



Mahatma Gandhi: An Apostle of Humanity and Inspiration

Dr. Kiran Mani Tripathi, Professor, Lakshmi Narain College of Technology, Bhopal
Email: kiran@lncet.ac.in

Abstract

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as an apostle of humanity and one of the twentieth century's greatest political and spiritual leaders is immortal for his confessions, great reformations, and values. Gandhiji as the messenger of non-violence and peace has given the concepts of truth, unity, Satyagraha, and Education that is related to human rights and responsibilities. He always stood for love, brotherhood, freedom, justice and equality. He believed that the service to the community is the service to God. He was in favor of human rights which should be fundamental as a human being irrespective of any gender bias. Gandhiji's belief is on the concept of non-discrimination and equality. All humans of any country are free and equal in rights and dignity. Gandhiji's approach to Human Rights is related to equality and justice to raise the level of society to a united nation. He wanted the involvement of women in political, civil, economic and cultural and all the respective fields. He has been the inspiration for all as per the concepts of development of the country in any context that is beyond the time and limits of boundaries.

Keywords: *humanity, immortal, freedom, justice, fundamental rights.*

INTRODUCTION

“You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is like an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.” — **Mahatma Gandhi**

Mahatma Gandhi, a name, known to the world as his personality represents or symbolizes humanity and a pure soul. Wherever he stayed his invincible impression like a guardian for the country or even the world will remain virtually unchanged. He has created a history and tradition of kindness and meritorious acts. He was balanced in his approach and thoughts; keeping his

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experiments to make the situation under control. He carried the whole sole responsibility of humanity and peace on his shoulders. He set the example of an ideal leader rather than instructing others. The way of pioneering and practicing the principle of Satyagraha that is resistance through mass nonviolent civil disobedience against the tyranny of the British was to teach the world to handle the toughest situation. History teaches how to deal with any difficult situation and Gandhiji has created that history. Most importantly his works are the treatise of history and literature. His moral preaching is based on the service of the society. He led the nation in various campaigns to make India independent. His principles of nonviolent and civil disobedience were supreme and vital in eradicating all the problems of poverty and injustices of the caste system. He built harmony in religious contexts. His role was pivotal in making the base of secular India.

HUMANITY AND INSPIRATION: RACIAL PERSECUTION ACTIVIST

While Gandhiji was in South Africa he had concern with all the Indians and Africans there. He himself had to suffer a lot on discrimination for which he resisted a lot. Several incidents such as skin discrimination scene of throwing out of a train coach by a white train official shuddered him from inside and he felt to resist this. As primarily he was not interested in politics still these incidents made him to fight for the human rights. He wanted to eradicate the cast prejudices and racial discrimination completely from the nation and even from the world. As in South Africa, white officials denied the rights of coloured people and they often bullied them and even to Gandhiji by calling ‘parasites’ ‘squalid coolie’ etc. People would spit on him as an expression of racial hate. [1]

Gandhiji believed in faith and goodness in others. He believed that we should hate the sin, not the sinner. He fervently believed in humanity. Though people are suffering lots of pain in the scenario of world war still, as Gandhiji said there is always hope and the complete ocean of this world cannot be foul. His words are relevant and true. A few drops cannot turn the whole ocean dirty.



Campaign Against Castes and Untouchability

This evil prevailed in Hindu society and Gandhiji has protested for. He believed that eradication of untouchability will help the nation grow and united and he also believed that Hinduism has that flexibility. In 1932, Gandhiji started a new campaign for the improvement of the lives of the untouchables, and he began to call ‘ harijans’, "the children of god".[2] this shows equality, love, and respect for all humans.

Freedom Movements

Mahatma Gandhi the "Father of the Nation" led almost all the freedom movements with his strong will in India successfully and created history. In all the freedom movements against British, he always followed the path of non-violence. His efforts were such that we have got the freedom celebrating and commemorate the lives of the martyrs. The major freedom movements that are made historic are as follows:

1. Champaran Movement, (1917)

In the independence movement, The Champaran Satyagraha in 1917 was the first and one of the most important movements that took place in Champaran of the district Bihar in India. The farmers were protesting against having to grow indigo with barely any payment for it. [3]

Commercial indigo cultivation had begun in 1750, in Bihar, the United Provinces, and the Bengal Presidency. British colonists had collusion with local rulers, landlords and Nawabs as it was a means of prosperity for several Asian and European traders and companies. So they coerced farmers to cultivate indigo as on the condition of giving loans. As cultivation of indigo was a cash crop that required a lot of water and even, it left the soil completely barren. So the local farmers opposed its cultivation and preferred to grow crops of daily need i.e., beans and rice.

Gandhi as convinced by Raj Kumar Shukla and Sant Raut a money lender and with so many veteran supporters and new volunteers led rallies and a hunger strike against the landlords, who had signed an agreement with the British government that offered additional compensation and authority over the region’s poor farmers and also the suspension of revenue hikes and collection until the famine was resolved.



The ‘Champaran Agrarian Bill’, was introduced by the Governments of Bihar and Orissa that consisted of all the proposals Gandhi Mission had made.

2. Kheda Movement (1917)

Mohan Lal Pandey in Kheda, Gujarat in 1917 demanded the remission of taxes owing to the poor situation of harvests or crops, so it was a no-tax campaign started by him. On 22nd March 1918 Gandhiji joined this movement and started the satyagraha ie, ‘insistence of truth’ along with Vallabhbhai Patel and Indulal Yagnik. And that resulted positively as the British government accepted the demands of the farmers.

3. Khilafat Movement (1919)

The Khilafat Movement was started by the Ali brothers Shaukat Ali, Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, Hakim Ajmal Khan, and Abul Kalam Azad. The movement showed the denial and protest against the unjust that was done with Turkey after the First World War. Although so many political activities and popular uproar on behalf of the caliphate emerged across the Muslim world, the most prominent activities took place in India. Mahatma Gandhi launched the protest movement against the British rule. The movement was to demand to restore the collapsing status of the Caliph in Turkey. Soon, in the All-India Conference in Delhi, Mahatma Gandhi was elected as the President.

4. Non-cooperation Movement (1920)

The concepts of Non-cooperation and swaraj are very crucial in Gandhiji’s movements of freedom started in 1920. As the Jaliawala bagh incident was so horrific, Gandhiji asked Indians to revoke the cooperation from the British government, to persuade them to grant self-governance. It was as a large-scale satyagraha through which he planned for non-cooperation persuading all Indians to withdraw their labour from any activity that "sustained the British government and also economy in India... including British industries and educational institutions.” [4]

5. Civil Disobedience Movement (1930)

Mahatma Gandhi started the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 and it is also a milestone in the way for freedom in India. He launched the movement after the observance of Independence



Day in 1930. Gandhiji's political ideologies of Ahimsa and Satyagraha are always reflected in all the movements and in this movement too. As non-violence, and the Non-Co-Operation were the essence of The Civil Disobedience Movement that was to defy the British laws

Gandhiji commenced the civil disobedience movement with the Dandi March on 12th March 1930. He with other 78 members left Sabarmati Ashram on foot and reached Dandi to break the salt law. At that time the government had control over the production of salt and it was considered illegal if done by anyone. The Salt March was started from Sabarmati and arrived in Dandi on 6th April where Mahatma Gandhi disobeyed the authorities by taking up a pinch of salt from sea evaporation and finally, he broke the law. The civil disobedience movement was accepted after this event all across the country

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Gandhiji considered women as the better half of the society and humanity not the weaker sex. He encouraged women in every field and most significantly in politics. As the women are embodiment of faith, humility, sacrifice and knowledge, they are nobler than men. If women are lagging behind in any path they are the stumbling block in the way of progress and success of the nation. He said women and men both have equal rights in the path of freedom and liberty. He also said in freedom women should not imitate the West but they should follow their genius and Indian environment. During 30's he urged women to take part in the Satyagraha movement and civil disobedience campaigns. He urged women to enter the legislatures with the passion of serving the people and strengthening the panchayat base.

BASIC EDUCATION ACCORDING TO MAHATMA GANDHI

Gandhiji explored a system of education called basic education containing the philosophy of life and values. The education system explained by Gandhiji has some important features making the thought sublime and equal for all.

a. *Complete development*: The education system should offer all-round development the personality of the child 'stimulating intellectual, spiritual and physical faculties'.



b. *Free and Compulsory Education for all*: basic education should be free and compulsory for all the boys and girls of the age between 7 to 14. The mode of education should be the mother tongue at primary level.

c. *Occupation-focused Education*: craft and skill-based education is of great importance in the Indian context. Craft makes education self-sufficient as they can get their own livelihood. Gandhiji thought that vocational-focused education and training will develop a disciplined mind and improve the productivity of the nation.

d. *The Mother tongue as a Medium of Instruction*: As per Gandhiji's views on the medium of instruction and subject of study were the mother tongue should be applied. It develops clarity in thought and understanding of the subject matter as it is easily understood by the students and that enhances their learning skills.

e. *Development of Creativity, Analytical and Critical Thinking*: Application of knowledge enhances creativity and thus improves analytical and critical thinking. So Gandhiji stressed on the principle of "learning by doing". It stimulates mind of the individual to think creatively, analytically and critically. As per his views this will enable them to apply the knowledge practically. So his emphasis was on the work culture for students even from the earliest stage that was to enable them to start producing whatever they were learning. So concern or the main goal of his basic education was to use his head, heart and hand rather than just concentrating on reading or writing. According to Gandhiji, "By education I mean bringing out the best in the child and man: body, mind and spirit." Only Literacy should not be the main objective of education.

f. *Emphasis on Collaborative Learning*: True education is an ongoing process helping to cultivate a sense of tolerance, cooperation, collaboration, and responsibility. These qualities create balance between the goal and the personality of the individual. Crafting leads to collaborative learning and the value of honest work is also realized

g. *Great Emphasis on Moral Education*: Gandhiji thought that education is the way to achieve peace in life. And for it morality and ethics are important factors so education should be based on



ethics and morality. Gandhiji advised all students that they should regard morality and honesty as essential parts of his education.

h. *Emphasis on Character Building*: Education develops good character and personality. The overall concept of character is to develop a personality having compassion, kindness, impartiality, and a spirit of dedication. So the goal of education must be the formation of character.

i. *Developing the spirit of Self-Reliance and Patriotism*: Gandhiji's main concern on education was the comprehensive development of children and creating a sense of patriotism through learning and the practice of crafts. The basic education system should be self-sufficient securing employment needs.

j. *Development of Faith in Truth and Non-Violence*: Gandhiji's philosophy of education was based on the concept of truth and non-violence that should be cultivated in the children as they are going to be the future of India. His views are that lying and violence always leads to slavery which cannot have any place in education. He said that class and communal hatred should be eliminated or avoided from the system.

Gandhiji commented: "We cannot, we will not think of exploitation and we have no alternative but this plan of education which is based on non-violence."

1. *Social Services Awareness*: Gandhiji thought that students should take part in community services that will develop the social responsibility in them. The goal of education is the spirit of service and love for the country that will elevate the humanity in the society.
2. *Cleanliness and Untouchability*: Gandhiji wanted the Students to sensitize to the merits and demerits of cleanliness and the evils of untouchability. He had opposed untouchability and the caste system from the beginning and worked tirelessly to eradicate it. He was just against the notion of high and low caste sentiment and even he protested publically for that. He wanted to remove the mark of untouchability from Hinduism. As an instance at the age of twelve, Gandhiji did not agree with his mother's warnings as she instructed him to not to go to the house or touch an untouchable who used to clean the latrines in his house.



3. *Child-centered Education*: Gandhiji believed that children are the future of the country hence they should develop creative abilities and originality. Education should be for pursuing knowledge and developing and maintaining purity in thought, word, and deed. Education should be completely based on the whole development of the student's personality.
4. *Self-Discipline*: Gandhiji's experiments with truth are on self-discipline. His autobiography is also an account of his self-discipline and truth in his life. Discipline is the drive to obey the laws and regulations of the society or community and it comes from the inner side so he believed that it should not be imposed on anyone from the outside. Freedom is essential in the development and growth of the child. He was on the belief of training and not corporal punishment to make the students disciplined.

CONCLUSION

Gandhiji as a spiritual leader, an activist and inspiration for all and the leader of the national freedom movement, fought to attain independence. He believed in democracy and wanted to civilize modern politics from within by eliminating evils like hatred, resentment and coercion. He wanted democracy with moral idealism and said that political work should be oriented toward social and moral progress. He advocated in the awareness of essential unity in the people regarding humanity. Apart from the goal of getting freedom his important objective was to save and uplift the Indian society, more specifically, Hinduism. He insisted that the people of India should show their capacity to reform. He was motivated by taking the initiative to integrate nationalist aspirations within the framework of social reform. He demonstrated his extraordinary tactics, on different and difficult situations of starting the movements as well as to suddenly call off a movement when its nature turned violent. The mission of his life was to educate people, make them skilled as per the employment and teach them the concept of self-reliance for discipline and self-rule. He emphasized his views on knowing the eternal truth and right path. His life became the message for all and his inspiration and motivational deeds made all the Indians work together for the betterment of the nation.



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