



The Impact Of Gandhian Ideology On Indian Constitution

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Abstract

The Gandhian ideology occupies the most important place not only for the reason that it prevailed from 1920 till the advent of independence in 1947 and thereby earned the distinction of being successful in achieving national liberation in a unique way but also for the reason that it showed the successful execution of a new experiment based on the principles of truth and non-violence in our struggle for freedom against the British colonialism and imperialism. "Gandhi's first experiment of 1920-21, called nonviolent and non-co-operation movement, showed that, for the first time, large sections of Hindus and Muslims collaborated for a national goal - the goal of self-government in India". Gandhi gave constructive shape by channelizing the energy of the people in specific directions that had their manifestation in the non-co-operation movement of 1920-22, civil disobedience movement of 1930-32 and finally the quit India movement of 1942-44. It was due to his charismatic impact that his voice became the voice of the country and at his instance the masses threw themselves into the arena of fight for swaraj. He was a staunch supporter of internationalism and universalism. Since Gandhiji was an intense nationalist, he laid emphasis on some original ideas for the reconstruction of the Indian Society and for the upliftment of rural areas like cottage industries and small-scale industries which could give extra income to the villagers apart from their main profession of agriculture. Gandhi said "The non-violent state will try to equalize economic conditions of the people with a view to secure social justice and economic freedom." Gandhi holds that the Indian villages will evolve a well-balanced social-economic and political system by eschewing the two extremes of 'Laissez-faire' and totalitarian control. The village community will develop an ideal form of co-operative agriculture and industry in which there is hardly any scope for exploitation of the poor by the rich.

Keywords: Non-Co-operation, self-government, Nationalists, Indian National movement, Village Swaraj.

Introduction:

Gandhi was in favour of village swaraj and wanted to give maximum powers to the Panchayats. He was ready to give permission for heavy production but with the

limitations that the heavy industries should not be established with a view to earning profits and these should not destroy the cottage industries. He was in favour of co-operative farming. The non-violent state would be a true democracy because people would have maximum equality and freedom in it. The entire Indian National movement can be divided into three periods: -The 1st period of Moderate Nationalists from 1885 to 1905. The second period of Extremist Nationalists from 1905 to 1920. The Gandhian period from 1920 to 1948. Now Gandhi entered Indian politics with his full vigor and force in September 1920 and started his famous Non-co-operation movement with the approval of congress. This was also supported by the Khilafat Committee. The Indians were persuaded to boycott the British manufactured goods and the boycott of educational institutions, courts and legislative Assemblies, established by the British Government. Dr. Rajendra Prasad rightly observed, "Gandhi infused a new life into the masses. The weapons of Non-co-operation gave the people a new hope. "Gandhi had expressed, "I shall strive for a constitution which will release India from all slavery and patronage. I shall work for an India, in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability on the cause of intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women shall enjoy the same rights as men. This is the idea of my dreams. I shall be satisfied with nothing else. "Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel remarked, "Indeed Gandhiji was a pillar of strength and a source of inspiration to the nation. "This paper deals with the ideals and the aspirations of Gandhiji which he applied throughout his struggle for Indian National movement and in liberating India and will try to analyze to what extent Gandhian ideology has been put to practice in the working of the Indian constitution. In this article on Gandhian ideology in the working of the Indian constitution, two aspects will be discussed. The first is that Gandhi refused to take part in the Constituent Assembly, entrusted to frame the prospective Indian Constitution. Thus, the first aspect of study is to explore the commitment and sentiments of the members of the Drafting Committee to what extent they incorporated the Gandhian ideology while framing the draft of the Indian Constitution. The other aspect is the actual working of the Gandhian ideas, ideals and aspirations in the present Indian constitution. What were the compulsions and limitations of the framers of the constitution for the deviation of some of the Gandhian ideas as some of the Gandhian ideologists complained that the present constitution is least Gandhian in spirit. But many of the aspects of Gandhian ideology got a suitable place in the Part III of Fundamental Rights and Part IV of the Directive Principles of state policy.

GANDHIAN IDEOLOGY AND THE DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY IN PRACTICE

The Directive Principles of State Policy, Part IV of the constitution of India, from Article 36 to 51, underlines the philosophy of democratic socialism citing Gandhian idealism as expressed by Gandhiji in his "Constructive Programme" in 1920. The Gandhian concept of Ideal State i.e. 'Ram Rajya' the Karachi Resolution of 1931 stressed that, "The state should

also aim at achieving the welfare of the individuals in the social, economic, cultural and moral spheres. "Gandhi writes in Young India on May 18, 1940, "True democracy lays in achieving village industries, providing primary education through handicrafts, removal of untouchability; communal harmony and prohibition. "The Directive Principles of State Policy in the constitution lay down certain directions to the future legislature and the executive showing the manners in which these have to exercise their authority. These are the directions which the state should follow while enacting laws, framing policies and preparing welfare programmes for the people of India. Although the provisions relating to directive principles are not enforceable through court of law yet the principles embodied therein are nevertheless fundamental in the governance of the country.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar -The Chairman of the Drafting Committee pointed out in the Constituent Assembly:

"These Directive Principles are not mere pious declarations. It is the intention of this Assembly that in future both the legislature and the executive should not merely pay lip-service to these principles but they should be made the basis of all legislative and executive actions that they may be taking hereafter in the matter of the governance of the country. These are the novel features in view of the fact it constitutes a very comprehensiveness political, social and economic programme for a modern democratic state." [2] The Directive Principles of State Policy, as mentioned in Part IV from Articles 36 to 51 display various aspects of Gandhian ideology and his 'Constructive Programme' - the basic guidelines for bringing social transformation in India. Gandhi was aware of this fact that 75% of the population of India lived in villages and unless the villages were not properly developed and improved the development of India, as a whole, was not possible. Thus, Gandhi always stressed on the upliftment of the social and economic conditions of the villages.

Gandhi expressed his views regarding 'Village Swaraj' in the following words: "I have believed and repeated times without number that India is to be found not in its few cities but in its 7,00,000 villages." [3] The Draft Constitution prepared by B.N. Rao included the chapter of Directive Principles of State Policy in the constitution mainly based upon the Gandhian ideology and aspirations which he expressed from time to time. Most of the members of the Drafting Committee i.e. Pt. Thakurdas Bhargava, Kazi Syed Karimuddin, Shriman Narayan, Mahavir Tyagi. Prof. Shibani Lal Saxena etc. stressed to give practical shape to Gandhian concept of 'True democracy'.

Gandhi and village Panchayats (Village Swaraj):

Gandhi was of the opinion that the key to Swaraj was not with the cities but with the villages. So, the reconstruction of the villages should not be organized on a temporary but permanent basis. "Thus every village will be a Republic or Panchayat having full powers i.e. all the authority and jurisdiction required. In Panchayati Raj only the Panchayat will

be obeyed and the Panchayat can only work through the law of their making." [4] The Gandhian concept of Village Panchayats got a suitable place in Part IV of Directive Principles of State Policy under Article 40. A large number of laws have been enacted to implement the directive principles in Article 40 i.e. to organize Village Panchayats and endow them with powers of self-government." The Panchayats elected by the entire adult population in the villages, have been endowed with powers of civic administration such as medical relief, maintenance of village roads, streets, tanks and wells, provision of primary education, sanitation etc. Even the Panchayats have some judicial powers. But the legal practitioners are excluded from these village tribunals. After the Constitutional 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts, almost all the states have enacted laws, vesting various degrees of powers of self-government in the hands of Panchayats.

Promotion of Cottage industries:

Gandhi was shocked at the devastating impact of British imperialist capitalism which had threatened the very existence of the village economy. The cottage industry had been crippled due to the free trade policy of the Britishers. Gandhi formulated his famous 'Constructive Programme' for the upliftment of the cottage industries. Khadi happened to be an important constituent of such a programme.

According to Gandhi: "Mechanization is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as is the case in India. Thus, extinction of village industries would complete the ruin of the 7,00,000 villages of India." [5] Khadi to Gandhi was the symbol of production by the masses as distinct from mass production. Thus, the village economy could not complete without the essential village industries. The Draft Constitution in Article 34 had no provision of cottage industries. It was the sincere efforts of Shriman Narayan, H.V. Kamath, Chettiyar etc. that a new portion was incorporated to Article 34 of the Draft Constitution as per aspiration of Gandhi and which later on took the form of Article 43 of the Indian Constitution which reads: "The State shall endeavor, in particular, to promote cottage industries on an individual or co-operative basis in rural areas." Thus, for the promotion of cottage industries (Article 43 which is a state subject, the central government has established several Boards to help the State-Governments, in the matter of finance, marketing and the like. These are- All India khadi and village industries Board; All India Handicrafts Board; All India Handloom Board; Small Scale Industries Board; Silk Board. Moreover, National Small Industries Corporation has been set up and the Khadi and Village Commission has been set up to develop khadi and village industries.

Gandhi and Prohibition:

Gandhi emphasized, throughout his life, on 'Prohibition.' To Gandhi: "Nothing but ruin stares a nation in the face that is prey to the drink habit. Drinking is more of a disease than a vice. I know scores of men who would gladly leave off drinks if they could. The

drink curse has desolated many a laborer's home. Only those women who have drunkards as their husbands know what havoc the drink devil works in homes that once were orderly and peace-loving. Drugs and drink are the two arms of the devil with which he strikes his helpless slaves into stupefaction and intoxication." [6], but it was strange that there was omission regarding 'Prohibition' in the Draft Constitution. One of the prominent members of the Constituent Assembly Kazi Syed Karimuddin wanted a separate Article in the constitution regarding Prohibition i.e.:"The state shall strive to secure Prohibition of manufacture, sale or transportation of intoxicating liquors for beverage purposes." [7] As per wishes of Gandhi, Article 47 of the constitution reads:"The state shall endeavor to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health." Prohibition for Gandhi was one of the most important reforms.

Gandhi and weaker sections of the society:

Gandhi was one of the beacon lights of modern humanity. He was a new star that rose on the horizon of the life of oppressed mankind, giving it a new hope. At that time in the traditional Indian Society Harijans- the oppressed classes suffered from atrocities, degradation and exploitation by the upper castes. Gandhi always protected the interests of the weaker and suppressed classes of the society which he called 'Harijans'-the people of God. Gandhi also started a newspaper called 'Harijan' for the promotion of the interests of the weaker sections of the people, in particular of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in order to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation."Untouchability as it is practiced in Hinduism today is, in my opinion, a sin against God and man and is, therefore, like a poison slowly eating into the very vitals of Hinduism. It has degraded both the untouchables and the touchable. They are denied even the ordinary amenities of life. The sooner, therefore, it is ended, the better for Hinduism, the better for India, and perhaps better for mankind in general." [8] It was due to the ideals of Gandhi that the Indian Constitution has the provision for the promotion of educational and economic interests of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other weaker sections. Article 46 reads:"The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitations." Article 330 shows the reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the House of the People. Article 332 has the provision of seats for scheduled castes and tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the states. Even there are provisions of specific reservation for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes in the government jobs.

Gandhi on Cow Protection and Animal Husbandry:

Gandhi had immense regard for cow and wanted that cow-slaughter should be banned on moral and economic grounds.

According to Gandhi: "Cow-protection is the dearest possession of Hindu heart. Cow-protection is a noble belief which means brotherhood between man and beast. For me the cow is the purest type of sub-human life. Cow protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution. Cow is the giver of plenty. Not only does she give milk, but she also makes agriculture possible. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God." [9] "But let me reiterate... that legislative prohibition is the smallest part of any programme of cow protection. The more I study the question of cow-protection, the stronger the conviction grows upon me, that protection of the cow and her progeny can be obtained if there is continuous and sustained constructive effort along the lines suggested by me." [10] In the Constituent Assembly Debates Dr. Raghuvver stressed that on the basis of Gandhian principle of Non-violence the provisions of cow-protection should be added in the constitution. "Cow is the mother of the individual. She is mother of the nation and cow shall be saved in the interests of the country and in the interests of our culture." [11] On the persistent appeal of Lakshmi Narayan Sahu and Pt. Thakur Das Bhargwa a specific Article 48 was included in the constitution which reads: "The state shall endeavor to organize agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines and shall, in particular take steps for preserving and improving the breeds, and prohibiting the slaughter of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle."

Gandhi and Education:

Gandhi emphasized on the true and useful system of education. Gandhi said: "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best inclined and man-body, mind and spirit. I am a firm believer in the principle of free and compulsory Primary Education for India. I also hold that we shall realize this only by teaching the children a useful vocation and utilizing it as a means for cultivating their mental, physical and spiritual faculties." [12] Gandhi considered that primary education extending over seven years would equip boys and girls to earn their bread by the state guaranteeing employment in vocations learnt or by buying their manufacturers at prices, fixed by the state. Honouring the views of Gandhi on education the Article 45 and Article 46 were incorporated in Directive Principles of state policy.

Article 45 i.e. the provision for free and compulsory education for children reads: "The state shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years." Article 46 reads: "The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in

particular, of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation."

Gandhi and Internationalism/Universalism:

Gandhi was the staunch advocate of Internationalism. According to Gandhi:"It is impossible for one to be an internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact i.e. when peoples belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man." [13]"The golden way is to be friends with the world and to regard the whole human family as one. My goal is friendship with the whole world and I can combine the greatest love with the greatest opposition to wrong." [14] Thus, Gandhi wished not merely internationalism but also universalism. Gandhian views on internationalism got suitable place in the Directive Principles of state policy under Article 51 i.e. Promotion of international peace and security which reads:"The state shall endeavor to promote international peace and security, maintain just and honourable relations between nations; foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organized people with one another; and encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration." It can be concluded that many of the aspirations of Gandhi such as village swaraj, Panchayati Raj, Cottage Industries, Swadeshi, untouchability. Prohibition on cow-protection, socio-economic justice and the ideals of world peace have the reflections in the Part IV i.e. Directive Principles of state policy. Incorporating these lofty ideas and ideals of Gandhi in Part IV of the constitution was the true homage to Gandhi by framers of the constitution.

Conclusion:

It is ordinarily very-very difficult, if not impossible, for one to make a true evaluation of Gandhi's life and contribution vis-a-vis India's freedom struggle in particular and Indian people's life in general, for Gandhi's life and achievements were too great to be properly understood. We may, however succeed to some extent in throwing light on some aspects of this unique career. The amazing thing about Gandhi was that by his principles, ideals and aspirations, he succeeded in moulding and moving enormous masses of human beings. He moulded a whole generation and raised them above themselves for the time being, at least. That was a tremendous achievement. He brought freedom to India and in that process taught Indians many valuable things. He told to shed fear and hatred, taught unity, equality and brotherhood, uplifted those who had been suppressed, preached dignity of labour and the supremacy of the things of the spirit. Above all, he spoke and wrote unceasingly of truth in relation to all our activities. He repeated again and again that To him Truth was God and God was Truth. Gandhi is dead but Gandhism will live till the stars shine and the oceans roll on. These words of late Dr. Rajendra Prasad give a very portrayal of the lasting value of Gandhian ideology. His blending politics with ethics and emphasizing the value of truth and non-violence both for the solution of national and

international problems, may be considered as a unique contribution of Gandhi to the political thought.

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