

A Study of Gandhian Ideology and Its Relevance in the 21st Century

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Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi exhibits a status of unmatched honesty, dependability, compassion, and integrity. He was a leader with significant global impact who was a man of action. His leadership, inner experiences, inner wisdom, and teachings of truth and nonviolence were what made him so remarkable. Nearly all of the societal, educational, cultural, monetary, and political issues of the modern world were inspired by his ideas. Despite not being a rigorous philosopher, he addressed several thoughts that are quite pertinent to the contemporary world. Today, primarily as a result of his vision, India has its own independent government. Gandhi was not an economist, but his comprehension of the economy, its workings, as well as human and social realities, is evident in his economic vision. Overall, Gandhi's ideology continues to be relevant today as a source of inspiration and guidance for those who are working to bring about positive social and political change in the world. Therefore, this article aims to analyse the present situation from a Gandhian ideology.

Keywords: Gandhian ideology, leadership, source of inspiration, contemporary world

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi is very famous in India as "Bapu" or "Father of the Nation". His full name is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He was a great freedom fighter and he led India like a nationalist leader against British rule. He was born on 2 October 1896 in Porbandar, Gujarat. He died on January 30, 1948.

Mahatma Gandhi was a political and spiritual leader in India who is best known for his philosophy of nonviolence, which he called satyagraha. Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence was based on the idea that it is possible to resist injustice and oppression without resorting to violence. He believed that this approach could be effective in bringing about social and political change, and that it was a more ethical and moral way to achieve this change. Many people around the world have been inspired by Gandhi's example and have used nonviolence as a means of resistance and change. For example, the civil rights movement in the United States was heavily influenced by Gandhi's philosophy, and many of the leaders of this movement, including Martin Luther King Jr., were inspired by Gandhi's teachings. He believed that people should live simple lives, consume less, and rely more on their own resources. These ideas have become increasingly relevant in the 21st century as people around the world have become more aware of the environmental and social impacts of consumer culture.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the research paper is to learn more about Principles and to investigate its

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applicability in the modern world and to gain greater understanding of Gandhi's ideals.

Methodology

The present study is based on historical, analytical, and experimental methods.

Significance of Study

Gandhiji's remarks reflect the century that has passed, yet his ideas are still relevant today. Mahatma Gandhi addressed social issues of Indian society specifically and global society generally in great detail, in addition to political and economic issues. Modernity is the age of the twenty-first century. The era of social media, technology, the internet, and information is referred to as such. The impact of all these technologies on people's lives is so profound that imagining a perfect existence without them is absurd. Gandhi's ideas serve as a beacon of light in this dark period. In the current unstable times, where a second outbreak like the Corona virus has rendered people hopeless, On the other side, major international countries are competing to amass more weapons. But it seems that these abilities are unable to stop a little infection. In light of this, Gandhism has more relevance than ever in its modern incarnation for restoring global peace and re-establishing human values.

Gandhian Ideology

Gandhi accepted and developed a set of religious and social ideals known as Gandhian philosophy, first in South Africa from 1893 to 1914 and then in India. Gandhi's philosophy is both political, moral, and religious at the same time. It is also both traditional and contemporary, straightforward, and complicated. Although Gandhiji was exposed to many Western influences, it is founded in ancient Indian culture and draws on universal moral and religious concepts.

There are many different levels on which philosophy may be found, including the spiritual or religious, moral, political, economic, social, individual, and communal. God and the spiritual or religious component are its fundamental components. It is believed that human nature is basically good. All people are seen to be capable of moral reform and high moral growth.

Gandhi's philosophy places more focus on practical idealism than idealistic idealism. Gandhi's ideology has two sharp edges. Its goal is to change society and each person at the same time in line with the values of honesty and nonviolence. Gandhiji drew inspiration for these ideals from a variety of authors and thinkers, including the Bhagavat Geeta, Jainism, Buddhism, the Bible, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Leo Tolstoy, and John Ruskin. The Kingdom of God is Within You by Leo Tolstoy had a significant impact on Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji referred to Sarvodaya, Ruskin's work, as "Unto this Last." Later "Gandhians," most notably Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan in India and Martin Luther King Jr. and others outside of India, further refined these concepts.

Major Gandhian Ideologies

1. Truth and nonviolence:

They are Gandhian thought's two guiding ideas. Gandhi ji defined truth as both the absolute truth—the ultimate reality—and the relative truth—being true in both speech and conduct. God (as God is also Truth)

and morality—the moral rules and code—are the foundation of this ultimate truth. Mahatma Gandhi believed that nonviolence, which is the polar opposite of violence in every way, meant active love rather than just tranquilly or the lack of overt aggression. The greatest rule of humanity is said to be love or nonviolence.

2. Satyagraha:

Mahatma Gandhi popularised the idea at the beginning of the 20th century, and it stood for steadfast yet peaceful opposition to evil. The Gandhian philosophy of Satyagraha is logically derived from the ultimate principle of truth. If truth is the ultimate reality, then protecting its principles and norms is crucial. God, who is the height of actuality and truth, demands a votary who is wholly altruistic and merciful. Gandhi's Satyagraha was a key strategy in the Indian uprising against British imperialism, and other protest movements have subsequently emulated it.

Satyagraha was motivated by the ancient Indian principle of ahimsa, or "non-injury," which is adhered to strictly by Jains, many of whom live in Gujarat, where Gandhi was nurtured. In order to modernise the concept of ahimsa and give it wide political connotations as Satyagraha, Gandhi also took inspiration from the writings of Leo Tolstoy and Henry David Thoreau, the Bible, and the Bhagavad Gita, on which he created a commentary. In 1906, Gandhi originally had the idea for Satyagraha in reaction to a legislation that the British colonial administration of the Transvaal in South Africa had enacted that discriminated against Asians. The first Satyagraha movement in India was held in 1917 in the indigo-producing Champaran area. Up until the British departed India in 1947, Satyagraha techniques in India included fasting and economic boycotts. Critics of the movement have claimed that Satyagraha is unrealistic and unable to achieve universal success because it depends on the opponent, who is the epitome of evil, upholding a high standard of ethical conduct and demanding an unreasonably high level of commitment from those working for social change. Both before and after Gandhi's death, these arguments have been advanced. Satyagraha was a crucial part of the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States and left a lasting impact in South Asia.

3. Sarvodaya

Sarvodaya is an acronym for "Universal Uplift" or "Progress of All." In his 1908 translation of "Unto This Last," a book by John Ruskin on political economics, Mohandas Gandhi first used the term to characterise the goal of his political philosophy.

Principle of Sarvodaya

- The settlements have a political and economic environment, but there is no central authority.
- All people shall be infused with the spirit of love, brotherhood, truth, nonviolence, and selflessness. Nonviolence will serve as society's guiding principle.
- Society will be free from the evils of the tyranny of the majority since there won't be a party system or majority rule.

- Sarvodaya society is socialist in the fullest sense. For all calls, the same moral, societal, and financial norms will be in effect. Each individual has the greatest potential for growth inside their personality.
- Equality and freedom are the cornerstones of Sarvodaya society. It has no place for unfair rivalry, exploitation, or class animosity.
- Sarvodaya is a representation of global development. Everyone should exercise independence and uphold the principle of non-possession. Then, it will be possible to achieve the objective of: from everyone according to his labour and each according to his needs.
- Private property, which may be an exploitation tool and a haven for prejudice and hate, won't exist. Rent and interest will likewise cease to exist, just as the profit motive will.
- Truth, nonviolence, and self-denial are the cornerstones of the Sarvodaya Movement.

4. Swadeshi

The English word "Swadeshi," which has Sanskrit origins, is created by combining two concepts from the Sanskrit language. Desh and swa both relate to one's own country or self. So, the word "Swadesh" means "homeland." In most contexts, the adjectival form of the term swadeshi, which meaning "of one's own nation," may be translated roughly as "self-sufficiency."

5. Trusteeship

Gandhi ji stated that for him, swaraj meant freedom for the meanest of his countrymen because he believed that swaraj of people meant the total of all individual swaraj (self-rule). In its broadest form, swaraj also encompasses self-rule, self-control, and might even be compared to moksha or salvation. It also goes far beyond independence from all restrictions. One of the main tenets of Gandhian economics, or the peaceful alternative to ownership, is trusteeship. Gandhi borrowed the concept from English law. It indicates that a person is a trustee rather than the owner of their possessions, which may ultimately include their talents or abilities. Everything must be utilised for the benefit of society as a whole, which ultimately includes one's personal well-being. This approach does not use material items as status symbols to boost our feeling of worth.

Trusteeship is an effective tactic for cutting down on excessive consumption. Under trusteeship, the economy could be rebalanced and refocus on urgent needs. Gandhi thought that having many needs always means depriving others of their needs. He said that there is enough food on the planet to fulfil everyone's needs, but not enough to satisfy their greed.

Relevance of Gandhism in 21st Century

Although it is widely believed that Gandhism is a challenge to pursue in the 21st century; that is not the case. Gandhi's principles can be applied in the following ways:

- Concept of Society: Modern society is a complicated system that is neither entirely speculative nor value-oriented. Once treasured tradition and authority are now completely ignored. Jealousy, mistrust, suspicion, and hate guide all of mankind. There is an increase in violence, poverty, and intolerance.

The deep oneness of our hearts does not radiate with the superficial homogeneity that science and society have brought forth. Therefore, we must immediately modify our thinking. He contends that upholding the truth ought to be the sole goal of life. The achievement of truth and justice by persistent efforts, not only for ourselves but for all of mankind, is the ultimate goal of the person.

- **Economy:** Mahatma Gandhi's concept of socialism entails the practise of non-violence, despite the fact that it is commonly acknowledged that it cannot be achieved without the use of force. He did not adhere to extremes and did not value total freedom, as in a capitalist democracy, nor did he value rigidity, as in communist dictatorships. He believed that power should be distributed as far as possible. Globalization is the blending of national economies via the flow of commodities, concepts, ideas, information, and other services. With the assistance of multinational corporations and international organisations, dominant economies often violate the interests of developing nations in order to further their own goals.
- **Education:** According to Mahatma Gandhi, humanising knowledge might help us immunise thoughts against racial mistrust. He said that being literate does not equate to being educated and criticised conventional schooling.
- **Swaraj:** Swaraj was intended to be independent of outside influences and foreign rule. The nation is now autonomous and unconstrained by outside forces. In the competitive and quick-paced world of today, our inner conscience must be under control. Self-empowerment is essential right now. Each individual should look for their own identity rather than attempting to fit into the stereotypes that society has established.
- **Technology:** The Gandhian ideas are still applicable, and it is possible to employ technology to increase their efficacy. He promoted Satya as his central idea.

Seven Social Sins by Mahatma Gandhi

In 1925, Mahatma Gandhi originally published Seven Social Sins in his daily Young India. That is an extensive list of actions that seriously hurt society.

1. **Money without Work:** It illustrates obtaining wealth by unethical methods and using quick cuts. Examples include insider trading, tax evasion, frauds, and black money.
2. **Earning enjoyment at the cost of others is equal to immorality. Pleasure without Conscience.** A person who is selfish will ignore the needs of others. Without a moral rationale, it would encourage unethical behaviour. Additionally, it would cause a spike in thoughtless use of alcohol and drugs as well as drug and alcohol addiction.
3. **Knowledge without character:** A person with character possesses attributes of honesty and integrity. A person with moral character may end up like Swami Vivekananda, whereas someone who engages in this sin may become like Osama Bin Laden.

4. Business without morality : one group in the society would be overworked at the cost of another. As a consequence, social tension and communal strife would increase. Unsafe working conditions, adulteration, and a lack of security are a few examples of this sin.
5. Humanity without science: Prescription drug costs are kept high by the large pharmaceutical firms, making them inaccessible for the underprivileged and those in need. It's fantastic if nuclear energy is used to provide electricity, but using it to bomb countries like Hiroshima and Nagasaki is completely unethical.
6. Religion without sacrifice: Rituals and activities are the only things that pass for religion nowadays. When we fail to uphold the moral principles of attachment, compassion, and brotherhood, that is sin.
7. Politics without principles are shown by the criminalization of politics, unexplained funds, and the use of force.

Conclusion

Based on research, it is clear that Gandhi's ideas are still relevant in the 21st century from a variety of angles. The relevance of Gandhian concepts has to be instilled in the nation's young via a variety of channels, such as incorporating them into various curricula from elementary school to higher education, from general education to technical and professional education. His ideals are widely disseminated via Bollywood films, epic films, historical dramas, and other media, which is important for promoting global peace, harmony, and prosperity. Gandhi's beliefs, aspirations, and concepts must be dissected and reassessed in the post-modern period. The goal of all students and parents in the twenty-first century should not be to get better grades, but rather to cultivate critical thinking skills like application, analysis, synthesis, evaluative, problem-solving, and decision-making in order to ignore real-world issues, as Gandhi did in his own life. Inculcating moral and ethical values, maintaining international harmony, judicious use of natural resources, proper use of technology, and rationalisation of the media are some of the basic needs of the hour. Other fundamental needs include the dignity of women, tolerance on a religious basis, rationalisation of the caste system, sustainable environment, inclusive economic development, and inculcating moral and ethical values. Future studies should take into account the deconstruction of Gandhian ideas in connection to neo-socialist and neo-liberal viewpoints.

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