

GANDHIAN NON-VIOLENT DEMOCRACY- AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL

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ABSTRACT:

The problem of violence is one of the many challenges that democracy faces today, but paradoxically enough, democratic form of government was established with the promise of a peaceful society. In reality it has largely failed to achieve its intended goal. Why? because it could not grow into what it was expected to be: a government of the people, by the people, for the people to use Abraham Lincoln's definition. And it is this failure of democracy to be the authentic voice of all people that seems to be responsible for the eruption of violence that goes against the very spirit of democracy. In all existing democracies, the opinion of an individual or of a section of the people often lie neglected, even if it is sound, as the democracies are guided by the views either of popular majority or of the dominating elitist minority. Moreover, while in capitalist or liberal democracy, political liberty rather than economic equality is emphasized, in socialist or Marxist democracy political liberty is sacrificed at the altar of economic equality. All these factors tend to generate discontent among those who stand marginalized in democracy, a discontent that may create a climate of tension and strife, sow the seeds of violence in society, but how to create a society that is free from these ills? The democracy of the world may turn to Gandhi for an answer, to transform democracy into a non violence pacific social rather than political order Gandhi offers two important suggestions. First, democracy must begin to work the lowest level, that is from the level of 'Gram-

Panchayet', this will stave off people's discontent by giving them a sense of participation in the democratic system. Second, he prescribes some moral principles to be cultivated, like truthfulness, ahimsa, toleration, self - sacrifice and self - suffering. Those measures, if taken will liberate Indian democracy from limitation of its western counterpart and help the evolution of a democracy that is true to Indian genius.

Keywords: Democracy, Decentralization, Cultivate, Violence, Ahimsa.

INTRODUCTION:

Modern age is the age of globalization. Globalization of democracy is the most significant political development in the late 20th century.¹ But today Indian democracy has faces many challenges, like terrorism, communalism, regionalism, human rights violation, micro and macro level corruption, political violence before and after any general election and so on. If we establish a pure democracy, which is based on the principle of 'non- violence' then those problems are may be abolish. M.K Gandhi (1869-1948) was not a political philosopher or scientist or theory builder or system builder in the accepted sense of the term; but his social, economic and political thoughts is still relevant. In this paper I want to trace briefly Gandhi's idea about democracy which is an alternative of existing democratic model also.

METHODOLOGY:

The study was conducted based on the method of document review and content

analysis in accordance with the qualitative approach to research.

FINDINGS: (DISCUSSION AND IMPORTANT FINDINGS)

We know there are a number of theories or model of democracy. Social scientists commonly preface the word democracy by a number of distinguishing terms like, liberal, political, social, pluralist, totalitarian or socialist and so on.² Liberal and socialist democracy have some similarities like, equality, individual freedom, people's rule are the basic elements of both model. Application of violence, common in both model and both model believes in rule by majority. Both model have some differences like, liberal democracy reflects capitalism is the better economic system. Socialist democracy wants to abolish capitalism. Rights of the minority in socialist democracy is very limited. The exponents of socialist democracy claim that a socialist state is truly democratic because it represents democracy for the vast majority of the people, but the general thesis of the 'elite' theorists like, Parato, Moska, Michels and C.Wright Mill's, is that any system of government indeed any organization is necessarily dominated by 'elites'.³ They dismiss the idea of popular representation as a fiction and argue that there is no such things as majority rule, in most societies liberal and socialist, it is an elite that rules, controls key resources and takes major decisions.⁴

M.K. Gandhi criticized the governments which in their institutional basic and political form were democratic, but from the philosophical stand point of view, were negations of the same, he held that violence and democracy were incompatible, it is only on the basis of unadulterated 'ahimsa' that genuine democracy can be built-up.⁵ Democracy refers a democratic government and also a democratic society. It is a principle

of government and social life. Gandhi considered democracy as a way of social life. Writing in 1939, Gandhi remarked:

"The democracies, therefore, that we see at work in England, America and France are only so-called, because they are no less based on violence than Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy or even Soviet Russia. The only difference is that the violence of the last three is much better organized than that of the three democratic power"⁶

Gandhi is not in opposition with the system of election and representation.⁷ He did not believe in the accepted western form of democracy with its universal voting for parliamentary representatives.⁸ He had his own concept of representative democracy, backed by a non-violent sanction.⁹ The essence of democracy is based non-violence. He held the view that without recognition of non-violence on a national scale there is no such thing as a constitutional or democratic government, it was his conviction that science of non-violence alone can lead one to pure democracy.¹⁰ Gandhian model of non-violence democracy reflects so many major points, some of them as follows:

- Non-violence and 'satyagraha' as a principle of social and political life of an individual.
- Conscience
- Individual freedom
- Minority opportunity
- Merits
- Immersion of 'non-violent political man'
- Decentralization of political power through 'panchayeta'
- Establishment of trusteeship.
- Secularism as 'sarbo dharma samanaya'
- 'Sonjam' as political toleration, etc

To transform democracy into a non-violent pacific social rather than political order Gandhi offers two important suggestions:

He advocated a high degree of political decentralization and he prescribes some moral

principles to be cultivated, like truth fullness, ahimsa, toleration, self-sacrifice etc.

CONCLUSION:

I think Gandhian concept of democracy is an alternative of liberal and socialist democratic model. If we strictly follow 'Man-Making Education' which presented by Swami Vivekananda under the concept of 'Man-Making Philosophy', then establishment of this type of 'Non-Violent True Democracy', which is the most significance and relevant in the era of globalization, may be possible.

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