

সংগ্ৰহ



সম্পাদক
দেবজিৎ বৰা

Xupan - a collection of knowledge based article volume
written by the college teachers of Assam and edited by
Dewajit Bora, Samaguri College, Samaguri, Nagaon,
Assam, Pin- 782140

প্ৰকাশক
গৱেষণা আৰু সম্প্ৰসাৰণ কোষ
চামগুৰি মহাবিদ্যালয়

ISBN : 978-81-202-8822-5
প্ৰথম প্ৰকাশ : ২৪ অক্টোবৰ ২০১৭

বেটুপাত
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মূল্য : ১০০ টকা

মুদ্ৰণ
জাগৰণ প্ৰেছ
চানমাৰি, গুৱাহাটী-২১
ফোন : ৮৬৩৮১ ৫৩১২৬

বিঃ প্ৰঃ - প্ৰবন্ধত প্ৰকাশিত তথ্যসমূহৰ বাবে সম্পাদক বা প্ৰকাশক দায়বদ্ধ
নহয়।

- ৭) মেধি, ড° বিৰিঞ্চি কুমাৰ : অসমীয়া উপন্যাস সাহিত্যৰ নিৰ্যাস, ১ম
প্রকাশ, গোলোক ৰায়মেধি স্মৃতি প্রকাশন,
দিছপুৰ-৬, জানুৱাৰী-১৯৯৩
- ৮) বেজবৰুৱা, ড° ইন্দ্ৰজিৎ : সম্বন্ধয়, ২০১২ (সম্পা.) শ্ৰীমন্ত কৃষ্টি
বিকাশ কেন্দ্ৰ, শংকৰদেৱ নগৰ, হোজাই,
নগাঁও-৭৮২৪৪২
- ৯) গোস্বামী, ড° হৃদিব (সম্পা.) : ইন্দিৰা ব্যক্তিত্ব আৰু সাহিত্য, ১ম প্রকাশ,
অসম পাবলিচিং কোম্পানী,
পাণবজাৰ, গুৱাহাটী-১, ২০১৪
- ১০) বৰা, ড° লক্ষ্মীনন্দন (সম্পা.) : গৰিয়সী, উনবিংশ বছৰ, ৫ম সংখ্যা, ফেব্ৰুৱাৰী,
২০১২, গৰিয়সী, একবিংশ বছৰ, ৫ম
সংখ্যা, ফেব্ৰুৱাৰী, ২০১৪



Gandhiji's Philosophy on Non- Violence

Anjali Borgohain

Asstt. Professor, Department of Economics
Sonari Commerce College

**“Non-violence is the law of the human race and
is infinitely greater than and superior to brute
force.” – M.K. Gandhi**

INTRODUCTION

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who was one of the
leading characters of the world history, gave our country
a purposeful direction by his thought of non-violence.

Truth and Non-violence were the foundations of his philosophy and he accepted these as the law of life. According to him 'non-violence is the means; truth is the end'. For him truth is God and God is truth. This was evident from many such sayings of Gandhiji as 'I have no God to serve but truth' and so on. Non-violence paves the path to the realization of God. He believed that hate and violence are to be defeated by love and non-violence. He developed many techniques for becoming perfectly non-violent. These are non-possession, non-thieving, elimination of untouchability, purity of thought, word and deed, sanitation, vegetarianism and finally perfection. For him the weapon of non-violence or *ahimsa* was superior to all nuclear weapons. He believed that violence cannot be destroyed by counter violence. Hate and violence can be defeated only by love and non-violence. So, for him it is nothing but a moral war rose against oppressions without horrors. The experiment of his philosophy of non-violence began in South Africa and Indian politics.

ORIGIN OF GANDHIJI'S NON-VIOLENCE

The idea of non-violence has been deep rooted in India since long time. This idea has been preached from one generation to another. He derived his inner strength by reading and practicing ancient Indian scriptures. The great personalities such as Lord Buddha, Mohavira, Jesus Christ, etc. seen to have left significant impress upon the thought

and life of Gandhi. Influenced by Ruskin he gave more emphasis on human happiness with moral and mental values than economic motives as a means of overall development of India. The great thinker Leo Tolstoy's work 'The Kingdom of God is within you' impressed his mind very much. He learned ahimsa as '*parama dharma*' from his mother Putalibai. The holly book *Bhagvat Gita* also influenced Gandhiji's thoughts and ideas. He felt that the internal teaching of the *Gita* is bounded by truth and non-violence. Bringing together all these ideas, Gandhiji was in search for a meaningful life based on truth, non-violence and moral courage to stand for the right and justice.

According to Gandhi, one should not injure another by any of the three – mind, word and action. A follower of non-violence should fear nothing but an evil. He extended non-violence from physical non-injury to mental non-injury. For him non-violence is not merely an idea, but it is a fact. He laid down five simple axioms of non-violence. These are –

- Non-violence implies as complete self-purification as is humanly possible.
- Man for man, the strength of non-violence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will of inflict violence of the non-violent person.
- Non-violence is without exception superior to

violence, i.e. the power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater than he could have if he was violent.

- There are no such things as defeat in violence. The end of the violence is surest defeat.
- The ultimate end of non-violence is surest victory, if such a term may be used for non-violence.

Some of the opponents of this idea criticized non-violence as the theory of coward people, but Gandhiji convinced that it is the religion of strong and morally determined people. It is the way of brave to face death. He is non-violent only who can defy the opponents without causing any physical and mental injury. A non-violent person can respect the feeling of others and hear the opponents patiently. Such person adopts the techniques of non-violence and co-operations to fight against injustice of any kind. Gandhiji firmly opposed violence. He believed that a peaceful and desirable end cannot be attained by violent means. Here Gandhiji differs from Karl Marx on the question of means to achieve the goal. Marx believed that classless society or socialism will be attained through a violent revolution, but Gandhiji opined that it would be achieved through a non-violent way. Because, he believed that a pure end cannot be achieved by the way of impure means. Wrong means did not justify the right end.

USE OF NON-VIOLENCE IDEA BY GANDHIJI: SOME EXAMPLES

Gandhiji's idea of non-violence played a very significant role during the India's freedom movement from 1920 to the final achievement of the freedom. His fight against British was based on his idea of non-violence and it took the form of satyagraha, civil disobedience, non-cooperation, fasting, strike, etc. Introducing non-violence as a technique in the political field, to fight against powerful British, is something unique in the history of the world. Gandhiji pleaded that India should evolve democracy without violence, by the way of mass effort and mass education with the sole aim of services of the lowliest, so that equal opportunities can be provided both to the strong and the weak. According to him non-violence is the basic requirement of democracy. He felt that a state which chooses democracy, but did not follow the path of non-violence is bound to turn totalitarian.

His Swadeshi movement was also based on non-violence. He believed that political independence without economic independence has no meaning. Economic freedom cannot be achieved without subscribing to the goods produced indigenously. So, he started this movement. Boycott of foreign goods through Swadeshi reflected the spirit of self reliance and economic independence.

In 1930, Gandhiji started the famous '*Dandi March*'

in a peaceful and non-violent manner to stop the tax on salt. According to British Law Indians are not given the right to produce salt, they had to purchase it from British-owned factories. To protest against the British Government's monopoly on salt production he organized a 24 day march to Dandi and produced salt from salty water.

Gandhiji could win the hearts of millions of Indians due to his sincere approach to solve their problem in a peaceful manner. He fought for various legal protections against several kinds of injustices done to them. As a result untouchability was declared illegal.

RELEVANCE OF GANDHI'S PHILOSOPHY OF NON-VIOLENCE IN PRESENT CONTEXT

Some people argue that the philosophy of non-violence is remained only as ideology; it has no practical use in present society. But, it is not fully true. It is certainly relevant in present context. On 15th June, 2007, for example United Nations General Assembly voted to observe 2nd October, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, as '*International Day of non-violence*'. At present, many organizations in India as well as in Assam frequently apply Gandhiji's ideas for fulfilling demands. Not only Indian, people of different countries in the world are encouraged by the non-violent idea of Mahatma Gandhi. They have followed the path of Gandhiji and have already achieved

their objectives. Examples of such prominent persons are Nelson Mandela, Aung-Sung-Su-Ki, Martin Luther King Jr. etc. Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison for his anti-apartheid activities and emerged to be the first democratically elected President of South Africa in 1994. Aung-Sung-Su-Ki has also followed the ideology of Gandhiji and led non-violence democratic movement in Myanmar for a long time and ultimately she has succeeded to establish democracy in Myanmar. There are many extremist groups in North East India such as ULFA, NSCN, BLT, DHD, etc. They adopt the path of violence to fulfill their demands. But violence is against all democratic norms. Many innocent people lose their valuable lives in so called revolutions of these groups. Now, some of them realize the importance of Gandhiji's ideology. Government is also trying to solve this problem through peaceful negotiations.

CONCLUSION

Gandhiji was not just a personality or an individual, he had become an idea. Perhaps, Gandhiji was unique in the modern world to use non-violence in solving political, social and economic problems. Though Gandhiji was not the inventor of non-violence, he is sometimes regarded as the father of non-violence. Because, according to Mark Shepard, "he raised non-violent action to a level never before achieved." Today, our country is in the need of

peace, unity and brotherhood and it is the philosophy of Gandhiji which can prove to be a universal remedy for all the unrest of present day society. Mrs. Sonia Gandhi the former President of National Congress, rightly said in her speech when visited South Africa, "Gandhian philosophy has not loss its relevance and in fact it has become more pertinent in 21st Century as an effective tool in conflict resolution."

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