

## **Influence of Gandhian Principles of Nonviolence in the Singing Revolution (Sąjūdis Movement) of Lithuania**

**GOVARDHAN**

Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University,  
New Delhi (India)

(Email : singh.govardhan21@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

The Singing Revolution (Sąjūdis Movement) was a non-violent freedom struggle of Lithuania along with Estonia and Latvia for liberation from an authoritarian regime of the Soviet Union. It is an inspiring precedent of non-violent political action in the late Twentieth century in which people's power of non-violence and their strong desire for independence expressed through the songs and culture. The key determinants which motivated the Leaders of Sąjūdis to adopt Gandhian principles and methods to produce a non-violent counter force against the violence of the Soviet army were; historical linkages, cultural and linguistic ties between Indian and Lithuania, similarity and popularity of Hindu philosophy and religion among the Lithuanian intellectuals, success stories of non-violent freedom struggle of India, and many other non-violent revolutions across the world. The proceedings of Singing Revolution have been the result of collective solidarity of Lithuanian people and their unbroken faith and persistent efforts in employing non-violent means to regain the national sovereignty. In fact, the singing revolution had set an example of the success of Gandhian principles of non-violence in the countries of Eastern Europe, and a major milestone in the history of non-violent revolutions.

**Key Words :** Non-violence, Satyagraha, Civil resistance, Sąjūdis, Baltic way

### **INTRODUCTION**

The people of Lithuania, along with Estonia and Latvia had waged several violent or non-violent wars at different phases of foreign occupation and subjugation of the nation. Moreover, the independence of the Baltic states in late 20<sup>th</sup> century was a watershed not only in the history of the Baltic States, but also stands as a major milestone in the history of modern world. Another importance of this great historical event was that people's non-violent aspirations for the restoration of their lost freedom from totalitarian regime voiced through national cultures and patriotic folk songs which were banned earlier under the Soviet rule. Intrinsically, the leaders of Sąjūdis shifted their techniques, methods and strategies from violent to non-violent to achieve the national freedom. Throughout the non-violent freedom movement (Sąjūdis<sup>1</sup>) of Lithuania, Gandhian principles of non-violence could be seen as a strong driving force in the formulation of strategies, methods and tactics of mass mobilization. In fact, the manifestation of successful non-violent resistance appeared to be well organized, inspired

**How to cite this Article:** Govardhan (2015). Influence of Gandhian Principles of Nonviolence in the Singing Revolution (Sąjūdis Movement) of Lithuania. *Internat. J. Appl. Soc. Sci.*, 2 (5&6) : 146-156.