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ROLE OF GANDHI JI IN THE INDIAN NATIONAL FREEDOM MOVEMENT

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Role of Gandhi Ji in the Indian National Freedom Movement

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Abstract – Gandhi Ji” recognised Indian National Congress as an instrument for the national struggle. He used Satyagraha as a new weapon for the national liberation. Muslim fundamentalist led by Jinna alleged that he was an ardent Hindu Similarly the Hindu Nationalist alleged that he was promoting Muslim communalism in the country and cited the example of khilafat movement which he supported The Marxist also alleged that Gandhi had a strong class bias in favour of rich. Dr Ambedkar Kansi Ram and other dalit leader’s leveled allegation that he was a true representative of Savrala Hindu and he worked for their hegemony over the Avarena sections of the Hindus more particularly even the dalites.

Keywords: Freedom Struggle, National Congress, Muslim Fundamentalist, Hindu Nationalist, Marxist Trusteeship, Untouchability, Savarna, Avarna Non-Cooperation Movement, Non-Violence, Amity, Satyagraha.

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The role of Gandhi Ji in National movement was crucial as well as critical. He was primarily responsible for turning the Indian struggle from an elitist to a mass moment. He reorganized the Indian National Congress to make it a fit instrument for the national struggle and provided Satyagraha as a new weapon for the national liberation; laid the ideological foundation; of an exclusive secular Indian nationhood. Not only this but he also brought the poor and dispossessed to the mainstream of the national struggle; and presented a new version of the future. Indian society and even provided the broad outlines of a new world civilization.

But the Muslim fundamentalist led by Jinnah alleged that his Hindu Muslim unity was nothing as he was an ardent Hindu and committed congressman. According to him the Indian national congress was a dominant Hindu organisation which wanted to dominate the numerically inferior Muslims. Further he alleged that his entire scheme of New Talim, his concept of Ramarajya and in fact, the entire diction and lexion was reflective of his basic commitment to being an ardent Hindu leader. As a result the Muslim led by Jinnah opted for the partition of the country, so as to avoid the Hindu domination.

Similarly Hindu nationalists alleged that he was primarily responsible for promoting Muslim communalism in the country. They cited the example in support of Khilafat Moment.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, KasiRam, Mayawati and other dalit leaders accused Gandhi ji that he was a true representative of Savarna Hindus. Hence, he worked for their hegemony over the avarena sections of the

Hindus more particularly even the dalits. His primary attempt was to keep the dalits in the Hindu fold and not allow them to go out at any cost and find a new and independent status for themselves. Besides, he ignored the socio-economic aspects of their problems and attempted to turn them into a purely religious issue. In the support of their accusation, they argued that dalits were never given their due, in his scheme of things.

The Marxists criticized that Gandhi ji had a strong class bias in favour of the rich and the propertied. Hence, at every critical juncture of the national movement, he hindered the growth of real redical and subaltern politics in India. In fact, none of his national movements including the Quit India Movement reached out to their logical conclusions. They also argued that he withdrew the Non-cooperation Movement in February 1922, at the moment when it was taking a radical and revolutionary turn.

All the allegations against Gandhi Ji were biased because his much-maligned Ramrajya and Ramdhuna hardly had any communal tinge as alleged by the Muslim communalists. His Ram was nothing but the name of the universal God and had nothing to do with historical Dasarath Ram. The stand taken by the Marxists was not on sound ground as in fact, during our freedom stuggle, the Communist Party of India several times came to the fold of the national movement and then drifted away at the behest of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Thus, their changing and often contradictory stands took away much of the sting from their criticism.

Dalit leaders misunderstood Gandhi Ji as no one of dalit leader felt the pangs of their sufferings in his own persona as did the Mahatma. He even went to the extent of expressing his desire to be born as a dalit in his next life so that he could really feel the depth and dimensions of their suffering in his own personality. And he did express such a wish despite his incessant search for moksha-freedom from the cycle of rebirth. He was so committed to banish every track of untouchability both from his own personal life as well as from the society.

He wanted to build up a united Indian nationhood transcending all division of caste, creed, language, region and religion. In fact, his impeccable secular record could be easily proved by his courage to stand steadfastly and fearlessly in the midst of communal carnage without making discrimination between the Hindus and the Muslims. Not only that, his 21 days fast for Hindu-Muslim unity, his work in Noakhali, Calcutta, Bihar and Delhi during 1946-7 communal holocausts was a living witness to his undying faith in a secular united India. He lived and died for the communal amity.

In fact Gandhi ji led an all-inclusive national movement and as such, he had to carry along all sections of the Indian society. He could not have spoken and worked as a sectional /secretarial leader in terms of class, cast, language, region and religion. As such, he made seminal contributions in the cause of the national movement. No less seminal work his contribution in terms of ideas. He presented broad outlines of the truly non-violent society with the ultimate purpose of freeing the human society from all the vestiges of exploitation and domination of man by man. In the process, he made a serious attempt to restore integrity, autonomy and self-respect to the individual, while taking full care of the societal needs by marking their inter- dependent nature. Some of his ideas like minimal state, trusteeship, truth and nonviolence and above all Satyagraha have valiantly stood the test of time. Besides, the problems he identified and anticipated in respect of both liberal and the Marxist system have been well validated by the course of subsequent historical developments. Hence Louis Fischer has rightly said that 'There may be fifteen days of chaos', Gandhi speculated, 'but I think we could soon bring that under control'.

Thus he would be always remembered for his seminal contribution of Satyagraha as an effective weapon in the hands of the poor and dispossessed. He would also continue to inspire those who would concern themselves to the suffering of the man for generation to come. In this context Rudolph has pointed out the 'serenity he achieved by his asceticism was...among his strongest assets as a leader of a mass movement that sometimes aroused strong feelings and evoked violent hatreds... It lay at root of his capacity to act sensibly in a crisis, to keep himself from being thrown off stride by other people's hysteria'.

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