

Impact of Gandhian Thoughts on Indian Novelists and its Relevance



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Abstract:

On forecasting back the golden pages of the world history, it may be realized that the greatness of man must be measured not by the amount of adoration accorded him but by the impact of his life on others. One of the most popular social-political figure of Indian politics is Mahatma Gandhi. He has been an immense source of writing himself and has influenced different disciplines and very many writers from different fields like history, politics, philosophy, literature, sociology etc. It was his way of life, his thoughts, his actions, his implementation of ideas on his own and his philosophic chanting which played an eminent role in the minds of people. People got inspiration from him and listened carefully what he laid down. Gandhian ideologies like truth, non-violence, simplicity, dignity of labour, views on trusteeship, village handicrafts or machinery everything is relevant in present times. These ideas provided a panacea to all the challenges existing in the society.

Keywords: Literature, Society, Dignity, Truth, Non-Violence, Trusteeship, Handicraft

Introduction:

Literature is the source of amalgamation of many thoughts and their direct & indirect impact on the people living in the society. Indian and world literature is vehemently influenced by the ideologies followed by Mahatma Gandhi. Many recent problems like population growth, production and consumption, unemployment, poverty, racial discrimination, untouchability, economic inequality are to be seen with present phase of globalization, privatization and industrialization. The best suited solutions for many of the problems of contemporary world is to understand and follow Gandhian principles. Gandhi's profuse writings, speeches and talks cover every conceivable aspects of Indian life of his time as well as of present world. There are two defining factors for the most of the writers and their craft are creativity and inspiration. India is the land where many great souls have been lived and contributed in various aspects. Mahatma Gandhi is the great iconic figure in Indian land who is the gift to the humanity in modern time and has influenced every aspect of life. Gandhi is among those great personalities who spent their lives for the development of the society. He was not only the greatest freedom fighter but also taught the philosophy of 'search for truth' to the masses.

Gandhi always favoured and advocated education as a key for human life. His wealth of knowledge has been adopted in our country and many learning institutions were opened on the same line. Gandhian impact has great relevance not only on Indian literature but also on world literature. It is really difficult to put all the thoughts of Gandhi in one paper however, in this paper, focus has been profounded on the Gandhian

contribution on literature specially to Indo-Anglian novelists as his thoughts had immense impact over Indo-anlian novelists. The Indo-Anglian literature is different from the Anglo-Indian literature. The former is the genre written and created by the Indians through the English language while the later is written by the Englishmen on the themes and subjects related to India. Therefore the Indo-Anglian literature is deeply associated with Indian English. It is a distinct standard of body with correct English usage but the soul is Indian in imagery thoughts and colours. Kai Nichalason said that, "A character who has loomed large in Indian-Anglian fiction during and after his lifetime is Mahatma Gandhi"¹. Gandhi has inspired a whole line age of writers discussing about his philosophy.

Mr. C D Narsimham was highly inspired by the thoughts of Gandhi and wrote the monograph on Gandhian impact on writing in English in the book of Meenakshi Mukherjee. Professor S K Iyengar also wrote the chapters related to Gandhian impact on the great Indo-Anglin writers in the book on the topic "The History of Indian Writing in English". Both are fiction examines Gandhian influence on Indo-Anglian novelists. Carlo Coppala has written an essay on the topic 'Politics and Novels in India' and said that the influence of both the Gandhian and Marxist ideologies on Indo-Anglian novels is well seen². The Indian writers were highly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi thoughts. Gandhi's social and political thoughts were linked with his notion of social reforms which were inspired by modern thinkers like Emerson, Tolstoy & Ruskin. Gandhi had keen interest to study the religious books like the Srimadbhagawad Gita, the Ramayana, the Mahabhart, the Upnishads, the Bible and the Quran however the basic ideas of him were evolved out of his human experiences. He gave high importance to the concept of Ahimsa (non-voilence), Satya (truth), Asteya (non stealing), bramhcharya (chastity), Asangrah (non possession), Sharirshram (physical labour) ³ along with Sarvadharm Sambhava (equity of all religion), use of swadeshi vastu, removal of untouchability and caste system ⁴. If, one follows the principles propounded and implemented by Gandhi, one can conquer the world without any problem.

Gandhi founded a base to the Indian writers for embarking upon a journey of discovering an individual and national identity. 19th and 20th century novels did not dwell much on social awareness while they focused on romanticism and were unable to reflect realities of of the time. It was with the advent of Gandhian Age when Indo-Anglian novels focused human being as a social being. The image of Gandhian consciousness in literature during the early phase of English in Indiareflects the consciousness of the period influenced by Gandhian revolution during 1920-1947, usually termed as Gandhian Age ⁵. M K Naik considered this noticeable influence as 'the Gandhian Whirlwing'⁶. Purna Swaraj provided a new identity and significance to Gandhian consciousness which was based on 'deep faith and love for all'⁷. Gandhian thought poured huge impact on the development of Indo-Anglian Novels and granted nourshing features which developed a heritage in Indian writing.

After the fundamental changes in the themes by the Indian novelists, many novels were written on the lines of Gandhian thoughts. Major novelists and their novels are follows: Mulkraj Anand's 'untouchable and coolie', Raja Rao's 'Kantapura', R K Narayana's 'waiting for the mahatma', Bhabani Bhattacharya's 'he who rides a tiger, so many hungers, shadow from Laddakh, A dream in haweli' etc. the above novels shows huge impact of Gandhian ideology, theme, structure and style. Raja Rao's Kanthapura is an analysis of imperial system and the social evils inherent in the hindu system as a result of ignorance and illiteracy. Mulkraj Anand's untouchable is

a story of Bhakha's sufferings and various processes of social discrimination . Bhattacharya's novel 'so many hungers' deals with hunger for freedom, food, power, sex, wealth and fame which was a central theme in Quit India Movement 1942.

The Gandhian concept of basic education which R K Narayana wrote in his first three novels is only the way to achieve cultural, personnel & spiritual liberation. Narayana and Gandhian values coupled with the terms of metaphysical experiences. He criticized the Western education system. R K Narayana was neither politically committed like Mulkraj Anand nor a metaphysical novelist like many others. William Walsh writes: 'Narayana is basically a native talent natively nurtured'⁸. Swaminathan in Swami and friends does not feel good in the Albert Mission School where Gods were an object of criticism and laughter. That's why he decided to leave the school. He protested against Western education in language. In the Bachelor of Arts, the debate of Brown and Chandran is interesting. Raghavachari, the nationalist professor of History feels 'If he were asked what the country needed urgently and he would not say self-Government but classified, purified Indian history'⁹.

Conclusion:

Gandhian thoughts and ideology helped the Indo-Anglian novelists to examine the present against the past and to link it with the future. Indo-Anglian novelists were more familiar with the Western ideas. Gandhian consciousness helped them to connect with contemporary society. It was not just a coincidence that all these Indo-Anglian novelists started writing under Gandhian spell inspired by Gandhian philosophy while they got purpose, direction and a sense of identity from the exposure of Gandhian precepts.

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