

CHAPTER - IV

C O N C L U S I O N

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: CONCLUSION :

Through this study it is seen that the concept of 'Passive Resistance' as political resistance method was first systematically developed by Aurobindo Ghosh. He further developed the ideas given by Gokhale. He explained that freedom struggle is an act of heroism and the qualities of moral courage, self-sacrifice and endurance are essential for the success. Without the spirit of selfless action no heroic actions for nation can be performed. 'Karma-Yoga' is the base of Aurobindo's theory of passive resistance. Like Vivekananda, Aurobindo was supporter of Vedanta philosophy and held that 'Karma-Yoga' was the heart of it. He further added that the service of God is service of mother-India, this service must be in the spirit of self-less action. National work is work of God, the personal salvation of individual is national salvation. He put forward that religion and politics is not different. To liberate Bhawani Bharati or Mother India we must practice political resistance and political resistance to alien government was the work of God. "Thus Ghosh endeavoured to re-orient the traditional vedanta, making it more worldly and linking it up with life and the practices of national liberation struggle."(1)

"The ideas of theory of political resistance of Ghosh was influenced by ideas of Parnell and the methods of the Irish home-rule movement. He held that for the successful consummation of the passive resistance with its different phases like disobedience, no-tax pay movement and aggressive resistance - three things were important - strong resolve and readiness of the people to offer resistance to the government, the need of the unified national political party to lead and direct the movement and simultaneous pursuit of self-development program of Swadeshi, national education and boycott."(2) That does not mean in any sense that he was totally opposed to armed rebellion, but was of the opinion that boycott through peaceful means and large scale national movement is the only correct option. There was a main difference between Gokhale and Ghosh, Gokhale was not in the favour to change the authority but Aurobindo was in the favour to change the authority. The capacity of the people to change the national will in their day to day activities decides the success of political resistance. According to Aurobindo the political aspirations of the people would grow with the development of passive resistance movement and he did not wanted it to stop it.

After Aurobindo's departure from political field in 1910. Tilak re-entered the stage and further developed

Aurobindo's theory of passive resistance. At that stage he started his home rule movement on Aurobindo's theory of passive resistance. He believed, "The only progress that has to be made in the preparation for liberty is progress in the awakening of national spirit and the creation of the will to be free and the will to adopt the necessary means and bear the necessary sacrifices for liberty."(3) Gandhi further developed the passive resistance theory of Aurobindo Ghosh and put forward his concept of 'Satyagraha'. Gandhi put into practice the ideas of passive resistance and self-government which were expanded by Aurobindo in 1907-08.

"Tilak and especially Gandhi developed and enriched the theory of political disobedience by linking together the philosophy of Karma-Yoga, the ideal of national liberation and establishment of democratic state in India."(4) Thus we can conclude that Aurobindo Ghosh's theory of passive resistance had deep impact on the ideas of Tilak and Gandhi. In other words Tilak and Gandhi's ideas about passive resistance are further developments of Aurobindo's passive resistance.

There was a great impact of Aurobindo Ghosh's theory of passive resistance on Tilak. Tilak's philosophy of passive resistance was a mid way between ideas of

Gokhale and Aurobindo. " In his discussions he said that if a particular law of the political system was unjust or if most of the political provisions of a particular political system were unjust, every body had a right to bring about a change in the law or the political system. It could not be called sedition because if this was sedition then we had to conclude that the government did not want justice and morality, did not like resistance to injustice and did not want to give equal rights to the people."(5) Tilak wrote that when a particular government did not want to concede the rights of the people because by doing it, it feared that would harm the interests of the powerful classes of the society. But by following the different methods of resistance including that of obstruction in government work, the government could be pressurised to change the particular law.(6) For evolving satyagraha as a political weapon Tilak praised Gandhi, according to him it was helpful in fighting injustice. He further explained that there is need of spirit of a very high level of morality and concern for truth but it also solved many moral problems present in disobedience of law. He believed that there is high need of a unique moral character, integrity and belief in truth for this. "To perform such an action it needed the support of soul-force and any person who had determined to acquire these qualities and capacities could do so."(7) We can

say here that Tilak understood the essence of Satyagraha.

The method advocated by Tilak is essentially political in nature and he was determined when he arrived on any conclusion for action. But this does not mean that he was not ready for compromise. He indeed compromised when he realised his mistakes. He was ready to make compromise to accomplish the real work, he would willingly take half a loaf rather than no bread. But he never accepted chaff or plaster in place of good bread. Aurobindo wrote, "...But neither would he mistake like the born moderate, the minimum efforts and the minimum immediate aim for the utmost possibility of the moment. Such a man is no natural revolutionist, but a constitutionalist by temper, though always in such times necessarily the leader of an advanced party or section."(8)

Tilak's views were that mass support and popular action should be the basis for political resistance. He further explained that for this purpose grit, determination and tenacity is necessary. He cautioned that we should continuously labour and work even after going through sufferings and sacrifices for a long time. In 1908, when he was sentenced to six years of imprisonment, Tilak said "All I wish to say is that in spite of the verdict of jury, I maintain that I am

innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of things and it may be the will of providence that the cause I represent may prosper more by suffering than by remaining free."(9) Tilak further explained that, "This equanimity and stability of the mind is the result of philosophy of 'Karma-Yoga' where a high souled and public spirited person would perform his duties towards his people and the country in the spirit of disinterestedness. He was willing to undergo all sorts of sufferings because what was important for him was not legality or illegality of an action but justice or injustice in it and he said it in no uncertain words that if morality demanded it, we must break unjust and oppressive laws."(10) That does not mean that Tilak believed in 'ends justified means', his view on 'ends and means' was quite clear. "His relativism was evident in his policy of responsive co-operation but it would be wrong to say that he did not care for means as when he talked about the responsive action, he was talking about deviations that became inevitable in the course of action."(11)

As pointed out earlier Tilak advocated a mid way between Gokhale and Aurobindo. This is so because he did not share Aurobindo's views on the cause of complete independence and also of Gokhale's policy of constitutional agitation. Tilak was willing to disobey unjust and

oppressive laws. Gokhale believed in pressure politics for change through the constituted authorities while Tilak believed in pressure politics but his aim was to change the government, through constituted authorities. Tilak also believed in the over throw of the government if possible and necessary.

"Aurobindo's theory of passive resistance was broadly reinterpreted by Tilak in both theory and practice. He made issues clear to the people and galvanised them in action. He and Aurobindo largely anticipated in 1906 and 1907 politics of Gandhi and laid foundations of his agitational politics"(12) Thus we find that Tilak's theory of passive resistance is the combination of Aurobindo's passive resistance and Gokhale's constitutional agitation. Aurobindo's theory of passive resistance believed a major part in the development of Tilak's passive resistance.

Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha is the basis of his passive resistance and it was having a religious touch. But its political message was sound and clear. Gandhi explained search after truth and salvation is his goal of life this is so because knowledge of truth was the essential condition of salvation, " This truth had to be sought with the help of non-violence which had



progressively humanised the brute in man, and with the help of action performed in the spirit of the detachment to further the cause. He made it clear that satyagraha was launched to right the wrong, to convert the heart of the opponent not in the interest of a person but for an entire people. Gandhi thought that British rule over India was a wrong action and through the pursuit of swaraj only, India could end her slavery. He did not want to suffer slavery that had emasculated the manhood of Indians."(13)

Gandhi's overall energies were directed against the foreign rule his main aim in political life was winning 'Swaraj' for India. Gandhi in his political life launched three nation-wide civil resistance movements in India and he said that they were some sort of non-violent open rebellions. Gandhi firstly used his weapon of aggressive mass civil resistance in Bardoli but in 1922 he suspended it. There after he never launched aggressive mass civil resistance movement. Though non-co-operation movement was quite militant and effective, it was realised that "non co-operation is difficult to practice as at times it causes little inconvenience to the state and it had to be abandoned."(14) The second reason which Gandhi put forward was mob violence and he feared that he might not be in a position to control the movement. Gandhi's second civil resistance was slightly different from the first

non-co-operation movement. The main difference between non co-operation movement of which ended in 1922 and the civil disobedience movement of 1930 was in the first attempt he refused to co-operate with the government but during the civil disobedience movement he refused to obey the unjust laws of the government. In the civil disobedience movement he practiced non-violent raids on salt depots and suffered consequent sufferings. This movement was strictly controlled by Gandhi and when there was a danger of great violence, it was withdrawn, Gandhi told that he was satisfied with the results of this second movement this is so because the satyagrahis behaved with restraint and discipline. The Quit India movement which Gandhi launched later on was the last and the most militant movement of Gandhi. It was an open and unarmed rebellion. "In this movement along with non-co-operation and civil resistance, Quit notice was given to the government and an attempt was made by the people to functions of the government and in some places parallel governments were established. Though the Congress did not make preparations for it, nor did Gandhi give any advise to the people, the people on their own did it. He could not lead the people, hence there was a lot of violence, repression and bloodshed. In fact, this type of resistance movement normally culminated in the

establishment of parallel government and, in the later phases of the movement, it became difficult to control it."(15) Parallel government was the consequence of this movement but Gandhi did not favour parallel governments. While addressing the people at Midanapur, who ran a parallel government in 1942 to 1946 he said, "I cannot say all that has been done, has been well done or ought to have been done. On the contrary much of it ought not to have been done. That the people did not remain inert is a matter of satisfaction, but the fact that after all these years they should not have known what the Congress stood for is a matter for sorrow, what they did was thoughtless. By its very nature, it could not be sustained." Explaining the reasons for this, Gandhi said, " You have graphically put in your reports how you blew up a railway track, put a road out of use, burnt a court, seized a thana, set up a parallel government and so on. This is not the technique of non-violent action. The people committed the mistake of thinking that all that did not involve killing was non-violence. Sometimes, killing is the clearest part of violence, if you kill the mischiefmaker out right then there is an end to it, but harassment is worse. It did not put out the mischief, it brought it on our heads. The authorities became vindictive and panic, it doesn't pay us to let them go into panic. But then they are the people who do not know

what defeat is, their cowardice is not fundamental. So they let such things as the Panchayat courts remain in your hands for a short like toys. but as soon as they had completed their dispositions, they turned the full blast of their machinery for refaliation against us."(16)

Gandhi was of the opinion that the might of imperialism could not be destroyed with the help of arms. He said, "Unless we have a new way of fighting imperlism of all brands in place of the outworn one of a violent rising, there is no hope for the oppressed races of the world."(17) He further added that true non-violence knew no defeat.

"People asked the most important question, Is not non-violent rebellion a program of seizure of power?" Gandhi replied, "Therein lies the fallacy. A non-violent revolution is not a pr gram of seizure of power, but it is a program of transformation of relationships, ending in peaceful transfer of power. If the people had fully carried out five steps outlined by me in my 8th August speech and had there been a perfect atmosphere of non-violence, the government's pcwer of repression would have been sterilised and they would have been compelled to yield to the national demands. If under the impact of foreign invasion or some other cause, the ruling power

abdicates and vacuum is created, the people's organisation will naturally take over but this sarkar will have no other sanction except that of nonviolence and service of the people to enforce its fiats. It will never use coercion."(18)

Thus we can say Gandhi never approved the forcible seizing of power but he wanted the government to read the aspirations of the people. According to Gandhi the main aim of satyagrahi should be through his constructive program to make the people independent and self-reliant.

We can say Gandhi believed in changing basically the relationship and this would result in the transfer of power by constituted authority in India. He never believed in hook or crook method for the seizure of power.

Passive Resistance distinguished from satyagraha as put forth by M.K.Gandhi as follows :

We are only concerned to note the distinction between passive resistance and Satyagraha,... there is a great and fundamental difference between the two. If without understanding this, those who call themselves either passive resisters or Satyagrahis believe both to

be one and the same thing, there would be injustice to both leading to untoward consequences. The result of our using the phrase 'passive resistance' in South Africa was, not that people admired us by ascribing to us the bravery and the self-sacrifice of the suffragists but we were mistaken to be a danger to person and property which the suffragist were, and even a generous friend like Mr Hosken imagined us to be weak. The power of suggestion is such, that a man at last becomes what he believes himself to be. If we continue to believe ourselves and let others believe, that we are weak and helpless and therefore offer passive resistance, our resistance would never make us strong, and at the earliest opportunity we would give up passive resistance as a weapon of the weak. On the other hand if we are Satyagrahis and offer Satyagraha believing ourselves to be strong, two clear consequences result from it. Fostering the idea of strength, we grow stronger and stronger every day. With the increase in our strength, our Satyagraha too becomes more effective and we would never be casting about for an opportunity to give it up. Again, while there is no scope for love in passive resistance, on the other hand not only has hatred no place in Satyagraha but is a positive breach of its ruling principle. While in passive resistance there is a scope for the use of arms when a suitable occasion arrives, in Satyagraha physical force is forbidden even in the most

favourable circumstances. Passive resistance is often looked upon as a preparation for the use of force while Satyagraha can never be utilized as such. Passive resistance may be offered side by side with the use of arms. Satyagraha and brute force, being each a negation of the other, can never go together. Satyagraha may be offered to one's nearest and dearest; passive resistance can never be offered to them unless of course they have ceased to be dear and become an object of hatred to us. In passive resistance there is always present an idea of harassing the other party and there is a simultaneous readiness to undergo any hardships entailed upon us by such activity; while in Satyagraha there is not the remotest idea of injuring the opponent. Satyagraha postulates the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own person.

These are the distinctions between the two forces. But I do not wish to suggest that the merits, or if you like, the defects of passive resistance thus enumerated are to be seen in every movement which passes by that name. But it can be shown that these defects have been noticed in many cases of passive resistance. Jesus Christ indeed has been acclaimed as the prince of passive resisters but I submit in that case passive resistance must mean Satyagraha and Satyagraha alone. There are not many cases

in history of passive resistance in that sense. One of these is that of the Doukhobors of Russia cited by Tolstoy. The phrase 'passive resistance' was not employed to denote the patient suffering of oppression by thousands of devout Christians in the early days of Christianity. I would therefore class them as Satyagrahis. And if their conduct be described as passive resistance, passive resistance becomes synonymous with Satyagraha. It has been my object in the present chapter to show that Satyagraha is essentially different from what people generally mean in English by the phrase 'passive resistance.'(19)

"Gandhi's theory of satyagraha was a development and extension of the work done by Aurobindo. But Gandhi developed and envolved it in such a manner that it received world-wide recognition. Through his different movements, Gandhi made the Indian people politically conscious, courageous and brave. He experimented with unique mass movements that involved at least a million people every time all over the country. He drew the striking power from ancient Indian traditions as well as from rural protest movements and owed a debt to Aurobindo. But the final is his own.

Thus Aurobindo was the fore founder of the theory of passive resistance in a systematic manner. His ideas



of various thinkers like Tilak & Gandhi on passive resistance. So we have to give due credit to Aurobindo for developing the idea of passive resistance. Tilak and Gandhi further developed the theory of passive resistance of Aurobindo with the changing context and the aspirations of the society.

Thus finally we could conclude that though there is similarity between the political method of 'Satyagraha' as advocated by Gandhi and passive resistance as advocated by Sri.Aurobindo in so far as non-cooperation and civil resistance are common to both, the two are basically different as one is based on non-violence and the other on expediency since passive resistance might lead to violence when circumstances arise. In case of Tilak, his ideas on political resistance were developed in the light of political events of the country and stood midway between Gokhale's ideas on constitutional agitation and Aurobindo's ideas on passive resistance in terms of 'Boycott'. Essentially Tilak's ideas were similar to those of Sri.Aurobindo.

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