

Chapter - IV

GANDHI ON PASSIVE RESISTANCE

Introduction :

Gandhi as we have seen in our earlier chapters, was opposed to violence of all sorts, and denounced it as a means, to attain ' Swaraj '. In fact ' Hind Swaraj ' was written in response to the growing school of violence in India, as well as its prototype in South Africa; In ' Hind Swaraj ' Gandhi trace the causes of India's slavery and loss of freedom, denounces brute force and provides an alternative method to attain ' Swaraj '.

Causes of India's Slavery :

On the issue of India's enslavement, Gandhi expresses the view that the Indian's have no reason to blame anyone but themselves. Indians should be frank and bold to accept the responsibility for their bondage. Having fallen prey to the wealth and riches offered by the aliens they became enamoured with the glamour and glitter that the West had to offer. To blame the English entirely for our state of affairs would be doing injustice to them. Gandhi says, " He is a true physician who probes the cause of disease and if you pose as a physician for the disease of India you will have to find out its true cause."¹

1) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 35.

Due encouragement from the Indians made the task of the British easier. Besides a clear lack of unity between Hindus and Muslims created an atmosphere conducive to strengthening their hegemonistic tendencies. " Hence Gandhi argues " it is truer to say that we gave India to the English than India was lost."²

The root cause of all evil in this world, according to Gandhi, is money. This Mammon worship has not just destroyed many a life, but even great civilizations have fallen prey to its attractions. It was this inherent weakness that enabled a handful of traders to stay on as rulers. Gandhi opines thus, " We keep the English in India for our base self-interest."³ He further concludes, " The English have not taken India, we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength but because we keep them."⁴

The test of the strength of a civilization lies in its ability to withstand shocks it may receive from the outer world. India's enslavement is thus to be attributed not to any weakness in our civilization, but the cause of our enslavement, Gandhi concludes is " Because the sons of India were found wanting its civilization has been placed in a jeopardy."⁵ He also enlightens

2) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 36.

3) Ibid., p. 37.

4) Ibid., p. 35.

5) Ibid., p. 58.

us to the fact that " ... the whole of India is not touched. Those alone who have been affected by Western civilization have become enslaved."⁶

How can India Become Free :

Gandhi maintains, " It is a world known maxim that the removal of the cause of a disease results in the removal of the disease itself. Similarly if the cause of India's slavery be removed, Indian can become free."⁷ According to Gandhi the enthronement of true civilization, ancient Indian civilization, holds the key to the issue of ' Swaraj '.

Gandhi draws our attention to the fact that because we are slaves, " We think that the whole universe is enslaved."⁸ We judge others according to our own standard, and in the condition of slavery, we impute it to the whole of India, which is not entirely true. He goes on to say, " If we bear in mind the above fact we can see that if we become free, India is free."⁹

On the issue of freeing India. Gandhi opines, " Slaves ourselves, it would be a mere pretention to think of freeing others."¹⁰ To free India by arms is a proposition that does not

6) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 58.

7) Ibid., p. 58.

8) Ibid., p. 58.

9) Ibid., p. 58.

10) Ibid., p. 59.

find any place in Gandhi's philosophy. To justify the above he cites the example of Italy. Both Mazzini and Garibaldi wanted Italy to be free, yet Mazzini held that the duty of man is to learn how to rule himself while Garibaldi believed in arms, " Garibaldi gave, and every Italian took to arms."¹¹ The Italy of Mazzini's dream is still enslaved according to Gandhi wherein people are unhappy and they, " indulge in assassination, rise in revolt and rebellion on their part is always expected."¹²

Gandhi therefore warns us that if we want to avoid the pitfalls experienced by Italy, their methods should not be adopted. He goes on to add, " I believe that you want the millions of Indian's to be happy, not that you want the reins of government in your hands. If that be so, we have to consider only one thing, how can millions obtain self-rule?"¹³

To combat British imperialism through adoption of arms is only a step towards embracing the European civilization according to Gandhi. He thinks that it would only go towards increasing her bondage rather than help her in attaining freedom.

Reacting sharply to the view that, an ideal solution to end colonialism in India would be to make use of methods of assassination and terror and guerilla warfare, Gandhi lambasts the

11) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj, p. 60.

12) Ibid., p. 61.

13) Ibid., p. 61.

advocates of this school of violence, and argues. " That is to say you want to make the holy land of India unholy. Do you not tremble to think of freeing India by assassination? What we need to do is to sacrifice ourselves. It is a cowardly thought of killing others. Whom do you suppose to free by assassination ? The millions of India do not desire it. Those who are intoxicated by the wretched modern civilization think these things."¹⁴ Thus Gandhi totally opposes the use of violence in freeing India of her bondage.

Use of Brute Force and Its Limitations :

Gandhi points out the futility of using brute force to wrest power from the hands of the British. A growing uneasiness and discontent with British rule was propelling the freedom movement towards violence and use of force and violence was slowly gaining ground and there were a few individuals and political groups who were convinced that brute force was the only method which should be adopted to drive out the English and obtain ' Swaraj ', but he writes, " opposed as I am to violence in any shape or form, I have endeavoured specially to come into contact with the so-called extremists, who may be better described as the party of violence.

14) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 62.

This I have done in order if possible to convince them of the error of their ways/I have noticed that some of the members of the party are earnest spirits possessing a high degree of morality, great intellectual ability and lofty sacrifice."¹⁵

Gandhi firmly believes that violence only breeds violence and that force can never achieve lasting results. It is here that he introduces his concept of the relationship between means and ends and says, " fair means alone can produce fair results."¹⁶ According to Gandhi, crossing an ocean by means of a cart instead of a vessel would be suicidal, similarly obtaining ' Swaraj ' through violence, would lead to the death of ' Swaraj ' even before its birth - a still born ' Swaraj '. Thus impure means can never lead to a pure end and ' Swaraj ' or Indian Home Rule can therefore be established only through non-violent means.

Real rights according to Gandhi are a result of performance of duty. In the background against which we have to obtain freedom, Gandhi insists on each one performing his duty and being faithful to his work, as is rightly said, " We reap exactly as we sow."¹⁷

15) Iyer Raghavan - The Moral and Political Writing of Mahatma Gandhi., Vol. I., p. 331.

16) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 67.

17) Ibid., p. 64.

Pointing out to the limitations of brute force, Gandhi has cited the example of Italy which gained freedom, through use of force which however has not been attained in the true sense of the term. In fact, a sense of defeat is prevalent in Italy. The reason obviously being the adoption of impure means to obtain a pure end.

Gandhi is critical of the role of violence and tries to convince the people of its futility. He says, " Force is used when men are filled with fear and what is gained through fear is retained only for as long as fear is present."¹⁸ Raghavan Iyer therefore rightly points out that Gandhi objected to violence because when it appears to do good, " the good is only temporary, the evil it does is more lasting. Revolutionary violence is intended to exert pressure but it is the insane pressure of anger and ill - will which cannot be as effective as the pressure extended by non-violent acts."¹⁹ History teaches one that those who have no doubt with honest motives, ousted the greedy by using brute force against them, have in their turn become a prey to the disease of the conquered."²⁰ Violence always thrives on counter - violence."²¹

18) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 62.

19) Iyer Raghavan - The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi., p. 198.

20) Ibid., p. 198.

21) Ibid., p. 198.

Gandhi concludes that violent methods are not the right methods to attain ' Swaraj ' and we should find out an alternative method of political resistance. He thinks that passive resistance is such a method.

Theory of Passive Resistance :

The theory and practice of Passive Resistance did not originate with Gandhi, but are found in the political thought practiced both in Asia and Europe. Raghavan Iyer points out, " In the political thought of ancient India, the failure of the ruler to full-fill his legal obligations (rajadharma) made him not merely morally culpable but also liable to removal by the people in whom rested the right of resistance to injustice."²² Raghavan Iyer further adds, " Apart from resistance to state authority the doctrine of passive resistance also found scope and its application in other areas of human activity. The " weapon of ' dharma ' (from dhṛ, " to hold ") to secure just rights."²³ People also often resorted to hartal to express their grievances. ' Deshtyaga ' or abandonment of a kingdom was followed as the last resort when all other measures failed.

22) Iyer Raghavan - The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi., p. 260.

23) Ibid., p. 261.

It is rightly pointed out that, " Aurobindo was the first Indian thinker to develop the theory of passive resistance, in a systematic manner. His theory of resistance was a considerable advance over the method of constitutional agitation advocated by Gokhale. Aurobindo made it clear that the success of any type of freedom movement, the qualities of moral courage, self-sacrifice and endurance were necessary because it was essentially an act of heroism."²⁴

While in South Africa, Gandhi was confronted with injustice being meted out to his fellow brothers by the government, he decided to fight against racial atrocities and humiliation. The movement was known as passive resistance. However as the struggle advanced, confusion began to mount over its exact interpretation. Besides Gandhi felt trying to explain the movement through an English name was not in keeping with the essence of the movement and hence he decided to coin a new term for the movement. Maganlal Gandhi suggested the term Sadagraha - " Firmness in a good cause."²⁵ However Gandhi felt that it did not contain the essence of the movement and decided to opt for the name ' Satyagraha '. " Truth (Satya) implies love and firmness (Agraha) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the

24) Chousalkar A. S. - Indian Idea of Political Resistance., p.38.

25) Gandhi M. K. - Satyagraha in South Africa., p. 102.

Indian movement ' Satyagraha ' that is to say the force which is born of Truth and Love or non violence, and gave up the use of the phrase passive resistance. "²⁶

In ' Hind Swaraj ' Gandhi suggests passive resistance as an alternative method to the use of violence as a technique for obtaining ' Swaraj '. He writes " Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance the government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If by using violence, I force the government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul force. It involves a sacrifice of self."²⁷

A government which is based on elements of injustice tyranny and exploitation defy the sense of obedience of a people. Unjust laws, backed by the coercive power of the state only serves to ignite the fires of resistance. Gandhi says " If man will only realize that it is unmanly to obey laws that are unjust, no man's tyranny will enslave him. This is the key to self-rule or home-rule."²⁸

26) Gandhi M. K. - Satyagraha in South Africa, p. 102.

27) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 71.

28) Ibid., p. 72.

Gandhi genuinely believes that it is unmanly to obey laws that are unjust and no tyranny can enslave a fearless man. Gandhi further holds that it is superstitious and unduly to believe that an act of a majority can bind a minority. In fact, many instances can be cited in which acts of majorities have been found to be wrong and those of minorities to be right. Numbers behind any act therefore do not in any way constitute its sanctity. And it is passive resistance alone which can remove such superstition, because so long as superstition reigns over the minds of men, men will continue to obey unjust laws backed by majority, and continue to be in a state of slavery. He further argues, " Those who believe that they are not bound to obey laws which are repugnant to their conscience have only the remedy of passive resistance open to them. Any other must lead to disaster."²⁹

Passive resistance is a technique which requires courage, fortitude and determination to face all odds. A passive resister will never obey a law that is against his conscience says Gandhi³⁰ " even though he may be blown to pieces at the mouth of a cannon."

Even a man weak in body can offer passive resistance. Both men and women can take recourse to it, and it does not require the training of an army. Control over the mind is the only

29) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p.p. 72-73.

30) Ibid., p. 73.

necessary condition before offering passive resistance. Therefore Gandhi writes, " Passive resistance is an all sided sword, it can be used anyhow, it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood it produces farreaching results. It never rusts and can never be stolen."³¹

Gandhi earnestly believes that this method of passive resistance which has been practised in India, since times immemorial is the only solution to defy a political institution based on force, coercion and exploitation. Besides one does not need to possess any special qualification to offer passive resistance, all that is needed is a high sense of moral courage. To become a passive resister one has to observe perfect chastity, adopt poverty and follow truth and cultivate fearlessness.

Passive resistance, in the course of discussion in ' Hind Swaraj ', is described as truth force those who are keen to follow truth will never be placed in a jeopardy. Thus Gandhi feels that the only remedy for the ills of India, is the adoption of passive resistance. Gandhi thus concludes possessing an ancient culture and civilization, unique and inspiring no other method can take root on the soil of India, except passive resistance. To follow any other way would be to ignore her requirements and would only be pushing her towards disaster.

31) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 73.

Gandhi often used the two terms passive resistance and satyagraha as synonyms in ' Hind Swaraj ' and elsewhere, however this distinction was sharpened while offering, ' Satyagraha ' in South Africa. The reason that prompted Gandhi to draw a distinction between passive resistance and satyagraha was because it was remarked by many that passive resistance was a weapon of the weak.

While passive resistance conveys the impression of it being a weapon of the weak and helpless and thus if it is offered in that spirit, will never make them strong and they would be ready to renounce it at the earliest opportunity. On the other hand, Gandhi says, " 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."³²

There is no scope for love in passive resistance which is in direct opposition to satyagraha which is embeded on the principle of love and is therefore known as love force.

Similarly use of arms is an inherent truth in passive resistance, while in Satyagraha, there is no scope for violence even in the most favourable circumstances. Passive resistance is

32) Gandhi M. K. - Satyagraha in South Africa., p. 106.

a step which may lead or prepare one for the use of violence, while satyagraha will never be utilized for that end. Passive resistance says Gandhi, " may be offered side by side with the use of arms. Satyagraha and brute force being a negation of the other can never go together."³³

Satyagraha can be offered against near and dear ones which is not so in the case of passive resistance, which is offered against near and dear ones, only if they have ceased to be so.

And lastly passive resistance is geared or oriented towards activating and harnessing the opponent into action, and is ready to inflict suffering on the opponent, as against satyagraha which hopes to conquer the enemy through love and self-suffering. Infliction of injury to the opponent is not intended in satyagraha.

However Gandhi goes on to clarify the defects of passive resistance, that he mentions are not to be seen in every movement which passed by that name. " He regarded Jesus Christ as the Prince of Passive Resistance."³⁴ The patient suffering of Christians he says is another fine example of satyagraha. Similarly the resistance offered by the Doukhobors of Russia is another outstanding example of satyagraha. On the other hand the resistance

33) Gandhi M. K. - Satyagraha in South Africa, p. 106.

34) Ibid., p. 106.

offered by nonconformists to the Education Act Passed by the British Parliament and suffragette movement are example of passive resistance of the weak according to Gandhi.

Thus Gandhi's chief purpose in distinguishing between the two was to protect satyagraha from the accusation that it was a weapon of the weak, to protect it as Gandhi said " from the taint of weakness implicit in the adjective passive."³⁵

Gandhi thus essentially wanted to distinguish not between active and passive resistance but between violent and non-violent resistance. He says, " Resist not evil ' with me has never meant passive resistance. The word ' Passive resistance ' I have described as a misnomer for ' resistance ' which I have known and offered. The paraphrase of ' resist not evil ' means resist not evil with evil and therefore necessarily means ' resist evil with good. ' "³⁶

Satyagraha :

The concept of Satyagraha is a key to the understanding Gandhi's political philosophy. Gandhi feels that civilization is not an incurable disease and cultivation of non-violence in all spheres of our lives is the sovereign remedy. It has also been

35) Iyer Raghavan - The Moral Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi., p. 274.

36) Ibid., p. 274.

observed that war and violence have been used since times immemorial to achieve peace, progress and prosperity. But good sense prevailed in time and the futility of the adoption of violence was realized and condemned. There has been an increasing concern for the establishment of a lasting peace and an universal acknowledgement of the importance and adoption of non-violence as a way of life.

Gopinath Dhawan aptly points out, " Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha deserves to be studied because it embodies the life long researches of the greatest exponents of non-violence. His philosophy is also important because it is the most original contribution of India to political thought and political practice. Moreover it forms the philosophical background of the present day nationalist movement in India where it has moved the masses and won tremendous popularity."³⁷ It is evident that this political weapon by Gandhi to liberate his countrymen from the clutches of the mightiest empire known to history, had its roots in Hindu tradition which influenced Gandhi " Commentaries on Gandhi agree that he had his roots deep in traditional India. Gandhian concepts and slogans - ' Swaraj ' (self-rule), ' Ramrajya ' (Godly rule) ' aparigraha' (non-possession) ' asteya' (non-stealing) - are all centrally familiar to Indian peasant and philosopher alike."³⁸

37) Dhawan Gopinath - The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi., p. 4.

38) Bondurant Joan - Conquest of Violence., p. 106.

Apart from this the influence of Ruskin, Tolstoy and Thoreau had also been acknowledged by Gandhi. The Gita and sermon on the m/Mount also influenced his philosophy of Satyagraha. D

Commenting on the derivation of the word Satyagraha Gandhi wrote, " The word, ' Satya ' (Truth) is derived from 'Sat' which means being. And nothing is or exists in reality except Truth That is Why ' Sat ' or ' Truth ' is perhaps the most important name of God. In fact, it is more correct to say that Truth is God' than to say that God is Truth ... it will be realized that 'Sat' or ' Satya ' is the only correct and fully significant name for God."³⁹

For Gandhi, the two terms Truth and God are convertible. Elucidating his views on truth he wrote to a friend. " In ' God is Truth ' is certainly does not mean ' equal to ' nor does it merely mean " is truthful ". Truth is not a mere attribute of God, but he is that; He is nothing if he is not that. Truth in Sanskrit means Sat. Sat means 'Is'. Therefore Truth is implied in Is; God is nothing else is. Therefore the more truthful we are, the nearer we are to God. We are only to the extent that we are truthful."⁴⁰

39) Young India - July 30, 1931, p. 196. - Bondurant Joan's Conquest of Violence., p. 26.

40) From a letter to P.G. Mathew - 9th July 1932, as quoted in Harijan 27th March 1949, - Bondurant Joan's Conquest of Violence, p. 19. J v
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" Gandhi was also fond of repeating the story of Prahlad, of a young boy who suffered because of his insistence on truth. Thus Satya-truth occupies a permanent place in the his entire philosophy. He says, " The whole of the constructive programme including handspinning and handweaving, Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition - is in pursuit of truth and non-violence."⁴¹

Satyagraha is literally holding on to Truth, and it means Truth force. Truth is the ultimate realization - the goal towards which all activities are directed. Here Gandhi was engaged in a political struggle with his adversary and since he sincerely believed that politics can never be bereft of religion, morality and ethical principles - hence his insistence on Truth. One can thus observe Gokhale's influence on Gandhi's philosophy regarding the importance of spiritualization of political life. A need to infuse concepts of truth, love, harmony and co-operation were introduced by Gandhi into the political arena a revolution indeed in the world of politics.

Satyagraha was a positive force, a projection of spiritual energy against the enemy. Truthfulness according to Gandhi is the key to any desired goal and to equip himself with strength to oppose

41) Gandhi in Harijan, 8th May 1937. Reference taken from Bondurant Joan's Conquest of Violence., p. 110.

external authority, truth was the weapon he adopted. Raghavan Iyer rightly says, " The natural simplicity an intellectual and spiritual humility that carries with it a certain naive wonder that flees before the breath of dogmatism as well as a serene but unshakeable courage that is willing to fight falsehood and injustice."⁴²

Gopinath Dhawan says, " Satyagraha is thus the relentless pursuit of truthful ends by non-violent means."⁴³ It is the " vindication of truth, not by the infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's own self."⁴⁴ Joan Bondurant points, Together with the aphorism, ' Satyannasti paro dharmah ' (there is no religion greater than truth), the Mahabharata couples 'ahimsa paramo dharma ' (ahimsa is the great religion or duty)"⁴⁵ Thus the way to truth is ahimsa or non-violence, " ... without ahimsa, it is not possible to seek and find Truth. Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc, who can say which is the obverse and which is the reverse ? Nevertheless ahimsa in the mean.

42) Iyer Raghavan - The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi., p. 173.

43) Dhawan Gopinath - The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi., p. 126.

44) Speeches ; Reference taken from above., p. 501.

45) Bondurants Joan - Conquest of Violence., p. 111.

Truth is the end, means to be means must always be within our reach, and so ahimsa our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later. When we have grasped this point final victory is beyond question."⁴⁶

According to Gandhi the philosophy of ahimsa has an important role to play in the field of politics. There is an implicit understanding between the governed and the government, as far as obedience to laws and orders of the state are concerned. When orders issued by the governing authority are unjust and backed by coercion, there are two options for retaliation - physical force or soul-force. Gandhi emphasises upon soul force to be employed by masses to ventilate their grievances against a tyrannical and unjust authority, Gandhi pointed out "peasants have never been subdued by the sword and never will be."⁴⁷ Thus the ultimate choice is between coercion which has temporary results and peaceful conversion which has lasting benefits. To Gandhi "A society organized and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be the purest anarchy."⁴⁸

Gandhi thus wished that people would accept non-violence as a guiding principle of their lives not just because it is backed by religious sanctity but because of its social and political

46) Gandhi M. K. - Yervada Mandir - Ashram observances., p.8.

47) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 74.

48) The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi., p. 187.

relevance. Gandhi's appeal to non-violence was an appeal to one's reason, conscience and voice within, an appeal to the finer instincts in man, awakening his cultural ethos, stressing on the purity of means to achieve social and political goals. Gandhi thus held " I have often said that if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself. Non-violence is the means."⁴⁹

Role of Satyagraha in the Nationalist

Movement for Independence :

In ' Hind Swaraj ' Gandhi uses the word passive resistance and thinks that with the help of this new technique of non-violent resistance, India could win her independence. Gandhi uses the two terms Satyagraha and passive resistance interchangeably and thinks that Satyagraha has tremendous potentials. It thus rightly pointed out by Dr. Chousalkar that " Gandhi developed his theory of Satyagraha in the light of the experiences he gained from different political movements. He claimed that his satyagraha was continuously developing in response to the development of truth."⁵⁰

Gandhi - ' Hind Swaraj ' draws our attention to the fact that the policy of violence or force is not in the interest of the nation and for those who have been led astray, however good their intentions may be, he suggests passive resistance or satyagraha as a weapon to combat the mighty British empire.

49) The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 187
Harijan - July 1940.

50) Chousalkar A.S. - Indian Idea of Political Resistance,



In a reply to Mr. Natesan editor of Indian Review with regard to his proposed appointment for presidentship of the forthcoming Indian National Congress, to be held on 1909 Gandhi replied " ... At the present moment I am unable to think of anything but the task of immediately before me, namely the struggle that is going on the Transvaal. I hope our countrymen throughout India, realize that it is national in its aim, in that it has been undertaken to save India's honour I may be wrong, but I have not hesitated publicly to remark that it is the greatest struggle of modern times, because it is the purest as well as in its goals and in its methods. Violence in any shape or form is eschewed. The Satyagrahis believe that self-suffering is the only true and effective means to procure lasting reforms."⁵¹

Gandhi has utilized the novel techniques of Satyagraha to fight against injustice and humiliation experienced in South Africa and wanted India to adopt Satyagraha to win ' Swaraj '. A country like India which has since times immemorial practised the doctrine of peace, non-violence and truth could not achieve independence in any other way except " Satyagraha ", In keeping with her traditions Satyagraha was the only weapon best suited to Indian soil.

As Dr. Ashok Chousalkar has aptly pointed out " Gandhi maintained that Satyagraha should be launched in the cause of

51) Tendulkar D.G. - Mahatma - Life of M.K. Gandhi., p.p. 135-36.

truth and righteousness. Its methods should be completely non-violent and it should cause no bodily harm to the opponent. The Satyagrahi should suffer and through suffering and sacrifice, he should use his soul-force to convert the opponent. A Satyagrahi was not interested in destroying his opponent but converting him to the side of justice and truth.⁵²

One did not have to be very intelligent to arrive at the conclusion that British rule in India was based on force, coercion, and injustice. Exploitation was its essential feature. It was able to hold its sway over the Indian masses because it succeeded in oppressing them and Indian masses meekly gave in to this oppression because they lacked courage and fearlessness. The fight was therefore between unequal parties. The British were equipped with arms which was the cause of their strength according to some. However if one keeps in mind Gandhi's view, one could conclude that arms are not a sign of strength but one of weakness. This fact however was overlooked by many individuals and political groups who felt that if the fight for independence and rights was to be on an equal footing then violence was the only answer. It is this philosophical attitude which Gandhi resented and to ensure that Indians too are adequately equipped to fight the British he provides

52) Chousalkar A. S. - Indian Idea of Political Resistance., p.68.

the all powerful weapon of Satyagraha. Appearing before the Hunter Committee he said " It is a movement intended to replace method of violence and a movement based entirely upon truth. It is as I have conceived it, an extention of the domestic law in the political field and my experience has led me to the conclusion that the movement and that alone can rid India of the possibility of violence, spreading throughout the length and breath of the land, the redress of grievances."⁵³

Injustice and oppression on the part of the English was an fact. To fight against it, was considered just for the fight was to uphold the principles of truth and justice. The method therefore to be adopted is Satyagraha. It is rightly remarked that " Gandhi pointed out that Satyagraha was a spiritual force and its universal applicability was demonstration of its permanence and invincibility."⁵⁴

Satyagraha thus emphasised upon the people the need to conquer hatred through love, and violence through self-suffering. To prevent the possibility of Satyagraha technique being abused it is aptly pointed out that " Gandhi maintained that there could not be any Satyagraha for an unjust cause and Satyagraha for the

53) Tendulkar D. G. - Life of M.K. Gandhi., Vol. I. p. 340.

54) Chousalkar A. S. - Indian Idea of Political Resistance, p.68.

just cause was in vain, if the men expousing it were not determined and capable of suffering to the end and the slightest use of violence often defeated a just cause."⁵⁵

Satyagraha according to Gandhi was an all time weapon which could be used to wage struggle against injustice and oppression and he sincerely wanted the Indians to adopt this technique for securing ' Swaraj ' Gandhi says " For me the law of Satyagraha the law of love is an eternal principle of co-operate will all that is good. I desire to non-co-operate with all that is evil, whether it is associated with my wife, son or myself."⁵⁶ Satyagraha can be undertaken only for social good and never for personal gain."⁵⁷

The object of Satyagraha is not to humiliate the opponent but convert him, and lead him to truth and justice. As Gandhi once remarked " The essence of non-violent technique is that it seeks to liquidate antagonisms but not the antagonists."⁵⁸ Gopinath Dhawan thus rightly concludes " the Satyagrahi fights with a view

55) Chousalkar A. S. - Indian Idea of Political Resistance, p.69.

56) Young India., p. 1054. Reference taken from Dhawan Gopinath
The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi,
p. 128.

57) Ibid., p. 133.

58) Harijan - April 29, 1939, p.101. Reference taken from source
cited above.

to bilateral and not unilateral victory. He aims at the integration and suppression of legitimate differences."⁵⁹

A government that swerves from its rightful path of duty defies the people and works against the principles of ethics and morality, is a government that has not just to be condemned but should be reformed and made aware of its errors, short comings and defects. This awareness has to be inculcated by the Satyagrahas who are never afraid of trusting their opponents. Gandhi says " Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the Satyagrahi is ready to trust him the twenty first time for an implicit faith in human nature is the very essence of his creed."⁶⁰

Conclusion :

In ' Hind Swaraj ' Gandhi is trying to develop an alternative method of political resistance that could be used to secure India's freedom. Gandhi used the method of passive resistance or Satyagraha in South Africa to redress the grievances of the Indians. He thought that this weapon of non-violent struggle could be used in India to overthrow British rule; passive resistance or Satyagraha is based on non-violence and truth and as a means it

60) Gandhi M. K. - Satyagraha in South Africa., p. 147.

is as noble as the end for which it is sought. Gandhi thinks that violent terrorist methods would not solve the problems and if India pursued violent methods she would lose her special place in the world. India holds a unique place in the world because of her commitment to non-violence.

Hence, Gandhi says, " Real Home Rule is possible only where passive resistance is the guiding force of the people. Any other rule is foreign rule."⁶¹

61) Gandhi M. K. - Hind Swaraj., p. 74.