominion status on one hand, on the other it also built up an atmosphere to an opportunity for getting help from the enemy country of the British. Moreover the progressive outlook of Woodrow Wilson, the American President inspired the Indian nationalist. The death of so many Indian soldiers in the different battle front of the First World War increased the anger of Indian people. People were eager to launch a struggle but vacuum of leadership disheartened the people. Therefore the political stage was ready for the birth of a new leader as most of the leaders of moderate and extremist were either died or aged – old. They had played their historical role; they had almost left nothing to contribute the country anymore. (Bandhu, 2003)

Before going to discuss about the changing political strategy of Mahatma Gandhi in the time of making Gandhi, let us know, what were the political strategy of the early congress – that was Moderate



congress and the Extremist in the national movement of India? Leaders of the moderate congress were mainly urban educated middle class or rich class, they were all graduated from indigenous universities or the universities of Cambridge or Oxford, were very successful in their professional life like barrister, pleaders doctors, teachers etc. The socio- economic structure in which they were born and brought up and were successful was not tried to be collapsed. But as a most progressive part of the country the moderate leaders agitated against the exploitation of the colonial government abiding by the constitution framed the British. (Bipan Chandra, 1988)

Under these circumstances the agitation of the moderates was purely urban centric and the involvement of urban educated elite class was for their own interest only demanding for a increase of a few seats in the constitution, reduce the age of civil service examination, criticize of economic policy of government taking with the strategy of please, prayer and protest and writing down the columns of various newspaper. For being a successful person the moderate had little time to spare for the congress organization, for the activities of rescue work of their motherland. After acquiring the name and social prestige and partly hankering after fame and partly for their consciousness of ideology of nationalism the early congress met themselves in the different urban centres in each and every year during winter recess period in the last week of December only for three days to formulate the activities of next one year for Indian National congress. When the holidays was over they were engaged their jobbed totally forgetting the resolutions taken in the annual conferences.

If we ignore two political events in Indian politics in between the completion of moderate politics and the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi then we fail to understand the strategically change of politics made by Gandhi. These two events were the rise of the Extremist and the Swadeshi movement in Bengal. The difference between the moderates and the extremist were mainly ideological and cultural not strategy of politics against colonial government. The extremist came to Indian politics with huge bang criticizing the limitation politics of the moderates but extinguished like meteorite. Although, the extremists having been glorified with the tradition, culture and civilization of ancient India and tried to forcibly break the rules and regulations and the laws of the Indian constitution, yet they did not take any identical political strategy breaking the past in spite of their random criticism of the strategy of politics of the moderates. They could only extend the political strategy of moderates deviating from the politics of limitation.(Singh I. , 1988)

The anti- partition movement consisted of different phases like moderate, extremist, Atmashakti, boycott and Swadeshi. Here political leaders had taken different techniques, one vain strategy invited another. It was observed that anti- partition movement of Bengal while following the continuation of political strategy of the past, at the same time it brought different kinds of strategies to struggle against colonial rule in the Indian political scenario. Atmashakti, Passive resistance programme, boycott movement and the swadeshi was the revolutionary in the context of proceeding of politics in contemporary India. Swadeshi movement had given to born new ideology and technique of politics in battle with the British. National politics became more self-determined, self-controlled, and potential and exacerbate and were shaping its independent character, not dependent on the assistance of the Britons. (Bipan Chandra, 1988)

In this historical context Gandhi returned to India in 1915 after launching a successful Satyagraha movement on the issue of apartheid against Pretoria government in South Africa. Returning to India, on advice of his political guru Gopal Krishna Gokhle, he travelled in the various parts of the country



and tried to understand the real soul of mother India among the lowliest people of the villages of India. The experiences he gathered through his travelling India led him to take different kinds of technique and strategy apart from moderate and extremist policy of urban politics to erase the tears of mother India but he was informed about the impact of strategically change of politics in swadeshi movement. Gandhi was a person of continuity to keeps the trends of changing the strategy of politics of swadeshi. Standing on the pillars of swadeshi he brought about a sea change in the strategy of politics in the struggle with the colonial rulers. (Moin, 1990)

It has been already seen that the field of anti-colonial national movement was prepared by the moderates and the extremist and it was also true that the Indian national movement was essentially a movement of urban educated middle class and rich class and it shaped elite character. Bipan Chandra also decided to write that the main goals of the early leaders were to establish the foundation for a secular democratic national movement; to popularise and politically educate people; to form the head quarter of the movement; that really is, to form some all India leadership group; and to develop and expanded an anti-colonial philosophy. Bipan Chandra's writings on such topics can be discovered in his book, "The Making of Modern India." An enlarged area was established for the launching of Gandhian campaign tactic as a result of various movements, including the extremist movement, the swadeshi movement, as well as the home rule movement. (Zaidi, 1990)

Gandhi as a political leader of Indian national congress brought about the change of Indian politics by introducing Satyagraha, going out the politics of limitation confined to the urban educated elite class. The introduction and experimentation of Satyagraha was considered a first significant change in the politics of strategy in the struggle with foreigners. Through the non- violence method of satyagraha, Gandhiji not only wanted to liberate India from foreign yoke but also increase the inner strength of spiritualism among countrymen. In the Champaran movement in Bihar in 1917, in the Kheda movement in Gujrat in 1918 and in the Mill workers' movement in Ahamedabad in Gujrat in 1918 witnessed the implementation of Satyagraha. Ignorant people of the village were drenched with the ideology of Satyagraha and its success prepared the path making Gandhi as 'Gandhi'. These three movements may be considered as period of making Gandhi charisma in the Indian politics. (Manikrao Hodlya Gavit & Attar Chand, 1989)

Secondly, if we carefully examine the national politics of India till the beginning of the 1st world war we watched that all political activities against colonialism were taking place in the urban areas such as Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Lahore, Allahabad etc. Gandhi consciously shafted the centers of anti-colonial movement from urban to rural area. He rightly felt that most of people of India lived in the rural area so that it was the village, not urban would play the pivotal role for fighting with foreigners by the technique of non – violent method of Satyagraha. Shifting the movements in the rural areas he welcomed peasants, labourer and the lower strata of Indian society which was hither unknown to Indian politics.

Thirdly, the elitist character of movement of Indian politics was also changed by mass movement and mass mobilization. The moderates and the extremist never came down to the lower section of Indian society leaving their prestige and dignity of upper caste and culture. Gandhi came to touched with the lowliest section and put up the mass movement in the above stated three movements. So, the introduction of the mass movement was one of his changing political ploys in struggle with colonialism. This was totally the rejection of moderate policy of 3P's and the agitation within four



corners of the colonial constitution. (Singh I. , 1988)

Fourthly, before the emergence of Gandhi in Indian politics the participants in the anti – colonial movement were basically the citizen of cities and towns, most of them were educated from middle class and rich class families of upper caste Indian. With the change of epicenter of the movement during the period of making Gandhi as Gandhi the participants were also changed. Peasants, labour, agrarian labourer and various classes of lower strata were involved in the movement of Gandhi. Gandhi built up bridge between the urban educated middle class and rural ignorant people of lower strata. This strategically change of politics brought a radical effect in the development of future politics of Gandhi. (Kaushik, 1986)

Fifthly, Gandhi changed the strategy and technique of Indian politics by picking up the local issue of the movement against British. Champaran issue, Kheda issue and issues of the mill workers of Ahmedabad contained only local character and these local characters had no relation with the issues of all India perspective during the period of First World War. Gandhi made the local issues into all - India issues. It was Gandhi's charisma the local issues were intensified and shaped as all India character. Before the emergence of Gandhi both the moderate and the extremists did not bother about the local issue and they didn't think that local issues could be shaped national character. Since then the local issues were much address and got importance in the Indian politics. In further research it will explore that during the time of making Gandhi as Gandhi the local politics had been turned as one of the dominant politics in colonial India along with the national movement. It opened the avenues for many provinces to exert their identity while their engagement in national politics. (B. N. Pande, Nisith Ranjan Ray, Ravinder Kumar, & Manmath Nath Das, 1985)

Sixthly, Gandhi started the experiment of Satyagraha in those provinces which were so far backward in terms of holding anti- colonial activities in colonial India. By launching Satyagraha in the backward provinces like Bihar and Gujrat Gandhi wanted to make an enhancement of political consciousness of those provinces to equate with politically advance provinces such as Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab. He rightly understood that if all the provinces were not equally politically conscious against British extortion and exploitation, the launching of Satyagraha with all India level would be in vain. This strategic move of Gandhi was very much effective when he launched Satyagraha in all India perspective such as in non – cooperation movement and civil disobedience movement. (Singh, 1981)

Seventhly, in the conduction of Mill workers' movement in Ahmedabad in 1918, Gandhi for the first time implemented the weapon of hunger strike in Indian politics. The success of this movement proved that the weapon of hunger strike was one of the strongest methods in the non – violent movement of Satyagraha. (Chand & Jagdish Saran Sharma, 1959)

Eighthly, it has been exposed in the careful examination of the above stated first three movements of Gandhi as the period of making Gandhi - Champaran and Kheda movement were peasant movements and the other was working class movement. All the three movements came by partial success. In the case of Champaran where Champaran agrarian Bill was passed in which *Tin Kathi* system was abolished but agrarian rent was reduced only 20% to 23%, in the case Kheda, the rent was reduced 30% to 40% and wages of the mill workers of Ahmedabad was enhanced to 30% in place of 50%. Gandhi realized that ruler never fulfill 100% of demand by putting up one single movement. It was success of agitators when authority accepted a portion of demand of the movement. Therefore he came to negotiate with authority by getting partial fulfillment of the demand of movement and prepared the



satyagrahis for launching another movement for the same issue for getting fulfillment of whole demand. This strategy was called by Bipan Chandra as Struggle – truce – struggle theory or Pressure – Concession – Pressure politics. Indian independence came with this war of strategy of Gandhi. (Mello, 1934)

Conclusion

In the thoughtful thought we have given to the movements of Gandhi, we have seen that 3 separate approaches were primarily taken. These approaches were the creation of alternative solutions, mass hold a rally, and structure-based arranging. However, it was rare for any and all three approaches to collaborate inside the service of a coherent political movement. Gandhi functioned as a bridge between such varied orientations, giving an exceptional instance for just how organizations may gain when different techniques come together. He was a leading figure in the Indian independence struggle. Including during his lifetime, the validity of his many political prescription and the quality of his numerous strategic choices were the topic of ongoing discussion and debate; these discussions have persisted after his passing in 1948. In notwithstanding the of the many scandals and discrepancies that surround Gandhi's career, we are still able to learn valuable lessons from the advancement of the Indian independence movement during his lifetime and its success in bringing anti-imperialist annoyance against British rule to historic levels.

Uprisings in Gandhi's early campaigns were frequently described to as "unplanned," "emotional," as well as "spontaneous," among other descriptors. Many commentators have been of the opinion that certain revolutions could not be organized in any way and were, instead, the result of the zeitgeist of the moment of history. Gandhi presented a alternative point of view. He argued that moments of activity resembling a tornado might be engineered by practitioners who are very skilled. An early and seminal research that had a significant influence on the match of Gandhian studies stated that "Satyagraha, as practical socio-political action, requires a comprehensive programme of organization, preparation, and studied implementation." In point of fact, one of Gandhi's most significant contribution in the field of campaign tactic in Indian history is the development of the this technique, which is known as that of the strategic use of unarmed rebellion.

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Notes

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