

Chapter-V

CONCLUSION

Dissemination of Ideas

It is the strength of a political leader or an icon to communicate his ideas to the masses and influence them by the depth of his ideology. His strength lies in his communication potential. It is through communication that he brings his audiences to follow or deny his line of thought. An icon of the masses influences them by the force of his argument. On the basis of his ideology, he becomes their icon. The ideology that he develops may be communicated through the electronic media, as it is being done by the modern leaders – reaching to their audience through TV channels, internet, mobile phones etc.; they may communicate their ideology to the people through literary forms which may be in any form like pamphlets, newspaper articles, journals, letters, autobiography, essays and so on. The icons may try to reach to their masses through mass organisations or rallies also.

It is true that an icon has to be a good communicator and his communication potential plays a very important role in his mounting on the ladder of popularity. He can disseminate his ideas to the masses through any modes of communication that are available at his disposal.

The two world icons M. K. Gandhi and Nelson Mandela have been successful communicators of their ideas. Apart from being the fighters, philosophers and social workers, they were good writers also. Through their writings they could communicate their thoughts to the masses. Their iconic stature

accounts for their efforts leading to the successful emancipation of their people but, at the same time their ideologies also stimulated discussions the world over.

Mahatma Gandhi is by all means the most discussed, widely accepted and the most popular political figure of pre-independence or post-independence eras of Indian political thoughts. In the pre-independence era, he was himself present on the scene physically and was instrumental in influencing the tide of the events by his ideas and philosophy. In the post-independence era also, his ideology is found to be relevant in some areas of politics or social life. As a philosopher and a visionary, there is hardly any area or discipline that he left untouched. This powerful socio-political figure of twentieth and twenty first centuries had his say in all the disciplines of political and social thoughts. He affects all aspects of human consciousness by influencing various disciplines like history, sociology, politics, religion, psychology and philosophy. His writings have occupied an important place in his contemporary age and the age that follows. The literary output of the Indian writers after Gandhi has a reflection of Gandhian thoughts in their works. In the post-independence age, the Indian way of life, the customs, the values, the political scene, the social ills and their cure can't be presented in their true colour without a touch of Gandhian philosophy. The principles he advised and the ideas he supported show an impress upon the Indian social fabric of his contemporaries and after him. He was himself a prolific and a voluminous writer who influenced the writings of his contemporaries and of the writers after him.

While talking of Gandhi as a communicator of his ideas, we have to realise his potential mass appeal because of his supreme faculty of communication. He used many journalistic modes to reach to the minds of the masses. It was his

unique strength and an appeal of his personality to gather men, women and children at a venue on his single call. People would sing the song that he sang, join the protest that he made against the authorities, live their lives the way he liked them to live, adopt the principles he prescribed as moral dictates, chant prayers with him, rise against injustice and exploitation on his single call, disobey the civil authorities if he advised them to do so, embrace the habit of using home made things on his call – such a wide and unquestioned mass appeal, Gandhi achieved on the strength of his unique communication skill. He spoke to the people in their simple language and touched the very simple issues of everyday life. He carved a niche for himself in the hearts of the masses by becoming their emancipator – relieving them from political and social bondages. Through the developmental work of the villages, colonies and the households, Gandhi reached to the minds and the hearts of the masses – his appeal was well marked on them. None of the social issues was left untouched by him; the relevance of these issues is felt in modern Indian society also.

To reach to the people of all classes, Gandhi would exploit journalistic activities – write to the press, write in the journals or papers like *Young India*, *Navjivan*, *Indian Opinion* and *Harijan*. He would communicate with the masses through his writings of different sorts. His felicity of writing is at its best in his first book *Hind Swaraj* that he wrote on board the ship while travelling from South Africa to India. He inculcated a simple style that would not require a scholastic knowledge to read and decipher. It made his writings acceptable to readers of different groups. His mother tongue was Gujarati and in this language he felt himself very comfortable. Therefore, he expressed the story of his life, his autobiography, in this language from which it was translated in other languages for

the benefit of the readers of other languages and countries. Through his writings, he would suggest the people the ways to maintain a healthy life. His originality as a thinker and his moral appeal attracted the masses. In his written works he would not preach great philosophies but only simple issues that aimed at keeping the moral values high. Whatever he preached in real life and even practised himself, he would write down in his books. His writings on Satyagraha analyse his philosophy of a non-violent protest that he devised to win over the opponents by a peaceful resistance. M. K. Naik remarks about him as an author:

Gandhi's writings are a mine of stimulating thought on political, social, economic, cultural and spiritual issues. He was no erudite scholar, by no means an original thinker with a razor-sharp mind, nor a brilliant theoretician. But solidly grounded in the ancient Indian tradition, he possessed a profound moral earnestness which enabled him to rediscover the ethical values of this tradition; and with his convictions supported by similar trends in ancient and modern Western thought, he boldly applied his findings to the political and social realities of colonial India. (Naik 122)

His simple style and his analytical approach to the practical issues of life make him a widely popular writer not only in India but the world over.

As the journalistic modes were confined to the urban areas, he would ensure his reach to the rural masses through 'padyatras', through group communications, through mass processions, and by including the folks as mates in his ashrams.

Gandhi's communicative ability is witnessed in his influence on the life and social patterns of Indian people portrayed in the Indian English literature produced at the time of Gandhi and after him. The Indian literature shows well marked impressions of the Gandhian precepts:

Indian English literature of the Gandhian age was inevitably influenced by these epoch-making developments in Indian life.

(Naik118)

The issues which were raised by Gandhi in real life for the uplift and welfare of the masses, became the themes of many novels of Indian English writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan. Gandhi's works in the political and social fields fed the works of these novelists with themes like – freedom struggle, East-West struggle, communal discord, untouchability, problems of the down-trodden, of the oppressed and of the poor. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* hailed as a Gandhian novel, reflects the concept of community development through Gandhian means; R. K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* and *The Vendor of Sweets* show an influence of Gandhi on the issues presented by the author. The impression of Gandhi on Bakha, the central character of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* is well-marked. His life changes after he listens to the speech of Gandhi. Not only the issues raised by Gandhi became the central themes of literary creations of Indian writings but Gandhi himself acted as a theme for the literary works of these writers. The poets and novelists would make a mention of Gandhi and his principles in their literary creations.

Gandhian impact is discernible in the electronic productions like TV documentaries, and the films like the award winning *Gandhi* of Richard

Attenborough. In the present century also, Raj Kumar Hirani's, Sanjay Dutt starrer, blockbuster film *Lagey Raho Munna Bhai* was an outstanding success on the silver screen testifying the influence of Gandhi's ideology on the Indian psyche. Anna Hazare's mass protest against corruption at all levels of administration in Indian polity is the re-enactment of Gandhi's Satyagraha against excesses of any kind. Anna Hazare earned the support of masses to press upon the Indian Government to bring a Jan Lokpal Bill, after he claimed that his protest would follow the Gandhian ways and declared that he was a staunch Gandhian himself. Masses find satisfaction to believe that in the leadership of Anna they have got an opportunity of being led by a true Gandhian. The non-violent support of the masses to Anna's protest is the testimony of Gandhi's relevance on Indian way of life in the present century also.

Many of Gandhi's ideas have been put into practice in India and abroad. The 'Pachayati Raj', a concept of Governance by the common man is an output of Gandhian philosophy of empowering the villages to rule themselves. The non-violent struggles in many parts of the world show an impression of Gandhian principles. Nelson Mandela also testifies in his autobiography that Gandhi's non-violent movements and protests had an influence in his fight against apartheid in South Africa.

Mandela's evolution from a Xhosa child to a great leader of masses had started from his student life. Since his impressionable age, he would see around him and in all walks of life, the exploitation and the racial discrimination that had become a part of a multiracial society. This unjust discrimination would prick him deep and his troubled mind would allow steel to occupy most of the space in his

will power. Consequently, a determined fighter, ready to fight tooth and nail to root out the evil of apartheid from the African soil, emerged. His conscience revolted against accepting the subjugation only because of the colour of his skin. Since his childhood, he exhibited his displeasure with any kind of discrimination and exploitation. He decided to fight for the people to get them their selfhood and dignity. As a student, as a lawyer, as a member of ANC, as a prisoner – he would speak on behalf of the group and his fellow people. These people were aroused from their slumbers not by the endless misery they were subjected to suffer, but by the shakes and waking calls given to them by the leaders like Nelson Mandela. He communicated to them how they were victimised and told them how their suffering was inhuman and sinful. He told them that they were themselves capable of reforming the inhuman system of Governance. These ideas he communicated through meetings, through pamphlets and through letters, diaries and books also.

His communication with the people continued not only during the fight against apartheid but even after the battle was over with a positive result. He wished to communicate his ideas to the masses through the exhilarating story of his life, his autobiography that he had started writing in the prison itself in a calligraphic style knowing that the authorities would not allow him to take out the written account in its readable form outside the prison. The story of his life presented by himself presents an account of the salubrious airs and landscapes of the country, the geographical details of his native village and of his culture, of which he was all the time nostalgic after he had left for studies and for struggle as a professional and as a freedom fighter. The circumstances and the conditions which crushed the spirits of the blacks putting them on the edge in their own country have been presented in a fair amount. These were the conditions which

aroused in him a resolve to wage a battle of truth and reason. The hardships which a fighter had to face, the strategies he had to make, his own evolution as a leader of the masses and his personal experiences as a leader, have been presented in detail with precision. The humility and truth with which he fought and made the sacrifices are displayed in the presentation of the account of the hardships he had to suffer at the Robben Island and other prisons. He has presented the details of the proceedings of the courts to provide to the readers as to how the prosecution of the freedom fighters was unjust and unfair. These all details are interspersed with the comments and messages of a visionary, who wants to teach to the masses the lessons of self assertion and selfhood that he had squeezed through his prolonged experiences as a freedom fighter:

The challenge for every prisoner, particularly every political prisoner, is how to survive prison intact, how to emerge from prison undiminished, show to conserve and even replenish one's beliefs. The first task in accomplishing that is learning exactly what one must do to survive. To that end, one must know the enemy's purpose before adopting a strategy to undermine it. Prison is designed to break one's spirit and destroy one's resolve. To do this, the authorities attempt to exploit every weakness, demolish every initiative, negate all signs of individuality – all with the idea of stamping out that spark that makes each of us human and each of us who we are. (Mandela 463)

This wisdom is an outcome of the experiences of a freedom fighter. This same he has communicated to his readers through a narration of the story of his life.

Mandela's *Favourite African folktales* is a book that shows Mandela's deep reverence for African culture. Mandela has collected in this book, the thirty two oldest stories of Africa, and a few new ones also, with the hope to spread an essence of the African Culture throughout the world. The most exciting thing about these stories is that they are as old as Africa is.

Conversations With Myself is an autobiographical work that presents to the readers a collection of his letters, speeches, interviews and notes written by Mandela himself. The book contains four parts representing different stages of his life. The book provides a fair idea of the life of the author though in the disjointed form. He strings together the pieces from his life. The book enables the readers to get a fair idea of the life of a fighter and the innermost thoughts of his mind, through his letters and diaries.

The Struggle is My Life, a book published years before his release (1978), is a collection of his speeches and his political writing from his days as a leader of Youth League of the ANC. The book is a document which throws much light on the grit and determination of the man. Though it was banned in South Africa at that time, but where ever it reached, it disseminated the ideas of the writer.

Mandela has remained a defining figure of anti-apartheid movement during his struggle against the White rule and after. Before his incarcerating imprisonment, he influenced the world with his ideas of independence and free democratic world. His literary efforts contributed to the alienation of the South African regime's policies of apartheid. Many literary writers were inspired by the ideology of Nelson Mandela even during his imprisonment. The anti-apartheid literature can't be thought of without having the influence of Nelson Mandela's

ideas. His humanistic ideology that he has outlined in his works has remained a source of inspiration for the modern world in eliminating the discrimination of all kinds.

Through these and many other works, mostly autobiographical in nature, Nelson Mandela has tried to disseminate his ideas to the world. Similarly, Gandhi's works were the great mines of philosophy for not only his contemporaries but still are, for the coming generations also. The study of the lives of the two leaders makes their ideologies amply clear leading to their becoming the icons of the masses. Without a proper communication of the ideas, the leaders could not have asserted a mass appeal. Therefore, a tentative conclusion seems to be emerging that to attain the iconic stature of the heights of Gandhi and Mandela, the leaders need to be good writers also. A leader, if he is a writer also, can disseminate his ideas far and wide, and with a better ease.

Gandhi and Mandela as Authors

Gandhi and Mandela, the two world icons, have their acceptance as great writers and also have behind them the wealth of a large number of readers. Interestingly, the autobiographies of both of them were written mostly during their confinement in prison. Both have, besides many books to their credit, collections of letters, pamphlets, and newspaper articles etc. Their books and other writings are a great source of their ideas which they had formed from their experiences of life and their struggles, against the oppressors in their respective places.

Gandhi's collection of written work is very large. His works are based on a variety of subjects. Besides being a great writer, he was a great reader also since the early stages of his life. His reading of the works of great English writers, the

Bible and the Gujarati texts enriched his thoughts and vocabulary which came to fill his written works also. As a writer, he started writing even while he was in his teens; *London Guide*, he had written when he was very young. He wrote many pamphlets while he was in South Africa. His articles appeared in newspapers also. Once he was mobbed and lynched in South Africa after the Europeans were angered to read his article in a newspaper.

Gandhi recorded his experiences in his writings. His articles written in Gujarati were translated into English and other languages, and were published in the newspapers of India and Europe. It ensured a dissemination of Gandhi's ideas to a wide range of readers. His contribution to the *Indian Opinion*, *Harijan* and other journals or newspapers was large and had a large number of readerships.

Gandhi experimented widely and recorded the outcome of these experiments in written form. Besides experiments, the experiences that he got from life, he rendered to a written form. *A Guide to Health* is a collection of the results he gathered from his dietary experiences. About the principles and strength of his theory of passive resistance which he called Satyagraha, he wrote in the form of a book. These ideals are also an outcome of his experiments which his intellect would keenly observe. His encounters with the precepts and principles of different religions, he recorded in his autobiography, or in his letters written to such people as Raichandbhai. The people he met or the places he visited would find place in his writings if any of them appealed to his imagination.

Gandhi had a quickened sense of observation and an equally strong urge for writing about his experiences. Whenever an idea came to his mind, he would write that immediately. He wrote while travelling – whether in a train or in a ship. When he got tired of writing with his right hand, he would use his left. *Hind*

Swaraj a criticism of modern civilization was written on board the ship while travelling from England to South Africa. Though he was such a racy writer, yet his work left hardly any scope for correction.

Clarity of expression and simplicity of style is the hall-mark of Gandhi's style. He avoided long sentences and also avoided becoming verbose. Conciseness of his expressions did not leave any scope for compression and that is why nothing superfluous emerged from his pen. He wrote for the masses, not for the scholars only. Apt words were fitted in their proper place. When required, he coined new phrases to suit the situation and to convey the meaning aptly. A well read scholar, Gandhi had developed his own style of writing which was simple but forceful in expression. He knew that his readers were not of one age or one group – they were varied, coming from different groups of age or class. He wrote for children, for literates and for half-literates. So, he was read not only by a particular set of people but by the great scholars like Tolstoy also.

All his writings have a tinge of morality as the basis. Even his autobiography – *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* presents his concern for the moral values which he held high all through his life. Originally written in Gujarati, the book is translated in English. The author has tried to present a series of moral tests that he had to undertake at various stages of life. The portrayal of the characters of his father, mother, wife and few friends show his knack of presenting the pen portrayals of personalities with precision. His religious affiliations, his experiences in England, in South Africa and later in India find their due mention in the story of his life.

The great volume of his writings, his simple style and his easy reach to the hearts of the masses help in the making of Gandhi, an icon of the masses of the world, not only of his own age but of the ages after him.

Nelson Mandela's collection of literary works is also large but unlike Gandhi's, the choice of his subjects is limited. In his writings, he largely dwells on the description of his fight against apartheid. So, most of his works are autobiographical and centred on his experiences as a freedom fighter. Mandela talks about the exploitation and discrimination which were at their highest in South Africa. This behaviour by one section of the society against the other on the basis of colour was inhuman and irrational. Mandela records in his works the instances of the behaviour of Whites, which was brutal in its inception and crushed the spirits of the sufferers. He provides in his writings a fair idea of the prevailing conditions – how the whites subjected the Blacks to an irrational discrimination of colour and how the Blacks displayed a spirit of docility in accepting whatever was being done against them. The social conditions of South Africa are provided in detail by Mandela in his works.

In his writings, he provides an account of the circumstances which led him to join the ANC. The volume of his writings comprising of his letters, diaries and books present the point of view of a freedom fighter. His prison life, his grit and determination to fight, the relentless sufferings, the atrocities perpetrated by a senseless Government – all are presented in depth by Mandela in his writings. An account of life is presented from the point of view of a fighter who wages a political fight not for himself but for the whole class.

In his works, a spirit of nationalism and humanity is all pervasive. African culture, geographical details, social set-up, family structures, customs, and

structures of the tribes in their historical perspective – everything gets a fair treatment in the hands of a true nationalist writer. He writes to promote the point of view of a nationalist. He is nostalgic at places, sad and angry at some other places in his description, but never losing hope. His writings have a positive note and convey a message of hope to the world.

All his writings show the writer's knack of building images with truth and fidelity. With the help of his narration, he transports the reader's imagination to the actual place of action. His style of writing is crisp and seldom complex. His sentences may be long but they never lose their meaning till the reader reaches to the end of it. The emotional tone and sentimentalism are the main features of Mandela's style which make the tragedy of a life that was spent in prison for the most of its part, alive before the eyes of the readers. The freedom fighter and icon of the masses communicates his life and his ideology through his written works to his readers.

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