**Unit-II**

**Gandhi’s Vision of State**

**Introduction:**

Mahatma Gandhi is considered to be one of the unrivalled leaders of all ages and all nations. His personality and philosophy have inspired millions of people of the whole world. His views on the state begin from a position of deep distrusts and discomfort vis-s-vis the state. He differed from the core commitment that liberals make to the idea of unbrbridle individualism. Hence he obviously does not subscribe to the notion of the State that has as its fundamental principle competing individuals pursuing an end defined by the interests of the isolated, atomized self.

Gandhi criticized the present set-up of state as it was based on too much centralization and violence. The state is to perform the minimum functions while allowing real-freedom (swaraj) to the people for undertaking their personal and general welfare. The people retain the power to resist the misrule and autocracy of the state through Satyagraha. Decentralization of power and authority with village autonomy would be the main structuring of the state. Truth and non-violence are the basic ingredients of the state of his dream which he calls ‘Rama Rajya’ or the ideal state.

The concept of Rama Rajya is a spirit and is not theocratic. Gandhi conceived king Rama as described in the great Hindu epic the Ramayana as an of Good coming down to earth for the welfare of people and upholding truth. He himself was the concrete example of truth in human form. For the pursuit of truth and for welfare of his subjects who were just like his children, he could even sacrifice his kingdom and wife. His kingdom Ayodhya was a real ideal state as no evil spirit was at work there and people enjoyed real peace and happiness. For him, Rama was truth itself. He loved Rama so much that when he was assassinated he uttered only two words,’hey Ram’ (Oh God).

Gandhiji’s views on state are quite opposite to other political thinkers. Like the Anarchists, Gandhi is also in favour of abolition of state. Of course Gandhi does not want to eliminate state by means of revolution as that of Karl Marx. He wants to abolish state by means of Satyagraha or by non-violent means and by abolishing the state; he wants to establish a new society. The society will be a classless society where the people will govern themselves. In his ideal society or stateless democracy there will be no political power.

In such society, all will enjoy equal power. It will be a decentralized society. Every individual will extend their services according to their abilities. There will be no exploitation. In the field of production every one will have shares of their own. There will be no profit motive. They will work for their common good. There will be no profit motive. They will work for their common good. There will do no use of machinery in the field of production. Every one will be manual work for production of their needs.

In his stateless democracy there shall be no provision for heavy vehicles, doctors, lawyers, medicines, and big cities. The society will not be affected even in absence of such facilities. But Gandhi later on realized the importance of such things. According to Gandhi “ Government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-violent because it represents all the people, I do not conceive of such a golden age but I do not believe in the possibility of a pre-dominantly non-violent society and I am working for it.”

Gandhi did not recognize the state as supreme. He regarded the state as one of association of associations. “The state, for Gandhi is not an end in itself, but one of the means of enabling for better to a condition in every department of life.”

Gandhi also opposed the absolute sovereignty of the state. He believed in sovereignty of people instead of absolute sovereignty. He also pointed out that the people have right to resist law if it is contrary to the interest of the people. “he uphold the cause of the sovereignty of the interest of the people.” He uphold the cause of the sovereignty of the people based on moral authority and concluded to the individual the right to resist the authority of the state through non-violent means, if its policies and actions did not appeal to his moral conscience.

Functions of the state:

 According to gandhiji, the functions of the state should be limited. The state should perform only limited functions. Most of the functions of the should be transferred to different voluntary organizations. Even in case of function of voluntary oraganisations, there should be no state interference. The voluntary organization should be given free-hand in performing their function. Gandhiji regarded such type of government as democratic government. It means that in democratic government the voluntary organizations should have right to carry on functions independently without any outside interference.

The functions of the state should not be compulsory. The state should not use any coercion while performing its functions.

The non-violent state has power to take action against the criminals. A non-violent state cannot be free from crime and violence. There may be violence. In such a case, the government may take drastic action against such persons, who resort to violence.

Police:

 According to Gandhiji, there should be police force in his non-violent state. But his police force is different from the present day police force. The police personnels should be believers of non-violence, they should not be the masters, but they should be the servants of the people.there should be mutual co-peration between the police and the people. The police should rarely use their arms.

Reforms of Prison:

Gandhiji also wanted to reform the existing prison system, according to him, prisons should be converted into hand spinning and hand-weaving institutions.the wardens of prisons should consider themselves as friends and instructions. The wardens of prisons should consider themselves as friends and instructors of the prisoners. The criminals should be given proper education so that they may reform themselves. They should also be given adequate privileges for self-government.

Justice;

In his non-violent state, there is also provision for judicial system. But in his judicial system , justice system, justice should not be highly expensive. The number of courts should be limited. People should refer their civil suit to arbitration. The panchayat should be empowered to settle disputes. The legal procedure should be simple. There may be lawyers but their fees should be minimum.

The system of Taxation:

Gandhiji also expressed his views on the tax structure of the state. There may be provisions for taxation.but he wanted to introduce a peculiar system of taxation. The people should not pay their tax in the form of coin but they should make payment in the form of labour.

Representation:

Gandhiji was in favour of representative form of government. In such government, the people should elect their representatives. He however, advocated for direct election in place of indirect election.the members of the panchayats should be directly elected by the people. But the voters can cast only one vote in the election. Gandhijiji also prescribed the qualifications for the candidates of election. The candidates should be selfless,able and incorruptible. They should not hanker after power. The candidates should be social workers. Voters will vote the candidates in recognition of their services to the people.

Gandhiji also mentioned the qualifications of the voters. The qualifications of the voters should be manual work. Manual work gives an opportunity to all who wish to take part in the government and wellbeing of the state.”

Role of Majority:

Gandhiji was of the opinion that there should be rule of majority in democracy. In fact the government should take all decisions on the basis of the votes of majority. But he has not ignored the view must be taken into consideration while taking a particular decision on a particular matter. According to him, “ the rule of majority does not mean that it should suppress the opinion should have greater weight than the opinion of many, if that opinion is sound.”

There will be army in the state. But the army shall be non-violent. They will be trained in the technique of Satyagraha. They will deal with be trained in the technique of Satyagraha. They will deal with the internal disturbances and external aggression by non-violent methods.

Gandhiji non-violent state will be secular. There will be complete religious freedom. There will be no state religion.

Rights and Duties:

Mahatma Gandhi also expressed his views on the rights and duties of the citizens. According to Gandhiji, the citizens should have the following rights and duties.

* Rights to form association
* Freedom of speech
* Freedom of press
* Right to conscience
* Right to religion
* Right to culture and language
* Right to equality irrespective of caste, creed and religion.
* Right to public service irrespective of caste, creed and religion.
* Right to public service irrespective of caste, creed and religion
* Right to honour
* Right to profesionank and other public institutions.
* Right to use public road,educational institutions, tank and other public institutions.

Duties of citizens:

Gandhiji also advocated certain duties for the citizens. The citizens should observe the following duties.

* There should be state secularism
* Provision for adult suffrage
* Free primary education
* Provisions for adequate wages for the industrial labourers.
* Provision for healthy atmosphere of work
* Soluation of unemployment problem
* Financial aid for old age and disease.
* Protection of women worker.
* Prohition of bonded labour
* Maternity leave for women.
* School going students should not be employed in the factories.
* Another duty of the state is to reduce the land revenue for the unproductive
* Imposition of progressive tax
* People should boycott foreign clothes.
* The state should give protection to local production of clothes.
* Another duty of the state is to control the key industries. In the same way the government should control mineral resources.
* There should be prohibition of alcoholic druges.
* The state also controls currency. It is the duty of the state to give financial aid to Indian public undertakings.
* According to Gandhi, the government officials should not be highly paid. Their salary should be deducted. The salaries of the government officers should not be more than five hundred.
* It is the duty of the labourers to form unions to safeguard their own rights.

Thus Gandhi not only advocated for certain fundamental rights of the citizens but also duties. Of course, Gandhi laid more emphasis on duties rather than rights. According to him, “the right to perform one’s duties was the only right that was worth living for and dying for.” Those who work for country they should have only rights. The true source of right is duty. If we all discharge our rights, right will not be far to seek. If leaving duties unperformed, we run after right, they will escape us like a will of the wisp. The more are pursued them, the further they will fly.”