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Impact of Gandhian Thoughts on Indian English Literature

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Abstract: Gandhi is considered as a national father of India. He is still alive in form of his philosophy and amplitude in the heart of Indians. The present article presents the importance of Gandhian thoughts and his message for his country. His ideology and thoughts for the religion, politics, discipline and cleanliness are presented here. The divine soul of Gandhi adorns as a school of truth and non-violence. It praises Gandhi's motivational thoughts and life for youth. Moreover, it gives important message to read good books and thoughtful literature to youth rather than sinking in social Medias and internet. It compares the situations of Gandhi's time and contemporary time and tries to prove that Gandhi's thoughts are beyond the time and age. Further, the impacts of Gandhi's thoughts in Indian English literature illustrates through the works of three writers of Indian English literature. R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchables* are written on the basis of Gandhian philosophy. The article is an attempt to attract the youth to learn art of living through the important thoughts of Gandhi.

Key Words: Gandhi, Contemporary youth of India, Impact of Gandhism on Indian, Vaishnava Jan, political, religious ideology of Gandhi.

As Gandhi opines in his *Hind Swaraj* "The force of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth or love." (Gandhi XVII) No one section or field in India which has not been impacted or affected by the Gandhian thoughts and his ideology. Politics, religion, discipline, cleanliness, etc. are the very impacting ideals given by Gandhi. It is the matter of taking proud of that he was Gujarati. People of Gujarat can feel pride as a Gujarati. Whenever, the writers write something on Gandhi, he naturally provokes by his thoughts. This provocation is not negative but such a positive impression with an

embracement of heart that it affects directly to the reader or spectator. There is no exaggeration to say that Gandhi was a great divine fame for Indians. He is an ideal model for world's mobilization. Moreover, he is universally considered as a prophet of humanity and assibilation of mankind. His graph of popularity and acclamation has the similarity among the all community of people. His name and fame is beyond the boundaries. Mostly, a large group of people has the recognition of Gandhi as a political figure of India and snatcher of freedom from the great British Empire. However, Gandhi is more than this practical bigotry. He is a philosopher and great inspirational momentum for the all generations of people. His

thoughts are ageless and unbidden for people. Everyone feels the courageous and hopefulness with his thoughts and amplitudes. As Gandhi talks about 'Unity' in his *Hind Swaraj* "A clay pot would break through impact, if not with one stone, then with another. The way to save the pot is not to keep it away from the danger point but to bake it so that no stone would break it." (Gandhi X)

The present time is the age of competition and rush, most of the times without any motifs and proper establishment of way. Contemporary youth continuously searches the way of success and proper path of art of living from social Medias and internet. Youth is spoiling his time and energy after watching the motivational videos from You Tube, Facebook and WhatsApp. They are not really know that the motivation and encouragement is gradual process which comes through the reading of good books like *My Experiments with Truth* and *Hind Swaraj* and other great writers' books. It is necessary to read Gandhi to understand him for youth. It is painful thing that today Gandhi is only reminded for his nationalism and his photos on Indian currency and much more for his logo as a National Father of India. Youths do not take care of his ideology and philosophy which is caused to set him on the highest peak of humanity. Sometimes, it seems that it is the scheme of just self-satisfaction and self-deception. The true tribute of Gandhi asks for the picaresque reformation and follow of his path. This Gandhian path has the following motifs.

1. To follow truth among the cruelest crisis,

2. To follow the hymn of equality and brotherhood among the brutal people,
3. To believe in sacrifice and service of people on the cost of life,
4. To enrich self and fight against evil without harm or wound through words, thoughts and physical accusation,
5. To repents for misdeeds and mistakes with confession and to keep account of evil deeds always and forget about the good deeds,
6. To stay strongly against the evil of mankind.
7. And the last but not least, to keep clean and calm the surroundings.

In short, Gandhi's views are based on the poem of great Gujarati poet Narsinh Mehta:
Vaishnav jan to tene re kahiye
je/ peed paraayi jaane re...
Means (one who is a Vaishnav knows the pain of others...)

Gandhian philosophy and his thoughts are profoundly affected the writers of all languages in India. The novels, fictions, dramas, poetry and other literature based on Gandhian thoughts have created its own distinctive impact on readers. The writers of post and pre-independence India have attracted with his thoughts and introduce them in their literary works. Especially, in Indian English literature, a number of writers have written on Gandhian amplitude in their works. Truth, non-violence and equality, the weapons of Gandhi against evil are applied in their works to show the real strength of Gandhism.

As Arvind Sharma writes in his article *Truth and Non-violence*:

Truth and non-violence are generally considered to be the two key ingredients of Gandhian thought. It is possible to pursue one without the other. It is thus possible to pursue truth without being nonviolent. Nations go to war believing truth is on their side, or that they are on the side of truth. The more sensitive among those who believe truth is on their side insisting not that there should be no war but that it should be a just war. The most sensitive – the pacifists among them-avoid violence altogether but it could be argued that in doing so they have gone too far and abandoned truth, especially when interpreted as justice. Even Mahatma Gandhi argued that although he was opposed to war, the two parties engaging in it may not stand on the same plane: the cause of one side could be more just than the other, so that even a nonviolent person might wish to extend his or her moral support to one side rather than to the other. (Sharma)

Many novels and dramas in Indian English writing with Gandhian thoughts represent the solutions of the problems through Gandhian approach. For an example, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, R. K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* and *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand.

Kanthapura was written by Raja Rao in 1938. It was very crucial

time when this novel was published. The Indian freedom struggle was in its catastrophe level. A great mass of youth divided in two parts, one division was followed by revolutionaries and another one was followed by Gandhian path of truth and non-violence. The novel is the best example of Gandhian thoughts. Moorthy is the protagonist of the novel who is the representative of Indian youth. He was attracted by the Gandhian philosophy and decided to go through Gandhi's path. The novel involves the ideas of unity, equality, truth, non-violence and brotherhood of Gandhism. Rao has involved the incidents of freedom struggle such as the acceptance of Khaddar dress and rejection of foreign robes etc. The novel emphasizes that the youth of that time was impressed with Gandhi's ideology. Contemporary situation of India is very different and unique than that time of freedom struggle yet the novel can be proved the best guide for the youth because situation is different or whatsoever but evil and problems of Indian politics, religion and society are still not solved. So, with the help of Gandhian philosophy, one can be hoped a favourable change.

Mulk Raj Anand wrote novel *Untouchable* in 1935. This novel is also symbolically appreciation of Gandhi and his philosophy. As everyone is familiar that Gandhi was a big advocate of untouchables, he considered them a particle of God. The novel presents the idea of Gandhian philosophy and his divine tag of Harijan to untouchables. Untouchability is one of the most critical problems of India which was rejected by Gandhi and his thoughts

are make sure the position of untouchables in society. Thus, this novel of Mulk Raj Anand also presents this idea of rejecting untouchability so indirectly it survives the Gandhian thoughts.

Waiting for the Mahatma is also one of the finest examples of Gandhian philosophy. Mahatma Gandhi is himself an active character in the novel. Although, the leading characters of the novel are Sriram and Bharati, Gandhi actively tells his visions and motifs in the novel through expressing thoughts of Bharati and Sriram. Sriram is the living example in the novel who is impacted by the Gandhian thoughts and totally transformed himself. Title of the novel is symbolically suggests that Sriram's thoughts should be transformed into the real Gandhism. Bharati, symbolically waits for Sriram's transforming thoughts into Gandhi. Real waiting of the novel is the waiting of Gandhian ideology in Sriram. Moreover, the last scene of the novel during the partition is illustrated that if Gandhian philosophy cannot be followed then people turn the way of bloodsheds and violence which is harmful for everyone.

Thus, the Indian English literature is the picture of Indian culture and tradition. Directly or indirectly, the literature aims at to success of Gandhian views and philosophy. it is necessary in the contemporary society that one should know about Gandhi's thoughts and his real dreamt India. The youth of the nation should ready to choose a path of Gandhi. Rapes, murders, violence, corruption, dirtiness, and many other evils can be overcome through his

thoughts and philosophy. His ideology can able to establish the new positive thoughts among youth of the nation.

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