



The concept of non-violence and the global socio-political issues, envisioned by Gandhi and Abdul Rehman Munif. A critical study.

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Abstract:- Literature forms the bedrock of a society and helps in the socio-cultural development of a nation. It would also help in the creation of a society with the values of love and peace, empowering the age-old traditional practices of war and deprivation. Saudi Arabia is a country that has rich cultural history and has since ages gained a prestigious place in the globe, as the birthplace of both, the Islam and the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad- peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him. Donning the pluralism in the diversity of literature, Arabian Novel holds a significant importance in raising the socio-cultural aspects of Arabian life. The peninsula would be sincerely accorded with the coining of the word 'Peace,' as the main source that the region has drawn its inspiration from, is 'Al-Quran,' the religious book of Islam, which makes it a moral obligation of a person to do justice and live in accordance with peace with all, friends as well as foes. The Gandhian notion of non-violence and the one coined by the Saudi novelists lies on the same values, and has no overall religious interference in them, in particular.

Keywords: Novel, non-violence, Peninsula, casteism, war.

Introduction:-

The contemporary world has a long list of pending challenges that need to be taken care of, at an earliest. Ranging from global wars, to the atrocities on minorities throughout the globe, and the possession of nuclear as well as non-nuclear arsenal by the atrocious nations is the major cause of concern among the global peace keeping forces and bodies. The UN and its sister organisations have always tried to reconcile the nations in maintaining peace and shred off the enmity, and come to talks to solve any major disputes between them, but to no avail. The decade long Afghan war, global resistance to ISIS, the wars in Yemen and Ukraine, are some of the major concerns among the peacekeepers, as these wars have already led to millions of civilian deaths. The world has witnessed many such instances, wherein a state was subjugated and its inhabitants were skinned off, of the material as well as non-material possessions. Such atrocities that led to chaos all around, deprivation, poverty, hunger, and non-availability of medico-legal aid to the populace, would envision and proclaim the need for a plan and strategies globally, so that the global inhabitants would no longer be left to suffer. The Indian diaspora, living and settled in South Africa,

much before India attained complete independence from the British rule, under the able guidance of the pioneer of non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi, resorted to such tactics and principles that would lead their way to peace and harmonious development of the society. It was just the beginning of a new philosophy, when the world needed such leaders and such a beneficial philosophy, as envisioned by Gandhi, which however had not been his discovery. He just brought the concept into application, which the world had almost forgotten to apply in practical life.[1]

Presently, we are the natives of ‘Global Village,’ with the most of us discoverable to the remotest parts of the world, through internet and telecommunication. We have some global policies that benefit most of us altogether, yet we have shortcomings also. Not only in the political world, but our social order also needs some changes. Poverty and Starvation are the biggest challenges that the world faces the most nowadays, with ‘Yemen’ and some African nations, like Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia as the front runners. Some Non-Governmental Organisations like the ‘UNICEF’ have been sharing the heart touching pictures and news about the starvation in these states, wherein a child of 9 years would be seen shrunken and looking like 3 years of age, due to continuous starvation, which sends chills down our spine. On one hand, the elite and rich would spend hundreds of dollars on food and waste too much of it, or are found over eating, while on the other hand, starvation and hunger continues. It is by here that we think of introduction and inculcation of such measures that would ensure that if not to the higher extent, but at least a meal is served to all and nobody sleeps in hunger. This could be done at all the levels of the society, with the elite, rich, and poor, all donating to charity whatever they can. [2]

The whole of the globe faces some social issues, with some of them common to all, while others remain uncommon and confined to a distinct nation. Gender based violence is the most common among such issues, while as discrimination based on colour, and sect remains the distant second and third. India too faces such social issues and a lot more in addition to it, like ‘dowry’ and ‘casteism,’ all of which are being addressed since ages. In the contemporary age, India has seen progress in these areas and some prominent contributors have rendered a helping hand to overcome these issues, with ‘Raja Ram Mohan Roy’ as the pioneer of such movements and changes, whose untired labour and toil helped in the abolition of ‘sati’ and ended ‘child marriage’ in India. For his significant contribution towards the India society, Raja Ram was adjudged as the ‘father of Indian renaissance’ by the historians. [3] Other such Indian social issues as casteism and scavenging were strongly rejected by the greats like Mahatma Gandhi, who felt the need for all to be their own scavengers and do not let their scavenging be done by a definite class of people, who would be considered as the ‘low caste’ people, but for their job, duties, and responsibilities. Gandhi was equivocal as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, for the abolition of social evils and advocated certain measures that would ensure a flawless social order, with the Dalits and Adivasis on the same seat, as the so-called upper-class citizens, like Brahmanas. Gandhi made a strong statement on the social issues and held that no political party in India could ever afford to ignore these issues. Gandhi talked about the abolition of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity, and Brahmin- non-Brahmin skirmishes. Since ages, the general population of India would resort to in fighting on these issues and would not allow the inter caste marriages and gatherings. Untouchables, commonly known as ‘*achhoot*,’ were not allowed to drink water from a well or a pond, that was meant for the use by higher caste men, and these people were assigned the duties of manual scavenging for the people of higher castes. They were not allowed to get themselves enrolled in the schools meant for higher castes. [4] Gandhi made

an appeal for the general masses, through public sermons, during the protest gatherings, to ensure that India stays united on all fronts of the social order and nobody should resort to communal, non-communal, and casteism violence or any untoward incidents, as it would hamper India's collective conscience against the common enemy and for the common cause. He taught people the lessons on unity, brotherhood, non-violence, and truth by quoting the living religious scriptures and teachings. Non-stealing, peace, and truthfulness were the pearls in his crown of non-violence. [5]

Present day India feels the same heat, as it used to feel during the Gandhian era, when we talk of social issues, as there remain many undecided and undone things from the past. Gandhi, however tried his best in order to get the desired results, but he remained at odds many a times, as he had a different battle to fight. The most gruesome among the present-day evils in Indian sub-continent remains the 'Dowry system,' to which the Indian Parliament in its 12th year of Republic, in the year 1961, Act no. 28 of 1961, has already designated any act of giving or taking valuable security, given or taken directly or indirectly as illegal. The action still remains in place and the society does not pay heed to any such laws. However, the police in the country has been doing a great job and is always keen on dealing with this social issue in order to protect the society. Other issue that Gandhi made an appeal against is the bribery, which remains the root cause of corruption globally. It has made its way from small business establishments to the parliament of our country, and would not leave a single stratum of the society. These social issues in India are so bad for its diversity and culture that these remain the utmost priority of the government to solve them or they will take away India's pride and prestige with them.

The Arab world, from the word go, has seen social issues prevailing like stars in the sky, with some of them in control and others out of the hand. The Arab philosophers like Ibn-Sina and Al-Farabi, to Sadiq Jalal- al-Azam and Abdul Rehman al-Munif, did make efforts to get rid of the social evils, so that prosperity remains the destiny of the Arabs. The Arabian peninsula in general and the Middle East in particular, has seen a long history of military as well as non-military skirmishes, resulting in political and social chaos, loss of life and property, as well as regime changes promptly. The political chaos that resulted because of the regime changes amid civilian and military protests led to losses worth billions of dollars and millions of lives, in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Libya. Abdul Rehman al-Munif has had a vision of the current Arab crisis, that is why he moved from oil economics to literature. When asked about his switching from economics to literature, Munif replied that his great gamble was in politics, and his experiment with political activism made him know that the methods organised in Arab politics were substandard and inadequate.[6] Munif's major concern regarding the Arab land was the non-competent politics, that paved way to insecurities and trouble in the mainland Arab. His philosophy regarding the Arab renaissance remained that the intellectual Arabs would resort to raising their intellectual voices as they had a presupposed role, either garnered or gained.

Munif's political vision and a deep study of the Arabian society and the different Arab regimes came up in his novels, which he proclaimed as prophecies, pronouncing chaos in future, political turmoil, poverty, starvation, and hunger, especially in the stagnant Arab societies. Munif, very cleverly resorted to the use of pen, in order to garner a political awakening among the Arabs. Unlike Gandhi, who resorted to mass and organized protests against the regime, Munif did not have any such plans and just went on with his supremacy with literature. Common issues of

the Arab natives would come up in his philosophy and the long-lasting impression was drawn on the everyday happenings. Munif would feel that the impending dominions would pave way for war and turmoil and the fate of Arab world would be something uncommon, if the Arab politics was not altered to fit in the global scenario. [7] Munif was stripped of his Saudi citizenship for his political ideas and the acquired Arab political philosophy. He, however, did not stop and kept on with his vision and made some brave statements in his novels.

Both Gandhi and Abdul Rehman Munif would fear the lives of their fellow citizens to the political, social, military, as well as non-military turmoil and war. Besides wars and turmoil, certain social issues, like bribery, and violence needed to be taken care of, as these would lead to economic, as well as social backwardness of their nations. Having the feeling and a strong sense of belongingness towards their respective nations, these two modern day great leaders did not want the public dominion, but the dominion of the Lord to rule the world, with justice and liberty. Munif and Gandhi had a great and strong belief in education, that it would act as a forceful tool in the social transformation and made it compulsory for their respective fellow people to stick to knowledge and literature to prosper on all fronts. Gandhi offered non-violence to his followers, while as Munif resorted to political awakening, while both were of the opinion of social awakening at the same time. In Gandhi, we find a leader, while as Munif provides the criteria and philosophy for king making.[8]

Munif's ideas are entrenched in his deep political and philosophical thoughts that are reflected in his novel literary works, like 'Cities of salt' and 'Al-Nihayat.' By the help of these novels, Munif has made a strong mockery of the Arabian politics, as well as the rich and elite people of the Arabian Peninsula. He was one of the strongest advocates of democracy, as echoed in his novels. The message that he gave through his novels was mass political awakening and learning to fight for one's rights, which would otherwise not be met. Most of his books and literary works were banned by the Saudi government, because of the content of the books and the message that was contained in them. Since Saudi Arabia is a Muslim Monarchy, most of the laws of the land are drawn from Islamic ways of life, fatwas, Al-Quran, and Hadith of the Prophet. Moreover, there are no political parties in Saudi Arabia, as the Saudi government has banned all the political parties in the nation and has never permitted any political movements, which are contrary to Munif's philosophy, that being the reason for pressing a ban on his literature in the country. [9]

Promotion of universal brotherhood, living in peace and harmony, creation and application of moral and aesthetic values, non-stealing, non-violence, honesty, value for dignity and worth of all, and doing justice, are some of the messages that we get from the leaders like Gandhi and Abdul Rehman Munif. Both aimed at the overall development of their respective national brethren and worked for the welfare of all. Though there have been attempts for the promotion of peace globally, yet there are leaders in the world, who just to fulfil their ego and pride, resort to the use of arms and ammunition, as the case of Ukraine. The world is at the brink of a nuclear war, with the nuclear-powered states serving one or the other nations fighting a war. Russia, that happens to be a giant power has taken on Ukraine, with all its might and ammunition, along with its allies, though fighting indirectly. On the other hand, the US and its allies are supporting Ukraine on all fronts, causing the world to come closer to a nuclear war. If that happens, the world will come to an end very soon. The UN and its sister organizations are trying their best to stop the war, by offering mediation and everything they could, but have not gained any positive

grounds until now. Leaders must understand that war is never a solution to any problems, but it in turn leads to more peculiar problems. The world has witnessed the full-scale wars on two different occasions and cannot afford to witness another one. The devastation caused by a war is so huge and alarming that it takes decades for a nation to rebuild. Baghdad, once known as the ‘Bride of cities’ has seen such a reckless destruction that it appears as if it never happened to own populace. The twin Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the whole of Syria, and the Twin Towers of US have witnessed some deadliest and the bloodiest episodes of war, that have left an unending negative repute of war.[10]

It is for the global leaders to come to the talks and decide on the future of the humankind. War is not the solution; it is a much bigger problem in itself. The philosophers like Gandhi, Suu-Kyi, Martin Luther King jr., and others have always been vocal for peace prevailing policies, such as non-violence. Non-violence and likewise policies are good for human existence. If we support war, then the existence of humankind on the earth will not only become difficult, but also impossible.

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