



Gandhian approach to Peace

Vipul Singh

D. Phil. Research Scholar
Defence & Strategic Studies
University of Allahabad

Abstract:

Gandhian ideology conceived of religious values, political strategy and social principles. Gandhian thought let the primacy of moral over political and spiritual over temporal. He regards absolute truth as ultimate goal and non violence as a tool to achieve that. According to him ends and means are impossible. He makes his life fit into the laboratory of truth and non violence. Therefore 21st century international relations can be reinterpreted and applied with emerging relations of that. The challenging nature of contemporary international society has relevant approaches regarding his teachings and personal examples. The multidimensional crisis like terrorism, abolishing of human rights, economic inequality, ethnic violence, poverty, religious intolerance by which the man is suffering today are of having great cure and aid with the goodness and justice provided by the Gandhian philosophy. Failure of non violent initiatives does not invalidate the Gandhian concept of peace. The most unexpected places and ways the Gandhian concept of non violence has spread in this world and it has a greater persistent of non violence in the face of violence.

Keywords: International relations, aggression, world order, tolerance, credibility.

Introduction:

Mahatma Gandhi has been considered as one of the greatest icon in the human history. Beside the fighter for India's independence and social reformer, he is considered to be the prophet of truth and non violence. He lived, fight and died for the ideas of brotherhood, tolerance, peace and non violence. He construct the innovative approaches towards non cooperation, civil disobedience, strikes, fasting etc. He found new dimensions to the theory of political mobilization.

Gandhian ideology towards politics and society are well known but his views on international issues and peace are not widely known. This is to be believed that he did not take much interest on world affairs. But this is one of the mistake that has to be viewed. Gandhian ideology never ignored the vision over the world affairs and expressed his views on contemporary international events and new world order. He carried out India's independence movement for larger international context.

His ideas over international relations and war and peace are scattered in his writings. Due to inconsistency in such writings, it is difficult to make organised theory out of it. His totality on the views of international relation make resolution of the problem of the inter state violence. The multiple sources and traditions of Gandhian vision over peace are electric in nature.



Approach

To better understand the Gandhian approach we have to extend the core of Gandhian social and political philosophy. The philosophy stemmed his actions and thoughts. His general philosophy over man, society and state provides his view and approach towards the world affairs. Gandhian philosophy have woven together with social principles and metaphysics, religious values and political strategy. The primacy of moral values over political and spiritual values over temporal are the fundamentals of Gandhi's thinking. The absolute truth are the ultimate goal and the non violence are the act to achieve it are their core values. He altered the dictum "God is truth" and makes it that "truth is God". The means of any absolute goal are of having high purity and he rejects the conception of Machiavellian approach of end justifies means. He said that ends and means are inseparable. The way any one fights and the goal to which the fight is began are same.

Gandhi's attitude towards war

War violates the principles of truth and non violence. So Gandhi considered it as unmitigated evil. Gandhi opposed every form of aggression whether it is from military force or any other form. War has the actions for demoralizations to whom who are trained for that. War has nothing to achieve but everything to be lost. He said , " On one hand democracy is associative and human whereas war has a tendency to disturb that human association. In his ideas the causes of war were many but racialism, imperialism and fascism are their chief causes. Even though Gandhi generally rejected war and denied any righteousness to it, his specific attitude towards war was not uniform. He himself participated as a volunteer in zulu war in South Africa and World War first. He also make preferable and moral basis of India Pakistan war of 1948 and make sense its necessity. Gandhi on first of all, make an unqualified pacifist view of war and rejected all war and military actions. He disqualified violence even for justice and defensive purpose. Secondly, a conditional pacifist that argue that with some wrong means, good can come out of war. Such attitude of Gandhi fall in the category of Russo Japanese war of 1904-05. Thirdly, a pragmatic nationalist, who tried to adjust the claims of nationalism with pacifism. War as a defensive response from external attacks by any innocent nation has quite different with unprovoked aggression. He said that violence is impossible to eliminate from this world, but it is non violent human being who should try to eliminate war.

Gandhian vision of Peace

Gandhi regarded peace as far more than the absence of war. A state in peace doesn't implies that it is free from any conflict, but it implies that it contains constructive and positive world order, where mutual aid and no exploitation takes place in between individuals, groups and nation. According to him peace cannot be seperated from truth and hence it is not to encourage to achieve peace through falsehood and deceit. Such peace cannot be for a long run. Gandhi do not treat war and peace as isolated problems. His vision over peace based on the philosophy of life. The realisation of humanity and independent character of nation are his approaches. He said mutual goodwill and friendship are the essential conditions for peace. The realist approach over



conflict looked as to resolved conflict the victory of one side or comprise between parties are necessary. Gandhian approach do not accept conflict as clash of interest. But it regard it as a misperception, mental illusion etc. Conflicts makes the irregular behaviour of life. In international affair conflict is not between any two groups but it has irregular behaviour in normal flow of life in two systematic actors. Creative potentials and exchanges of healthy dialogues have enough to resolve the differences in between these two. It also do not have any demands of sacrifice of his position or interest. The pacifism practice of west are very much different from Gandhian approach of peace. Pacifism involves the violence and military service to refrain it which Gandhian approach advocates the social actions of peace and justice. Gandhian satyagraha has open the doors of new aggressive form of pacifism which involves high mora belief of non violence.

Elements of Gandhian approaches to peace

According to Mahatma Gandhi, war is not a natural phenomena but it is a social and cultural one. Human nature is not to kill or harm anyone and so the states. The moral techniques which are roots and responsible for war must be avoided. Individuals which have a human behaviour of ethics and morality are of having a linkages between his family, neighbourhood, society, nation, and ultimately to the whole world. Each level are very much complex and advocates a larger bonding between each other. According to him "to not to believe in possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness in the human nature.

Humanism with Nationalism

Gandhi was a strong devotee of nationalism and always stands for the rights of the Indians. His nationalism was not incompatible and narrow. He believes in the feeling of universalism and international brotherhood. He believes that such things lacks in nationalism could be dangerous and it can be equal to colonialism. Nationalism must be full of humanism. He believed that Indian nationalist are threat to other nations but very much beneficial for the oppressed countries. He vision for free India which carves out its foreign policy of brotherhood and spiritual heritage as non violent struggle as a tool of its foreign policy.

According to him without abolishing the nation state one can achieve peace because its not nationalism but selfishness and narrowness which is evil in nature. It is not necessary to make conflict and narrowness with other nations in order to secure their own country.

Promotion of Disarmament

Armaments do not give security and make deterrence to other states from any type of aggression. The sickness and disorder of international system acquire the desire of armaments and arms race. The nation state has its credibility in the hands of its citizen who have to make themselves been able to fight and sacrifice for their homeland. Gandhiji perceived that the race of arms and ammunition one day makes the slaughter of entire human race. According to him the nation state disbelief on each other and to make human race more purify and make justice it is needed to



make unilateral disarmament and take risk. He appealed in his times to great powers of the world to take such steps in the benefit of human race. All good things started with a small step and this step makes to be risky but more beautiful. This step reduces tensions and make upbringing of other sides to also change his heart and mind. The disarmament makes moral pressure anyhow to the other side and this sincere approach one day brings world peace.

Fight against Nuclear weapons

Gandhi opposed the idea that atomic bombs and their powerful nature will prevent any future war. It has to be suggested by scholars that atomic bombs will bring ahimsa (non violence) as nothing else can. But the moral ethics of law of war could damage by the evolution of atomic bomb. The tolerance has subside with that and end of war should be more important than means. As bombs are not destroyed by counter bombs so that violence cannot be beaten through violence.

Gandhian thought and faith remain unshaken after the use of atomic bombs on the two cities of Japan i.e; Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. He said that atom bomb is nothing before my non violence and truth. There is no bomb to kill soul of human beings. He said that the purity of soul and pledge to not harm anyone are the philosophy that germinates one day to evaluate the power of atomic bomb in front of human soul. There is nothing to win and achieve in nuclear bombs instead to lose everything.

International Organisations

Gandhi was not much believer in the effectiveness of international organisations like UN and league of Nations. He believed that such organisations are the outcomes of the great wars. He criticised that world powers are not reliable of their duties and besides proliferation of peace such international organisations are reliable to stop any such wars. The moral grounds of such organisations lacks the responsibility, genuine structure and credibility. He said that without changing the heart of the world leaders and unity of mankind is to be worshipped the settlement of such organizations cannot led peace among nations.

At the time of establishment of United Nations Gandhi supported it and hopes that it would led to support the movement of freedom of all the colonized nations. He urged that its establishment must be based on to end war and end colonial rule. It has to create international police force and established the social and economic justice. After seeing his hopes are no more be drafted in UN Gandhi acknowledged to wrote great powers that they are living in fool's paradise if they think that the exploitation of the backward and coloured races goes on. According to Gandhi following fundamentals are necessary in order to credibility of international organizations while keeping peace and security.

- (1) The tendency of non violence must be in individual and in state.
- (2) World should be free from racialism, imperialism and colonialism.
- (3) International organisations must represents all states of the world.
- (4) The principle of general disarmament should take place.



(5) The inter and intra state disputes must be settled through negotiations, mediation or arbitration.

(6) A small international police force must be constituted to avert any disharmony in the path of non violence.

Gandhi considered a friendly and independent states based on self determination of the people. Such prospects must be on some distance but it is actually not impossible.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Scholars visions Gandhian views as idealistic and contradictory. As his views on wars were changed many times critics regards it as unreliable. His absolute pacifism concept fail to meet the standards after his participation of him in World war first and approval of war with Pakistan after Independence.

His ethical and practical non violent philosophy was always questioned. Scholars have raises the issue that Gandhi didn't comprehend all the complex nature of international politics while making a plan for global peace. The validity of civil defence and civil freedoms have laid a doubt. But the general thing is that Gandhi was a practical leader and the judgement of his contribution based on what he did rather to be what he wrote about world peace. He was not a dogmatic thinker and his philosophy and ideas are converting according to new realities and developments. He believed that his aim was not to be consistent with the statement he has given but the evolving truth that led before him time to time.

Gandhian approach takes him to be sensitive and perceptive man of peace with far sighted nature. Modern peace researchers find Gandhi as initial and purity contributes in the peace research process. To achieve good he admired peace as best element which involves dynamic nature and flexibility. Gandhi was in very few who argued for justice at global level. Satyagraha according to him has a alternative to war which regards potential of achieving one's goal. In South Africa he demonstrated that active pacifism has an effective force for the society as well as for the international relations or world order.

Reference:

1. Prabhu, R.K. & R.R. Rao, The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, Navjivan publishing house, Ahmedabad.
2. Power, Paul F., Gandhi on World Affairs, The perennial press.
3. Puri, Rashmi Sudha, Gandhi on war and peace, Praeger New York.
4. Misra, K P. Gandhi and the contemporary world: studies in peace and war, Chanakya publications.
5. Weber Thomas, Conflict resolution and Gandhian ethics, Gandhi peace foundation, New Delhi.

Corresponding Author - vipulsinghme@gmail.com