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PASSIVE RESISTANCE TO SATYAGRAHA



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ABSTRACT

“ Hind Swaraj” is written in 1909 in Gujrathi language by Mahatma Gandhi during his return voyage from London to south Africa. It was written in 10 days between 13 and 22 November 1909, on board the ship Kildonan Castle.

KEYWORDS :Gujrathi language , Mahatma Gandhi ,fundamental work.

INTRODUCTION

Hindu Swaraj is recognized by all as being Gandhi’s most fundamental work. The originality of Gandhi’s teaching in this book consists in arguing that

there is a connection between the process by which the nation attains its independence and the process by which the self attains control over itself. Neither the doctrine nor the practice of passive resistance originated with Gandhiji for they are to be found in the political thought and tradition of both Asia and Europe. He himself pointed out in 1908 that the idea of passive resistance was as old as the human



race, that the doctrine was understood and commonly practiced in India, long before it came into vogue in Europe. At the same time he stressed that the doctrine of Satyagraha was different. Doctrine of Satyagraha was different from earlier notion of passive resistance.”

Apart from resistance to state authority, the doctrine of passive resistance has been widely practiced in more limited spheres. The weapon of Dharana holding out by sitting in hunger strike was employed by creditors at the door of debtors who ignored legitimated claims on them.

B) Use of Brute Force and Its Limitations

Gandhiji points out the falling of using brute force to wrest power from the hands of British. A growing uneasiness and discontent with British rule was propelling the freedom movement towards violence and use of force and violence was slowly gaining ground and there were a few individuals and political groups who were convinced that brute force was the only method which should be used to drive out the English and obtain swaraj. This I have done in order if possible to convince them of the error of their ways I have noticed that some of the members of the party are earnest spirits possessing a high degree of mortality, great intellectual ability and lofty sacrifice.

Gandhiji firmly believes that violence only breeds violence and that force can never achieve lasting results .It is here that he introduces his concepts of the relationship between means and ends and says "Fair means alone can produce fair results" .

According to Gandhiji ,crossing an ocean by means of a cart instead of vessel would be suicidal, similarly obtaining Swaraj through violence would lead to the death of Swaraj even before its birth - a still born Swaraj .Thus impure means can never lead to a pure end and Swaraj or Indian Home rule can therefore be established only through non violent means.

Real rights according to Gandhiji are a result of performance of duty. In the background against which we have to obtain freedom, Gandhiji insists on each one performing his duty and being faithful to his work as is rightly said "we reap exactly as we sow"

Pointing out the limitation of brute force, Gandhiji has cited the example of Italy which gained freedom through use of force which however has not been attained in the true sense of the term. In fact a sense of defeat is prevalent in Italy. The reason obviously being the adoption of impure means to obtain a pure end.

Gandhiji criticizes the role of violence and tries to convince the people of its futility .He says force is used when men are filled with fear and what is gained through fear is retained only for as long as fear is present.

Gandhiji concludes that present methods are not the right methods to attain Swaraj and we should find out an alternative method of political resistance.

C) Theory of Passive Resistance:-

The theory and practice of passive resistance did not originate with Gandhiji, but are found in political thought practiced both in Asia and Europe.

Raghvan Iyer points out "In the political thought in ancient India the failure of ruler to fulfill his legal obligations made him not merely morally culpable but also liable to removal by the people in whom rested the right to resistance to injustice. Raghvan Iyer further adds "Apart from resistance also found scope and its application in other areas of human activity the weapon of " Dharm" to secure just rights" .

People also often resorted to Hartal to express their grievances " Deshlyag" or abandonment of a kingdom was followed as the last resort when all other measures failed.

In "Hind Swaraj" Gandhi suggests passive resistance as an alternative method or as a technique for obtaining "Swaraj" He writes "Passive Resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms .When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul force. For instance the govt. to repeal the law I am employing what may be termed body force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul forces. It involves a sacrifice of self."

Passive resistance is a technique which requires courage, fortitude and determination to face all

odds. A passive resistance will never obey a law that is against his conscience says Gandhi "Even though he may be below to places at the mouth of a cannon.

Even a man weak in body can offer passive resistance both men and women can take recourse to it, and it does not require the training of an army. Control over the mind is the only necessary condition before offering passive resistance. Therefore Gandhi writes "Passive Resistance is an all sided sword, it can be used by everyone, and it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used without drawing a drop of blood. It produces far reaching results it never rusts and can never be stolen. Passive resistance in the course of discussion in "Hind Swaraj" is described as truth force those who are keen to follow truth will never be placed in jeopardy. Thus Gandhiji feels that the only remedy for the ills of India is the adoption of passive resistance. Gandhiji often used the two terms passive resistance and Satyagraha as synonyms in "Hind Swaraj" as elsewhere however this distinction was sharpened while offering Satyagraha in South Africa .

There is no scope for love in passive resistance which is indirect opposition to satyagraha which is embedded on the principle of love and if therefore known love force .Passive resistance is a step which may lead to prepare one for the use of violence, while satyagraha will never be utilized for that end .Passive resistance says Gandhi, "may be offered side by side with the use of arms .Satyagraha and brute force being negation of the other can never go together.

D) Satyagraha :-

Gandhi's theory of satyagraha was based upon his philosophy especially his philosophy of Karma Yoga. .Gandhi Feels that civilization of non violence in all spheres of our lives is the sovereign remedy .It has also observed that war and violence have been used since times immemorial to achieve peace.

Satyagraha was positive force of projection of spiritual energy ageist enemy. Truth fullness according to Gandhi is the key to any desired goal and to equip himself with strength to oppose external authority, truth was the weapon he adopted.

E) End and means in satyagraha:-

In Hind swaraj he made it clear that there was unity between needs and means .He wrote the means may be linked to a seed the land to a tree and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and ends as between the seed and the tree.

Gandhiji claimed that fair means could alone bring fair results .Gandhi wrote "I have often said that if one takes care of the means the need will take care of itself.

F) Difference between passive resistance and satyagraha

- 1) First of all if we continue to believe ourselves and let others believe that we are weak and helpless and therefore offer passive resistance our resistance would never make us strong and at the earliest opportunity we would give it up. On the other hand if we offer satyagraha as believing ourselves to be strong, to clear consequences follow .Fostering the idea of strength, we grow stronger everyday with the increase in our strength. Our satyagraha to become more effective and we would never be casting about for an opportunity to give it up.
- 2) While there is no scope for love in passive resistance, there is not only no place for hatred in Stayagraha, but it is passive breach of its ruling principle.
- 3) While in passive resistance there is no scope for use of arms, Brute force is a negation of Satyagraha, but not necessarily of passive resistance.

4) Satyagraha may be offered to one's nearest and dearest, whereas passive resistance cannot unless, they ceased to be dear to us.

5) In passive resistance there is always pleasant and idea of harassing the other party while in satyagraha there is not the remotest idea of injuring the opponent.

G) Limits of Satyagraha:-

1) A particular device like fasting as its own well defined limits has fastest is coercive when they are intended to attain a selfish objective. No doubt the dividing line between a selfish and unselfish end is often very thin but a person who regards the aim another's fast to be selfish should resolutely refuse to yield to it. Satyagraha of certain types is limited by the nature of object.

2) Satyagraha involving non cooperation is limited by the pledge of non violence by the pledge of nonviolence by the possibility of indiscipline or anarchy.

3) Satyagraha involving civil disobedience is limited by the fact that it is only when a person has intelligently and freely obeyed the laws of society that he is in a position to judge as to what particular rules are good and just and which unjust and iniquitous .

4) The limit for Satyagraha in general is prescribed as by the capacity of its votaries as a whole for self sacrifice and self suffering.

H) Relevance of Satyagraha in 21st century:-

Gandhiji was well aware of the increasing influence of materialistic consideration on the modern society and individual .According to Gandhi the main objective of satyagraha was to irradiate the evil or to reform the opponent .In the present socio economic political system there is a dire necessity to wean the individual away from the influence of wealth luxuries and power. In all educational institution right from the lowest level to the level of university, it would be worth while to teach the young.

People the concept of satyagraha and the principles of truth and non violence as the basic factors contributing to the peace, harmony and well fare of the society.

Satyagraha as an ideal and as a great weapon of conflict resolution will always serve as a great inspiration to the people of all generation to come both in India and elsewhere.

Satyagraha is relevant even today, when injustice and exploitation are taking place .The method of staygraha is used by many movements all over the world like the Narmada Bachao Andolan .The importance of soul force and self sacrifice appears to be more important in democratic governments where the governments to be awaken about the injustices done to the people . Stayagrah was a novel method and will remain relevant thoughts out human existence.

I) CONCLUSION:-

In Hind swaraj Gandhiji is trying to develop an alternative method of political resistance that could be used to secure Indians Freedom .Gandhiji used the method of passive resistance or satyagraha in South Africa to the grievances of the Indians, He thought that this weapon of non-violent could be used in India to over throw British rule. Passive resistance or satyagraha is based on non- violence is as novel as the need for which it is sought. Gandhi thinks that violent terrorist method would not solve the problems and if India pursued violent methods she would lose her special place in the world .India hold a unique place in the world because of her commitment to non-violence.

Hence Gandhi says "Real home rule is possible only where passive resistance is guiding force of the people .Any other rule is foreign rule. "

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