



## MAHATMA GANDHI AND GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN INDIA: AN EVALUATION

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**Abstract:** Mahatma Gandhi has given a significant contribution to grow the 'Nationalism' in India. In order to inculcate the spirit of 'Nationalism' within himself, an experience of stay in South Africa, has given rise to take initiate of the 'Nationalism spirit.' Subsequently, his views on politics, the truth, the 'Satyagrah' and secular views on religious faith have given rise to 'cementing force' to develop 'Nationalism' in India. The other views on women's right, decentralized democracy by empowering the Gram Panchayats, the rural development and the vision on 'Ram Rajaya' have cumulatively, have been proved conducive to grow the 'Nationalism' in India. The factors like Gandian philosophy on non-cooperative movement and the mode of boycotting the British discriminative policy against Indians, an active participation of the people, different strata of society have given rise to grow 'Nationalism' among the people, belonged to different strata of Indian societies, pressure groups and religious leaders of India.

**Keywords:** Nationalism, satyagrah, secular views, Ram Rajaya, British discriminative policy, religious leaders

### INTRODUCTION

Mahatama Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 at Porbander town in the Kathiawar district of Gujarat. His father, Karam Chand Gandhi was the 'Deewan of Rajkot Riasat'. At the age of thirteen, he got married with Kasturba. After his completion of his 'Legal studies,' he returned to India and started his 'Legal practice' at Rajkot in Gujarat. In the year 1893 A.D, he went to South Africa for arguing a case there and subsequently started his legal practice in South Africa. In South Africa, the *Apartheid Policy* of the British government against the aboriginals of African and the Indian residents of South Africa were facing the discriminative policy. They used to harass by the *British* for imposing the 'despotism' on the Indians. In order to protect their rights, Mahatama Gandhi set on 'Satyagraha' and subsequently succeeds to pursue the British Authority (Bipin Chandra, 1982). As a result, the Britishers have withdrawn the policy of discriminated behaviour against the NRIs living in South Africa.



They have also withdrawn the different '*modes of Insulting*' in the form of laws against the Indians residing in the South Africa. This great success of Mahatma Gandhi has boosted the image of Mahatma Gandhi and become a popular in India too. In the year 1914, Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa to India and developed the *anti-British environment* to fight against the British government. Subsequently, a spirit of '*Nationalism*' was developed in accordance with changing anti-British environment among the farmers, agricultural and Industrial labours, students and the people belonged to different strata of society. It has been observed that the 'Dalits' who have always been deprived with discriminated behaviour of the '*British*' government. The personality of Mahatma Gandhi has been developed a "*Demonstration effect*" on different segments of the society which has ultimately given rise to '*strengthen*' the '*Nationalism*' through national movement (Romila Thaper, 1977). In this context, Gandhi Ji has been proved a very conducive factor to develop non-cooperative movement during the period of 1920-22. And subsequently the movements like *non-co-operative movement* have been spurred by the associates of Mahatma Gandhi during early 40s, as a result it has tuned in to '*Jan Andolan*.' All these cumulatively given rise to develop the spirit of '*Nationalism*' among the people, belonged to different strata of society. In this context, a review of '*Nationalism*' has been evaluated in relation to its strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of this *perception*.

## **MAHATAMA GANDHI AND 'NATIONALISM' IN RELATION TO POLITICAL THOUGHTS**

In order to strengthen the perception of '*Nationalism*,' Mahatma Gandhi played a significant role to support the spirit of '*Nationalism*' with the political spiritualism. His politics was based on religion. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "Without religion the politics is a sin" Further he says, "If the religion and the ethical values become a part of the politics, as a result; most of the human problems will be automatically ended. According to Gandhi, "The main objective of this was the advocacy of human rights. The other objectives were to make the efforts for growth and development of mankind and developing the spirit of *global brotherhood* (Mahatma Gandhi on My Experiments with Truth, 1936).

According to Mahatma Gandhi," The religion is an integral part of politics where the truth, non-violence, humanity, morality, sacrifice, love and self confidence were the components which have given rise to '*Nationalism*' among the people, belonged to different strata of



society. Dr. Rjender Prashad rightly said that the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi have been proved conducive to refute the politics which was an inter-mingled yarn of fraud, far away from the truth and reached at the meanest state of mind of the politicians. He never tried to use any unfair means for mobilize the resources. The Gandhian teachings were full of morality and spirituality which have affected the people's view points on 'Nationalism' "*Satyagrah*" is such type of spiritual weapon which based on love for humanity (Anil Seal). It does not reflect the hate against opponents. Gandhi Ji rightly said that the '*Satyagrah*' is such a principle, where we would like to live and as well as die for it too. Mahatma Gandhi always used the components of "*Satyagrah*" which include strike violence, social boycott, and boycott of foreign goods, *Dharna* and civil disobedience. By using of all these components, Gandhi Ji expedited the growth '*Nationalism*' in the country. It had a '*multiplier effect*' in different parts of the nation.

Mahatma Gandhi was a worshiper of 'Non-,' which means –we are no supposed to hurt anyone by heart, promise and action and everyone should be treated with friendly behaviour . In the words of G.N.Davan," The non-violence is such strategy which paves the way to find the non-violence and truth. Meaning thereby, it is a rational way of thinking with spirituality and morality which decide the right or wrong human actions. By these spirits, a considerable momentum has been given rise to steady growth of '*Nationalism*' in the country.

Mahatma Gandhi has developed the thought of *class-less* society in the Indian society. His vision on '*class-less*' society was based on the vision and used to believe non-discriminated society. He used to think that the '*Dalits*' have a *equal rights* to live as others. Gandhi ji was strictly against the *untouchability* with the '*Dalits*.' All these views on caste or classless society have given rise to growth of '*Nationalism*' in rural and urban areas of India.

On the front of rural development, Mahatma Gandhi always focused on 'decentralization of power through *Panchayati Raj System*. He has given this mode of system as '*Decentralized democracy*' which is a true democracy, as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "It is the decentralized democracy, which reflects the spirit of the people. It was the need of that time, because of lion's share of population of India, used to inhabit in the millions of villages in the country. All these thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi have been



proved conducive to worked as a 'cementing factors' for steady growth of 'Nationalism' in India.

According to Mahatma Gandhi, "All human beings should be given their rights, and they should also be uniformly treated. Only then, the 'Nationalism' spirits will strengthen among the people, belonged to different strata of society. The base of the Gandhian politics was the *morality* with the *purity of means*. He organized the 'National Movement' with the spirit of *non-violence*. Whenever the national movement has shaped with 'Violence' as a result, Mahatma Gandhi used to drop at once the *movement*.

Mahatma Gandhi had contributed significantly in the world politics. He has *spiritualized* the politics and revised the greatness of Indian society; its culture served the man-kind. All the efforts made through economic, politics, social and spiritual objectives. In this way, Mahatma Gandhi has tried to strengthen the 'Nationalism spirit' with wide spread growth of spiritualism among the people, belonged to different strata of society (Romain Rolland 1923).

### **NATIONALISM THROUGH SATYAGRAH AND NON-VIOLENCE**

The outstanding contribution of Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian politics, has been spirit of 'Satyagrah and non-violence' The 'Satyagrah' is a Sanskrit word, which means "Satya" and "Agraha" which reflect the 'Right and Justice' and 'the request' respectively. According to Gandhi Ji," the movement which was comprised of different mode of non-violence for 'Right & Justice.'" There was no place of 'violence' in the 'Satyagrah' Gandhi ji has never taken censure against his opponent even (Panikar, K.M, 2007)

### **MAHATMA GANDHI'S PERCEPTION OF 'RAM RAJAYA'**

In this his book, *India- Of my Dream'* Gandhi Ji has developed the perception of 'Ram Rajaya' for India, where the rich and poor, caste, colour, religion and sex do not matter in the society. All differences will be ended. Where, the state and land will be owned by the citizens. According to Gandhi ji, "The Ram Rajaya will pave the way for fast and cheap justice for the people. The state should think maximum for the welfare of the people. Mahatma Gandhi used to believe in full liberty for airing their views, press and other institutions. He has developed such a vision, where everyone may live in full liberty, happy and independent life. All these multifaceted vision on 'Ram Rajaya' have been proved conducive to grow the



spirit of '*Nationalism*' among the people, belonged to different strata of society in different regions.

In order to win the confidence of the people belonged to different regions; Gandhi Ji has tried to develop a secular society. He has studied the different religious scripts of Hindu, Bodh, Jain, Christian and Islam. He used to believe in religion as an agency of social control, so that a social stability may be developed in the society. His secular vision on each religion, has been proved a one of '*cementing*' factor for inviting the people from each and every religion which has been proved a '*centripetal force*' for growth of '*Nationalism*' in India (Peter Vande Veer, 1974)

In order to take the women, as active participants, Gandhi Ji made consistent efforts for the development of the women in rural and urban areas. He fought for equal right for women. He was totally against the *pardah system*, child marriage, polygamy, dowry system, in the society. He has advocated for women's *education*, *widow re-marriage* and *inter-caste marriage* in the different strata of society. All these pro-women development vision has given rise to include the women as a part of the motivating factor for '*Nationalism*' in India (Bidyut Chakrabarti, 2006).

## CONCLUSION

Mahatma Gandhi has played a significant role for growth of '*Nationalism*' in India. The philosophy and thought on truth, *Satyagrah*, non-violence and secular vision on religion have been proved a '*cementing force*' for strengthening the '*Nationalism*' in India. Gandhi Ji's view on rural development for devolution of power to *Panchayati Raj*, removable of '*untouchability*' from the '*Dalits*' have been proved conducive to pull the people from all strata of society. His secular vision on religion has been proved a great '*cementing*' factor to invite the people from varied religious back grounds. On the other hand, despite his consistent efforts, the Indo-Pak partition has taken place with a very much blood-shed from the both sides. His views had to face a *conflicting situation* with his contemporary leaders like *Neta Ji Subhash Chander*, *Bhim Rao Amendekar* and *Bhagat Singh* have not been compromised on certain issues, raised by the people. Despite some of pitfalls and feasibility in the Gandhian thoughts, he has given a significant contribution to expedite the '*Nationalism*' in India.



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