

An Analysis of Gandhian Thought and it's Implications for the Spread of Democracy Systems

Sonu¹ and Dr. Daljeet Singh²

¹Research Scholar, Department of History

²Research Guide, Department of History

NIILM University, Kaithal, Haryana

Abstract: *This essay aims to examine Gandhi's pertinent opinions on the structured institutions of political power as well as how democracies shift toward the prospect of slower political development. Violence is having a negative impact on the globe today. Nations that have prospered off fear and bloodshed are quickly realizing the pointlessness of enmity. Gandhi's nonviolent ideology is being embraced globally as a means of fostering harmony and peace in society. Even during Gandhi's lifetime, brilliant thinkers from throughout the globe sensed in his work the potential of a new world, and he is now emerging as the savior of a world endangered by superpower warfare. Romain Rolland (1866-1944) is one among them. He said in his book Mahatma Gandhi: The Man who Became One With the Universal Being (1924) that "With Gandhi everything is nature, modest, simple, pure - while all his struggles are hallowed by religious serenity." However, 15 years before, in Joseph J. Doke's Gandhi, A Patriot in South Africa (1909), Gandhi's somewhat religious temperament that pervaded his politics was noted.*

Keywords: Gandhian Philosophy, Political Development, Non-violence (Ahimsa)

I. INTRODUCTION

On the global stage, Mahatma Gandhi is gradually but surely being recognized as a moral and spiritual hero. In his 1958 book *The Future of Mankind*, the renowned German existentialist philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) stated: "Today we face the question of how to escape from physical force and from war, lest we all perish by the atom bomb." Gandhi provides the real solution in both his words and deeds: political deliverance can only be brought about by a supra-political force. This is an echo of Gandhi's voice and the voice of the global consciousness. Not every ear may hear the voice. However, at least some people have heard them. It's odd that the nation that is highlighting the need of Gandhian non-violence in the contemporary world is Germany, which was the cause of the Second World War.

Actually, Rene Fullop-Miller's *Gandhi: The Holy Man*, released in 1931, marked the beginning of Germany's understanding of Gandhi. "Gandhi's nationalism contains none of those elements which make nationalist movements of the West seem a menace to peace," he added, emphasizing the importance of Gandhian methods in resolving political issues. It is an appeal for a Gandhian solution to political issues, which is essentially how the German elite currently perceives Gandhi's pacifism.

Let's examine Werner Heisenberg, the finest contemporary physicist after Einstein, and his perspective on Gandhian nonviolence. "Gandhi's teaching of nonviolence could prove to be stronger than the vague impersonal conception of an international court of justice," he writes in an article about Gandhi. Gandhi's singular example demonstrates that genuine personal participation combined with a complete rejection of force may lead to significant political achievement.

In 1969, a collection of articles titled "Mahatma Gandhi As Germans See Him" was compiled by Dr. Heimou Rau of Max Mueller Bhavan in New Delhi. It includes sixteen articles about Gandhi's life and teachings written by distinguished German thinkers. The pieces demonstrate how Gandhi's nonviolent ideology has shaped German thought. *Gandhi Struggling for Autonomy* (1999) by Ronald J. Terchek illustrates how Gandhi's concept has resonated with the Anglo-Saxon world. Gandhi's theory that our soul's swaraj is the only thing that can enable us to fulfill our social and political responsibilities is explained in the book. David Hardiman, a professor at the University of Warwick, wrote

Gandhi in His Time and Ours, which is equally significant. Gandhi's philosophy is encapsulated by Hardiman's statement that "Gandhi's approach represented a state of mind and not any theory."

Gandhi's moral and spiritual approach to our political issue is especially relevant now that the US has declared war on terrorism. We must appreciate Gandhi's advice to examine ourselves and discover who we are if we are to realize this. Terrorism will not be eradicated by the Pentagon's might. It will only spread more widely. Violence cannot bring about peace. Nonviolence is the best response to violence. "If even one great nation were unconditionally to perform the supreme act of renunciation, many of us would see in our lifetime visible peace established on earth," Gandhi said in one of his writings in his 1938 book Harijan.

OBJECTIVE

The goal of this essay is to examine and evaluate Mahatma Gandhi's democratic philosophy, which is relevant to democracies generally and is completely surrounded by non-violence and dignified and peaceful coexistence.

What is Gandhian Political Theory?

It is irrelevant whether Gandhian political philosophy is essentialist or relativist. There are two sides to the argument. Gandhian political thought, I contend, is essentialist. I use the methodology of India's intellectual past to support my assertion that Gandhian "political theory" is essentialist in character.

The goal of essentialism is to discover the inherent qualities of things as they are. Rationalism is essentialism's antithesis. Essences are referred to as natural sorts in analytical philosophy. When a phrase or categorization is true and consistent throughout all potential universes, it refers to a natural type. Kripke refers to these words as "rigid designators." 10. After achieving their actual condition and realizing their innate potential, natural sorts are things-in-themselves. It is impossible to envision them in any other way. Using rigorous syllogisms, deductions, definitions, tautologies, and similar arguments, necessity is the favored logical modality for essentialism.

Regardless of connections, context, time, or observer, natural sorts always exist or seem to exist. The characteristics of natural sorts are what define an object's essence; everything else is just coincidental, contingent, or historical. Instead of making flexible differences in degree, essentialism creates either/or distinctions. Rather of gradations and actual continuity, it proposes polar opposites. There are many instances accessible. Either method or no method drives science; action is either interpretative or rational; art expresses subjective experience; technology is impersonal; knowledge is either socially constructed or corresponds to the world; the mind is either a machine or a conscious mind; ideographic hermeneutics is the method used in social science; society is either Gesellschaft or Gemeinschaft, but not both at once.

Static typologies and inflexible categories, whose grids divide objects that are everywhere and really distinct under all conditions, are essentialism's favored way of operation. A dualistic cosmology that makes sharp differences between things natural and social, body and mind, behavior and action, cause and purpose, is sometimes associated with essentialism.

Gandhi's emphasis on the unique traditions of Indian life that have evolved over a very long time is the foundation of his essentialism. Both in the East and the West, modernity and its effects on society erode the traditional values of a happy life. Gandhi makes an essentialist decision on what standards and values should make up a genuine and vibrant existence. He leads the values of a decent life free from the never-ending pursuit of materialism by using political and moral ideals.

Gandhi's specialization as a political theorist and practitioner of Indian intellectual history is evident in the unique aspects of Gandhian political theory, particularly the conceptual examination of political and moral categories presented as a distinct entity. The peculiarity of Indian social and cultural traditions is the fundamental basis for the uniqueness of Indian political ideas, such as those of the United States, Britain, or Africa. Being among the world's oldest civilizations, Indian culture has a wealth of thought-provoking concepts. In the evolution of civilization, other religious doctrines were also formed.

Fundamental concepts about how people should live moral lives and act in society and politics were created via religious discourse. Monarchy evolved as a form of social governance from Yuran and Vendantic traditions. India's historical unique administrative system was vividly described in Kautilya's Arthashastra. India's cultural heritage gained new dimensions with the advent of the Mughal and British empires. Indian customs were infused with western ideals

and spirit throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of colonial control. Through colonial and imperial dominance, British hegemony over non-Western nations was shaped by western ideologies inspired by the Enlightenment. As a liberating movement, nationalist movements began in this colonial and imperial setting, giving rise to several indigenous thinking processes that are now part of the rich historical and cultural heritage.

The social reformers in India during the nationalist movement used the British rationalists' lines of reasoning and reimagined concepts from ancient Indian literature like the Purana and Vedanta. From vedantic and Hinduistic viewpoints, intellectuals such as Dayananda, Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra, and Gandhi cultivated an Indian nationalist consciousness. From an Indian philosophical viewpoint, they attempted to oppose Western concepts and British domination. In this regard, it is stated that "liberal knowledge includes the study of Indian political thought." To comprehend the history of Indian institutions and movements, it is crucial to examine how Indian intellectuals have thought about themes of freedom and power. Highlighting Gandhi's contribution to India's vast political canon is very pertinent in this setting. Many people within and outside of India were struck by his leadership and charm during the liberation movement. The origins of these concepts, which he expounded upon in Hind Swaraj and other works, revealed a unique Indian lifestyle.

RELEVANCE OF GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY

Gandhian political philosophy has been the subject of much discussion from two key angles. Gandhian political thought, according to one viewpoint, is a relative or balanced pattern of both Eastern and Western traditions. Gandhi is an original thinker, according to the opposing viewpoint, as he developed novel political ideas that were inevitably rooted in Indian customs. Thus, it may be said that Gandhi created a unique and different kind of political theory from what is often thought of as political theory in the West. I'll make the same argument. My goal is to highlight a different perspective on political theory that Gandhi addressed; I want to highlight the fundamental nature of the Gandhian thread that permeates Indian traditional thinking.

Gandhian political philosophy has been the subject of much discussion from two key angles.

Gandhian political thought, according to one viewpoint, is a relative or harmonious pattern of both eastern and western traditions. Gandhi is an original thinker, according to the opposing viewpoint, as he developed novel political ideas that are fundamentally rooted in Indian customs. Thus, it may be said that Gandhi created a unique and different kind of political theory from what is often thought of as political theory in the West. He did not, however, hold to any such prescriptive standards of truth or absolute predictions. He rejected his own beliefs, claiming that they were as ancient as the Himalayas, and held that there was only one ultimate truth God. Additionally, he disproved the notion that Gandhism is a generic concept. I'll make the same argument. My goal is to draw attention to Gandhi's alternative perspective on political theory and the fundamental nature of the Gandhian thread that permeates India's traditional philosophy.

GANDHIAN THOUGHT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACIES

When it comes to Gandhi's political philosophy, we must keep in mind certain of his traits. To begin with, Gandhi was not an academic system architect. He wasn't a philosopher of politics. Because whatever he spoke came from his genuine understanding of the truth and his intense emotions. Without delving into specifics, it may be said that he had no particular school of thought in mind.

His writing and voice were often answers to specific situations. Even in his last days, Gandhi said that he had never stopped developing and that, as a result, he had been learning from his autobiography, "Experiment with Truth." Gandhi's intellectual framework remained constant, yet he sometimes changed his views. He had not changed his fundamentals.

Gandhi's political philosophy draws from both Eastern and Western traditions. Despite inheriting several customs, he had not accepted any of them. He had learned a lot of conventional ideas from both ancient writings and his direct forebears. Gandhi never professed to be a creative thinker. However, if we examine all of his statements, we see a philosophical framework. Furthermore, we have every cause to acknowledge him as an Indian philosopher when we see that his theoretical ideas and actual endeavors are the same. However, only he could become the man of the

millennium as well as the man of the nation's destiny, in contrast to other political scientists and philosophers from both the East and the West.

Gandhi was considered by many political scientists to be both a prophet and an exceptional politician. As a result, he had incorporated elements of both philosophy and politics into himself. Gandhi's admirer and critic, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, reportedly said that Gandhi needed to serve as both the Supreme Leader of the Indian National Liberation Movement and a global teacher. He added, in a critical tone, that he often had to sacrifice his other job since his previous one that of a global teacher became so prominent. Whether or not one agrees with Netaji Bose, it seems that there is truth in the national liberation effort.

However, when we go more into Gandhi's philosophy, we see that his view is not binary. One may argue that Gandhi saw politics as a tool for improving humankind's social, economic, moral, and spiritual conditions. Gandhi acknowledged to his South African acquaintance that he had a more religious than political inclination. In his 1924 biography, Romain Rolland said that Gandhi may have chosen a monastic life over a political one if Tilak had not passed away. Gandhi believed that politics was his religion. He did not support the politicization of religion. Although he supported spiritualizing religion, he was fundamentally a worldly man and never pursued his personal salvation apart from society. He felt as if politics had wrapped itself around him like a snake's coil.

There is no relaxation; he has to battle the serpent. He may have considered staying out of politics because, in the absence of politics, India's hungry jobless might be given food and employment. He firmly believed that the removal of political oppression, socioeconomic exploitation, and the moral degradation of the Indian populace would not be achievable without his active participation in politics.

Gandhi's encounter with a snake's coil must be understood from this angle. We must wrestle with the serpent to overcome the assignment, no matter how difficult it may be. If we can reduce the current political climate to dharmic politics, this can be accomplished. Gandhi defined dharmic as being free from sectarianism and corrupting influences. Everyone should be able to participate in this politics. Gandhi was unwilling to embrace any rigid doctrine or formulaic approach to either religion or politics.

Gandhi envisioned the socially and morally corrupted and divided people being transformed so that they may enjoy their freedom in a selfless way. Gandhi's concerns about the division between the state and civil society must also be understood in order to comprehend his politics. Community life is rapidly eroding, and civil society has been unable to develop any regulatory mechanisms.

Gandhi was worried that Western culture had been hedonistic that is, focused on one's own pleasure pragmatic that is, focused on immediate financial gain and individualistic that is, egocentric that is, focused on the sovereign individual since the days of Hind Swaraj. He discovered that the British parliament had devolved into a sterile institution where blatant displays of party or self-interest (or power alone) had been made. He held Western society itself responsible for the sickness. Gandhi discovered that politics as a whole had been a farce that had led people astray.

Gandhi, as we all know, was a guy who valued God. But to him, truth is God, and politics, like other areas of life, should be a quest for truth. Gandhi must understand that the goal of this quest is to awaken the public's consciousness. Every person must be free from hunger pains in order to stop injustice and exploitation. After that, he would be able to strive toward his own growth by carrying out his responsibilities. The emergence of a universal moral code would foster a positive political environment. Self-transformation should be seen as an ongoing process. Gandhi made it clear that politics without faith is a death trap that destroys the spirit. Gandhi meant something more than our daily lives when he spoke of the spiritualization of politics, but he did not exclude the realm of everyday experiences.

A group of people undergoing self-realization can withstand the distorting effects of prevailing interests. Gandhi asserts that this is not only a philosophical ideal detached from the reality of politics. Plato was one of many great philosophers who struggled to reconcile the difference between ideal and reality. According to Gandhi, we should have faith in the potential of the average person to rise beyond emotion and self-interest and develop a strategy that may lead to the emergence of a new form of politics, as Gandhi had envisioned.

GANDHIAN EQUALITY FOR POLITICAL DEMOCRACIES

In addition to being a fundamental tenet of Gandhian philosophy, equality is also a notion that most other authors of social and political philosophy hold in high regard. However, a closer examination of the idea would reveal the

disparities in these authors' perspectives. The phrase is often used to refer to both equality of treatment and equality of features. The standards of equality, excluding the former, have been applied in a variety of ways, including (a) impartiality; (b) equal shares to everyone; (c) equal shares to equals; (d) proportional equality; and (e) unequal shares, which correspond to pertinent disparities. Gandhi advocated for the rights of individuals in society. His most significant starting point is the civil and political rights brought about by British empire. He supported the idea that all people are created equal. He denounced foreign exploitation and imperialism.

The foundation of satyagraha is the belief that every person has the unalienable right to oppose a social and political structure that uses coercion. Gandhi argues for the internality of judgment in opposition to the assertions of governmental omnipotence. Political individualism, or equality of rights and freedom, was what he advocated. In terms of individual rights, his experiences in South Africa seem to be painful. He learned how to seek legal and political rights from his experience in South Africa. He pushed for societal acceptance of man's inherent moral value as a spiritual creature. Gandhi believed that a person's moral standing and dignity were related to his or her political rights. Gandhi believed that the ultimate form of individual right was swaraj. Every Indian has the fundamental right to it. Gandhi believed that duties and rights were complimentary to one another. Therefore, he said that moral and inalienable human rights shield people from all sorts of pressure and fortify them against injustice, wrongdoing, and lies. He believed that the underprivileged and disenfranchised should have particular rights. According to him, as long as moral duties are met, rights are necessary for the fulfillment of good.

Despite being borrowed from the West, the concept of basic human rights has taken on new significance in Indian politics. Gandhi refers to this as satyagraha. Satyagraha, according to Gandhi's definition in *Hind Swaraj*, is a "method of securing rights by personal suffering: it is the reverse of resistance by arms." 46 According to the western heritage of rights, people may use violence to protect their rights. Gandhi's approach to gaining rights in India, on the other hand, is novel in that it implies "personal suffering." Parekh has referred to this satyagraha practice as "struggle love." According to Joan Bondurant, self-suffering is never a legitimate means of obtaining rights in the eyes of the West. Gandhi converted the Indian tradition of satyagraha into the Western tradition of civil disobedience. He took the extraordinary step to present the "Fundamental Rights and Economic Changes" before the India Congress alongside Nehru.

II. CONCLUSION

Gandhi is unquestionably a contemporary Indian political thinker. Ideas like swaraj, satyagraha, sarvodaya, swadeshi, ahimsa, nationalism, constitutionalism, and dharma, or selfless service, are among his intellectual contributions. The evolution and reimagining of the idea of purushartha is comparable to the balancing of many aspects of human growth. An alternate perspective to the Anglo-American view of social and political reality is provided by essentialist and cultural relativist political theory. In a sense, Gandhism incorporates his ideas by redefining Indian society's essentialist and cultural traits. Gandhi's greatest gift to mankind, according to Parel, is that he created a bridge between the spiritual and secular, which is rather distinctive of his approach. In addition to all the other advances in political life, such as swaraj, satyagraha, truth and non-violence, and religion and politics.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Gibler, Douglas M.; Owsiak, Andrew (2017). "Democracy and the Settlement of International Borders, 1919–2001". *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 62 (9): 1847–75. doi:10.1177/0022002717708599. S2CID 158036471.
- [2]. Foreword, written by historian Harry J Hogan Archived 1 September 2013 at the Wayback Machine in 1982, to Quigley's *Weapons Systems and Political Stability* see also Chester G Starr, *Review of Weapons Systems and Political Stability*, *American Historical Review*, Feb 1984, p. 98, available at carrollquigley.
- [3]. Carroll Quigley (1983). *Weapons systems and political stability: a history*. University Press of America. pp. 38–39. ISBN 978-0-8191-2947-5. Retrieved 20 May 2013.
- [4]. Carroll Quigley (1983). *Weapons systems and political stability: a history*. University Press of America. p. 307. ISBN 978-0-8191-2947-5. Retrieved 20 May 2013.

- [5]. Glaeser, E.; Ponzetto, G.; Shleifer, A. (2007). "Why does democracy need education?". *Journal of Economic Growth*. (2): 77–99. doi:10.1007/s10887-007-9015-1. Retrieved 3 July 2017.
- [6]. Deary, I.J.; Batty, G.D.; Gale, C.R. (2008). "Bright children become enlightened adults" (PDF).
- [7]. *Psychological Science*. 19 (1): 1–6. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02036.x. hdl:20.500.11820/a86dbef4-60eb-44fa-add3-513841cdf81b. PMID 18181782. S2CID 21297949.
- [8]. Albertus, Michael; Menaldo, Victor (2012). "Coercive Capacity and the Prospects for Democratisation". *Comparative Politics*. 44 (2): 151–69. doi:10.5129/001041512798838003. S2CID 153949862.
- [9]. Squicciarini, Mara and Voigtländer, Nico, Knowledge Elites and Modernization: Evidence from Revolutionary France (October 2016). NBER Working Paper No. w22779, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2861711>
- [10]. "The Resource Curse: Does the Emperor Have no Clothes?".
- [11]. Acemoglu, Daron; Robinson, James A. (2006). *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-85526-6.
- [12]. Alsan, Marcella (2015). "The Effect of the TseTse Fly on African Development" (PDF). *American Economic Review*. 105 (1): 382–410. CiteSeerX 10.1.1.1010.2955. doi:10.1257/aer.20130604.
- [13]. Acemoglu, Daron; Johnson, Simon; Robinson, James (2005). "Institutions as a fundamental cause of long-run growth". *Handbook of Economic Growth*. *Handbook of Economic Growth*. 1. pp. 385– 472, Sections 1 to 4. doi:10.1016/S1574-0684(05)01006-3. ISBN 978-0-444-52041-8.
- [14]. Mellinger, Andrew D., Jeffrey Sachs, and John L. Gallup. (1999). "Climate, Water Navigability, and Economic Development". Working Paper.
- [15]. Acemoglu, Daron; Johnson, Simon; Robinson, James (2005). "Institutions as a fundamental cause of long-run growth". *Handbook of Economic Growth*. *Handbook of Economic Growth*. 1. pp. 385– 472, Sections 5 to 10. doi:10.1016/S1574-0684(05)01006-3. ISBN 978-0-444-52041-8.
- [16]. Farrelly, Elizabeth (15 September 2011). "Deafened by the roar of the crowd". *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Archived from the original on 30 December 2011. Retrieved 17 September 2011.
- [17]. Robert Michels (1999) [1962 by Crowell-Collier]. *Political Parties*. Transaction Publishers. p. 243. ISBN 978-1-4128-3116-1. Retrieved 5 June 2013.
- [18]. Harald Wydra, *Communism and the Emergence of Democracy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 22–27.
- [19]. Compare: Wydra, Harald (2007). "Democracy as a process of meaning-formation". *Communism and the Emergence of Democracy*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 244–68. ISBN 978-1-139- 46218-1. Retrieved 11 August 2018.
- [20]. Abbott, Lewis. (2006). *British Democracy: Its Restoration and Extension*. ISR/Google Books.
- [21]. Appleby, Joyce. (1992). *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination*. Harvard University Press.
- [22]. Archibugi, Daniele, *The Global Commonwealth of Citizens. Toward Cosmopolitan Democracy*, Princeton University Press ISBN 978-0-691-13490-1.
- [23]. Becker, Peter, Heideking, Juergen, & Henretta, James A. (2002). *Republicanism and Liberalism in America and the German States, 1750–1850*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521- 80066-2.
- [24]. Benhabib, Seyla. (1996). *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*. Princeton University Press. ISBN 978-0-691-04478-1.
- [25]. Blattberg, Charles. (2000). *From Pluralist to Patriotic Politics: Putting Practice First*, Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-0-19-829688-1.
- [26]. Birch, Anthony H. (1993). *The Concepts and Theories of Modern Democracy*. London: Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-41463-0.
- [27]. Castiglione, Dario. (2005). "Republicanism and its Legacy." *European Journal of Political Theory*. pp. 453– 65.
- [28]. Copp, David, Jean Hampton, & John E. Roemer. (1993). *The Idea of Democracy*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-43254-2.

- [29]. Caputo, Nicholas. (2005). America's Bible of Democracy: Returning to the Constitution. SterlingHouse Publisher, Inc. ISBN 978-1-58501-092-9.
- [30]. Dahl, Robert A. (1991). Democracy and its Critics. Yale University Press. ISBN 978-0-300- 04938-1.
- [31]. Dahl, Robert A. (2000). On Democracy. Yale University Press. ISBN 978-0-300-08455-9.
- [32]. Dahl, Robert A. Ian Shapiro & Jose Antonio Cheibub. (2003). The Democracy Sourcebook. MIT Press. ISBN 978-0-262-54147-3.
- [33]. Dahl, Robert A. (1963). A Preface to Democratic Theory. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 978- 0-226-13426-0.