

## **Rethinking Gandhian Thoughts And Gandhian Political Parties**

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**Abstract**

*Despite Gandhi's worldwide popularity, the man was never rewarded nationally or internationally some other alien-like Richard Attenborough earned Oscar by filming the biography of Gandhi. Though Gandhi's thoughts helped to change American Civil Rights forever through the leader Martin Luther King Jr., but it is difficult to find the success of Gandhi's principles otherwise. We the Indians got independence after massive bloodshed, yet we are struggling for basic needs. Human rights are being victimized under the boots of invading armies for political interests. Non-violence offered no solution to them. Gandhi's nonviolence asserts to show others errors but punish you. However, it influenced those who do not care about it but rather seek to punish you. This sort of willingness of the innocents is a much powerful answer to insolent tyranny. As a common man none can pursue the practice of mute suffering as a moral principle that Gandhi could use successfully. Unlike Gandhi's belief the stability of organized violence is often greater than that of non-violence. Like other powerful countries, India has competed for increasing its military strength. Since independence, India has been contracting with the powerful states for that purpose. India expends more on the military sector than on education and health care combined. Gandhi's thoughts have been distorted by terrorists and bomb-throwers in their every sabotage. Day by day the political system of India has been waning in its glory due to political violence, factionalism, ideological conflicts so on.*

**Keywords**

*Political Violence, Factionalism, Ideological Conflicts.*

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“Meet the need of the people but don’t encourage their greed”, contrary to this statement since independence Indian political system is forming itself in another way to get acquaintance in world politics. India is more enthusiastic to spend her effort and intelligence in the defense sector by modernizing and importing 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Generation defense equipments to grab a high rank in world politics rather than to ensure peaceful co-existence. Despite Gandhi’s realization on violence that can never provide certainty to human security, India still has the mood of violence just for gratifying her vested interests. Since independence, India has yet to face the horrific violations. These are not unpredictable indeed. Forgetting Gandhi’s values our political leaders are intoxicated with power accumulation by any means. On the one hand side, while he is saying “means are all everything, as the means so the end...”, on the other hand India is advancing with the concept of ‘means are after all means’ (Young India, 17-7-’24, p.236). Here’s what Gandhi meant to say that any sort of impure means results in an impure end. He had often said “if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself” (Harijan, 11-2-’39, p.8). The contemporary political philosophy of India is very concerned about consumerism. Everyone is racing to acquire the utmost, unlimited, unnecessary, unjust happiness along with violence.

Despite Gandhi’s worldwide popularity, the man was never rewarded nationally or internationally some other aliens like Richard Attenborough earned Oscars by filming the biography of Gandhi. Though Gandhi’s thoughts helped to change American Civil Rights forever through the leader Martin Luther King Jr., but it is difficult to find the success of Gandhi’s principles otherwise (Disciples of Mahatma Gandhi, n.d., para. 1). We the Indians got independence after massive bloodshed, yet we are struggling for basic needs. Human rights are being victimized under the boots of invading armies for political interests. Non-violence offered no solution to them. Gandhi’s nonviolence asserts to show others errors but punish you. However, it influenced those who do not care about it but rather seek to punish you. This sort of willingness of the innocents is a much powerful answer to insolent tyranny. As a common man none can pursue the practice of mute suffering as a moral principle that Gandhi could use successfully.

Henry David Thoreau’s civil disobedience espouses that people do have not an obligation to devote their life to eliminating evils but they are obligated not to participate in such evils and should refuse to follow the law dictated by the unjust government. Only those who have strong morality to understand the importance of this activity in accordance with Gandhi they are competent to take part in it. Being a Saint, Gandhi had the firmness to overcome any hindrances through self-torment. But in reality common people are not as spiritual as Gandhi. Meanwhile seeing the

angry reaction of the people against the arrest of Congress leader Gandhi was compelled to call off Civil Disobedience Movement to get back the political prisoners Gandhi- Irwin Pact accordingly (Raghuramraju, 2006, p. 17). Now Gandhi realizes that continuous mass movement cannot be sustainable. Even before that, Gandhi had witnessed the aggression, defiance, and intolerance of mass during the non-cooperation movement. In this case he adopted the same approach and withdrew that movement. Gandhi felt the necessity of an interval to fight the next phase of the struggle with more vigor and vitality. In this way due to Gandhi's repeated retreat, his moral principles lost their velocity when the people were in high spirits about victory. Having a sage-like personality and wisdom Gandhi intended to give back to India its mythological traditional legacy where self-sacrifice is the ultimate path to stay in peace.

Gandhi did not believe in modern industrial civilization. Meanwhile, Congress has decided to build India as an industrial country. "The future of India lies in its villages"- many leaders of Congress considered the statement of Gandhi as unrealistic (Thadani, 2011, para. 1). Jawaharlal Nehru believed in instituting a new cooperative order based on socialistic ideals for eradicating poverty, unemployment, human degradation and prevailing imbalance in wealth. Gandhi's ideal village had provision for the demographic inclusion of full population and to diminish the fractional access of educational as well as economic opportunity and a job-led economy rather than a capital intensive one. Gandhi perceived the dignity of village life instead of the anonymity of the city. He firmly believed in David Thoreau's thinking, "that government is the best which governs the least" (Thoreau, 1849). Gandhi portrayed that political power not as an end but as one of the means to enhance people's condition in every sphere of life (Roy, 1964, p. 16). Gandhi's Ram Rajya elucidated a state that would be self-governed, self-reliant and self-sufficient as well. The people of this state would be their own rulers and generous to their neighbors (YI, 1929, p. 305). Therefore, this ideal state has no need to gain political power because of the absence of specific statesmanship. Based on all these factors, Congressmen assumed that Gandhi proposed ideal village existed only in his imagination. As a first prime Minister of a newly independent country Nehru immensely relied on heavy industrialization and the building of material prosperity beyond Gandhi's concept of Ram Rajya. Now the city has a major role to happen to the trade of these material goods. Nehru emphasized on hasty growth of our sluggish economy and making an apposition in the world economy. Here, Nehru had differed from Gandhi regarding the eradication of poverty through industrialization and urban commerce (Coward, 2003, p. 17).

John Ruskin was worried about the changing lifestyle in newly industrialized England and concerned about the unrestrained capitalism that created a vast discrimination against the poor working class, and placed little value on human life instead of profit by utilizing their labor. The book unto this Last fetches socio-economic problems to the forefront. Ruskin had faith in Christian values. Here he emphasized on respect for everyone, equality for all, no hindrances to neighbors and justice for all which are connected with Christian values. This book is consisted of Four Essays. In the first one The Roots of Honor author showed a relationship between employer and employee as well as the position of domestic servants in our society (Gandhi, 1956, p. 7). He put a standard definition of wealth offering an alternative in second essay The Veins of wealth. Here Ruskin discussed about two types of economies a) political and b) mercantile. Political economy simplifies the relation of production, preservation and distribution on required time and condition. However, the mercantile economy consists of accumulation of wealth. The author put some instances extracting from our daily living to make a sense of rich and poor existence. Inequalities of wealth, misdistribution, and absurdity of wealth accumulation expand the economic discrimination over the nation (ibid., p. 15). Ruskin found the error of the economist's concept that competition is good for the national economy and so he wrote down in his third essay Even Handed Justice. However, that kind of unjust competition may only reason the nation to ruin and result to be either poorer or richer (ibid., p. 21). In Ad, Valorem's author stated that political economy is misleading individuals and makes the nation unhappy for widespread discrimination between rich and poor. The economy does not conduct of men into account rather it holds the accumulation of wealth as securing future generations. Heavy industrialization makes rustic people compelled to leave their stable dwelling instead of a better life. But in real life, they get a diminished livelihood, a dark future and very incidents of deception. As a solution to aforesaid deteriorations, Ruskin intended wise men to take steps for eradicating all vices as well as for educating the poor about so that they are aware of their rights. Through these essays Ruskin raised his voice for an equal work opportunity, fair wages, fair distribution of wealth and greater opportunity for the betterment of individuals' life (ibid., p. 28). Gandhi read this book on a twenty-four-hour journey from Johannesburg to Durban. Being influenced by the ideals he translated it into his native language Gujrati, entitling it 'Sarvodaya'. Subsequently, he decided to make experiments the Ruskin's essays.

Gandhi believed in turning away an opponent from error through patience, sympathy and self-suffering. Unlike Gandhi's belief the stability of organized

violence is often greater than that of non-violence. Like other powerful countries, India has competed for increasing its military strength. Since independence, India has been contracting with the powerful states for that purpose. India expends more on the military sector than on education and health care combined. Gandhi's thoughts have been distorted by terrorists and bomb-throwers in their every sabotage. Morality, humanity, and conscience are being blurred from day to day. Disobeying Gandhi's methods such as fasting, and self-suffering, the people of India are becoming self-centric under the dreadful atmosphere of political arbitrary (Guha, 2009, p. 248). Day by day the political system of India has been waning its glory due to political violence, factionalism, ideological conflicts so on. The thought of non-violence was originated in the context of colonial India. Gandhi protested against a democratic parliamentary government i.e. British Government. That is the reason behind the success of Gandhi's method of non-violence by fasting, and self-suffering as well. If the opponent was as tyrannical as Hitler or Stalin then all methods of self-suffering would have been ineffective. Opposing the leadership they either would have shot him or let him starve till his death as a hellish precedent so that none can think to oppose subsequently.

Once again Gandhi's principles were proven as inactive when Anti Corruption Movement commenced in 2011 in India. Through massive exertion and self-suffering, Gandhi promoted morality, humanity and values among Indians. Nevertheless, while the 65<sup>th</sup> Independence Day is being celebrated in India, ironically, on the other hand Anna Hazare is organizing an anti-corruption movement. This movement was consisted of such aims as 1) to eliminate corruption in the Indian government through the introduction of the Jan Lokpal Bill. 2) The repatriation of black money from Swiss and other foreign banks. 3) Grievances of mass protesters focused on legal and political issues, kleptomania, including political corruption and other sort of corruption (Bansal, 2018, para. 1). Despite being a quintessential public figure he followed Gandhi's footsteps to oppose prevailing corruption consequently he was compelled to split on the issue of formation of political party which again move Gandhi far away from the prevailing political scenario of India.

According to Gandhi Truth means nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. The human beings are being regulated by a supreme authority from the very first day of civilization. In the eyes of Gandhi, the Truth is that authority from which we will be regulated i.e. 'The Almighty'. Gandhi believed that everything in this world is regulated by specific laws, nothing is beyond the Law. To Gandhi, the law is nothing but the eternal truth. This is the truth of the pulse of everyday life. His proposed path of truth is the path of self-observation. Gandhi brought Indians together

under an umbrella i.e. Nationalism. Prior to him none could enhance the intuition of patriotism amongst Indians. We are witnessed of numerous movements against empirical power but in an unorganized manner. Ahimsa is nothing but worship. The common frustrated people of British India were not ready to cast themselves into a spiritual practice. Hence, they repeatedly happened enormous diffused violent incidents. He is the reverent who made Indian confident and altogether against the British Raj . Under his leadership, India realized that they were equal to the British and that it can defeat the greatest power in the world through peaceful means.

The economic situation during the freedom struggle was very dreadful. Constant draining of indigenous wealth the economy of India was broken down. Meanwhile, to restore economic stability Gandhi got focused on the Cottage Industry. But after independence when capitalism was broken down in world politics, India welcomes the fragile capitalism through its Indianisation. Here we left Gandhi's thoughts far away to reach India at the doorstep of global politics. Gandhi brought the people together and gave them a sense of doing something with their lives and achieving the impossible by peaceful means.

In a society like India, with multi-lingual, multi-cultural, religions and beliefs and a huge population, divergent issues exist in every walk of life. This togetherness we adopted from Gandhi's ideals. He was the one and only media as well as the string who wreathed the whole nation with his charisma that could not be happened before by any alien force. The political history of India has been witnessed a numerous incidents such as the splitting of two sullenly hostile countries and the escalation of internal unrest in India. He felt that the political leadership should diffuse the evils from the society and inspire and unite people to fight poverty, blind faith and general ignorance rather than each other. Gandhi knew that the political parties remain concerned about their position and power rather than taking the nation on the path of general development and well-being of its population, then it is difficult for them to provide leadership. Hence, on the eve of his assassination Gandhi drafted His Last Will and Testament by showing how the Congress might disband itself by flowering a welfare association named Lok Sevak Sangh and working for the establishment of a nonviolent society (29<sup>th</sup> January, 1948 ). Rather India is renowned as the largest democratic country under a multi-party system. Forgetting the article of Gandhi's proposed testament, India got concerned about the battle to grab the throne of power.

Gandhi's ardent follower, Vinoba Babe launched the Bhoodan movement, while Jayaprakash Narayan, through various phases of his transformation ultimately launched the 'Total Revolution.

But apart from this, there were other followers of Gandhi who resolved to participate in the Parliamentary Democracy by forming political parties of their own having claimed to Gandhian policies. The present study intends to identify four such parties, viz., Lok Sevak Sangh, Kishan Mazdur Praja Party, Praja Socialist Party and Samyukt Socialist Party and review their activities to find out whether their activities measure up to the principles followed by Gandhi.

Consequently, India has been facing enormous malpractices of political power under uncountable political parties. In the socio-economic-political system of India Gandhi is becoming nowhere. But every five years Gandhi is used just as the manifesto of political parties. Each political party claims that they are the heritage of Gandhi. They are very well aware of the immense reverence of the people towards the 'Father of the Nation'. Nowadays Gandhi is being turned into a fossil that will remain inscribed in his voluminous writings. We kept him confined to his birth anniversary celebration and his works only. As we find very important documents in a while, Gandhi is also treated likewise.

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