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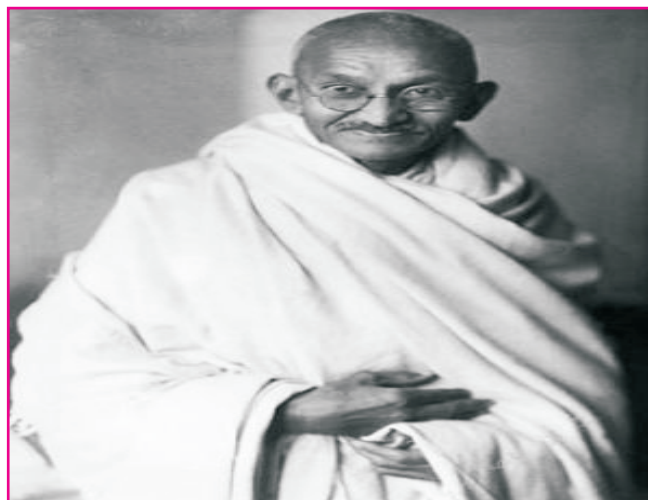
MODERN NIHILISM AND GANDHI

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ABSTRACT

The world we see and observe around us is profoundly suffering from the disease of 'Modern Nihilism'. Nihilism is something believing that everything is a myth. If one tries to meet a good number of people and asks about the future of India as a nation in such a confronting circumstances, one is likely to get the response quiet negative, people feel there is no future for us because we are in complete mess. There is full of negativity in the people of nation. Teachers are not happy with their students, parents are not happy with teachers, police is not happy with lawyers, colleagues are not happy with one another, one language is not happy to another language, one subject is not happy with other subject and list goes on. This is where we can feel the modern nihilism. The present article is a fair attempt to revisiting Mahatma Gandhi's life and his teachings, writings and deeds to find the way out with which we can overcome this grief and can lead a productive, constructive life. We can be good citizens who not only just bark about poor, destitute, disadvantaged groups in India but also working for them.



KEYWORDS- Mahatma Gandhi, Modern Nihilism, Education, Idealism, Contemporary crises, peace and development.

INTRODUCTION :

Let's put me a very radical question in front of everyone that Do we like Mahatma Gandhi? No doubt that majority of the gathering gives the answer in affirmative. But if I put another question that How many people follow him in their personal and professional life? Here, I think, people may take time to respond it. And I am sure people have difficulties in following Mahatma Gandhi in their personal and professional life.

Then there will be two major questions arise from this situation. (1) Why people like Mahatma Gandhi? (2) If people like Mahatma Gandhi they why they don't follow him? The whole argument of this paper is in the spectrum of these two fundamental questions. Here, in present paper, author tried to cover the notions of people related to Mahatma Gandhi. His phenomenological position in the life of people and some pragmatic concerns of people when they tend to follow him in real life circumstances. Which, therefore result in the clash of ideal verses real life.

Gandhi: Common Man's Representative

Gandhi was a highly qualified and acclaimed individual of that time. Why he became a Gandhi the way

we all see him in India and overseas is that besides of his intellect and qualifications he always presented himself as a common man. We all must have to accept that if he would not thought in this way about poor, marginalized, suppressed and disadvantaged groups, he would have been something else. But he consciously made a choice to be a common man and we know he worked throughout his life for them.

Here is the phenomenological position of Mahatma Gandhi in everyone's life who claims to like him. We may be today in positions of power, designations like Principal, Dean, BOS member, President of some youth organization, Professor, Phd guide, Member of parliament, Member of legislative assembly, or Chief operating Executive; these positions made us to be different from common. And doing our work we have sometime experienced that, feel that, there are very few avenues are left with poor, marginalized and disadvantaged groups. Then, a feeling from within everyone comes out that 'someone should represent them' and suddenly we look at Mahatma Gandhi and we feel contented. It's nothing but satisfying our ego by saying that I know what is the problem but I cannot fight against it. I am not Mahatma Gandhi. That it how most of the people like him.

Modern Nihilism

Sociologists' tends to separate the phases of world to study the social realities and aspects made significant impacts e.g. pre-modern society where technology was not there, people have to depend heavily on manual labour. Modern society where world is introduced with technologies that changed life of people from every walks. The labour is replaced with machines. And now they believe that we are in post-modern society where our life is controlled by technology. Technology has become an everybody's and everyday's business. People cannot believe that they can live without it.

After Liberalisation polices, the pace of development has significantly increased in the developing countries like India. But soon people have realised that such development advocated by liberalization is leading to the worst conditions. To quote some;

English as language

Gandhi strongly believed that children should have education in their own mother tongue. He had said that English will put us in a conflict between those who know it and those who don't know. What is today's reality? People who know English consider themselves better/higher than those who don't know it. This is new castes created by a language. It can be seen the current clashes between language politics. Everybody is rushed to secure an admission of their children in English medium school.

Work is Worship

Gandhi believed that education should be intimately related with human experience. He sees education in the work, physical work or manual work. He said that knowledge cannot be separated from work. In our modern life where we are so determined about the division of manual and intellectual work which becomes a problem for us. Intellectual people are not ready to work hard e.g. when given the work by Election commission people have a problem to even accept it as a work.

Money without work is a sin

World has everything we need, but not for our greed. We are all in a competitive world. We all want to make money. Everybody wants money to live. But people who make money out of corruption are not doing anything, which becomes their habit. It is conservation thought that the corruption is in only money, it is a very comprehensive term. Money without work is corruption is someone is not performing his given duties and still paid is corruption. But today everybody is engaged or in support to one or other corrupt practices.

Truth and non-violence

In liberalized world when everything is a commodity and has a price tag. There is competition in every field. People don't want to confront with moral issues. Rather they are in favor of what make things done. It's a pure pragmatism. And when a government believes that some kind of violence can produce them good result in

next election, then people must be ready to face more violence.

Service

Service is something Gandhi put higher in any learning. He said that an educated man is one who takes a broom in every day and clean his surroundings'. He had given highest value to the labor. Service should be out of heart, it should not be any monetary benefit. Today people feel they work for money and they are not serving nation, the other man of land.

Character

Gandhi emphasized over character, even he said that an education should have a prime motive to build a character in student. To build a character, one who build it, must have a character. Here Gandhi wants to say that a teacher should have purity in soul, idea and action. No extreme individualization included in character, one who thinks for all is a character man. People find problem in it.

What happens is Nihilistic Person?

It is interesting to note that what happens in a Nihilistic person, and how can one identify the symptoms of it.

Negativity

People with nihilism tend to believe that 'Nothing can happen in this world', 'Nothing will change', 'New technologies, tools, politics have no use'. 'No one can do anything'.

Stagnant

People don't change their life style, teaching methodology, question papers, notes etc.

Frustrated

People with this attitude are often frustrated. This is because they don't go beyond their subject. They find difficulties in exploring new edges of their area of subject.

Low energy

People with this tendency lag behind the energy. They feel pale very early. This is because they don't find any excitement in the work they do.

When we think or talk about the nation building processes, we must think about the people who will be engaged in such processes are people of different walks of life. Our national problems like poverty, unemployment, health, terrorism, extremism, national peace will be addressed when people are morally strong to question the systems of governance. Sarvodaya Samaj may be reality when there is no gulf between educated classes and masses, tradition and modernity, materialism and spirituality, and cities and villages.

Satyagraha: a ray of hope

In his discourses in prison in 1930 about his philosophical frame of reference;

The word Satya (Truth) is derived from Sat which means being. And nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why Satya or Truth is the most important name of God. In fact it is more correct to say Truth is God than to say God is Truth... Where there is no Truth there can be no true knowledge.

Today the concept of truth is irrelevant; it's subjective or seen in utility value. In other way it's a denial of the proposition that truth posses reality. And to find a reality one must have faith in the dialogical processes. Therefore it is inevitable to think that I may be imperfect so I must practice tolerance.

For him Satyagraha or holding fast to the truth was not political activity but philosophical stand to demand right action from the both sides polity and the people of society. He said 'Satyagraha' is not only premise but a quest for a Satyagrahi. One who is doing Satyagraha, his action may or may not be political but can remain

non-ideological. It can also be the basis for challenging unjust laws – and this is a philosophical question, for it puts natural justice against the formal laws. Moreover, Swaraj, or the quest for self-recognition had to be pursued by pure, that is, non-violent means - to indulge the impulse to violence was to undermine the self.

CONCLUSION

Free from any kind of fear is a real freedom said Gandhi. Today most of us feel that his philosophy has no use, but he was the man who not only preached his philosophy of 'Satyagraha' but also demonstrated the path to practice it. His writings like individual and social development are interdependent and no one can develop himself unless his society develops with him and vice-versa. Author feels that if we start traveling his way to justice, humanity, values and peace will be ours and also we can overcome the modern nihilism. We will be in a spiritual society that is based on love, non-violence, truth and justice.

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