

Vol 4 Issue 10 July 2015

ISSN No : 2249-894X

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*Monthly Multidisciplinary  
Research Journal*

*Review Of  
Research Journal*

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**RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595**

**ISSN No.2249-894X**

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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## SATYAGRAHA – A BASIC CONCEPT

Vitthal Katti<sup>1</sup> and Rahul Shinde<sup>2</sup>

### INTRODUCTION :

The present paper focus on the concept and basis of Satyagraha as enunciated by M.K.Gandhi.

Like the nations of good and evil, Satyagraha is universal in scope. It is a doctrine and a powerful method of direct action. Satyagraha is like a banyan tree with many branches. It's branches are civil disobedience, non co-operation, strike, fasting, peaceful picketing etc. The doctrine of Satyagraha rests upon a religious and metaphysical belief. Gandhi was a crusader. To him Satyagraha means suffering.<sup>1</sup> It also means firmness in a good cause. Satya Implies truth, love and firmness. Agra means force. Thus Satyagraha means soul force or truth force or love force. Thus, Satyagraha means soul force or truth force or love force. Thus, Satyagraha is a force or love force. Thus, Satyagraha is a force which is born out of truth, out of love, out of non-violence.

The concept of Satyagraha is not a new one. Its origin can be traced back to the past. The classical hero's like Rama, Bhisma and Harishchandra were Satyavartas – whose life is devoted or pledged to truth. Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and determination to

### ABSTRACT

*M. K. Gandhi was the creator of new India. He contributed much for the independence and upliftment of India. He was a great nationalist, freedom fighter and was considered as the champion of freedom fighters. He was a man of action, a realist and a pragmatist.*

**KEYWORDS :** *Independence, freedom fighter.*

### SHORT PROFILE

*Vitthal Katti is work as Guest Lecturer at Government Women's Degree College, Gulbarga – Karnataka – India.*

reach truth. It is wedded to truth<sup>2</sup>. It is a commitment to uphold the truth. The doctrine of Satyagraha was derived from many sources i.e., from Bhavad Gita, Tolstoy etc. Literally Satyagraha means holding on to truth. It excludes the use of force, violence, and bloodshed. It is a non violent and peaceful resistance. It is a non violent resistance in order

to uphold truth. Soul force or truth force is superior to physical force said Gandhiji. There is no such thing as failure in the use of this kind of force. It calls for greater courage, than violent resistance without drawing a drop of blood<sup>3</sup>. It produces far reaching results. He said by practicing Satyagraha we grow stronger and stronger everyday. There is no scope in the use of arms. Brute force is a negation or opponent of Satyagraha. The aim or motto or goal or intention of Satyagraha is self suffering. Suffering is the law of human beings as war is the law of the jungle. The concept of Ahimsa is opposite of Himsa Non – violence is fundamental to the doctrine of Satyagraha. Satyagraha is much broader concept. It is ultimately the argument of suffering.

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Satyagraha invites suffering, suffering upon himself and requires no mercy<sup>4</sup>.

Gandhiji said, it is practised against injustice, tyranny, violence etc. A Satyagrahi must love his enemy. He appeals to reason by gentle argument or to the heart by self sacrifice. Satyagraha ennoble the one who practices it and the one against whom it is practised. It does good and blesses the Satyagrahi. It is a moral pressure for the sake of truth. It is the power of truth.

Satyagraha is the force of human soul against any kind of political, social and economic injustice. The life of Harishchandra and prahlad are the stories for the vindication of truth. They are great Satyagrahis. For Gandhi, resistance must of non violent and peaceful. Gandhiji not preachd Satyagraha rather practiced be in his life time from his childhood. Gandhiji named it as civil resistance based on non violence. Satyagraha is not a passive resistance<sup>5</sup>. It is as a moral prerogative of the human beings Satyagraha is the force of truth and pressure for truth having two attributes i.e., suffering and trust. It is a positive love. Thus, Satyagraha is both a philosophy of life and technique of politics. It is a active non co-operation not with a part but with the whole system. Satyagrahi not only refuses to serve the government, but also non cooperatives with evil works of the state, the courts, educational institutions and hospitals etc. It is a righteous struggle i.e., Dharma Yuddha.<sup>6</sup> There is no secrets, no scope for cunning, no place for untruth. The Satyagrahi disassociate himself with the entire machinery of the evil state. Thus, he is dynamic, courageous and fearless and becomes a hero of the right cause of a man of the society and universe as a whole. Gandhiji proved himself unchallengable due to this weapon of Satyagraha.

### BASIS OF SATYAGRAHA

Following are the important basis of Satyagrah. First, upholding the truth. Second, it is a process of educating the public. Third, it should be legitimate. It is a legitimate weapon of

the injured individuals or groups. Fourth, it excludes the use of violence in any form or shape, whether in thought, speech or deed.<sup>7</sup>

Fifth, it demands absolute non – violence sixth, there should not be no intention to embarrass the wrong doer. Seventh, it is the willing obedience to the laws of the state without questioning or challenging if the laws of the state are legitimate.

Eighth, toleration is the base of satyagraha.

Nineth, it presupposes the capacity and willingness to suffer. Tenth, he who has no capacity or willingness to suffer should not attempt satyagraha.

Eleventh, discipline is obligatory. Individuals must be disciplined soldiers. Twelfth, individuals must engage in constructive social work in order to develop the required qualities.

They must also be able to remain calm. Thirteenth, satyagraha cannot be resorted to personal gain or profit, but only for the good of others. Fourteenth, it can be resorted only under wise guidance or after prolonged discipline.<sup>8</sup>

Fifteenth, Satyagraha is gentle and it never wounds. Sixteenth, it never count the numbers. It is always the quality which is upper most.

Seventeenth, Satyagrahi must believe in non-violence. Eighteenth, Satyagrahi in general must not aim at distruction but at construction and deal with causes rather than with symptoms<sup>9</sup>. Twenty one, satyagrahi must be kept within its proper limits. Twenty Satyagraha must be above suspicion. Twenty two, in satyagrah physical force or brute force is forbidden. Twenty three, satyagraha is the weapon of the strong and not of the weak. Twenty four, it is wholly pure, in the sense, it is free from any element of ill-will or desire for victory. Twenty five Gandhijis statement is that moral pressure is to be welcomed when it secures a moral response.<sup>10</sup>

Twenty six, Satyagraha is an alternative

to armed forces or violent action. Twenty seven, Gandhiji stressed the need for patience on the part of the Satyagrahi. Twentyeight, tapashya is a must for satyagrahi. The satyagrahi must avoid artificiality in all his doings so that his acts should be admired by all. Twenty nine, satyagrahi has to examine himself. Thirty a perfect satyagrahi has to be a perfect man.

### Techniques of Satyagraha

Following are the important forms or techniques of Satyagraha.

#### 1. Non cooperation:

Non co-operation as a movement of purification. Gandhiji was the chief exponent of non-co-operation movement. Gandhiji always engaged in non – violent and non co-operation movement not only against British Raj, but against the whole trend of western civilization. It is a non co-operation to paralyse the government.<sup>11</sup> It is the active resistance to the authority. Non-co-operation may be resorted to in the form of Hartal or picketing. It also assumes the form of boycott. It is nothing the withdrawing people's co-operation with the evil doers. It is a remedy for many evils. If the co-operation is withdrawn in justice comes to an end. People may show resistance. But the means adopted must be peaceful. The total boycott must be amicable<sup>12</sup>. This stage includes total boycott of courts by the lawyers, schools and colleges by the teachers and the students. Gandhiji challenged the maxim that "Might is Right".

#### 2. Civil Disobedience:

It is also a technique of Satyagraha to resist the Oppressor. He regarded Civil disobedience is complete, effective, bloodless etc. The strength of the satyagrahi lay in suffering. Gandhiji said, disobedience should be non – violent, and civil. It must be sincere, respectful, unrestrained and must be based on some well understood principles<sup>13</sup>. It must not be capricious and must have no ill-will or hatred

behind it. He was of the view, civil disobedience was to be practiced with great caution. All possible steps were to be taken to avoid an outbreak of violence or general lawlessness<sup>14</sup>.

#### 3. Fasting:

It is also an integral part of satyagraha. It is most effective weapon. Fasting is meant only for rare occasions. Fasting person must possess spiritual fitness, purity of mind, discipline, and faith. It is not a physical act of fasting, but a spiritual one. It is dictated by the inner light or the candle of his moral reason. Fasting should be used at last resort said Gandhiji. It should be resorted to when absolutely necessary. Gandhiji was the author of Satyagraha<sup>15</sup>. Thus, it is a weapon which is meant for penance or self purification. It is a means of resisting injustice or changing the heart of the evil doer.

#### 4. Strike:

It means temporary postponement of the work as a protest. It is a silent expression of protest against injustice. Strike means stoppage of work, closing of shops when there is too much of dissatisfaction. In this strike, workers should not try to employ destructive or negative methods. Thus, strike or hartal is the another form of satyagraha. Satyagraha is a means of solving the people's difficulties. It is a weapon of the workers for the redress of their grievances. Strike should be directed at removing of corruption, injustice, inefficiency and shortsightedness of the capitalists.

The strike must be non – violent and the demands of the strikers must be clear, feasible and just. Ahmedabad strike in 1918 was very important when Gandhiji supported the strike of the workers by fasting. The object of the hartal or strike is to draw the attention of the people and the government. To some extent, social boycott is also used. But Gandhiji repeatedly warned the people not to use it frequently<sup>16</sup>.

**5. Peaceful picketing:**

It is also a valid and useful form of Satyagraha. It was successfully resorted during the independence struggle. Its legitimacy was acknowledged by Gandhiji. It must be persuasive and non – coercive. It refers to the withdrawal of children from Schools, boycott of foreign goods. Gandhiji advocated the use of picketing for liquor, opium and foreign cloth<sup>17</sup>. The volunteers will try to convince the owners of liquor, opium, wine and foreign cloth not to sell these things. They will appeal to the purchasers not to purchase these things. Volunteers should appeal the dealers and purchasers both. Needless to say, the leaflets should be in the language understood by the and the customer<sup>18</sup>.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS:**

The current scenario is precarious and loathsome. Seldom have we found a politician without any tag of corruption attached to him. Whether it is a security scam, sugar scam, Telecom Scam, Hawala Scam and Scam after scam. All these have eaten into the vitals of the Indian Society. Gandhian dream of Ram Rajya has been shattered if we look at and analyse the conduct of the present day politicians. Instead of Ramrajya we approach the establishment of Daitya Rajya (Kingdom of Evil Forces)<sup>19</sup>. The insect of selfishness has widened the gap between theory and practice. We have a few true Gandhians, but innumerable Gandhians in dress, mannerism and speech. This is reapproachable indeed.

Mahatma Gandhi loved the song, 'Isvara Allah Tere Naam, Sabko Sanmati De Bhagwan'. Gandhiji was a man of action or mission. He would prefer not to be spend thrift with his precious time. He would not love to spend time in gossiping, in public harangue or boasting himself in public as the present day leaders are accustomed to<sup>20</sup>. The government has also adopted 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments to materialize Gandhian dream. Gandhian life can be stated in this way's 'simple living and high thinking'.

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