

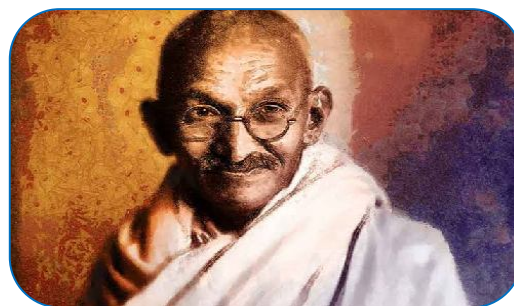


## PRINCIPLES OF GANDHI : CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

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### ABSTRACT :

*In every period of man's activity there have appeared significant figures to whom history later points as the leaders of a new age. Such men are dynamic, purposeful, prophetic, and dangerous to the established order and habit of their time. Such a figure is Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi, known to the world as Mahatma Gandhi, born on October 2, 1869 in small state of Porbandar, western India.<sup>1</sup>Gandhi the man who led the Indian National Movement and shook the mighty British empire not with the help of any army or weapon but with his principles as weapon against the injustice. Even today the all values and principles of Gandhi have same relevancy. Some basic principles by which countrywide movements were conducted by Gandhi and the other leaders of Indian National Movement are discussed in this paper.<sup>2</sup>*



**KEYWORDS :** Principles of Gandhi, Contemporary Relevance.

### INTRODUCTION :

The First principle and the base of the Gandhi's whole ideology was the principle of satya (Truth) and ahimsa (Non- violence). Gandhi once said that "with satya combined with ahimsa you can bring the world to your feet."<sup>3</sup> About satya Gandhi said "Devotion to the truth is the sole justification for our existence. All our activities should be centered in truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life. When once this stage in the pilgrim's progress is reached, all other rules of correct living will come without effort, and obedience to them will be instinctive. But without truth it is impossible to observe any principles or rules of life."<sup>4</sup>Gandhi called the non-violence as the greatest force of the world. In Gandhi's views it is mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.<sup>5</sup> Gandhi also talked about the relation between truth and non-violence. He said " Truth-Sat is positive, Non-violence is negative. Truth stands for the fact , non-violence negatives the fact. And yet non-violence is the highest religion. Truth is self- evident; non- violence is its matures fruit. It is contained in Truth but as it not self-evident a man may seek to interpret the shastras without accepting it. But his acceptance of truth was sure to lead him to the acceptance of non-violence"<sup>6</sup>.

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In the matter of non-violence Gandhi believed in the fact that the love of the non-violent resister towards opponent plays a more important role in changing latter's attitude. It helps in perceiving things in broader perspective and human context. It neutralizes emotions like fear, anger, pride, jealousy and rivalry and thus psychologically seems to be more effective in resolving conflicts<sup>7</sup>. Gandhi also suggested the principles according to which non-violent resistance seems to be more effective. The first principle was that aggression, if meted out with violence, reinforces counter violence and thus aggression flourishes more and more which forms a vicious circle. The second principle was that evil could not be overcome by evil. Only good can neutralize and overcome evil. The third principle is to allay the revengeful feelings of the attacker<sup>8</sup>. Gandhi also gave the answer to whom, who believe that non-violence is the symbol of weakness. He said "My creed of non-violence is an extremely active force. It has no room for cowardice or even weakness .....my non-violence does not admit of people who can't or will not be effective use of arms. Let me repeat for the thousandth of times that non-violence is of the strongest not of the weak<sup>9</sup>. Gandhi talked about the sustainability of ahimsa. He said that " Non-violence in thoughts can not be sustainable unless it goes hand in hand with non-violence in thoughts".<sup>10</sup>

Gandhi had given the message of non-violence in the field of education on also. In his newspaper "Young India", He had preached to the students and his thoughts over ahimsa in education is useful for the students of any era and age. He said that "Ahimsa in education must have an obvious bearing on the mutual relations of the students. Where the whole atmosphere is redolent with the pure fragrance of ahimsa, boys and girls studying together will live like brothers and sisters, in freedom and yet self-imposed restraint. The students will be bound the teachers in ties of filial love mutual respect and mutual trust. This pure atmosphere will be a continual object lesson in ahimsa. Further he said " the ahimsa in education shines clear and far and can no more be hidden even as the sun can not be hidden by any means."<sup>11</sup>Gandhi spoke about the importance of non-violence in every field. Even Gandhi was the first in human history to extend the principle of non-violence from individual to the social and political plane. He even extended the frame of violence. He said that " if we use aggression even in words ; harsh judgment, ill will, anger are all insidious form of violence."<sup>12</sup>

Satyagraha, the other important principle of Gandhi's theory . Satyagraha for Gandhi was not just a political weapon, it was the way of life. It is peaceful yet revolutionary innovation. Thus the Satyagraha is not only a technique, rather more a matter of principle. It was developed by Gandhi by means of experiments in his personal life and his efforts at combating social evils to build up a better social order.<sup>13</sup> Gandhi theory of Satyagraha is at once both epistemological and political a theory of both knowledge and action, and much misunderstood when seen as either alone.<sup>14</sup> Satyagraha is an eternal principle of life based on love, which seeks to establish an agreement with the opponent on the basis of reason and persuasion.<sup>15</sup> Gandhi explained the meaning of Satyagraha as " The word Satyagraha is often most loosely used and is made author of the word I may allowed to say that it excludes every form of violence, veiled or unveiled and whether in thought, word or deed. It is a breach of Satyagraha to wish him ill or to say harsh word to him or with the intention of harming him."<sup>16</sup> About Satyagraha further he said " Satyagraha is gentle, it never

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wounds, It must not be the result of anger or malice. It is never fussy, never impatient, never vociferous. It is the direct opposite of compulsion. It was conceived as a complete substitute for violence.<sup>17</sup>

Brahmacharya, an another impotent principle which is highly debated because of its narrow understanding.<sup>18</sup> The proper meaning of Brahmacharya is search after Brahma. As Brahma is present in every one of us .We must seek for it within with the help of meditation and consequent realization. Realization is impossible without complete control of all senses. Therefore Brahmacharya signifies control of all the senses at all times and at all places in thought, word and deed.<sup>19</sup>

The narrow understanding of the term Brahmacharya is harmful as Gandhi himself explained that “I have always felt, that the much harm has been done by the narrow understanding of the term Brahmacharya. If we practice simultaneous self-control in all direction, the attempt will be scientific and possible of success.<sup>20</sup> ....let us remember the root meaning of Brahmacharya means course of conduct. Brahmacharya conduct adapted to the search of Brahma i.e. Truth. From this etymological meaning arises the special meaning, viz. control of all senses. We must entirely forget the incomplete definition which restricts itself to the sexual aspect only.<sup>21</sup>

Another important principle was the principle of self-control and self-discipline. By the term control, Gandhi means the control of wishes, control of physical comfort and harmony, control of the palate. It is very closely connected with the observance of Brahmacharya.<sup>22</sup> The real sense of the term is in the deliberate and voluntary restrictions of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment and increases the capacity of service.<sup>23</sup> Gandhi said that “ A certain degree of physical harmony and comfort is necessary, but above that level, it becomes a hindrance instead of help.<sup>24</sup>For self-control Gandhi talked about the harmony of body and mind. According to him the relation between the body and mind is so intimate that, if either of them got out of order, the whole system would suffer.<sup>25</sup> In this matter of controlling Gandhi also talked about patience and anger less ness. About controlling the anger Gandhi told one supreme lesson that “conserve anger and as heat conserved is transmuted into energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power which can move the world.”<sup>26</sup>

Besides anger, in self-control Gandhi talked about controlling passion. He supported taking vow because it help in making determination and control of thoughts. In controlling he even included over eating and said “food has to be taken as we take medicine.”<sup>27</sup> Another important aspect of controlling is the silence. According to him “the silence is a part of the spiritual discipline of a votary of truth.....silence of the sewn-up lips is no silence....silent who, having the capacity to speak, utters no idle word.”<sup>28</sup> Fearlessness was also an another important aspect of Gandhi believed that fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fear- fear if disease, bodily injury and death, of dispossession, of losing one’s nearest and dearest, of losing reputation or giving offence and so on...<sup>29</sup> Gandhi had given the formula or way to losing fear he said that “we should give up attachment for things, while we enjoy them....all fear will role away like mists and we shall attain ineffable peace.”<sup>30</sup>

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Gandhi had given all these principle with his own experience which have the guiding light for the world even today. We can be completely agree with S. Radhakrishnan's views about Gandhi. He said that with the increase velocity of modern changes we do not know what the world will be a hundred years hence. We can not anticipate the future currents of thoughts and feelings. But years may go their way. Yet the great principles of Gandhi are there to guide us. They are silent stars keeping holy vigil above a tried and turbulent world. Like Gandhi we may be firm in our conviction that the sun shines above the drifting clouds. We can't measure the great contribution of Gandhi for the betterment of humanity. Plato's old saying is completely do the justice with Gandhi's contributions that 'There are in the world a few inspired men whose acquaintance is beyond price.'

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