



Reshaping of Modern Values through Nationalism and Gandhian Lenses

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ABSTRACT

Gandhi, a prominent figure in Indian history, led one of the largest non-violent political movements and developed his own political philosophy, including his ideas on nationalism. His liberal, accommodating interpretation of nationalism was based on the struggle for national liberation, not an ivory tower theory. Gandhi's work on nationalism emphasized accommodating diverse ideas and tolerating diversity, leading to a more empathetic nationalism. During India's freedom struggle, Gandhi experimented with 'Satya' and 'Ahimsa', aiming to build a new world. His village-oriented moral lifestyle and spiritualization of politics attracted the world. In the contemporary world, globalization has led to a materialistic lifestyle, and Gandhian values are seen as the only hope for humanity's survival. This paper evaluates Gandhi as a pioneer in value generation in the contemporary world.

INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi, also known as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, was a prominent leader, thinker, and social reformer who led India's successful, non-violent struggle for independence from British rule. He experimented with 'Satya' and 'Ahimsa' during the freedom struggle and continued his practice of non-violent methods to compel the British government to lose control on India. Gandhi coordinated boycotts of British products, marched peacefully, fasted, and advocated for the repeal of oppressive British laws. On August 15, 1947, India became independence.

Gandhi was a visionary who wished to build a new world of his dreams. In the contemporary world, liberalization and globalization have compelling society to adopt a materialistic life style, leading to increasing poverty and unemployment. Gandhi believed that emancipation of India was Yugdharma, or the duty of the age, and that politics should be value-free and free from religious foundationalism. He consciously propagated the idea of nationalism in his own terms, giving a liberal, accommodative interpretation of nationalism.

Gandhi's ideas of nationalism were not just about the state but about affinity, a sense of belonging of people to their political community. He believed in non-violent civic nationalism, derived inspiration from Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini. His novelty lies in his effort to bring together the modern idea of nation and support it with traditional examples, creating an altogether new concept of nation with an Indian definition.

Nationalism in conventional sense is understood as an idea of particularistic affinity between people from similar cultures, languages, or religions. However, Gandhi's definition of nationalism in his own terms is important to record and analyze because it was not a theory propounded from an ivory tower but rather a work out from the epicenter of struggle for the liberation of a nation.

Gandhi was a social and moral philosopher who aimed to create a world with ethical principles, such as spiritualization of politics, simple living high thinking, global thinking, local action, interdependence of rights and duties, doctrine of trusteeship, and practices of Satya, Ahimsa, and Satyagraha. He criticized modern civilization as satanic and believed that machinery represented a great sin and impoverished India.

Gandhi's dream was to establish Ramarajya, where men were free and independent in every aspect of life, culturally, economically, and spiritually. He lived around villages, earning livelihoods from small industries and solving problems through the pious means of Satyagraha. Swaraj and Swadeshi, which he considered a state of being of individuals and nations, were adopted and circulated to ensure Hindu-Muslim unity, small village industries, economic security, emancipation, improvement of the status of women, farmers, labour, students, and adivasi, promote khadi, provincial language, national language, education in village health and hygiene, adult education, basic education, village sanitation, removal of untouchability, prohibition of wine, etc.

In his vision for a new world, Gandhi believed that every religion had its full and equal place, and that any village could become a republic without much interference even from the colonial government.

Gandhi's Political Philosophy embodies a moral framework with three interconnected focal points: the person, the community, and the world at large. The connection between a person and the political community complements their relationship with the cosmos, since the community is presumed to be

sufficiently liberal to adopt an empathic perspective towards outsiders. Gandhi said that individuals within a certain culture are not only analogous but are fundamentally unified, and their connection to others reflects their relationship with themselves.

The political community must be seen as a separate but interconnected entity. Gandhi attributes the fundamental characteristic of the political community to the influence of its value system on people, who simultaneously form the community in return. The community's impact on the person is validated by its contributions to the lives of its members.

The third axis is humanity, where the transition from community to humanity is a fluid process owing to the ontological significance attributed to the individual. The same moral value of all individuals necessitates their equal treatment, which fundamentally underpins their moral equality. Parekh contends that since mankind is one, individuals have responsibility to and for one another, and the well-being of others should concern each person.

Gandhi's justification of nationalism derives from the intrinsic human inclination for belonging to the community of which one is a part. He does not see the country or civilization as inorganic, but presents his own ideas. Through historical processes, cohabitation, and the Tirathyatras, individuals developed a conscious awareness of India as a country. This conception of country is not inherently negative, since individuals are integrated within their communities and possess emotional connections to them, allowing for the pursuit of nationalism as a valid philosophy.

Akeel Bilgrami examines Gandhi's disposition towards accommodation in two distinct works. He contends that Gandhi was a philosopher who maintained consistency in his principles on morality and truth. Bilgrami contends that authentic satyagraha, an archetype of an ideal individual, must exhibit tolerance towards the ideas and critiques of others, since the manner in which one upholds their moral ideals supersedes the veracity of such opinions and criticisms.

Bilgrami posits that the unifying element in Gandhian epistemology is in the actions of a genuine satyagrahi, who remains unfazed by external criticism and differing viewpoints. His actions cannot be deemed commendable unless his thoughts are non-violent as well. The authentic satyagrahi must serve as a paragon for others to emulate, with the precedents established supplanting concepts in Gandhian philosophy.

Gandhi's assertion that genuine non-violence cannot exist without the elimination of criticism from moral considerations is seen as part of a moral stance that rejects moral standards. In Gandhian philosophy, exemplary acts supplant beliefs. This underscores the need of self-restraint and humility in upholding one's moral principles, rather than prioritizing the truth.

In "Gandhi's Religion and its Relation to His Politics," Bilgrami analyzes the interplay between Gandhi's political ideology and his religious beliefs, as well as the influence of his religion on his political actions. He contends that Gandhi was profoundly religious, although his religious convictions were not derived from texts; rather, he was more concerned with the ethical ramifications of his views. He construed religion according to his own understanding, based on the two fundamental principles: Truth and Non-violence.

Bilgrami contends that Gandhi's conception of Truth was relativistic, signifying that he saw Truth based on his own experiences. This relativism originates from classic Hindu philosophical traditions of advaita and dvaita. Gandhi's rationale for relativism posited that the universe is ever evolving and illusory, but it has an enduring quality that renders it both real and unreal. He was referred to as an *anekantavadi* or a *syadvadi*, representing his unique perception of reality. The experience aspect of truth is seen in the critic's candid assessment of one's actions. Gandhi posited that the statements of a critic have validity if spoken sincerely, since they reflect the critic's authentic sense of reality. By making Truth contingent upon individual morality, Gandhi sought to harmonize the many theological and ethical convictions around him. This reunion was essential to Gandhian politics. Bilgrami interrogates the potential for universalization of individual religious views. He asserts that if an individual has a sincere confidence in their experience truth, they may authentically articulate it and embody the truth in an experiential context (*satya*), rather than in a propositional and didactic manner. Others may arrive at other realities via their experiences without negating one's own, which is how *syadvada* permits these truths to be considered valid.

The question then emerges: how can one harmonize the multitude of ostensibly divergent perspectives and "truths" inside a certain society? Consequently, the job of a genuine satyagrahi is paramount. A genuine satyagrahi demonstrates belief in moral beliefs for others to emulate. Gandhi posited that the acknowledgment of difference may be made universal, and the interplay between the individual and the general can be reconciled. By recognizing the many experiences and viewpoints of people, Gandhi successfully reconciled the varied religious and ethical convictions around him, fostering a more inclusive society.

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Politics has always been seen as a contest for acquiring, reclaiming, and maintaining power. Nonetheless, the notion of morality and worth in politics has gained significant prominence. Gandhi saw politics as omnipresent, and his struggle for Indian Independence was conducted using the dual instruments of truth and non-violence, which constituted the Satyagraha movement. Gandhi believed that politics ought to be a moral issue of significance, emphasizing the need to transform politics via ethical principles. He underscored the significance of religion in politics, arguing that politics without of faith is a perilous predicament. Gandhi championed the concept of people's politics above party politics, advocating for the transfer of power to the populace at all tiers. He advocated for a party-less democracy, which would usher in a new epoch of democratic decentralization. Gandhian politics plays a pivotal and helpful role, opposing limited nationalism and emphasizing elevated principles. The politics of exploitation have been dismantled, and the politics of service is conceptualized via democratic principles. As public service and societal improvement become the paramount objectives of nations globally, the significance of Gandhian Politics cannot be understated.

The Gandhian philosophy advocates for a flourishing and dignified society

The Gandhian way of life has inspired many world leaders to solve contemporary problems and establish a peaceful human society. In the western concept, politics is viewed as a game to achieve power, regain power, and retain power. For Gandhi, politics is a moral problem of value, and the need of the hour is to revolutionize politics by ethics. Morality serves the cause of progress and is rooted in deceit and dishonesty.

Mahatma Gandhi was deeply rooted in his cultural and religious traditions, and his principles have been influenced by Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, and other African leaders. Satyagraha, or the relentless search for truth, is a teaching that teaches us the art of living and dying, and it is never an invitation to the disruption of society.

Gandhi proposed several norms and principles for adopting the Satyagrahi, such as bidding good-bye to fear, being eager for peace, believing in truth and non-violence, and relying on God for protection against brute force. He believed that a just cause backed by moral strength couldn't be ignored by the most powerful government.

However, today's social, political, and economic life falls far short of Gandhian values and methods. Strikes, fasts, dharnas, and gheraos are often undertaken to back demands, but the spirit behind them is often thrown away. Gandhi favored arbitration or adjudication as the method of settling industrial disputes, and he envisioned that arbitration would eventually replace the principle of strike.

Dr. V.P. Verma(1959) , discusses the social philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, noting that he never sanctioned the doctrine of caste war, class struggle, and fight between races. Instead, Gandhi sought to solve problems of social tension, social discord, and disequilibrium through collaboration, sympathetic accommodation, and genuine brotherly solidarity.

Supporter of sustainable development

Gandhi aimed to eliminate the blind race of development, addressing issues like rapid population growth, depletion of natural resources, climate change, poor village conditions, and polluting industries. He proposed a sustainable society that partners with nature, conserves resources, reduces waste, and uses eco-friendly technology. Gandhi believed industrialization would be a curse for mankind, and he abandoned the luxurious lifestyle to focus on less polluting poor people. He believed that the earth provides enough for everyone's needs but not for greed, making him a prophet of the future.

The Gandhian value emphasizes the importance of eradicating terrorism

The present era of terrorism is marked by volatile conditions resulting from scientific and technological developments that have enabled terrorist groups to manufacture deadly weapons. This has resulted in a deficiency of human ties, with individuals polarized along economic, national, regional, and religious lines. The deterioration of interpersonal relationships has facilitated political decay. Mahatma Gandhi promoted non-violent approaches to address social, economic, political, and religious issues. Nonetheless, his non-violent methods have faced scrutiny, and religious extremism has emerged as a perilous tool for terrorists. Gandhi advocated for identifying the root causes of individual oppression and addressing them, rather than resorting to military insurrections. He also condemned the presumption that terrorism would achieve the intended outcome of subjugating the opposition to the tyrant's demands. If they are certain they will neither submit to the dictator's demands nor respond with their own tactics, the tyrant will deem it unprofitable to persist in terrorism.

Significance of Democracy

Gandhian Self-Rule, also known as Swaraj, is a genuine kind of democracy in which authority is held by people, with each person being the true master of themselves. Gandhi was skeptical of parliamentary democracy, which he referred to as a "sterile woman and a prostitute." This is despite the fact that parliamentary democracy performed an essential function. However, he cautioned against imitating the Western Model, which only had nominal democracies, despite the fact that he liked democracy. Currently, democracy is largely acknowledged as the most effective form of government; yet, in order for it to be implemented effectively, it must be implemented at the grassroots level, with party structures constructed on recognized principles and defection eradicated.

Innovative Dimension of Education: to Enhance and Institutionalize Gandhian Principles

Genuine education invigorates the spiritual, intellectual, and physical faculties, striving to develop the whole individual and enhance his holistic identity. Gandhi posited that education should extend beyond mere literacy to include the cultivation of a spirit of service and sacrifice. He championed a comprehensive approach to education, emphasizing the 3'H's (Head, Heart, and Hand) above the 3'R's (Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic).

Gandhi's notion of Basic Education emphasizes the cultivation of the intellect, emotions, and practical skills, as opposed to the traditional 3'R's (Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic). He emphasized the significance of the genuine development of intellect, emotion, and spirit for an effective educational system.

Nonetheless, there exists concern over the effectiveness and pertinence of Gandhi's philosophies in contemporary society. The existing educational system has increased the prevalence of educated unemployment, posing a danger to both society and governance. Nonetheless, there exists optimism about the application of Gandhi's principles of value education to rescue society from jeopardy and devastation.

Gandhi's concept of education encompasses not just innovative methods and techniques but also a transformative lifestyle, promoting a balanced and harmonious social order grounded in the ethical principles of truth, love, and non-violence. This methodology seeks to foster self-sufficiency and self-awareness, with Gandhi asserting that the universalization of education might facilitate a more peaceful society.

A Gandhian Concept of Global Governance and Universal Peace

Mahatma Gandhi believed that nationalism was not the highest concept, but rather the world community. He proclaimed "Vasudhaiv Kutumbkum" or "Mankind is one family," which he believed would end the disparity between nations and promote peace. This idea has led to the creation of supra-national institutions like the Economic Community of Nations (EE.C.) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These institutions are responsible for addressing pressing issues such as hunger, disease, and illiteracy.

Gandhi's nationalism was not exclusive, aggressive, or destructive, but was essential for sound internationalism. He believed that peace could only be achieved if a single government controlled armaments. No sacrifice would be too big to achieve world peace by surrendering national sovereignty or renouncing force in international disputes. Gandhi argued that peace is indivisible and cannot be achieved in one part of the world and war in another.

He believed that the only condition for the world to live is being united under one central governing body. He also opposed the retention of an International Police Force and advocated for the establishment of an International Peace Force.

In the present Unit-polar world, Gandhi's importance has increased, making him relevant and relevant. His philosophy emphasizes the importance of world government and peace, and his belief in the necessity of shedding belief in war and violence for the betterment of all races and nations.

Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi, a global leader and prophet, is now remembered with reverence and is recognized as a great leader of action, liberator, and martyr. His ideas have become unquestionable and unchallengeable, and it is imperative for human survival to act on his advice. Gandhiji's seven social sins include politics without principles, wealth without work, commerce without morality, education without character, pleasure without conscience, science without humanity, and worship without sacrifice. India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru, paid tribute to Gandhi by stating that the light has gone out of our lives. Gandhi's legacy is reflected in the works of Dr. Martin Luther King II, Lee Kwazi, Nelson Mandela, Ho-Chi-Minh, Aung San Suki, Aryaratna, and Daisaku Ikeda. Gandhi's work on nationalism, which emphasized accommodating visibly divergent ideas and tolerance for diversity, has led to the development of a wholly Indian theory of nationalism.

The principles that Gandhi upheld are very important for the advancement of mankind and will continue to motivate millions of people to work for global peace, harmony, and compassion. To ensure a future that is both meaningful and human, it is essential to adopt the ideals that Gandhi advocated for, to put his acts into action, and to put his ideas into practice. Acting on the advise that Gandhi gave is absolutely necessary for the survival of the human race, since failing to do so might result in the extinction of the human race. There is no other hope for the future but Gandhi.

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