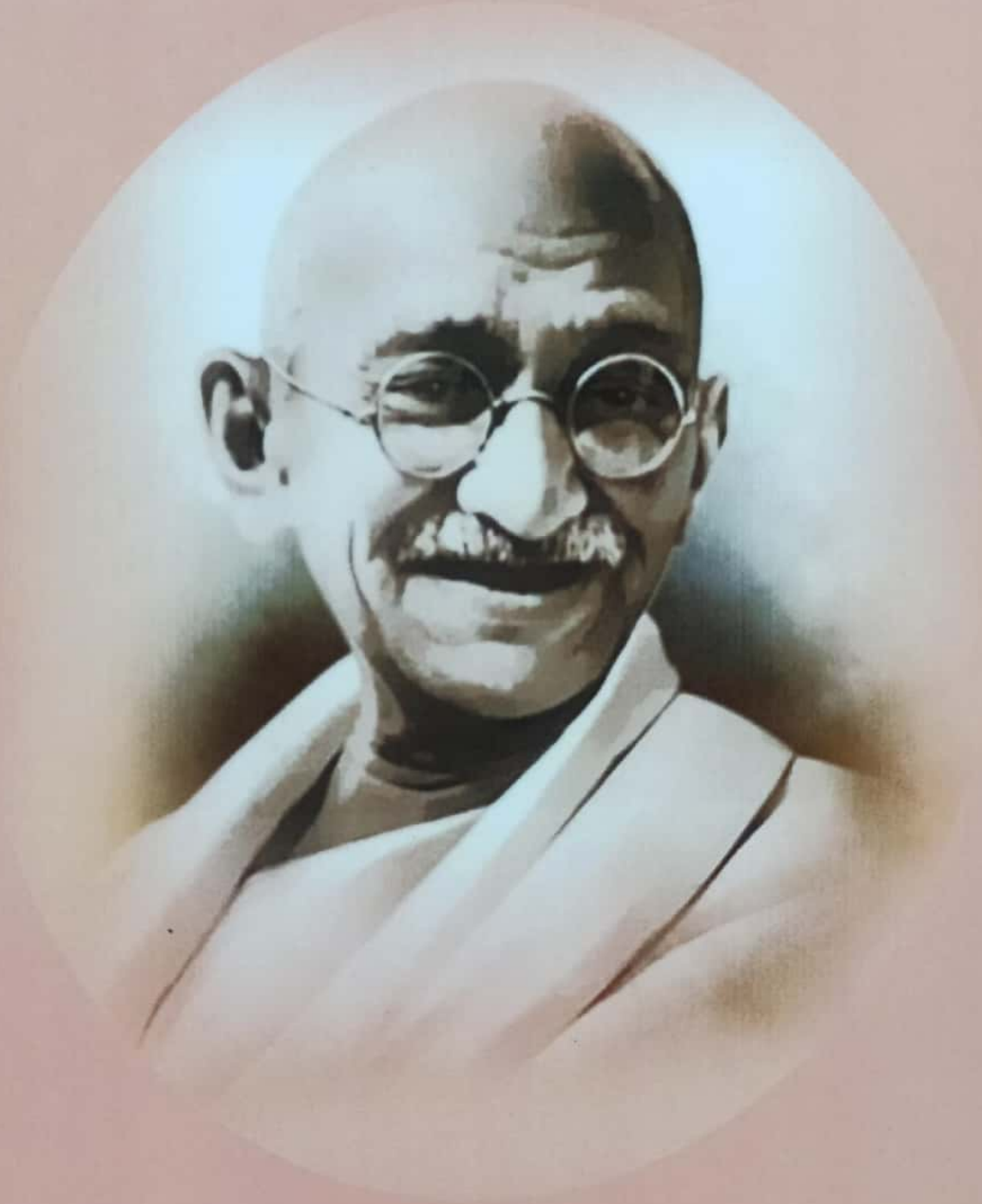


गांधीवादी विचार

GANDHIAN THOUGHTS

Volume-II



संपादक

डॉ. बाळासाहेब जी. जोगदंड

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प्रा.डॉ. बाळासाहेब जी. जोगदंड

सहयोगी प्राध्यापक,

पदवी व पदव्युत्तर राज्यशास्त्र विभाग,

सीताबाई कला वाणिज्य व विज्ञान महाविद्यालय अकोला.



आधार पब्लिकेशन्स, अमरावती

गांधीवादी विचार

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■ प्रथम आवृत्ती - २ ऑक्टोबर

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COVID-19 and Gandhian Principles

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Preface:

Outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic has created an unprecedented situation throughout the world and spread threat to humanity at large during last 6 months but this is not the first time that pandemic has embraced the whole world. History had witnessed the severe effects on social, political religious and economical sphere very often like Swine flu, plague, H1N1, Ebola, AIDS, TB pandemic etc. and endangered the humanity. Now in 2020, due to spread of Corona virus (assumed to be biological war), China has been targeted by the world. The worst epidemic and pandemic about 3000 years BC wiped out the whole village "Hamin Mangha" in china where the whole community, irrespective of age, gender, was affected and dead bodies were collectively disposed after which the whole village was set to fire. Around 430 BC, an epidemic in Athens witnessed the sudden deaths of 100000 people due to brain fever. Plague and Spanish flu (1343 to 1920) wiped out over half of European population and bodies were buried in mass graves. It resulted in the course of Europe history by witnessing the emergence of technological innovations.

At present the devastation aroused out of corona epidemic proved that the notion of human beings to considered themselves as suprimo in this world rendered severe blow. Technology and religion seem to be helpless to fight with this virus. Till date, a proper medicine is not invented and still there are faint chances to get vaccine for lifelong protection. Earlier it was said that it would affect the children and the aged people, but fact is that no one is left unaffected. Hence now, it is clear that one must increase the immunity power to

fight against this virus and this leads ultimately towards the basic principles given by Mahatma Gandhi.

The question may arise, “what is the relevance of Gandhian thoughts and COVID-19?” It is said that “M K Gandhi is a person of experience”. Hence one has to understand him first. He says, “My life is my message”. The image of Gandhi in the minds of his contemporary people was that of political strategist and a mass leader. For some others, he was a perfect spiritual and moral leader but there is a class of thinkers who know Gandhi from other broad perspective. Those who understand Gandhi’s concept Hind Swaraj of 1909, constructive program of 1936, key to health, naturopathy, simplicity, Ekadash Vrat would easily correlate its relevance in epidemic diseases not only in COVID19 but for all time. To control and fight against corona, world leaders, economist, medical team are doing their best and exploring all the possible ways. But if we recall one of the proverb, “Old is Gold”, Gandhian principles about life best suit to this.

COVID-19 pandemic has hit the whole world including almost 200 countries with only 14 untouched. This virus has directly or indirectly (physically/ mentally) infected about 749 Crore people out of 750 crore making it the worst situation of all pandemics in the history. Depending on the severity of situation, many countries declared lockdown varies from 180 days for Australia, 70-80 days in India, 90 days in China or no lockdown in Sweden, etc. This sudden lockdown, without giving any space for preplanning, has affected the social, economical and educational sectors intensively worldwide and facing innumerable problems. Of many possible measures, lockdown is one but can’t be called as the only solution and moreover this is not the first time we are facing such pandemic situations. We could have controlled such diseases had we used remedies offered by ancient Indian Ayurveda. Unfortunately and unknowingly we became the part of this pandemic! Theoretically we believe that *prevention is better*

than cure, but practically it has gone out of fashion. We have forgotten the old remedies to control diseases which were proposed and practiced by Gandhi hundred years ago. At present they are remembered as "Anandvan Project" for leprosy or Gram swaraj, self exploration, respect of labor, or naturopathy .

Gandhi travel all over the country and came to know that nutritious food and personal hygiene is the key to healthy nation. In 1915, after returning from South Africa, Gandhi decided to set the Ashram in India like Pegwin and Tolstoy. He established the Sabaramati Ashram in Gujrat. He started and disseminate his idea in "Shantiniketan" run by Rabindranath Tagore. His Ashram based on importance of Bread labour, Education, health and happy life set a beautiful example of harmony in life and nature. Similar Ashram was established at Kochrab in 1916. Just after 2 years, Spanish flu pandemic hit India and about 1/5 of population of then, approximately 10 million people died within a span of two years. Gujrat and other states were affected seriously but Ashram was left untouched by any infection. This was the result of Gandhi's project of naturopathy. Clean air, personal hygiene, healthy food and the most important discipline saved his Ashram from any outside infection. He constantly experimented with himself and his family for the better life. Later he discussed it with Ghokhale also. He experimented it in Champaran for Indigo riots. He renders humanitarian services to the people through his Trisutri: Health, Education and Satyagraha which transformed him from '*Mohandas to Mahatma*'. Gandhiji came to Wardha, central place of India, in 1932 at the invitation of Jammalal Bajaj and established Ashram at Shevgaon near Wardha, later he named it as "Sevagram" which means 'village of service'. Since then it has become an inspiring place for self reliance and self exploration. Louis Fischer said, 'India has a rich heritage of Ashram life. But Gandhi's concept of Ashram stands on different footing. Gandhi is firm believer of ascetic life still strongly connected with social life.

His Ashram is a beautiful amalgamation of spiritual, social and political life of India. This is always in accordance with human life and encompasses the liveliness. His ashram is good example to learn how to deal with plague, flu or Collara pandemic. He insisted on organic farming which is a reach source of nutrition.

When Parchure Shastry was rejected by his family due to Leprosy, he went to Gandhi's ashram. Gandhi was in dilemma, but he decided to serve him. A neat separate cottage was arranged for him near Gandhi's and he personally nursed him with herbal medicine and supervised his diet. He treated many others and started *satyagraha* to heal and not just treat through various awareness programs. Inspired with this initiative, Baba Amte, Achyutrao Patwardhan have started separate projects like "Anandvan" and devoted their lives to deal with lepers and serve humanity. In India a leprosy mission PARTI project was launched in 2014, advocating lepers for their rights in employment, education, health care and community participation. Such initiative implies the power of Ganghian principles.

Though COVID19 has embraced the whole world, it is not as severe as plague or collara or Spanish flu. Today, directly or indirectly we are following Gandhi's principle of social distancing and personal hygiene by washing hands very often for 20 seconds. He puts it at two levels: "Ekadash vrat and Satyagraha". In fact, in daily life we misunderstood the meaning of both. We relate it with only Brahmacharya (celibacy) and movement. But this is not so. Satyagraha means to increases moral strength and insists for truth. Ekadash vrat means to control and stay away from all greeds. In Covid pandemic, these principles play the important role in our life which motivates us to maintain social distancing and minimize our daily need. It also highlights the need of personal hygiene and nutritious diet which the whole world is trying to follow to deal with this epidemic. Hence in this context, Gandhi's 7 VOWS: *Satya*,

Amihsa, Bramacharya, Asteya, Aparigraha, ShariraShram and *Aswada* seem relevant today.

New questions arose due to covid-19

Employment and labor management along with sufficient medical facilities, supply of nutritious food, increasing materialism, mental health, Social, Political, Economical, Educational conflicts, disbelief among different countries, lack of understanding, environmental issues, imergence of self-centered leadership and most importantly great economic depression all over the world etc. Till now 180 million people migrated only in India and this is supposed to be the largest after partition. Tremendous losses have been occurred in farming and industrial sectors. If India's GDP comes down to 0%, economists are predicting the loss of 5 thousand Billion. In spite of sufficient food grains, if starvation occurs, it's an alarming situation and indication of forgetting the Gandhian principles. He was the man thinking about not only of India but of the whole universe putting Humanity at the core.

Gandhian Philosophy

In the speech at Banaras Hindu Vishvidyalaya, Kashi on 4 February 1916, Gandhi has given the emphasis on farming issues because farmer is the backbone of nation, trust system, health and cleanliness, selfsufficiency, Gram Swaraj and raise the question of our slavery. According to him, needs of developed countries are different. Industrial innovations and machineries can reduce the labor work but this is harmful for countries with large population. For India, the country of villages, he instated the GRAM SWARAJ about 100 years ago with the principle of self sufficiency and decentralization. According to him, cities have so far exploited the villages, and that has resulted in the void between villages and cities in education, culture, facilities, employment. Now a new partnership between cities and villages is needed to cater the needs of these million migrants. India is a land of farm and hence if we concentrate on the overall

development of Indian villages, most of the question related to health, education and poverty may be answered. Vinoba bhave said that, each village is a University. It has tremendous potential and creativity. If each village is flourished and made self sufficient, Indiginous feeling will start to develop atomatically. City lifestyle is costly and this has proven by the migrating workers amid COVID 19. This could not happen if Gandhian Philosophy of decentralization of work and availability of basic facilities had been adopted by each country. This is not impossible. This is proven by many villages in Maharashtra like Mendha-Lekha, Panchgaon, Patoda, Ralegansiddhi, Hiware Bazar.

Conclusion:

Gandhian principles are helpful not only for solving political issues but has the tremendous power to find solution of any problems worldwide. These have a potential to handle this COVID19 situation. Whenever there is natural or man made disaster, we surrender to God. This happens to be universal law. Recently President Trump declared to open all sort of religious places in US which were closed due to corona pandemic. This implies the importance of mental peace which gives the strength to fight against any disaster and live in harmony. Hence Gandhi insisted on the daily routine prayer, Upavasa (Fast) and *Moun*(Silence), His practice of *Brahmacharya* insists on the control of the mind over desires. It is rightly reflected in the present practice of physical distancing. The idea of Gandhi on making the villages self reliant and fulfilling emerged as necessary step to control the situation. Gandhi's vision in Hind Swaraj regarding the importance of doctors, advocates, railway transport, education and villages received prime importance now. The top priority of the world today is environment, the question of food, health and safety of the people who serve others, which Gandhi had focused some years before. It is the hope of humanity that all the serious concerns that have haunted the world should not influx in only exceptional conditions like this, but it should turned into the routine lifestyle of the people as dreamed

and practiced by Gandhi. To remember his philosophy, principles and practices only in crisis cannot be an ideal answer to the grave situation, rather the wisdom is to follow the visionary, the seer called Gandhi every day. **we cannot avoid microbes and hence must increase our immunity by adopting healthy lifestyle of sufficient sleep, clean air, yoga and nutritious food.**