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Influence of Gandhism on Younger Generation

Man is a social animal. He cannot live in isolation and always yearns for company. His deeds and words have a direct impact on his relation with others. He learns and become accustomed to social norms and values through socialisation — a lifelong process which transforms a small child into a self-conscious and responsible adult. But throughout the human-history, we find that people, a vast majority of them, struggle to strike a balance in their social life. Many fall into ill practices and habits and the ultimate result is the deterioration of social values and culture of that society. Fortunately, whenever a society has fallen in such a situation, a spiritual leader has come up, suggesting the right way of life. Many religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism etc emerged from such situations. The world always remembers such their founders, Buddha, Mahavira, Confucius, with respect and gratitude. They have led the people from the verge of destruction to a path of harmonious, satisfactory and worthful lives. When we talk of



such leaders in modern times the image of Mahatma Gandhi rushes into our minds. Though he has not founded any religion, nor is he an accepted 'spiritual' leader, he is the man who aroused the spirits of Indians and corrected the evils in them. Gandhism spread round the world like forestfire and has become even more relevant in today's scenario.

Gandhi is taught in schools to millions mainly as a political leader, the freedom fighter who fought hard to accomplish the dream of independence of India and eventually succeeded in it. But, his contributions to our nation cannot be restricted there. The fact that he never used 'weapons' to fight for freedom is the testament to this. What he did was make Indians stronger—mentally and to an extent spiritually. He instilled in them the importance of truthfulness and fearlessness. It was this change in attitude of Indians that helped us earn independence.

What made Gandhiji different from his contemporary politicians was that he did what he said and he said what he did. Most of the campaigns and movements started and ended with rhetoric of the leaders but they could not put into practice what they said. Moreover, the huge population of illiterate Indians at that time did not have the incentive to hear speeches for long hours mainly because they comprehend the complicated words of the leaders.



By putting these words to practice, they could better understand and participate in them. This is one essential quality which ^{a person} ~~should~~ should possess to be successful. Mere talking is not encouraged anywhere. Gandhiji proposed ideas before people only after ensuring its successful implementation in his own life. There is no better title for his autobiography, than 'The Story of my 'EXPERIMENTS' with Truth'.

One of the main aspects of Gandhism is ahimsa or non-violence. Throughout his life, he had remained adamant to this. He renounced weapons and arms and urged people to 'fight peacefully'—it might have sounded paradox or ironic had he not shown us that it is possible. Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience were his strategies and for him it had nothing to do with violence, though they turned violent in some parts of the country. It included only boycotts and protest rallies. At that time, many renowned persons laughed at Gandhiji and his ideas but ultimately Gandhiji had the last laugh. Non-violence is the attribute which defines his life.

✓ At present, we encounter many instances of violence in the name of caste, race, religion and even gender. People get provoked quickly and a light joke might end up in stabs and murder. Preaching and instilling non-violence and forgiveness in the ^{young} ~~new~~ young minds is the need of the hour. Only then can we live in harmony.



Another important aspect of Gandhian ideology is religious tolerance. We might refer to the period of partition as the era of communal riots. But, even in today's context communal riots pose a constant threat to the secularism and the very existence of our nation. Gandhiji was a deep-rooted Hindu and understood it to its core. He respected all religions and worked tirelessly to unite the Indians who were deeply divided on the basis of religion. He advocated secularism and espoused it. The younger generation right from their infancy should be taught secularism along with the introduction of their respective religion. Once the seeds of communalism has been sowed, it can never be completely 'harvested'. So, we should propagate secularism for a secure future of our nation.

Gandhiji also promoted gender equality and women empowerment. In this case too, his actions spoke for him. His wife, Kasturba Gandhi, was a prominent figure in the freedom struggle. He dreamt of an India where women enjoyed the same status as men. Today, the attacks on women are on the rise. In fact, it has acquired new forms different from olden days: as acid attacks and cyber crimes. Though he was very adamant on non-violence, in this case, he promoted some violence. He advised women to carry daggers for self-protection and use it when the need arises. This shows his great concern for women and their security. It is this concern which prompted him to sacrifice his beloved ideology to a small extent.

Gandhiji also despised drugs and liquor or alcohol which transformed humans into beasts. Most of his movements included picketing liquor shops. He considered them to be one of the main punishment on Indians inflicted by the British. Even in this matter, we find that our country has progressed a lot but in the negative direction. The number of drug addicts has never diminished. Alcohol and drugs appear detrimental to our society in numerous ways. Hence too, Gandhiji's dream of complete eradication of liquor and alcohol remain a ~~do~~ unrealised.

Gandhiji's ideology and teachings are well-known and they remain very relevant ~~at~~ the present. This very fact reveals our failure in carrying forward Gandhism. For instance, had we followed Gandhiji's dream of complete drug eradication and fulfilled it, it would not have ~~become~~ ^{remained} relevant. There is no logic in teaching alphabets to graduates as they have already succeeded in it. So, it clear that Gandhian ideology has not been properly propagated in our country in the past. This is the reason why we continue to experience the evils which Gandhiji tried to sweep away.

Gandhiji had unprecedented support from the masses. They found the key to happy and successful life in his deeds. But our young generation had been deprived of this privilege. They do not get ample opportunities to know and understand Gandhi to the core. For them, Gandhiji is just a



Source of getting marks and prizes. Gandhiji's role in academics is confined to its political face. So, children do not know the exact meaning and importance of Gandhian ideologies. Even 'value education' is a part of the syllabus only in very few schools. In my opinion, Gandhian Studies should be made a compulsory subject in schools and children should be encouraged to practise them in life. In this subject, marks should be awarded on the basis of 'practicals' and not theory.

Gandhism has in it all that is essential in the present scenario. If properly propagated, it can take India to great heights. Children are the future of the nation. So, we should begin our activity among them. The current influence of Gandhism among children are only nominal. But, it should be taken further. This can help us overcome the hurdles to overall prosperity. This is actually the need of the hour.

So, let us start the movement Gandhiji has suggested us to become the change which we want to see in our world. Let us take the young minds through the path of Gandhism. The result, though not sudden, will be startling. Let Gandhian ideology lead us forward. Let us hope for the time when Gandhism cease to be 'relevant', a time which applauds Gandhiji and practises his ideology in full fledge.

Harmonious, satisfactory with ..