

## **Satyagraha: The Call of the Present Scenario**

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**Abstract :** India's freedom movement possess certain remarkable features which stand out as somewhat unique in the struggle for nation liberation. One of the distinguished Indian freedom fighters was Mahatma Gandhiji. His life, ideology, novel technique of fight to redress political wrongs and injustice fascinated not only an India but to the world too. He introduced harmless but powerful technique of protest, *Satyagraha* which received a massive response. The tireless efforts of many freedom fighters proved fruitful and India got freedom in 1947 in which Gandhiji's contribution was definitely significant. Gandhiji showed the path of peace and truth to the nation. However, even after the 75 years of independence, India is still undergoing many conflicting and challenging issues. The nation, today observes and experiences the chaotic situation around it. The emergence of truth less, valueless and moral less society has deteriorated the social and political spheres. The present paper aims to focus on Gandhiji's powerful massive and passive resistant technique, *Satyagraha*. It also attempts to correlate the present scenario and the need of implementation of *Satyagraha* to improve the situation to bring the favourable changes in the society.

**Key Words:** *Satyagraha*, non-violence, non-cooperation, civil disobedience

### **I) Introduction:**

It is of utmost importance to realize the radical change which came over the entire freedom movement of India after the leadership came into the hands of Mahatma Gandhi in 1920. It was Gandhiji who provided the nationalist movement with a new enthusiasm and dynamic leadership. He created a new mood and showed a way out of the impasse. The non-cooperation movement raised his political status to the climax in the country and emerged his personality as a great father-figure. Gandhiji's courage and moral were really worth to appreciate as he challenged the mighty empire with his serenity and pledge to free India through *Satyagraha*. He seemed like a rishi (sage) from some ancient epic who had come to bring about the liberation of India. His parables struck home; his analogies were drawn from the Hindu epics. Indian politics became a strange mixture of "nationalism and politics and religion and mysticism." (Gupta, 230)

Gandhiji's approach to India's political freedom was very different from that of the rest of his contemporaries. Gandhiji had struck the idea of *Satyagraha* in South Africa when he raised his voice against racial discrimination practiced by government of the country against the people belonging to India. Thus, he was drawn in the South African struggle, in order to give justice to Indian immigrants there. Therefore, he had to search for a method and technique of resistance which would remove their disabilities. He wanted to employ the technique closely associated with the fundamental moral principles which guided his life. On a limited scale he fashioned the instrument of passive resistance against injustice and

oppression. His movement is referred as passive resistance, civil disobedience, non-cooperation. However, Gandhiji did not feel that these terms fully conveyed the moral and spiritual aspects of the struggles he organized. Therefore, he gave them a significant name, "*Satyagraha*", which means the pursuit of truth.

As the name suggests, *Satyagraha* means insist of truth which is ultimately based on reality. Hence, it is assumed that practicing *Satyagraha* means believing the principles of truth and non-violence. Thus, *Satyagraha* is a strong and non-violent weapon used by Gandhiji to raise his voice against the humiliation, suppression of people and the unfair policy of Britishers. *Satyagraha*, Gandhiji's silent method of protest, used to force Britishers to rethink of their decision. He placed the doctrine of non-violence and non-cooperation before the country not only as the right method but as the most effective one for the purpose of national freedom.

Gandhiji always laid stress on the religious, moral and spiritual side of the movement. His theory of *Satyagraha* is a philosophy of politics and life too. It is significant to note that Martin Luther King Junior and Nelson Mandela were so influenced by Gandhian ideology of *Satyagraha* that they practiced it in their countries, America and South Africa respectively. Thus, the magic of Gandhiji's philosophy of *Satyagraha* was observed worldwide.

Martin Luther King Jr. described *Satyagraha* as a silent soul force, neither an act of cowardice nor a weapon of the weak. According to him there are the six important principles of *Satyagraha*. First, it keeps the mind active than a physical aggressiveness. As it is a silent protest against the opponent, it increases a feeling of guilt in the minds of the opponent. Second, it does not humiliate the opponent but develops friendship and understanding between them. Third, *Satyagraha* wages battle against the forces of evil and not individuals. Fourth, by accepting suffering, it opens up tremendous educational and transforming possibilities and becomes a powerful tool in changing the minds of opponents. Fifth, humans have a cosmic companionship with God who favours truth. And, lastly, bitterness and hate are replaced with love. (Basu,1)

Gandhiji practiced two types of *Satyagraha* in his mass campaigns. The first was civil disobedience, which included breaking a law and courting arrest. His focus was on "civil" meaning both "relating to citizenship and government" and "civilized" or "polite" too. Thus, for Gandhiji, civil disobedience means moderate way to refuse to cooperate. Keeping this ideology in a mind, Gandhiji and followers break a law-politely. For instance, Civil Disobedience Movement, Dandi Salt *Satyagraha*, Quit India Movement are certain examples of *Satyagraha*.

Gandhiji combined the idea of non-violence with his non-cooperation movement and launched against the British rule. It was definitely a revolutionary movement as it stimulated the whole nation filled with life and energy among the Indian masses. It offered the goal of national freedom and the ending of exploitation of the underdog. These movements increased the tremendous pressure on the government and at the same time increase the

strength of people. It was the most dignified way of getting the masses active and it proved appropriate for the Indian people. *Satyagraha* was an essentially a peaceful revolution for liberation of the country. The non-cooperation, *Satyagraha*, mass or individual civil disobedience, all rested on non-violence and truth.

## II) *Satyagraha* And the Present Scenario:

India is known all over the world for its secularism and unity in diversity. Recently, the nation celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> independence with enthusiasm. In order to memorize the sacrifice of the freedom fighters, the government suggested different activities to be organized in the society, organizations, colleges and schools. And, no doubt, India made it the memorable event and astonished the world with its patriotic spirit. Though this is the fact, the other days, India undergoes through a crucial problems which invite a threat to the unity and secularism of the country.

Nowadays, all human beings on the earth live under a threat of many issues. The present scenario is full of riots and violence which harms peace of society and an individual too. The chaotic reality, we face nowadays, is harsh and bitter to digest. A society is undergoing the socio-political unrest and we are forced to live in unpredictable situation. As far as Gandhiji's principles of *Satyagraha* are concerned, even today truth and non-violence need to be practiced rigorously to bring law and order in a real sense in a society. His ideology behind *Satyagraha* was to bring peace and harmony in a society. Ultimately, every country, community and society struggle lot to establish peace and harmony in a society.

The burning issues of the present Indian society are terrorism, warlike situation, tension on borders of the nation, communal riots, suicide of farmers, corruption, castesim, fear of religious riots, victimization of women, value degradation and environment deterioration etc. As these issues are very sensitive, there is need to resolve them gently by following a non-violence principle and leading the nation towards peaceful life.

India is one of the largest democratic countries in the world which believes in secularism. Being a secular country, India believes in a principle of tolerance. Besides, as it follows the constitutional directives, it always offers the equal religious treatment. However, nowadays, the religious tension is raising at every moment around us which disturbs social peace and invite danger to a society. If one wants to solve the religious tension smoothly, there is need to follow an ideology of *Satyagraha*.

Another rigid issue of Indian society is that of casteism which splits a society into pieces. A castesim is shattering our distinguished feature of a unity in diversity. If we wish to avoid caste conflict effortlessly, we must have to practice the technique of *Satyagraha* as it a method of silent protest, without harming anyone.

Gandhiji's philosophy of *Satyagraha* believes in moral value. The value education is a need of the present scenario. At present, the moral values are being trodden by a society which descends the Indian culture's dignity. The principles of *Satyagraha* need to be introduced and implemented effectively to inculcate the values in a society.

Corruption is another dark side of the present Indian society. To lead a society towards an excel, there need to be transparency at every level. To establish a corruption free society is a challenging task. However, it can be possible if one believes and practices the principles of *Satyagraha*. If every individual rigorously follows a principle of pursuit of truth in his or her everyday life, corruption can be eradicated from a society.

Gandhiji started *Satyagraha* to challenge the social, political and colonial decisions. Today's polluted politics reflects the unpredictable alliances, valueless politics, shifting the political party frequently and disloyalties to political party's ideology etc. In order to improve a Indian political field, vision of *Satyagraha* need to be practiced.

Nowadays, the issue of women's harassment and security is again a crucial one. In the present Indian society, respect and dignity of women is being forgotten. By following non-cooperation movement, women can demand a justice for themselves. It may prove powerful tool to draw the attention of society towards their genuine problems.

### III) Conclusion:

To conclude, it can be stated that *Satyagraha* was a tool used powerfully by Gandhiji in order to get justice for the oppressed. It was a matchless weapon to fight against the strongest and the mightiest power. A Peaceful, effective, more lasting and mass scale, non-violent techniques of the Indian revolution proved milestones in Indian freedom movement. Gandhiji used and demonstrated the power of *Satyagraha* successfully to get India liberated from the yoke of British imperialism. It was a bloodless mass revolution in conditions of honour and dignity. Hence, his strategy of *Satyagraha* with its principles of truth and non-violence seems a call of the present scenario too. Rather, it may prove the only right technique to bring the expected changes in the present society without harming anyone. Though Mahatma Gandhiji's concept of *Satyagraha* was for colonial violence, even today it can prove effective if implemented rightly.

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