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Gandhian Theory of State

In Gandhi's assessment, the state (Western type) was the symbol of violence in concentrated form. In order to ensure allegiance from the citizens the state (which means its authority) applies coercion or violent measures mercilessly.

Once he said "the individual has a soul but the state is a soulless machine, the state can never be weaned away from violence to which it owes its existence". In other words, Gandhi treated both state and violence or coercion synonymous. He further says that there is a state but not violence or coercion in any form cannot be imagined.

He gathered experience in South Africa that more and more power to the state meant more and more violence or greater amount of coercion. In the name of the maintenance of law and order the South Africa's white government acquired enormous power and this led to the ruthless administration, exploitation and curtailment of individuals' liberty.

He once said that a political organisation based on violence would never receive his approval. Rather, he is always afraid of such an organisation. What he felt about the Western state system is quite explicit in a comment which he made, "I look upon an increase in the power of the state with greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which is at the root of progress".

From the above analysis it is absolutely clear that Gandhi rejected the state of Western model on the ground that it represented violence or coercion. Now the question is why did he oppose violence so much? The modern state, according to Gandhi, was about to destroy individuality—that individual freedom and spontaneous urge to work.

Secondly, the individualism is the root cause of progress. Gandhi believed that nothing could be done by applying coercion. Again, the individual cannot be forced to do any work against his will or spontaneous desire. To put it in

other words, according to Gandhi the progress of the society can be achieved through the functions which the individuals perform willingly.

Here Gandhi appears to us as a great individualist philosopher. The two great utilitarian philosophers—Bentham (1748-1832) and J. S. Mill (1806-1872)—wanted to put curb upon the activities of the state to enhance the quantum of freedom of the individuals. The state, prescribed by Bentham and Mill, is called limited state. Both Bentham and J. S. Mill did not approve coercion for demanding allegiance from the individual's.

But Gandhi appears to us as more aggressive. Under any circumstances the individual's freedom cannot be sacrificed. Gandhi's love for individual's freedom ranks him with the great anarchist philosophers (we shall discuss his anarchism later on). The central idea is that to Gandhi state is an undesirable political organisation because of its close connection with violence.

Sovereignty of State:

Gandhi was not interested at all in building up a comprehensive and well-argued political theory. He was a mass leader, philosopher and freedom fighter. On various issues and situations he expressed opinions which constitute certain aspects of political theory and state sovereignty is such a theory. In Western political thought, state sovereignty is a much talked theory and large number of scholars and philosophers has dealt with this concept. Bodin and Hobbes are chief among them.

Mahatma Gandhi was an effective leader in India. He was a progressive thinker also. Gandhiji always always wanted to adopt different cultures. He supported western and eastern both cultures and tradition. So in this way this thinking off course effect in every states also. Because India is an huge country so there live different cultures different traditions and different religions also. So, Gandhian this theory is very very important for a state. Gandhi ji also supported freedom, equality, justice for each and every persons so it does effect on a state, because there lives several persons and every person needs to be free.