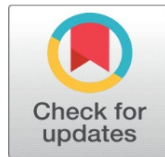


GANDHI'S PHILOSOPHY OF SATYAGRAHA AND FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The success of satyagraha in South Africa and the independence struggle in India served as inspiration for peace movements on the campaign against racism in the United States and for non-violent revolutions for freedom in Africa or against tyrants all over the world. Perhaps the best-known personality who strived for India's freedom is Mahatma Gandhi who used principles non-violent protests and insistence on the truth the concept captured in Satyagraha. He was a leader and a reformer, who started coming to political limelight in South Africa, where put in place his particular kind of political approach due to the discriminations and racism he experienced. Gandhi spent 21 years in South Africa fighting for the Indian oppressed community's rights between 1893 and 1914. This article describes the development of satyagraha philosophy with references to the fight against racism and the freedom struggle in South Africa. This research paper also analyses the effect of Gandhian concept on south African freedom struggle and how Mandela adopt the concept of satyagraha from Gandhi.

Keywords: Satyagraha, Freedom Struggle, South Africa, India, Apartheid, Passive Resistance

1. INTRODUCTION

In South Africa Gandhian's joined hand, under the leadership of Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and Dr. G.M. Naicker launched the passive resistance in 1946 against legislation to curb the Indian buying of land (the "Ghetto Act"). Gandhi directed them up to the time he was killed on January 30 1948. The African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress began the "Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign in 1952 to which over 8000 people of all race types were imprisoned. When the government having all opportunity to shut all legal channels of protest, outlawing the people's organizations and confining all the leaders. Mandela and others agreed that they could no longer maintain armed struggle only through politics of passive resistance. The government ventured into probably the worst mistake of using force and arresting everyone in sight, torturing and imprisoning them for long periods in an attempt to quell the movement. But the desire for liberation could not be pardoned. It was born in 1980s in a mass democratic movement, a brave non-violent rebellion against the rulers which neutralised several racist laws. This people's movement and international pressure compelled

the white rulers to release Mandela and other political prisoners and undertaking to make a peaceful transfer of power to others.

2. EARLY LIFE AND INFLUENCE OF GANDHI

What is more, before the trip to South Africa Gandhi was a quite traditional Indian boy who received a rather traditional education in his homeland. He was born in 1869 at Porbandar, a small coastal town of Gujarat, India. Generally, like any other upper middle class Hindu family education was an important aspect in young boys' life and therefore he was compelled to take law. Gandhi was trained in law in London and thereafter had gone to South Africa only for a short-term legal work in 1893.

This is the place where Gandhi was more or less awakened about the problem of Indian community in that nation and the discrimination of African race. The official racism that characterized South Africa during the apartheid years put into place a racial hatred and oppression that laid the basis for Gandhi's first engagement with oppression. It was in this tradition and milieu that he began to think out his theories of social evolution which he later transposed into the Indian freedom movement.

3. UNDERSTANDING GANDHI'S EXPERIENCE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Gandhi first went to South Africa and his experience was prejudice against black people right from the start. He had been ejected from a first-class coach of a train in Pietermaritzburg while in possession of the ticket. This occasion, and other acts of prejudice against Indians and Africans, compelled Gandhi to ponder about race relations in a way that is rarely seen in one who was born into privileged white status. He decided to start fighting back with 'Ghandian' methods of passive protest.

South Africa in the late 19th century like many other countries was segregated with Indians occupying the lower class and suffering social, political and even economical repression. Laws were enacted and passed by this government to limit their freedom of movement, rights, the rights of voting, and even the rights to property. The Indian community in South Africa, women, and men, many of whom were indentured labourer's traders and professionals, endured several discursive humiliations and violations. The context in which the policy of apartheid emerged and against which framework of institutionalized racism that Gandhi formulated his concept of Satyagraha. In the beginning, Gandhi tried to launch the struggle through legal and diplomatic channels fail because legal and diplomatic actions proved to be inadequate where there is systematic discrimination. Gandhi ji always started to think about sort of liberation that cannot involve physical fight; and at the same time was not indirect and passive. This approach would later be known as Satyagraha.

4. THE BIRTH OF SATYAGRAHA

The term Satyagraha is a compound of two Sanskrit words, Satya is truth, Agraha means to hold firmly, to stick to something. For Gandhi, truth was ultimate reality and therefore truth was the moral imperative of right action. To him, therefore, Satyagraha was not mere political tool or a philosophy of defiance, but a lifestyle that was based in ethics. Actually, the first time when Gandhi actively used Satyagraha was in 1906 when the government of Transvaal in South Africa passed a law that Indians including women should be registered and should carry identity cards. It for this reason that this discriminatory law was viewed as an exercise in endangering the dignity and Indian identification of people of Indian origin. Gandhi and his fellow did not accept the registration and he started advocating for civil disobedience. They stick to non-violence as their strategy, which sometimes involved imprisonment, torture, suffering and death, but never retaliated.

Thus, this early experiment in the Satyagraha was a historical event of South Africa as well as the rest of the world. It was not just a fight against particular laws which were unfair, but for humanity, for the values of human being, for human's worth. The leadership role of Gandhi to organise this particular campaign was very useful to bring the Indian community in South Africa and develop a new form of political agitational method.

5. THE EXPANSION AND PROGRESS OF SATYAGRAHA MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Gandhi's success of the first Satyagraha campaign in 1906 made him determined to perfect his theory and form of protesting. Gandhi himself over the course of the next few years launched more and more ambitious campaigns to protest against discriminatory treatment of Indians in South Africa – each of these campaigns was larger and more structural than the previous one. At first, the Indian community was disparate and some of them were even still fragmented they unconditionally supported Gandhi.

Gandhi called for a nonviolent form of protest when a number of laws were passed to dethrone the Indians of their civil liberties. Some of these were non-cooperation, failure to register and even torching of registration papers. It led to police crackdown and thousands of Indians being sent to prison. However, they received a bad treatment unlike other movements associated with violence and this led to international recognition. When a new tax had been levied on Indian miners in South Africa to which the miners had to conform, Gandhi urged them not to pay this tax. The strike was suppressed brutally, but it nevertheless showed lessons of non-violent resistance, once again. The strike led to a major win for the government and consolidated Gandhi's position more as a leader of opposition. Non-violence for him was not merely the absence of the use of force or the renunciation of the use of violence but it is affirmative fact, spiritual in its nature, and it would make a new man and a new society. That's how the focus on inspiration and discipline, on the appeal to collective actions and moral sentiments made the campaigns successful despite the repression.

6. THE INTERACTION OF MAHATMA GANDHI WITH THE AFRICAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

It's impossible to overstate Mahatma Gandhi's impact on the South African national movement. Gandhi found his sense of orientation in Africa and groomed a political culture and strategy which not only ignited Indian freedom struggle, but current world liberation movements as well. It is during his years in South Africa (1893–1914) that the Philosophical and Political development of Gandhi took place. His participation in the establishment of the South Africans national movement was central in the liberation from British colonial rule, fight for equality of the oppressed communities, and use of non-violent protests which became his trademark.

In his crusade in South Africa Gandhi mainly targeted the Indian population but the philosophy and the strategies he adopted exercised a tremendous impact to the anti-colonial struggle in Africa including the African nationalist movement was influenced. During that period, there was emergence of the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC was formed in 1912 and, as an early civil rights organisation, was a calm one demanding the rights of African people under British colonialism. Cyril is quick to note from the leadership of the Indian civil disobedience movement that Gandhi's strategies inspired many of the future leaders of the ANC such as Mandela and Sisulu as well as many other activists of the future.

It was civil disobedience that Gandhi made famous in South Africa and this preoccupation was heard from African leaders who were still wrestling with the challenge, how best, may be, to resist this form of racism and colonial exploitation of their people. However, thanks to the actions of the exiled Indian leader, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the African National Congress had a blueprint which would act as the foundation of their revolution – Satyagraha. Virtually all the African nationalists saw his non-violent struggle as a form of struggle that would replace violent rebellions where the colonial authorities exercised their trigger-happy muscles.

7. GANDHI'S PHILOSOPHY AND MANDELA

It is noteworthy is that such an inspirer of the anti-apartheid struggle as Nelson Mandela borrowed a lot from the ideas provided by Gandhi, including the concept of satyagraha. But what influenced him to the core was this nonviolent resistance, which Gandhi practiced. A young Mandela's political activism was initially with the African National Congress (ANC)- the organization fighting colonialism and apartheid. However, the leadership of the ANC when formed considered that the liberation struggle should not be waged through violent struggle but rather through peaceful petitions. This positioner was very much in support with Gandhi 's non-violence point of view. Inspired by the thinking of Gandhi and his own experience, Mandela become more actively involved in the struggle against apartheid. Though Mandela was an advocate for passive resistance and satyagraha he soon realized that apartheid was violence and could only be confronted violently.

8. TRANSITION OF MANDELA FROM SATYAGRAHA TO ARMED RESISTANCE

Ideologically, Mandela remained a Gandhian, though his thinking changed over the years and formal anarchist theory did not per se move him as apartheid worsened and the state to increase in brutality. However, Mandela had soon learned that passive resistance has its drawbacks; after Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 when non-violent protesters were shot down by the police. This was the event that changed the life and, indeed, the thinking of Mandela.

Mandela started as a peaceful fighter against apartheid rule but when no progress was made, he resorted to militancy. This led to his participation in the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) the African National Congress' military wing in 1961. Mandela however never shied from force, his force though was called for only when all other options failed, that too to achieve justice and equality. However, the so-called hero of the black people never reverted to the use of physical force and continue upholding Gandhian actual real values of Moral Leadership. While it altered over time, his ethos remained oriented toward forgiveness, calm, and the respect of all the South African people regardless of colour. Same as Gandhi, Mandela was aware that the struggle could not be based on sin, which is why he paid much attention to the concept of forgiveness and national unity after he was released in 1990.

9. NONVIOLENCE IN FREEDOM FIGHTER MOVEMENTS WITH GANDHI AND MANDELA

This moral education impacted Mandela with the sort of leadership he was to exhibit in the post-apartheid era. Mandela also derived this fact that triumph of the anti-apartheid struggle was not just a political victory but a moral triumph as well. Much of the strategies Mandela brought to the negotiating table with the South African apartheid regime had been influenced very much by Gandhi's concept of satyagraha which essentially is a doctrine of nonviolence.

The political imprisonment of Mandela came to an end in 1990, therefore sealing the new era of South Africa. Nevertheless, Mandela, while being in prison for several years with hard conditions, could express incredible tolerance and welcome to the Mandela Speech Database! But the most significant aspect of his regime was that he followed the philosophy of Gandhi in the transition to the democracy. In democracy and reconciliation, freedom and justice, the reconstruction of the nation, and the fight against racist oppression and hatred, Mandela continues Gandhi's legacy of justice and tolerance as responses to despotism and inhumanity.

The black South African people were given a new leader Mandela who in his installation speech, championed unity contrary to previous partitionist policies that Gandhi had written about. People took mandate out of his speeches that it is the time for the South Africans to come together and begin reconstructing a new nation; this, at first, pointed out that the most important thing that can be done is to avoid further fighting. But there is no doubt that his leadership during this period mainly built up from the moral policy of Mahatma Gandhi in the political and social battle and constructive work means non-violent non-cooperation and love for society.

10. THE IMPACTS OF GANDHI IN SOUTH AFRICA

It is noted that Gandhi's sojourn in South Africa put a definite imprint on the national movement, directly in terms of his political activities, and indirectly in terms of effective ideas. His time in South Africa described him further in the struggle for social justice, non-violence and the emancipation of the oppressed black population. He helped instruct political and social formations in South Arabia; these he impacted both the Indian and African nationalist movements.

The cent imageries of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and non-violence were shifted and copied by the subsequent generations of leaders in their anti-colonization crusade. In South Africa, these ideas would be taken up by, for example, Albertina Sisulu and Desmond Tutu and used in the fight against apartheid. He did not only spearhead a struggle for liberties of Indian people in South Africa, but also brought concepts of raw-political parlance of non-violent-resistance, unheard of in those times even in his South African domicile. His experience in the South Africa and developed the concept of Satyagraha and became part of the fight for human rights the world over. Although people know only his later fight for Indian independence, Gandhi's time in South Africa played an important role in the formation of his political and social ideas as well as in the appearance of non-violent struggle as the method of the social and political transformation.

11. CONCLUSION

Satyagraha became the central to the whole brutal process of Gandhi's evolution in South Africa and his entire practice in political and social campaigns. The struggle which he spearheaded in South Africa against the colonial system which was characterized by discriminative policies acted as a birthplace to his theology of passive resistance. Satyagraha ideals of non-violent resistance for a cause elicited by truth, armed with civil disobedience and self-sacrifice bestowed the struggle for Indian freedom. Gandhi's triumph in South Africa demonstrated to those living in that part of the world that non-violent civil disobedience could be an effective way to stand up to oppression, and it was not only for Indians back home, but also for others throughout the world. This period of South African sojourn paved way to change in the view of Gandhi for the Indian freedom struggle and for a society. This is what the study in resistance through non-violence, truth and moral force indicates that his leadership inspires civil rights and freedoms globally. The struggle of Mahatma Gandhi is still inspiring people all over the world talking about the fight against dictatorship regime non-violently.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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