

Mahatma gandhi as a modern political thinker

[Psychology](#), [Personality](#)



The world is facing the adverse effects of violence nowadays. So it is urgent need to recall and implement Mahatma Gandhi's techniques and philosophy, based on the foundation of Peace and Non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual and moral approach to us and world political problem is particularly important today. Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like other virtues. To him non-violence was the basic precept in his political activities. He cultivated all the political techniques purely based on non-violence. He used non-violence to achieve his political aims. He says that the society is mostly directed by the expression of non-violence. The state must be built on non-violence otherwise it will be inconsistent with the natural development of people. He was an ardent supporter of the cause of the lowest, the oppressed and the suppressed. He had almost an instinctive understanding of women and their problems. Mahatma Gandhi has become now a spiritual and moral hero on the international scene. Today's question is that how to escape us from physical force and war. Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophy of non-violence gives the true answer of it. This is the voice of the world conscience and this is an echo of the voice of Mahatma Gandhi. The voice could not reach to all ears, but it has reached at least some ears. The nucleus of this study has been the relevance of Gandhian Political Philosophy in today's world.

Great nation called India is made of not by its large territory and military power only. The most important factor is people who inhabit and cultivate its land and create hub of rich economies by rich agricultural produce, industrial development and other means. At the same time, we cannot ignore the historical background, cultural heritage and political philosophy of India,

which has its own contribution to make today's India. One of the ardent mass leader and political philosophers of India is Mahatma Gandhi. The welfare of the nation, weaker sections of society and above all, humanity was dear to his heart. He worked not only for the political emancipation of the nation as well as the world, but for liberation of all the suppressed and oppressed sections of society. In order to build a mass movement the slogan of freedom had to be extended to a number of depressed groups like untouchables, peasants, workers and women. Along with this Mahatma Gandhi's vision was that whole world is a single family. His goal was Sarvodaya means development and welfare of all. His principles were Truth and Non-violence. His methods were Satyagraha, Civil Dis-obedience, Protest etc. Basic thrust of his programme was to bring change in the society. He worked for the upliftment of women. Mahatma Gandhi advocated education as an essential means for enabling women to uphold their natural rights and to exercise them wisely and work for their expansion. He asked them to be economically self sufficient in order to maintain their dignity. He advised them to participate in social life and contribute to moral and spiritual growth of the community. He was against the Purdah System that cut off women from social life. He was also against Dowry System. Using very strong words he said, any young man who makes dowry a condition of marriage discredits his education and his country and dishonors womanhood.

Mahatma Gandhi's principles are followed not just in rural India but these are recognized throughout the world, As Mahatma Gandhi's activities in South Africa were acknowledged as fit examples of human rights activities in the

world. Even today, Mahatma Gandhi is considered to be the originator and the most influential exponent of Human Rights of the 20th century.

The methodology involves secondary data, comprehensive studies using historical and socio-economic perspectives and application of a geographical framework for better representation and understanding both time and space. The secondary data is collected from books, newspaper and general.

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The present condition is affirmative towards Gandhian philosophy of moral values and its relevance in politics, whereas from the very beginning, starting from Mahatma Gandhi, politics was all pervading and hence, his war of Indian Independence had to be fought with the twin weapons of truth and non-violence, which ultimately became a movement and he called it as satyagraha. Arnold Brecht described Mahatma Gandhi's understanding of politics as Scientific Value Relativism because Mahatma Gandhi conceived politics as a moral problem of value. It is the need of the hour is to revolutionize politics by ethics. Mahatma Gandhi was basically religious as well as the ethical personality. He maintained highest moral standards in politics. As the most crucial strategist in politics he evolved the political methods and campaigned the movements to capture the state's power through the prolonged mass movement. Mahatma Gandhi declared on politics that for me there is no politics without religion not the religion of the superstitious and the blind religion that hates and fights but the universal religion of toleration. Politics without morality is a thing to avoid. He thought that the politics is the one of means to open the door of service to public and

not for misusing the power for one's selfish purpose. In addition to that he said for me politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt ever to be shunned. Politics concern nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who is religiously inclined, in other words a seeker after God and truth. Therefore, in politics also we have to establish the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mahatma Gandhi has described about the nature of power that is possession of power makes men blind and deaf. They cannot see things which are under their very nose and cannot hear things which invade their ears. There is thus no knowing what power-intoxicated government may not do. So, patriotic men ought to be prepared for death, imprisonment and similar eventualities.

Politics comprises the whole of socio-economic and moral factors of the state, which aimed at promoting the public life. It has the power to activate the state through those representatives which is gained from the individuals of the state in a collective way. He said that the power can be gained through the service to the people and also through the majority of votes. According to Mahatma Gandhi power is of two kinds, the first one is captured through the fear of punishment, another one is gaining through love, kindness and tolerance. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment.

Mahatma Gandhi himself admitted this to his South African friend that his bent of mind was religious and not political. There are two techniques for stabilization of power of the people:

(i) Constant propaganda; publicity and

(ii) Decentralization of power.

The aim is to change the heart of the people. In 1924 Romain Rolland in his biography of Mahatma Gandhi had commented that Mahatma Gandhi might have chosen a religious life rather than a politician if Tilak would not have died. To Mahatma Gandhi politics was his religion. He was against politicizing the religion.

Mahatma Gandhi was not prepared to accept any fixed dogma or mechanical way either for politics or for religion. Gandhi had a vision of changing the socially, morally degenerate and alienated persons in a manner where individuals can enjoy their freedom in the spirit of unselfishness.

Mahatma Gandhi found that the business of politics had been running to a wrong path on a fraud. Generally it is believed that, Mahatma Gandhi was a man with a great belief on God. For him Truth is God in the fields of life and politics should also be a search for truth and this will lead to the raising common conscience of the people. Every individual must be free from twinges of starvation should prevent exploitation and domination. Then he would be in a position to work for his own development through the performance of duties.

A universal morality would create an atmosphere for healthy political life. To Mahatma Gandhi self-transformation is necessary to the individuals and also we should be ready to accept this as a perpetual process. Mahatma Gandhi was forceful in saying that politics bereft of religion is a death trap which kills

the soul. It is the condition of our time that the spiritualization of politics, Mahatma Gandhi meant this is not excluding today's world experiences but something larger than our day to day life. In a spiritualized political method the people based on communities and individuals have ability to resist the corrupting powers on the process of self-realization in political aspect. The process of spiritualization of politics is not just a Utopia far from realities of political life. Many great philosophers right from Plato could not resolve the dichotomy between reality and ideal. In the vision of Mahatma Gandhi, we should into disbelieve the ability of commoner to rise above the passion and self-interest and we can develop a new kind of politics might emerge as Mahatma Gandhi visualized.

Henry Kissinger noted that Mahatma Gandhi had a greatness which transcends the ordinary meaning of the world, greatness beyond the trappings of power, beyond the opinion of men, a greatness of spirit.

Mahatma Gandhi's life was inspired by truths which known no boundary in space and time for they are eternal. Therefore, Kissinger agreed upon the self experiments, based on truth approach of Mahatma Gandhi which is the concrete for the edifice of Peace and Non-violence, his entire social and political philosophy and technique of mass action.

Mahatma Gandhi on women

The first Non Co-operation Movement of 1921, Mahatma Gandhi consciously involved women in an attempt to link their struggle with struggle for national independence. The programme for women was devised in a way that they could remain at home and still contribute to the movement. In spinning they

have a natural advantage over men. Spinning is essentially a slow and comparatively silent process. Woman is the embodiment of sacrifice and therefore, non-violence. Her occupations must therefore be, as they are more conducive to peace than war. Mahatma Gandhi respected tradition of the society but not at the cost of loss of individual dignity.

Social reforms were essential for the restructuring of the societal values that had so far dominated the perception of Indian women, although he had great reverence for the traditions of the country. He also realized that certain customs and traditions of the Indian society were adverse to the spirit of development of the women of the nation. His practical and dynamical advice was “ It is good to swim in the water of tradition, but to sink in them is suicide.” These words of Mahatma Gandhi sum up his entire social and political philosophy and technique of mass action. He never hesitated to criticize the evils which had gripped the Indian society and tried to mobilize public opinion against such evils. He realized that there were old custom hampering the development of women. Their freedom from such shackles was necessary for the emancipation of the nation. Mahatma Gandhi aim was freedom; freedom from external restraints from an alien government and from the age-old unjust social customs and traditions. His weapon was passive resistant which he translated into active and effective action.