

THE POLITICAL THOUGHTS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

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1.1 Introduction:-

Mahatma Gandhi, also known as "The Father of the Nation" in India, was a political leader and freedom fighter who played a pivotal role in India's struggle for independence from British colonial rule. He is widely considered to be one of the most influential figures in Indian history and his political thoughts continue to inspire people across the globe.

Gandhi's political philosophy was rooted in non-violence, civil disobedience, and the power of the people. He believed that the strength of a nation lies in the strength of its people and that true freedom can only be achieved through the active participation of the masses. He believed that non-violence was the most powerful weapon in the struggle for freedom and that it was the only way to achieve a lasting peace. He famously said, "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man¹."

1.2 Objective of the study:-

1. To understanding the Political Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi

1.3. Research Methodology:-

The present study is the purely descriptive type which exclusively relied on secondary information. The necessary information has been collected from my Books, Journals in libraries.

1.4. The Political Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi-

1.4.1 Gandhi's political philosophy non-violence

Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence was not only limited to the political struggle for independence but also extended to the everyday lives of people. He believed in the principle of "Ahimsa" or non-violence towards all living beings and advocated for vegetarianism as a way to practice non-violence. He also believed in the principle of "Satyagraha" which is a form of non-violent resistance where people peacefully protest against unjust laws and policies. The core of Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence is the belief that violence only begets violence, and that true change can only be achieved through love and compassion. He believed that violence was not only a physical act, but also an attitude of anger and hatred that could be found within individuals and societies. He saw that violence was a destructive force that could never lead to lasting peace, and that it only served to perpetuate cycles of suffering and oppression.

Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence was based on the idea that all human beings are inherently good, and that it is only through ignorance and fear that people become violent. He believed that the solution to conflict was not to suppress or eliminate the opposition, but

to understand and transform it through love and compassion. Gandhi saw that the ultimate goal of non-violence was not simply to end conflict, but to create a society in which all people could live in peace, love, and harmony. Gandhi's methods of nonviolent resistance were innovative and effective. He organized mass protests, strikes, and boycotts to bring attention to the Indian independence movement and to pressure the British government to change its policies. He also used fasts as a way of expressing his commitment to non-violence and to show his solidarity with those who were suffering.

Despite the fact that Gandhi's methods were often met with violence and repression, he never wavered in his commitment to non-violence. He remained steadfast in his belief that love and compassion were more powerful than hate and violence, and that the path to peace was through understanding and reconciliation.

In conclusion, Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence continues to inspire people around the world today. His legacy demonstrates that true change can only be achieved through love and compassion, and that violence only perpetuates cycles of suffering and oppression. His teachings show us that we have the power to create a more just and peaceful world, and that we can overcome conflict and division through understanding and compassion.

1.4.2 The civil disobedience as a political tool

Mahatma Gandhi is best known for his philosophy of non-violence and his use of civil disobedience as a political tool. Civil disobedience refers to the deliberate and nonviolent refusal to comply with laws or policies that are seen as unjust or oppressive. Gandhi used civil disobedience as a way of protesting against British rule in India, and his methods had a profound impact on the course of Indian independence and the wider global struggle for justice and human rights.

Gandhi's use of civil disobedience was rooted in his belief that all human beings have a moral obligation to resist unjust laws and policies. He saw that civil disobedience was a way of expressing one's commitment to justice and of forcing change through nonviolent means. He believed that non-compliance with unjust laws was a way of highlighting the moral and ethical flaws in the system, and of inspiring others to join in the struggle for change.

Gandhi's campaigns of civil disobedience were often large-scale and well-organized, and they had a profound impact on the Indian independence movement. One of his most famous campaigns was the Salt March of 1930, in which he led a march of thousands of people from Ahmedabad to the Arabian Sea to protest against the British monopoly on salt production. The Salt March was a powerful symbol of resistance and a turning point in the independence movement, and it helped to galvanize support for the struggle against British rule.

Despite the widespread support for Gandhi's campaigns, they were also met with repression and violence by the British authorities. Gandhi and his supporters were arrested, beaten, and even killed, but they remained steadfast in their commitment to non-violence and

civil disobedience. Gandhi believed that the power of non-violence lay in its ability to convert those who opposed it, and that the strength of the movement was not in its ability to force change, but in its ability to inspire others to join in the struggle for justice.

In conclusion, Gandhi's use of civil disobedience was a powerful tool in the Indian independence movement and a model for other movements for justice and human rights around the world. His legacy demonstrates that nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience can be powerful tools for change, and that ordinary people have the power to bring about profound and lasting change in their societies. His teachings show us that we have a moral obligation to resist unjust laws and policies, and that we can achieve justice and equality through peaceful means.

1.4.3 Gandhi was a firm believer in the power of the people to bring about change

Mahatma Gandhi was a firm believer in the power of the people to bring about change. He saw that ordinary people, when united and motivated, had the ability to challenge even the most powerful institutions and governments. His philosophy of the power of the people was based on the idea that all human beings are inherently good, and that it is only through ignorance and fear that people become violent.

Gandhi's philosophy of the power of the people was not limited to India, but had a global impact. His teachings and methods have been used in numerous other movements for justice and human rights around the world, from the Civil Rights movement in the United States to the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. He saw that ordinary people, when united and motivated, had the power to challenge the status quo and bring about lasting change.

In conclusion, Gandhi's philosophy of the power of the people continues to inspire people around the world today. His legacy demonstrates that ordinary people have the power to bring about profound and lasting change in their societies, and that we can create a more just and peaceful world through non-violent resistance and the power of the people. His teachings show us that we have the power to challenge the status quo and make a difference in the world, and that we can overcome conflict and division through understanding and compassion.

1.4.4 Mahatma Gandhi was a strong advocate of the principles of "ahimsa" and "satyagraha"

Mahatma Gandhi was a strong advocate of the principles of "ahimsa" and "satyagraha," which are central to his philosophy of non-violence. Ahimsa, which means "non-violence" in Sanskrit, is the principle of avoiding harm to all living beings, and satyagraha, which means "holding onto truth," refers to Gandhi's method of nonviolent resistance. Together, these principles formed the foundation of Gandhi's struggle for Indian independence and his vision for a more just and peaceful world. Gandhi believed that ahimsa was not just a principle to be followed in political activism, but a way of life that should be embraced by all individuals.

Satyagraha was Gandhi's method of nonviolent resistance, which he used to protest against British rule in India. He believed that satyagraha was a powerful tool for change because it was based on the idea that all human beings are inherently good, and that it is only through ignorance and fear that people become violent. He saw that the ultimate goal of satyagraha was not simply to end conflict, but to create a society in which all people could live in peace, love, and harmony.

In conclusion, Gandhi's beliefs in the principles of ahimsa and satyagraha continue to inspire people around the world today. His legacy demonstrates that non-violence and nonviolent resistance can be powerful tools for change, and that ordinary people have the power to bring about profound and lasting change in their societies.

1.4.5 Gandhi's political thoughts were also heavily influenced by his religious beliefs

Gandhi's political thoughts were also heavily influenced by his religious beliefs. He was deeply spiritual and believed that religion was not just about rituals and ceremonies but about living a good and moral life. He believed that all religions taught the same universal truth and that people of all religions should coexist in harmony. He said, "I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are all God-given and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of these faiths, we should find that they were at the bottom all one and were they all led to the same God."

Gandhi's political thoughts were not limited to India but also extended to the global political stage. He was an advocate for world peace and believed that lasting peace could only be achieved through non-violence. He also believed in the principle of "Swadeshi" which means self-reliance and advocated for the boycott of foreign goods and the promotion of indigenous industries. He believed that this would not only help in the economic development of the country but also in the promotion of self-respect and self-reliance among the people.

1.4.6 The Philosophy of Swadeshi and self-respect and self-reliance to Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi was a man of many philosophies, but among his most well-known is his belief in Swadeshi and self-respect and self-reliance. These principles played a significant role in Gandhi's political and social activism and continue to influence political and economic thinking to this day.

Swadeshi is the philosophy of using locally made goods and rejecting foreign goods. Gandhi believed that by using locally made products, people would be able to support their own communities and economies, leading to greater self-sufficiency and independence. He believed that reliance on foreign goods was a form of economic imperialism that exploited the people of India and weakened their ability to control their own lives and communities. He encouraged people to support local industries, use traditional skills and crafts, and buy from local markets.

Gandhi's philosophy of self-respect and self-reliance was closely tied to his belief in Swadeshi. He believed that by relying on themselves and their own communities, people would be able to develop a sense of self-worth and independence that would help them resist the domination of foreign powers. He encouraged people to be self-sufficient in their own lives, to work hard and develop their own skills, and to contribute to their own communities in meaningful ways.

Gandhi's philosophy of Swadeshi and self-respect and self-reliance was not only political, but also had a spiritual dimension. He believed that by relying on themselves and their own communities, people would be able to develop a deeper connection to their own inner selves and to the world around them. He saw this connection as a way to overcome the alienation and emptiness that he saw in modern society and as a path to a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

In conclusion, the philosophy of Swadeshi and self-respect and self-reliance by Mahatma Gandhi continues to have a significant impact on modern political and economic thinking. By promoting self-sufficiency, community-building, and a deeper connection to the self and the world, Gandhi's philosophy offers a compelling vision for a more equitable and fulfilling society. Whether we are looking to resist the domination of foreign powers, or simply to live more meaningful lives, Gandhi's philosophy offers a powerful and inspiring guide.

1.5 Conclusion-

In conclusion, Mahatma Gandhi's political thoughts continue to inspire people across the globe. His philosophy of non-violence, civil disobedience, and the power of the people has been a source of inspiration for many freedom fighters and activists. His belief in the principle of "Ahimsa" and "Satyagraha" has been a source of inspiration for many peace activists. His belief in the universality of religions and his advocacy for world peace has been a source of inspiration for many religious leaders. His belief in the principle of "Swadeshi" has been a source of inspiration for many economic thinkers. Mahatma Gandhi's political thoughts continue to be relevant today and his legacy will continue to inspire future generations.

References-

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