

**DOES POLITICAL ETHICS CONTRIBUTE IN MAINTAINING PEACE IN THE
SOCIETY: A GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVE**

*A dissertation submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of*

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in
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Under the Guidance of

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DECLARATION

This is to state that the research work embodied in the thesis titled “**Does Political Ethics Contribute In Maintaining Peace In The Society: A Gandhian Perspective**” submitted to the Department of Philosophy, University of Hyderabad, for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Philosophy is original and carried out by me under the supervision of **Dr. Abhijeet Joshi, Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Hyderabad.**

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most ancient notion that human societies have with them is politics. Its practice have been the most vital part of a society. Politics as we all know are certain rules of conduct. These are basically kept and utilized in the society in order to prevent the community and also, they are paramount in safeguarding its members. Politics came into picture when men started to question the rules to which they ought to abide or by which the generations preceding them abode and were governed. Moreover, it became an inseparable part of human life when they saw and questioned not only themselves but also the other societies, their rules, etc.

Throughout history people have indulged themselves in the field of politics providing various definitions to contemporary and succeeding generations. This has resulted in different conceptions of politics that we have with us today. It can be seen in the works of various scholars that though they have talked of politics extensively, they have talked about it very pessimistically. In the ancient ages still, we have references, which tells us that scholars and philosophers talked about the welfare of the society, the economy, its people. Basically, we have instances which shows that people who worked in the field of politics and who worked for the field of politics regarded morality and ethics as paramount. But with the passage of time every thought seems deviating from morality and ethics. The whole concern was given to the retention of power through violent means. The consequences of such a thought process can be many, but one field that it has majorly affected is the field of political ethics. It has affected it in such a manner that even today it is difficult for general public to acknowledge that notions of politics and ethics can work together effectively. What political thinkers have lost sight of is that the concern of politics is to maintain harmony in the society.

So whenever we look around we see a lot of politicians doing what they think politics is, we see them claiming a lot of things which can be beneficial for the society, sometimes promising things which can be seen benefiting a particular community or a particular group and with the passage of time their being in power or not, we see them betraying the public, we see how cleverly they lie and they have been lying. So, ethics which is one of the important aspect of human life, which of course is an important aspect of all the science seems to be questionable in this particular field. This further raised a question whether this field of applied ethics is essential in maintain peace in the society, and therefore the topic: Does political ethics contributes in maintaining peace in the society.

The dissertation is divided into 3 chapters, the first one talks about the description of politics by various philosophers and scholars, only those have been discussed which are relevant for this research, to be precise the work have 21 scholars and philosophers 14 of them being westerners and 6 of them being Indian all of the theories of them have been discussed briefly in the dissertation. The second chapter deals with the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, his contributions to the society in the name of satyagraha, swaraj, education and so on are mentioned. The third chapter aims to look at the effects of misconception of political ethics. It tries to see how the amalgamation of vices in political ethics affects the peace of the society.

The following set of concerns and questions are extensively dealt in the dissertation:

- The cause of the misinterpretation of political ethics.
- The impact of pessimistic description of politics and optimistic explanation of evil in politics.
- Does the above-mentioned understanding have harmed the society?
- Does power corrupts?
- How a Gandhian way help us to solve the pervading negativity in the society?
- Importance of political ethics.
- Redefining political ethics in a Gandhian way.

The work though hugely emphasis on politics and power it is extremely relevant in the context of philosophy as it tries to look at the ethical considerations that are mentioned or not in these spheres. Since a Gandhian approach have been taken this work does not emphasise only on the problems but it approaches to solve the continuing glitches in the field of politics. Since it goes deep into the root of the problem it becomes more philosophical.

As philosophy understands ethics, it regards it supreme in a way that it does not make it sit on a pedestal unquestioned, but it focuses on it by questioning it, critiquing it and thus reforming it. In the same manner when this work looks at the question and concerns mentioned above it does not just aim to answer them or define them, rather it takes a speculative approach towards them and tries to look at the problem thus in that regard the work not only has Inductive, Exploratory and Open ended methods but it also has a brief set data attached so that we can have a clear picture of politics, power and ethics.

Moreover, the work does not only contributes only in the theoretical manner but, since it is done in the field of socio-political philosophy it has the potential to reach out the society and

politics in power and can try to bring positive changes in the society. Changes that are envisioned here are not only limited to a particular sector or a particular generation, rather it aims to bring changes in all the spheres of society. And these aims can of course take time to accomplish themselves but still the already laid down Gandhian pathways are sure a help.

Therefore, this work is relevant from the context of philosophy as well as it has the capacity that can bring out the lost ethical values from politics so this tells us that the work can also help us in fields other than philosophy too. Furthermore, it will try to give us a new vision about political ethics and will define the significance of political ethics in order to maintain peace.

CHAPTER 1

POLITICAL THOUGHTS OF MAJOR POLITICAL THINKERS

Politics is the most general topic that is addressed by societies. It is of interest for the most intellectual crowd of the society but not only that it is a concern for a layman as well. This basically tells us that politics is not a job performed only by elite people. It therefore becomes important to clarify that this field have in addition a lot more than what a politician do, it is more than the activities performed in government sectors, parliaments, etc. It basically comprises of all the societal activities which affects the citizens of that society. Politics thus is present in each and every nerve of the society.

It will be right on my part to assert that every citizen without any exception of a nation either by consent or without consent takes part in some kind of political activity. And thus, in a way we can say, when one says I am apolitical because I am not concerned as I do not want to make or have any political opinion is itself a political opinion. Thus, it would be right to say that not only politics has its footprints on our lives but that our everyday life itself have political consequences embedded in it. So, if it is considered by many an evil, in that regard, politics is the necessary evil.

The common mistake that all of us do is that even being a part of politics we try to assert that we are not a part of the system, and we regard it as only the work of a politician. In saying that what we really miss out is that politics being an intricate system comprises of so many issues and systems in it. Not only the issue of unemployment, poverty, rights are taken care in here but also the maintenance of society ranging from smaller bits (like improvement in park by establishing open gyms, etc) to larger area like institutions, constructions, etc, are also parts of politics. Therefore, it is not particular to any one sphere, it is an activity taking place everywhere.

But why is it necessary to talk about politics at all? Why from such a long time, many scholars like, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli and so on have given significant amount of time in explaining what politics is? or what is the importance of politics? and how it should be done?

Well one among the chief reasons could be that it is politics only which works as a tonic to kill all the germs of disputes in a society. It does not always solve the problem, but it helps us to deal with the how and why of the problem. This is the reason for me to always believe that politics always had its roots in philosophy. It therefore helps us to change our stubborn standpoint about ourselves, the society around us and our relation to other people.

Whenever we look at our history, what we can see is that there is no unanimity in the thought of people. There are different set of people divided in different spheres, each sphere perhaps following a similar kind of thought. Some live without having concern about what is happening in the state of which they are a part. Some are there who can detect the flaws but does not find it important to talk about it. Some are disquiet about their surroundings, but their desires of input are always left unnoticed. There are also available records which tells us that people have been restrained from raising their voices against the wrong in the society.

However, there are some critics whose charismatic writings have changed the usual course of thought of the society. They have brought a whole-together new system of opinion which gave new perspective to many organisations. There are many thinkers, to name a few are, Plato, Aristotle, Karl Marx and Rousseau. Their thought process still continues to affect a lot many philosophers and their theories still works practically in the society.

It is therefore evident that one of the most common activities that human perform is politics, but since its area of influence is extensive it becomes one of the hardest thing to define politics through a single definition. This is the reason why politics has been defined in different ways by different scholars.

While looking at the description of politics by an eminent Greek philosopher Plato. It is evident through his works that though he has not talked about politics in a strict sense, neither he had made any attempt to define politics, but in his work Republic, he has emphasised on a particular virtue called Justice. It seems that Plato never wanted to leave out the conception of morality from his philosophy. This is evident because he regarded justice as a quality. This quality of human beings enabled them to understand the need of political state so that justice could be ensured and preserved in the society.

Justice therefore brings humans close to each other, it helps them to form bonds, it of course is a virtue, but it goes even beyond that for Plato as this principle not only make an individual good but also makes them social.

Further whenever we read Plato it becomes important for us to notice that he has mentioned the significance of the fact that Politics need proficiency. For him, in political rulers must not be any ordinary person of a state rather he must be edified extensively. It must be kept in mind that rulers must not be a resultant of accident.

A general point of view that we have of Plato is that throughout his life he was zealous about idealism only. But it is important for us to notice that Plato is not politically naïve. Though he is cynical about human beings he still maintained in his works that having a solitary life for human beings is implausible. And thus, if we look at the characteristics of a good political society, we can see him envisioning a political society which has virtues embedded in it. Another way of saying it could be that, for him a society where people have an authority over their things, where they can openly say that this belongs to me, where virtues like justice, wisdom, moderation and courage are paramount, only that society can be regarded as a good political society.¹

While talking about what politics it becomes significant to talk about Aristotle. He is regarded as one of the most influential personality who has touched almost all the areas of philosophy, science and his contributions are in even poetry and theatre as well. He is further marked as the first on who talked about politics not in an idealistic sense, but he theorised about it through his observations. As Ulfa nur wilda says, “Aristotle can be regarded as the first to introduce the world through his observations about human politics and he called *zoon politikon*.”²

But it is to note that for Aristotle politics and science were not a segregated field. For him politics was a science which actually played an essential role for the formation of a good society as in his most renowned work named as *Nicomachean ethics*, he says:

Knowledge of the good would be the concern of most authoritative science, the highest master science. And this is obviously the science of politics, because it lays down which of the sciences there should be in the cities, and which each class of the person should learn and up to what level. And we see that even the most honourable of faculties such as military science, domestic economy and rhetoric, comes under it. Since political science employs the other sciences, and also lays down the laws about what we should do and refrain from, its ends will

¹ Korab-karpowicz, W.J., *Plato: Political Philosophy*.

² Wilda, Ulfa Nur, *Definition of Politics According to Experts*.

include the ends of the others, and therefore will be the human good.(Aristotle
4)

Since, Aristotle have also given extensive contribution to ethics and as virtue is paramount in his philosophy, he believed that it is the path of virtue only that can necessarily help a person to lead and live a happy life. It is to note that political acts must always exist in confirmation to virtues. His conception basically tries to tell us is that politics does not have an ideal of togetherness or amity of its people as a goal rather it aims to make sure that noble actions are taking place. So, therefore a politically virtuous person would be the one who contributes the most to the society. Wealth, freedom, dignity in birth, does not help anyone to surpass other. To the question, how to make a person understand virtue? How to make him/her good? The answer given is education. Education was of foremost importance to him. When Foster in his work explains the political position that Aristotle had, he says that according to Aristotle, “The state should be the school of the citizens.”³ Further it is to notice that ethics and politics are not two different spheres for him. Politics has to go in hands with ethics according to him. As through his observations he saw humans forming groups, he just wanted to find the purpose behind it. Since he believed in the conception of teleology, he remarked that it was natural disposition of humans to gather together.

Another important figure who have contributed in politics is Cicero, his political thought comprises of three elements which are related to each other:

Firstly, there should be a belief in natural law which entails that there is a perpetual law which is main. This law is ahead of all other laws and by other laws he majorly meant natural laws. Secondly, there must be equality, by equality he meant natural equality, here basically what cicero meant is that there must be an instant obedience to natural law. The state or political law is not mandatory to be followed, it does not absolutizes the state law on its citizens, but it is the natural law that one must always abide to. Thirdly, he maintains, the state as natural to man where a conception of universal commonwealth maintained by Cicero. For him different laws at different places is not the correct notion of state. An abstract and universalized law must be given to all the nations which is unchangeable and is true all the time.⁴

Another profound figure, who have contributed a larger part of his work in politics is Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli had a different personality as compared to other political figures.

³ Foster, Michael b., Masters of Political Thought, vol. 1, pp. 131-132.

⁴ Ibid, pp. 181-189.

Coming on to his philosophy on one hand it shows us the reality but on the other hand it takes us down to a road which is way too pessimistic. It is difficult to get the essence of his thought in one go. The character of his philosophy can be called as neither good nor bad.

If we look at Machiavelli's political philosophy what we can see is that it is extensively empirical. The reason for calling it empirical is because we can see that he has incorporated a lot of his own experiences and he tells us that these observations have taught him a lot about how the society works. So, this affairs of world that he has noticed helped him to construct maxims for the betterment of the state.

Power plays the central role in Machiavelli's philosophy. It is just the ownership and control of power that must be regarded as an end. So basically, the maxims that he has propounded does not comprise of any statements for the betterment of the society rather these maxims just pays attention on his conception of retention of control. His philosophy therefore concentrates on how the retention of power should be done and how it can be maintained for a longer period of time.⁵

To talk about Machiavelli makes it mandatory to talk about renaissance. Renaissance was the period which taught us the true meaning of our own intellect, it taught us the meaning of having a rational mind and the need to utilize it, it forced us to get ourselves out from the life in which we demand mercy from others, in which we fear from the almighty, it taught us to get ourselves out from the comfort zone in which we were laying from past so many year. It brought to us self-determination, self-assertion and helped us to throw away the burden of prosaic morality. Machiavelli can be called as the one to whom renaissance affected most uniquely. For him the old conception of moral order, notion of god did not had any significance. He believed that everyone must strive for fame, distinction, honour and reputation, as these and only these can be called as the best aspects of life.

Therefore, in the major sections of his work *The Prince* and *Discourses*, his aim was to signify the role of power. He stressed on the fact that power can get you what you desire, and this is the reason he always focused on the possession of power.

Machiavelli have further given sufficient concentration on the so-called important notion in politics called Virtue. This definition seems to be in two parts. As he had theistic surroundings where church use to play a major role, he saw that qualities regraded as virtuous were- courage,

⁵ Jones, W.T., *Masters of Political Thought*, vol. 2, pp. 24-25.

honesty, obedience to law and so on. With that Machiavelli was not satisfied as these virtues could not give us a hold onto power. So, he brings in the picture his own conception and regarded, cunning, deceit, and so on as virtuous. As he always focused on the end which is power the means never bothered him.⁶

To quote Machiavelli he has asserted that, “if a prince wants to maintain his position he cannot afford to keep promises, fulfil treatises, or tell the truth. Therefore lying, faithlessness, and dishonesty are all virtues.”⁷ This tells us that he had a unique way of looking at the state and politics.

Following is the gist of four maxims maintained by Machiavelli which he believed a prince must observe:

Firstly, he talks about a merciless utilization of force: a very cleverly constructed maxim, here basically he says that in order to be in power one must though have to maintain friendly relations, but it is the method of despoiling that a state must use. As he asserts that a ruler of a liberated state must always demolish it, if the ruler does not do this, he himself is shattering his own rule. Secondly, he guides that a prevalent view point running in a society must be utilized skilfully and cleverly: here it is to notice that he do not ask the prince to alienate himself from the state and be ruthless, rather he says that prince must be a part of everything of the society (be it religious as well). So, now everything that perhaps works in the approbation of religion must be used artfully in such a way that it helps the prince to build up his own course of things. Thirdly he asks the prince to take decisions confidently: hesitation does not have any place in Machiavelli’s philosophy, rather what he maintains is that one must always be robust in his acts. Mistakes are a part of life, but hesitation will be a hurdle that will never let you grow. So, what basically through this he demands from a prince is that he must act decisively and must have strength to move on even from the failures. Fourthly, he tells the significance of having a powerful defence force: since acting authoritatively plays an important role in his philosophy, he maintained that it was very essential to have a strong army, as only then a Prince will be confident enough to take decisions without hesitation.⁸

It is right to quote Jones here who have praised Machiavelli and has glorified his contributions, as he says:

⁶ Ibid, p. 42.

⁷ Machiavelli, Niccolò, *The Prince*.

⁸ Jones, W.T., *Masters of Political Thought*, vol. 2, p. 45.

Machiavelli thus is an excellent epitome of his times, his cool calculating cynicism his frank and undisguised naturalism, his extreme individualism, his pragmatism, his devotion to classical antiquity in his rejection of religion and of super natural sanctions in favour of a-here-and-now philosophy and hedonistic morality, in all these things he is the characteristic of the renaissance and to a very considerable extent of modern mind. But why Machiavelli is important in the history of political thought? The reason considered is that Machiavelli was the first exponent, as he is one of the clearest of power-politics. (Jones 50-51)

One of the least read and yet one of the most frequently mentioned political theorist is Jean Bodin. His philosophy basically comprises of a detailed conception of sovereignty.

For Bodin sovereignty has a complete and eternal potentiality for instructing a state. For him it was essential to define this term. It was sovereignty which made a state essentially different from all other kind of alliances, for him thus sovereignty was constant, it was permanent and lasting power.

One of the main concern in Bodin's philosophy is of justice. The one who just care about himself is not a true sovereign, one must be working for God and Justice and this virtue must always be abided by him. He must work for the interest of others and specifically in the interest of justice.

Bodin's theory is similar to that of Machiavelli's as they are in favour of protecting naturalistic theory of state. But Bodin parts his way when we see that he wanted men to be devoted towards religion in a way that they must realise the charm and glory of the nature.

It is truly said that an environment in which one grows is the major reason for his thought process. This particularly is true for Thomas Hobbes. His thought comprises of a lot of negative instances which he himself observed in a war situation taking place in England. As he saw worst cases there, he saw people being selfish and fighting only for themselves, brought him to a conclusion that one always works for his own benefit.

While having an insight into the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes, it is particularly mentioned by him that absolute monarchy is the only form which can be regarded as accurate form of government. This argument is basically found in his renowned work Leviathan. But a question at concern here would be why only absolute monarchy? In answer it can be said that

since Hobbes was too much influenced by his surroundings, he saw people as selfish creatures and to control them there is a need of a king who can keep a check on his subjects. He believed that only this kind of government could be consistent and right.⁹ His most read and appreciated book is Leviathan, and the pessimism that has hard struck Hobbes can be seen in this work of him. He has given a whole theory where we can see him telling us the significance of power and regarding humans as mean creatures. In the same vein of pessimism Hobbes have maintained that men can assert in groups or to each other that peace is honorable, and we must aim to achieve that, but the basic tendency in all of them is that they all have selfish urges, and somewhere all of them desire power.

So, now the conception of selfishness have affected Hobbes in such a way that he believes that even morality is also not a consequence of duty, as duty, goodness, etc are conceptions which are vague to him, and therefore it can be said that the sole reason for one to obey the law is for the sake of covenant. The contract is the only essentiality for one to follow the law, one does not have moral obligations attached. So basically, we ought to do it because it is for one's own benefit.¹⁰

Another important figure of modern era who still continues to influence the major political thought even today is John Locke. He maintained in his philosophy that, men are basically capable of governing themselves as they are fair, well-ordered, civil and societal.¹¹

This basically tells us that Locke always had a distinct point of view about the state. He clearly kept himself away from the cynicism of Hobbesian point of view about the nature of human beings. Moreover, the important point to mention here is that he had a really important conception about the state, which is called, the state of nature.

In Locke's conception of state men are not evil like in Hobbes. Rather for him, freedom, consent, etc are essential. You come and be a part of a covenant because of your own will, and because of the trust you have in the social contract which gives you assurance of saving your, life, liberty and property. Therefore, it is the sense of duty, consent and voluntary action, plays a significant part. So, basically all men are living in a society, there is no doubt that we all are a part of nature but what he necessarily maintains is that we are also members of a moral law as well. So, this law does not give any definitions of human actions rather it provides an ought

⁹ Ibid, p. 89.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 114.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 152.

for the human action. So, this kind of state provides harmony in our surroundings and because of these reasons Locke says, that to live without state is not at all possible for humans. Therefore, political life here for him does not benefit the ruler only rather his philosophy focuses on the citizens in a way that the foremost concern of the state is the benefit of its citizens.

Another important political personality who is worth mentioning is Rousseau. Rousseau's essential composition on politics is called, *The Social Contract*.

It is important for us to note that Rousseau was not just a usual human being who is trying to ameliorate the evils that he finds in the society rather his contributions to his surroundings were way more than that. He found that the conception of consent is not that straightforward as Locke has mentioned it, rather it has adhering complexities with it.

Rousseau came up with a different conception in his philosophy as he felt that though Locke's conception is praiseworthy but still there is a need of improvements required in it. This is the reason he came up with the conception of General will. The doctrine basically tells us the importance of unity and togetherness. It basically contradicts extreme individualism, division and isolation.¹² Furthermore it is significant to see that the conception of general will is vital and most fundamental to Rousseau's theory, reason being that his originality of thought comes only through this conception, moreover, it is his most historically significant and unique input to the field of political theory.¹³

For Rousseau, citizens are not alienated from the political organisation, they are rather an active part of them. According to him a political structure must be one in which citizens are actively present, they participate in an immediate manner. This thought that citizens must not remain indifferent rather they must intelligently participate in political activities makes his philosophy essentially unique from all other philosophies.

Moreover, like Locke, Rousseau also does not abide by the principle of force, according to him, force can bring no good results. Force threatens and this threat can work only for a period of time in the society. But it is the General Will which works with the conception of good and thus for him the focus is on General Will. But what is general will? General will comes into picture, when the citizens of a society agrees on a covenant and comes into it because they

¹² Ibid, p. 255.

¹³ Ibid, p. 318.

want to preserve themselves as individuals. As living individually is incomplete while coming into a contract they preserve themselves. So, the General will ensures that there is a common good in which all the citizens must come in and discover the greatest good.¹⁴ It is to note that General Will takes care not only of rationality but also the morality of its citizens.

But how will we form a General Will, when we will have a group of people who have a whole together different mindset, different backgrounds and different environments. How will we come on to consensus? The answer can be found in the noteworthy difference between General Will and Will of all.

Suppose we have a group of people who have various interests that disagree with each other. But if we take away all the interests that disagree what we are left with is General will. It is basically the aggregate of the difference which comes as a consequence when we take away the conflicting will of all the individuals. What then we will be left with is General will.¹⁵ Basically it will have differences but no disputes.

Another important political thinker is Jeremy Bentham. Though he have contributed widely in the field of political philosophy, his principle thought can be jotted down in one line which says, political norms must focus on norms which brings the greatest happiness for the greatest number. So, if in any case you are in dilemma, only that principle must be followed that tries to bring maximum happiness to the maximum number. His philosophy does not take means into consideration at all, rather his philosophy tries to achieve the end in which the focus is to abstain one from pain. The concern of minority is no concern at all. But it is to note that the beauty of Bentham's philosophy is that he do not talk about pleasure and pain in childish manner, rather he has done a deep observation about its magnitude and strength.

Further it is to note that Bentham's political thought have three requirements which must be taken into consideration: "It must be clear and precise; it must be the single and sufficient account of motivation; it must be applicable by means of moral calculus."¹⁶

The way he has dealt with his principle of utility and the way he has associated and gradually made his theory hedonistic tells us that he was way ahead of his time. The beauty in his philosophy is the way in which he has reduced all the problem to the problems of ways and

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 255.

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 270-275.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 373.

means. Imagining a state of Bentham is difficult as it might be a state where majority is perhaps happy, but it won't be a State of peace and happiness.

Another important political figure in the history whose theory have influenced a lot of people is John Stuart Mill. His contributions are huge to social and political theory and thus it becomes important to note that his qualitative contributions to theory of utility has brought a different kind of revolution whole together.

Mill was a meticulous thinker. He was way more mature in his thoughts as compared to his age. He was regarded as most influential philosopher and the rigorousness of thought can be seen in the way he have analysed and worked on the works of Bentham.

John then being the son of James Mill who was a companion of Jeremy Bentham, was automatically a member of Benthamite school of thoughts. the principle that school of utilitarianism followed was that it believed that it is only pleasure that is pursued by all and everyone tries to abstain by pain. Furthermore, these two principles of pleasure and pain are essential, and they can be measured.¹⁷

Though Mill was a good student of his teachers he himself said that with the passage of time he spotted out a lot of flaws in Benthamite principle. Though, efforts can be seen in his work where he tries to defend Bentham's principle. But with that it is also equally true that he was not comfortable in rigidly adhering to this system. And thus, with the passage of time though he did not parted his way completely from his teachers, but he modified their principles in the best possible manner.

So, what have Mill basically done is that he has given a revolutionary refinement to the quantitative utilitarianism by adding the context of quality in it. The typical way of looking at happiness or pleasure or to be precise, hedonism cannot be only in terms of quantity but quality matters too. Through this conception of measuring the higher and lower pleasure brought a significant change in the school of utilitarianism and finally a culmination was given to the deteriorating Benthamite theory by Mill.¹⁸

Coming next, to a theory which brought revolution in the history, and even today it influences a lot of people. The theory is Marxism, named after its founder Karl Marx. Basically, it is a communist propaganda, and though the name to the theory given is Marxism, it is to note that

¹⁷ Lancaster, Lane W., Masters of Political Thought, Vol. 3, p. 112-113.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 113.

Engels is also a major contributor in this system of thought. Therefore, whenever to discuss Marx is to discuss Marx-Engels.

Joshua Muravchik talks about Marxism and says:

Marxism believed that the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle. Marx- Engels claimed that the immutable working of capitalism (a term largely, if not wholly of their invention) would lead to the reduction of society to two classes, an ever growing and increasingly impoverished proletariat and an ever shrinking and increasingly wealthy bourgeoisie. The dynamic would make revolution morally necessary and politically possible. It would also assure that the socialist revolution would be the final revolution.(Joshua 36)

They have made it clear that a revolution is mandatory, and this revolution has to throw away the existing set of believes and thus while reading them one more thing made itself clear is that war is necessary. The struggle they talk about is not a silent struggle, but it is a violent struggle. He asserted that it is only through this kind of struggle one can bring a desirable change in the society and perhaps to one own self and it is to note that this struggle is not of a day or a week, but it can take a lifetime.

Whenever, one gives a theory what they majorly miss out are the consequences that their theory might bring out. A theory on paper is not worth if it does not have its use in the world out there, but again, what must be given major consideration is whether that theory brings out good in the society, or even if it has certain bad consequences, the ratio of that too must be taken into consideration. This is what is missing in Marx-Engels theory. Though it is masterpiece, the focus on violent measures in bourgeois society has so many pessimistic results that it loses its virtue over the time. As the scale of violence differ from person to person, for me perhaps harsh words and humiliation in public is a violent act but for some other person, using a pistol to kill somebody is a violent act. Therefore, what we assert here is that the struggle of Marxism demands war. But a war that has no end.

While talking about Marxism it becomes important to talk about Marxism-Leninism which is regarded as a higher stage of Marxism, and thus it becomes important to consider a yet another higher stage of Marxism-Leninism which is, Marxism -Leninism-Maoism.

So, another significant mastermind that communist ideology had was Wladimir. I. Lenin. He did not had any own idea of sovereignty but just interpreted Marxist system of Communist Manifesto. The Marxist ideology was taken up further by Lenin in such a way that he begin his own kind of revolution which started in his home country Russia named as October Revolution. This revolution of course had its roots in Marxism, but it was no more theoretical. He rather applied it to the society extensively.¹⁹

As it is explained above that a theory has its worth if it can be applied to the world out there. The worth to Marxism was given by Lenin. He was the one who took it to a level ahead. Applying Marxist point of view in the society he found out that peacefully no one is going to leave what they have, a peaceful revolution thus cannot bring us anything, thus he asserted that we have to overthrow the ruling-class and for that the path of violent- actions and violent-revolutions are the only alternative.

Coming on to another Marxist admirer, an extensive urge of the retention of power can be seen in the philosophy of Mao. Mao criticized other kinds of government and maintained throughout in his theory that it is the power and just that power must be retained. The negativity in his thought process can be seen through the words where he intends to deceive innocent people by giving false promises. As he says that peace must always be inculcated in the political system, even slogans related to peace must be inculcated too but only for the sake of showing and saying. The reason for such a thought process is that it is the power that a political party must focus on. So, for that it is essential to gain confidence of people. And once the power comes in hand, the whole focus must be on the retention of power. Therefore slogans, promises are meant to gain the trust of the people, there is no requirement to abide by them, he says.²⁰

Further it can be said that for Mao a revolution can be done properly and will be effective only when it is backed up with the power of army. Political power does not come with roses, but it comes with guns. As class struggle is done by the working class, he believed that they have to remove the powerful landlords, as they are regarded the paramount reason and cause of capitalism and exploitation of the labour class. A revolution which can forcefully remove the bourgeoisie require violence, thus through guns only the world can be changed.²¹

¹⁹ Sim, Philip, Differences Between Marxism and Leninism.

²⁰ Singh, Rustam, Violence and Marxism from Marx to Mao, p. 29.

²¹ Ibid, p. 29.

Then there are some important Indian political thinkers as well who have contributed a huge amount of works in the field of politics.

While talking about the Indian philosophers who have given noteworthy contributions to political theory it becomes mandatory here to mention Chanakya. He was popularly known by the name of Kautilya or Vishnugupta. If we trace the history back, not only of India but of the world, he can be regarded as among the first scholars who wrote and gave a whole political system. His political system Art of government defines the ends and means of the ruler. As Rao has mentioned about kautilya in his work where kautilya has asserted: “Strength is power, and happiness is the end. The possession of power and happiness makes a king superior to another, in a less degree inferior and in equal degree equal. Hence a king shall always endeavour to augment his power and elevate his happiness.”²²

He is considered to be the reason of the powerful reign of the Mauryan Dynasty. He was not a philosopher in a way that morality or ethics was not something that he worked on, of course we can see in many statements that he has talked about the well-being of the people of that state must be taken into consideration, but the priority was always to secure the king in power. He was well aware of the evils that surrounded a ruler and therefore in his philosophy one can see that the focus have always been on the end and not on the means. Moreover, he can be regarded as the earliest tacticians who did not focused for having a moral basics of power. The immorality and oppressive power that he theorised was extended to the society.

Though after Kautilya there have been a lot many Indian scholars who have contributed significantly in politics but because I have limited opportunity, I cannot mention all of their works thus I have taken only few thinkers, who I think are important from my research’s point of view.

The revival and reawakening came to India with Raja Ram Mohan Roy. His contributions are so significant that India will always be grateful to the philanthropical reforms he has brought to our society. He say that primitive values was embedded in Indian society in such a way that it was a causing degradation in the whole civilization. To revive that he stood up in the path of these feudal values and asserted that the only values that must be given attention to are liberty, equality and fraternity.

²² Rao, S. Venugopal, Power and Criminality: A Survey of Famous Crimes in Indian History, p. xvi.

He is the most influential thinker of modern India. If we trace the history, he can be regarded as the first who begun political movements. Raja worked throughout his life for the betterment of the society and as a consequence he formed a system popularly known as Brahmo Samaj. This system aimed in removing the feudal beliefs and concentrated in making a modern India. He worked not only for the freedom of the society as a whole but also focused on Individual freedom.²³

He is also known as a social reformer as he was the one who took a stand for the welfare of women by throwing away the horrible custom of sati. Raja's contributions are paramount for India. Though he has worked in lot many sphere to mention few here are: press, peasants, oppressed women and human rights.

Another important personality of India is Dada Bhai Naoroji. His contributions are present in a lot many spheres like, education, religion, etc. It is to note that he also did not supported the conception of power or brute force. He advocated the facts of liberalism where the chief conditions of good society rested on virtues of emotions, sentiments, etc. Moreover, Naoroji's conception shows us his sheer attachment with the conception of eternal moral force. He has maintained that a system can be formed through physical force, but it will fail in the longer run as it is morality only that is perpetual.²⁴

Another important figure in Indian political thought is Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Unlike other political thinkers his point of view was different as he was not in favour of amalgamation of social and political issues. Political progress must be a cautious phenomenon which must be unhurried. After this, social reformation will automatically come into picture. Patriotism can be seen in his works. This perhaps is the reason that he is regarded as a paramount figure in the Indian freedom struggle.²⁵

While looking into his political ideas, it is important to note that for him a perfection of society does not exist. A politically perfect society, like we have seen in the vision of Plato, Aristotle and Cicero does not exist for him. One more important feature in Tilak's political thought is the concept of swarajya. He regarded swarajya as Dharma, a home rule where significance was given to the perfection of self, control was required on the self, as it was believed that only through these achievements one can emancipate their right duty. The swarajya was not only

²³ Bhagwan, Vishnu, Indian Political Thinkers, p. 2.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 26.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 51.

limited to the spheres of political or moral, but it was spiritual as well. He focused on the inner freedom which can be achieved through contemplation.²⁶

The way Politics was perceived by Tilak, it shows us that he neither propagated idealism nor he was interested in a speculative approach. As rightly described by Dr. Verma, “Tilak’s philosophy is naturalism founded upon Democratic realism.”²⁷

Coming onto another profound figure Gopal Krishna Gokhale. He took a path of nationalism as through this he believed that one could reach, develop his personality. Nationalism thus lead to liberation in a way that it will help a man to evolve, morally, intellectually and physically Gokhale thus believed in unhurried development and in a rational progress.

When talking about Indian Political thought it becomes essential to mention M.N. Roy. As mentioned by Bhagwan in his work that Roy believed that science and rationality must be regarded as paramount, to quote Roy he said: “New humanism is cosmopolitan. A cosmopolitan commonwealth of spirituality free men would not be limited by the boundaries of national states. Which will gradually disappear under the impact of the 20th century renaissance of man”.²⁸ This tells us that Roy had a divergent way of looking at the society. He was very sceptical about the ways of Gandhi. Roy was not as such a scholar in a way that his philosophy does not seems to be providing any new notable thought rather what we can assert is that his works are busy in criticizing the usual ways in which the society operate. If we compare Roy to his preceding thinkers, it is very much evident that he was not a spiritualistic person rather he always associated himself to science.

Social revolution is significant for Roy, but he maintained in his works that a philosophical revolution must come prior to it, the reason that can be tracked out from this viewpoint is the relation that he saw in philosophy and science. He believed since philosophy edifies, it will help the society to understand the importance of rationality and thus liquidate religion.²⁹

Roy, but cannot be stated as an original thinker, reason being that throughout his life he was critiquing the prevalent point of views in the society. His voluminous contributions does not

²⁶ Ibid, p. 57.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 67.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 183.

²⁹ Nath, Ramendra, Manbendra Nath Roy.

entails any new set of ideas rather his work seems questioning the thoughts popular in politics and society.³⁰

The Marxists have influenced a lot many people not only in west, but it had its great spell on India as well. Since it had affected a lot many philosophers, J.P is one of them. As the philosophy of J.P is very extensive, and I have only limited opportunity of time therefore I have written down his major Ideas only.

Looking at the ideas of J.P. one can see his ultimate love for individual liberty. Though he has contributed to political philosophy in so many ways, for example, we can see his contribution in the cause for the betterment of democratic constitution, further he also calls a need for partyless democracy, where representative's focus must not be on the substance on his political party rather on the people who chose him as their leader. But above all his major contribution is of Total Revolution.

Being a Marxist, Jaya Prakash also said that a revolution is inevitable, in all the aspects of life. It is evident when one looks at his philosophy that he asserted that change is required in the society such that it affects the individuals and collective groups as well. He wanted to free the government from all kinds of problems such as corruption, nepotism etc. His revolution envisioned to work in three levels which are Political, economic and social.³¹ This basically tells us that J.P's concentration was always on a humanitarian cause. He focused on the small evil of the society but also envisioned to bring a proper revolution in the society.

These above accounts have made our assumption clear that throughout history everyone has taken keen interest in politics. Though only few voices have been heard and brought to us on paper, but still the whole civilization of humans affected politics and got affected by it too. This is the reason that from ancient times to today everyone has a perspective (good or bad) about it. These viewpoints helped us to understand that question like:

Who should rule? Why should we obey? etc are perennial questions, but the beauty is that the answers of these keep changing with the passage of time.

These questions further tell us that humans are really important element in order to understand a political system. Humans must be examined thoroughly as it will help us to understand how the whole institution works. When we will understand them, their mindset, we can

³⁰ Bhagwan, Vishnu, Indian Political Thinkers, p. 204.

³¹ Ibid, p. 339.

automatically get a clearer picture of the society which they affect and get affected by. It will help us to answer a lot of questions about the society, its political setup and its workings.³²

While looking at the description of various scholars about what politics is or what it should be, it becomes slightly evident that with the passage of time all the political scholars have misinterpreted what political ethics means in its true virtue. The inclusion of concepts of absolute monarchy, power politics, justification of the importance of divorce of power with morality has made the situation worse. Political ethics have been defined in such a way that it has lost its significance in today's time and thus we can totally relate conspiracy, lying, betraying as an inseparable part of politics. Political ethics thus accepts lying, it accepts betraying, accepts violence. Instead of analysing these notions critically political ethics seems justifying it, which loses the essence of ethics. Politics in contemporary time is seen in a negative way by general public as they can see that political ethics is not at all ethical.

One thing that contemporary world needs to know is that politics can be associated with ethical values, values such as of non-violence and truth, conception popularised by Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhi's way of thought can be predicted as the result of the influence of his family especially his parents. His father as he explained was a man who was truthful, brave and generous and mother was religious, saintly and loving. Another major influence was of the show he saw in his early days named as shavarana pitrabhakti nataka. Another play was on Harishchandra which affected him even more, the effects of that can be seen in the life of Gandhi where he regarded truth as unamendable. He has further mentioned a number of regrettable instances of his life (for e.g. case of stealing from his father, and so on). This tells us that he was not a perfect man, rather he was an ordinary man who through his experiments in his life has come up with morals and values so strong that they can help the society to transform and perhaps develop.

In the following chapter I will be explaining what the views of Gandhi on politics are. I will be explaining number of important concepts of Gandhian political philosophy.

³² Jones, Grace, A., Political Structure, p. 1.

CHAPTER 2

A GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVE ON POLITICS

A close study of Gandhi's life shows that, Gandhi was always destined to something great. He fought for the people whether it be the case of untouchability, rights, equality and so on. He stood up for what is right.

It is to note that Gandhi was not a politician, he never wanted to get into politics, but it was his deep affection for his people that he took a stand for people's rights. He did not had any office in any government, he led no terrorist group or any armies of rebels. He had no interest in doing politics, yet it becomes important for us to talk about Gandhi and his perspectives when we talk about politics, reason that his vision was to free India and his people from all the evils that surrounded them, this actually aroused millions of Indians, it shook the empire, therefore even though he did not enter into politics intentionally, he ended up being the most admired political thinker.

Since Gandhian thought is vast, and because of the limited opportunity of time this work will be dealing only with those aspects of Gandhian philosophy that have relevance in understanding Gandhian political thought.

Gandhi is seen as the one who was born in such a period where he have initially seen times in which war was fought with military force who had power in the shape of rifles to the time when war was fought with atomic bombs. He was born at the time when the world was ruled by power only. He had contemporaries like Tsar Nicholas, Lenin, Stalin, Adolph Hitler, Roosevelt, Mao and so on.³³ How can a person, who is surrounded by such a great force of power and control turned out to be a Mahatma? One reason could be that he was influenced by a lot of people who themselves had a very optimistic approach towards life, its problems and ways to solve them. As a person's historical background plays an essential role in forming his/her personality the optimism that surrounded Gandhi, whether it be in the form of his mother's eternal love and saintly nature or through influence of books of Tolstoy and Ruskin helped him a lot. It can be seen in Gandhian ideas that Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau, Emerson etc

³³ Sharp, Gene, Gandhi as a political strategist with essays on ethics and politics, p. xii.

had a really deep impact on him but with that even Indian philosophy have also changed his perception in a way that helped him to elevate his thoughts.³⁴

He further came across a bunch of people(theosophists) who got him acquainted to Gita. In his life, Gita has a profound impact and he asserts that it was a habit that he had of reading Gita every day. It helped him not only in understanding right code of conduct or morality but also helped him to take right decisions when in dilemma and it also helped him to get over the failures of life. The comfort that he found in reading Gita can be seen in the way he admires it and recommends it.³⁵ Thus, through his life history it can be clearly said that Gandhi primarily was not an original thinker, neither a political philosopher nor a political thinker rather he was a humanist. He was a religious man who took politics because of his love for human- beings.

When one begins to talk about Gandhi or his perspectives on politics it becomes a hard task to do so, the reason being that first of all there are abundance of available literature on the subject. As Dr. B.S. Sharma have provided us with the data which says, “the ministry of information, government of India alone is publishing the collected works which are likely to run into 60 or 70 volumes. Besides that, there is a vast number of books written by him and about him. In the latter category then there is a large number of books written by his devotees and admirers in glorification of Gandhi’s personality”³⁶. Another thing to note here is that it is not that easy to trace out Gandhi’s perspective on politics, as he have never made any interest in defining what it really is moreover since his environment changed a lot many times it resulted in thought statements which varied a lot and sometimes he even contradicted his own earlier statements.

A systematic approach was not what Gandhi did or even aimed in his life. It seems that he never even bothered to follow any kind of methodology to achieve what he desired to have. As we all know he was not a professional philosopher rather what we can say about him is that he believed in certain principles and throughout his life he tried to abide by them. But what also we must keep in our thoughts is that the way he performed his actions later on itself became a coherent holistic system. This is evident when we see that he did not regarded the spheres of social, economic, political and religious as different from each other rather these spheres were intertwined with each other in such a way that one has and will always influence the other. Gandhi had this kind of conception which tells us that though he did not aimed, but he ended

³⁴ Mani, Mahajan P and Bharati, K.S., Foundations of Gandhian thought, p. 4.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 3.

³⁶ Grover, Verinder Gandhi and politics in India, p. 9.

up creating a cohesive system. So, even though he never aimed in forming a political system or philosophy, it still resulted in a political system so strong that even today it influences a lot of political propagandas. The beauty lies in the fact that his philosophy bring revolution with the conception of truth and non-violence.

Further it is to notice that Gandhi has devoted his whole life in the betterment of the society. His works can be seen as an amalgamation of so many thoughts in relation to welfare service, etc to the society. He believed that the problem that come to us are majorly because we think in strict, particular sense. It is our partiality towards our own self and the society which in longer run affects us adversely. It is the universality in the thought that was advocated by him. He always aimed towards the welfare of all and recommended that everyone must pursue this thought only.

For him life sometimes had a tint of idealism and it sometimes had a tint of existentialism. This kind of interpretation that he had for life can be easily traced out from the deep effects of religion on him. It was this kind of religious impact that made Gandhi who he was.

The personality of Gandhi is so unique as when we analyse him it seems like we cannot categorise him under one personality. He cannot be called as a sage, neither he falls entirely in the category of saint nor he can be labelled as a political leader or a statesman, but he had the qualities of all of these personalities which made him an extensively influential person who enhanced and upgraded the whole political world.³⁷

One can easily see the embedded footprints of religion on Gandhi's heart and in Gandhian thought. For him, one must always follow a religion, and here it is to notice that by religion he did not meant only Hinduism. One can find peace in Islam, other might find tranquillity in Christianity. But what his emphasis was on, was that religion brings a harmony between thought and action. He believed that the piousness of religion could bring more satisfaction to human beings than anything else. Further it is to note that he emphasised on the conceptions of love and truth and nonviolence in such a way that he believed that these are essential to human beings in order to have a virtuous and peaceful lives.³⁸

As we have already asserted that he does not fall in category of politician, neither in the category of a philosopher, but here it is important to note that though he followed religion in a

³⁷ Ibid, pp. 83-85.

³⁸ Ibid, pp. 83-85.

very strict manner he was not even a theologian. The reason being that his thought does not have a flow or a method, they are scattered but of course they are firm too.

The essential aspects of his thought are truth and non-violence. But a thorough study of his philosophy tells us that he used to be more particular about the conception of truth. And this can be seen, as his autobiography is also named as *The Story of my experiments of truth*. In that he has mentioned several instances from which he had learned many righteous and worthy things about life. His quality of learning from his own flaws made him the Gandhi we know today. The impact of truth was extensive on him that he changed his initial statement God is Truth to Truth is God. He dreamt of a nation where everyone abode to this principle, he wanted everyone to realise the importance of truth. He also maintained that following this path is not a child's play rather it's a path for the courageous.

Non-violence is another principle which plays an important role in Gandhian philosophy. One important incident that happened in South Africa. Gandhi, neither had a popular family background nor he had a strong political background. He did not become a paramount figure in one day but the incidents that he went through made him the person we know today. One incident that is worth mentioning is the incident that happened in South Africa. When he sailed for South Africa in 1893, he saw the racial differences in the society. His acquaintance with the oppressing atmosphere, where Indians were regarded slaves disturbed him a lot. Though he read a lot of books from which he learned the importance of non-violence, he never saw the need of applying it in practice. In 1893 when he was going to Pretoria from Durban, he was forcefully removed from the first class. Even after showing his ticket the train inspector he was detrained at Maritzburg railway station. It was cold and dark, and that winter night made him realize that he need to take a stand against the racial discrimination. From that moment on Gandhi started to live a life for the people. He realized that he had a voice that can bring a change and he used it in order to bring a social change.³⁹ Fischer has rightly pointed out: "on that bitter night at Maritzburg, the germ of social protest was born in Gandhi."

Gandhi further asserted that all the religions of the entire world has in its groundwork a universal ethical norm, and because all of them followed a similar kind of ethical principle even though they have different description. All religions basically talks about ethical codes which must be abided by human beings as these codes of conduct are made by a supernatural

³⁹ Gandhi, M.K., *The Story Of My Experiments With Truth*, pp. 108-111.

entity called the God.⁴⁰ As we have seen that religion plays an extensive role in his life as he believed that only that ideal of life is significant which has religious implications in it. But what makes him unique is that he showed us that these ideals are not merely other-worldly rather they can bring out the best possible nature of ours. This is the reason why Gandhi is called a practical idealist. He taught us a different way to look at religion, morality and life.

Gandhi never intended to give any theory for the development of the society, his aim was not to answer us Why class struggle happens? or What leads to capitalism? etc. what he aimed was to bring a revival in the society and with that so-called social evils must be removed. And to remove these social evils he has certain norms which are required to be followed by the individuals. These norms which are paramount in his philosophy are Truth and Non-violence.⁴¹

A Gandhian perspective envisions a society which is the result of a harmonious covenant between the citizens of the society. The concepts of morality and ethics must not be seen differently rather they are intertwined with each other. He asserted that everyone must try to abstain from the evil and brutish desires. The type of change he is talking about cannot be brought only by focusing on a certain group rather this change must be brought in every individual present in each and every group. Gandhian philosophy has many set of norms which can help to form a system which is more tolerant towards each other. The conception of tolerance can be seen in his idea of self-sacrifice. It is the idea of giving up for the sake of other which can help a society to become more tolerant and more harmonious. Non- violence with self- sacrifice are norms which must exist in the roots of a society as these ideals make a society stronger over a period of time.⁴² Furthermore, the thought that follows is that the individual good and social good does not resist one another. It is the love, companionship and so on through which the citizens of the society can regulate the society in the best possible manner. Virtues like these helps us to abstain ourselves from brutish desires those which are present in animals and these certainly makes us who we really are i.e., humans. And thus, it can be clearly concluded that society in this way will automatically flourish as its citizen will be having peace in their own good and societal considerations.

Sitting idle is not appreciated by Gandhian philosophy. As he himself believed in the virtue of hard work, he asserted that hard work must be done by the citizens of the society as it is this which makes us ahead of animals. By doing work you help, not only yourselves but also others.

⁴⁰ Grover, Verinder Gandhi and politics in India, p. 88.

⁴¹ Lal, Basant Kumar, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, pp. 138-140.

⁴² Ibid, pp. 138-140.

As we can see Gandhi's emphasis on work is very significant. The beauty of his thought comes out in the way he shows that no work is more significant or superior to other. This shows that equality among the citizens was paramount for him. So basically, what this perspective implies is that a cobbler's job deserves as much respect as the job of a teacher. This provides holistically a perspective, which can bring change in the society from the root level.

As everyone is fundamentally a part of a political system, Gandhi realised this, and his work seems to be an excellent consequence of such a thought. His focus was on the conception of morality and ethics, he thought that these must be inculcated with the political system, not only theoretically but in a practical manner. There are many who speak about Gandhi and morality one among them was Lal who founds Gandhi's political thought as extremely moral:

It is very clear that Gandhi's political views, in a sense, differ fundamentally from other political theories in so far as he makes even politics subordinate to ethics and religion. Usually politics is considered to be the game of the clever. Even deception, dishonesty, telling lies etc. are considered to be political achievements if they are resorted to skilfully. Gandhi tries to introduce morality in politics, and that he does by presupposing that even political activity is an aspect of the spiritual pattern that guides the world. (Lal 146)

What Gandhi has further taught the world is that of course we will be affected by evils, in a way that sometimes because of the circumstances we might do something immoral which actually was not done by an immoral purpose. Therefore, what he basically maintains is that man who performs immoral wicked actions is not essentially a wicked person. At that particular stage may be that person is suffering from something which forces him to do these wicked deeds. He thus wanted us to believe in the conceptions of goodness and in the conception of ethicalness.

The most exceptional and substantial contribution of Gandhi to our world is of satyagraha. It was not a theoretical conception, but it was his political weapon too. As it works with the notions of love and suffering, he tried to remove hate and ferocity from politics through this principle.⁴³ It is a movement that had and will always influence the world with its ultimately virtuous principle. Gandhi's this conception brought a revolution in such a way that it taught us to have our own rights and to fight for them without violence. When one goes through the

⁴³ Ibid, pp. 146.

principle of satyagraha it provides a mental satisfaction to the speculative intellect of man. But satyagraha loses its virtue if it remains only on a piece of paper or only in the speeches. It validates itself only when it comes into action. Its philosophy maintains a hypothetical position that takes the world to be abiding by the principle of truth. It basically asserts that untruth does not exist at all, so basically there is no competition in what will win as only truth exists, the destruction of it is not possible at all. This principle then has a persistent pursuit of truth.⁴⁴

Further a perspective that Gandhian ideology battles with is the claim that it has likeness with Marxism. But a thorough research tells us that in principle Gandhian philosophy is way more righteous as compared to Marxism. It does not focus on class rather it focuses on all classes. Individual suffering is the ideal followed.

As Gandhi himself have pointed out that, he is not teaching or giving the world any new ideals the conceptions of truth and non- violence that he has laid down are as old as hills. But still whenever we talk about these concepts Gandhi always comes first into our mind, reason could be that the way he have formed and articulated these principles so that they can be used in our everyday life is worth appreciating. This can be seen in the way he talked about various qualities to be possessed by a true satyagrahi. In the following lines I have mentioned the qualities that Gandhi said must be present in a satyagrahi.

A struggle for reform must always have truth and non-violence as its principle. These are the primary teachings of satyagraha. He says that there are certain qualities that a satyagrahi must have in him. Following is the list. A satyagrahi can either be a man or a women. I am using *he* only in anthropological sense.

A person having bad dispositions or rigid set of beliefs cannot be considered right for this category. He must be straight forward with his thoughts and unprejudiced. In this way only, satyagraha can be operated in a well manner.

Other virtues that must be existent in a satyagrahi are fearlessness and love. He must always abide by the principle of truth. And to follow the path of truth again is not a child's play. There will be difficulties, but a true satyagrahi must be always be ready for facing it with courage.

As mentioned above, path of truth is difficult what a satyagrahi must always be ready for the foregoing of his most precious thing or even perhaps foregoing of his life.

⁴⁴ Mani, Mahajan P and Bharati, K.S., Foundations of Gandhian thought, pp. 87-88.

Whatever be the achievements of a satyagrahi he must remain down to earth. Pride is not a quality of a satyagrahi since he is an honourable man following honourable task his earthly nature will help the movement of satyagraha to flourish.

Furthermore, humbleness and modesty are the basic requirements of a satyagrahi, humility thus is essential. Moreover, harsh words, insulting remarks are not at all accepted and a satyagrahi must abstain from all these. Truth thus must be spoken but the way in which it must be spoken is of sheer significance. Thus, non- violence must be embedded in the behaviour. Moreover, he must not get panic in difficult situations but must be confident. The strength in character is paramount.⁴⁵

A satyagrahi must not be immoral or a liar, implies that whatever he says must be dealt by his acts as well. Otherwise the whole satyagraha will go in vain.

Often the practice of fasting must be taken up by a satyagrahi, as it keep him calm and patience will be brought to him. This is one of the major requirements if a satyagrahi. But with that it is also mentioned that some additional virtues must be followed by him viz. non-stealing, contentment, celibacy etc.⁴⁶

Another major requirement is that he must have tolerance in him. As it is a struggle, if endurance is not there, it will be difficult to sustain a non-violent movement. This way of love requires patience and a satyagrahi must have mastery over that.

Further he must always be on time as, time is precious in struggle, there is not point of reaching a venue when nobody is there to listen to your demands, punctuality thus is the main requirement with many other.

A satyagrahi must have his belief in god. The path of faith and divinity will always help him to achieve the desired result. He might fail, but faith in god will give him hope. So, satyagraha in its principle has this notion, where believing in god is a requirement. It is thus believed that this moral force can bend even the greatest powers.⁴⁷

It has to be noticed that, Gandhian satyagraha has been a success because of the view that he had, that this simple technique of satyagraha can be used differently in different situations. And therefore, he talks about kinds of satyagraha.

⁴⁵ Lal, Basant Kumar, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, p. 118.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 118.

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 117-119.

Some of the prominent kinds of satyagraha that have been used not only by Gandhi or his followers but also by believers in other kinds of theory (viz, the communists) are: “Negotiation, Arbitration, Agitation and Demonstration, Economic boycott, Non- cooperation, Civil disobedience, Direct action, Fasting, Strike, Picketing, Dharna, Non-payment of taxes. etc.”⁴⁸

In the first chapter what we saw is that many philosophers focused only on the results of a particular movement. If they are good then the Means, however evil they may be, no attention is given to them. Well Gandhi was different from all of them. For him the path must be good only then the outcomes will be worthy. If the paths are cruel and immoral it doesn't matter how much the outcomes are good, they all will be in otiose. Further in the similar context Gandhi told us that it is a mistaken notion that way and the outcome are different. They both are exchangeable and are inseparable. To think that means and end are different is our foolishness. If we examine this closely it can be clearly seen that he was right and those who took them differently actually failed in understanding the true meaning of morality.

The conception of means and end was basically learned by him through the spiritual aspect. Since spirituality is paramount in Gandhian philosophy, for Gandhi essentially, spirituality and unity of everything is really important. He saw that an atheist cannot attain spirituality as an end and since spiritual ends are the only desired ends that humans have, these ends cannot be a resultant of profane means. Therefore, a good end has to be an effect of a good means. So, this tells us that if we see an end which is good it is worthy of calling as good if the means are good too.⁴⁹

The spell of *isms* have been so much on people that it was difficult for them to think out from these given structures. By *isms* what we mean are big movements that took place in the society like communism, and so on. A lot of work have been done on these concepts which brings to us the consequences which are too abrasive for the society. On the other hand, we have Gandhian conception of Sarvodaya. Derived basically from book *Unto This Last*, this book had an acute effect on Gandhi's thought. As a result, Gandhi took this conception and started to work on it. This conception basically advocates well-being of everybody. Also, it is based on the very basic conception of human values and it has the calibre to bring extensive changes in the society.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 120.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 123.

Vinoba took this ideology of Sarvodaya further and thus later brought it to the society in a way that it could be followed practically. The conception of sarvodaya has four techniques under it namely, bhoodan, sampatidan, gramdan, Jeevandan.

As the name itself suggests bhoo refers to land and dan refers to charity, so what we are doing here is that we are giving land in charity. Gandhi understood that the problem of land is because of the unequal distribution of land and with that the landlords were seen discriminating the labour not only physically but mentally as well. In order to solve this, he brought in this technique. So basically, he also saw the problem of communism, but his approach was unique, as he believed that through non- violence and positive encouragement, we can persuade the landlords to give up their surplus land to the people who are in need. This has to be done without demanding any compensation. In this way it lies in the criteria of charity and further in a way it also has a potential to bring economic and social change without violence⁵⁰

Coming onto the next concept, sampati means wealth and dan again is charity. So here we give our money to those who are in need, as inequality in wealth is one of the major reason for the inequality in a society. Sampatidan can bring a huge transition in the capitalistic arrangement of this society.

Gramdan being the third step in the inception of sarvodaya. as the name suggests that the entire village will be donated in charity. This movement aimed to have unity among the villagers. The change in the society was for sure brought but with that also the in the heart was also a resultant.

A dedicated life towards the Sarvodaya society is required. Before yourself you have to think about the society its people and give up your whole life for their welfare. This thought is basically comprised in the technique of Jeevandan.

When we are talking about Gandhian conceptions of peace-making techniques one thing that needs to be mentioned is his conception of disarmament. Disarmament as the name suggests refers to the giving up armaments. Which basically asserts that there must be no military, no attacks on others. Disarmament shows the importance of social, economic and political relations and thus tells us the inessentiality of having armies. Since a whole system can easily run on the conception of love and non- violence, the need of armaments are totally unneeded.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Mani, Mahajan P and Bharati, K.S., Foundations of Gandhian thought, pp. 67-73.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 102.

Being a champion of peace one thing that is evident is that he was against the conception of a country having an army. The reason being that military power, army, etc ensures that they are there in the country for the welfare of their country and thus it is protection of their country that is their major concern. It is to further notice that whenever we read Gandhi, what is to be understood is that whenever he was talking about nation, he use to talk about boundary-less nation, then this means that the whole world is our nation. Then the army is protecting whom? and the armies in war are killing whom? Are they not our people only? Is humanity has different races in it? Gandhi told us that since we all are the citizens of this world which is our family there is no need of armed forces. Moreover, since Gandhi believed that the universal principles must be the one which ensures peace, armament moves towards the way of war. War then threatens and takes away from us the harmony in which we always desire to live. His idea of disarmament was this in general, but he also leaves loops in it in way, as when he says that it is fine for some countries to have army. But with that he also says that only that country will receive universal respect, who will willingly leave out to have an army, only that country will be heroic and will be risen to a higher level. And in this way, he said that India should disarm itself. To quote Gandhi, he says, “peace will not come out of clash of arms but out of justice lived and done by unarmed nations in the face of odds.”⁵²

Further to understand a Gandhian conception totally we have to look at his idea of swaraj. His conception of non- violence, truth of course has the power to change the society, but they were incapable of forming a social order, which could bring peace and prosperity in the society and for that Gandhi brought a conception which could establish a social and political order which ensures an economic wellbeing. An ideal of self-rule which he named as swaraj.⁵³

If we get swaraj and then the few rich people take all the power in their hands, will it be fine? As even then the country still will be having self-rule in it. To this Gandhi will not agree as this. He did not envisioned that a country must be developed only so that it can be representable to the world out there, as this could be achieved but, by a population which has few rich and powerful people in it. Gandhi wanted the society to elevate and focus on the poor population as it has to be noted that swaraj is for all. So, it can be said here is that since it is for all, it belongs not only to one religion, one community, one gender, or to one class rather it belongs

⁵² Ibid, p. 107.

⁵³ Lal, Basant Kumar, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, p. 147.

to everyone. Swaraj helps the oppressed as it taught them to raise their voices, to fight non-violently for their rights.⁵⁴

Swaraj then basically helps us to understand that my freedom is not to be taken by others, rather it is mine. I must have the realization of it. The realization of anything is not possible without having accurate knowledge about it, and thus we must educate ourselves. The feeling of freedom is what swaraj basically ensures.

One another concept that is central to Gandhian political thought is his concept of swadeshi. Basically, it is a prerequisite to self-rule as self-rule can be achieved if we give importance to cottage industries, if we try to elevate them then our country can become stronger from inside. It basically teaches the importance of boosting our own resources having our own industries.⁵⁵ Having a quick overlook about the conception of swadeshi basically shows itself very negatively because it has words like abandonment, exclusion, etc associated with it. But a thorough study tells us that it does not abstain us from anything. To be precise this conception does not stop us from using foreign goods, but of course the priority of swadeshi is to safeguard its home-industries. It is a notion which says that first try to make yourself strong and then of course you can welcome others and make them strong too. All those foreign goods must be used which benefit us, but ban will be only on those goods which take away the consumers from cottage industries. As world is a nation, Gandhi never advocated that foreign goods must not be used because they are not from our country. Believing that this was his perspective is a misunderstood notion.

Swadeshi does not have a feeling of abhorrence in it, it accepts others in all possible manner. But self-preservation is also taken into consideration. Further it is to note that it is a broad liberal doctrine which has a vision in which it tries to help other countries as well. It keeps in mind that our neighbour might need our help and thus do not disregard their goods. If swadeshi was followed in a narrow sense, then it has a lot of limitations attached with it for example: medicines, as we know foreign countries develop new drugs in order to kill many dangerous diseases, now if swadeshi was implemented rigidly and not from Gandhian perspective then we could never access those drugs, even after knowing that they are beneficial to us. So, he understood this and thus his conceptions welcomed useful tools, technical instruments, medicines, etc. Since swadeshi aims in the development of the society it must have a broad and

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 147.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 155.

liberal approach. The ultimate end of Swadeshi, for Gandhi, is not mere economic development but spiritual achievement. Therefore, it remains as an important vow and a key concept in his philosophy. Swadeshi conveys the idea of belonging to one's country.

All the ideals that are mentioned above are worth appreciating. The reason is that we understood them, they have the potential in them to bring the change. The positivity in the approach is perceivable. But what about the people who do not understand these ideals? They cannot see any potentiality, positivity, etc because they lack the virtue of education which solely is responsible to understand these ideals. Moreover, not only for this education was important but it was important for the overall societal development.

It is to note that Gandhi was not an academician nor an educationist in the rigid sense of the term. But his views on education has embossed a serious and lasting outlook towards educations that could be of high value to Indian education system at all time. Gandhi's contribution in this regard could be considered as most important one to India for her social development. He had a broad outlook towards life as such and education in particular. He did not consider literacy as synonym to education. Moreover, for him education is not a part of school only you do not get educated or ascertain knowledge by sitting in a room where you are taught simple mathematics and science. Education is more than that. He taught us that education helps you to flourish not only mentally, but also physically and also spiritually. If these three fields are touched by education you can say that an all-round development is taking place, and thus it can be called the right kind of education. It shows that he was basically viewing education as a means for all-round human development. He held the view that the optimum enrichment and development of personality should be achieved through education.

While reading what becomes clear is that education holds a significant role in Gandhi's life, he believed that the transformation in the society can only be brought when a system places its emphasis on education. The society is going to buildout and reform only when it will have educated citizens bodies in it. The attitudes, the values are important for him and therefore he wanted everyone to understand them and work upon them. So basically, true education does not consist literacy, training, but in character building. Moreover, Gandhian education system teaches us that a person becomes elite with modest living and high thinking and not because they are so-called high born or has a strong family background. Real education teaches us this

and following this automatically help in the attainment of self-sufficient economy and morally efficient social order.⁵⁶

Through the above description of Gandhian approach towards politics tells us that he had altogether a different and optimistic approach in doing politics. He has accepted and mentioned the problems in the society, but it is also evident that he do not tell us to escape or avoid the evils rather he has laid down paths for us, so that we can tackle those evils and win over them. The next chapter will be dealing with the question of what has caused the misinterpretation of political ethics, and what has been the impact of pessimistic description of politics and optimistic explanations of evil in the politics, how these above-mentioned understanding have harmed the society and how could this be solved by a Gandhian way. Finally, the chapter will lay down the importance of political ethics and will redefine political ethics in a Gandhian way.

⁵⁶ Mani, Mahajan P and Bharati, K.S., Foundations of Gandhian thought, p. 188.

CHAPTER 3

SIGNIFICANCE OF POLITICAL ETHICS: REDEFINING THROUGH A GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVE

The kind of society in which we are living is the one where state fear each other and seek to gain power at each other's expense. It is to note that when I say society it does not aim to point particularly towards the Indian society rather it applies to the whole world, and in that context what I can assert is, we are the citizens of the world where the so-called stability is enhanced and ensured by nuclear weapons, military power, etc. And therefore, in today's world having security for its people is just a competition to exhibit one's own power.

The question then is how this field of applied ethics can be called ethical at all if it threatens others, if peace is derived from offensive strategies, whether it be in a form of military or nuclear weapons.

The ethics in politics seems deteriorating when one read phrases like "politics is a dirty river"⁵⁷ further there are other expressions as well, where it is held that if you enter politics your hands will get dirty, the question here can be asked is that what can be the reason for this misinterpretation of political ethics?

The answer perhaps can be found in the relation between, power and politics.

When we read Machiavelli, Walzer and so on we can see that these scholars in order to justify the evils of the society have done extensive amount of work, one example is: "the problem of dirty hands"⁵⁸ where they begins by taking extreme cases where lying becomes a mandatory thing but the problem is that a politician is not always in such a position when he can justify the end justifies the mean , they are forgetting that this could lead to a really hazardous results, as when to human beings you give the easy path of lying, they will never take the courageous but difficult path of truth.

The role of ethics is vital in politics, but as we have seen already that with the passage of time different scholars have defined and focused widely on what politics is or what politics should

⁵⁷ Harris, John, Power Matters, p. 256.

⁵⁸ Walzer, Michael, Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands.

be like and as a result the ethical aspect in politics went on missing, which leads us to ask questions like, Is politics ethical at all?

Many has claimed that armed forces are required so that we can secure our country and so that our people can live in peace. But, if we look at the cases of past fifty years, we can see that even though those countries which has the strongest armies, those which are considered to be the most powerful cannot be called as peaceful countries. Why did that happen? The people of such countries fear more than ever, why so? If military, armed forces ensures security then why did 9/11 happened? Why did 26/11 happened? This tells us that armed forces, guns and barrels as the measure of conflict resolution or peace maintenance are fragile measures.

A nuclear bomb can cause massive destruction by covering about 2500 square miles killing lakhs of lives. Moreover, the number of nuclear bombs countries holds in today's time have the potential to end a whole civilization. The achievements of science are worth appreciating on one hand and on the other hand it is evident that with the flourishing of science we can see the rise in the fatal destructions as well. Therefore, it can be seen that technology which revealed itself is a boon to our society is becoming bane day by day. This is one way which tells us that power destroys.

Another form of destruction can be seen in the way ruling groups behaved with the population. History has told us that among all the population throughout the world only the reigning groups can be seen involved in most of the criminal activities.⁵⁹ As we have already seen in first chapter how various philosophers and scholars have talked in the favour of giving absolute power to the kings or the leaders which can bring consensus in the society. A further brief account of such incidents tells us otherwise. I have below mentioned a fascinating and provocative monography by P.A Sorkin and Walter A. Lunden on the relationship between power and morality. They have shown us that the percentage of criminality is way too higher in the ruling groups as compared to the overall public. Though democracies has not brought a dramatic change but still it can be seen that number is comparatively low and the reason considered is the constraint that it has on the power.⁶⁰

From west they have given us the data of England, Turkey, France and Russia. While talking about English monarchs they told us that from William I to George IV (1066-1820) 40 percent of them were guilty of murder, with the advent of democracy, dramatic change can be seen in

⁵⁹ Hargopal, G., Gandhian world view, p. 8.

⁶⁰ Rao, Venugopal S., Power and Criminality: A survey of famous crimes in Indian history, p. ix.

the social order of England and thus there has been a remarkable decline of violence and criminality in the actions of kings. Further, if we look at Turkey, there were 34 sultans who came into power ranging from the period of 1290- 1922AD, of these 4 percent were guilty of murder. The earlier history of France also has a high rate of criminality among its rulers, as the data says that Merovingian dynasty and its reign shows brutal kills of its people. Russia then also shares the same kind of structure. It has somewhat more brutal structure as it has been mentioned that Muscovy period had a fashion of blinding and doing mutilation of beloved but dangerous relatives.⁶¹ To quote Sorokin and Lunden: “The percent of murders of relatives, friends and associates among the Kievan (Rurik) dynasty with its branches Volyn, Galicia, Suadal, Vladimir and Novgorod rulers was above rather than below some 25-30 percent.”⁶²

The same cruelty and brutality resulting from power was followed by all the countries and this is evident from the pages of historical surveys. The pattern that India followed was not different. Our history has the same structure of cruelty that was present in the west. They have mentioned Ajatsatru, Kalasoka, Nandas, Chandragupta Maurya, Asoka. It can be traced out that Ajatsatru was so mad for power that in order to take the empire from his father he imprisoned him and gave him so much of physical and mental pains that he dies later on. The power in the hands of Kalasoka dynasty was for a decent period of twenty-two years, then came Nandas. Nandas are regarded as the one who brought different changes in the society through violent actions, they were seen as having an unending struggle of power. This struggle incorporates a lots of violent actions like murder, kidnaps, etc. then came the one among the most powerful dynasty that the world has seen, the Mauryan dynasty. It was founded through a forceful upheaval of Nandas by Chandragupta Maurya. He did some ferocious crimes at his time and has known for loosing really less battles, being followed by Bindusara and Ashoka. Ashoka is also regarded as the most powerful emperor that the world has seen. He was also known for his violent acts in the early eight years of his reign. After that his son Kunala suffered from violent acts and the evidence are there which says that he was blinded out. Then came Kanava Dynasty which also shows high rates of violence embedded in it. It basically had four kings among them two of them were involved in brutal and fratricidal crimes⁶³. Sorokin and Lunden provides us with the following data: “India had three powerful dynasties which ruled India from about 545 B.C. to 31 B.C. during which forty rulers held sway. Of them, there is categorical evidence of guilt of the crime of murder in respect of at least nine. Leaving the

⁶¹ Ibid, pp. ix-xix.

⁶² Ibid, pp. ix-xix.

⁶³ Ibid, pp. ix-xix.

criminal activities of the puppet kings aside there is still 25% of cases which represents criminality.”⁶⁴

If we look at the fabulous Mughal empire, they ruled over India for almost two hundred and thirty-five years. But it ended practically in 1761. They used their power ruthlessly and it has been said that among seventeen, eleven were guilty of deceit and violence. They exercised power in the most extensive way which did not had any positive effect, neither on the society nor on themselves.⁶⁵ A remark then by Sorokin and Luden is helpful here as they have provided us with the brutal consequences that power can bring with it:

Thus, the majority of the monarchs belonging to one of the most illustrious dynasties which ruled India were murderers, the degree of criminality (nearly 70%) surpassing any group of section of society. In today's time destructive and sensational crimes at the cost of the community and innocent people have now become a sheet-anchor of the policies of certain groups struggling to assert themselves in the medley of power politics. Hi-jacking, instrumental violence and kidnaping in furtherance of political ends are some of the crimes that have added a new dimension to power- motivated criminality in which victims are those who have nothing to do with the political or ideological disputes. Prevention of such crimes have become difficult due to jurisdictional problems and divergent national interests. It is to note that, public attitudes which approve such brutal acts inspire and breed more violence and crime. (Rao xix)

It can thus be said that power has potential for criminality in it from time immemorial. Power is one of the prime reason that causes one to forget the ethical norms that they must follow in order to maintain harmony in the society, as a result the people or a person in power, starts to regard himself as supreme. This sometimes leads to madness as we have seen through the above records and sometimes leads to mass destruction. Acton has provided us with the conception that complete power has a lot of negative consequences attached with it, thus it has the potential to corrupt one absolutely.

So, should we remove power completely from politics? Well not necessarily, without power also it is not possible to perform actions in a political sphere, as power brings with it control which is also required to regulate a society. The point of consensus that can be made here will

⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. ix-xix.

⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. ix-xix.

be that, a ruler must have knowledge to utilize the power, he must know the ways to channelize it in such a way that it could bring positive changes in the society.

Further it is to notice that when here it is mentioned that power destructs, we are not generalizing it as a fact. As there are instances in history which shows that rulers or leaders have used their power in hand very admirably. They have made the best use of it and had brought real good changes in the society. People or rulers, who are seen misusing their power are majorly untrained rulers, who have been brought up in the environment where they were not taught the significance of ethics. Moreover, one does not starts to destruct immediately some responds to power positively while maximum responds to it negatively this tells us that their background and upbringing plays a major role. And it is on this the whole focus must be on. As Clarissa has noticed it and she has remarked, “one does not become criminal in a day”⁶⁶

Another problem that a society faces is that the powerful always coerce the powerless, they treat them with such a brutality, even the minimum resources are not given to them because they must not realise or even have the slightest taste of freedom. They have been conceived throughout history till today in such a way that they are taught to accept that they are the lesser ones among the population. They have been manipulated in such a way that they have gone to a position from where they do not even think about challenging the status quo of the society. Though above it is mentioned the power also helps to flourish, but it is very problematic to understand this ideal and thus we ask, how? Majority of the cases that have been brought to us shows that it oppresses the oppressed, it deteriorates the deteriorated. It helps only a marginal section of society and other sections always suffer.⁶⁷ Throughout history a lot of attempts have been made in order to understand the conception of crime, destruction. A lot of attempts have been made to understand how and why destructions happens in the society. Even the most strongest socio-political framework seems to suffer from these evils.

Let us now look into some other important questions of this work, Is politics ethical at all? this brings to us another question which is are politicians, rulers are morally worse than rest of us? there are many ways to answer this but the most prevalent way is, since they have to deal with a large number of cases so their lies and deceit will for sure have a context behind it and that must be taken into consideration before making any judgement. So, in that way what has been

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 166.

⁶⁷ Hayward, Clarissa Rile, De-facing power, p. 6.

asserted is that they for sure are ethical, but what has to be kept in mind is that ethics itself is seen from a different perspective.

Moreover, the other thing which is evident is that, with the passage of time what can be made out is that the focus of rulers shifted from people to themselves. They forgot the basic duties that they had towards the people they are ruling. It is to note that this is not applicable only to monarchies or aristocracies but also to democracies as well. They forgot that politics is not a game. It has the notion of power in it to regulate the society peacefully not to destruct it or make fool of people or oppress them.

Another point that can be made here is that with the passage of time all the political scholars have misinterpreted what political ethics means in its true virtue. The inclusion of concepts of absolute monarchy, power politics, justification of the importance of divorce of power with morality has made the situation worse. Political ethics have been justified in such a way that it has lost its significance in today's time and thus we can totally relate conspiracy, lying, betraying as an inseparable part of politics. Instead of analysing these notions critically political ethics seems justifying it, which loses the essence of ethics. Politics in contemporary time is seen in a negative way by general public as they can see that political ethics is not at all ethical.

It is evident that after Aristotelian period no thinker have given sufficient time to explain political ethics, even when they were talking about politics. With the passage of time one can see that politics have detached itself from ethics. It is important to see and analyse the effects of such detachment. It becomes important to ask ourselves that, is it accurate to have a notion which is all pervading in the very sphere of life to be unethical?

Hargopal has also made a comment and he tells us that ethics have never been a part of Indian politics, as Indian political system got segregated from it long back. Morality or ethical norms was not looked upon by Indian system as necessity. Rulers and leaders have learned well to justify the consequence of their action before performing it is not something they ever focused on.⁶⁸

It is very disheartening when one gets acquainted with the system of class system of India, the differences and segregation of human race has been done in such a way that it has gone deep down the roots of the whole system. Kosambi has made a remark on the class system of India and he asserts:

⁶⁸ Hargopal, G., Gandhian world view, p. 8.

In India instead of the class creating the state, it was almost the state that created the classes. It is not that the state created the classes in the strict sense but that only suggests the special place of the state in the society. In the normal course it is the classes that extract surplus from the toiling masses and support the state apparatus making the state instrument of the class. In India the state performed the indulged in extraction of surplus to support the classes. The Indian state, thus, has been the rallying point of the class or the classes. (Hargopal 10)

So, when we look at Kosambi's account and if go back to first chapter where the philosophy of Kautilya has been mentioned the thing that becomes evident is that India had to suffer the problem of class discrimination and further, an eradication of morality in total from socio-political order. As Chanakya who is regarded as the founder of Indian political thought himself always focused on embracing and forming a system which has a hierarchical and authoritarian order. This has further made a problem to the Indian system. As Indians never expected equality or morality from their leaders, or rulers, since they have lived under a system where hierarchy is embedded in such a manner that you cannot even question it this actually made the work of foreign rulers who invaded India very easy. Whether it be the reforms of Akbar or the Britishers who came after four to five hundred years of Mughal rule. One thing that never changed in India and its people was its affirmability with the social oppression or inequality.⁶⁹

The above accounts make it definite that power of course have the power to ruin everything in every possible manner. There is an immense need to understand power's importance, but with that what is important is its consequences of it must also be borne into the mind. It not only corrupts but it deteriorates the whole system and Gandhi understood that, this is the reason why he insisted that it is morality, moral ideals and ethical norms that must be considered paramount.

As it is mentioned that power sometimes have marginal positive effect it can be said that, the positive effect of the oppression done by power, actually brought a whole together new forms of revolution where people understood the true meaning of their lives. These kinds of revolutions has helped a lot in the historical shaping of the society. As a result of this all the people of the society started to give thoughts on the happenings in their surroundings, they

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 10.

started to question the society and evidences also shows that even great minds started to act in this sphere as well.

The function of state have been divided into two opposing schools of interpretation, first is where the state came in order to improve and help the human race to progress and second is where state became supreme and started to Coerce its people. Gandhi belonged to the second category.

As we have already seen that state, power, etc does not have any significance in Gandhi's life. He wanted that a society must be without these conceptions. There was also no requirement of defence as well. As in his conception the ideal of having an army or military forces or even police are foreign ideals and he believed that if we will have such a kind of society then our society will not able to come over the British or some foreign power.⁷⁰ A self-regulatory society was envisioned by him. In such a society citizens will be able to have consensus in their own way. Such a society does not require any external authority which can take decisions for them. He thus, wanted India to become a self-regulatory, self-sufficient, its own master kind of country.

Gandhi and Marx both had an ideal for bringing the change in the society by elevation the people who are poor, but it is to notice that the Gandhian state and civil society is different in totality from that of western liberal kind. Gandhi aimed in bringing change in the social order by elevating the lowers sections of the society by basically telling and educating everyone on the importance of ethics. His system aims to incorporate ethics in each and every field and thus making a society a better place to live. Like Marx he also believed that revolution is required but unlike him he said that we can revolute without violence. Moreover, he never focused on material gratification as he believed that there is enough in the nature that it can fulfil our needs but satisfaction for greed can never accomplished.⁷¹

One can trace complete moral nihilism if we advocate the divorce power from morality. We have pragmatic philosophers who asserted that a strong state is that in which ruler does have the baggage of ethical norms on his head. As we have already seen this includes such famous personalities like Kautilya in India, Mao and Lenin in china, Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes and so on from the west. As we have seen in our first chapter that most of them defended ruler's freedom from moral restrictions. Raising a leader to a supreme level is acceptable but blindly

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 5.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 6.

believing that whatever he does is right, this is a mistaken notion. Such a kind of conception can lead to diminishing of the thin line between the right and the wrong, the illicit and the guiltless, the good and the evil, etc. This trend can lead to catastrophic events.

As we have already seen in second chapter that Gandhian politics is extremely ethical, reason being the unique amalgamation of various techniques that he used were built upon the values of non- violence, truth and love.

If we take the Gandhian principles from the viewpoints of citizens, it teaches us that the methods of resistance must be properly followed as they are the reason for the entailment of the result and thus is very important. On the other hand, if we look at what his system teaches us about ruler or a leader or in general about a person is that however cruel, proud he may be a change of heart is possible through the method of love. Further what his system teaches to a ruler or a leader is that he must be humble and kind and follower of the notions of truth and non-violence.

It is to be noted that this paper is not attempting to defend or deny the experiments that Gandhi did with vegetarianism, control of sexual urges, health cures, etc, but these were hardly his important contributions and their non- observance or rejection will not take anything away from his most important gift, the strategy of non-violent action.

Everyone throughout history was in support of the fact that revolution is necessary. Revolution is an integral part of a society which helps it to grow. It helps a society to incorporate new ideas and to enlarge its vision. Even great minds like Einstein believed that a revolution is inevitable. But does a revolution requires violence? or Is it necessary to have war in order to prevent war? Gandhi's answer to both the questions will be, No. It makes no sense to have war in order to prevent war.

He was the one who showed us a pathway where revolutions, protests, fights for rights and other movements can take place without having violence in it. A revolution which tries to preserve the people and their rights must be learned by women. A revolution does not need destructive power, rather its analysis must be availability of shelter, food and clothing for all, it do not divide rather it unites. In this way, he aimed in having a revolution which has the potential to build the future and he wanted that society must abstain itself from tools and technology, which can annihilate the past, present and future.⁷²

⁷² Krolick, Sanford and Canon, Betly, Gandhi and the Postmodern Age: Issues in War and Peace, p. ix.

Sorrow, grief, failures, etc are a part of life one must not run away from them rather learn from them. Gandhi recommended Gita to the whole society because he believed that this book was not the property of one religion rather it's an ethical code of conduct which is for the whole human race. He believed that Gita has the potential to help the defeated, it can release the oppressed, and give courage to the failed. This perhaps is the reason that Gandhi himself never got suffocated under the burden of his thoughts even when things did not worked out for him. This bit of information is sufficient to know that Gandhi was not a man of perfection, neither god, nor a theorist rather he was a normal human being who had faith in certain things which were worth appreciating and certain other things on which important questions can be raised.⁷³ No further discussion have been mentioned about Gita in this work as it is irrelevant from the point of view of building a socio- economic model for India on Gandhian principles. It is certainly relevant only for those who wants to go beyond that.

The problem that can be raised here is that even if we have a political system, that is ethical, still there exists a possibility to a very larger extent that still politicians or public in general will opt the paths of lies, violence, betrayals etc, because for getting the work done people often want shortcuts or robust pathways which can bring about the results quickly. How can we change the mind of a well grown man, when he himself do not intend to do so?

The answer could be found in Gandhi's emphasis on education. A well grown politician will not understand the importance of ethics in politics, he will not get that his small action, his corrupts acts can actually affect the society, expecting these from a stubborn minded man is our foolishness. Therefore, the emphasis must be on the younger generation, and how this emphasis will be done? Gandhi tells us that the change that we want in society can be brought only when the emphasis is on the education of the young generation.⁷⁴

Not only Gandhi but a lot of other scholars who deal with the conception of ethics as being an important part of politics talks about the importance of education. For example, Susan Mendus says, "I have talked about educating the children and people because I believe that in a society where there are good and intelligent citizens are there, there will be no need of evils that are included in politics."⁷⁵

⁷³ Sethi, J. D., Gandhi today, p. xvii.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 117.

⁷⁵ Mendus, Susan, Politics and Morality, p. 6.

Such an educated world will understand the need of ethics in the society. They will learn that truth is not something that can be bended or used for your own benefit rather it is a maxim, which will lose its significance if changed. And it is this quality of it, because of which the path of truth is difficult to follow and is not abided by all. But one must always try to follow it is what education teaches us. Not only this, educated crowd will understand the meaning of a virtuous life as it will bring to them, respect and honour.

Such a civilization will grow above Machiavelli's conception of the world which is evil. As he maintained that the world has bad people in it so the politicians who are controlling them must be clever and deceiving too. It will further not react to the working of Lenin and Mao, it will understand where Chankya went wrong. It will realize why Gandhi begin to work on the root cause. Thus, they will realize that Gandhi tried to change the people of the world which in effect changed the world gradually.

Thus, it is clear that this training of mind through education is extremely important in maintaining peace in the society. Though Gandhi use to talk about the basic kind of education which must help an individual to transform, here through this thesis I would like to suggest that this basic education should not be any kind of education, but it should comprise of the study of philosophy. Philosophy as we know through ancient times is the only subjects which talks about morality, this is the only subject which tells us the relevance of ethics in our lives. This subject should not be left like a subject for elite rather it must be brought to every individual. Thus, there is an utter need of introducing this subject in schools as the training of mind cannot be done in a day rather it is a gradual process which will take time.

Political ethics is important because it takes us to political obligation. Political obligation is a sub-species of moral obligation co-ordinate with other sub-species such as social and parental obligations, just as parental obligations are the moral obligations which we incur when we become parents and social obligations are the moral obligations that we have because we are the members of a society, so political obligations are the moral obligations that lie upon us because we are the citizens of state with laws. What is important to note here is that this slight difference can actually make a big change If we miss the distinction between the fact that political ethics and political obligation are just the sub-species of genus ethics and genus obligation. It seems that maximum of political scholars have missed this fact. As R.M. Hare has mentioned that:

To think that political obligations are not a sub-species of moral obligations, but a species of the genus obligation co-ordinate with moral obligation, might lead someone to do highly immoral acts in the name of political obligation conceived as overriding morality; but if we ask what such a political obligation could be, or what could be its source, the resulting darkness may persuade us that this way of using the terms is radically misconceived. (Hare 9)

So, does political ethics matter? To this question we can give a straightforward answer that it does matter and in today's time it matters more than ever. What political ethics teaches us is that there must be no desire for a perfect and greatest kind of political system. It teaches to accept the flaws of the society and it showcase many pathways so that we can learn from those, improve ourselves perhaps others and become finer day by day. It is political ethics only which can regulate power in the best possible manner, it ensures that power must have limitations and most importantly this field of applied ethics ensures a fair treatment of all the people.

The policies, political programmes etc will be taken and made by political parties, and it is normal to raise concern against it, political ethics motivates these concerns and questions. Moreover, it works not only in the favour of humans only but since it's a principle applied to the society it works holistically. Know-how is important for today's technocratic society, but political ethics teaches us that it is not sufficient as values must be considered the most essential, and all the works in the society must be done in accordance to these values. Ethics in politics ensures a trust and confidence in the society which further ensures the harmony in the society.⁷⁶

The negotiability in political ethics is the reason that we find it one step ahead to human rights. The open-ended quality of this principle ensures that each and every concern can be included and thought about as it does have any rigid ethical ground like human rights. Its nature is its tendency to understand others perspective. Constantly being sceptical, questioning is always a political advantage, and this supported and promoted by political ethics.

It is difficult to find one person in the crowd of youth who says that he wants to become a politician. Reason being that the perception we have about it in our mind about it is very negative and the way it have been brought to us shows that this field has weak ethical grounds, which of course is true. But should we run away from it? Or abandon it because it

⁷⁶ Girardin, Benoit, *Ethics in Politics: Why it matters more than ever and How it can make a difference*, pp. 156-159.

require a lot of work for its betterment. Well no, we must stand up and strive for the betterment of this field because it affects us directly, we must strive to bring back the ethical notion in it which is now majorly missing. This is important because, only through this field we understood that political ethics works on the values that ensure societal harmony and stability, it lets the citizens of the state to critique the argument and not the person. Therefore, it entails political maturity which is extensively missing in our society. Moreover, it will decrease the muscle power, exploitation, partiality, etc and thus can eliminate the label of dirty from politics.

Though Gandhi have not used the term political ethics as such it is to note that it is his political thought that is regarded as the most ethical one, as Martin Luther King, Jr. says:

The intellectual and moral satisfaction that I failed to gain from the utilitarianism of Bentham and mill, the revolutionary methods of Marx and Lenin, the social contracts theory of Hobbes, the “back to nature” optimism of Rousseau and superman philosophy of Nietzsche, I found in the non- violent resistance philosophy of Gandhi. I came to feel that this was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. (King, Jr.)

It is through the attempt of redefining political ethics in a Gandhian way, takes us to the fact that in politics, Gandhi emphasised on ethical considerations, and thus his biggest contribution can be talked about which can be seen in the field of peace studies. The world looks at Gandhi as a proponent of peace. But Gandhi actually never worked in the area of peace though he spoke about it but he did not worked in that area rather he always tried to figure out non-violent ways in order to formulate a policy of conflict resolution. His major contributions are in this field only.⁷⁷ Conflict again like revolution helps a society to grow. It provides a dialectic in the society which ensures that a society is not only one stream, rather it has people in it who think otherwise. Having differences in thoughts is paramount, questioning what is already existing is significant. But sometimes when these conflicts grow to a larger scale, they become problematic. But the beauty of Gandhian thought is that it does not work on the immediate objections and problems of the conflict rather it goes to the root of the cause of the conflict. There are two techniques that can be used in order fix these conflicts , these major two ways in

⁷⁷ Krolick, Sanford and Canon, Betly, Gandhi and the Postmodern Age: Issues in War and Peace, p. 21.

which it can be done are either violent way or non-violent way. We are here to focus on the latter one.

A Gandhian way will always be helpful as it is through his conception of satyagraha, we have learned that everything can be fixed with peace and harmony. There were many who gave viewpoints on this context but, Gandhi gave us directions so that the principle does not remain restrained to words and speeches, but it can be brought into actions.⁷⁸

Gandhi had the firm belief that human beings were basically good, and humanity essentially had a nonviolent nature. As he says, every one of us is a mixture of good and evil. The difference that there is between human beings is a difference of degree. Gandhi considers it violent to classify human beings as inferior or dehumanise them. He wrote in Harijan; Not to believe in the possibility of peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature. Methods hitherto have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking. (Gullapalli 72)

It is to note that each and every ideal of Gandhi has the potential to bring change in the society, a revolution that necessarily works on the non-violent principles shows that in a society the betterment can be asked of, but the measures taken up need not be fierce. When we look at politics from a Gandhian standpoint it seems to us completely ethical. And it shows us that these ethical principles must not be amended but must be followed even if it brings hardships with them.

Is it possible that satyagraha will always win? Will it always bring the desired results? Not necessarily. It is the only movement, which teaches us, it brings differences in thoughts into unity in such a way that we gain a lot in the movement. It will not always bring desired results, reason being this process is slow and we are impatient. But one thing that must be noted is that, even satyagraha loses, unlike other movements, here it is only the movement that loses, but the humanity is always preserved. This is true for every principle and notions of Gandhi. Moreover, it is to note that absolute consistency has no place in life there can always be failures in life and ups and downs are a part of life, uniformity in principles and thoughts must be left to theoreticians and gods. Gandhi was not either of them, he never claimed to be one.⁷⁹ Thus it

⁷⁸ Gullapalli, Sailaja, *Gandhian Approach to Peace and Conflict Resolution*, p. 71.

⁷⁹ Krolick, Sanford and Canon, Betly, *Gandhi and the Postmodern Age: Issues in War and Peace*, p. 22.

can be clearly said that an understanding of Gandhi's perspective on politics can for sure ensure peace in the society.

CONCLUSION

Though political ethics is one of the most important field in ethics it is evident that it has lost its virtue because of the absurdities attached with it. The amendments according to one's own benefit is gone so high in this field that it has become difficult for us to even point one maxim of ethics in it, as nothing ethical stays in this field. There are no ethical standpoints incorporated in the field of politics, no tolerance at all, and the system is on the verge of becoming less secular day by day. From the issues and concerns that we have mentioned in the above three chapters and the answers the work has tried to find out what can be asserted here is that a Gandhian approach for sure will be a huge help to the major sections of the society who suffer the consequences of the political evils.

This work has optimism in it not because of the ends that it will bring to us, but because of the approach that it has taken have optimism in its very foundation. It comforts the failures but at the same time encourages the revolution. A revolution that non-violently changes and with that it also preserves. Moreover, through this work we can understand that anything is not bad in itself, but it is our understanding of it which makes it so. Power, for example is not a bane but its erroneous understanding, misuse can make it so. In this manner this work focuses on incorporation of philosophy in the education system as only then we can have and see the result that we are desiring for.

This work does not aims to glorify Gandhi, as it is also taken into consideration that his ethics even being truly optimistic does have a lot of flaws in it. Sometimes it reaches idealism of such a level that it becomes difficult for us to regard it practical at all. Moreover, his philosophy largely emphasis on looking at the other person with love and humility, but it seems that the work on your own self and on individuality is less. Moreover when he says that a change of heart can be done to every wrong-doer, one thing that becomes questionable is what about the criminals who themselves does not want to change, or if we bring another case of psychology, where criminality can be seen in an individual in a very young age, where his environment does not have any effect on him as such but it is the biological roots of his family which has such an effect or sometimes some people have criminal instincts from their childhood even though their environment does not have them. These questions and many like these can of course critique the position of this work. But still apart from these if we look at Gandhi's

position, he has no doubt laid principles which are so strong and will remain eternal because they aim at preserving the most important thing that we all have i.e., humanity.

Furthermore, politics if seen from a Gandhian perspective teaches us a lot. Since ethical values ensures harmony in the society, ethics in politics will for sure bring peace in the society. Political ethics must be present in every individual as this notion ensure and automatically preserve other values in the society.

As Roy has pointed out correctly “There is only one good which is comprehended by the whole world it is both the individual good and nations good. Such an explanations of political ethics which is general for all, it is an ideal to all the groups and can establish peace in the society not perhaps the perpetual peace of Kant but certainly a durable and salubrious peace.”⁸⁰ This is the thought that is maintained by Gandhi as well or we can say that this thought and many thoughts like these are actually propagated and encouraged initially by Gandhi only and after that the world realised its worth.

There is a need to realise the value of Gandhian explanation of politics and his thoughts on peace, truth and nonviolence. Political ethics still exists in the nature, but the only thing is that people need to see it in the right direction. A redefining of political ethics gives us a new perspective to look at politics. It is significant to look at it in a Gandhian way because it is the only way which can speak for values that transcends politics without disengaging the votary from politics.

⁸⁰ Roy, Ramshray, “what is peace”, *Introduction to peace and conflict resolution*, p. 12.

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