

A Study on the Relevance of Gandhian Philosophy in Resolving Conflicts

**A Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Indian Philosophy**



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PREFACE

Mahatma Gandhi is the father of the nation. He is considered to be one of the greatest sons of Indian soil and the maker of the modern independent republic. Although much has been written on Gandhi and his ideas and ideals, yet more of its underpinnings need to be uncovered because of the prevalent significance and increasing relevance of his philosophy for contemporary times. As a man of action and great insight, he practiced what is moral, truthful, and non-violent after a thorough examination. He was truly multi-dimensional in his approach and had left an indelible mark in the religio-moral, socio-economic, and political spheres of modern India. In fact, in today's age times, his philosophic ideas and ideals progressively appear more sensitive than ever.

The entire gamut of his philosophical thought is mainly based on two moral values of eternal relevance, namely, truth and non-violence. An attempt is made in this study to understand those and to apply them to the pertaining issues of recent times both in India and beyond so as to reexamine and critically analyze them in the light of Gandhian philosophy keeping in focus their co-relation and relevance. In order to deal with such an immense domain of research area, the research work is divided into seven chapters excluding the introduction and conclusion.

This research first briefs a sketch of Gandhi's life; highlighting prime influences on his thoughts and formulation of his core ideas. It describes chief Gandhian principles i.e. 'Truth, non-violence, and Satyagraha'. It further attempts to discuss the moral aspects of the Gandhian view through the concept of 'ends and means' and 'cardinal virtues'. Thereby a Gandhian resolution for religious conflict and communal problems are discussed before his approach to secularism is critically engaged with. Consequently, social conflicts and their resolution are identified after a rigorous analysis of social issues of 'caste and untouchability', upliftment of women, the status of education and moral values, etc. Similarly, political conflict within non-violent democracy and the role of decentralization, etc. are thoroughly studied.

Economic views of Gandhi and his concept of reorganization, the theory of trusteeship, economic equality, rural development, and cooperative formation of Indian villages can be key concepts in transforming the lives of millions of Indians. His views are, therefore, presented with a aim of resolving monetary issues of a developing society. The research further focuses upon

various resolutions of contemporary problems through Gandhian philosophy. Modern conflicts such as terrorism, violence, world peace, etc. are thoroughly analyzed. And in the concluding part of this research, a critical reanalysis of core chapters is attempted. It clearly outlines the major findings of the current study and underlines the future scope for further research.

Thus, this present study tries to give an estimation of the different aspects of Gandhian thought for establishing peace through resolving conflicts. The research study also examines the feasibility of implementing Gandhian techniques to resolve the present problem of the world. This study maps out the position of conflicts in human society, their source of emergence. The study further notes that the reality of conflicts in men's lives, their source of emergence, and continuous efforts, which human beings have been making through the ages for their resolution. Thus, as it was in the past, Gandhi's ideals have been nurtured and practiced in India and other parts of the world in the modern times, leading to lasting results. This is due to the fact that 'Gandhian philosophy now holds more relevance for the modern times than ever before' since his ideals are laid down on the firm foundation of the immutable moral maxims like – 'Truth, non-violence, *Satyagraha*, Peace, and Love'.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

If one thinks and ponders deeply on today's global issues and its association to human misery, it becomes quite natural to seek guidance and solace for the underestimated human suffering in the midst of the development of Modern civilization. In order to resolve all the issues of today Gandhi's philosophy was deemed suitable. It is with this intention of tracing out elements of Gandhian principles that can cure the minds of man as policymakers, democrats, statesmen, and so on. Such that the plight of the unfortunate gets addressed while the overall structure for human growth and socio-economic standards improve, for everyone and where nobody is left behind because of our ignorance or bias.

Since a thorough reading of Gandhian thought is a requisite to understand his methods and experiments, I thus had taken a broader area so that first of all I am able to study all the aspects of Gandhian theology and its scope for remedial measures of the pertinent and reoccurring problem of human civilization. At a glance, there are three Gandhian principles that can be called the strong foundation for his morals, ethics, and spirituality. These are 'Truth, Non-violence, and *Satyagraha*'. On the basis of these Gandhian elements of Peace and harmony, various dimensions of conflict resolution in the domain of Religion, Society, Politics, Education, and Economics are critically analyzed and a coherent system of Gandhian thought is framed.

- **Introduction to Research Topic**

Mahatma Gandhi has an important role in the history of India, especially in the first half of the 20th century. M. K. Gandhi, also known as '*Gandhi*' and '*Mahatma Gandhi*' is one of the most influential leaders of Indian freedom struggle. He is well known not only for his political thinking but also for his socio-religious and economic thought. Gandhi a proponent of peace, truth and non-violence is one of the leading personalities of the 20th century. Gandhi's ideas have evolved and played a crucial and an identical role of non-violence, truth and *Satyagraha*. As a man of action, he practiced ethics, truthfulness and non-violence after intense examination and great insight. His philosophy on truth and non-violence is a viable source of power '*to resolve conflicts not only in the present world but also in the future world*'.

Gandhi is known for the beliefs and values that he held close throughout his life. The values that are based on the ideals of- non-violence (*Ahimsa*) something which needs to be inculcated in a person for the betterment of both 'individuality' and 'the society'. Thus, creating a society which is rich in values, and while keeping the faith in universal brotherhood and humanity.

But if we look at the present scenario, it is totally opposite of what Gandhi envisioned. Today's society is not varies from the earlier times. With the development of the technology and various other fields of knowledge, many things have changed drastically- the way people think, their life style, their relationships with each other, way of celebrations, responsibility towards the society etc. Everything now is fast changing with a touch of Western culture. And these changes carry both positive and negative effects upon an 'individual' and 'the society'. The change in this 21st century which is highly noticeable is the degradation of values among the individuals reflecting as negative effects upon the society like various conflicts and a state chaos all over. The current moral crisis is due to the lack of values such as- forgiveness, empathy, care towards each other etc. Therefore, it becomes very important to review, discuss and practice the Gandhian values, since they are the need of the hour in order to save the Nation.

During the last few decades, there have been enormous developments in every sphere of our life that has practically changed the entire face of the earth. But in spite of the great achievements in every sphere of life, still there prevail some violence and conflict at all levels: individual, social, moral, religious, political, national and international. We also find that people are getting worse day by day. There is violence and conflict at all levels of human existence, in every aspect of life; and day by day violent activities are dominating the present world.

In such circumstances, it becomes clear to us that we have to catch up on the Gandhian method. And become firm on the opinion that '*there is no other way but to accept and adopt the principles of Gandhian philosophy*'. If we want to get out of violent conflict situations then we have to follow the Gandhian principles 'very strictly'. Perhaps, this is the reason why a study about Gandhian principles is considered so important nowadays. Those who follow Gandhian ideals believe that 'in the present circumstances, Gandhian principles of life are the only remedy

for all evils'. The salvation of mankind is possible only through the practice of Gandhian principles.

This research attempts to understanding the concept of 'ends and means', universal love, *Satyagraha*, ethical-relativism and universal morality, cardinal-virtues, communal problem, secularism, religious pluralism, social equality, caste and untouchability, upliftment of women, education and moral-values, democracy, decentralisation, *panchayat-raj*, duties and rights, non-cooperation and civil disobedience, economical equality, rural and urban development, *Khadi*, unemployment, *Swadeshi*, trusteeship, terrorism and modern world, environmental crisis and challenges, Industrialization in modern civilisation, human resource development, modern science and technology, conflict resolution, world peace etc. These concepts were dealt with earlier by Gandhi and the solutions that he had offered without losing the sight of – 'truth and non-violence', which are of even greater relevance and more significance to the modern times since modern society has turned more exploitative and violent, mainly due to the imperfections in the human institution. Now, there is no other better option than to adopt the techniques of Gandhian principles for resolving different levels and layers of all kinds of conflicts. In other words, if we follow the principles given by Gandhi, one can easily solve all the global conflicts that we are faced with today. And the current study thoroughly covers many issues of recent times both from India as well as some that keep reoccurring in some other parts of the world. This thesis examines and analyses 'conflicts' in the light of Gandhian philosophy in order to find out its correlations and even the relevance.

• Research Objectives

The fundamental objectives of this study are given below:

- i. The main aim is to study the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, especially in the modern context and examine its relevance to the modern times.
- ii. To find some Gandhian tools or methods which can help for resolving the present day conflicts.

- iii. To explore the role of Gandhian philosophy for resolving various conflicts in multidisciplinary perspectives.

• **Literary Sources of the Study**

There are so many books written by Gandhi himself and on Gandhian Philosophy by many erudite scholars. These books are:

Hind Swaraj is written by M. K. Gandhi published by Rajpal and Sons, Delhi in 2017. This booklet was originally published in *Gujarati* in 1908 and was later translated into English. This book is certainly a monumental work in Gandhi's Philosophy of Art and Civilisation. It is a critique of civilisation. However, the most important objective of the book was 'to supply a critique of Western civilisation'. In other words, the book is written from the point of view of providing - a critique of Western civilisation, Gandhi tried to set out in this book the principles of recent civilisation which he hoped would enable individual and social life. *Hind Swaraj* can be regarded as the 'Bible of Gandhian thought'. This book contains the primary formulation of his ideas in the form of Truth.

Another book is *An Autobiography* or *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* originally written by M. K. Gandhi in *Gujarati* language but later translated into English by *Mahadev Desai* and published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad in 2015. This book is essential text of the Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi. It is a detailed account of Gandhi's self-written essay (105 essays in total) on Gandhi's own experiments, and covers all aspects of the Gandhi's spiritual life. This *Autobiography* is divided into five parts starting from his childhood days, his experience in South Africa where he experimented with the powerful weapon of *Satyagraha* and his transformation from Mohan to *Mahatma*, with his various experiments on the fundamental principles of Truth and God. The *Autobiography* is in a way a confession of Gandhi's faith, a very basic document for the study of his thoughts.

Another book namely *India of My Dreams* was originally written by M. K. Gandhi, and was later on got compiled R. K. Prabhu and published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad in 2016. This book is an essential text of Gandhian philosophy. In it, an attempt has been made to piece together passages from Gandhi's writings and speeches, in order to give the reader an idea of Gandhi's dream that is of his conception of a completely free and independent India. The book lays before the reader not only the basic and fundamental principles of Truth and non-violence but also indicates how we can help fulfill those by establishing a political and social life through the means of a constitution and the dedication of human material. This book is one of the most significant of Gandhi's writings, as it gives with the reader a brief overview of Gandhi's views on all the problems related to India and its people. So this book can prove to be helpful not only for all students of Gandhian ideology but for the creative activists too.

Another valuable book namely *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, compiled and edited by R. K. Prabhu & U. R. Rao and published by Navajivan Mudranalaya, Ahmedabad in 1960. I find this book as an essential help in understanding Gandhi's mind for those who are striving for the establishment of *Sarvodaya* and a search for truth. This book presents the reader with the essence of Gandhi's thought and philosophy. Today there are many misconceptions today about Gandhi's thoughts and his way of thinking. This book, pieces together relevant quotes from his own writings on his central faith and conduct, it further clarifies Gandhi's position in the modern mind. This book is included in all select bibliographies on Gandhi and has been cited over and again in many important books about Gandhi right from its publication.

The book *All Men are Brothers* is compiled and edited by Krishna Kripalani and is published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad in 1960. It is a selection from the writings of Mahatma Gandhi's life and thoughts, as told in his own words. The texts have been selected to appeal to a wider public and are intended to help the reader understand with various aspects of Gandhi's personality and his writings on - religion and youth, 'means and ends', International peace, etc. These selections, once compiled from his speeches and writings give the reader some idea of the working of Gandhi's mind, the growth of his ideas and the practical techniques he adopted. Gandhi has discussed in the book that in the present nuclear context if we want to save the world, we must adopt the principles of non-violence.

The available literature has been reviewed in the preparation of this research and some articles are also studied to prepare this research work. Secondary sources related to Gandhian philosophy are also used.

- **Research Methodology**

Further, in this research, an attempt has been made to show the importance of Gandhian philosophy and its role to resolve the various conflicts in modern society. The ‘descriptive and analytical method’ has been applied to this main objective. Both primary and secondary sources have been used while presenting the subject matter of the research and research materials are gathered; and thereafter are analysed the Gandhian perspectives. In order to accomplish this research, the data has been collected from various books, research journals, magazines, relevant websites and the use of the different libraries.

- **Brief Chapter Overviews**

The thesis entitle: “A STUDY ON THE RELEVANCE OF GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY IN RESOLVING CONFLICTS”, is divided into ‘seven chapters’ excluding the introduction and conclusion. A brief overview of the seven chapters is as follows:

The First Chapter entitled “*Brief Outlines of Gandhian Philosophy*”, tries to present a brief outlines of Gandhi’s life, philosophy and his activities in India and abroad. We have also made a critical discussion of the various factors which has influenced his thoughts and ideas. This chapter deals with the sources and influences that shaped his thoughts right from his parents to the great religious figures he admired and the eminent thinkers of East and West that he looked up to. The influence of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Sermon On The Mount*, the *Civil Disobedience of Henry Thoreau*, the social equality of *John Ruskin*, the influence of *Leo Tolstoy* is also been dealt in this chapter. Here we have also tried to point out some of Gandhi’s principles such as – Truth, non-violence and *Satyagraha*. These principles possess great relevance and significance especially for our modern times.

The Second Chapter entitled “*Moral Foundations of Gandhian Philosophy*”, attempts to discuss Gandhi’s views on morality. Gandhi’s notion of morality was very wide and has universal application. The moral law, according to him, rules out any type of exploitation - political, economical or cultural. He always insisted that there should be no distinction whatsoever between man and nature, and he thus preached the gospel of ‘universal morality’. This chapter further presents the moral aspects of Gandhian view, such as his interpretation of morality, the relationship of ‘ends and means’, ‘ethical relativism’ and ‘universal morality’ and cardinal virtues have been dealt in this chapter too.

The topic of the Third Chapter is “*Gandhian Resolution for Religious Conflict*”. The Indian society is a diverse society which has many religions, sects, faiths and beliefs. Sometimes, this multiplicity creates the religious intolerance and bigotry among the followers of different religions. In such situation it becomes necessary to adopt the Gandhian ideology which teaches the teaching of religious tolerance. In this chapter we have dwelt upon the contributions of Gandhi in this regard. We have tried to show that Gandhi’s views are broad and all-inclusive. He showed equal respect for all the great religions of the world and advocates unity amongst all religions. His religious philosophy was mainly characterized by *Truth and non-violence*. The main religious aspects of the Gandhian philosophy deals with the issues like- communal problem, Hindu-Muslim unity, religious pluralism and secularism.

The Fourth Chapter with the title *Gandhian Resolution for Social Conflict* identifies ‘social conflicts’ and searches for its resolution via, adopting a Gandhian ideology. Gandhian philosophy is proven useful for this task though Gandhi was not satisfied with the utilitarian philosophy that ‘*the greatest good is of the greatest number*’. Being greatly influenced by his study of the *Bhagavad Gita*, he advocated the philosophy of ‘*good of all*’ which he calls *Sarvodaya*. This chapter also discusses social aspects such as caste and untouchability, upliftment of women, problems and position of women in the society, equality between the sexes, women education, *purdah* system, marriage and love, child marriage, dowry system, widow remarriages, household and divorce, population and birth control, the awakening of women, education and moral values, basic education and significance of moral in education for modern times, are also dealt in this chapter.

The Fifth Chapter is pertaining to political issues. Entitled as “*Gandhian Resolution for Political Conflict*” this chapter is about Gandhian approach for the contemporary political conflict. It is quite clear that Gandhi was not a professional politician, and that he never entered politics for acquiring the ‘*political power*’. Yet Gandhi gave specific direction to politics successfully, and at the same time made a sincere attempt to spiritualise the politics for the welfare and service of all, regardless of their caste, colour and creed. Also, the aspects such as democracy, political objective of non-violent democracy, decentralisation, state and society, *panchayat raj* and decentralised administration, rights and duties, *Satyagraha* as a tool of political method and non-cooperation and civil disobedience are also discussed in this chapter.

The Sixth Chapter studies the “*Gandhian Resolution for Economical Conflict*”. Gandhi has formulated his economical ideas and principles within the context of his grand design of - an ideal social order: a non-violent, non-exploitative, humanistic and egalitarian society. He tries to approach all aspects of this social order - its economics, its politics, its sociological and philosophical complex like - truth and non-violence, which governed his entire life. This chapter also presents Gandhi’s economical ideas and his ‘concept of economical reorganization’. Elsewhere, this chapter also argues on few basic Gandhian concepts alongside the economical crisis like- the idea of economical equality, rural and urban development, significance of *Khadi*, problem of unemployment, present economical crisis, relevance of *Swadeshi* and the role and relevance of trusteeship in economical development.

The Last Chapter is focused upon various resolutions of current and contemporary problems. This chapter is entitled as “*Application of Gandhian Method to Modern Time Conflict*”. Today new kinds of conflicts including war tensions, Naxalism, terrorism; communal, caste, regional and linguistic conflicts have become permanent features of our so called ‘civilian life’. In such a crisis of modern society, Gandhian principles are in fact now more relevant than ever. His philosophy on *Truth and non-violence* has been succeeding been accepted by the global politicians as a viable source of strength in resolving conflicts; not only of the modern world but also that might emerge in the near future. The modern conflicts such as: the problem of terrorism, environmental crisis and challenges, issues pertaining to Industrialization in modern

civilisation, human resource development, modern science and technology, Satyagraha and non-violence for conflict resolution and the message world peace etc, are thoroughly discussed.

Thus, this research tries to give an estimation of the different aspects of Gandhian thought for establishing peace through resolving conflicts. In fact, Gandhi too had borrowed his ideas from many sources yet his greatness and originality lies in his clear grasping of those borrowings and in its cultivation in a most comprehensive manner. Consequently, all aspects of Gandhian philosophy have been carefully examined in this research.

CHAPTER – 1

BRIEF OUTLINES OF GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY

1.1 The Origin and Development of His Thought

- 1.1.1 Childhood Influences
- 1.1.2 Religious Influences
- 1.1.3 The Influence of Books and Authors
- 1.1.4 Western Influences
- 1.1.5 Role and Limits of Reason
- 1.1.6 Role and Importance of Experience

1.2 Gandhian Principles and Their Applications

- 1.2.1 Truth
 - 1.2.2 Non-Violence
 - 1.2.3 *Satyagraha*
-

CHAPTER - 1

BRIEF OUTLINES OF GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY

Gandhi is well known for the beliefs and values that he has hold throughout his life. His ideas have evolved and played an identical role of ‘non-violence, Truth and *Satyagraha*’. Thus, creating a niche in values and having faith in universal brotherhood and humanity. In other words, violence does not resolve conflicts but by the means of integrating, harmonizing and through suppressing the differences of the individuals. He wanted to root out various types of violence, evils from the society through these three fundamental principles ‘truth, non-violence and *Satyagraha*’. These methods were used in order to establish morality, justice, love and peace.

1.1 The Origin and Development of His Thought:

Gandhi has drawn great influence in making the present-day India. Gandhi’s ideas were generally simple. Though he never declared himself to be a sage or a theorizer yet his impact on the foundation of modern India is remarkable. He had never encouraged his followers to write of his views as something like ‘*Gandhism*’; rather he was simply interested in applying in his own life- ‘the eternal truth’ and more so, thrived to apply his resolve to the problems of our nation. Although he himself had discarded the idea of ‘*Gandhism*’ yet nobody can deny the influence he had left on the minds of his people. And so it becomes necessary to trace out his sources of influences and inspirations that he received from various sources. We are going to discuss them under the titles- his childhood influences; religious influences; influence of books and authors; Western Influences; role and limits of Reason; role and importance of Experience.

1.1.1 Childhood Influences

Based upon the available sources on Gandhi, it is not difficult to determine the extent of his childhood memories and lessons upon the course of development of his ideas. Gandhi

belonged to a rich, aristocratic family and had affectionate relatives and devout parents. The influence of his parents and the circumstances to which he was born proved favourable to the development of his innate core qualities and from which a clear connection between ‘his childhood, his religious values and moral ideas’ can be easily assumed. It is noteworthy that in his childhood he had the opportunity to easily acquaint himself with religious duties and moral responsibilities especially by the religious practices of his mother, and with the *Jaina* philosophy that was introduced to him by his father. Before going further, it would be significant here to explore the implications of his title ‘*Gandhi*’ - ‘The word *Gandhi* means the grocer’ (Desai, 2015, p. 3).

According to the Hindu *Varna Vyavastha* (caste system), there are four *varnas* or castes- ‘The *Brahmans*, the *Kshatriyas*, the *Vaishyas*, and the *Sudras*. The Gandhi belongs to the third category- the *Vaishyas* or the *Bania* Caste (Dutta, 2005, p. 6). It may be added that his mother *Putlibai*, a woman of most religious temperament, shaped his early religious views the most. His mother *Putlibai* had a sharp commonsense and was well versed in state affairs and the court held high opinion of her intelligence. Gandhi learnt early the popular Indian maxim that ‘*Nothing is more than Truth*’, and also picked from his mother the verse- *ahimsa paramo dharmah* meaning ‘the practice of harmlessness (or *ahimsa*) was the supreme virtue’. *Ahimsa* which today is universally acknowledged was then rigidly practiced particularly by the *Jainas* and *Vaishnavas*; and Gandhi had grown up in such an atmosphere at home. On the contrary however, A. L. *Basham* holds quite a different view about the influence of *Vaishnavism* upon Gandhi’s childhood. He emphasizes that, “The *Vaishnava* temple where his mother worshipped had no appeal for him” (Raghuramaraju, 2006, p. 21).

Anyhow, Gandhi did learn much from his father too. His father *Kaba Gandhi* was a less religious person compared to his mother. Gandhi himself expounds that his father did little religious exercises yet often visited temples and proffered listening to sacred sermons. In fact in his last days, his father took to reading *Bhagavad Gita* devotedly, and chanted verses of it aloud every day during prayers. *Gummadi Veerraju* said that:

Gandhi recalled the affection he had obtained from his nurse *Rambha*. In his childhood he used to have the fear of ghosts and the spirits. *Rambha* suggested to him to repeat the name of *Rama* as a sovereign remedy of his fear. He considered the name of *Rama* as infallible remedy for him which as a seed of faith in God nurtured him and it is due to *Rambha* (Veerraju, 1999, p. 6).

More to the point, in his last moments it was these simple words of *Rama* which gave him strength. Besides these, later he has developed a passion for truth. Again *Gummadi Veerraju* mentioned that:

Gandhi writes in his *Autobiography* that the passion for truth was innate in him. Gandhi quoted an incident which occurred at the examination hall when he was studying first year at the high school. Although the teacher tried to prompt him, he would not be prompted and could never learn the art of copying. Gandhi referred to the other two incidents which have the basis in truth and devotion to service. They had always clung to his memory and shaped his thought (Veerraju, 1999, pp. 6-7).

Gandhi could never be tired of seeing the drama. Gandhi was truly inspired by the ideal of *Harishchandra* and believed in the story. For him, “both *Harishchandra* and *Sharavana* are living realities” (Desai, 2015, p. 7). Like *Harishchandra*, Gandhi also suffered for preaching and practicing truthfulness. A true religious man is he who practices truth and suffers for it unto his death. Truth is God and religion is the discipline. Religion as conceived by him is not a dogma, or a doctrine or a discussion thereof.

The conception of ‘Truth’ which is a foundation of *Gandhian* philosophy is an outcome of ‘*Harishchandra’s play*’. Further, a detailed account of the impact of Hinduism upon his thoughts and personality will be given in this research work at appropriate places whenever necessary. These childhood incidents of his life significantly show the influence of *Hinduism* on him. Stories and plays of *Hinduism* drew a lasting impact upon his mind. He developed his views out of these influences.

1.1.2 Religious Influences

A Hindu by birth, Gandhi was fundamentally a religious man. We have noted above how on several instances he finds inspiration within the Hindu religious lessons. But he was also much influenced by the teachings of *Jainism*. In his days *Jainism* was relatively more of a living force particularly in *Gujarat*. It is pertinent here to quote *Pyarelal* while presenting the ideas of *Jainism* he writes:

Ahimsa on the religious side, *anekantavada* or *Syadvada* on the philosophical side, and the institutions of vows on the ethical side. He was greatly attracted, too, by the *Jaina* theory of knowledge. On the religious side, the *Jaina* doctrine is pluralistic. In its philosophical aspect it is characterized by a dialectical way of thinking. According to *Jaina Shastras*, *Ahimsa* is not a negative truth- a mere mechanical abstention from violence- but a positive quality based on universal love resulting from the recognition of oneness of life and, therefore, kinship of all living beings. One who has realised this ideal cannot be indifferent to the suffering of others. Further, the *Jaina* religion, it is claimed, has been the first, perhaps the only religion in the world to include in its conception of universal love, not only human beings, but the entire sub-human creation, including plant life (Pyarelal, 1965, p. 276).

The synthetic visions found in Gandhi's are greatly influenced by the '*theory of knowledge*' that Jainism prescribes. *Pyarelal* elaborates:

Gandhi was fundamentally influenced by the *Jaina* institutions of vows. The *Jaina shastras* lay down that one should regulate his conduct in his daily life by not allowing evil channels of *karma*. That means one should restrict the field of his activity. For this purpose, certain rules or vows have been recommended. They are *Truth, Celibacy, Non-violence, Non-stealing, and Non-possession*. The *Jaina* thinkers hold that the absolute renunciation of certain categories of activity

through the observance of vows, tend to separate the association of soul with matter which is the cause of its bondage (Pyarelal, 1965, p. 278).

The words of *S. Radhakrishnan* are also significant in this regard who emphasizes that the virtue of non-violence is the cardinal virtue in *Jainism*. He states that:

Violence or infliction of suffering to others is the great sin in *Jainism*. Other sins include untruthfulness, dishonesty, unchastity, covetousness, anger, conceit, deceit, avarice, which lead to bondage in this world, and their opposites, patience, humility, simplicity and contentment, further the spiritual growth. Thus the chief feature embodied in *Jainism* is non-violence which implies reverence for everything that has life and abstinence for violence (Radhakrishnan, 2008, p. 270).

Thus, *Jainism* preaching's on non-violence greatly influenced Gandhi's foundational views in his childhood itself and was subsequently revived by some other sources of influence like - the *Sermon* in *St. Mathew's Gospel*, discussed later in this chapter. Although, it is true that Gandhi was highly inclined towards the conception of non-violence as found in *Jaina* discourses.

Apart from, Hinduism and Jainism one more major religious influence is found on the thoughts of Gandhi- the personality of *Gautama Buddha*. Gandhi acquired knowledge of *Buddhism* in his London days. *Buddha* by virtue of his strong moral sense, tried to achieve the ultimate goal of life- *nirvana* or salvation. Righteousness is the highest virtue in Buddhism. Gandhi, being a true follower of the *Buddha*, adopted and practiced *Buddhist* 'code of ethics' on attaining *moksha* (or salvation- the ultimate goal of life). Gandhi read *Arnold's 'Light of Asia'* several times devoted to the *Lord Buddha's* life and exclaims that, "Look at *Gautama's* compassion, it is not confined to mankind, it was extended to all human beings" (Desai, 2015, p. 122).

To sum up, we may say that though Gandhi took inspiration from all the religions, however, he eventually develops his own independent concepts. For instances, as in the case of

non-violence, he took notice of all the sources whether it be *Hinduism* or *Jainism*, or *Buddhism*, yet he eventually furnish them in his own unique way; and in accordance to the modern context.

1.1.3 The Influence of Books and Authors

Apart from these influences, many religious books and authors also influenced Gandhi's thoughts. Among these books which shaped his ideas, the *Gita* can be ranked first. He memorized several chapters of the *Gita* which became his '*dictionary of daily reference*', and made an extensive commentary on it. The significance of *Gita* as observed by Mahadev Desai may be put in the following words:

The *Gita* is an unerring psychological insight into the human life. *Gita* indicates the ladder of broom in which the first step is brooding over the sense-objects. The second is attachment to them; the third is hankering after them; the fourth is resentment over the unfulfilled hankerings; the fifth is heedlessness with all resentment beings; the sixth is self-lessness and forgetfulness; the seventh is restriction of all desires which takes one finally down to the abyss (Desai, 1946, p. 60).

At every stage of his career Gandhi turned to the *Gita* for reference. The teachings of the *Gita* drew a lasting impact on the thoughts of Gandhi. No other book has deeply influenced him as the study of the *Gita* and he learnt a good deal about *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *samabhava* (equability) from this precious book called *Gita*. Gandhi's concepts of- *truth, non-possession, equality, tolerance and humility* these all concepts are rooted in the *Gita*. Gandhi was especially impressed with *Gita*'s two Verses specifically- the Verses 62 and 63 of Chapter 2. These are as following:

dhyayato Vishayan punsah sangasteshupjayate;
Sangat sanjayate Kamah Kamat Krodhobhijayate.
Krodhat bhavati sammohah sammohat Smritivibhramah;
Smritivibhranshate buddhinash buddhi-nashat pranashyati (Desai, 1946, p. 60).

The impact of the second chapter of the *Gita*, including these verses, was very profound. This was the power and charm of the *Gita* which caught the earnest attention of Gandhi. The *Gita* deals with the subject of 'self-realization'. For Gandhi, it is like a manual to attain *self-realization*. Though he was first acquainted to this book *Gita* as '*The Song Celestial*' (1988) written by '*Sir Edwin Arnold*'. Renunciation is the central theme of the *Gita*. Renunciation of the fruits of deeds is a matchless remedy. A man who is after the effect become impatient and show angry when if he does not get the expected result, and often resorts to unfair and foul means to attend his end. All Indian religions proclaim that by considering the body to be the temple of God, it becomes possible to attain freedom. Gandhi also held the view that fasting could help to curb obsession, if done with a view to self-restraint, however, he adds, fasting is futile unless there is a constant craving for self-restraint.

To sum up, it might be said that Gandhi saw the *Gita* as a book which states- '*principles for the victory of man in his moral fight against evil*'. The ideal which the *Gita* sets before us is non-violence for achieving a perfect state of mind, speech and body. *Gita* teaches us that we have to work without anger or attachment and that violence become impossible if we could develop such a frame of mind.

Gandhi decodes the eternal secrets from the sacred books like *Valmiki's 'Ramayana'*, *Vyasa's 'Mahabharata'*, *Manu's 'Manusmriti'*, the translations of the *Upanishads*, and *Patanjali's 'Yoga Sutra'*. These sacred books gave him the idea of a proper moral attitude. The influence of the *Valmiki's 'Ramayana'* in Gandhi is next to that of the *Gita*. This epic teaches us that we can reach the stage of better life and prosperity only by means of non-violence and peace. Gandhi also wanted to spiritualise politics. His concept of *Ramrajya* was influenced by the *Ramayana*. The influence of *Isaavasyopanishad* is worth mentioning here and his concept of '*trusteeship*' was primarily inspired by the first verse of this *Upanishad*.

Gandhi believes in the plurality of religions. He expounds that essence of all religions is same. In spite of this attitude, or because of it, he wanted to remain a Hindu; as a matter of fact, he maintained that it was only through a study of all religious scriptures that he has enabled himself to understand more clearly- the Hindu religious doctrines, and could also purify those

convictions which had already formed in his mind. And he held in almost equal reverence the teachings of '*Buddha*, the doctrines of *Mahavira*, the teachings of *Hinduism*, *Christianity*, *Islam* and *Zoroaster*'. Though he preferred to remain a real '*Sanatani Hindu*', he was no Hindu of the common order. Many of the current practices were repugnant to him and he did not hesitate to reinterpret the Hindu scriptures in accordance with the promptings of his own 'inner-voice'.

As he himself often said, because of his political activities he did not have the time to read as many other books as he would have wished. However, while he was in prison he made use of all available opportunities for reading other important works. On one of those occasions he read *Karl Marx's 'Das Capital'*; although he had a great regard of *Marx* he could not reconcile himself with the *Marxian* conclusion since he had no faith in violence of any form.

Gandhi admired *Raichandbhai* or *Rajchandra*, too much. *Raichandbhai's* life exercised some influence in moulding his character. Gandhi sketched the personality of *Raichandbhai* in the following words:

It was hiding wide knowledge of the scriptures, his spotless character and his burning passion for self-realization that persuaded look to him for guidance in the moments of his spiritual crisis (Desai, 2015, p. 107).

In fact, it was *Raichandbhai* who created in Gandhi the keenness for the study of the *Hindu scriptures*. Though he was a *guru* like figure to him but Gandhi did not accept him as a *guru*. Since *Raichandbhai* was not a perfect *Jnani* he could not be exalted as a *guru*. And, the throne of the *guru* remained vacant and his search for *guru* continued throughout his life. Gandhi himself was engaged in the spiritual quest, and therefore, he took into consideration all the qualities prescribed for a *guru*. This is the reason that he did not enthrone in his heart *Raichandbhai* as a *guru*.

Gandhi was particularly influenced by the two men. They were *Dadabhai Naoroji* and *Gokhale*. *Dadabhai* was the founder of the *Indian National Movement* and had taught the first

lesson of *Ahimsa* to Gandhi. *Gokhale* also exercised considerable influence on him. It was all due to *Gokhale* that he could be able to bring politics and religion nearer to each other.

Thus, it is pointed out that Gandhi was under the influence of these great personalities of India. It is through *Gokhale* that he learned to emphasize the purity of the means to achieve the goal. Gandhi tried his best to spiritualise the entire mankind.

1.1.4 Western Influences

We have tried to show the different Indian sources which influenced Gandhi's thought. We now proceed to point out how far and to what extent he was influenced by the West. Gandhi was also deeply influenced by the West. He was deeply influenced by Western scholars, prophets, thinkers, ancient as well as the modern. Gandhi owed indebtedness to the West. He did not think that the Westerners would reject everything. He also learned about *Ahimsa* from the Western tradition. Gandhi says:

I have nothing to be ashamed of if my views of *Ahimsa* are the result of my Western education. I have never tabooed all Western ideas, nor am I prepared to anathematize everything that comes from the West are inherently evil. I have learnt much from the West and I should not be surprised to find that I had learnt something about *Ahimsa* too from the West (Suhруд, 2019, p. 279).

Gandhi was open for any source of knowledge whether it to be *Eastern or Western*. Though he was a great critique of Western civilization, but he was open enough to something good from the West. His following views are relevant in this respect. He writes:

I still do so, but it does not mean that everything Western should be rejected. I have learnt a great deal from the West and I am grateful to it. I should think myself unfortunate if contact with and the literature of the West had no influence on me (Suhруд, 2019, p. 279).

The ancient Greek philosopher *Socrates* influenced Gandhi greatly as a seeker of truth. Gandhi regarded *Socrates* as a great *Satyagrahi*. He had great admiration for *Socrates* and found in him a soul force which is capable of fighting against injustice; *Socrates* was courageous enough to prefer a cup of hemlock than to give up his *pursuit of truth* and resisted superstitious beliefs of his people through non-violent means. Commenting on *Socrates* and his stand for truth, Gandhi pointed out:

Socrates would not refrain from preaching what he knew to be truth to the Athenian youth and bravely suffered the punishment of death. He was in his case a *Satyagrahi* (Veerraju, 1999, p. 23).

Gandhi wrote a book on *Socrates*, *Vir Suktrat*, in *Gujrati*. *Socrates* was considered to be his hero. He admired the moral courage of *Socrates*, who preferred the cup of poison to the search of truth and resisted the superstitious beliefs of his people by non-violent means.

Gandhi had a great interest in the writings of *Henry David Thoreau* (1817-1862), who proclaimed non-cooperation with the American Government as a protest against slavery, as well as in the philosophy of the *Quakers*. He read *Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience'* and *Civil Disobedience* is considered to be *Henry Thoreau's* most powerful political essay. Realizing the inappropriateness of the expression *Civil Disobedience*, he later on changed it to '*civil resistance*' and finally to '*non-violent resistance*'. This weapon, according to Gandhi, was meant to be used against the power of highly organised states. The reading of *Thoreau's* essay provided him with detailed suggestions for the conduct of a '*Gandhian movement*'.

Gandhi was a man who always attempted to obtain a firsthand knowledge of any circumstances. He always tried to go deeper into the details of the problems that came in his way. Although the influence of *Thoreau* on Gandhi was far greater than that of *Emerson*, the influence of *Emerson* was direct and palpable. After going through the Western sources it becomes clear that he was much more influenced by the various religious books than any other books. He has also accepted this fact when he says:

The fact remains that religious books have a hold upon mankind which other books have not. They have made greater impression on me, than *Mark Twain*, or, to take a more appropriate instance, *Emerson* (Gandhi, 1904, pp. 168-169).

Besides, *Tolstoy* it was the modern writer *John Ruskin* who left a deep impact on Gandhi. It cannot, however, be said that Gandhi always accepted *Ruskin*. They also disagreed with his views on the nature of state functions. But this does not mean that they both always differed. There were also some commons in their views on *educational, economic and political problems*. Gandhi seems to have drawn his inspiration on education from *Ruskin* on which both held major importance to education, in their productive programs. Both *Ruskin* and Gandhi kept in mind the essential nature of a child and emphasized that education should start from the childhood. In this connection, both of them laid considerable stress on home and home ties as sacred place of training for better social life which would cover all spheres of human activity. For *Ruskin*, woman, in every society, is regarded as the embodiment of compassion, and the bread giver, and as the companion guide of man. Gandhi too, attempted to liberate woman through inner discipline and education, that is, through truth and *Ahimsa*. Gandhi symbolizes woman as the incarnation of *Ahimsa*.

Of these above mentioned writers, *Tolstoy* left a deep spiritual influence on Gandhi. His attention was first drawn to a short story, '*The Death of Ivan Ilych*' published by Russian writer in 1886. This story influenced him deeply. Among *Tolstoy*'s writings of this period, '*The power of Darkness*', '*The Kreutzer Sonata*' and '*The Devil*', none of these stimulated him more and as deeply as *Tolstoy*'s '*The Kingdom of God is Within You*'; here Gandhi found not only the advocacy of truth and non-resistance but also the beauty and grandeur of suffering. Once *Hariprasad* observed, "Like *Dattatreya*, Gandhi had many *gurus* of whom *Tolstoy* was one" (Kher, 1961, p. 302); on hearing this Gandhi said, "I wish I should claim the honour" (Kher, 1961, p. 302).

Gandhi borrowed his ideas from *Tolstoy*. *Tolstoy*'s second essay '*Christianity and Patriotism*' which was published in 1894 also produced a profound impression on him. In that essay, *Tolstoy* warned the people against the dangers of war. He criticized the moral indignation

of war which was going on at that time. *Tolstoy's* contemporaries certainly did not care for his warning. Gandhi's credit that he expressed his highest regards for the venerable Russian sage, "who in the sunset of his life stood alone and erect like the lofty Himalayan peak; against him were the churches, the State, the Censors, the militarists, the patriots and even several members of his own family including his wife" (Kalidas, 1950, p. 33). Gandhi studied many other books related to *Tolstoy*, and then further Gandhi admits:

I made too an intensive study of *Tolstoy's* book. '*The Gospels in Brief, What to Do?*' and other books made a deep impression on me. I began to realise more and more the infinite possibilities of universal love (Desai, 2015, p. 119).

Gandhi was attracted to the concept of bread-labour, which was first introduced by a great Russian writer *T. M. Bondaref* and very much advertised by *Tolstoy*. They had much in common. *Tolstoy* was devotedly influenced by *Ruskin's* '*Unto This Last*', which he was later, translated as his *Sarvodaya* ideal. *Dr. Kalidas Nag* describes:

Tolstoy, like *Ruskin*, condemned the pseudo-science of political economy and proclaimed that there existed one true science which concerned the welfare and destiny of all men (which Gandhi in translating *Ruskin*, would name *Sarvodaya*) (Kalidas, 1950, p. 33).

However, we cannot call Gandhi a thorough going *Tolstoyan*. There are certain facts that distinguish Gandhi from *Tolstoy*. The first is that Gandhi is more practical than *Tolstoy*. On certain matters of practical importance, he used to make some compromises, though he did not know compromises on matters relating to principles. And secondly, Gandhi's concept of non-violence is different from *Tolstoy*. This is the main difference between the two thinkers. On August 15, 1910, Gandhi wrote his last letter to the Great Russian sage *Tolstoy*, who later in a letter dated September 7, 1910, replied very significantly to Gandhi:

Your work in Transvaal, which seems to be very far away from the centre of our world, is yet the most fundamental and the most important to us supplying the

weightiest practical proof in which the world can now share and with which must participate not only the Christians but all the people of the world (Gandhi, 1910, p. 513).

Gandhi belonged to the tradition of *Mahavir*, *Buddha* and *Jesus*. Therefore, those who claim to interpret the teachings of Gandhi and look for his sources of inspiration in *Tolstoy* can be said to be true within certain limits. In fact, it seems to be doubtful whether Gandhi owes the origin of *Satyagraha* to *Tolstoy* or not. But this can undoubtedly be confirmed that he accepted *Tolstoy's* view on what was going on in Transvaal. Gandhi had not yet accepted *Tolstoy* as there was the question of reincarnation.

Writing out the introduction to '*A Letter to Hindoo*' by *Leo Tolstoy*, Gandhi said, "No one should assume that I accept all the ideas of *Tolstoy*. I look upon him as one of my teachers. But I certainly do not agree with all his ideas" (Gandhi, 1909, p. 2). Though *Tolstoy* influenced Gandhi but his influence cannot be said as wholly original for Gandhi. *Tolstoy* presented old truth in new zeal. His logical way of presentation made the old things more appealing and relevant. This is more or less true for all the Western influences. It is true that the Western *Christian* tradition provided him with the initial stimulus but, at the same time, we cannot ignore that throughout his life, he drew his sustenance from *Hindu* roots. So, Gandhi said:

There is no doubt that there is nothing new in what *Tolstoy* preaches. But his presentation of the old truth is refreshingly forceful. His logic is unassailable. And, above all, he endeavours to practice what he preaches. He preaches to convince. He is sincere and earnest. He commands attention (Gandhi, 1909, p. 5).

Gandhi read the *Holy Bible* with keen interest and *New Treatment*, especially the *Sermon on the Mount*, the teachings of which went deep into his heart. Gandhi wondered at *Christ's* non-violent character and this is the reason that he called *Jesus*, '*the prince of Satyagrahis*'. *Christ's* simple life, austere living and highly moral teaching were the most inspiring factors among the Western thinkers of truth and non-violence. '*Jesus played a great part in my life*', he said, many years later:

When I began to read the *Sermon on the Mount* I felt the beauty of it. I cannot say that it is singular, or that it is not to be found in other religions. But the presentation is unique...So many of my words are chosen from the *Bible*. In my talks I cannot avoid reference to the *Bible*. I am unable to speak without referring to it (Dutta, 2005, p. 35).

Gandhi again expressed that, “embraced *Christ* but rejected *Christianity*” (Fischer, 1954, p. 131). He had immeasurable love for *Christ* but many aspects of *Christianity* left him discontented. Above given citations not only prove that the degree of religious influence upon Gandhi’s mind, is much deeper than that of any intellectual influences, and also shows that Gandhi was fundamentally a religious man. That is why he had got most of his inspiration from religious texts. *Theosophist* brothers introduced him to the literature of other religions. *Theosophy* believes that all religions are the branches of one religion.

In South Africa, Gandhi studied *Islam* under his Muslim Friend ‘*Abdulla Sheth*’. His association with the *Holy Koran* was quite thorough and extensive. Gandhi himself said, “Contact with him gave me a fair amount of practical knowledge of *Islam*. When he came closer to each other, we had long discussions on religious topics” (Desai, 2015, p. 78). He also read other books of *Islam* and came to the conclusion, “The very word *Islam* means peace which is non-violence. The sword is no emblem of *Islam*” (Sen, 1995, p. 134). The teachings of the *Koran*, “No man is a true believer, unless he desireth for his brother that which he desireth for himself”; “He who neither worketh for himself nor for others will not receive the reward of God”; “Whoever is kind to His creatures, God is kind to him”; and “The most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman”, were absorbed by Gandhi³⁰ (Tendulkar, 1953, pp. 365-366). The teachings of almost all religions of the world are but peace and love to mankind.

1.1.5 Role and Limits of Reason

All these above influences were taken by Gandhi. But what is important and should, therefore, be borne in mind is that Gandhi accepted authority and was influenced by it only in so far as, and to the extent that, it appealed to his intellect or reason. Gandhi said:

Indeed I would reject all authority if it is in conflict with sober reason or the dictates of heart. Authority sustains and ennobles the weak when it is the handiwork of reason, but it degrades them when it supplants reason sanctified by the still small voice within (Bose, 1960, p. 315).

He was never dogmatic in his approach. For him, philosophy should be tasted by experience. Gandhi had a great regard for tradition, but he was at the same time progressive and dynamic. For instance, he has presented a rational explanation of religion too. Gandhi held the view that this current age of science and reason has to play the greatest role for bringing advancement to different spheres of life. He would examine every problem of life rationally before working upon it. It was thus that he was very much influenced by intellect or reason in his life.

1.1.6 Role and Importance of Experience

It has been already discussed that Gandhi was influenced by authority and he was also very much rational and progressive in his explanation of problems of life. We shall now pass on to show that in Gandhi's thought, experience has played a very important role. By experience, we do not mean ordinary experience of life. Experience, in this context, means very largely '*spiritual experience*'. It seems that Gandhi's teaching has its real source in experience and that experience, according to him, is '*spiritual experience*'.

He laid enough stress on experience. According to him, teaching which has no root in experience is superficial. Teaching, according to him, when even based on authority and reason is nothing but sheer lecturing. And teachers who attach much importance to authority and reason

and do not care for experience are simply called professional or university teachers. Therefore, it will be quite reasonable to argue that for Gandhi, '*authority should kindle reason and reason should end in experience*'. Gandhi was very much conscious of the fact that reason was not everything in life. He took experience as the primary source of his teaching provided it does not contradict reason but rather, supplements it. Experience thus does not trespass but transcends reason. Gandhi, like a scientist, made experiments in life, about some of life's '*eternal verities*' since 'making of experiments is necessary in order to put principles to proof, to verify the validity of spiritual experiences'.

Gandhi tried to combine 'salvation' with service of man and 'spiritual experience' with practical-politics. According to him, religion is that which includes faith in the brotherhood of mankind whereas politics is but applied religion. It is spirituality which is in practice. This is how he explained spiritual experience and interpreted it. This shows that spiritual experience had a profound impact on the mind of Gandhi.

It is now abundantly clear that Gandhi drew inspiration from the '*East as well as the West*'. In him, we find a marvelous combination of the mystic East and the materialist West. Gandhi considered the whole of mankind as one big family. After all these influences it is also true that Gandhi's thought have originality and freshness about it.

1.2 Gandhian Principles and Their Applications

To know Gandhi's philosophy, whether social, moral or religious, one has to study his entire principles truth, non-violence and *Satyagraha*, because his ideas on any one aspect would not be regarded as complete without reference to the other aspects of his principles. He was a man of progressive ideas. In fact, he was a great revolutionary. He wanted to revolutionize the entire society by introducing certain progressive measures and principles, for instance, upliftment of the *Harijans*, the removal of Untouchability, etc. Gandhi thus advocated the full development of man through his principles. Now, we will discuss the three fundamental principles of Gandhian philosophy.

1.2.1 Truth

Truth is one of the important values that everyone should focus on. Gandhi has always considered that truth as one of the significant quality in the formation of a good character. The concept of God will also come into discussion as the concept of truth and God are closely related to each other. Gandhi in his writings preferred in saying that, 'Truth is God' than 'God is Truth'. Truth is Existence, knowledge, and is a matter of immediate experience.

Truth, according to Gandhi, is completely free from all duality, it is the absolute 'behind the relative' and 'the doctrine of limits' cannot be applied to it. So, it is indefinable. And yet the Absolute Truth as the Ultimate Law can be regarded to be dynamic for it is by virtue of it that the relative truths are true. Gandhi further says that the universal validity of Truth cannot be denied or rejected or destroyed for the very denial of it is its unconscious assertion. Gandhi said:

Observation of the law of truth is understood merely to mean that we must speak the truth, but we... should understand the word *Satya* or truth in a much wider sense (Gandhi, 1950, pp. 247-248).

It is noticed that at present time there are hardly some people who speak the truth. Some people knowing the truth hesitate to speak up because of various selfish reasons. Such as- they don't want to involve in the quarrel, don't want to look bad in the eyes of others, don't want to interfere in things they are not benefitted from, don't want to make enemy with people having power, etc. This kind of attitude is prevalent in today's society. Due to which many innocent people or people without any fault are facing problems on daily basis and has to suffer a lot. Therefore, every person must try to speak the truth and remain honest towards themselves and others; whatever the situation may be.

In short, all our activities must be centered in truth. In his search for truth, Gandhi emphasizes the significance of *Ahimsa*. As we see, he supports that there is an inseparable relationship between Truth and *Ahimsa*.

1.2.2 Non-violence

Non-violence is the term which Gandhi himself coined to bring out the meaning of the *Sanskrit* word '*Ahimsa*'. Nobody can deny that with non-violence all problems even of the present day can be tackled. Gandhi contended that non-violence did not mean surrender to evil. It does not also mean compromise with violence. However, the importance of the principle of non-violence cannot be minimized. Hence, non-violence should be our mental attitude. We should try to be non-violent as far as practicable. If non-violence be accepted in this sense, we do not find any harm in accepting it as one of the methods of establishing a new social order.

Gandhi sometimes used to identify truth with *Ahimsa* but it seems very difficult to agree with him because the two cannot be equated. Here, we may agree with him in accepting his views in regard to non-violence as the correctness, cleanliness, and sanctity of means. Truth is an integral concept whereas *Ahimsa* is evolved by man and it is applicable to him not in the universe. The existence of truth cannot be denied by any person. It is all pervasive which cannot be questioned. *Ahimsa*, on the other hand, is not always possible. There are brute animals like, serpent, tiger, lion, etc., which in some way or other cannot survive unless they devour some lower animals. Here, we cannot condemn the actions of these animals as violent.

Hence, it seems that violence cannot be checked everywhere and on every scale. Only truth prevails and cannot be denied. It has been described in ancient *Hindu* scriptures as vast. In spite of certain limitations of non-violence, we cannot deny the importance of it. Non-violence has certain merits in it which are very helpful in achieving the new society of Gandhian concept. It helps man in bringing about a democratic pattern of behaviour. He replaces the economic, political and physiological struggles of man by a bloodless intellectual competition. *Auguste Comte* also hoped that, “for the supremacy of beneficence and universal consensus” (Dutta, 2005, p. 66).

Non-violence represents mutual adjustment, social coordination and socio-mental correlation. It stands for increasing relationship between the different groups, races, classes and

nations into which the whole humanity is apparently divided. Non-violence, stated above, is a higher form of truth.

Thus we find that the Gandhian ideas of non-violence or *Ahimsa* were novel, unique and different in many ways from those of pacifism '*Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism or Christianity*', in the sense that he not only recommended flexibility in their application but also applied several other principles or values which he had assimilated from ancient texts and practical experience.

1.2.3 *Satyagraha*

Satyagraha, for Gandhi became a source of inspiration. He tried to analyze and preach the effectiveness of this weapon in tackling all problems of life. It was he who for the first time made attempts to popularize this unique tool. Gandhi wanted to tackle all problems by adhering to the technique of *Satyagraha*. He first used this technique in South Africa. Subsequently he used this method in India also. He had gained much experience about the validity of this technique in South Africa. The experiences gained there were successfully utilized in organizing peasant's *Satyagraha* at various places in India also. In this perspective, Gandhi said, "There can be no doubt that the spirit of *Satyagraha* has pervaded the masses" (Gandhi, *Young India*, 1920, p. 49).

The technique of *Satyagraha* was unique for Gandhi. *Satyagraha* is a soul force or love force, so Gandhi solves all problems and conflicts by winning the hearts of the opponents. With greater emphasis he added, "the beauty and efficacy of *Satyagraha* so great and the doctrine so simple that it can be preached even to children" (Narayan, 1968, p. 148). For him, it was meant not only for politics and for his revolution but he also adopted it in the form of human knowledge. He advocated that our knowledge should be in accordance with the principle of *Satyagraha*. It should not only be confined to politics but it should also be used in other spheres of human thought. This technique has been tested on many occasions and it has the capacity of being universal. It can be very useful in modern times. As A. C. Kapoor writes:

Satyagraha is the technique of resisting all that is evil, unjust, impure and untrue and resolving all maladjustments in human relations by love, voluntary suffering and self-purification by an appeal to the divine spark in the opponent's soul (Dutta, 2005, p. 69).

Satyagraha is the highest and purest form of non-violence. It is the weapon of conquering evil with love by taking suffering upon oneself. It establishes the spiritual relation with the oppressed and wicked and makes them understand that a *Satyagrahi* cannot hurt anyone unless he hurts himself first. He sacrifices all for the sake of justice. *Satyagraha* can also be analyzed as the technique of identification and involvement.

Gandhi's *Satyagraha* teaches us the lesson of love and kindness. A *Satyagrahi* fights against oppression and brute force. He should try to solve all problems on the lines of mutual cooperation and understanding. This cannot be possible unless there is place for love for others. The opponents should not be coerced, they should be converted. So Gandhi prescribes love as soul-force and the conception of *Swarajya* is also said to be based on it. As Gandhi said, "A *Satyagrahi* never injures his opponent and always appeals, either to his reason by gentle argument or to his heart by the sacrifice of self" (Hingorani, 1970, p. 29.).

A *Satyagrahi* should not only persist in his right for he cannot hold on to truth unless he practices it. Gandhi goes on advocating that, for safeguarding his inherent right, a *Satyagrahi* should be ready for all eventualities. To resist opposition to one's right is not an easy task. Self-suffering replaces retaliation as the technique of the redemption of the right of a *Satyagrahi*. Gandhi himself said, "*Satyagraha* is an inherent birth right of a person" (Gandhi, *Young India*, 1922, p. 349). A *Satyagrahi*, who is always considered to be the seeker after truth, should undergo all types of suffering for the sake of truth. To be a *Satyagrahi* means everything. Therefore, Gandhi maintained that a *Satyagrahi* is one who can suffer all kinds of suffering and God is in the suffering masses.

Therefore, if these three fundamental principles, i.e. *truth, non-violence and Satyagraha* had been followed in all social, religious, political and economic activities, the India of Gandhi's dream would not have been far away.

CONCLUSION:

From the foregoing discussions it appears that Gandhi was not a man of limited circumstances. Thus, Gandhi drew great inspiration from the '*Indian and Western influences*' and they shaped his thought to a greater extent. Gandhi read with profound care the various religions of the world and was influenced more or less by almost all. He embraced and practiced what was good in them and rejected what was repugnant to his thought and ideas. He did not accept anything simply because it came from authority, or reason, or experience. He accepted only those principles of thought which after several experiments proved to be true. Gandhi conducted experiments on moral, religious and existential issues in his inner life and outside existence; and his idea is nothing but a product of a series of experiments that he carried out. His main objective in life was to eradicate the miseries and sufferings of mankind through the principles of '*truth, non-violence and Satyagraha*'. If these three fundamental principles are followed in all social, religious, political and economical activities then there will always be positive results.

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CHAPTER – 2

MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY

2.1 Gandhian Doctrine of Morality

2.1.1 The Concept of ‘Ends and Means’

2.1.2 Ethical Relativism and Universal Morality

2.2 Gandhian Views on Cardinal Virtues

CHAPTER- 2

MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY

Morality is not innate in man. It does not lie in men from birth but a quality to be acquired. There is a certain code of conduct common to all men in any society, and an adherence to which is termed moral and the negligence is called immoral. The different moral codes are not given from without but are rather product of different process of moral development.

Being a powerful moralist, Gandhi applied his weapon of moral power in every field. Gandhi's morality includes purity of the character, purity in the purpose of the soul, in the perception of truth, and selfless service by the goodness of means. In other words, he attempted solving all problems whether social, religious or political- on the basis of morality; which for him is the solution for all the evils. It is due to this that the British philosopher, *C. E. M. Joad* called Gandhi, a "moral genius" (Dutta, 2005, p. 101); in fact, morality, according to Gandhi, "is nothing but *Satyagraha*" (Lal, 2014, p. 134) and requirements of a true *Satyagrahi* are nothing but morality.

2.1 Gandhian Doctrine of Morality

Gandhi was averse to the idea of customary morality and did not accept morality as a mere passive obedience to customs. Further, it did not consist in the norms of responsibility imposed by a community. One should not act under the influence of other persons and virtue or morality consists in the right or the good behaviour of men. Moreover, Gandhi did not see any conflict between reliable behaviour of a person and the '*welfare of mankind*'. Rather, he advocated flexibility between the behaviour of an individual and mankind as a whole. And, finally, prescribes one norm of morality to judge all actions, which according to him is moral actions of the people i.e., if any actions are conducive to the '*welfare of mankind*', they should be taken. Gandhi said, "In judging the actions of men, we should always apply the test, whether it conduces to the welfare of the world or not" (Desai, 1968, p. 23).

Gandhi prescribes living life in harmony with this ideal and according to him ‘morality is neither the imagination nor the timeless essence’; regardless of whether the *Moral Law is God-given* or manifested spiritually, it must hold the practical utility in life. Gandhi writes:

Morality is the very foundation of life. The existence and progress of man depends upon his moral self. It seems that the morality has been taken in two senses- an ideal and a way of life. It is an ideal because it is an inner urge of an individual, the realization of which is absolutely necessary in order to lead a moral life. And morality is also considered as a way of life in the sense that after realizing the ideal one will have necessarily to obey it (Desai, 1968, p. 23).

Sometimes, we find that actions of men cannot be considered either moral or immoral in which case he expounds that, “The question of morality does not enter at all into many of our ordinary actions, since we are, for the most part, the mere creatures of convention” (Desai, 1968, p. 23). In other words, the question of morality does not arise in a normal situation but when a problematic situation occurs and that is where, one has to decide about the correct course of action.

So, we see here that the first principle of moral action should be voluntary i.e. a person should always be aware of what one does. And any individual should always perform his actions, consciously; to have a better control over his actions. There is always some good intention behind the moral act of an individual which is derived towards the good and welfare of mankind because the question of morality does not arise in the absence of intention to do well to others. Every action done by us must be directed towards the good of all. And Gandhi also tried to explain this moral act when he said, “Whether an act is moral or otherwise depends upon the intention of the doer” (Desai, 1968, p. 10). It can be said here that this is the second characteristic feature of morality, according to Gandhi. To explain his position more clearly, he says:

Two men may have done exactly the same thing; but the act of one may be moral, and that of the other the contrary. Take, for instance, a man who out of great pity feeds the poor, and another who does the same such selfish end. Though the

action is the same, the act of the one is moral and that of the other non-moral (Desai, 1968, p. 10).

However, the position of Gandhi does not hold well from the viewpoint of *Immanuel Kant* since he does not regard even ‘this action’ of an individual ‘moral’. He explains, any action done out of pity have no moral sanctity whatsoever. Although we are not concerned here to go in detail to *Kant*’s notion of morality as it is sufficient to make it clear here that in developing his moral philosophy, *Kant* has gone too far in advocating something which does not appeal to the common sense. That is why he emphasizes that the moral act should be done such that they are accepted universally and under all circumstances. In other words, morality to him is universal in nature. Gandhi reminds that, “The highest moral law is that we should unremittingly work for the good of mankind” (Bose, 1960, p. 308). We must not be selfish in nature so that morality pervades the entire human race by transcending the immediate good of a particular person and through embracing the good of the entire mankind.

It is thus obvious that Gandhi was an altruist. His morality lies in the common good, in the happiness of all. According to Gandhi, this is the ultimate goal of all morality. He makes his point more clear when he said:

So long as man remains selfish and does not care for the happiness of others, he is no better than an animal and perhaps worse. His superiority to the animal seen only when we find him caring for his family. He is still more human, that is, much higher than the animal, when he extends his concept of the family to include his country or community as well. He climbs still higher in the scale when he comes to regard the human race as his family (Desai, 1968, p. 23).

It will not, however, be out of place to mention here that Gandhi’s idea of morality is governed by two principles: i) the idea of the superiority in respect of quality; and ii) the internal sanction. He did not lay any stress on the first. He said, “If I collected a million false coins they would be a worthless burden to me. One true coin would be worth its value” (Ray, 1950, p. 48). He was of the opinion that moral actions which are prompted by a sense of prestige or honour are

as worthless as the 'false coins'. While actions which emanate from heart and are performed out of true moral sense alone constitute morality. The external sanctions which include- political sanctions, social rewards and punishments, public esteem and dishonour, etc. do not constitute, according to him, true morality. And true sanctions, according to him, are 'internal'. In other words, the moral law is revealed to us- internally. All men are divine and, therefore, moral law which emanates from the core of hearts is also divine. Hence, to know the moral law, we have to first know ourselves. Moral law is not beyond and apart from us. It is our obligation to follow all its details. Thus we can say with much emphasis that, 'the real seat of morality is contained ultimately in the nature of man himself'. Therefore according to Gandhi, moral action should be directed towards selfless action.

The only code of morality, according to him is '*disinterestedness*' which is to be taken as the touchstone in all spheres of human activities and Gandhi strove hard to preach the gospel of disinterestedness as the standard of morality. An act done with this end in view is really a moral act. But also at the same time, the code of morality should not vary from individual to individual and nation to nation- '*It must be common to all men in all circumstances*' i.e., it must have universality in it. Universal in the sense that same code of morality becomes the basis of all human acts. Gandhi shaped his life accordingly and demonstrated its efficacies to the entire human race in solving the problems of social, moral and religious importance. He adhered to one '*code of conduct*' to be adopted in all circumstances and at all times. He also prescribed certain norms of moral behaviour to be adopted in disciplining and shaping lives of individuals.

Thus, we can say that there is a definite ideal in the moral life of man, which is realised by the effort of man. Here it can be argued that sometimes there are 'collective moral ideals' and other times, evolving conscious states of human beings. The moral life is considered a constant development, by all processes.

2.1.1 The Concept of 'Ends and Means'

A critical discussion of Gandhi's concept of this 'means-end' relationship is as significant today, if not more, as it was during his life time. Therefore, 'means' like- cunningness, deceit

and violence, even though justified for some desirable end, cannot be justified at any cost. Gandhian dictum- ‘means and ends are convertible terms’ suggests the making of ends in the process i.e., a true man committed to moral values will not remain fixated on either means or ends for their own sake. He will not sanction himself or others to use means with illusory justification. While judging of the morality of an action, the motive of the doer or agent should be taken into consideration; that whether the action is moral or immoral- ‘judged on the basis of the motive that prompts it’. *D. M. Dutta* said that, “If the means adopted is not moral, the end cannot be moral. Moral means should be used to make a man morally better as the use of immoral means is not morally justifiable” (Dutta, 1953, p. 84).

Gandhi stated that if the means are taken care of, the goal will be reached sooner or later. And that ‘means and ends’ are interdependent and equally necessary. When the means adopted are wrong the goal (that is the end) even if it is pure will not be reached, and even if it is obtained, it wouldn’t be realised as a ‘pure end’. Gandhi expresses that, “Immoral means must ultimately have their effect on ends. If these desirable ends are necessary, moral means to achieve the ends are at least as necessary” (Veerraju, 1999, p. 50). Gandhi did not accept violent means to achieve the goal. Gandhi did not like to bring about India’s independence in violent means. He said:

If violence and untruth are necessary for the advancement of my country, let my country go under. I would not sacrifice these two for all World...I do not seek to serve India at the sacrifice of truth for I know that a man who forsakes truth can forsake his country, and his nearest and dearest ones (Tendulkar, 1951, p. 32).

However, Gandhi has always managed over the means; and never relied on the ends. In fact, for him the means are more important because the end rises out of the means. He believes in ‘as a means to an end’. So for him the end can never justify the means. In fact, in many of his speeches he had expressed the idea that ‘the end is always in part to the means’ and thus, ‘the attempt to win *Swaraj* is *Swaraj* itself and both cannot be different’. Gandhi said, “I have, therefore, concerned myself principally with the conservation of the means and their progressive

use. I know if we can take care of them, attainment of the goal is assured” (Bose, 1960. pp. 36-37).

From all which is said above can be followed the most important and basic of the principles on which Gandhi himself acted throughout his life, and marked himself amongst one of the greatest men whom we adore. He was a person who always acted on what he said. The vows were mainly- *truth*, *Ahimsa*, *Asteya*, *Aparigraha* and *Brahmacarya*. For long years he consistently lived these ideals and in the light of their experience, modified and improved them. About these ethical disciplines, he thinks, that they should be taken as a vow by mankind in general, for the purpose of self-realization which requires a self-purification which further requires moral discipline. The roots of violence are based in divisive tendencies like *anger*, *selfishness*, *lust* etc, which take us away from our goal. And if endured would take the universe into chaos. Even if a person is clear and definite about his goal, he cannot reach it without a proper path. So it is only in the context of means, that the end gets relevant. Therefore, this has bearings on and relevance for the human life even in this modern world.

2.1.2 Ethical Relativism and Universal Morality

The *Sarvodaya* philosophers have explained the principles of morality in different ways. *Vinoba Bhave* did not accept all the prevailing rules of morality to be of permanent value. According to *Vinoba*, “the basic moral principles which sustain and regulate life are absolute and fixed like the laws of mathematics” (Dutta, 2005, p. 117). Further, *K. G. Mashruwala* also holds that, “some rules of morality are products of geographical situations, historical incidents and particular social needs” (Dutta, 2005, p. 117). By ethical relativism he meant principles valid in certain circumstances and invalid in other. The norms of moral behaviour should not vary from one situation to another. Viewed theoretically, he said that everything relative must be relative to something and, ultimately, there must be at least one absolute element to which everything is relative, otherwise they would lose their real basis.

The theory of ethical relativism gains enormous support from *Marxism* which holds that each class has its own morality. *Marx* was averse to the principle of absolute code of conduct

because that has a tendency to dogmatism, prosecution and intolerance. It is, therefore, regarded as an enemy of intellectual thought. Yet, the *Marxist* attitude cannot be accepted as the correct attitude. The main difficulty in accepting this view is that it has not been worked out in much detail. Another difficulty in regard to ethical relativism is that the moralities of different people are alleged to differ, but how they differ, has not been precisely set out. Even *Bertrand Russell*, an ardent supporter of ethical relativism, accepted its inadequacies. *Russell* wrote:

When I am compelled as happens very frequently in the modern world, to contemplate acts of cruelty which make me shudder with horror, I find myself constantly impelled towards an ethical outlook which I cannot justify intellectually. I find myself thinking these men are wicked and what they do is bad in some absolute sense for which my theory has not provided (*Russell*, 1954, p. 128).

These explanations clearly indicate that the theory of relative morality does not find favour in *Russell*. So, Gandhi too was opposed to '*relative morality*'. He always remained in favour of one norm for all men. Therefore, he always stressed the need for universal morality. Universal morality, as we have held, is such that the norms to be followed should not vary from person to person and nation to nation. One code of conduct should be made the criterion of all our behaviours. But, what are these principles of morality in Gandhian thought? Which are universal? It is, thereby, necessary that an individual must order his life in accordance with these moral principles and unless one follows these moral principles, he cannot be moral in the true sense.

However, there are critics which show Gandhi advocating '*relative morality*'. *E. M. S. Namboodiripad*, the great critic of Gandhi, has explained that Gandhi's Indian national independence struggle was based on purely relative morality. Gandhi's ideals are seemed to be changing. Persons behaving differently in different situations form the different norms of morality. If it be accepted as true, we can unhesitatingly call Gandhi's principles of morality as '*relative morality*'. But we are marching ahead on the way to progress in which we will have to

face different situations, and if we judge our actions in these situations differently, our moral actions certainly will be relative.

Gandhi was not an ordinary man who confined his activities to a limited situation or limited circumstances. He strictly followed one principles of morality in all his works and performances. According to him, ‘absolute principles of morality have come into being as a result of man’s experiments’; they all aim at man’s existence and progress. Humility or tolerance, for instance, is one such absolute principle of morality. It is the product of man’s experiments.

We thus come to understand that, Gandhi strove hard throughout his entire life to achieve this concept of morality. He appealed to every individual of the society, so that every person can lead a perfect moral life.

2.2 Gandhian Views on Cardinal Virtues

Gandhi advocated certain virtues of life as necessary for a pious and moral life. These virtues approved and recommended by Gandhi are not different from the requirements he laid down for a true *Satyagrahi*. Gandhi laid great emphasized on certain moral principles which can be considered as moral disciplines to organise the life of man. Traditional Indian philosophy too emphasizes the need for observing cardinal virtues emphasizing that their practice by everyone. Gandhi prescribed various *Ashram* observances also known as ‘vows’ to moralize the conduct of human beings. While Gandhi was in the *Yervada Jail*, he used to send a series of weekly discourses to members of his *Ashram* at *Sabarmati* on the principles of upbringing in the *Ashrams* during the 1930s. The *Ashrams* observances or vows are- Truth (*Satya*), Non-violence (*Ahimsa*), Celibacy (*Brahmacharya*), Non-Stealing (*Asteya*) and Non-Possession (*Aparigraha*). These five primary vows contain the essence of spiritual reflection which Indian saints of the past recommended for a proper functioning of society. Moreover, apart from these primary vows; there are six more vows viz., Control of the Palate (*Asvada*), Fearlessness (*Abhaya*), Removal of Untouchability (*Asprishyatanivarana*), Bread Labour (*Sharira-Shrama*), Equality of Religions (*Sarva-Dharma-Samanatva*) and Duty towards Neighbour (*Swadeshi*)- these are derived from

primary five to suit under certain conditions, or are required to follow the first five primary vows properly. Before elaborating on these, a general remark should be made regarding the practice of these virtues. Gandhi said that:

These virtues should be practiced not only externally, but also in thought, speech and action. The purpose of ethical activities is the attainment of purity, and complete holiness can be attained only when the person is virtuous not only in action but also in thought and speech (Naamboodiripad, 2010, p. 123).

Below are explained all the ‘*Eleven Vows*’ expounded to help individuals in cultivating love, freedom and faith. These *Eleven Vows* are explain as following:

(i) Truth (*Satya*)

The first vow is that of *Satya* or Truth and its observance is not an ordinary task. Truth had to be practiced not only passively but actively. All our activities should be focused on truth and follow the path of truth at any cost. Truth should be practiced in all stages of life. And all other rules of life ultimately merge into the Truth, thereby, correct living of life should be directed towards this *supreme truth* because ‘Truth’ rules over the entire human race.

Gandhi urges that in order to move towards the Truth, one has to sacrifice- hatred, anger, selfishness, etc. otherwise the attainment of truth remains impossible. He further states, “A successful search for truth means complete deliverance from the dual throng such as of love and hate, happiness and misery” (Desai, 2015, pp. 319-320). The truth is indeed self-manifested, but we have become blind due to our ignorance. According to him, ignorance is not natural or necessary by itself. He firmly held that, “moral degradation or pervasion of one kind or another causes ignorance” (Lal, 2014, p. 135).

All other vows are observed by this vow. It is like a uniting force in the universe. All our experiences and activities are united and associated with this *powerful force*. It reigns supreme in the heart of every person. It also helps in establishing *the idea of brotherhood*. By following this

great virtue, one leads to the *realization of Brahma*. When we reach this stage, that is, when we realise *Brahma*, we feel that we become free from all worldly desires and temptations. At this stage, everyone feel delighted and perfect. And, when we really get a glimpse of *Brahma*, then the concept of an ideal society naturally comes to our mind in which all individuals live free. From this point of view, Gandhi had always and under all circumstances emphasized over the need to cultivate this great virtue called Truth. Gandhi mentioned that:

Truth, in another form, means to act as one perceives it at any moment. Anything which appears to be our duty is *Svadharma*. *Svadharma* in the broad sense imposes a discipline in order that we are truthful in *words, deeds and thoughts* (Desai, 1932, p. 6).

Truth means ‘real existence’. It is also the correct, complete, and important name of God. And Truth in the absolute sense comprises ‘*Sat-Chit-Anand*’, or in other words *satchitananda* is ‘...one who combines in Himself Truth, Knowledge and Bliss’. Thus, it becomes clear that, as per Gandhi, every person should practice Truth which is a great moral virtue. Truth is considered as an essential human virtue. And it is this virtue that separates humans from animalistic tendencies. A person who wants to realise the Truth with his or her own efforts should become highly ethical. Any independent *pursuit of Truth* requires a deep moral life. Only those who go through these disciplines of morality can claim to have heard the voice of conscience regarding Truth. Thus, it can be easily said that Truth, the most important code of morality, is everything in life. Below, in brief, certain deeper moral implications of non-violence principle are expounded.

(ii) Non-violence (*Ahimsa*)

Gandhi had given utmost importance to non-violence as a great virtue. Moral aspects such as tolerance and love are manifested in this virtue. He considered this principle primarily as a tool for moral upliftment and regeneration. There is enough evidence in the history of mankind which proves the gradual progression of violence. Gandhi had worried with the rise of violent tendencies already prevalent in society. He deduced that peace cannot be accomplished by

violence but by non-violence. And with the help of this unique power of moral strength, he did drive out the *Britishers* and further fought for all walks of society.

According to Gandhi, non-violence permeates the whole being and should not restrain to individual acts. The supporter of this principle should always act non-violently under each circumstance. It should be kept in mind that human life cannot be departmentalized. It is an inseparable whole. This is the reason why Gandhi accepted this weapon of non-violence as operative tool throughout the life of man and not restricts to acts committed in isolation. This law should also be practiced both at the individual and national basis. To practice the creed of non-violence, it is necessary to take serious study, tremendous perseverance and commitment to purify oneself completely. It is not only a case of philosophy, but is embodied in life and takes many shapes outside of the self-culture too. Gandhi accepted that the function of non-violence is different from other moral laws in the sense that its source is divine. The votary does not act with his own strength. Strength comes from God. Therefore, Gandhi says:

All through my life, I have acted in that faith. Never have I attributed any independent strength to myself. This may be considered by men who do not believe in a higher power than themselves as a drawback and a helpless state. I must admit that limitation of *Ahimsa* if it be accounted as such (Gandhi, 1948, p. 292).

Thus, this moral force- non-violence is '*humanly governed, but divinely controlled*' i.e., it is incomprehensible without the control of God. Therefore, a person who believes in non-violence also considers *God as the ultimate source of all moral strength*. God is the supreme moral power to overcome mankind. It is clear that non-violence cannot be adopted as a very popular tool of moral-regeneration. But the tragedy is that this principle has not developed properly. It must be admitted that the science of non-violence is not yet properly practiced. The failure of this powerful force is due to the lack of moral strength on the part of men who could not implement it. To practice this '*great weapon of non-violence*' is necessary, to be morally strong. It is further held and already explained that perfect non-violence is impracticable. In this regard, he writes:

True non-violence nobody knows, for nobody can practice perfect non-violence. It can be used in politics precisely as it can be used in the domestic sphere. We may not be perfect in our use of it, but we definitely discard the use of violence and grow from failure to success (Gandhi, 1948, p. 321).

Gandhi advocated for them and advised people to practice these ideals in every situation of life by showing to the world, endless source of power behind these moral forces, one of which is celibacy. Now we will proceed to discuss the moral implications of the celibacy principle.

(iii) Celibacy (*Brahmacharya*)

Brahmacharya is the most important of the vows prescribed by Gandhi as it has been practiced as a ‘cardinal virtue’. *Brahmacharya* is a mandatory condition for the observance of the first two morals, namely, ‘truth and non-violence’. Gandhi considers this vow to be as important as ‘truth’ and is convinced that a *Satyagrahi* should accept *brahmacharya*. This vow is also popularly known as continence. In the general context, it is a life of purity that is considered as essential to devote oneself exclusively to the attainment of God. All forms of restraint have been associated with it.

Gandhi explains the basic definition of *brahmacharya*, “as the conduct adapted to the search of *Brahma*, i.e., Truth and in its special meaning it is a control of all the senses” (Desai, 1932, p. 14). When *Brahmacharya* is practiced properly, it ultimately leads to the attainment of *Brahma*. However, *brahmacharya* does not simply mean practice of control over sexual passions, but overall control of all organs of the senses. *Brahamcharaya*, rather lies in the control of all the senses. Moreover, anger and impure- thoughts do not provide any strength to *brahmacharya*, therefore Gandhi, maintained this moral principle as a means of ‘*self-control*’.

Gandhi further rejected the old and traditional belief that women are more worldly, impure and inferior to men in relation to moral behaviour. Explaining this, he said that it is not women who defile men, but also men too are at times impure and morally inferior to women. He

thus advocated equality of both sexes. A *Satyagrahi* who follows *brahmacharya* is neither man nor woman. The very observance of this code of conduct reduces the sexual desires of both men and women and gives rise to a renewed consciousness on towards the idea of sex, whereby all women are either mothers, daughters and sisters etc. If a *Satyagrahi* is almost a complete *brahmachari*, nothing will be impossible for him. Therefore, a *brahmachari* should control his passions. This sublimation of passions strengthens a person's entire existence- physically, spiritually and mentally, and gives him otherwise unattainable power. *Brahmacharya*, in its widest sense means, 'complete control over thoughts, words and deeds'. A complete *brahmachari* should strictly discipline all the organs of the body. If not controlled and regulated, the purpose of a complete *brahmacharya* is defeated.

Gandhi emphasized the need to maintain *brahmacharya* also in the married life. According to him, even a married person can observe this vow, if he establishes a relationship with his wife based on purity and friendship, and not lust. This ideal of marriage is the union of the spiritual through the physical. The law of marriage is justified and sanctified only when it is done with the purpose of procreation however this idea is not practiced well these days. Therefore, it can be argued with *Manu smriti*, Gandhi considered a child either a '*Dharmaja*'- arising out of righteousness, or '*Kamaja*' i.e., arising out of lust and therefore emphasized the need to follow *brahmacharya* in married life.

For Gandhi, *Brahmacharya* was the most powerful solution for the current problem of a growing population. He considered this moral virtue- *brahmacharya*, as a reliant means of *self-control*. According to him, *self-control* is necessary for solving the huge population rise. It is generally accepted that in every civilized and prosperous country, the need for birth-control is as great as defense, it helps in food control and related problems. In modern times we are developing medical science through various researches to help humans in controlling the birth rate but needless to say, that these mechanical methods for birth-control interfere with the work of nature. Gandhi, like other great economists, seized the problems of over-population in India, but he feared that the use of contraceptives for birth-control purposes might put people in more trouble. So he thought that it would be better if people would adopt healthy methods to achieve the goal instead of going into such dangerous practices.

India has its own distinctive culture and civilisation. In Indian culture, sex has been very much sacred. Marriage in India is a sacrament, and is believed to occur with great spiritual benefits. Against this background, we are not sure how the use of contraceptives be effectively allowed. One of the many purposes of marriage is to actually bring order, harmony in our sexual life. It is only possible that the use of contraceptives may spoil the harmony of our sexual life and could have a huge impact on us. And Gandhi maintained that contraceptives are an insult to womanhood arguing that, “Any large use of methods is likely to result in the dissolution of the marriage bond and free love” (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 358). Thus the question of birth-control is still unresolved. Modern methods of birth-control only reduce human conscience. Gandhi held that, “Birth control by contraceptives and the like is profound error” (Dutta, 2005, p. 129). Then what is the method of birth control? Gandhi believes that the only appropriate method for birth control is through ‘*self-control or self-restraint*’. Thus, we see that birth-control through modern scientific methods is harmful and immoral, especially in India. The best way a man has is the spiritual method of *self-control* i.e., *brahmacharya* and thus Gandhi concludes:

Brahmacharya in married life now assumes its nature and inevitable position and becomes as simple as the fact of marriage life. Any other method of birth-control seems useless and unthinkable (Dutta, 2005, p. 129).

Although Gandhi maintained that, he did not consider physical union between married couples to be a violation of *brahmacharya*. So, now try to summarize the moral implications of non-stealing principle.

(iv) Non-Stealing (*Asteya*)

Asteya (non-stealing) means observance the rule of not taking property or anything belonging to someone unless it is given by the person concerned. Apart from this, there is another meaning which is more strict in its use which refuses to keep such thing that is not needed or required by the person concerned. Gandhi made use of this term in both these senses. He believed that by observing non-stealing, a person can progressively reduce their desire as far as possible and thereby poverty too can be reduced. Gandhi says:

It is impossible for a person to steal and simultaneously claim to know Truth. Most of the people, knowingly or unknowingly, cautiously or incautiously, are more or less guilty of theft (Desai, 1932, p. 14).

Jainism and *Buddhism*, which have great influence on Gandhi, laid more emphasis on this virtue. Gandhi recognized that liberation from violence and exploitation is a moral virtue based on love. Therefore, he recommends that a truly moral person stay determined to practice the virtue of non-stealing. Gandhi's explanation of these two vows is more meaningful than what is understood of these in common parlance. Gandhi proclaimed that *non-possession* and *non-stealing* are very much mental conditions.

However, no human being can follow the observances of these two to perfection. Body is also a possession. But a true moralist should reduce his desires. He should not tread unnecessarily in the worldly necessities of life.

(v) Non-possession (*Aparigraha*)

Aparigraha (or non-possession) is an important virtue associated with *asteya*. People should practice this virtue. According to Gandhi, a votary of *Satyagraha* should observe this vow. For Gandhi, "*Aparigraha* is contentment- being contented with the necessities of life and not to pine for more" (Lal, 2014, p. 136). It may be impossible to follow in life in the absolute sense of the word 'non-possession', but this ideal must be constantly kept in mind and critically examined so as to reduce possessions to minimum.

According to Gandhi, even, "a thing not originally stolen must nevertheless be classified as stolen property, if we possess it without needing it" (Desai, 1932, p. 23). In other words, no one should keep anything that is not needed. Nothing should be saved for the future. Gandhi proclaims non-possession of not just things but also of thoughts. Our thoughts often present obstacles in the path of *Sadhana* and distract us. Non-possession in thoughts means the intrinsic values of life and service of mankind. In this way non-possession means the cultivation of detachment. It is non-dependence on material things. This approach is more radical than that of

extreme communists. Gandhi felt that exclusive possession and love can never run mutually; that perfect love demands ready to give up everything, including the body, stands as an ideal for which man should progress, although this may not be entirely feasible in human life. Therefore, Gandhi wrote:

In actual life, we can hardly exercise perfect love, for the body as a possession, will always remain with us. Man will ever remain imperfect, and it will non-possession will remain unattainable ideas as long as we are alive, but towards which we must ceaselessly strive (Duncan, 1971, pp. 246-247).

At the same time, he also warned that the satisfaction of these needs should be kept under certain limits otherwise they would reduce physical and intellectual instability and might obstruct the path of a moralist in his service to humanity- ‘the aim of a moralist should not be the multiplication of the seekers, rather, it should be the fulfillment of bare needs’.

We have discussed above the five primary vows very well emphasized upon by Gandhi for the purpose of moralizing the various walks of life. We will now proceed to discuss the six secondary vows of morality which are necessary aids to the practice of the first five vows of morality.

(vi) Control of the Palate (*Asvada*)

Gandhi has elevated the control of the palate and considers it as an aid to *brahmacharya*. Among the various means of *brahmacharya*, this vow is also being prescribed by him. According to him, a *brahmachari* should practice this moral discipline to get a control over his palate. We should not try to please our palates, but put our body and soul in proper working condition. Gandhi recommended some dietary restrictions. He also recommends fasting and prayer because all the disciplines are useful only when the mind cooperates with the body, which occurs when mind develops distaste for things which are not necessary for the body. Gandhi himself conducted experiments to control taste and found them to be completely successful.

Therefore, Gandhi said that those who are willing to serve their country should regularize and purify their diet daily and avoid food gradually. He made it clear that this vow should be observed strictly in thoughts, words and deeds. Now we discuss the observance of fearlessness.

(vii) Fearlessness (*Abhaya*)

Fearlessness (*Abhaya*) is one of the indispensable moral-tool for pursuing *truth and non-violence*. Hence, it has been given position of pride in the *Gita*. It has also been regarded as the ‘*commander of all virtues*’. Fearlessness was given primary importance by Gandhi since ‘the path of truth was to the brave, not to the cowards’. Bravery did not mean swords, rifles and other weapons; in reality those are but the instruments of the coward. Fear causes cowardice. And it is violence and untruth which gives rise to fear. According to Gandhi, cowardice is possibly the greatest cause of bloodshed that occurs in the name of violence. And where there is fear and violence, there cannot be ‘*truth and non-violence*’. Only those who are brave and strong can practice *non-violence and truth* and their strength lies in ‘fearlessness’. Therefore, Gandhi places great emphasis on fearlessness and considers it a symbol of *self-purification*. One of the objects of fearlessness, according to Gandhi, was to infuse the countrymen into self-confidence and relieve them from the fear of coercion. He succeeded to a great extent in cultivating in his countrymen the idea of practicing the fearlessness.

These weapons are taken up away by those who suffer but from fear. Gandhi believes that complete fearlessness is attained only by those who have experienced the supreme, by which he meant freedom from illusions. With the practice of self-confidence, a person can progress towards this goal with determination. Therefore, now we will proceed to discuss the moral implications of removal of untouchability.

(viii) Removal of Untouchability (*Asprishyatanivarana*)

Gandhi has given this vow fundamentally for achieving perfect social equality, that is, for the eradication of all kinds of *distinctions, radical, religious, caste* etc. Gandhi considered, “Untouchability as the sin of the Hindus” (Gandhi, *Young India*, 11-5-1924, p. 344). With this

end in view, Gandhi tried to bring Hindu temples open to the *Harijans*. *Vinoba Bhave* has stepped forward in an attempt to open them up to men of other religions as well. We have seen that *Sarvodaya* is unanimous in abolishing all kinds of Untouchability. Eradication of Untouchability has its own merits in Gandhi's ideal of social reform.

This vow does not require further explanation here. It can be emphasized that this vow is very important for bringing equality among men of all religions. Let's move to discuss the observance of bread-labour.

(ix) Bread Labour (*Sharira-Shrama*)

This vow is closely related to the 'vows of non-violence, *brahmacharya* and non-possession'. This vow is very essential for non-violence because much of exploitation and struggle arise in the society due to neglect of physical labour. If one has to practice non-violence in society, then everyone should do some kind of physical labour. Only then necessary conditions for non-violence can be created. Gandhi asks:

A millionaire cannot carry on for long and will soon get tired of his life, if he rolls in his bed all day long, and is even helped to his food. He, therefore, induces hunger by exercise and helps himself to the food he eats. If everyone whether rich or poor, has thus to take exercise in some shape or form why should it not assume the form of productive, i.e. bread labour? (Prabhu, 2016, p. 56).

Gandhi said that if everyone worked for their food then most of the conflicts between capital and labour around the globe can be avoided and most of the problems of class and position would eliminate. He was deeply concerned about the laziness of Indians and attributed the cause of poverty in India partly to this laziness. He set the task of 'bread-labour' as the only way to reduce the hunger of millions of dying countrywomen and countrymen. He proclaims that meaning of *Swaraj* would appear, "nothing to him if it did not show them how to use their applied laziness" (Tendulkar, 1951, p. 85). It is because of these ideas that Gandhi accepted the ideal of bread-labour, whether it is sewing, weaving or scavenger work. This vow deals with

brahmacharya in the way it keeps the mind healthy and peaceful. And, moreover, one can assume that bread labour would give rise to simplicity of life. Thus, it can help in cultivating the vow of non-possession. There are different types of bread labour. But the best form of bread labour is *cultivation*. But *cultivation* is not possible for everyone. Therefore, he prescribed weaving and spinning as the second choice of bread labour.

Thus, we believe that the moral implication of this vow is that '*work is duty*' and that labour must be produced from society. At the present time, bread labour is neglected and anyone who does physical labour does so under compulsion. Now let's move on to the discussion about the ethical implications of equality of religions.

(x) Equality of Religions (*Sarva-Dharma-Samanatva*)

Gandhi believes that all the religion of the world contain the same principles and expounded the importance of all religions. Different religions for him are, "beautiful flowers from the same garden or branches of the same majestic tree" (Gandhi, 1950, p. 261). Just as there is a soul that manifests itself in many bodies so there is one religion which is manifested differently when it passes through human beings. He stated that all religions were equally true, although their reception and interpretation through human devices were equally imperfect.

In fact, in his daily prayer meetings *Bhagavad Gita*, *Bible* and *Koran* were recited. But he remained a *Hindu*. His statement that, "there is in Hinduism room enough for *Jesus*, as there is for *Mohammed*, *Zoroaster*, and *Moses*" (Prabhu, 1955, p. 61), does not give rise to any implication that he believed Hinduism to be superior to other religions. Gandhi taught that every *Satyagrahi* should cultivate tolerance towards other religions. Apart from these disciplines which an individual should follow strictly for the benefit of society and thereby to India as a whole, Gandhi had to consider all aspects of human life. All were considered necessary to reach to the ideal. Even the question of food, clothing, shelter or treatment of disease did not escape his careful consideration. To him they were as important as the independence movement or the problem of Untouchability.

All religions have one common goal in the life of man and that is the desire to rise. But there is no religion that can be called totally perfect. All are more or less imperfect. This consideration is necessary to maintain equality of all religions. So, lastly we can proceed to discuss about the observance of duty towards neighbour.

(xi) Duty towards Neighbour (*Swadeshi*):

Swadeshi is another important moral vow and the major concept of Gandhian philosophy. Using country-made things are proclaimed in this vow. For Gandhi, it is a discipline that must be adopted as a complete disregard for physical discomfort. He considered this vow as a sacred law of human beings. In short, there are important moral disciplines laid down by Gandhi. According to Gandhi, all these vows provide a basis for both *personal and social life*. The *Sarvodaya* philosophy sets one and the same ideal for every individual. It does not provide dual morality. It also does not create divisions in personality and any 'ism' in men. According to these principles, 'ends and means' are one and the same. The various vows propounded by Gandhi embody the principles of a happy life. They all relate to our present life. The spirit of this age is 'the search of truth'. The unity of all life should be the basis of truth. Science propagates partial truth, not absolute truth, which should be our sole objective.

Man chooses either the path of non-violence or violence. There can be no compromise between the two. The first three vows could end all economic exploitation and provide better psychological and economic security. *Swadeshi* has been considered as the greatest vow of the present era and is also a very important duty of man. *Brahmacharya* helps us to preserve human energy. It will also keep in check the growing population problem without any moral loss, intellectual and physical degeneration. And fearlessness is necessary to organise life on a new pattern.

CONCLUSION:

We have discussed briefly above, the *concept of morality* as stated by the Gandhi. We find that he did not develop any system of morality, perhaps because he was not an academic

philosopher. Gandhi's notion of morality includes intuitionism, rationalism or austerity and adultery. Gandhi studied and evaluated the human situation to take non-violent actions in the events of necessity, while not losing the sight of '*purity of means*'. By adopting this conception, he avoids the problem of employing the immoral means which give recourse to violence, untruth and other evils. The adoption of *purity of means* has great bearing on human life and significant relevance to the modern world. We can say that, moral virtues such as *non-violence*, *truthfulness*, *non-stealing*, *non-possession* and *celibacy* have their significance and perennial relevance. Gandhi thus revives the old ethical and spiritual basis of society which was being destroyed by the materialistic culture of the West. Therefore, Gandhi always emphasizes the cultivation of *love, truth, freedom and brotherhood*. These virtues can be cultivated and practiced only in the establishment of a *Sarvodaya* society. His every act is directed towards the good and *welfare of all mankind* and we see that Gandhi in his last analysis of morality tends to present the notion of *Sarvodaya*. It is, therefore, imperative for us to present his notion of *Sarvodaya* in the concept of morality.

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CHAPTER – 3

GANDHIAN RESOLUTION FOR RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

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CHAPTER-3

GANDHIAN RESOLUTION FOR RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

Religious conflict is one of the most affecting issues in our present day society. Such conflicts are emerging on the global stage today in many forms. The main causes behind these are a faulty '*sense of power*' and '*desire for domination*'. Since ancient times, in Indian society the structure of religion has been full of spirituality- *peace, forgiveness, faith, non-violence*. But in the present times many religious defects have appeared due to bigotry and intolerance- 'bigotry generates mutual suspicion, jealousy, disharmony, terror and conflict in the public mind'. It is such a great irony that while in the religious texts - *love, kindness, compassion and sacrifice*, are the most talked about yet the most cruelty and hatred, arguably is spread in the name of religion itself. However, in no tradition one religion is to call another religion bad. Rabindranath Tagore reminds:

If there is any philosophy of religion in my writings, it amounts to this: to realise the relationship of perfect love between the supreme soul and the souls of all created beings is indeed true religious sense- this love that holds duality on one side and non-duality on the other, union as well as separation and bondage along with freedom (Lal, 2014, pp. 73-74).

The narrow mindset of selfish people has changed the definition of religion. Today religion has become a mere toy in the hands of corrupt individuals, divisive politicians, self centered political parties and various institutions that are doing the disgusting act of breaking the society in the name of religion. Now the globalized world needs to create a new humanism, which can build an inclusive civilisation that promotes *freedom, compassion, justice and conscience*.

However a solution to religious conflict and societal problems can be found in Gandhian philosophy. In current times of moral-crisis, it becomes necessary for us to *adopt the Gandhian ideology*. In fact it can be easily said that Gandhi's religious thoughts are more meaningful today

than they were in his lifetime. The need is only to understand in the context of changed circumstances and to interpret in the context of new environments. Gandhi studied all religions thoroughly and thereby taught people to respect all religions. There is no place for *high and low* in his sense of religion. No religion can claim to be superior to another religion. Gandhi emphasizes:

I should love all the men-not only in India but in the world- belonging to the different faiths, to become better people by contact with one another, and if that happens, the world will be a much better place to live in than it is today. I plead for the broadest toleration, and I am working to that end. I asked people to examine every religion from the point of the religionists themselves (Prabhu & Rao, p. 95).

Today the incidences of religious violence in Indian society are increasing day by day. The solution to complex religious violence and conflicts can be found in *Gandhian philosophy*. So we people need to be mentally prepared to follow and spread *Gandhian ideal*. Now we will discuss how we can resolve the present religious conflict through the Gandhian philosophy.

3.1 Communal Problem

‘Communal harmony’ is the just the reverse of communal disharmony and creates conflict. In the strict sense of the term- ‘communal harmony’ can be taken to mean as a state or condition of peace, normal or good relations and the presence of fraternity between any two communities. However, in Indian perspective, communal harmony is almost always taken to mean the persistence of fraternal relations between *Hindus and Muslims*. Opposed to communal harmony is communal conflict which refers to a state of hostility or antagonism in the relationship and ‘interaction pattern’ of any two communities. *Ashgar Ali Enginner* said that:

In a multi religious society and polity like India, communal harmony and inter-religious understanding are not as identical phenomena of common parameters; nor are they necessarily inter-dependent. That is to say, it is possible to have

conflicts among two groups of people professing the same faith, the basis of group consciousness being language and culture. Conversely, it is possible to have peaceful co-existence among groups professing very different religions on the basis of agreed principles of equality and justice, in the common domain of polity and economy in a plural democratic framework (Ali, 2003, p. 81).

Communalism is the most serious threat to our *sovereign, secular, socialist and democratic politics*; it is an evil which unleashes forces of *fear and hatred, and corrupts* the entire environment and may bring about a fatal blow to all the hopes that are centered in a good democracy. There have been some scholars, historians, and some other eminent people from the political and social fields who have seriously endeavored to understand the communal problem in all its complexity, and find its proper, effective, and lasting solution. The problem has to disappear from the national agenda so that we could pay our undivided attention to the socio-economic problems facing the country. Communalism, tensions, conflict and antagonism between *Hindus and Muslims* have become a very serious problem to solve in the present times. It was believed that this problem would be automatically solved after independence as constitution makers declared *India as a democratic and secular nation*. Even then communalism has not been solved rather nurtured in the post-independence era bringing *Hindu-Muslim* riot and tension which have often occurred since and today constitute a challenging problem for Indian people to resolve.

If all religions, followed in their true sense, would lead to identification with and oneness with all human beings, in fact, with all of the creation. If a person is able to internalize the essence and the deepest meanings of one religion, he/she will be able to adhere to the essence of all religions. That is to say, that a basis of harmonious living of all adherents of all religions exists in their respective religions themselves. The existence of all faiths with harmony does not need superficial similarities or exhortations but harmony with nature and belongingness to the whole mankind are the very roots on which each religion is structured in its '*true essence*'.

3.1.1 Gandhi's Idea of Communal Harmony

Gandhi's idea of communal-harmony, therefore, has to be understood in 'spiritualistic terms' and in terms of what he called 'heart-unity'- which means mutual goodwill and understanding. In fact, he fought throughout to ensure the rights and interests of minorities. When Gandhi talked about true religion, he talked about the essence of religion (*Dharma Tattva*). The spiritual or incorporeal aspect of religion is expected to take an individual to higher planes of consciousness. As one moves to higher levels of consciousness, he tends to identify himself with and have a feeling of oneness with larger and larger cosmic arrangements. It could be said that in the highest stage of consciousness, oneness with the whole is achieved. In terms of Gandhi, "communalism of the virulent type is a recent growth. The lawlessness is a monster with many faces. It hurts all in the end, including those who are primarily responsible for it" (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 15-9-1940, p. 284). Communal-harmony was his passion right from his early youth; and for which he had lived, continuously pleaded for, even fasted and purified himself, and ultimately breathed his last sigh. Such was his spirit. But how did such passion developed? It developed *out of love*. Gandhi said:

Love is the basis of our friendship as it is our religion. I seek to gain Mussalman friendship by right of love and if love persists even on the part of one community, unity will become a settled fact in our national life (Mishra, 1988, p. 165).

In Gandhism, the whole question of communal harmony has been approached differently because of different realities that the potential of human consciousness to rise and transcend physical boundaries within which it grew. In essence all religions are supposed to help in transcending the limitations of our physical surroundings and inculcate a sense of belongingness to and oneness with each human soul. Gandhi had this vision, the idea was based on the potentiality, that what should be, rather than what merely is. This was the basis of his belief that if everyone followed true teachings of their religion, then there would be no scope of communal conflict. To put it positively, Gandhi considered the 'human potential to transcend' - an essential quality for communal harmony.

Gandhi believed that people could adhere to right path without any force or coercion, since the right path is rooted in their belief system. Further he believed that 'the issue of harmony never was and has never been a case of people versus state'. For him, the harmony in society meant the harmony between different sections and communities of the society. And the spirit of harmony could come only from within each section of the society. Harmony must be based on higher planks of morality and human consciousness, as against the process of mutual deterrence.

It would not be out of place to record it here that Gandhi did not reject any Western concept just because it came from outside or from an imperialist system. On the contrary, he firmly believed that India has a long history and experience of assimilating different belief systems and a harmonious coexistence between variable systems had been achieved in the past as well. Therefore, he knew that this old civilisation called India was much better equipped to adopt ways of harmony even in the new changed situation. Thus for communal harmony he offered an alternative whose source of motivation lie within the culture of the land itself.

Evidently, Gandhi was not a secularist in the sense of being non-religious or anti-religious. He strongly felt that there was no need to move away from religion in order to maintain communal harmony in the society. Gandhi had offered his own solution to various such problems through the concepts like *Swadeshi*, *power sharing*, *trusteeship*, and *self-reliance at the grassroots level*. However, the question of communal harmony could not be tackled without bringing adherents of different faiths closer to the essence of their religious teachings. Gandhi was concerned with people. Therefore he based his approach to the issue of communal harmony on those positive forces which could be released from within the society.

In order to attain mental community-harmony, Gandhi advocated the need of a secular-state permeated by the spirit of democratic values. In such a state, recruitment to various posts and positions must not be made along communal line, because that would distort the ideal of secular state and would cause inter-community antagonism. He also emphasized in his theory- (i) the cultivation of morals of high order, and (ii) a sense of sacrifice among majority and minority; these points he expounded for the sake of expelling communalism and maintaining communal harmony; that is to say, that Gandhi did not exclude the idea of 'coexistence' from his secular

approach where everyone must follow the true teachings of one's respective religion. Gandhi always advocated that, "Religion is a misfortune that, today, they are so distorted that they have become a potent cause of strife and mutual slaughter" (Rao, 1963, p. 38). The essence with the contemporary reality in which essence would represent eternity while contemporary values would represent temporality constitutes an integral part of the framework of *Gandhian approach to communal harmony*. It is getting increasingly clear now that what Gandhi has said on the communal problem in one context or other has great relevance in the crisis through which the country is passing now days. *Dr. Rajendra Prasad* stated that:

It was the tragedy of the first magnitude that the unscrupulous people, who could not reconcile themselves to his approach to communal harmony, conceived the idea of removing his body from the scene of his activity and achieved success in their design (Mishra, 1988, p. 154).

Today, developments are suffers from *communal violence* and are often suppressed with measures often reflecting other forms of violence. Thus, Gandhi's way to dealing with *communal harmony* holds significance: a valuable and appropriate step, yet this one step cannot be taken as a panacea or a bullet for eradicating the grave disease of communalism.

3.1.2 Emphasis on 'Hindu-Muslim' Unity

Gandhian principles of communal harmony have been accepted by the peace-loving and secular people as significantly useful in solving the problems of communalism and particularly, the *Hindu-Muslim* conflict. Gandhi, virtually, remained in pain and distress throughout his political career due to persistent communalism. Gandhi was from his early youth a votary of harmony between people of different denominations. Throughout his public life of fifty odd years he symbolized in himself the message of brotherhood among communities. *R. P. Mishra* stated that:

Gandhi was an embodiment of *Hinduism*. His religion was not that of a narrow perspective. It was elastic, humane and universal both in principle and practice. It

was neither a religion of ritual practice nor a dictum of a particular sect. It was a religion which propagated the ever cherish able maxims of *Sarva Dharma Samabhava* and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (Mishra, 1988, p. 163).

Gandhi had faith in the greatness of all religions. He professed that, “All religions were equally true, though being received and interpreted through human instruments equally imperfect” (Narayan, 1968, p. 216). That is why he was always against any kind of religious conversions. According to him one must stick to one’s own religion, as everyone’s religion was best for himself. Gandhi was a pantheist too: his ‘God is Truth’ in the sense of the *jijnasa* of the *Upanishads* or an irrevocable faith in *Yekopasana*. ‘His *Ishwar* is none other than *Allah*’ as he exclaims no difference between true *Hinduism* and true *Islam*. Highlighting the contribution of *Islam* in Indian culture, he observes:

I cast these two distinctive contributions. For in *Hinduism* the spirit of brotherhood has become too much philosophized. Similarly, though philosophical *Hinduism* has no other God but God, it cannot be denied that practical *Hinduism* is not so emphatically uncompromising as *Islam* (Prabhu, 2016, p. 264).

Gandhi never conceded the hypothesis that supports two separate countries for both *Hindus* and *Muslims* something which was advocated by the communal organizations such as *The Muslim League* and *The Hindu Mahasabha*. But for him, as mentioned before, religion was never a determinant of nationality. Gandhi said, “Religion is no test of nationality, but a personal matter between man and his God. In the sense of nationality they are Indians first and Indians last, no matter what religion they profess” (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 140). His appeal to his countrymen always remained about ‘examining religion from the point of religionists themselves’. Moreover, he has always opposed the concept of ‘one nation, one religion’. His message is tolerance for all religions and approves their co-existence: side by side, with one another. In 1908, Gandhi was as yet to emerge as a leader of the *Indian National Movement*. In his most important and controversial book - *Hind Swaraj*, he expressed his views regarding the communities of India, regarding them as one nation. Gandhi believed, preached and practiced the principle of co-existence among people irrespective of their religions and faiths; and believed

that without *Hindu-Muslim* harmony a well integrated and organised Indian society cannot be imagined and achieved.

In order to realise his principles of communal unity into practice, Gandhi made every effort possible. He continued his unceasing efforts to secure communal unity and peace till the very end of his life till when he himself got consumed by the poisonous flames of communalism. Gandhi, throughout his life denounced and hated inter-community clashes and killings. He dared intervene at the time of clashes between *Hindus* and *Muslims* and if failed, observed *Satyagraha* and fast unto death. Unity between *Hindus* and *Muslims* was the central goal of Gandhi's life. He said that, "that there are two things to which I am devoting my life- permanent unity between *Hindus* and *Mohammedans* and *Satyagraha*" (Gandhi, 1915, p. 296). Gandhi's actions confirmed and confirmed his firm choice and he was ready to sacrifice his life in his efforts to unite *Hindus* and *Muslims*, which is evident from his statement, I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is too able to cement the two with my bloods, if necessary.

By his words, it is clear that he meant for an unbreakable heart unity. Gandhi, virtually, derived that *Hindu-Muslim* must live in peace with each other and abide by rule of fraternity. For this cause, he was ready to sacrifice his very being. Gandhi was a great votary of religious equality and tolerance. He believed in monistic pluralism in religion and identified religion with truth and non-violence. His words, "It would be a great thing for the *Hindus* to achieve this act of self-denial" (Gandhi, *Young India*, 25-9-1924, p. 82). After the death of Gandhi his principles of communal harmony were taken up by the constitution makers and India accordingly was declared as a 'secular state' in which every religion had equal significance without any of the religion taken up as a state religion. Further, *Nehru*, *Lohia* and *Jai Prakash Narayan* and afterwards most of secular minded leaders, reformers and intellectuals have accepted Gandhian principle as very pragmatic in solving the issue of *Hindu-Muslim* conflict.

In fact, Gandhian theory of communal unity is significant and useful from different points of views: (i) It provides a means- method and approach, to the realistic solution of communal discord; (ii) It is very appealing to the conscience and heart of human beings; (iii) It fosters

humanism and fellow-feeling; (iv) It makes the people conscious of treating others faiths and religions as equal to their own; (v) It makes a realistic appeal to the majority and the minority with a solution for living together and trusting each other; and (vi) Gandhian principles of communal unity are stable according to the perspective of human instinct because it recognizes the value of *love, non-violence and fellow-feeling*; to be internalized by the people of Indian. Gandhian principles and theory of communal harmony have remained a source of inspiration. Therefore, Gandhian principles have been adopted for the *Hindu-Muslim* tension in India and they have worked too.

Thus, the question of its utility is beyond any doubt. However, the question of acceptance of Gandhian principles of communal harmony has remained unsolved until now. *Firstly*, since communal violence does often erupt in the country to the murder of Gandhian principle. *Secondly*, Gandhian principle is yet to get acceptance by people of both the community at large because of the tough demands of the principles contained in Gandhian theory. It seems that Gandhian theory has not become universalistic in its character. It might be due to the fact that human being whether *Hindus* or *Muslims* are basically selfish egoist and thus generosity and broadness are lacking in them. Further, every community treats its own religion as the most valued and appropriate which lies at the common roots to religiosity, fundamentalism and religious hatred. Obviously, such elements are hazardous for communal harmony. The Gandhian principles also do not suit to the people and leaders as Gandhian thought stands in their way to personal ends. The leaders and people in general accept and advocate the usefulness of Gandhian theory but when it comes to realizing them into practice they either withdraw or deviate. They appeals to the heart and conscience- what is contained in Gandhian theory. The moral principles prescribed by Gandhi are too high and difficult for selfish people to be adopted in their life and code of conduct. It is because of the above facts that Gandhian ideals of communal harmony is yet to be accepted and realised into practice by both *Hindus* and *Muslims*; and for such reasons the problem of communalism has largely remained unresolved.

The foregoing discussion provides the basis to observe finally that *Gandhian theory of communal-harmony* is realistic and useful as well for *maintaining communal peace*. However, the principles and ideals are only repeated; and advocated by the people and leaders alike when

the necessity to make some use of them arises. While the Gandhian principles of communal-harmony has still not made their way deeper into the thinking and behaviour of either majority or even the minorities; or more particularly among people in general. Despite the availability of these golden principles, our nation still suffers from the disease of communalism. Thus, the need of today is to realise '*Gandhian techniques*' to put into practice his principles of communal-harmony; methods of implementation which are often promoted by all Gandhian institutes and organizations and those must be taken into cognizance to attain *communal-harmony in the Gandhian way*. We will now proceed to discuss about the concept of religious pluralism.

3.2 Religious Pluralism

The term *pluralism* has the premise in the principles of acceptance and diversity. It is promoted as a framework for the benefit of all. It is a meeting up with normal acknowledgement and confidence to all beliefs and developments of present day social, scientific, and economic social orders. *Pluralism* as a theory of religion accepts all religions on equal footing without giving any special status to one religion. However, it should be borne in mind that *pluralism* does not imply undermining of one's beliefs. *Pluralism* does not mean equality of all religions in every respect. Instead, it only means equality of rights. Gandhi said that, "Giving up finality is not the same as accepting without question every dimension, belief and value of any religion in the dialogue" (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 4-1-1948, p. 497).

Religious plurality is a fact that one needs to accept today. However, in history of religions, one can see that religions, by and large, grew in isolation at different times and in different places. Often, they were oblivious of the presence of other religious traditions. In a religion's encounter with other religions, there are different phases of growth. Again Joy Kachappilly said that, religious pluralism as a "theory of religious plurality is not only a rational act but also a theological act" (Kachappilly, 2005, p. 52). In other words, religious pluralism is to be accepted not only by reason but also by faith. This entails an acceptance of the fact of other religions and an understanding of other religions from the perspective of each one's religious experience, but not separated from the perspective of one's own faith. The true spiritual liberation that people are waiting for is the opening of the doors of the prisons that religions have

been turned into. Religions must now enter into a new and effective alliance to resist the forces of exploitation and oppression that are now rising in our midst under the cover of globalization. Globalization portends to be the most gigantic instrument of exploitation ever devised by human genius for evil. The colonialism of the past is a minor rash in comparison.

This follows that *pluralism* in its *Vedantic* sense too is not accepted. For, *Vivekananda*, a follower of *Advaita Vedanta*, recognized a type of *pluralism* when he spoke of the image of a circle with different radii as an explanation of the unity-in-diversity of the religions. Variety is to be expected; but the goal of the religions remains the same while they are true manifestations of the same truth, and that they all lead to the same conclusions as the *advaita* has reached. But for the pluralists, variety is only in the philosophical and theological realm but basically the same God is worshipped.

Gandhi's relentless search after truth, the Absolute, his understanding of truth as relative, his formulation of 'Truth is God' instead of 'God is Truth' and his utilization of it in each part of his life made the concept of truth a powerful instrument for handling the issues of *religious pluralism*.

3.2.1 Religious Plurality: A Gandhian Perspective

Gandhi's religious endeavor consisted in understanding and in imbibing those teachings passed on to humankind by the prophets of the world, which helped him to understand religions in terms of truth. His devotion to truth helped him in the task. To achieve his aim, Gandhi stayed rooted in his own religion while he cultivated a sincere appreciation for other religions. His religious experiences that included even conflicts within himself and with others helped him to conclude that all religions are not only imperfect but also equal. After all, every religion attempts to approximate the *Absolute Truth*. Hence Gandhi endeavored to strive after interreligious cooperation and fellowship through different ways. As a young boy, Gandhi visited the temple frequently with his mother, listened to the reading of the *Gita* during the illness of his father and religious discourses that his father had with different sages who visited his home. As pointed out earlier, the rigorous fasts that his mother undertook touched the tender heart of the young boy

with religious fervor. Gandhi learnt the habit of repeating the name of *Rama* from his nurse *Rambha*. All these childhood experiences instilled in Gandhi a sincere devotion to his native religion. Later, Gandhi himself defined, “*Hinduism* will burst forth upon the world with brilliance perhaps unknown before. Of course, therefore, *Hinduism* is the most tolerant of all religions” (Kachappilly, 2005, p. 52).

Gandhi also had a specific love for the *Gita*. For him, “the *Gita* is pure religious discourse given without any embellishment. It simply describes the progress of the pilgrim soul towards the supreme goal” (Gandhi, 1950, pp. 18-19). Gandhi’s commitment to truth also empowered him to see the value in different religions. It must be noted that Gandhi’s openness and impartiality with regard to religion was already noticed when he was a youngster. All these acquaintances with different religions resulted in an intrapersonal conflict within Gandhi. Gandhi said:

Objectively, it was a question regarding the status of religions: which religion was really a true religion? Subjectively, it was concerned with the response he had to give to the issue: should he be converted to any other religion at all? Both the questions are intimately connected with each other. It is only by solving the first that he could answer the second (Kher, 1961, p. 210).

Gandhi also writes, “For a time I struggled with the question: which was the true religion out of which I knew. To feel my way I waited upon God, seeking His guidance” (Desai, 2015, p. 30). Further, it also helped Gandhi to observe that not only *Hinduism* but every religion is imperfect. Speaking at a prayer meeting, Gandhi said that:

No religion as it existed in the present-day world was entirely free from blemish. *Islam* gave to the world some of the noblest characters in history but unwanted accumulations had gathered in the practices of *Muslims*, which ran counter to the fundamental teachings of *Islam*. Similarly, *Christian* nations professed to follow *Jesus*, who taught humankind to love even their enemies. But they were responsible for two major world wars in a single generation. Likewise, *Hinduism*,

which was based on the doctrine of the oneness of all creation, had allowed a diabolical wrong to be perpetrated on the so-called untouchables in the name of religion (Gandhi, *Young India*, 6-2-1925, p. 273).

This imperfection in religions stems from the fact that human beings, who profess and live the different faiths, are themselves imperfect. Although all religions constitute a revelation of truth as absolute, this truth is revealed only relatively. Hence every religion like the raindrops of pure water that become weakened or polluted when they interact with *Mother Earth* is alloyed with impurities. Thus, Gandhi held that all religions are equal, in spite of, or because of, the imperfections in them. This equality is not physical but primarily a mental state and refers to the interiority. So too is religion. He compared this equality of religions with the leaves on a tree. Gandhi asserted that:

No two leaves are alike, yet there is no antagonism between them or between the branches on which they grow. Even so, there is an underlying unity in the variety which we see in God's creation (Pyarelal, 1965, p. 71).

Gandhi's views on religious pluralism are expressed thus, "Religions are different roads converging upon one point" (Narayan, 1968, p. 216). Gandhi believed that, 'all religions are equal (*sarva dharma samabhava*) and all are to be tolerated.' This equality is not only physical but primarily a mental state and refers to the interiority. When one says that human beings are absolutely equal, it implies that this equality is for souls and not for bodies. Gandhi defined religion as, "a belief in the ordered and the moral Government of the universe" (Kumarappa, 1955, p. 27). Gandhi is right when he says there are as many religions as there are individuals.

We now proceed to discuss about *truth and non-violence* in relation to his religious philosophy. For Gandhi, "Religion is not sectarianism, but it pervades everyone and binds indissolubly to truth which is a permanent element present in human nature" (Dhiman, 1993, p. 45). Every religion is growing in its attempt to reach the *Absolute Truth*. Hence the question of inferiority or superiority of religions does not arise. The acceptance of the equality of religions does not in any way negate the distinction between religion and irreligion. There is no room for

cultivation of toleration for irreligion. The equality of religions is also implied from the fact that God reveals to everyone equally. Anyone who is open will hear Him in day to day life. It is similar to the presence of music that is broadcasted through the radio waves. Only a transistor that is attuned properly to the waves can receive it. Gandhi said, “My firm belief is that He reveals Himself daily to every human being but we shut our ears to the still small voice. We shut our eyes to the Pillar of Fire in front of us” (Richards, 2013, p. 156). However, this revelation of God is distinct for each human being. Hence Gandhi claimed, “The God of my imagination rules my life, and not the God of your imagination” (Prabhu, 1955, p. 34).

In accepting both the possibility of imperfection in, and the subsequent equality of religions, Gandhi confirmed the fact of the *plurality of religions*. He writes, “Personally, I think the world as a whole will never have, and need not have, a single religion” (Kumarappa, 1955, p. 65). One of the reasons for this plurality is that God, though One, appears differently to different people. For instance, “I believe myself to be a *Hindu* but I know I do not worship God in the same manner as many of the *Hindus* do” (Gandhi, 1909, p. 358). Further Gandhi wrote, “*Rama, Rahaman, Ahurmazda, God or Krishna* is all attempts on the part of man to name that invincible force which is the greatest of all forces. It is inherent in man, imperfect he thought be, ceaselessly to strive after perfection” (Pyarelal, 1956, p. 198). Gandhi was of the opinion that humans try to describe God in their own poor language and their attempt is bound to be plural. Besides, for Gandhi reality was multiform and ever changing. Hence it follows that and said:

No statement can hold good at all times and in all ways and in all places, and it is, therefore, impossible to pledge ourselves to an inflexible creed. Nor may anyone claim exclusive truth for his own (Prabhu, 1955, p. 44).

Gandhi’s acquiescence of the *Jain* theory of *Syadvada* also contributed to the acceptance of the plurality of religions. The doctrine that truth is comparative with our standpoint likewise turned into the premise of his understanding of religions. The natural law of ‘unity in diversity’ confirmed Gandhi’s faith in religious plurality. Gandhi stated that, “In nature, there is a fundamental unity running through all the diversity we see about us. Religions are no exception

to the natural law.” (Gandhi, 1962, p. 38). The fact that conscience even in well trained persons is different shows that religious plurality is inevitable. *M. S. Deshpande* said that:

Even amongst the most conscientious persons, there will be room enough for honest differences of opinion. The only possible rule of conduct in any civilised society is, therefore, mutual toleration (Deshpande, 1950, p. 89).

Already in South Africa, Gandhi had realised this truth about religions, namely, that ‘religious plurality’ is a fact of life. Hence Gandhi called for interreligious cooperation by tolerating other religions without disparaging them. Thus, while advertising the books published by the *Esoteric Christian Union in Natal Mercury*, Gandhi wrote:

The system of thought expounded by the books advertised is a system of religion which teaches universality. In that system, there is no reviling of *Mohammed* or *Buddha*. It reconciles the other religions with *Christianity* which, in the opinion of the authors, is nothing but one mode of the presentation of the same eternal truth (Pyarelal, 1965, p. 325).

The fact that every religion has produced great saints shows that every religion has certain good features. Tolerance implies that one should accept these right features and not the evils. Further, since imperfect humans interpret that one religion differently, everybody is right from his own perspective. Therefore tolerance becomes a necessity. Tolerance does not mean indifference however a more intelligent and purer love for different religions. Tolerance also would mean that exclusive understanding of a religion is not only a disservice to itself but also to the very fabric of religious harmony. When people professing different religions live the religious principles they believe in, in an authentic manner, mutual cooperation is possible. For, Gandhi, “Truth has to be lived if it is to fructify” (Kher, 1961, p. 24). It is by living their religion that the various followers of different religions will be able to add to the sum total of human search. Gandhi expressed that, “We should by living the life according to our lights share the best with one another, thus adding to the sum total of human effort to reach God” (Kumrappa, 1955, p. 43). Gandhi again mentioned that:

We, who have equal regard for all religions, should make it a point to celebrate all such occasions. Let us turn the search light inward purge ourselves of all dross realise the oneness of God and the essential sameness of His word. We should bear witness to our faith by being ready to lay down our life for what we hold to be true or right. Let us on this occasion remember and meditate on the fact that *Christ* mounted the Cross for what he held to be the truth (Pyarelal, 1956, p. 101).

Even if one is not sure of the existence of certain deities, still they could be used in interreligious worship because every name is ultimately the description of one God. As a true devotee, one must transcend such particularities and embrace the one universal God. *Pyarelal* said that:

The use of various names of God in interreligious worship caused some problems to Gandhi. Thus some *Muslims* accused him for coupling the names of *Rama* and *Krishna* with *Rahim* and *Karim*. It was blasphemous and offended *Muslim* ears. This was a painful surprise for Gandhi. It betrayed intolerance and narrowness of mind. It was untrue that he was trying to corrupt *Islam* by coupling the Hindu incarnations of *Rama* and *Krishna* with the One God of *Islam*. He claimed to be a humble man of God. He had never invited, on principle, anybody to change his religion. His object was ever to make *Muslims* better *Muslims*, *Hindus* better *Hindus*, and *Christians* better *Christians*. His religion was not exclusive but expansive and all-inclusive. *Rama*, *Allah* and God were to him convertible terms (Pyarelal, 1956, p. 164).

Religious pluralism, according to Gandhi, does not include the historical or institutionalized religion because he considered them as manmade religions. The Hindu religion is normally pluralistic. Religious pluralism helps one to understand how different religious traditions affect people of different religions, different religious traditions within one's own religion. The important role of religious pluralism is to remove the *bitterness of religions* which is a sign of *lack of non-violent environment*. Thus, Gandhi firmly believed in the fact of religious

plurality. It became a necessity for him as a worshipper of truth. A notable *Rig Vedic* hymn makes this point clear. “Truth is One, though the sages know it variously (*Ékam sat vipra bahudhā vadanti*)” (Meister, 2011, p. 63).

Therefore, Gandhi strove to safeguard and to inculcate plurality, by taking a serious view on the controversies that endangered religious harmony. As a man of Truth, naturally, he tried to resolve them by appealing to an all-embracing concept of truth. For, he held that ‘Truth, which is not only absolute but also relative, is acceptable to all religions’. Each religion contains relative truth and endeavors to reach near the ‘*Absolute Truth*’. Gandhi also respected the individuality of each religion and allowed it grow as its own pace. He did not attempt to simplify and unify religions by merely combining different beliefs taken from them. He also avoided blending the deities of different religions. All these helped Gandhi to avoid the dangers of relativism and syncretism in his understanding of religious plurality. His interreligious experiences together with his devotion to truth facilitated him to deal with certain problems that arise in a multi-religious context in a manner acceptable to different religious traditions, if they are sincere and open.

3.2.2 Application of Gandhian ‘Truth as Ideal’ to Religious Pluralism

If we apply Gandhi’s position of truth to religious pluralism, we can justifiably say that each one of the varied religions is ‘validatable’ provided that it enables its respective believers to approximate the *Absolute Truth* in their own life-contexts: cultural, historical, social and National. In fact, Gandhi argues that all religions are valid since all of them have produced great saints. After all, diversity of faiths is necessary. Faith, according to Gandhi, must be tested according to the diverse conditions and not imposed simply. Gandhi stated that:

Surely it is a dangerous thing to present it to those who have been brought up in a different belief. And it would appear to me to be impertinent on my part to present my untested belief to the professor of another which, for ought I to know, may be as true as mine. It is highly likely that mine may be good for me and his for him. A thick woolen coat would be the best thing for one living in the cold regions of

the earth, just as a piece of loin cloth for another living near the equatorial regions (Kher, 1961, p. 65).

Further, the revealed truth must share the imperfection of the medium through which it is revealed. Each religion has its own attractions to its votaries. Thus, Gandhi said, “Hinduism, with its message of *Ahimsa* is to me the most glorious religion in the world- as my wife to me is the most beautiful woman in the world- but others may feel the same about their own religion” (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 128). Such a possibility is available to believers of every religion. This implies that what is important is not which religion one belongs to, but rather how one lives their religion. In other words, a constant growth towards holiness irrespective of one’s religious tradition is of utmost value to Gandhi. He said:

My constant prayer is for a *Christian* or a *Mussalman* to be a better *Christian* and a better *Mohammedan*. I am convinced, I know, that God will ask, asks us now, not what we label ourselves, but what we are, i.e., what we do. With Him deed is everything; belief without deed is nothing. With Him, doing believes (Kumarappa, 1955, p. 84).

Hence Gandhi criticized the *Christian* scholars for unduly defending themselves upon their unique claims. Truth-living also implies that life witness is proclamation and not vice versa. Proclamation of one’s religious uniqueness must be patterned after the ‘*Gospel of the Rose*’, that is, living the truth that one professes to establish the fragrance of uniqueness in one’s life and then, the fragrance will spread itself spontaneously and naturally. Hence, Gandhi writes:

To live the gospel is the most effective way- most effective in the beginning, in the middle and in the end. Preaching jars on me and makes no appeal to me, and I get suspicious of missionaries who preach. But I love those who never preach but live the life according to their lights. Their lives are silent, yet most effective, testimonies. Therefore I cannot say what to preach, but I can say that a life of service and uttermost simplicity is the best preaching (Ellsberg, 2019, p. 192).

Another implication of truth-living is that there is a need to transcend theology in order to bring about real transformation of one's life. To put it in the words of Gandhi, he emphasizes:

All I can say is that there should be less theology and more of truth in all that say and do. Amongst agents of the many untruths that are propounded in the world one of the foremost is theology. I do not say that there is no demand for it. There is a demand in the world for many a questionable thing. But even those who have to do with theology as part of their work have to survive their theology (Kher, 1961, p. 334).

Hence Gandhi's emphasis is not so much on theology as on the living of the tenets of religion. This is because Gandhi held that theology is not spirituality. In this way, by appealing to the essence of religion, i.e., living a life approximating the *Absolute Truth*, Gandhi was able to point out the futility of different religious claims to superiority over others: '*Absolute Truth* is found in all the religions as they all have produced saints' and hence, 'all religions are equal'. Therefore, what is important for the 'believers' is to live up to the acclaimed unique features of the religions they subscribe to, rather than, narrate them. This is because even these features are validated by approximating to the '*Absolute Truth*', and validation means- effecting a life transformation. N. K. Bose said that:

We often confuse spiritual knowledge with spiritual attainment. Spirituality is not a matter of knowing scriptures and engaging in philosophical discussions. It is matter of heart culture, of immeasurable strength (Bose, 1960, p. 292).

Similarly, since for Gandhi, Truth is 'a reality to be lived' as well as 'reality in itself'. However, metaphysically it is truth (transformed life) that validates reality (the Absolute Truth). Hence, any religion (truth-affirmation) can be validated provided it is oriented to the *Absolute Truth* (the Reality). And this can be proved from the fact that religions provide contexts for life-transformation to their believers. In other words, it is through '*truth as ideal*' that we are able to affirm the worth of each religion, thereby appreciating and legitimizing religious pluralism. Religion is primarily meant for living and not so much for preaching or teaching, much less, for

speculating. While theorizing it, one may formulate universal principles. But when it comes to living, it is very difficult to form such principles as they pertain to the climes, time and culture of persons and races.

Therefore, any criterion suggested by the followers of a religion is mainly intended for themselves and not for others. Hence what is important is not so much what religion one belongs to, or what one happens to believe but how sincere one is with regard to one's moral and ethical life, contributing at the same time to the welfare of society at large. If at all, a religion is to be evaluated, one should not grade it in relation to other religions- their doctrines, rituals unique features or theologies- but should identify whether that tradition is a human response to the real, and for this, one must look at the spiritual and moral fruits it produces.

3.3 Secularism

The need for secularism arose because societies tended for multi-religious or at least a multi-sectarian attitude, and still more because religion began to lose its hold as an institutional force on people. The term 'secular' was coined to designate this process of disillusionment with organised, institutionalized religion, but it did not rule out religion as an affair of individual conscience. In fact, what happened was that religion was considered more as an affair of 'individual conscience'. Thereby religion instead of elimination got re-located within the new emerging landscape of 'modern society' and a rising culture of 'humanism'. Secularism, in spite of this fact of coordinating with this view point went above and beyond tolerance per se by the aid of legal rights of religious choice, and any deviation thus could be called upon before the law.

Secularism, in India, indeed helps to promote harmony among diverse religious faiths and promotes the soul of common brotherhood among all people's beyond- religious, semantic and territorial or sectional varieties. Today secularism has become an essential part of our society but still due to lack of awareness people still consider it negatively.

3.3.1. Gandhi and Secularism

Gandhi's theory and program of communal-harmony is nothing but secularism. But to understand this idea till the extent Gandhi recognized as a realist, needs the knowledge of distinguishing between - the ideal and the actual. Gandhi had to struggle with the modernistic aspects and those elements which had corrupted the than Indian society to arrive at his own version of what we now call 'secularism', however they do appear in his writings in the discussion on the issues like: (i) correct relation between the religious life of the individual and the state; (ii) the relationship amongst religious sectarian groups; and (iii) the relations between Religious groups and The State.

Secularism in the Indian context was consequently 'a declaration of the soul of tolerance, diversity in unity just as a wide soul of humanism'. Gandhi, who set out his life at the modify of secularism, might be hailed as the '*Father of Indian Secularism*'. He has gone against any proposition for a state religion. Now, for a few theoretical and conceptual explanations, and clarifications, as a lead up to our discussion of the Gandhian propositions; anyone who has been involved in a study of religion or secularism should know the impossibility of arriving at essentialist or absolutist definitions of both the phenomena outside 'historical contexts'. But this is no excuse for not stating one's own understanding of these terms as a framework for understanding concrete historical manifestations of the phenomena. Secularism in this process is identified with the doctrine of excluding religion from the domain of new and expanding public, political space - by reducing it to a matter of private individual conscience and consciousness. For Gandhi, secularism implies that:

All subjects would thus be equal in the eyes of the law. But every single individual would be free to pursue his own religion without let or hindrance so long as it did not transgress the common law. . . . What (*Gandhi*) wished India to do, was to assure liberty of religious profession to every single individual (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 494).

With this brief excursion into Western history it gets clear that it mixes up two different and complex connected processes- the secularization of society and the secularization of the state. But herein lie a paradox as well which *Marx* saw in his discussion of the Jewish question: a totally secularized society based on an abolition of the religious category would not need a secular state because it is precisely a non-secular and imperfectly secularized society living in a secular state. Gandhi, it hardly needs to be repeated, believed in the oneness of Indian nationality, and rooted in a plural 'religious society'. The shared common denominators of religion, according to his definition are: ethics, non-violence and love. He excoriated modern Western agnosticism or atheism, as he held them responsible for the breakdown in human relations as evident in the than West. Thus, he was at pains to reject secularism but understood them as a humanist belief system which claims to supersede religion.

Gandhi hardly used words like 'secular' and 'secularism'. He did not also encourage the concept of 'minorities'. It is only in the post-1947 era that *Nehru* popularized the 'secular' idea in collaboration with socialists and communist. Strangely, the *Christians* and *Muslims* cling to the banner of secularism because they took *Nehru* as the savior of both - the English language and minority's interests. Secularism to them had the impression of being religious as not bad for *non-Hindus* though the *Hindu* secularists almost took secularism for running down their religion to make the rest feel safer. Such an irresponsible use of the secularist idea distorted the *Hindus* and fuelled *Hindu* intolerance and at the same time, promoted *non-Hindu* conservatism; had the secularists stayed honest in their creed, they would have given rise to 'a new ethics of public life and private living' of those who came under their influence. The pity is that secularism in India has not been able to elaborate a code of behaviour.

It has been pointed out that towards the end of his life, implicitly after witnessing the intractability of the *Hindu-Muslim* discord; Gandhi finally expressed himself in favour of a 'secular state', something that would deal impartially with all religions. There is no doubt that his earlier optimism about forging *Hindu-Muslim* ties through a 'united front' against the common enemy of 'British imperialism' was founded on his successful earlier experience in South Africa. He also sought explaining the deteriorating relations between the two communities in terms of sociological, political, human- and most of all in 'civilisational- factors', all of which

he considered remediable. His acceptance of the necessity of a secular government reflected his dawning recognition that ‘restoration of social harmony would take longer’ than he had earlier envisaged. Gandhi visualized secularism as an, “Intermediate arrangement awaiting the establishment of the right conditions for the growth of non-violence and cooperation” (Ali, 2003, p. 57).

The final blow to his hopes was delivered on the eve of Independence by *Nehru* who refused to entertain Gandhi’s request to incorporate his program of village based economy and politics into the agenda of free India. Gandhi did not, however, essentially abandon his faith in the individual and social, even political importance of religion as a pursuit of the common good. To be sure, he was against the pursuance by any single community of its own narrow interests over and against other communities. However, he would hardly have approved, for example, of the post-Independence secular educational policy of banning the teaching of all religion in government schools. What he ungenerously recognized was the need for the state to maintain the balance between the communities. It was becoming increasingly obvious that the interpersonal moral order he had envisioned as the basis of national life was, for the time being at least ‘receding’, rather than growing under pressure of modern conditions though Gandhi’s secular principles contained a special importance in the specific context of the Indian National Movement.

Undoubtedly, the Indian culture has traditionally been surrounded by the evils of discrimination based on *caste and creed*. It is clear that the caste-oriented definition of Indian culture has frustrated all possibilities of public integration from the beginning of Indian culture. Secularism is effective only when it is able to project an alternative focus for the people’s emotional loyalty. When it has no use of religion and if it is afraid of becoming nationalist, then what remains? Secularism then reduces to minority-ism. As far as religions are concerned in India: it is invariably pluralistic- there are *Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhist, Jains* and other faiths. And therefore, Gandhi conceived his non-violent society on the equality of all religions. He became a staunch believer of secularism by which he meant that, “different religions in a non-violent society would get equal place and would remain undisturbed” (Thakur, 1988, p. 62).

Moreover, there could be as many religions as there are stars in the sky. But none would be high or low, superior or inferior. All would be equal. All would be true from their own standpoints with their limitations and defects. He envisioned a non-violent society where each religion would prosper in perfect harmony being in peace with the each other. In his own words, “Indians of whatever religion had to live together. They were of the same soil, they were nursed by the self-same mother and they could not go on killing each other if India was to live” (Rao, 1979, p. 124). According to him, different religions are different sources for the attainment of one goal. That one goal which all religions venture is the realization of truth as God.

A non-violent secular society will bring forth a non-violent secular State. Gandhi went against State-religion; he had kept his faith in ‘one religion for a community’. In his secular State, all religions are given freedom and treated equal whereby they may stay without any impediment by the State. In the expression of Gandhi himself, “There should be no interference with missionary effort, but no mission could enjoy the patronage of the State as it did during the foreign regime” (Bandopadhyaya, 1960, p. 362).

In order to attain his aim of secularism Gandhi took recourse to different techniques of *Satyagraha* at different places like Noakhali, Bombay, Patna, Calcutta and Delhi in the years 1946, 1947 and 1948 when he visited the riot affected areas and preached the internal unity of all religions. As a result of his fast and food-marches, peace was to be restored amongst the trifling communities. Gandhi did not subscribe to the Western concept of secularism but creatively interpreted it in the Indian context with intend to inculcate the value of mutual respect among the masses for all religions equally. Even though his understanding of secularism needs to be debated even more profoundly, there is no doubt that in the Indian context, the equal respect for all religions was fundamental to his understanding. Gandhi says:

The *Hindus* want *Swaraj* in India, and not a *Hindu Raj*. Even if there is a *Hindu Raj* and toleration one of its features, there will be place in it for the *Mussalmans* as well as the *Christians* (Welukar, 2019, p. 195).

Gandhi always stressed upon mutual understanding, especially among *Hindus* and *Muslims* because each held severe misconceptions about each other's religion and these misconceptions continues to exist even today, thus seriously hampering *Hindu-Muslim* relations. This clearly shows that Gandhi was far ahead of his time and continues to be so even today. He had all the qualities of a prophet, a mission of self-fulfillment. He was unique in the sense that he used temporal and secular means to achieve spiritual ends.

It is found that secularism had worked better when it is joined with socialist and communist movements. There it becomes a way of life and acquires a morality. The communists of Kerala and West Bengal have contributed significantly to the containment of communalism in those states. But '*Nehruvian Secularism*', that is, *Congress Secularism*, is hollow. In recent years, socialist and communist movements have been eroded even from their bases. Moreover, Indian secularism has remained a form of reaction to the sustaining communalism. However, the real function of secularism is not leaving any ground for any growth for communalism. And that is what Gandhi achieved in his time. *Ashgar Ali Engineer* said that:

Gandhi was undoubtedly a socialist. But his approach to the communal problem was, as already stated, religious. He appealed to the two levels of the Indian consciousness: the religious and the nationalist. Unlike the secularists who suspect religion to be a source of communal politics, Gandhi arrogated to himself the status of a religious leader. As a symbol of *Hindu* religion, he stood head-and-shoulder above the *Babas* and *Shankaracharyas* of his day. He perhaps could not weaken *Muslim* communalism, but his success was one hundred percent in reducing the political power of *Hindu* communalism to almost a zero. *Hindu Mahasabha* leaders like *Savarkar* and *Munje* became insignificance because they could exploit neither the *Hindu* consciousness nor the nationalist consciousness of the people (Ali, 2003, p. 195).

It is only after the Partition was agreed to and the leadership of the Congress had passed from the hands of Gandhi that *Hindu* communalist politics could raise its voice again with confidence. Gandhi's version of secularism is not merely relevant but crucially relevant if we

have to survive as a society because his secularism is an indigenous product, capable of touching our most sensitive moral nerves. It is a '*modern secularism*' arrived at through a specifically Indian trajectory. It may be a theoretical puzzle in so far as 'it is a modern superstructure resting on non-modern, pre-modern and even anti-modern postulates'. Nevertheless, it should work because it represents a theory that ought to be practiced and that can be practiced with some hard reflection on the suicidal course which all of us- majority, minority- seem to be currently embarking on.

3.3.2 The Modern India and the Rejection of Gandhian Secularism

The modern Indian state was born amidst deep disappointment in the perceived failure of the Gandhian vision, and his prescriptions received wholesale repudiation, despite ritualistic references to negativity for his inspiration. Furthermore, the partition left a confusing legacy with both of its successor states- India and Pakistan (East and West, now Bangladesh), as the two nation theory failed to manifest itself in a clear-cut division along communal lines.

Although continuing with the 'theory of one nation' composed of plural-religions and cultures, Indian decision-makers now proposed to tackle the communal problem through a secular state. The task of such a state is to remain secular in its own operations and to take equitable decisions amount different religions on the principle of equality. More strongly it aims to transform the Indian nation into a non-communal secular society through appropriate educational and legislative measures. Thus the new rules anticipate complete elimination of causes for communal conflict altogether. Another implication of the European experience which may or may not have entered the calculations of the secularists is the removal of religion from the public space might nearly make it extinct in the long run.

However, in actual practice decision-makers have found themselves faced with unexpected difficulties. The democratic, elective political system, functioning within a multi-religious society, has become hit by an irresponsible populism with potentially explosive consequences. Continuing the Gandhian policy of placing the major burden of responsibility on the majority of *Hindus*, any steps to pacify *Muslim* concerns are ultimately proved biased and

unjust on the executive. The processes of modernization and secularization have thus given rise to further communal tension. Such problems are addressed through educational, legislative, and judicial processes, but the state still has a delicate legitimacy over religious and communal matters.

Before leaving the subject of the ‘Gandhian formula for communal harmony’, one may ask whether it is feasible to apply today- any of the techniques he had advocated in his time. There was a decisive change of direction from- the moral to the legal state, after 1947; and a promotion of the ‘urban-industrial model’ over that of the ‘republic of villages’ which made almost impossible creating an environment that can lead to the birth of a responsible Gandhian society. There are heaps of Gandhian efforts, some of them very effective, but the main direction is towards modernity in social, economic, and political life. And modernity, as Gandhi feared, ‘is powered by an assertive individualism and competitive materialism’. The few successful Gandhian projects only highlight the absence of the ethical state he envisaged. To repeat, his advocacy of a ‘secular state’ in both aspects of state secularism and state power was in acknowledgement that ‘the reconstruction of the moral society was not a viable proposition in the immediate present’. Yet he never for a moment considered a religious, ‘highly Industrialised society’ as a norm for India, or for any country. Gandhi adhered to the principle that, “there should not be any state religion, even if the whole community had one religion.” (Desai, 2015, p. 31).

Gandhi additionally believed that all would be well in our political life by limiting religion to the individual plane. Though deliberately flexible, he held firm to his core beliefs and principles. However, problems could arise, when tactical aberrations showed a tendency to overpower the goals. This happened to his dream of *Hind Swaraj*, rejected by the Congress Party. He had allied himself with the Congress for the attainment of Indian freedom, supporting their goals of parliamentary democracy against his best beliefs. He found that by the time freedom was achieved his suspended socio-politico-economic goals had completely passed. Something similar happened to his provisional support to secular statehood to modern India because instead of maintaining a just peace between communalities, the state got trapped through its various agencies in a series of loops and contortions appeasing now one community and later

another. Such moves were hardly designed to create much good will and trust, let alone promote inter-religious harmony. The Common action and common prayer in the Gandhian mode required broad parameters to *dharmic* understandings.

A question one may ask is whether the Gandhian dream was strategically flawed in its philosophical and sociological assumptions? And whether there is any possible link through the media between Gandhian morality and a religious secularism. As we have seen, the Gandhian vision of communal harmony assumed several general and specific concepts: an organization of village republics composed of small cooperating and responsible groups and individuals, and a rejection of heavy industrialism and consumerism. The importance of asking this question arises naturally from the setback Gandhism has received in modern India, and the difficulties associated with any attempt to revive the Gandhian program in a convincing and central way. The query is also relevant in view of the problems that are manifesting themselves through the apparent failure of secularism to fulfill the promised communal harmony.

There are two areas in which secularism has disappointed. One is in practice, in that the state has been found to be negligent in its dealings with different religious communities. It has been accused by its critics of practicing what has been described as non-genuine or '*pseudo secularism*'. The second is in its unrealistic goal of the import of total European-style non-religious secularism. Literally, the weaker rhetoric of 'multi-religious' secularism, more suited to the religious character of Indian society, has been suggested, but this is more a slogan than a reality. Other aspects of modernization, especially the strong orientation of an anti-religious education, and the de-culturing modes of mass entertainment media are driving society towards non-belief or hedonism, rather than a positive interpretation of humanism.

It is necessary to find out the variations and functions of secularism. The concept of secularism is unclear to many people. In a democratic country, secularism helps to protect cognitive right, increase equality as per *race, gender, caste and reduce discrimination*. Moreover, the abolition of dictatorship and the increase of respect to all are possible only in a secular State. People had the fear of ethnic violence due to the declaration of secularism. It should be understood however that secularism does not create social conflict rather it promotes

social unity by eradicating fundamental beliefs and superstitions. Moreover, secularism does not dominate the conscience but it promotes giving equal rights to all religions. A secular society does not favour any religious discrimination against any religion.

CONCLUSION:

To conclude, it can be said that time is ripe now for religions to make a common cause for social justice. In every religion, justice is seen as divine. Yet, paradoxically, all religions have been lacking in their actual commitment to justice. When the commitment to social justice is diluted in a religion, it soon succumbs to the spirit of communalism. Communalism is religion without universal *justice and peace*. We are living in a time of expanding religious plurality within a growing globalization and also a pluralization of the world network. Moreover, diversities of religions are found throughout the entire history of humanity particularly throughout the history of India. He simply attempted in his own particular manner application of 'eternal truths' in his daily routine and to the problems. One of the main fields of his application is religious pluralism. Secularism in essence is giving equal respect towards all beliefs. Gandhi defines secularism as '*Sarva Dharma Samabhava*', meaning 'equal respect for all'. Particularly, in India, it helps to promote harmony in the midst of several religious faiths and the soul of common brotherhood among every one individuals rising above religious, linguistic and regional or sectional varieties. So in the end, the Gandhi's teaching and his lifelong efforts and sacrifices become relevant. He understood that 'the unity of this esteemed land lay not in its uniformity but in its picturesque diversity'. His appeal to his fellow compatriots was 'to preserve the legacy of unity in diversity through mutual respect, tolerance, cooperation, trust and love'.

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CHAPTER - 4

GANDHIAN RESOLUTION FOR SOCIAL CONFLICT

4.1 Problem of Caste and Untouchability

- 4.1.1 The Prevailing Caste System and the Abolition of Untouchability:
Gandhian Approach
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CHAPTER- 4

GANDHIAN RESOLUTION FOR SOCIAL CONFLICT

Social conflict are a problem of great complexity something that can end with violent acts. Nowadays social conflict is a common issue that is found in all societies. The formation of any society or organization is made up of persons or groups of individuals who often come from different ideologies, beliefs, and value systems. The present society, people are classified into different group in which social conflicts does arises due to a lack of ideological co-ordination. In fact given the context of diverse leanings, it is natural for a situation of social conflict to arise in different societies and organizations at different times. It should be noted here that with the development of Industrialization, urbanization, there has been a change in the present society. These new inventions have also brought a lot of change in the society.

Since any conflict has both positive and negative sides, therefore, in any situation a balanced and better decision can be reached after consultation on both the sides. A situation of social conflict can be resolved through discussion amongst the conserved parties, i.e. by understanding, listening and knowing the opinion of others, in doing so a non-violent and peaceful society gets created. For resolving any such social conflicts, there should be a spirit of unity, love and harmony among all the sections of the society.

In the present situation of various such social conflict we can adopt Gandhi's philosophy. Because I think his philosophy will always be relevant in every situation of life. Even during his own time, Gandhi had resolved various conflicts in a non-violent way. If Gandhi's principles are used even today, then surely a non-violent and peaceful society will be formed. Gandhi accepts the existence of social conflict as a fact and brings a philosophical attitude to resolving it. Gandhi saw conflict in society, and he pointed out such conflict like poverty, unemployment, discrimination of caste and untouchability, exploitation of women, lack of education and moral values, drug addiction, prostitution etc., in which the conflict is particularly conspicuous.

Now how are these social conflicts to be resolved? There are two strands in Gandhi's teachings which must be distinguished. One is his conception of '*Trusteeship*' and the other is '*Passive Resistance*'. It is true that Gandhi does not always isolate one from the other that he often takes passive resistance on the part of the exploited as a way to the building up of the spirit of trusteeship. However, for clarity of understanding, it is very necessary that one should distinguish this ideal of Gandhi from the theory of *non-cooperation and passive resistance*. The distinguishing feature of the latter is that it is built on an awareness of the fact of conflict. It is a realistic, hence scientific, assessment of the nature of social relationship.

From the above discussions we came to know that by adopting every philosophy of Gandhi's life, we will be able to easily solve the various conflicts of life. In course of resolving a conflict, a *Satyagrahi* first of all places his viewpoint before his adversary and tries to convince him by reasoning and argumentation. Hence, in this chapter we will try to resolve current social conflict with the aid of Gandhian philosophy and principles.

4.1 Problem of Caste and Untouchability

Untouchability has remained a social concern too by all those who occupy any space of significance within the public domain of India. It has erected a powerful barrier against the emotional integration of the people of India and has divided them into numerous small and hierarchically arranged 'closed groups'. It has further divided Indian society into high-born and low-born caste compartments. Since caste is one of those social institutions which has dominated the public and social life of Indian society for long.

The precise beginnings of caste are lost in the mists of India's ancient past. The *Rig Veda*, oldest of *Hindu* scriptures, describes classification of a society through a referential illustration where parts of the body of the cosmic being *Purusa* are ascribed different functions necessary for functioning of the entire body efficiently. In which, his mouth represents the *Brahman* (priest and teacher class), his arms (symbolizing strength and valour) to the *Kshatriya* (warrior clan), his thighs the *Vaishya* (trader and agriculturist) something that runs the socio-economic exchange, and his feet to the *Sudra* (labourer) class, which provides the labour involving services. This

classification has wrongly retained and confined within family lineages alone discouraging any free switch between jobs of one class into the other. It is under the influence of many factors- racial, cultural religious, economic- and by unmarked stages, that rigidity developed in the relationship of the four *varnas*, as they were then called. Finally, a fifth class appeared-the untouchables concerning which we shall have much to discuss in this chapter.

Gandhi's views on caste and untouchability have created many misconceptions in the scholarly circles. Critics have focused on Gandhi's alleged 'specious' distinction between *Varnashrama dharma* and the *caste system*. Such interpretation reflects an oversimplified understanding of a complex reality. This study examines the different positions of attack or defense of Gandhi's treatment of the question of caste and untouchability. Gandhi said that, "If untouchability lives, *Hinduism* must die" (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 146). He considered the individual as the unit; and the reformation of society has to start from the individual. For Gandhi, 'individual is the supreme consideration'. He stood against the irrational traditional customs which had no moral basis. He found untouchability as a cancer- eating away the vitals of Hinduism. Gandhi wrote that:

This monster of untouchability has invaded every form of society in India; and the idea behind this message is that there should be not only no untouchability between *Hindus* and *Muslims*. I am convinced that if this great change of heart can be brought about among millions of *Savarna Hindus* and if their hearts can be purified - as certainly they will be purified - we should live in India as one people trusting each other and without any mutual distrust or suspicion. It is untouchability with all its sub-forms that separates us from one another and makes life itself unlovely and difficult to live (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 26.1.1934, p. 146).

He also felt that if the whole system can not to be destroyed then at least untouchability should be removed. Moreover, since he argues, that 'untouchability has entered the caste system as an unwanted evil'. However, today there is a lot of change in the social customs and traditions. At least some people are coming out of the caste-ridden society and marching ahead

with progressive views. The nation is progressively marching from the barriers of caste-ridden society to realise casteless and classless society and upholding the notion of social equality.

4.1.1 The Prevailing Caste System and the Abolition of Untouchability: Gandhian Approach

Gandhi visualized the prevalent caste system as the most burning social problem. The caste system, as practiced, is in his view, ‘irrational, unscientific, indiscriminative, unsystematic and grave sin and danger to society and ultimately to entire humanity’. It separates man from man, although everyone is equal in the eye of God. It is very harmful to social upliftment and religious growth and has no scriptural and moral base. In his own words, “caste has no religious basis, but is certainly regarded as bound up with religion, though it is not derived from the scriptures” (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 146). It is a human creation and is daily weakening the social vitality and has to go once for all. It is an evil custom built by interested persons for their convenience.

According to *Gandhi*, the present hideous, disdainful and distorted divisions of caste and sub-caste are the disfigured and degraded forms of *Varnashrama Dharma*. It was very much opposed to *Varnashrama* and thus sooner the public opinion ends it, the better for the Indian people. According to Gandhi, social inequalities and gradations of high and low, superior or inferior are a by-product of the emergence of multiple castes. The sense of superiority is based on the notions of falsehood, hatred, hypocrisy and arrogance. It is, therefore, against the ethical canons of *equality and justice* and is quite repugnant to the social stability and integrity. Society based on wrong notions like superiority or inferiority by birth undermines one’s being and becoming. Gandhi visualized that so long as the racial differences, *discrimination and demarcation* based on social superiority and inferiority are allowed to remain in the society, no real *Swaraj* can be dreamt of. He, therefore, included the abolition of modern caste system and untouchability in his ‘Constructive Program’ and worked heart and soul for their end.

Untouchability has grown out of the prevalent caste system. It is a sin, a blot, a curse and a chronic disease for mankind and has no scriptural base. *Hindu* scriptures support only

Varnashrama Dharma and there is no warrant for untouchability. Gandhi considered, “untouchability to be a heinous crime against humanity” (Mishra, 2012, p. 264). Hindu society practices it without any authority and therefore, reformers like *Buddha*, *Guru Nanak*, *Kabir* and others tried in their time to cast it off from the *Hindu-fold*. It is amazing to see that not only caste *Hindus* differentiate themselves from the untouchables, the untouchables also differentiate amongst themselves. The *Sanatanist*’s practice of looking down upon lower castes and refusing to have social intercourse with them, their determination to keep them away from temples, schools, wells and tanks etc. were considered by Gandhi to be unwise, inhuman, destructive and hideous- Gandhi thought that sooner the caste described as untouchability would be abolished, the better would be for Hinduism and India. Therefore, the primary duty of any caste-abolitionists is to help for its extinction.

Gandhi believed that with the throwing away of the *phenomenon of casteism* by the society, the sad panoramas of caste would vanish automatically and there would remain only four classes based on hereditary callings. He asserts, “Take untouchability out and the fabric of caste is destroyed” (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 7.7.1946, p. 221). It may be noted that Gandhi was against caste system as practiced in the society but not against *Varnashrama Dharma*. *Dr. Ambedkar*- the leader of the untouchables - who was against the inhuman treatment of co-religionists through untouchability, was also not against the caste system, if taken in its pristine purity. Gandhi was eager to see the end of untouchability because for him it was atonement and penance. In his own words:

The moment untouchability goes, the caste system itself will be purified, that is to say, according to my dream, it will resolve itself into the true *Varnadharma*, the four divisions of society, each complementary of the other and none inferior or superior to any other, each as necessary for the whole body of *Hinduism* as any other (Arivanandham, 2009, p. 60)

The caste was meant to define the duties of the four fold divisions. Gandhi said that, all professions are equal in status, none high or none too low and all are interdependent. All should be treated equal without distinction and exception. All are good and lawful and would bring

equal merit and reward before God and man. Gandhi opines that these four divisions are based on equality of social status and services though having different qualities and tastes. Society based on this ancient law would be free from fruitless experimentation, struggle for existence, soul-killing competition and social disintegration. In Gandhi's well-ordered society, all would be equal in social status, irrespective of material and intellectual differences because of being the children of one and the same Father. God has created all; therefore, there should not be any inequality amongst 'His Creation'. All should enjoy same reverence, privilege and reward of their actions in the society. Gandhi writes, "In the book of God, the same numbers of marks are assigned the *Brahmin* that has done his task as well as to the *Bhangi* who has done likewise" (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 11.2.1933, p. 201). It was discovered by our saints and seers for perfect social harmony, adjustment and convenience. Gandhi mentioned that:

Varna thus conceived is no man-made institution but the law of life universally governing the human family. Fulfillment of the law would make life livable, would spread peace and content, end all clashes and conflicts, put an end to starvation and pauperization, solve the problem of population and even end disease and suffering (Narayan, 1968, p. 384).

Gandhi took strong note of the evil of untouchability prevalent in the society and worked with every bit of energy to end the age-long prejudices of *Sanatanists* against the untouchables. He launched *Satyagraha* in India again and again to save the so-called untouchables from inhuman treatment of the *Sanatanists*. In order to get rid of this social disease, he considered work-propaganda as more important and effective than lip-propaganda to free them. During his *Satyagraha* campaigns, he underwent fast unto death and set out on tours several times to remove the sufferings of millions of sobbing untouchables. He included entrance of untouchables in Hindu temples in his *Satyagraha* program. He said, "Temple entry is the one spiritual act that would constitute the message of freedom to the untouchables and assure them that they are not outcastes before God" (Sharma, 1994, p. 45). Gandhi with full vigor during the years 1932 and 1933 in places like Travancore, Guruvayur, Rohed and Dharwad, and Belgaum. The conditions of the untouchables at the above mentioned places were miserable. During this period, Gandhi

delivered anti-untouchability speeches at several places in joint meetings of *Harijans* and *Sanatanists* and published his views in the weekly paper *Harijan* in 1932.

Gandhi undertook *Satyagraha* to open temples, roads, wells, schools, tanks, etc., for the *Harijans*. He was not in favour of constructing separate temples and wells for the untouchables. On the contrary, he was in favour of constructing new temples and wells and repairing the old ones for all. He advocated that in case of the *Sanatanists* not accepting water from the untouchables, they (the untouchables) instead should boycott them in society and refuse the water offered by them. Besides this he pleaded for the joint electorates of the *Hindus* and the untouchables against the British policy of their separate electorates. The most important work in this regard was done by Gandhi during the year 1932. During the same year, Gandhi started another *Satyagraha* to remove the age-long disadvantages of the untouchables of Travancore. This *Satyagraha*, launched by him, is known as *Vykom Satyagraha*. It was launched for meeting the just and proper demands of the untouchables and was restricted to a limited area and was conducted with strictest regard for nonviolence and truth. This *Satyagraha* earned full public sympathy and *Vyakom Satyagrahis* tried to change their opponent on the strength of their character and suffering. The untouchables of Travancore were never allowed to enter the temples by the *Sanatanists*. Gandhi took up fast against it. As a result of this, the temple entry proclamation was issued and the temples were opened for the untouchables on the same terms and conditions as they were in vogue for the *Savarnas*. The same year, he got a resolution passed condemning untouchability and pleading for its abolition by law. In 1934, he opened two temples between Dharward and Belgaum to the *Harijans*. As a consequence of his *Satyagraha* several other temples, roads, wells and ponds were opened to the *Harijans*.

Gandhi's *Satyagraha* for the abolition of untouchability and for removing caste barrier awakened the Indian people from dogmatic slumber and made the *Savarnas* embrace the *Avarnas* as their kith and kin. His *Satyagraha* for the abolition of misinterpreted caste system was successful beyond measure. His *Satyagraha* paved the way for the enactment of laws against untouchability and caste system in free India. As a result of his *Satyagraha*, and the attention of the masses could be focused on the fruitlessness of the prevalent caste distinctions that lead to the heinous practice of untouchability.

Society, today, is a more steady and cohesive whole due to Gandhi's efforts. Several institutions have been established for the welfare of the neglected masses and for raising their status in the society. Officers have been and are being employed to look after the interest of the down-trodden. Facilities they need are being provided to them for their proper living. Schools have been and are being opened for imparting free compulsory education to their children and financial aids are liberally given to their students. Arrangements for their dwelling houses and drinking water have been and are being made sincerely. They have been granted opportunities for electing their representatives in Councils and Parliament. Percentage of their seats in services has also been reserved and raised. Several other constructive works are being done for their upliftment. All these are according to the path shown by Gandhi for a social upliftment and cohesion. In the beginning Gandhi had to establish that path by taking recourse to several *Satyagrahas*.

4.1.2 Critique of the Gandhian Sociology of Change: An Evaluation

In India, caste is threatened by the revolutionary social ideals of communism. Communism is uncompromising in opposing caste and communists set an example of what they profess by abandoning their caste status. Crucial in the advance of any society is its sensitivity to human values. This, particularly for untouchability, has been generated in India by the voice and example of Gandhi. Although dedicated to Indian self-rule he preached bluntly that Indians themselves were undeserving of freedom when they denied freedom to their own brothers. Gandhi's crusade against all offensive distinctions among men is reflected today in the speeches of Indian leaders. In Indian villages where caste ties are strongest they are slowly relaxing. In cities the bond weakens rapidly. In no area was the observance of Gandhi's ideals found more gratifying but significantly, on the point of this brotherly solicitude that 'men appear most concerned to follow him'.

Gandhi tried in many ways to show his kinship with caste's unfortunates. He slept with them; he adopted one as his own child; he placed his life upon the altar of the fast for their sake. It is good to know that this call to brotherhood still rings across India and that a hardy and prophetic minority is committed, at whatever price, to the way he taught and lived. Gandhi was

in favour of adult franchise for the *Harijans* and their recruitment to the higher posts. He said that he would be happy if untouchable is appointed as the Viceroy of India. In his own life, Gandhi claimed to be a sweeper, a scavenger, a spinner and a labourer. Thereby he tried to manifest his concept of fellowship and general brotherliness with the suppressed sections of the Indians, especially among the *Hindu* society. But in handling the problem of social change today one has to think of problems of accommodation, tension-management and integration in the entire Indian social structure. Merely philanthropic and noble acts on the part of some *Hindu* individuals would not solve the problem. Gandhi felt that if religious equality was provided to the *Harijans*, their political and economic condition would improve rapidly. This suggestion is perhaps not sound. The problems have to be attacked at all levels and the exercise of legitimate political rights and economic betterment has also to be proceeded side by side. To this extent, we can say that the attempt of the post-independence governments in India to provide special opportunities to the *Harijans* is a wise remedy. *D. K. Mishra* said that:

Gandhi refused to recognise any separate entity as the untouchables. As an advocate of the *Varna* system, he wanted only four divisions. This means that he would have grouped the untouchables among the *Sudras* and the *Vaishyas*. He did want the untouchables to have all the rights common to the four *Varnas* (Mishra, 2012, p. 19).

But it is very doubtful if the Gandhian '*Varna Scheme*', which is based on birth and heredity, can operate in Independent India. But the most dominant problem is: can political recruitment and economic advancement really bring about integration between the high-caste Hindus and the *Harijans*? Judged in the context of Indian history, this appears to be a formidable task which may require centuries for its solution. The political system cannot bring about emotional identification among the citizens by resorting to coercive measure.

Sometimes in newspapers we read of violence on the *Harijans* and then we feel like questioning whether Gandhi's techniques of conversion or change of hearts have been any success? The task of building a harmonious political and social system which will not be narrowly fanatical or orthodox in its approach should be based upon the universal criteria of

liberty, equality and justice. It is true that in several parts of India during the Gandhian era and later, untouchable leaders have come to prominence. But as I have said, in spite of political recruitment and economic advancement, perhaps psychological communion and emotional involvement has not increased among both, the *Harijans* and the high caste *Hindus*.

Therefore, we makes it imperative that we should re-think on the problems of nation-building in the light of both the *Gandhian techniques of change* of heart and the alternative legal and democratic structural functional patterns of strengthening the political and the national system. The Indian political system cannot work effectively if there are dissatisfied and disgruntled elements in the politics, like today. The sub-system must experience a sense of inner contentedness and only then can there be effective feedback from their side which can galvanize, in its turn, the entire system and thereby counteract social entropy.

4.2 Upliftment of Women

From the time of birth, no one should be given a special status but yet are distinguished on the basis of gender and race. Men and women are like the wheel of a vehicle and it is not possible that only one should run while the other is kept unmovable. For attaining India's independence and making society worth living the upliftment of women was considered by Gandhi to be very essential. Gandhi gave his own view about equality, humanity and the welfare of the society. So long as their status was not raised, *Swaraj* of his dream would remain an impossibility he therefore, included emancipation of women in his constructive program of *Satyagraha* and strove hard for attaining it during his life-time. The Congress under his leadership was committed to look after their welfare like raising their status and providing them with equal rights and privileges as men have. Even before Gandhi, the condition of women in India had been a matter of concern to the social reformers. *Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, a great social reformer, had worked relentlessly to liberate women from the age-long inhuman system of *Sati*.

Gandhi was very intolerant to the idea of women as an object of self-indulgence or satisfaction of carnal appetites. He took it to be a grave injustice against them and a heinous crime. In his words, "I have looked upon women, never as an object for satisfaction of sexual

desire, but always with the veneration due to my own mother” (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, pp. 347-348). Acceptance of women in the customary manner would mean superiority of animality and inferiority of rationality, although women are gifted with no less rational capacity than men. At times, women have proved their superiority over men in different walks of life. Still men of less intellectual caliber consider them inferior and try to keep them under subjection. Suppression of women in such a manner would mean the denial of spiritual identity- oneness of all lives. He said, “Suppression of women is a denial of *Ahimsa*” (Mishra & Narayanasamy, 2009, p. 291).

Now the question arises, how could Gandhi understand women so deeply and respect them so greatly. One has to go back right to Gandhi’s childhood to study and appreciate the role of various women who took care of him during his lifetime. To begin with, his mother and sister impressed him. Gandhi talks a lot about his mother in his writings and speeches. His first lessons in *Satyagraha* were taught by his mother. After marriage, his wife *Kasturba* influenced him as did other women in the *Ashrama*, especially *Meeraben* and *Amrit Kaur*, whose sincerity and commitment impressed him deeply.

Gandhian philosophy on gender emphasizes that social expectations from men and women differ and in turn their responses and responsibilities in the public and private sphere are also different from each other. Commenting on gender equality, he quotes widely from *Hindu shastras* (texts) and asks that if every soul originates from *Braham*, then where do differences between men and women arise? He stresses that it is not the gender, but the individual’s soul that matters. Commenting on the role of scriptures, Gandhi said that all that is written under *Smritis* is not divine as there are some false interpolations. If religion and religious scriptures teach unethical codes then they ought to be disobeyed.

There is no difference in the basic mental faculties of man and woman, and she too deserves the same liberty and freedom. Today the world speaks of *pure love, one family, and one husband and wife* in a monogamous and faithful relationship, thus echoing Gandhi’s teachings concerning the family, the cohesive family is the building block of a healthy society. Gandhi said that providing healthy, intelligent and good children to the country is in itself a great service done by women. He also believed that the *Hindu Law of Inheritance* required changes and

improvement. Wherever family property is concerned, women should be given equal rights because deprivation of women from family property is chiefly responsible for male domination and subjugation of women. Gandhi adds:

I am uncompromising in the matter of women's rights. In my opinion she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by men. I should treat daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality (Prabhu, 2016, p. 232).

Gandhi was keen that women should be given, rather should take equal, if not more, responsibilities as men, in anything that he did or in any new undertaking that he ventured to put forth. No doubt, he was not satisfied with the part played by women; he wanted them to take greater responsibilities, not only in the national struggle, but in building up the nation. In all the institutions for which he was directly or indirectly responsible, he gave women a leading part.

4.2.1 Problems and Social Status of Women

In modern scenario; social changes for good, emphasis on developing women empowerment system and different gender related issue has become burning issue. Gandhi talked about equality in all aspects of life, be it social, economic or political. Gandhi emphasized that souls of all human beings are same. Therefore, any kinds of discrimination like that against *Harijans* by upper caste *Hindus*; or any kind of discrimination whether against women or anyone is considered as unethical by Gandhi. So, Gandhi adopted an integral approach to human problems and strived to bring equality in every sphere of life.

The age-old social customs and traditions adopted in the Indian society had greatly brought down the status of women. Certain social taboos laid down in the past impeded the woman's progress, and restricted her moments to function independently. Gandhi said:

Women's movements the world-over, have gathered momentum to move national Governments to alter their legislation, increase resource allocations to enhance the status of women and mainstream them in the course of development. The

women's movement in India has played a vital role in this direction. The Constitution of India founded on a base of equality has moved to an affirmative position of empowering women to give them a share in the decision-making processes. The Government of India has further extended this process to programme implementation through the *Indira Mahila Yojana* (Veerraju, 1999, pp. 73-74).

Gandhi wanted to provide them with the same rights and privileges as men - equality of status. As per Gandhi's wish, the *Indian Constitution* has provided them 'with the right to adult franchise, freedom of equal education, freedom of speech', etc. Equal rights and privileges would lead to healthy social and national growth. Therefore, against all undesirable and unworthy restraints imposed on them, they have, according to Gandhi, the right to take recourse to *Satyagraha*. Without granting equal rights and privileges and considering them as co-workers and help-mates, no permanent change for the good of the society and the nation can be brought about. Besides, without their help and co-operation; men would not be able to do much. As a result, India would not be able to compete with other nations. Women are the best friends, comrades and guides of men in furthering their services to the society and nation. Gandhi said, "Man must understand that woman is his companion and helpmate in life and not a means of satisfying his carnal desire" (Prabhu, 2016, p. 241). Again, Gandhi propounded that, "Wives should not be dolls and objects of indulgence, but should be treated as honoured comrades in common service" (Gandhi, 1941, pp. 17-18). Gandhi tried to advocate that a wife is '*ardhangini*' or better-half of the man or '*sahadharmini*' or as partner in the performance of one's *Dharma*. He was of the opinion that the texts which help in lowering the status of women should be rejected. He did not hesitate in dictating that when the husband becomes oppressive and said:

The wife has a right to take her own course and meekly brave the consequences when she knows herself to be right and when her resistance is for another purpose (Mishra, 1999, p. 247).

Gandhi expected both the partners to be honest, upright and dutiful. To achieve these three key principles, it was very necessary to provide equality to the two makers of society, men and women. Thus, gender equality is a prerequisite for the peace and development of the nation.

From the above discussions the kinds of diseases engulf a society are mentioned. To put the law into effective operation, propaganda and peaceful picketing for creating public opinion was thought by Gandhi to be the best way for the eradication of such evils. He had no tinge of doubt in mind that women were best suited for this task and so he imposed this duty on them more than men. As per his suggestion, women took recourse to peaceful picketing and propaganda. They peacefully picketed at the streets and doors of the houses of ill-fame and tried to win them over by changing their heart. The man who visited brothels was shown the dangers of his habit and it was tried to convert him by arousing his conscience. The techniques of *Satyagraha* was adopted to do away with the miseries of woman and to elevate them to their rightful position.

4.2.2 Present Position of Women in Modern India

Indian women form one of the very large groups of victims of the unhealthy developments of misconceptions and rigidity in *Hindu* as well as *Muslim* societies. The degeneration of the position of women became distinctly visible in the growth of such institutions as *purdah*, child marriage, in the denial of equal right in inheritance and in the whole trend of relegating Indian womanhood to a position of inferiority.

In order to raise the status of woman, Gandhi raised his voice against certain evil systems of the society, namely,

- i. Equality between the Sexes
- ii. Women Education
- iii. *Purdah* System
- iv. Evil Practice of Dowry System
- v. The Ideal of Marriage

- vi. Child Marriage
- vii. Widow Remarriages
- viii. Household and Divorce
- ix. Population Control and Women

Gandhi considered them to be the serious draw backs of any social system and sought the co-operation of women for the eradication of these social evils. In the following pages we shall attempt to examine these factors in detail and to indicate their present position.

(i) Equality between the Sexes

One of the main problems of the society that attracted Gandhi's attention was the social status of women. After Independence, the Congress Party which assumed political power has undertaken several legislative measures for the emancipation of women. These serve as an indication of the impact of the Gandhian ideals. *Jawaharlal Nehru* said that, every effort should be made by the state and private agencies to remove all social and customary barriers which hinder the full development of an individual. *Nehru* again expressed that:

Apart from full protection of all such rights of the individual and the group, it was common ground that every effort should be made by the state as well as by private agencies to remove all invidious social and customary barriers which came in the way of the full development of the individual as well as any group and the educationally and economically backward classes should be helped to get rid of their disabilities as rapidly as possible. This applied especially to the depressed classes. It was further laid down that women should share in every way with men in the privileges of citizenship (*Nehru*, 1985, p. 247).

It is no surprise, therefore, that Gandhi denounced men for the neglect and ill use of women. According to legislation, it is the handwork of man who has been unfair to woman in performing the self-appointed task. Therefore, women are not inferior to men. In fact they are supreme in their fields. The acceptance of the different fields of activities for men and women presupposes that they are fundamentally different from each other. This point he further states in

most unambiguous terms that, “man and woman are equal in status, but are not identical. They are a peerless pair complementary to one another.” (Gandhi, 2016, p. 237). Nature demanded the vocations of men and women to be different from each other. For instance, it was not necessary for men to acquire the qualities necessary for performing the duty of motherhood. According to Gandhi, “The art of bringing up the children was her special and sole prerogative” (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 365). There was a definite division of labour between man and woman; the former is the breadwinner while the latter, the caretaker and the distributor of bread.

It is true that Gandhi was nostalgic about the great Indian traditions. But he would reject anything that would not appeal to his reason. Yet, Gandhi did not like that the household chores should take away entire time of women. He called it domestic slavery and wanted to free the womankind from this incubus. Men and women, though equal in status, are quite different from each other by nature. He held the view that it was not possible to develop the personality of men and women to their maximum unless the scheme of education was framed keeping in view the cardinal truth that the activities of men and women were different; while the men are to be prepared for the outward activities, the women have to be trained for the home-life. He said, “I believe in the proper education of women. But I do not believe that woman will make her contribution to the world by mimicking or running a race with men” (Prabhu, 2016, p. 239). He once said, “If I was born a woman, I would rise in rebellion against any pretension on the part of man that woman is born to be his plaything” (Jayapalan, 2003, p. 207). Gandhi wanted that men and women should enjoy full equality in public life and that women should not have any legal disabilities.

Gandhi considered the law necessary to remove the inequalities of women. But he considered it better for the enlightened women of India to take up this matter. He wanted India to produce pure, determined and self-controlled women to achieve this non-violent revolution in Indian society.

(ii) Women and Education

Gandhi always supported better education for women. When Gandhi discuss about education or about the merit of education, he hopes for general welfare through it. Not only he includes women in the learning fold, but also provides stress upon their participation in the entire process of education. Lack of education for women is considered responsible for their low status in the society. Gandhi always supported better education for women. When Gandhi discuss about education or about the merit of education, he hopes for general welfare through it. Not only he includes women in the learning fold, but also provides stress upon their participation in the entire process of education. Gandhi was positively concerned about lack of education for women. He was fully conscious with women's contribution in building the society and nation and of their role in national liberation movement.

Gandhi's commitment to women education can also be observed from his sincere desire of providing them rights equivalent to men. He was not ready to accept an argument of denying rights to women on the ground of their illiteracy, or lack of education. He was not prepared from depriving women from their rights on the basis of their backwardness. However, he firmly held that education was necessary for women to protect their rights as well as improve their status. As Gandhi quoted, "Man and woman are of equal rank but they are not identical. In framing any scheme of women's education this cardinal truth must be constantly kept in mind" (Prabhu, 2016, p. 237).

The principle of gender equality has been advocated since long time. The *Indian National Congress* in 1931 upheld the fundamental rights and resolved to adopt gender equality as a guiding principle. The progress of the nation is integrally linked with the advancement of women and their status in the society. Gender discrimination is one of the forms of deprivation. Therefore, we can say that, due to lack of education and information and low levels of literacy have increased the deprivation of women.

(iii) Observance of *Purdah* System

The word '*purdah*' literally means hidden or covered. To keep the women in seclusion which is otherwise called as *purdah* stands as a barrier to their progress in all the fields. The observance of this custom entails not keeping the women away from the social or political life only but also to deny her opportunities to mix up with the rest of the society. This system deprived her of educational opportunities and her involvement in other social activities and thereby preventing the development of her personality in the society. Seclusion of women and *purdah* is being observed since the recent centuries itself and is stated to be the cause for the fall of the progress of the nation. *Jawaharlal Nehru* pointed out:

That it injures women is obvious enough, but the injury to man, to the growing child who has to spend much of its time among women in *purdah*, and to social life generally is equally great (Nehru, 1985, p. 385).

Whatever are the reasons for its origin and development; the observance of *purdah* has become a sign of aristocracy and a mark of status and prestige. It is confined largely to the aristocratic and middle class circles. As a visible indication of its extreme practice, one may notice the well-to-do *Muslim* woman covering herself completely with a veil and the *Hindu* woman protecting her face from approaching males with the help of her *pallu* and the social custom recognizes it as a necessity for both- to keep away from men, except a few relatives even within the domestic circles, and more so in the places of social contact. He, therefore, strongly pleaded with the women to, "tear down *purdah* with one mighty effort" (Gandhi, *Young India*, 3.2.1927, p. 107). Gandhi vigorously fought against *purdah* as it suppresses women and denies them of their freedom and even the gifts of God like the outdoor light and fresh air. It generates in women a sense of inferiority and inactivity. Gandhi also said:

The *purdah* system, the economic dependence, non-existence of widow-remarriage, the custom of polygamy and numerous other customs hampered the woman to develop her personality and raise her status in society. She had to perform domestic functions under social constraints which had made her life

cramped, narrow and fruitless so far as the modern world and its new developments were concerned (Veerraju, 1999, p. 77).

Giving the evidence of ancient Indian history, Gandhi writes that women's lives during that period were less secluded and insular as they participated in public debates and discourses and their lives were much fuller and less restricted when *purdah* was unknown. He raised pertinent questions like, why don't our women enjoy the same freedom as men? Why shouldn't they be able to walk outside and get some fresh air? Women's organization also took up this issue and protested strongly against it. *Mrinalini Sen* went as far as saying that women in modern India were asking for a freedom that was actually their birth right. In this perspective, Gandhi also said that, "women chastity is a matter of purity in body and mind and can be protected through self control and not by veil (*purdah*)" (Thakur, 1988, p. 107). Again, he said:

Purdah is one of the social evils of the society that impeded the march towards *Swaraj*. Removal of *purdah* was also necessary for a healthy competition with other nations which was impossible if we allow the better half of ourselves to become paralysed (Gandhi, *Young India*, 28.6.1928. p, 227).

Almost all the social reformers, right from *Ram Moham Roy* (1772–1833) among the Hindus and *Sayyid Ahmed Khan* (1817–1898) among the *Muslims* up to the present, have emphasized the necessity of putting an end to the practice. But it continues in Indian society both among Hindus and among the *Muslims*, except in certain parts. Thus, the situation, however, is slowly improving with the increasing facilities now being provided for women's education and with women's gradual realization of their own position in society.

(iv) Marriage and Love

Marriage must also be a means for realizing a spiritual life. That is why he says that the object of sexual relation must be nothing else but preservation of race, that is, getting a child. Gandhi said, "husband and wife merge in each other. They are one in two or two in one".

(Gandhi, *Harijan*, 9.3.1940, p. 207). Gandhi was against the compulsion to choose a partner for life. Gandhi again said:

If the wife has to prove her loyalty and undivided devotion to her husband, so has the husband to prove his allegiance and devotion to his wife. You cannot have one set of weights and measures for the one and different one for the other (Beohar, 2018, p. 79).

Therefore, Gandhi recommends that the goal of marriage must be the same as the goal of life itself. So, married life should be a training of spiritual love, husband and wife should develop a sense of companionship and a pattern for cooperative life.

(v) Child Marriage

Child marriage is a curse of the society as it cripples it through several undesirable effects. Besides being bad for health, it thwarts the growth of national economy on account of creating over population. It snatches the freedom of married boys and girls at an early age and burdens them financially and therefore, they do not attach efficiency in their vocations as their formative period is not left free. The child of early marriage is also not as healthy as the child of mature age.

Child marriage was made punishable by law as early as 1929 as a result of the consistent efforts by Gandhi and other social reformers like *Har Bilas Sarda*, whose name is associated with the *Child Marriage Restraint Act*. Though the Act was amended in 1949 in order to enlarge its scope, it still had loopholes. Like other social reformers, Gandhi was also against the practice of forcing marriage without the consent of both, the boy and the girl. The Act did not only affect the validity of child marriage but only sought to discourage it by punishing those who brought it about and that too only when a complaint was made within a period of one year. Besides, when a marriage is established, it is in fact presumed, to be according to law unless the contrary is proved. Thereby, all child marriages became valid in due course. And as a result, child marriage still continues to exist. In rural areas parents contract marriages even when the children are very

young, though the ceremonies may be postponed or concealed. The practice, however, is largely confined to orthodox and illiterate families. It may be stated that this concealed form is often far from easy to detect and counter. Gandhi was against child marriage, which he considered an immoral and inhuman act, as it lowered our morals and induced physical degradation. Expressing his views about *Sarda Act*, then under the process of formulation, He writes:

I am strongly in favour of raising the age of the consent not merely to 14, but even to 16. He further stated, I have witnessed the ruin of the health of many a child mother, and when to the horrors of an early marriage is added enforced early widowhood, human tragedy becomes complete. Any sensible legislation in the direction of raising the age of consent will certainly have my approval (Gandhi, *Young India*, 27.8.1925, p. 301).

Gandhi wanted that a girl generally below the age of 18 should never be married. He was in fact in favour of fixing the minimum age of 20 for marriage of girls. Advising the young men not to marry any girl who was below 16, He writes:

If I could do so, I would lay down 20 as the minimum. 20 years is early enough even in India. It is we who are responsible for the precocity of girls, not the Indian climate, because I know girls of the age of 20 who are pure and undefiled and able to stand the storm that may rage round (Bose, 1960, pp. 332-333).

Child marriage is lowest in South India which has the highest literacy, whereas it is largest in the North where literacy is low. Therefore, the prevalence of child marriages is not necessarily only an indication of resistance to change but also, perhaps, of the amount of education being provided.

(vi) Evil Practice of Dowry System

Dowry system has been another social evil, which has plagued the lives of women in India. It is prevalent among many sections of the society even today. In our country, it has

become common to have dowry deaths. Some of the brides are subjected to harassment and humiliation and some are set on fire. Behind all these ghastly events, the prime cause is stated to be dowry, the degrading practice. This heinous act mocks at the norms of human values and dignity.

Gandhi opposed the system with all the vehemence at his command. Gandhi saw this as an abhorrent practice and termed dowry marriages as horse-trading. In 1929, Gandhi said that, “if I had a girl under my charge, I would rather keep her a maiden all her life than give her away to one who expected a single pie for taking her for his wife” (Gandhi, *Young India*, 14.2.1929, p. 71). Gandhi strongly felt that society could not restore woman to their proper position if the evil custom of dowry was not immediately done away with. Dowry is an insult to womanhood, the mother of mankind. It dishonours womanhood and discredits our education and country. The breaking of the barriers of caste and province would also help in giving a blow to this evil custom. He writes in *Young India*:

The parents should so educate their daughters that they would refuse to marry a young man who wanted a price for marrying and would rather remain spinsters than be a party to degrading terms. The only honourable terms in marriage are mutual love and mutual consent (Gandhi, *Young India*, 27.12.1928, p. 221).

Gandhi stood against the evil practice of dowry and it ‘an abominable system of dowry’, a ‘marriage by purchase’, ‘abusive practice’ etc. According to him, there is inherent evil in the dowry system for those that are involved in it as it results in bondage. Under this system man becomes a mere commodity after bargaining in the process of buying and selling. It badly affects human relations. Gandhi pointed out:

The system is intimately connected with caste. So long as the choice is restricted to a few hundred young men or young women of particular caste the system will persist no matter what is said against it. The girls or boys or their parents will have to break the bonds of caste if the evil is to be eradicated. All this means

education of a character that will revolutionise the mentality of the youth of the nation (Narayan, 1968, p. 399).

Gandhi called for the formation of a strong public opinion to discredit the dowry system. He advocated even for the excommunication of those who received dowry. Gandhi advised people to boycott young men who expect dowry from their prospective bride's family. He saw inter-caste and inter-community marriages as a solution to this social evil. Urging young people, especially young men to give up this decadent practice, Gandhi envisioned his anti-dowry belief to take on the stature of a youth movement.

(vii) Widow Remarriages

Enforced widowhood is inhuman and is the root of corruptions in the society. It is a grave injustice to women, from which they have suffered since long. Gandhi showed great concern over the plight of lakhs of women who had become widows. He wished for their remarriage and a happy life. Gandhi points out that:

In the name of religion we force widowhood upon our three lakhs of girl widows who could not understand the import of the marriage ceremony. To force widowhood upon little girls is a brutal crime for which we Hindus are daily paying dearly. Voluntary widowhood consciously adopted by a woman who has felt the affection of a partner adds grace and dignity to life, sanctifies the home and uplifts religion itself. Widowhood imposed by religion or custom is an unbearable yoke and defiles the home by secret vice and degrades religion (Bose, 1960, pp. 338-339).

A widow imposed by religion or custom cannot be afforded, rather it defiles the house and degrades religion. He said that reforms should be brought in the case of those who are suffering from enforced widowhood. Yet he was not against widowhood, but against the wrongs done to the widows. Gandhi said:

Widow-remarriage is no sin-if it be, it is as much a sin as the marriage of widower is. All widowhood is not holy. It is an adornment to her who can observe it. If this sister has the courage, then let her speak out her mind to her uncle and brothers and seek their help. If they cannot assist in the marriage, then the sister will have to quit their house and take refuge in some widow-remarriage institution (Bose, 1960, p. 339).

In order to bring the practice of widowhood to its rightful position, Gandhi advocated that girl widows should be married again with the help of their parents and adult widows should be left upon their wills.

(viii) Household and Divorce

Gandhi, like many other considered the married life as a state of discipline and emphasized upon the household peace as a means for a happy society. In case of cruelty or other cases, when there was no other alternative, he even advocated divorce, which Hindu society has discountenances for ages. It should be noted that Gandhi was against divorce by unscrupulous persons, not against divorce as much. In the view of Gandhi, marriage is a sacred bond between two sexes, where divorce would mean the breaking of that holy bond. It was, therefore, permissible in exceptional circumstances only when any of the partners would break the marriage discipline.

As marriage is for self-realization, divorce, too, should be for the same, not for satisfying animal appetites. Satisfaction of animal appetite is *vyabhichara*, which is against the purpose of marriage. Therefore, to keep the relation of marriage intact, moral restraint should be followed so that the unforeseen situation of divorce can be avoided.

(ix) Population and Birth Control

Today we are dealing with the problems resulting from population explosion; however, this problem was recognized as early as 1932-33. Gandhi despite that he expressed his

admiration for this resolution and the feeling behind it, yet he strongly believed that self-control is the best legitimate means of birth control. According to him:

Birth control by contraceptives no doubt, regulates to a certain extent, the number of newcomers, and enables persons of moderate means to keep the wolf from the door. But the moral harm it does to the individual and society is incalculable. For one thing, the outlook upon life of those to satisfy the sexual appetite for the sake of it is wholly changed. Marriage ceases to be a sacrament for them (Jolly, 2006, p. 238).

Gandhi believed that women had more self-restraint and he gave the responsibility of birth control through abstinence to women. Though in his pursuit of attributing greatness to women but unjustly placed on women more than their share of responsibilities. Gandhi's words:

If it is contended that birth control is necessary for the nation because of overpopulation, dispute the proposition. It has never been proved. But I have joined hands with the advocates of birth control in India from the standpoint of the present political condition of the country (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 357).

This was particularly so in the case of Gandhi's insistence on family planning and abstinence among women, when in fact it is a male problem and must be held accountable.

(x) The Awakening of Women

When the rebellion of women against the man's injustice is non-violent it would be nevertheless more effective. The practice of non-violence involves avoiding the oppression of women. A woman has the same right as a man in shaping her own destiny and for the plan of life that is based upon non-violence. Gandhi was more concerned for the *welfare of women*.

From the foregoing analysis, is fully evident that Gandhi was a supreme blend of tradition and modernity, especially with regard to his views on the status of women. Till the

Gandhian times, we may notice many changes in our society like education of women has improved, marriage age is increased for both boys and girls, *purdah* system is abolished and many more. So as a youth we should also change our mentality regarding *gender inequality*. So that even women get equal opportunity in every aspects of life, in order to improve their status in tradition and society.

4.3 Gandhian Education and Moral Values

The reconstructionist for education contends that much of mankind today suffers from institutional disequilibrium followed by moral confusion and uncertainty and that there is a need to make a search for such of the values that stand as highest priorities like education. It would not be adequate merely to be content with the values for education, since education does not merely involve values, but has a good purpose and end. So it is the obligation of the people for its relevance. The world of today has been split into warring camps. The resources and the energies of the countries of the world are wasted in their destructive tendencies, while hate and destruction are ‘disvalues’ that are conspicuously found in the human life in spite of the values such as - *love and cooperation*, which are constructive. In order to achieve a goal such as world civilisation, there is need for the people of all colours, creeds, races and nations to join together to promote peace and unity under the banner of international world order.

Gandhian educational ideas should be taught after in-depth understanding and thorough investigation on the basis of their results like how they contribute to *human progress* and *moral upliftment*. He turned out to concreteness from abstraction and from the inadequacy of the fixed ideas; and from the closed system which claim to be absolute and final. As a man of action believing in the values, he turned towards ‘*concreteness of facts and reality*’. Ramashray Roy stated that:

Gandhi did not believe in the system of education which does not lay more stress on the inculcation of the moral values. He had an ideal education to be realised by experience and he wanted to experiment with this true system of education. He upheld character in education and regarded character building as the proper

foundation of education. If the foundation is firmly laid, the children could learn all other things themselves or through the assistance of their friends (Roy, 1996, p. 57).

The concepts such as equality, liberty and freedom should not remain as mere ideals but they have to be realised in action. True wisdom lies in its practice. According to *Dr. Ramjee Singh*, “An operationally viable value system would be lasting through educational orientation” (Veerraju, 1999, p. 98). Gandhi aimed at the human transformation rather than the mere acquisition of knowledge. For Gandhi, the importance of practical life lies in the attainment of values which are said to be the core of his true education.

4.3.1 Gandhian Vision of Education

Gandhi saw life as a whole and as a unity and saw education as the only revolutionary means of uplifting life continuously for better, richer and fuller - materially, culturally, morally and spiritually. About twenty years ago he deliberately named his educational program ‘*Nai Talim*’, which means ‘New Education’. Under *Nai Talim*, education became life-centered rather than text-book-centered and *Nai Talim* was defined as education for life, for a lifetime. The following definition of ideal education was given by him:

That man I think has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logical engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order ... whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience who has learnt to hate all vileness and to respect others as himself. Such a one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education, for he is in harmony with nature (Gandhi, 2017, pp. 71-72).

His views on education are expressed in *Hind Swaraj* and the many speeches he gave and the articles he published. The important tenets of his educational philosophy are as follows:

(i) Free and Compulsory Primary Education:

Gandhi envisaged seven years of free, compulsory and universal primary education up to matriculation minus English. And he wanted it to be compulsory because majority of people do not realise the central value of education in life and do not send their wards of the school.

Therefore, he wanted to make education compulsory for all so that the children may attend the school regularly rather than attending some other duties that are assigned by their ignorant and illiterate parents. Moreover, nobody would be denied to receive education up to 14 years of age. As such, it is universal in nature.

(ii) Craft-centred Education:

Craft-centered education is not education and crafts, but it is education through crafts. In this program, 'craft' is the center of education - central to the entire teaching-learning process. Craft should be taught not only for production work but for the development of the intelligence of the students. Gandhi said, "It was his wish that, the whole process of education should be imparted through some handicraft or industry" (Taneja, 2007, p. 184). Later, Gandhi outlined the following factors regarding the selection of crafts: -

- (a) It should centered around different subjects grouped together,
- (b) It must be according to the natural and social environment,
- (c) It should be tied with the life of the children,
- (d) It should meet the vocational needs of the child in the changing social order.

Craft-centered education is important on the following points:

(a) It is psychologically healthy as it frees the child from the tyranny of purely academic, theoretical and monotonous education. It is a means of fostering the power of imagination and sharpening the intellect. It gives wide scope to children for self-expression by sublimation of their instincts. Moreover, the psychological needs of the children i.e. need for affection, self-respect, creativeness are fulfilled through craft-centered education.

(b) It is sociologically sound - as the introduction of practical productive work can break down the hiatus between urban and rural life when it tends to infuse a sense of dignity of labour in children. It brings a sense of co-operation, discipline, belongingness, tolerance and self-government in children.

(c) Economically, it is considered good as it enhances the productive capacity of our workers and also enables them to use their leisure profitably. It also helps in attaining the aim of self-supporting aspect of education.

(d) It is pedagogically sound since it gives reality to knowledge and helps to bring correlation of knowledge with life and its various aspects.

(e) From the biological stand-point, it is sound as it provides opportunities for earning while learning.

(iii) Self-Sufficiency:

It implies that a child should be able to cover some part of his educational expenses by engaging himself in some productive works which would give him earning along with learning. It also enables the child to earn a living after completing his course of education-preparing the child for future life. Gandhi realised that a poor nation like India which cannot provide free education to all the students, needed education to be self-supporting and self-reliant. His self-sufficiency aspect was criticized on the grounds of the following:

(a) Critics thought that by indulging children in productive works, school would exploit them. It was nothing but exploitation of the child labour. Therefore, the tender age of children is grossly exploited and spoiled.

(b) Some expressed fear that if children are left free in making goods, they would mishandle the machinery which would cause irreparable loss. Thus, there will be huge wastage at the hands of small children.

(c) It was thought that child would use all his energy and power for earning money and in the process of earning child would neglect his study. Thus, learning of the child would be atrophied.

(d) Critics argue that parents would reap the advantage of child labour by propelling the child to do some works in the hope of shunning their onus.

(e) Lastly, it was thought that children might produce articles which could not compete with the marketable articles produced in factories because their products were very rough and crude. In spite of its drawbacks, craft-centered education is unique for its self-sufficiency aspect which brings about economic prosperity.

In spite of its drawbacks, craft-centered education is unique for its self-sufficiency aspect which brings about economic prosperity.

(iv) Emphasis on Mother-tongue:

Gandhi realised that the biggest obstacle in the prevailing system of education was that education was being imparted through the medium of English. This affected the development of understanding, purity and clarity of thoughts. Gandhi expressed that:

I am hoping that this University will see to it that the youths who come to it will receive their instruction through the medium of their vernaculars. Our language is the reflection of ourselves, and if you tell me that our languages are too poor to express the best thought, then I say that the sooner we are wiped out of existence the better for us (Kumarappa, 1953, p. 48).

Through mother tongue we can understand feelings and aspirations, use lists of materials and indices to express freely and clearly in speaking and writing, and consult dictionaries and reference books.

(v) Correlation as a Method of Teachings:

It was envisaged that correlation should be the guiding principle of teaching all subjects. Various subjects are to be taught with craft being the focal point of the teaching-learning process. Gandhi said that:

Every teacher will have his own method of teaching within that framework; however, such instruction may be imparted only in accordance with the ideals that have been laid down by the authorities with regard to religion. It is true that instruction in other subjects can be impacted by one who has read certain books on these subjects (Gandhi, 1926, pp. 383-384).

For example, in Geography teaching, it can be correlated with spinning through a thread-bare discussion on the nature of soil required for plantation of cotton, climatic condition, period of vegetation etc. In language teaching, it can be done by stimulating pupils to write an essay on cotton. In science subject, pupils can be asked to make a nature study for the growth of the cotton plants.

Therefore, it is the starting point of teaching all other subjects and it is the medium through which different subjects are to be taught effectively by means of correlation. As such, he had distaste towards water tight compartmentalization of manifold subjects.

(vi) Creed of Non-violence:

A very outstanding feature of his educational philosophy was the application of the law of non-violence in the training of the child as a potential world citizen. He thought that non-violence was the panacea for all evils. Gandhi stated that:

Where the whole atmosphere is redolent with the pure fragrance of ahimsa, boys and girls studying together will have like brothers and sisters in freedom and yet in self-imposed restraint; the students will be bound to the teachers in ties of filial love, mutual respects and mutual trust (De & Sahu, 2018, p. 127).

His plan of education was based upon the pillar of non-violence. His aim was to develop a non-violent society based on love, mutual respect, sympathy and cooperation through education.

(vii) Ideal of Citizenship:

Gandhi wanted to make children right type of citizens endowed with civic sense, conscious of one's own duties and rights, responsibilities and opportunities which is possible through his new indigenous system of education. Education should therefore, be directed to conform to this standard of citizenship. In short, Gandhi's says, all instruction must be combined with some basic craft and academic education must be used as a means to a greater goal of character building.

4.3.2 Basic Education: The Gandhian System

Gandhi has conducted several experiments in education from the early days of his social career. He was very receptive and reformative. He learnt inside and outside the class. The whole world became his laboratory. This was further reinforced when he asked the Indian Youth to boycott the British educational institutions during the 1920's Non-cooperation movement. To impart indigenous and need-based new education, Gandhi founded *Gujarat Vidyapith* in 1920 at

Ahmedabad. For Gandhi, *Ashrams* and prisons became centres of learning, educational research and experiments. A systematic approach to new education was made only when Congress assumed power in various provinces in 1937. Gandhi's educational ideas were to take the shape of '*Wardha Scheme*' followed by the conference of Congress State Education Ministers and experts under the leadership of Dr. *Zakir Hussain* in 1937 at Wardha. The education programme chalked out by Dr. *Zakir Hussain* and his team, based upon Gandhi's educational thoughts is called *Wardha System of Education* or *Basic National Education*. However, the nomenclature given by Gandhi was '*Nai Talim* or *New Education* or *Basic Education*'. Gandhi in his foreword to the *Zakir Hussain Committee's* book containing the syllabus of *Basic National Education* wrote that:

What *Zakir Hussain* and his Committee have called *Basic National Education* is exciting fair interest in India and outside. A more correct, though much less attractive, description would be *Rural National Education* through village handicrafts. Rural excludes the so called higher or English education, National at present connotes truth and non-violence and through village handicrafts means that the framers of the scheme expect the teachers to educate village children in their villages so as to draw out all their faculties through some selected village handicrafts in an atmosphere free from superimposed restrictions and, interference. Thus considered, the scheme is a revolution in the education of village children. It is in no sense an importation from the West (Mishra, 1999, p. 258).

Thus basic education is a mass-based (majority Indian being rural), need-based and specially designed to tap the skills by reviving the indigenous and labour intensive rural technology. In 1945, Gandhi shed light on his ideas in *Nai Talim* as a scheme of education for rural and urban centres. Moreover, the vocation centered education could prove useful for saving a large amount of public money. It also emphasizes the principle of dignity for manual labour among students from school stage to university level, resulting in the inculcation of work-ethics. The training of 'head, heart and hand' brings about productive results. In fact, Gandhi wanted

that theory and content of education should be linked with concrete life situation in social and physical environments.

But craft education was not to replace book education rather it was to be an adjunct to it. He knew systematic knowledge of skill could be acquired with the help of books. Gandhi himself was an actionist first and theorist afterwards. In conformity with this view, the education system conceived by him also contained the '*practical aspect*' first. He believed in close interaction between 'the teacher and the taught' laying emphasis on values such as - *cooperation, discipline, sacrifice, integrity and fearlessness*. Gandhi recognized the importance of education and then used the useful handicraft to be taught to every child. This concept of education serves both the goals at the same time. Gandhi's concept of education was first suggested to be applied to children in the age group of 7 to 14 years and was called 'Basic Education'.

The special features of basic education should meet the challenges of the present and to enter the threshold of 21st Century, such as:

- nonviolent and value oriented
- learner centered
- objective and need based, experimental learning by bridging the gap between theory and practice
- indigenous, local-specific and self-sufficiency oriented
- appropriate use of science and technology for harmonious life-style in tune with nature (socially and ecologically non-violent)
- integration of personality development of the learner moral, emotional, physical and intellectual faculties
- secular interreligious harmony and peaceful resolution of conflicts.
- removal of direct and structural forms of violence
- *antodaya* and *sarvodaya*
- culminating positive attitude towards the harmonious coexistence localism (*Swadeshi*), Nationalism, Internationalism and Globalism.

Thus, the modern educational system should strive to evolve a holistic, multipronged educational package based on the basic educational approach. Indeed, in the face of challenging problems posing threat to the very existence of human kind today, a new awareness is being built-up in the form of alternative movement. To establish a peaceful socio-human order, nonviolence can only be the viable means. Thus, Gandhi declared in crystal clear terms that:

All our problems have therefore to be solved non-violently. Our arithmetic, our science, and history will have a non-violent approach, and the problems in these subjects will be coloured by non-violence (Mishra, 1999, p. 264).

His concept of education makes people self-supporting and educated. He made people aware of their social responsibilities and made them realise that they are an integral part of the society. His concept of basic education is an important measure to avoid the crises arising out of rising unemployment in the society and due to lack of harmony between the education provided and the jobs secured to the people. Gandhi rightly believed that in order to make education compulsory in villages of India; it ought to be made self-supporting. Moreover, craft work and manual labour in basic education could also inculcate appropriate work culture amongst the youths.

Basic education makes provision for participation of its members on equal terms in the educational process of learning, while doing some productive work. This brings about a social change and makes the individuals economically sound. This method needs to be followed with commitment, honesty and integrity. It can be said that education is the cornerstone on which the political emancipation of India rests. Our country should not be built with bricks, but with mind, and *'not with cement, but with knowledge'*.

4.3.3 The Significance of Moral in Education for Modern Times

The significance of education in the modern times lies in the part it can play in terms of 'morality'. This has been recognized widely by the people. For Gandhi the goal of education is *character building*. Human transformation is the aim of Gandhi. Man has to realise higher values

of life. When education is value-oriented, it continues to be perennially relevant. Something that the draft of National Policy on Education during 1967 laid a stress upon, “The cultivation of moral and social values. The educational system must produce young men and women of character and ability, committed to national service and development.” (Veerraju, 1999, p. 102). The aim of education is not only to prepare for employment but also to enable the person to realize his great ideas and implement them in his life. As the famous education commission of 1964-66, the *Radhakrishnan Commission*, observed:

For achieving change on a grand scale the only effective instrument is education. Education does initiate changes in social institutions and sub-systems, and this affects the social situation of the country (Chakraborty, 2013, p. 94).

Gandhi, is a system builder of new social order to be based upon - *truth, nonviolence, non-exploitation, disarmament and sustainable peace*. In this age of environmental degradation, energy crisis, population explosion, poverty, injustice, suppression, oppression and terrorism, we can find Gandhian educational measure as a viable alternative. For skeptics, Gandhian model of education may appear to be ‘*primitive*’ or ‘*utopian*’. But, in the light of current value trends, problems and other perspectives of modern world, Gandhian model will prove to be a viable alternative. Gandhi was a person of future, not of the past and thus his programs as well reflects the same.

From the above discussion, we arrive at saying that, Gandhi never lost sight of manifold problems and the challenges the nation is confronted with and he had the foresight of the future. Modern society recognizes the significance of the job-oriented courses and thus lays more stress on starting these courses to widen the scope for a better professional opportunity for the people in general.

CONCLUSION:

To conclude, we can say that every society cherishes certain goals, values, ideals and norms. The relevance of the Gandhian social philosophy lies in his conceptualizing the social issues and making them relevant and dynamically operative to the modern world. Gandhi stood against the evil manifestation of caste and untouchability. He opposed casteism where it had degenerated with its evil manifestation of untouchability. The position of women and their status is marked by the characteristics of exploitation, discrimination and humiliation in the society since the ancient times. Gandhi worked out for their social upliftment by upholding the values such as - *equality and social justice*, hitherto unheeded. Education plays a significant role in the human life. By restructuring education, it could be made meaningful, purposive and relevant to the needs of the modern man. When education lacks moral values for inculcation, the purpose and meaning of education is lost. Education is a powerful media for social change in the emerging new world order. This makes it very clear that Gandhi wanted to bring about the reformation in the society gradually and aimed at establishing – ‘a classless and casteless society that promotes brotherhood, communal unity and harmony’ as they are very essential for any society to progress and co-exist peacefully. Gandhi transformed the traditional concepts for the betterment of all sections of the community and improves their social conditions.

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CHAPTER – 5

GANDHIAN RESOLUTION FOR POLITICAL CONFLICT

5.1 Gandhian Model of Democracy

- 5.1.1 The Concept of Majority and Minority in Democracy
- 5.1.2 Political Objective of Non-violent Democracy
- 5.1.3 Gandhian Approach to Decentralization

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- 5.3.1 Gandhian Thought on Rights and Duties
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CHAPTER-5

GANDHIAN RESOLUTION FOR POLITICAL CONFLICT

Political conflict is at the core of all political structures and can be found between citizens, social groups as well as political representatives and political parties. Political violence is executed by people or governments to accomplish political objectives. Gandhi did not make any distinction and made no wall of separation between social, economic, religions and political. *Gummadi Veerraju* held that:

Gandhi also felt that harmonious balance has to be maintained among the moral, social, economic and political spheres to avoid the possible domination of one sphere to avoid the possible domination of one sphere over the other and destroy its identity with the other (Veerraju, 1999, pp. 150-151).

Generally it has been said that politics deals with the pursuit and capture of power. Gandhi was no political theorist; he was a political actionist or a '*Karmayogin*'. He did not set himself to the task of a systematic presentation of his view about the nature of political power. His ideas were concrete realities and were intended to give a new shape to events and for the remaking of man as a moral person. It is the circumstances to which neither that Gandhi neither could, nor he evolves any definite or clear-cut political theory.

From the standpoint of methodology, Gandhi's was deductive, empirical and even pragmatic. He found certain conclusion from his essential assumptions- metaphysical and ethical. To him metaphysics, ethics, economics, sociology and politics are intertwined. However, his approach to politics is indeed moral which lend a special significance to his theory in current age of moral politics. It is true that he did not care much for the historical and quantitative methods of politics, but the deficiencies are compensated in the form of giving a moral direction to politics. It is from a normative stand point or 'values' as he understood and accepted to be fundamental and elaborated in his concepts of political theory. Gandhi viewed the individual as the centre of authority and value. Gandhi stated that:

The state and government derive their existence and power from the individuals. This concept of the ultimate authority of the individual logically paved the way for the enunciation of the theory of non-violent non-cooperation with the state and the exploitative system that stand in the way of the all-round evolution of the individual, because for Gandhi the individual is the one supreme consideration (Gandhi, *Young India*, 13-11-1924, p. 378).

Accordingly, it is clear that Gandhi was not a professional politician and he never entered politics to acquire '*political power*' though he wielded much influence over his followers, associates and masses in the freedom struggle and became the center of political power in Indian politics and remained till the last moment of his life. Accordingly, his political career added a new dimension to the concept of politics in India, which might not be suitable to the present day power hungry and self-centered politicians but it is hundred percent true to the heart of the good governance for all the people on this earth if the common or poor people matters at all. The approach he made in the domain of politics is stated to be moral and this gains utmost significance in the modern age of power politics. He conceived a broader notion of politics and stood against any dichotomy between the public and the private. It is in this context that the challenge of Gandhi to the modern political thought bears significance and relevance.

Political conflict is considered a complex field of struggle. That is why efforts are often made to resolve conflicts by leaving politics behind. There is talk of alternative politics as well as politics of alternatives. Gandhi tried to create a '*politics of choice*' so that politics could become '*a medium of cooperation and human upliftment*', and not conflicts.

5.1 Gandhian Model of Democracy

Democracy stands for a form of government wherein all the classes of individuals have a voice in the act of government. This voice may be directly exercised or through representatives. What is implied in these definitions of democracy is a type of government wherein people rule themselves. There are only two classes called the ruling and the ruled. Hence, if we could say

that democracy means 'self-rule'. A democrat believes that every adult who exercises his franchise is capable enough to exercise the force of self-direction and all ought to be offered the equal chance to exercise their self-directions.

Gandhi took parliamentary democracy as a starting point as it embodies a set of hard-won values. But as will be clear from the above, he was searching for means to make society accept the values to live by. Gandhi wanted to make democracy more real so that every individual would play an effective role and not a ritualistic one in the running of the country's affairs; something a norm today in many countries where the only role remains for the citizens- the casting votes at regular intervals. It is not enough of the institutions and rules were formed on the basis of those values. Gandhi was painfully aware how the values are declining predominantly through a ritualistic adherence to the rules, leaving ample scope for sheer hypocrisy to prosper. He criticized the functioning of the democratic institutions as they emerged in the world, however cherished the values. He was aware of the importance of institutionalized values as a starting point for the practice of the values in social life. Perhaps, we might mention, this is not an essential ingredient in the makeup of the meaning of democracy. Gandhi, however, felt that 'those who have not worked with their hands are not sincerely interested in the welfare of the people'. We need not labour this point further.

Let us go back to the main point. How a hotch potch group consisting lakhs of people with different wants and outlooks on life would govern themselves since they do not form a homogenous unit which could rule over itself? In fact, it is because of this hotchpotch nature of a large group of people that democracy has had to face many difficult problems. We are all the members of a society alike in all respects, if all could agree on the same wants and same aspirations and approach to problems of life, there might remain no difficulty in selecting a batch of people representing the whole society as government. For, then whoever becomes a member of the government body would act in the like any common individual.

The success of democracy depends on the procedure adopted for choosing the representatives of people to serve on the various governmental bodies and more so by the

character of the people that are chosen. Here is what Gandhi has said in this connection. Gandhi said:

Fifteen hundred delegates, jealous of the interests of the people, broad minded and truthful, would any day be a better safeguard for democracy than six thousand irresponsible men chosen anyhow. To safeguard democracy the people must have keen sense of independence, self-respect and their oneness, and should insist upon choosing as their representatives only such persons as are good and true (Prabhu & Rao, p. 424).

Gandhi believed that when there is democracy only in name, when lunatics, loafers and the uneducated people are allowed to exercise their franchise, there will be violence in the government. If there has to be non-violence precaution has to be taken to see that there is real democracy-democracy with contents and not only with outward form. A non-violent and real democracy is possible only when there is no acute economic disparity and no one class that wield economic power or tend to bend political power to its ends. *Lenin* sought to suppress the exploiting classes forcibly while Gandhi used the weapon of non-violent action, *Satyagraha*, to end class dominance. There is violence in a democracy when it is devoid of real contents. Gandhi preferred non-violence because it is necessary if we have to realise our self. Is our democracy non-violent? If what we see all round us not as a mirage, there is violence present in our country which, for reasons that might be beyond the control of most of us perhaps gets a stimulus from what democracy has become in our country.

The things that are happening in our country today remind that perhaps Gandhi had a premonition of coming events: there are strikes, destruction of property, and loss of life, loot has risen. Most of us are corrupt and selfish. Should such things happen where there is real democracy? Gandhi wanted democracy in which the hands of the people were absolutely clean. In a democratic society where there are varied classes of people with varied degrees of intelligence and general attainments in varied fields of learning, a majority principle has to be applied. It is the wish of the majority which should prevail not only in selecting the policy or in

selecting the representatives but in all matters of execution of policies and rules of conduct that are laid down.

We have made most of the essential features of democracy as conceived by Gandhi clear. One can now see for oneself how far removed our democracy is from what Gandhi wanted it to be. In Gandhi's democracy there is no exercise of force or any no show of it. Wedded to the doctrine of non-violence, Gandhi could not have believed in anything else. In democracy there should be non-violence. However, we have to remember, that non-violence, in all cases does not exist in absence of physical or mental force. The lectures on Gandhian non-violence, this point elaborated. We need not repeat here what has been said there but it is important to note that true democracy is self-rule and in true self-rule there be neither forcible extraction of money nor the exercise of similar force for other purposes.

How few of us have cared to know what Gandhi said and precisely what he meant by democracy. According to *George Bernard Shaw*, "Democracy substitutes election by the incompetent many for appointment by the corrupt few" (Mehta, 1985, p. 176). What *Shaw* says is true of many democracies. It is perhaps true in a large measure of Indian democracy. If Gandhi could see today's conditions of our country, he would have revolted against the hideous distortion of his democracy in the country of his birth. Was Gandhi a believer in socialism? He said some times, 'I am a socialist enough'. But he never liked to be labeled as a socialist. In fact he did not like any label on him. He was a worshipper of truth, of non-violence, of the spinning wheel and so on. It is clear from the above passage that Gandhi would like socialism to be brought about by non-violence. And his socialism is different from the socialism of the West. For him socialism is same as his democracy.

In a true democracy there would be no power except in the sense that 'each individual has power over his own self'. Though the institution of voting will be there in which majority of votes has importance, yet it will be different from what we have in most of the democracies today. We wonder whether the power that our administrators have could accurately be described, additionally, in the words of Gandhi, since this power is obtained by instilling a fear of punishment. Gandhi expounded that the government use as little force as possible. It is

democratic in the measure in which it abstains from using its power. Further, as conceived by Gandhi, 'In a democracy, there would be the right to speech and freedom of the press'. In other words, there would be no suppression in liberty of expression whether in spoken or written words. Gandhi stated that:

Liberty of speech means that it is unassailed even when the speech hurts; liberty of the Press can be said to be truly respected only when the press can comment in the severest terms upon and even misrepresent matters, protection against misrepresentation or violence being secured not by an administrative gagging order, not by closing down the Press but by punishing the real offender, leaving the Press itself unrestricted (Gandhi, 1909, pp. 176-177).

Gandhi adheres strictly to his conception of democracy, freedom of speech followed by press. How wisely Gandhi said that 'protection should not be secured by an administrative gagging order'. There should be no room for force but if a need is felt absolutely necessary it should be exercised as minimum as possible. Moreover, there is always some room for love in 'democracy'. If government uses the exercise of check by the use of force, that government governs the least. Gandhi in spite of him not being concerned with appearing consistent is indeed consistent and in fact is more consistent than us. He abided with his conception of democracy and allows it to take its course freely. Once he made truth his objects of worship, all the wise statements followed naturally with ease without much effort on his part.

Our democracy should be prepared to listen to the views of the opponents and should not make fun of them much less should it take a revengeful step against them. However, Gandhi's wise words appear to have fallen on deaf ears. In *Harijan* of 27th May 1939, Gandhi says:

Today our democracy is choked by our internecine strife. We are torn by dissensions-dissensions between *Hindus* and *Mussalmans*, *Brahmanas* and non-*Brahmans*, Congressmen and Congressmen. It is no easy task to evolve democracy out of this mobocracy (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 27.5.1939, p. 76).

Have we made any progress in the right direction or has our democracy acquired in a greater measure the spirit of ‘mobocracy’, since a true democracy is characterized by the sense of unity among the people. But could there be any unity in a country that soon after its Independence divided itself into so many States. Can there be such unity when each State is wanting more and more for itself from the Union. And where people say, we speak this language and you speak another language and therefore, we must make separate State. India indeed did not have true unity among its people for hundreds of years but Gandhi wanted the people to unite and he appeared to be successful to certain extent though soon after his death disillusion has come to us. However, Gandhi has sown the seed, and we do not know when, if ever, it will germinate.

N. Lenin said, “It is true that liberty is precious so precious that it must be rationed” (Mehta, 1985, p. 184). Liberty certainly is precious; it is sacred and in a true democracy it would not be necessary to ration it. A democracy of name only, ‘liberty degenerates into license’. Then to preserve its sacredness it has to be rationed. But who cares whether we have a real democracy or a mere label of democracy. What is the shape of our democracy today? If we witness what is happening today in our Independent India everybody looks concerned with their rights while forcing others to recognize them but how many of us are conscious of our duty.

Gandhi’s democracy died before it was born. Men at the levels of their being have turned a deaf ear to Gandhi’s preaching and his wise words. Perhaps Gandhi’s democracy will never be born in this country for hundreds of years. Gandhi’s fears have come true. He knew that those who had the reins of government in their hands were neither democratic in spirit nor non-violent. *Pyarelal* writes in his book:

Gandhi was a born democrat. He was the greatest democrat of all times because he saw God in humanity and humanity in God. The one saved him from the dilemma which sometimes confronts humanists when Demons turns into Chaos, the other saved him from the fallacy of individualism which leads men to seek peace and personal salvation in the retirement of the cave (Pyarelal, 1956, p. 95).

In a true democracy there would be no occasion for strikes of any kind for any purpose. But as we have said, true democracy has never existed anywhere. It is an ideal. The people have to think, speak and act as one man, voluntarily, to make their association a case of real democracy. But where that is not possible there is room and justification for strikes, but strikes only of the kind that Gandhi approved. So, he said:

A strike should be spontaneous and not manipulated. If it is organised without any compulsion there would be no chance for goondaism and looting. Such strike would be characterized by perfect co-operation amongst the strikers. It should be peaceful and there should be no show of force (Bandopadhyaya, 1960, p. 269).

True it is that a strike ought to be unconstrained, and not controlled; characterized by perfect co-operation. That is why we have said above that *'in a true democracy people have to think, speak and act as one man'*. If they do that, their strike would be spontaneous and have the characteristic of perfect co-operation. Nature abhors uniformity of form and shapes. There is, however, under the surface a hidden uniformity which it is the object of religious men to discover. This hidden uniformity can be brought to the surface through the labourious process of true education, as Gandhi says.

Here Gandhi compares democracies in the East with those in the West. Non-violence is a must in democracies everywhere. And for deliverance of the people it will be necessary to restrict our wants and take to simple living. There lies the secret of happiness. And for that Gandhi would not mind waiting for a few thousand years. Ideals are difficult to attain and it may be that what is easy to attain cannot be an ideal. Ideals are always far in the future and those who have to be able to recognize them must have a far-sight. We know that Gandhi advocated self-sufficiency and has said each village and each individual should try to be self-sufficient. Now let us quote from his writings in *Young India* of 21st March, 1929. He says:

If man were so placed or could so place himself as to be absolutely above all dependence on his fellow-beings he would become as proud and arrogant as to be veritable burden and nuisance to the world. Dependence on society teaches him

the lesson of humility. That a man ought to be able to satisfy most of his essential needs himself is obvious, but it is not less obvious that when self-sufficiency is carried to the length of isolating oneself from society it almost amounts to sin. A man cannot become self-sufficient even in respect of all the various operations from the growing of cotton to the spinning of the yarn. He has at some stage of other to take the aid of the members of his family. And if one may take help from one's own family why not from one's neighbours (Gandhi, *Young India*, 21.3.1929, p. 365).

It might appear that Gandhi was contradicting himself here by advocating self-sufficiency in the extreme, adding that even if it was possible it is not desirable. Can we explain away this apparent contradiction? Why did Gandhi want that each one of us should be self-sufficient? That was because he felt would minimize the chances of quarrels and exploitation. You must help yourself and if you depend on others the relationship thus established might lead to exploitation and often leads one to think of material wants over the spiritual wants. Now, if we have true democracy, as we have repeatedly said, the whole society becomes for all practical purposes 'one man'. In such a society interdependence would not lead to exploitation nor would it make anybody think less for material gains. 'Each individual would be organs, on the same body'.

Undoubtedly, Gandhi's emphasis on 'vigilant democracy' is significant. If citizens are aware enough then democracy would move towards true self-government. A disciplined, responsible and aware democracy can become a true government of the people. Therefore, Gandhi's views regarding democracy cannot be taken lightly. An open debate should be organised on their vitality and relevance in the present context and if it turns out relevant to the need of the hour, it should be adopted.

5.1.1 The Concept of Majority and Minority in Democracy

In a democracy, the government reaches a unanimous decision by all means, but this is not possible in political matters. For all practical purposes, majority rule should essentially serve everyone's interests, although it is not in agreement. Otherwise the danger of majority rule

becoming a tyranny of the majority cannot be ruled out. *Bertrand Russell* was of the opinion that it is an error to assume that majority is essentially right in certain political matters. Some supporters of the amendment requested Gandhi to accept it in view of the strength of the feeling in favour of it. Gandhi refused to do so and explained his position thus:

As regards an appeal to me to accept the amendment which has just been lost by strength of one vote, let me remind you that we claim to work under a democratic constitution. One vote today has meant that the amendment has been lost, but one vote the other way could have easily meant the retention of the amendment. What you have to consider is whether the country would suffer by the loss of the amendment (Gandhi, 1928, p. 336).

The question of the majority and the minority can be by passed if, as Gandhi has said, when people are self-respecting and have sense of oneness and when the elected representatives of the people are broad-minded, truthful and interested in the welfare of the people. Gandhi did not consider a majority decision to be valid and sacrosanct and upheld the opinions of the minority when they are just and moral. He stated that to be accountable to the majority without taking its decision into consideration. Gandhi says:

The rule of majority when it becomes coercive is as intolerable as that of a bureaucratic minority. We must patiently try to bring round the minority to our view by gentle persuasion and argument (Narayan, 1968, p. 371).

Gandhi was of the opinion that it would be another fallacy to behave that a large number of representatives somehow helps in the better conduct of the business or that it protects the democratic principles. He was adamant that is a majority rule has to be positively beneficial to the people or, in other cases, innocuous, the franchise has to be confined to moral people. A few persons, who have soul force, constitute majority as against a large number of persons who do not possess the requisite degree of soul force. Gandhi would in other cases prefer to have rule of the minority as he believed them morally superior. A benevolent dictator is preferable to a form of government when majority of unscrupulous people constitute the franchise.

5.1.2 Political Objective of Non-violent Democracy

Gandhi held that true democracy is based on non-violence. If the state rules on violence, such type of rule could be termed as a totalitarian regime. The object of state is to restrict or limit the social violence committed by the individuals through the employment of force and violence. The violence of the individual is prevented and controlled by the superior violence and force exercised by the state. In the opinion of Gandhi, state is nothing but the manifestation of violence.

Gandhi's *Satyagraha* did not aim at merely transfer of power from white men to the brown men but also at setting up a democratic form of socio-political order. Without building up a new order, according to Gandhi, freedom would remain a cry in the wilderness. In course of his *Satyagraha* struggles in India, his immediate objective, in the political sphere, was the establishment of a non-violent democracy because it was the highest form of political order that men had envisaged. A non-violent political order, in the eye of Gandhi, guarantees national existence on the basis of co-operation, harmony and individual freedom. Contrary to it, a violent political order, based on coercion and exploitation, leads to political chaos and anarchy. Violence, instead of doing any good to the individual, destroys his individuality.

Gandhi, though in favour of establishing a democratic form of socio-political order, was not in favour of its Western form since. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi has vehemently criticized Western democracies and has given an idea of an ideal democracy. The deep-rooted evils of Western democracies are the centralization of power, race for armaments, imperialism, exploitation, political instability, etc. Western democracies were erroneous as they practiced violence and left little place for individual freedom. In the West, British parliament is considered to be the best form of a democratic institution but even it ignores the vital requirements of non-violence and individual freedom. Western democracies instead of working for people at large benefits only a section of people from the ruling certain party. *Benudhar Pradhan* explained that:

Since the state is born of violence and force, Gandhi was convinced that force and violence are the inalienable aspects of the nature of the state. The state cannot

come out of its inherent nature as much as a leopard cannot change its spots under any circumstances. Gandhi subscribed to the view that even if an individual is morally deprived, he is not beyond redemption (Pradhan, 1980, p. 523).

Gandhi's acquisitive and exploitative tendencies can be curbed under the moral treatment. Gandhi felt that state is not the same as the individual to be beyond redemption. In the true test of democracy, it attempts to replace force and violence by social will. The modern states became totalitarian and if they want to be democratic they have to be truly and boldly non-violent. A perfect democracy is possible only when there is perfect non-violence. If a revolutionary movement asserts its power by exercising violence justifies under the pretext for the establishment of non-violence then it only reflects a failure to see the relations between violence and power. Gandhi therefore had a unique conception of democracy. His democracy was essentially a product of truth and non-violence.

In Gandhi's scheme of things, it is the individuals who count more than anything else because disciplined and enlightened individuals alone can make a democracy. The individuals, in the eye of Gandhi, are the end of all institutions including State by the means for their purification and betterment. The individual being the architects of society and State, have to realise too the merits of sacrifice and selfless service for the proper functioning of the democratic State. Gandhi thought that a true democratic structure, built from bottom upwards, could not emerge without arousing the conscience of the individuals. The arousing of individual conscience was necessary because reforms that arise from within are lasting. Gandhi opined that in a democracy all political and social laws must be in accordance with the principles of conscience for over all good of the society. The emergence of such a democracy, however, is impossibility without purifying individuals through a change of heart, and cultivating a spirit of brotherhood.

Gandhi strongly felt that in a democracy duties are more important than rights since any individual, who does not perform their duties but clings to rights alone, create chaos and confusion in the society. A perfect democracy, which in the opinion of Gandhi is essentially non-violent, emerges when an individual cultivates 'non-violence' while performing their duties to

the society selflessly. In any non-violent democracy, an individual gets maximum opportunity for realizing *Sarvodaya* or '*the greatest happiness of all*' and society's support too. When a society provides individual freedom and maximum opportunity for performing one's duties, society gets decentralised.

According to Gandhi, a society which gives individual freedom and practices non-violence provides the real basis of true democracy. In his vision for democracy, there is no place for social, economic and religious inequalities. As per him, '*Varnashrama*, bread labour, non-possession, *Swadeshi* and secularism would move the wheels of society and would guarantee in status'. *Varnashrama*, as pointed out earlier, would end unworthy competition from the society, he further claims as '*all duties are sacred and equal in merit*' which bring rewards to the same society. The acceptance of *Varnashrama* would not mean a distinction of high and low in the society. Likewise, bread labour or 'compulsory performance' of physical labour for bread except by those who are physically unfit could root out all sorts of social exploitation too. Because practice of bread labour would enable people to realise the value of non-possession. And once the faith in non-possession is firmly set, the idea of trusteeship begins to dominate the mind of the people.

Besides this, a democratic society permits full religious freedom and allows no coercion of the followers of one faith by the other. In a democratic set up, there is no superiority of one faith over another and, as a result, there is no scope for change of faith and communal violence. *Swaraj* of Gandhi's dream did not recognize any race or religious distinctions. With the democratic base of the society, Gandhi envisaged a democratic state and government. Gandhi very much likes a state government to be non-violent through and through. A completely non-violent state is, however, very difficult to realise. He therefore, wanted state to firstly become predominantly non-violent or democratic in faith and practice. *Himanshu Bourai* stated that:

In order to facilitate the full growth and progress of the individual, a democratic society must have its basis in rational understanding, mutual cooperation and concern for the well-being of all. The main principle of human love inspired the

votary of non-violence to seek good of himself in the good of all and sacrifice his life to realise the ideal (Bourai, 1999, p. 161).

In Gandhi's view, a genuine democracy can be established only by the non-violence of those brave, who will not work for the charges of exploitation and coercion. In a non-violent or democratic structure of society, Government has to exist considering that all men are not exactly alike and there would always be some external restraint, even minimum, some framework would be needed on them which is the structure of democratic functioning where control of the Government is minimal besides use of minimize violence, coercion and exploitation though sufficient to eradicate complications from social relations. The democratic State, however, was not an end in itself for Gandhi. Gandhi always considered it to be a means of *Sarvodaya* or good of all. A democratic state was, for him, an instrument of common good. If in a democracy the political power exercised by the representatives of the people, does not deliver social good, the people, in Gandhi's plan, would have the right of changing the representatives of the people. Gandhi's conception of a democratic state does not require numerous representatives of the people where most of the functions of social upliftment are done by voluntary organizations.

In a non-violent democracy, as conceived by Gandhi, the pattern of election, the purpose of imprisonment and the role of police and military would be uniquely different from the existing forms of the same. Gandhi favoured 'indirect election' because direct elections, in his view would not be conducive to a sound and healthy democracy. A poor and independent candidate would not have much chance under the system to win. Gandhi prescribed qualifications for the voters and for the selection of candidates too. A candidate of democracy should not misuse the art of fetching votes by psychological exploitation and conversing but should use service and sacrifice, rendered to the society and state for upliftment for all. That is to say a candidate must acquire personal *Swaraj* in the sense that he becomes selfless and incorruptible. One more important function which a democratic State would perform was to impart education to the citizens for their all round development.

In is framework of basic education, children obtain more practical knowledge than theoretical teachings since theoretical knowledge alone would bring unemployment in the

society. His plan of primary education in the country was very important for the rise of a non-violent democratic system. It is a moral duty of the State to influence guardians to send children to schools. Supervision, co-ordination and guidance in educational matters are a state responsibility. Gandhi wanted the State to make payment for higher education which was useful to the society at large.

Centralized type of democracy cannot be run on non-violent lines. In his view centralization perpetrates exploitation of the individual materially and intellectually and exploitation is treated by Gandhi as part and parcel of violence. He also reminds that truth can prevail over falsehood and democracy cannot be achieved by dictatorship. Gandhi further emphasizes that, “centralization cannot be sustained or depended without adequate force” (Narayan, 1968, p. 277). Only decentralised democracies are consistent with non-violence as it governs the least where violence or force is not needed. For Gandhi, decentralisation lies at the root of genuine democracy. Centralization of economic power brings unemployment and financial injustice in the society further adding complexity in life by destroying resourcefulness, creativeness and eventually uprooting the democracy. Gandhi’s suspicion of centralization process made him to think of vesting minimum power even to the State; as State usually exercises violence in a concentrated and organised shape, he observes. In his view, a non-violent democracy alone would guarantee individual freedom with the use of minimum power by the State.

Every *panchayat*, Gandhi opined, should be a judiciary; legislative and an executive body whose offices are filled by election by adult voters, both male and female, with minimum qualification of bread labour. Moreover, the State will not interfere in the working of *panchayat*. Gandhi thought that a *panchayat* alone could provide real freedom, minimize coercion, give fair judgment and at the same time will save some money of the villages.

Gandhi believed that true democracy can be delivered by violence, that is, no perfect democracy is possible without non-violent measures of a state. He held that the modern imperialism is explicitly based on a force protecting it, and is not consistent with non-violence. A true democrat defends both his freedom and the freedom of his subjects.

5.1.3 Gandhian Approach to Decentralisation

Considering the nature of the state, which retards the individual initiative, Gandhi advocated the decentralised type of democracy followed by the self-governance through self-sufficient village republics this is the nucleus of his political philosophy. A social scientist has to evolve the type of economy and polity that could fit within the pattern of decentralisation. If the power does not remain at the working base, it will only be deceptive and does not prevail in real democracy. Therefore, *J. C. Kumarappa* has rightly observed it as, the grave of democracy. He writes:

As far as circumstances in our country go, decentralised methods are the only remedy for the ills we suffer from- lacking of initiative, want of sense of responsibility, looseness in business methods, wide-spread poverty, unemployment and under-employment (*Kumarappa*, 1958, p. 172).

Gandhi, in order to achieve his ideal of the establishment of non-violent, non-coercive, non-exploitative, classless, stateless and democratic society, sought to decentralise the entire living system of the Indians. Machines used in such enterprises displace necessary human labour, kill initiative and skill and lead to a state of slavery. In the end, machines start ruling over men and leaving no chance for freedom. Though civilisation based on machines saves time and labour but it creates unemployment and under-employment, is prone to the spread of hatred, misery, violence, exploitation and war. It ultimately disrupts the society and the State. Gandhi took capitalism to be less injurious than socialism in some sense. *Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa* wrote that:

Indeed, from this point of view, Socialism may be said to be only a more thorough-going form of Capitalism, i.e., a system wherein the imperfection and inconsistencies of Capitalism are removed, and there is centralization through and through, leaving nothing to private enterprise (*Kumarappa*, 1965, p. 100).

Centralized economic order results in a government for a fraction of people- a centralized government. Powers in such a centralized administration are vested in the State and the Centre, not in the individuals. The individuals in such a Government become weak, helpless and dependent. In the works of *Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa*:

Centralization in the economic sphere inevitably leads to centralization in the political sphere, i.e., to the emergence of an all-powerful State which monopolizes power and puts an end to individual freedom (Kumarappa, 1965, pp. 175-176).

Only a decentralised economic order can provide him with the opportunity of full development and free expression of his personality. Machines and instruments of a decentralised economic order are required to be simple. The machines need to be of service, and not controllers of men. Under decentralised production, raw materials are to be produced in the locality and prepared goods are to be sent to the local markets to be consumed by local men. Markets as such are required to be approachable to all. In decentralised production, the producers and consumers know one another's living and working condition. The production, therefore, is always need based. It provides employment to millions of unemployed and under-employed persons, saves time and money in transport, gives individual freedom, increases initiative and skill and puts an end to exploitation, greed, violence and war. *Joan V. Bondurant* held that:

Gandhi consistently emphasized upon the individual effort, local reform and village-centered activity. He worked out for societal organization which has its basis on decentralised villages, industries and self-sufficient rural communities (Bondurant, 1958, p. 180).

Industries, according to Gandhi, should be village-oriented and in general. He promotes the cultivation of small industries that requires small capital so they are available to even the poorest amongst the villagers. Gandhi emphasizes that large scale production too should be carried out in villages so as to supplement the production made by hands. He warns that centralized undertakings like telephones, telegraphs, roads, etc., should not be owned by private persons who are guided by personal gain and exploitation.

In his scheme of decentralisation, harmonizing with the industries that affect the vast national activity in the Indian villages comes first. In this context, Gandhi had *khadi* uppermost in his mind. Amongst various village industries and handicrafts, *khadi*, for Gandhi, came prior to all. Gandhi maintained that the ‘very *khadi* connoted decentralisation’. He asked every village to produce enough to meet their own requirements while saving a little surplus as a contribution to the requirement of the cities. Gandhi wanted all these processes to be carried out in the villages; he wanted decentralisation to start from the cotton growing stage itself. He decentralised *khadi* and believed that decentralisation begins with the beginning of the *khadi* process. Gandhi suggested that those who are employed in less remunerative occupations should voluntarily co-operate in pinning. For he believed that revival of spinning in the villages would solve the problem of cloth- one of the primary needs of human being.

Villages can be self-sufficient in this matter not by imported cotton, but by growing cotton in their own land. Imported cotton doubly impoverishes the people for it deprives them of employment opportunities and exhausts the cash which they might have saved. Gandhi said that, “Self-sufficient *khadi* will never succeed without cotton being grown by spinners themselves or practically in every village. It means decentralisation of cotton cultivation for at least self-sufficient *khadi* is concerned” (Vyas, 1962, p. 75). Decentralizing, here means, production of cloth wherever cotton is grown. According to Gandhi, “The science of *khadi* requires decentralisation of production and consumption. Consumption should take place as nearly as possible where *khadi* is produced” (Mathur, 2010, p. 100).

Gandhi wanted to decentralise the capitalistic system not by class-struggle but by class co-ordination and class-collaboration. This, he believed, could not be attained by dispossessing capitalists of their possessions, but by changing their mentality. Wealth possessed in excess of one’s own needs should be utilized for the poor in society. The rich should be treated as trustees of the poor in society. Gandhi recommended that those who would not regard themselves trustees of the poor in the society should be dispossessed by the State from their excess wealth with minimal practice of violence. Decentralisation, according to Gandhi, required the abolition of the *Zamindari* system. Land, he strongly felt, should be possessed according to one’s

requirements which the cultivators then cultivate by their manual labour. *Shankar Ghose* said that:

Being influenced by *Henry Thoreau*, the ardent champion of the individual freedom and his classical statement the government is best which governs the least. Gandhi believed that the best government is one that governs the least. He held that a nation is truly democratic when it runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without much interference of the state (Ghose, 1991, p. 164).

A society or State based on non-violence would be free from external force. The police and military of a decentralised society or State would be trained on non-violent lines too. Finally, Gandhi declares decentralisation as best, quickest and most efficient way to build a country from the bottom up, and for this purpose, Gandhi asked every educated Indian to go back to the village and build a prosperous India.

5.2 Ideal State and Society: *Ramraj and Swaraj*

In the long course of history, the terms like ‘State and ‘Society’ has assumed various meanings. The fact that there are several definitions of and approaches to these terms shows how difficult it is to accept any one of them as a standard one. Gandhi, who was neither a political philosopher nor an academic sociologist, does not seem to have accepted fully the existing concepts of either of the state or of the society. One has to examine his ideas expressed in the course of his writings and speeches in order to understand his notions about the state and the society. By *Swaraj*, Gandhi did not mean mere emancipation from the British Imperialism. S. C. Biswas said that:

Gandhi regarded the state as a ‘soulless machine’. It was for him a symbol of violence in a concentrated and organised form. He would prefer a society of ‘enlightened anarchy’, where everyone is his own ruler, to a coercive state (Biswas, 2015, p. 348).

Gandhi declared no need for coercion in regulating human relations and hence the state becomes unnecessary. He himself was aware of it. He, therefore, proposed a state with limited functions, and provides measures to control the powers of the state. It is well known that Gandhi was an advocate of *Ramarajya*, in June 1945, he described *Ramrajya* as ‘*the kingdom of God on earth*’. He envisages a kingdom where inequalities on the basis of rights, colour, race, creed or gender does not occur.

In a society of Gandhi’s conception, an individual keeps the upper hand. He thought that such a society could be created if men attained complete personal *Swaraj* and performed their social obligations effortlessly without being governed by the state. Whether one accepts Gandhi’s conception of state and society or not but he has made people think over it a lot.

5.2.1 A Comparative Evaluation of Gandhian Ideal of State and Society

Gandhi made the necessary evaluation between the state and the society. In modern political theory this evaluation has been taken note by *Professor Barker* in his celebrated book ‘*Principles of Social and Political Theory*’ drawn relations between the state and the society, and further evaluates it ‘within the state’ and ‘in terms of state’ marking ‘the area of society’ and ‘the activity of social thought’. Political obligation is due within the state, and in terms of the state it may be granted that it is unconditional. But there is a sphere of activity in man’s life, which transcends sometimes even the well-known sphere of the political state and enters the wide arena of society. Here political obligation is to be qualified that becomes conditional. *Barker* says, “A new and a super political obligation enters as soon as we take into our view the socially created and socially developed idea of justice; an obligation which we may call social” (*Barker*, 1961, p. 220). *Barker* considers the social obligation to be higher. One may recall here the position of *Rabindranath* who enunciated the philosophy of indifferentism to the state in *Swadeshi Samaj* (1904). Gandhi believed that each nation should have its own system of government in keeping with its own history, traditions, cultural and civilisation. Writing in the *Harijan* in 1937, he said:

By political independence I did not mean an imitation of the British House of Commons, or the Soviet rule of Russia or the Fascist rule of Italy or the Nazy rule

of Germany. They have systems suited to their genius. We must have ours suited to ours. What that can be is more than I can tell. I described it as *Ramraj* (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 2-1-1937, p. 343).

When once was asked by a reporter to define *Swaraj* he said that '*the word is indefinable*'. He used the word *Swaraj* to also mean '*self-rule and self-restraint*'. From the above statements one can get an idea of the type of the state and the society, Gandhi was aiming at. Being a practical idealist, he placed before himself an ideal and strove hard to realise it. In real, *Swaraj*, it is not enough to delegate governmental authority to a few. For achieving *Swaraj*, the means proposed and practiced by Gandhi are non-violent, as he believed that good ends can be realised by good means only. His weapons of non-cooperation, civil-disobedience, fast, *Satyagraha* are quite effective. He expects citizens to employ such non-violent means not only to defend their fundamental liberties but also to get social justice in the state. He further deprecates the use of violence because the success of violence is temporary and leads ultimately to greater violence.

Similarly, civil disobedience is regarded by Gandhi as the inherent right of a citizen. While he recognizes the right of the state to put down criminal disobedience, but denies the right to a state in respect of civil disobedience. The state has to perform legislative, executive and judiciary functions. Gandhi wanted India of his dreams to be a non-violent state which spreads the message of non-violence to the rest of mankind. To get flowers from the plants in the garden one has to put a strong fence to protect them from the beasts. S. C. Biswas pointed out that:

The ideal society for Gandhi would be a non-violent society where individuals would enjoy perfect liberty, equality and social justice. The basis of this society is moral law resulting from the practice of truth and *Ahimsa*. Though he did not define absolute truth, he pursued and lived and also invited others to search and live the life of particular truths till absolute truth was attained. *Ahimsa*, as was practiced by him, had both negative and positive aspects. A man practicing *Ahimsa* had not only to abstain from doing harm to a living being in thought, in

speech and in action but had also to show affection and love even to his enemy (Biswas, 2015, p. 348).

He, therefore, felt that for building up a non-violent society it was necessary to guarantee an individual his freedom and independence. Gandhi knew that individuals in a society may not have equal talents and abilities, therefore he placed much moral obligation on the persons of superior talents to act as trustees and share their surplus wealth with the other members of the society on a voluntary basis. Gandhi finds justification for the peaceful transformation of the acquisitive society into the socialistic pattern through a change in the outlook of the individual towards society. He held that:

Every individual must have the fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with equal use by his neighbours but no one is entitled to the arbitrary use of the gains from the talents. He is part of the nation or says the social structure surrounding him. Therefore, he can only use his talents not for self only but for the social structure of which he is but a part and on whose sufferance he lives. The present inequalities are merely due to people's ignorance (Chakrabarti, 1992, p. 73).

The idea of reducing economic inequalities through trusteeship system is far from realistic. Decentralisation of political power in a country where there is political instability may prove to be dangerous and disastrous. However, decentralisation of the administration of justice in a big country like India is essential as the administration of justice will then be prompt and within the reach of common man.

Gandhi's ideal village unit consists of one thousand souls. This could be a possibility in a perfectly non-violent society. Thus, we can say that Gandhi's highest achievement in the field of political thought is replacement of the ideal of the legal state by the moral state. His insistence on using good means to attain noble ends is a great challenge to the builders of a new world order.

5.2.2 *Panchayat Raj* and Decentralised Administration

Panchayat Raj means a political structure whose base is at the village level consisting of five members especially of elder statesmen of the community with the functional ability of legislature, executive and judiciary. Lack of faith in the *Panchayat Raj* institutions is evident from the fact there is no statutory provision even for their regular elections with the results such that people no longer take their existence seriously. We forget that it is the foundation of a healthy Indian polity and an experiment in integrated development. It is noted that if there are charges of corruption and inefficiency, scant regard for procedures, parochial loyalties, motivated actions etc. against the PRIs, I have to submit that it is more so at the upper level of administration today. In spite of all these handicaps, the PRIs have their gains. This has resulted in a mass-education in political citizenship. With all the above arguments in defence of the PRI, I am constrained to submit that the *Panchayat Raj* is only so called. It has an Indian name and form but basic content is western. In short, we find in it the frame of parliamentary democracy at the grass-root level. This is against the indigenous of Indian political culture. *Ramjee Singh* held that:

Despite political vicissitudes, wars and conquests, the village system remains intact. They are almost self-sufficient and self-governing republics. However, by introducing parliamentary system in the name of *Panchayat Raj*, the basic structure of village-system was destroyed (Singh, 1988, p. 73).

A village should not be treated as a mere geographical entity with human population. It should be treated as a community. Gandhi stated that, “We have to make a choice between India of the villages that are as ancient as herself and India of the cities which are a creation of foreign domination” (Vyas, 1962, p. 43). There might be delay but there is less chance of machinations and future strifes. India is a country of villages. Even now about 80% people live in rural areas. But they are almost neglected. There are no good schools or hospitals, no communication, not even proper facilities for drinking water at least in one lakh villages. *Community Development Programs* and *6th Five Year Plans* have not been able to solve the problem of the rural poor or

rural underemployment. Our priorities for heavy industries, urbanizations etc. have further taken away the meager portion of employment of the villages. *Gummadi Veerraju* held that:

The *panchayat* system as viewed by Gandhi represents a village community to be self-sufficient, especially in the matter of the basic necessities of life. The economic reconstruction would be from the bottom to the upwards and the village unit would constitute the foundation of planning. The *panchayat* will have autonomy as far as the internal village administration is concerned. Unlike the anarchist tradition, some sort of hierarchical pattern could be evolved by linking up the village *panchayat* with the *Taluk*, District, State and Nation (Veerraju, 1999, p. 165).

Gandhi, with his series of experiments with truth and the knowledge and experience that he had about the political institutions of the society, suggests a suitable political organization that suits to the modern requirements. If the country is to be revived, her roots have to be tended which lies in the village. In other words, the development has to begin from the bottom, i.e., village level. Therefore, this program which lies in the village has to be tended and initiated by the people themselves with proper understanding. Gandhi said that a structure made up of innumerable villages would always have a wide but never an ascending circle. Gandhi says:

Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be the oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages till at least the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but even humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units (Dayai, 2006, p. 230).

In order to democratize the local institutions, three-tier system of rural and local government has been suggested viz., *panchayat raj*, *panchayat samiti* and *zilla parishad*. The three tier of administration is *zilla parishad* consisting of the representatives of the block *panchayat samittis*, the members of the state legislature, members of the Parliament,

representatives of the cooperative organizations in the district and any other special organizations. Hierarchical pattern could be evolved by the linkage of village *panchayat* with the block, district, state and nation.

The village consists of the village elders who are elected by the citizens of the village. The purpose of the village *panchayat* is defeated if it is not checked from time to time. There is need to have a wider institution of the people for which the *panchayat* has to be the cabinet and this institution is recognized to be *grama sabha* consisting of all the adult citizens- men and women, both young and all of the village. It is said to be the counterpart of the National Parliament. Among the members of the *grama sabha*, some have to be elected for *panchayat* as its cabinet to conduct the affairs of the village. The *grama sabha* has to meet periodically and review the work done by *panchayat*. The *grama sabha* has to represent hopes and aspirations, fear and frustrations of the people through village *panchayats*. Gandhi says:

I must confess that I have not been able to follow the proceedings of the constituent Assembly... (the correspondent) says that there is no mention or direction about village *panchayats* and decentralisation in the foreshadowed constitution (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 21.12.1947, p. 473).

The block *panchayat samiti* has to co-opt representatives of women, scheduled and depressed classes, cooperatives and other special interests which have not been represented in the *samiti*. The object of the *panchayat samiti* is that people of all sections of the community that constitute the population within the block has to be represented. *Gummadi Veerraju* pointed out that:

The main aims of the *panchayat raj* were to create institutions at the village, block and district levels to create conditions conducive for self-expression and political representation. At these levels to mobilize the public support and local resources for the development of the programmes and also to decentralise the decision-making which helps to take the local experiences, requirements and

aspirations to have their full role in the matter of planning and implementation of the development programme (Veerraju, 1999, p. 169).

The *panchayat* elections are to be conducted without the interference of any political party which helps to restore the traditional values of the village. If any place is given for its vested interests, it gives rise to the projection of some political party. This will not help to combat or cure the ills of the society, viz., casteism, communalism, money, power, etc. Gandhi favoured the village republics. The movements of statutory *panchayats* and the new scheme of democratic decentralisation may be stated to be the amplification of the Gandhian views. Gandhi said:

When *panchayat raj* is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do. The present power of the *zamindars*, the capitalists and the rajas can hold sway so long as the common people do not realise their own strength. If the people non-cooperate with the evil of *zamindari* or capitalism, it must die of inanition. In *panchayat raj* only the *panchayat* will be obeyed and the *panchayat* can only work through the law of their making (Prabhu, 2016, pp. 102-103).

Gandhi suggested indirect elections to be conducted through the village *panchayats*. These villages with their voting capacity will elect their district administrations which again will elect the national chief executive. There will be voluntary cooperation between these villages which will produce real freedom. When the basic material needs of the individual are satisfied, they become free to pursue higher and spiritual values of life to enjoy greater happiness and peace. There has been a recognizable growing inequality in the country. Some people who are after money and power, are taking the undue advantage of the new and added sources for the acquisition of wealth. They have exploited and acquired wealth and they are becoming the masters of the political power also by capturing it.

Therefore, the idea of giving constructive type of leadership out of public interests is gradually emerging at present to usher in a democratic decentralised society and adult suffrage.

But the fractions among the villagers, their kinships loyalties, and their limited identification with larger groups stand as barriers on the way of development programs.

5.3 Gandhian Political Approach

As it is well-known, Gandhi was no political theorist; he was a political actionist or a *karmayogin*. He did not set himself to the task of a systematic presentation of his views about the nature of political techniques. In fact due to the nature of his circumstances that Gandhi did not, nor could he possibly, evolve a definite and clear-cut political theory. For him 'theory is all grey-evergreen is life'. It would be an unrewarding task to look for a consistent, systematized body of thought in Gandhi's writings for he owned absolute allegiance to none of the prevailing schools-anarchist, Marxist, liberal, democratic, etc.

From the standpoint of methodology, Gandhi's approach was deductive, empirical and pragmatic. He deduced certain metaphysical and ethical conclusions from his core beliefs. Metaphysics, ethics, economics, sociology and politics were intertwined. Any student of Gandhi's political thought and his eventful life will readily see for himself that he developed a keen empirical outlook towards life in general and political and social events in particular. He was eclectic enough to draw from different sources and schools that fitted in with his basic outlook of truth and non-violence. His approach to politics was indeed moral. And that lends a special significance to his theory in this age of amoral politics. But the deficiencies that follow there from have been more than compensated in the form of giving a moral direction to politics. It is from a normative standpoint-norms or values as he understood and accepted to be fundamental-that he elaborated his concepts of political theory.

The Gandhian political techniques include both traditional like the press, meetings and associations and non-traditional instruments. The non-traditional techniques like non-violence, *Satyagraha*, civil-disobedience, non-cooperation, duties and rights etc. These techniques are not exhaustive but merely illustrative. Some of the Gandhian techniques left more of a demonstrative effect than anything substantial. The Gandhian techniques of political socialization deserve to be studied in detail and with reference to their use in the pre-1947 and post-1947 periods. The

political mobilization which occurred because of the use of these techniques is another aspect which deserves a critical examination.

5.3.1 Gandhian Thought on Rights and Duties

Gandhi fought for the rights of the exploited and humiliated people in the society. He established the relationship between rights, duties and obligations. He stood against the others against exclusivity and special privileges. According to Gandhi, rights are the opportunities necessary for self-realization which, for him is the highest duty; '*Rights are innate in the sense in which moral values are innate*'. For Gandhi, social good has even in a sense primary importance; and every right really comes ought to be a right to perform one's duties. In this respect Gandhi is following the teaching of *Gita*.

Thus for Gandhi the true source of rights is duty. Gandhi believed that rights should be recognized by the state only for the purpose of enforcement. Such a theory of rights stands in contrast to that of *Bentham* for whom, "Rights properly so-called are the creatures of law properly so-called" (Veerraju, 1999, p. 170). For Gandhi, rights are not the creatures of law, but its condition precedent. They are the conditions which law seeks to realise. Indeed, in an ideal society Gandhi explicitly recognizes '*the needlessness of the state for the enforcement of rights*'. But the necessity of enforcement of rights through the machinery of the state arises because of the imperfections of individuals and consequent conflicts of rights. *V. P. Verma* said that:

As a strong believer of the equal rights for all men, he defended the human rights and raised his voice against the illegal, illegitimate and unjust social norms, political conventions and colour prejudices which are in vogue over the ravages of time (Verma, 1959, p. 219).

For a proper recognition of individual rights, its actions are to be directed towards the moral norms of life. There is a need to integrate the rights of the individual with a system of moral ends. The lack of such integration would result in disruption. So the performance of one's own duty is of paramount importance. Gandhi says, "Instead of insisting of rights everyone does

his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind.” (Bandopadhyaya, 1960, p. 335). The ideal for Gandhi is the ideal of self-realization. The justification of the state, and for that matter of any institution, depends on the contribution which it makes to this ideal.

That is to say, the reason for respecting the rights and duties as enforced by the state exist in so far as they facilitate the realization of this ideal. But this ideal being ethical in nature, cannot be enforced by the state but must be realised through the individual initiative and for this end liberty is an essential condition. Hence there is a conspicuous emphasis on individual liberty in Gandhian philosophy. Thus, for Gandhi, the ground of political obligation resides ultimately in the duty of self-realization for which individual liberty is essential.

5.3.2 *Satyagraha* as a Tool of Gandhian Political Method

The word *Satyagraha* means to hold the truth or to follow love. It also means true power and soul power. In contemporary times, critics are not ready to understand the implications of the Gandhian method of *Satyagraha*. There is an honest failure in the recognition of the potentiality of *Satyagraha*. Self-suffering differs from violence. Violence inflicts injury on others whereas self-suffering inflicts suffering on the person concerned or invites suffering on himself who exercises the technique of *Satyagraha*. Gandhi attaches the great importance to the individual integrity and freedom. Gandhi says:

Satyagraha can be used in political as well as domestic matters. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its durability and invincibility. It can be used by men, women and children alike (Geetha, 2004, p. 68).

The political methods adopted conventionally are based upon causing violence is precisely inclusive of hatred. The practice of *Satyagraha* involves suffering and attracts those who has the readiness and capacity to undergo suffering. *Satyagraha* is held to be of service as a supplement and stands as a substitute to law in some cases in the modern context based upon the rule of law.

Therefore, Gandhian *Satyagraha* is a method of protest made by the aggrieved party to take recourse to an appropriate non-violent action. Gandhian *Satyagraha* sets in new moral values, a new moral order in the state as it is founded on truth. Its application in the political arena would result in drastic changes in the political authority.

5.3.3 Gandhi's Views on Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience

Gandhi's *Satyagraha* movement is interpreted by some as non-cooperation movement because all his energies were directed towards attaining the visualized socio-political objectives by non-cooperating with the wrong-doers. But non-cooperation was employed by him to seek co-operation of the wrong-doers. According to Gandhi, "non-cooperation with an unjust socio-political order was as much a duty as co-operation with a just one" (Thakur, 1988, p. 172). Non-cooperation, however, was to be employed with a pure non-violent motive of seeking co-operation of the opponent.

Non-cooperation, however, was not a weapon for personal political ends only. It could still be very well applied in social fields for bringing out the desired result. Boycott and *hartals* were the important forms of non-cooperation and boycott had relevance both in social and political domains for undoing the wrong and getting things right. In Gandhi's view, the son has the full right of boycotting his unjust father for mending his ways and vice versa. He boycotted British goods and institutions not only because these were hindrances in the way of realizing *Swaraj* but also because he wanted to build up a self-reliant society. Boycott as a social technique, was employed by him to achieve economic quality. At times, he even inaugurated the bon-fire of foreign cloth. For him, non-cooperation was the best method of making the rich accept the theory of trusteeship. Gandhi took non-cooperation to be the best way of securing co-operation of the rich in society.

Gandhi postulated non-cooperation with a view to redress the wrongs. Any law must be moral to be obeyed. A person cannot follow an immoral law and it is constitutionally framed that one should not obey against the dictates of his conscience. Non-cooperation was, however, not a passive state of withdrawing co-operation only. Non-violent non-cooperation, for Gandhi,

comprised of two factors, negative and positive or destructive and constructive. This aspect of non-cooperation aimed at paralyzing the corrupt government. Gandhi recommended these alongside the program of boycotting, should go the program of constructive activities.

This technique of nonviolent non-cooperation promotes personal relationships and can stand as a way of resolving conflicts. Non-violent non-cooperation provides continuous appeal to the opponent with truth and justice to reduce hostility and thereby transforming inter-relation. The transformation of the opponent is possible through self-power manifested by self-pity and persuasion. In his speeches and writings, he quoted scriptures of the world to show that the duty of non-cooperation was strictly enjoined by all the religions. He describes *Bhagavad Gita* as “a gospel of non-cooperation between the forces of darkness and those of light” (Gandhi, *Young India*, 4.8.1920, p. 290). For him, the religious basis of non-cooperation make it a tool for enduring quality and add value to the armory of *Satyagraha*. Gandhi had deep respects for religion and very often he declares that he entered politics because it develops religious potential in him. Religion enjoins non-cooperation as it has ethical roots. Sometimes non-cooperation becomes as much a duty as co-operation since to co-operate with evil or even to remain neutral out of fear is basically inhuman.

Gandhi recommended non-cooperation as a technique of *Satyagraha* with a condition that it should have its roots in love, not in hate. He emphasizes that non-cooperation should never be practiced out of hate for the opponent but out a desire for the well being including that of the opponent. For Gandhi, it was a refined and modernized form of political protest. He employed this weapon for settling disputes, combating aggression and to bring about political change. It is a risky weapon though, and should be used, according to Gandhi, very cautiously and only as a last resort. A *Satyagrahi*, according to Gandhi, should obey social and political laws which are just; moral and democratic. At the same time, a *Satyagrahi* should never tolerate the unjust, brutal, undemocratic, violent and immoral State authorities; rather, disobey them civilly or non-violently and consequently should remain ready to suffer for the violation of laws as well. Therefore, a *Satyagrahi* should have the vision to judge the rightness and wrongness of laws. Gandhi adopted civil disobedience neither for finishing the Britisher’s nor for embarrassing the British Government but to deny their immoral authority on India.

Gandhi emphasized the adjective ‘civil’ than the substantive ‘disobedience’. Disobedience in itself is antisocial, unhealthy, immoral and destructive. However, disobedience combined with civility is not destructive and anti-social. Disobedience without civility, discipline, non-violence and discrimination is bound to end in sorrow. Civil disobedience, i.e., non-violent resistance, is bound to foster life, growth and freedom. Moreover, Civil-disobedience, as a method, can be employed by those only who have no tendency to commit criminal disobedience or violence. In the words of Gandhi:

Those alone are fit to offer civil disobedience who are above committing criminal disobedience or doing violence. A man cannot commit both civil and criminal disobedience at the same time even as he cannot be both temperate and furious at the same time and just as self-restraint is acquired only after one has been able to master his passions, so is the capacity for civil disobedience acquired after one has disciplined one-self in complete and voluntary obedience of the laws of the land (Prabhu, 2016, pp. 86-87).

Criminal disobedience, according to him, leads to social and political disintegration and anarchy and that’s why every State has to put down criminal disobedience by force. Mass civil disobedience means intensive and spontaneous action by the masses. Individual civil disobedience can be carried out at anytime but the atmosphere must not be productive of violence. Mass civil disobedience, on the contrary, cannot be carried out at any time but the prevailing atmosphere must be peaceful. Individual civil disobedience can be carried out by persons who are competent for it. Mass civil disobedience can be carried out by one and all. Individual civil disobedience can be started without any preparation. It does not require any leader. Mass civil disobedience requires previous preparation and is started by well-prepared and well-known leaders. In individual civil disobedience, everyone is a leader and follower at the same time. Everyone is an independent individual. Opposed to it, in mass civil disobedience, leadership by eminent persons is essential. Individual civil disobedience has limited interests. Mass civil disobedience has wider interests; and is always started for the interest of the mass. Civil disobedience first occurred to resist the South African authority and thereafter in India, on a

different occasion. A distinction should be made between violent disobedience and non-violent disobedience. Violent disobedience leaves the evil untouched. Non-violent disobedience or civil disobedience touches the core of the evil. Gandhi's was concerned with non-violent disobedience or civil disobedience.

A State is required to make laws in accordance with the needs of its citizens. If its laws are perpetually unwholesome, complete civil disobedience proves to be the only effective remedy. The need of *Satyagraha* in the form of civil disobedience arises only when immoral and unjust laws are imposed on citizens.

Gandhi started civil disobedience movement in South Africa against its immoral and unjust government. Civil disobedience in South Africa was mostly directed to end racial discrimination and to provide equal rights and privileges to the Indians. Owing to the alliance with European strikers, Gandhi suspended the civil disobedience movement of the indentured Indians there. Its suspension means a halt or stoppage for some time for additional preparation. The suspension is a strategic retreat for more thorough preparation of the *Satyagrahis*. Suspension is at times as much necessary as its continuation. The aim of mass civil disobedience of *Champaran*, *Kheda* and *Bardoli* was to meet particular grievances. Gandhi employed this method not only to meet particular problems, but also to end a rule which was eating the vitality of India. Gandhi took the leadership and adopted the method of civil disobedience for attaining *Swaraj*. He had thus to take recourse to civil disobedience a number of times for securing political justice and getting *Swaraj*.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, above discussed we can point out that political conflicts are considered a complex field of struggle. That is why efforts are often made to resolve conflicts by leaving politics behind. Gandhi tried to create a politics of choice so that politics could become a medium of cooperation and human upliftment, not conflicts. Decentralized democracy is consistent with non-violence as it governs the least where no violence or force is needed for the implementation of its policies. *Panchayat raj* as a political structure at the base of the village

level consists of five members with the functional ability of legislature, executive and judiciary. Gandhi used *Satyagraha*, a non-violent resistance, to fight against injustice, exploitation and for the redressal of grievances. Its application results in drastic changes in the political authority. Today *Satyagraha* has assumed a greater significance and relevance than before to fight against the evils that have beset the modern society. Gandhi suggested non-cooperation as a potent weapon to fight against the evil as a sacred duty of every individual. If the cause is good and the people are firm in their resolve and non-violently resist the evil and exploitation, success becomes a certainty.

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CHAPTER – 6

GANDHIAN RESOLUTION FOR ECONOMICAL CONFLICT

6.1 Gandhian Approach to Economical Equality

- 6.1.1 Problem and Solutions of Rural and Urban
- 6.1.2 The Role and Significance of *Khadi* for Economical Equality
- 6.1.3 Regeneration of Employment Opportunities through Gandhian Approach

6.2 Gandhian Solution for the Present Economical Crisis

- 6.2.1 Relevance of Gandhian Concept of *Swadeshi*
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CHAPTER-6

GANDHIAN RESOLUTION FOR ECONOMICAL CONFLICT

Modern economical conflicts and international tensions of capitalism and communalism alike prompted Gandhi to develop a new economic philosophy. The advances of Gandhi towards a new economical order are revolutionary and essentially constructive and not violent; at same time his ideas are evolutionary and not static. Gandhi was a true economist who could be called 'an economist of the people' since he formulated his economical ideas and principles within the context of a grand design for an ideal social order that would result into a non-violent, non-exploitative, humanistic and egalitarian society.

Elsewhere I have argued few basic concepts on economical crisis with the help of Gandhian view, these are: economical equality; problem and solution of rural and urban development; role and significance of *Khadi*; problem of unemployment; present economical crisis, relevance of *Swadeshi*; and role and relevance of trusteeship etc. Now I am going to discuss all the basic concepts and economical equality with the help of Gandhian philosophy.

6.1 Gandhian Approach to Economical Equality

By economical equality Gandhi meant only an approximate but not absolute equality. Gandhi stated that he would bring about economical equality through appealing to the reason of the people using the forces of love, and an appeal to stand against hate and finally transforming them to his point of view and setting himself as an example for the same by reducing himself to the poorest of the poor.

Gandhi believed that people who are talented would have more advantage to earn more and they would utilize their talents for the welfare of all the people. This could be done if a man identifies himself with the poor and through him, with all of the mankind in a spirit of renunciation and by broadening his outlook and rising himself above the selfish ends. If a person demands the equivalent of a family, it amounts to a violation of economical equality. The ideal of Gandhi's equal distribution was not be easily realised and he worked on with the *Marxian*

definition- ‘to each according to his need’, considered by Gandhi as the real definition of economical equality. Gandhi said:

A society based on non-violence cannot nurture any other ideal. We cannot perhaps be able to realise the goal, but we must bear it in mind and work unceasingly to near it. To the same extent as we progress towards our goal, we shall find contentment and happiness (Kelekar, 1960, p. 12).

Although Gandhi was concerned with the entire world and its problems, he considered it his duty to concentrate more of his attention on India and render his humble service for the amelioration of the condition of dependent India’s impoverished millions. For him the problem of rural and urban development was unemployment and its solutions lies with ‘*khadi*’.

6.1.1 Problem and Solution of Rural and Urban Development

The irony of the fact is that the developmental process of change operating in rural and urban areas, ‘since the inception of planning’, has neither ended poverty nor inequality; but on the contrary, it has at times unknowingly, promoted them along the process of growth in production and income. The question which arises is: how has the poverty and inequality survived despite launching a number of development programs and policy measures? A scientific answer to this question lies in a critical review of the history of policy formulations for rural and urban development and their working in the past. However, a gist of such a historical review may be suggestive to indicate that the strategies formulated for rural and urban development in the past were primarily ‘growth based’ and they could not comprehend ‘the social structure of class configurations and their relations in production and distribution’. As a result, the consequential process of development could not check these phenomena from aggravating in the process of growth in rural and urban areas.

It is thus increasingly becoming clear that any effective solution of these problems requires a fresh thinking of and search for - a new approach for understanding their ‘characteristic features’ with a view to formulating realistic policies for rural and urban

development. In view of this, an attempt has been made here to discuss the philosophical aspects of the Gandhian approach, ideals of development, concept and sources of development, and locate the guiding forces that operate behind organization of rural and urban development, and understanding the historical realities facing rural and urban India, to understand better the changing agrarian structure of our times.

In fact, his *Village Swaraj*, i.e., village republics, was the guiding force behind the Gandhian plan of rural development. In his organizational scheme of development, he wanted the system of *Panchayati Raj* to operate for performing the functions of legislation, judiciary and executive. That is why he said, “*Panchayat* can only function under the law of its own” (Das, 1979, p. 117). And he wanted all this for the translation of *Swaraj* into actual rural life, with the integration of individuals with village communities through the operation of the three-tier system of *Panchayati Raj* in rural India.

In a sense, he wanted villages to be self-administered and self-managed in all respects-including organization of rural development. But his scheme for organizing rural development was meant for satisfying ‘*minimum needs of the rural people*’ with a strong moral and spiritual base, and not by strengthening the material base of rural India, making it competitive with the present world. But when people living in the rural areas are either unemployed or underemployed and moreover without much hope, they migrate into big cities. The rural unemployment is partly due to the overpopulation also. And with ‘over-migration’, rural unemployment shifts into urban unemployment. For a poor man it is better to be even poorly paid than to remain idle.

Gandhi wanted the transformation of society by shifting the centre of gravity to the villages till everyone was employed and become self-sufficient. Gandhi did not foresee any possibility of full employment in urban areas for the immigrated rural masses. He had the knowledge of urban problems such as unemployment, and the menace of slums, etc. Also, when the rural population is not in full employment, there stays possibility for some unknown threat. Changes within the rural areas play a decisive role, and for any social activity village is the best beginning place.

To such nations which are highly urbanized or which believe that urbanization is the sign of progress, the theme of rural development might appear irrelevant yet same is not the case with Gandhi. He declared that, “if the villages perish, India will perish too” (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 29.8.1936, p. 226). Moreover, the establishment of village industries to solve the problem of growing unemployment is much relevant to the modern world, and especially to India. To generate generation in rural areas, emphasis is laid on village and cottage industries. The employment content of these industries cannot be disputed. The Gandhian concept of village and cottage industries is based on the objective of making self-sufficient villages. This implies that ‘*small scale of peasant production*’ should have market for those goods produced by such industries. Hence the employment-oriented village and cottage industries should use indigenous technology and must have domestic demand. Again, the operation of such industries requires a specific group of the population. The requirements of these industries indicate their importance in terms of fulfillment of the objective of employment and welfare, its success depends on the linkages created between small peasants and production of the goods produced by these industries, and the control and management of the same.

Thus, the three main targets in the economic plan are (i) the promotion of equitable and equal distribution of economic resources, (ii) provision of wider employment opportunities, and (iii) to secure the best use of capital and labour. Every village has to be self-sufficient and has to grow its own food and produce its own clothing. Several measures have to be taken up in the field of agricultural relations, land reform and cooperative farming. Much importance has been attached to the decentralised small villages and cottage industries. Gandhi held that:

The first step of relieving the peasants from the burden of revenue by suggesting improvements in terms of settlement and by assigning new roles to the intermediaries. Economic equality and self-sufficiency were to be the ultimate result of the economic pursuits through the application of the principles of trusteeship, cooperation and reintroduction of handicrafts like spinning and weaving (Sharma, 1970, pp. 38-39).

Gandhi said that the message of ‘the spinning wheel’ should be seen to lead a simple life and serve mankind. The great importance that Gandhi attached to the imitation of rural character and the need for the upliftment of rural life can be noted. Gandhi’s vision based on decentralisation of economic activities at the village level is to achieve the welfare of the rural population. Gandhi seeks to revive villages which are no more exploited. Gandhi referred to the urban industrial culture which had been corroding the simplicity of village life. He wanted to reduce the urban and village disparities. The optimum utilization of local resources cannot take place in the countries which are densely populated even though they have with the sophisticated technologies which do not respond to the local factors. Gandhi said that:

When the villages are sufficiently developed, there will be no dearth in them of men with a high degree of skill and artistic talent. If the present situation is taken into consideration, the villages are dung heaps and if properly designed for the progress, they will be like tiny gardens of Eden where highly intelligent live, whom no one could deceive or exploit. There is need to reconstruct the villages on these lines right now on permanent basis (Prabhu, 2016, pp. 99-100).

The problem before the villages is to find work for millions of villages. The condition of the villagers was not much different then, and Gandhi acquainted well with villagers and thereby understood their problems quite well. The Government has to find self-employment schemes with financial assistance and check for the proper utilization of the funds for these deserving poor and needy villagers. These people are increasingly losing interest in work; even for thinking or living. They are leading a living death. Gandhi held that:

In the villages some flour mills, rice mills, etc., have displaced the village labour, impoverishing the villagers, being encircled by the moneyed men. If this process continues for a longer time, the villages would be destroyed without any further effort (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 20.6.1936, p. 145).

Thus, it is clear that the application of the Gandhian model of development for rural and urban areas cannot work for providing social justice successfully without the existence of the

Gandhian type of economic and social framework for rural and urban India. However, the present agrarian situations prevailing in the rural and urban economy indicate that the Gandhian type of rural and urban development process cannot be initiated successfully. At the present juncture of historical development which India are experiencing, and the historical process of development and change taking place in the modern world which is influencing the Indian rural and urban development in a different direction. Moreover, given the present state of socio-politico- economic framework of the rural and urban society, the implementation of this model, will only benefit ‘the dominant section of the rural and urban population’ based upon the caste lines of the poor.

6.1.2 The Role and Significance of *Khadi* for Economical Equality

In his program of the economic building and national reconstruction, Gandhi gave utmost importance to *khadi* as a village industry. His wide coverage of the Indian villages and the personal contact he established with the vast masses that are neglected, living below the poverty line with abject conditions and scattered all over the nation, made him realise the significance of the revival of the village industries. Gandhi said:

Revival of the cottage industry, and not cottage industries, will remove the growing poverty. When once we have revived the one industry, all the other industries will follow.... I would make the spinning-wheel the foundation on which to build a sound village life. I would make the wheel the centre round which all other activities will revolve (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, pp. 501-502).

Gandhi recognized that mills cannot grow like mushrooms as no one has felt the failure of the spinning wheel. Highlighting the significance, the role and hope of the spinning-wheel of the masses, Gandhi pointed out:

The masses lost their freedom such as it was, with the loss of the *Charkha*. The *Charkha* supplemented the agriculture of the villages and gave it dignity. It was the friend and solace of the widow. It kept the villagers from idleness. For the

Charkha included till the anterior and posterior industries- ginning, carding, warping, sizing, dyeing and weaving. These in their turn kept the village carpenter and the blacksmith busy. The *Charkha* enabled the seven hundred thousand villages to become self- contained. With the exits of the *Charkha* went the other village industries, such as the oil press. Nothing took the place of these industries. Therefore, the villages were drained of their varied occupations and their creative talent and what little wealth these brought them (Kripalni, 1960, p. 101).

Among the major economical problems confronting the Indian nation in particular and the world in general, the problem of unemployment takes precedence over the other problems like a canker corroding the entire gamut of the economy. Gandhi said:

The millions must have a simple industry to supplement agriculture. Spinning was the cottage industry years ago, and if the millions are to be saved from starvation, they must be enabled to introduce spinning in their homes, and every village must repossess its own weaver (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 506).

Therefore, *khadi* is not merely of economic importance but also possess some cultural value. Gandhi worked for an infusion of new life into the individual to make him self-dependent and resourceful. Gandhi strongly felt that, hand spinning when universalized would teach the population about the dignity of labour. If hand spinning was done by everyone, the gulf would be bridged and in its place a bond of unity would be established between the masses, all classes, all castes and creeds. This was the social value that Gandhi found in hand spinning. Gandhi realised that industrialism, along with the need for raw materials and markets, gave rise to - imperialism, international conflict and war. All these reasons: economic, cultural, social and political, led Gandhi to establish the *khadi* movement. Gandhi said that:

The spinning-wheel enables us to identify ourselves with cores. The millionaires imagine that money can bring them anything in the world. But it is not so. At any moment death might come and snuff them out... Losing one's life...is not the same thing as shedding 'self' (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 501).

He referred to *Adam Smith*, the great economist and the writer of the outstanding book '*The Wealth of Nations*' in which he mentioned about certain principles governing the economic phenomena. *Adam Smith* described some of the other things that constitute the turbulent factor preventing economic laws from playing freely. Major human elements are found in those disturbing factors. Gandhi said that:

The *Charkha* enabled the seven hundred thousand villages to become self-contained. With the exit of the *Charkha* went the other village industries, such as the oil press. Nothing took the place of these industries. Therefore, the villages were drained of their varied occupations and their creative talent and what little wealth these brought them.... Hence, if the villages are to come into their own, the most natural thing that suggests itself is the revival of the *Charkha* and all it means (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 507).

Today machine industries being run with electricity have gradually usurped the cottage industries which produce the basic products needed for daily life resulting in large-scale unemployment. The consumers are then habituated to prefer the machine made goods to hand-made goods. This situation has forced the unemployed labour to offer their goods at lower prices, and that has then evolved into a system of politics and economics sustained by such exploitation of weaker masses. This tendency paved the way for the further accentuation of the unemployment position and also gave rise to numerous other sources of exploitation. Gandhi said:

The need of a simple industry to the millions to supplement agriculture. In the past spinning was the cottage industry. If millions are to be saved from starvation, they must be able to reintroduce spinning in their homes and every village must repossess its own weavers (Prabhu, 2016, p. 115).

By being an example himself, Gandhi encouraged people to wear *khadi* which is relevant in the Indian context even today. When people take to wearing *khadi*, and as the *khadi* industry is

mainly rural, employment is generated there. Not only this, it will also benefit the farmers as they would sell the cotton produced directly to the cottage industry situated in the villages itself. If the middle men are avoided, the farmers will surely be happier since the distressing factor of the farmers as well as weavers is reduced and thereby, suicide cases will come down significantly as well.

6.1.3 Regeneration of Employment Opportunities through Gandhian Approach

The problem of unemployment is the most burning problem of the world and in comparison to other countries of the world - the problem is more acute in India, and is surely undermining the vitality of its people. This problems are numerous, namely - the direct or indirect creation of centralized big factories, foreign-made cheap articles, labour saving machines, private ownership, over population, lack of local markets for consumption, consumers attitude of purchasing mill articles or foreign-made low priced articles, capitalism, land monopoly, excessive national expenditure for manufacturing big machines, fragmentation of land ownership, export and import material goods, climate, inequality in social status, early marriage, caste system, joint family, defective educational systems, short-sighted political ideas, lack of manual labour, etc. Indian societies based on materialistic civilisation of the west are handicapped and inadequate in solving this problem partly or wholly. Capitalistic civilisation concentrates wealth in some persons and depends on raw-material producers, ready-made-things producers, labourers, capital investors, clerks, coolies, railway men, shippers, advertisers, agents, salesman, shop keepers and consumers.

Machines, no doubt, produce things more in quantity and better in quality than hands, but cannot solve the existing problem of unemployment, which is repugnant to our moral conscience. Gandhi was not against machines as such, but against their abuses. Instead of solving the problem of unemployment they increase it more and more. Machines which displace human labour are not fit for India where the hands are many and need employment. It may be good for other countries where the hands are a few.

It is an evil, a curse and a disease for those countries where the problem of unemployment is acute. In such countries, machines should be used to make things which hands cannot make and where it will not displace labourers who are gainfully employed. As for an example can be taken of 'Singer's Sewing Machine', what this machine does can neither be made by hands nor it displaces the human labour entirely. 'Machines are always to be treated as servants, not as masters'. Instead of serving humanity, however, machines have been used to destroy humanity. Machines give birth to exploitation, starvation, unemployment and misery. They rule over us and the works of millions are done in a day. In the words of Gandhi, "Machinery exists for man, and not vice versa, and must be made subservient to the well-being of the people and should not be allowed to become their master" (Narayan, 1968, p. 318).

Unless and until the craze for machinery is not put an end to the problem of unemployment cannot be solved. Moreover, big machines are complicated and uneconomic. They require long training and big financial resources. Large scale machines destroy our natural resources like mineral, oil, coal, iron, etc., which are limited in supply and if once burnt can never be brought back into existence. Machines have uses and abuses. In the words of Gandhi:

So long as machinery promotes the happiness and the prosperity of the masses as well as the classes it is a beneficent agent. But when it leads to unemployment and starvation of millions, as is happening in the highly industrialised countries of the West, it becomes a curse (Thakur, 1988, p. 82).

A society, which is dependent on machines, can neither be non-violent nor can solve the problem of unemployment. It can neither provide work to all nor can it develop the human character. A non-violent society will emerge only when it provide work to all. Gandhi has written, "No labour is too mean for one who wants to earn an honest penny. The only thing is the readiness to use the hands and feet that God has given us" (Saraswati, 2002, p. 67).

Gandhi was against big machines which save human labour; bring about unemployment, idleness and starvation. Instead of such machines, he was in favour of simple tools and instruments which are easily made, easily purchased, locally repaired and can be easily handled

by all. The mechanical civilisation of today considers man to be secondary and machines to be primary while Gandhi considered man as primary and machines as secondary to man. Moreover, the former attitude can never, while the latter would certainly solve the problem of unemployment.

Gandhi considered present education system which is based upon Western civilisation as very defective in the sense that it does not and can never provide employment to all along with the demerit of making our society anxious for armaments. And its advances are utilized for manufacturing new and heavy machines, many of them for destructive purposes bringing the country on the brink of unemployment, starvation, pauperism and disaster. Socio-economic inequality, unemployment and wars are produced by the present day educational system and technical education is getting imparted mainly for the purpose of manufacturing big machines. In short, aimless education is being imparted to the students in the universities and such education is neither self-supporting nor has it any use for the society.

For remedying the evils of the present day education and for uprooting the deep rooted monster of unemployment, a right kind of education with an overhaul change in the present day syllabi was considered to be essential by Gandhi. The syllabi, according to Gandhi, should impart more practical than theoretical training on students- a training that is more by hands than by books. The syllabi of this sort would provide more employment opportunities.

To cast out unemployment and poverty, Gandhi suggested necessary training of village industries and handicrafts to both children and adult. Gandhi's suggestion of bread labour plays perhaps the greatest role in meeting the problem of unemployment. According to his principle of bread labour, everyone has to depend for bread on manual labour compulsorily. Everybody will engage himself in some productive manual labour. Gandhi emphasized that 'as soon as people realise this fact, there will be no more unemployment'. Agriculture and village industries provide much opportunity for bread labour. They provide employment to local men and women. They are the backbone of non-violent society and state. In the words of Gandhi:

The revival of village industries for the production of articles of everyday use and the utilization of the limitless capital in the form of labour now lying unused offers the best and the only means for the achievement of this goal (employment) (Prabhu, 2016, p. 51).

But agriculture alone cannot meet all the necessary demands of life- food, clothing and shelter. Proper agriculture can simply solve the problem of food. People today are mostly dependent on agriculture for all their needs. Agriculture gives seasonal employment, not a full year employment. Therefore, village industries should be adopted as subsidiary to agriculture for the utilization of residual time. In the words of Gandhi:

It is being increasingly realised that the provision of progressively fuller employment and the attainment of full employment in this country is possible only through the intensive development of village industries (Kothari, 1957, p. 7).

This suggestion of Gandhi is only for those who are unemployed or under-employed. Gandhi would only ask those who are suffering from unemployment and poverty and ask some industries to add little to their meager resources. He was also of the opinion that the minor industries should not replace the major industries rather they should supplement each other. Among the various village industries *khadi* comes first as subsidiary to agriculture. Along with the revival of *khadi* all great and small rural industries are to be revived to attain the economic goal. The revival of *khadi* can solve the problem of cloth- one of the primary needs of human being. Mill-cloth and foreign-cloth are uneconomic and made from that machinery which creates the problem of unemployment. To solve the problem of unemployment and economic inequality 'spinning' was introduced by Gandhi. As a result, *khadi* put an end to exploitation, misery, poverty and starvation. But *khadi* alone cannot solve the problem of unemployment. Therefore, the other existing or dead village industries should also be revived. In the words of Gandhi:

But *khadi* is not the only such struggling industry. I therefore suggest to you to direct your attention and efforts to all the small scale minor, unorganised industries that they are today in need of public support (Kothari, 1957, p. 7).

Besides *khadi*, all great and small organised and unorganised industries like silken and woolen cloth industry, match-making, shoe-making, paper-making, rope-making, pottery-making, soap-making, tailoring, carpentry, needle work, embroidery, printing, works of art, metal industries, etc., should also be revived for achieving the goal of employment.

The above account presents a picture of the Gandhian way of solving the acute problem of unemployment.

6.2 Gandhian Solution for the Present Economical Crisis

Gandhi was one of those rare geniuses' in whom economists, political scientists, sociologists and philosophers all became one. The product of his genius was a vast system of thought, composed of many sub-systems despite the difficulty to look at any subsystems, semantics, for example, in isolation. To use an analogy, the total system of Gandhian thought was like a vast reservoir from which many streams flowed out, each with individual characteristics, conditioned by the peculiarities of the terrain but all preserving a consistency with the essential qualities of the resources at the source. His economics, especially his welfare economics, clearly reflects this consistency. The approach of Gandhi towards the economic order is revolutionary and essentially is - constructive but not violent; and evolutionary but not static. Particularly, his advocacy of *Swadeshi* and trusteeship was centered on the principles of economic self-reliance.

Now, we will discuss about these two principles regarding the relevance of present economical crisis.

6.2.1 Relevance of Gandhian Concept of *Swadeshi*

Swadeshi is the most significant concept. A modern name for this would be 'self-reliance' or economic independence. It is a positive force to fight neo-colonialism which has an increasing grip over the Indian economy and society. *B. N. Ganguli* said that:

From the economic angle *Swadeshi* meant economic self- reliance, economic independence, reconstruction of the rural economy, laying the foundation of an Indian economy on the basis of a new kind of consumers, preferences, going back to the masses of the rural population and organizing them to fight the evils of poverty and foreign oppression (Ganguli, 1973, p. 281).

According to Gandhi, *Swadeshi* meant three things. Production for exchange comes in the next circle. The contact between one village and the other and also between villages and cities is established through the production for exchange; with the limits of production for use. Gandhi held that:

A votary of *Swadeshi* would dedicate himself to the service of his immediate neighbours as his first duty involving the exclusion or even sacrifice of the interests of the rest which would be rather apparent. When a person on the other hand runs to the ends of the earth to offer his service being lured by the ‘distant scene’ fails in his duty towards his neighbours (Narayan, 1968, p. 282).

For Gandhi, the first duty of man is towards his neighbour. It does not mean hatred towards foreigners or favouritism towards fellow countrymen. There are clear limits to our ability to serve. In fact, in *Swadeshi* there is no place for distinction between serving oneself or people. He held that:

People must boycott the foreign yarn for the sake of the starving masses living in enforced idleness to enable them to spin and weave in their cottage for their living. Gandhi was afraid that several indigenous (*Swadeshi*) commodities in the market are in the danger of disappearance due to lack of patronage. Further the law of country’s progress demands its inhabitants to give preference for the products locally made (Desai, 1932, p. 62).

Gandhi said that *Swadeshi* is a universal law and self-reliance and self-sufficiency in *Swadeshi* is not in isolation. *Swadeshi* is not to be confused with the narrow sense of protecting small-scale indigenous industries but to be used in a much broader sense. Gandhi said:

India was strong and able, India would send out to the world her treasures of art and health-giving spices, but would refuse to send out opium or intoxicating liquors although the traffic may bring much material benefit to India (Gandhi, 1929, p. 345).

Therefore, the aim of the *Swadeshi* movement was to organise the rural masses to make them economically and socially self-reliant.

6.2.2 Role and Relevance of Gandhian Concept of Trusteeship

Gandhi's principle of trusteeship means the use of all, for the good of all. Gandhi said that it is not only wealth but one's physical strength, talent and intelligence which should be used for the service of all. Their economic system is based on individual non-possession. When Gandhi was pursuing his legal studies in England, he obtained the idea of trusteeship. Incidentally he found the same idea present in the *Gita* also. Further, *Pyare Lal* mentioned:

Gandhi based his trusteeship doctrine on a celebrated verse in the ancient Hindu philosophical scripture. *Ishopanishad* which says, all that is in the universe is pervaded by God, renounce first, therefore, in order to enjoy, covet not any body's riches (Pyarelal, 1956, p. 624).

The modern economics gives utmost importance to the capital. Gandhi was not against the capitalists but against capitalism. It is immoral for the capitalists to rob the fruits of the worker's labour. Instead of asking for the fulfillment of their legitimate demands, it is equally immoral for labourers to paralyze industries and tyrannize the capitalists with their exaggerated demands. And he strongly held that, 'no society can thrive and progress following the methods

of hatred or violence in any form'. Gandhi wanted a union between capital and labour and a harmonious co- operation between these two.

Gandhi again asserted that, "I am inviting those people who consider themselves as owners today to act as trustees, i.e., owners, not in their own right, but owners in the right of those whom they have exploited" (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 326). A person should know about the evils and dangers of the accumulation of wealth while realizing that it is in the larger interests of the community rather than for mere personal comforts. Gandhi said:

The theory of trusteeship is that there is no make-shift, and certainly no camouflage. I am confident that this theory would survive other theories as it has religious sanction behind it. When the possessor of wealth has not acted up to this theory, it does not prove its falsity but proves the weakness of the wealthy (Narayan, 1968, p. 296).

Further, the doctrine of equal distribution can only be realised non-violently since resorting to any violence to make the wealthy dispossessed of their possessions would not benefit the society. Gandhi states:

The solution to this riddle by relying on non-violent, non-cooperation and civil disobedience as the right and infallible means. If this fact is spread among the poor, they would learn to free themselves by non-violent means from the inequalities which crushed them and kept them on the verge of starvation (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 20.8.1940, p. 260).

Thus each individual can fulfill the needs of the society by being a trustee for himself and for others. It can remove all inequalities at both individual and social level and contribute to the welfare of all.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, as we know that Gandhi was a true economist who stood for the well-being of the masses. His crusade against exploitation, poverty, recognition of an economic system, upholding of the moral value system; and the introduction of trusteeship to establish economical equality for poverty alleviation program are enough evidences to revolutionize any economical field. Gandhi wanted to bring about a complete change in the economical field and to establish economical equality through his non-violent method of trusteeship. His *khadi* seeks to revive the economy primarily to the needs of the village and make its people self-sufficient, remove unemployment and poverty, given it gets necessary training in village industries and handicrafts. Gandhi's advocacy of *Swadeshi* and trusteeship centers on the principles of economic self-reliance. The appeal of reason and love helps to create an environment conducive to such awareness and self-purification. Gandhi held that non-violence could play a big role in establishing economical equality in which each individual can fulfill the needs of the society by becoming a trustee for himself and for others.

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CHAPTER – 7

APPLICATION OF GANDHIAN METHOD TO MODERN TIME CONFLICT

7.1 Reoccurring Global Issues and Possible of Gandhian Solutions

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CHAPTER-7

APPLICATION OF GANDHIAN METHOD TO MODERN TIME CONFLICT

In our country, while we are living in a state of almost constant tension and unorganised violence since the advent of independence, yet we still hope to resolve them by treating it as purely a law and order problem and thereby seeking a reform in the police system but experience shows us otherwise; that a 10 percent increase in the police force results in crime and violence increase from 100 percent to 1200 percent that is because the roots of violence does not lie in our psyche alone, but as much in our religious, social, political, economic structure.

Perhaps, we suffer from a sense of bloated pride about India based upon its rich tradition of peace and non-violence as preached by its global figures like *Buddha*, *Mahavira*, Gandhi and *Vinoba* etc. In the world today we have all kinds of conflicts including war tensions, Naxalism, terrorism, communalism, casteism, regional and linguistic disputes which has become a permanent feature of our so called 'civilian life'. Therefore, Gandhian principles are more relevant than ever, especially for Indian society today. It is worthwhile however, to know till what extent Gandhian approach is being gradually adopted all over the world. His philosophy on truth and non-violence has been accepted by many world politicians as a viable source of strength for resolving conflicts; his methods are relevant not only in the present times but for the future as well.

7.1 Reoccurring Global Issues and Possible of Gandhian Solutions

The modern world is confronted with an unprecedented crisis caused by factors that are interconnected - violence, terrorism, ecological imbalance, mounting tensions and wars. Gandhi demonstrated the practical applicability of non-violence to all areas of human endeavor, and its usefulness to the whole world. The techniques of nonviolence are a way of life for humanity at large. It helps to achieve lasting global peace. The concept of non-violence, as explained by Gandhi, assumes ecological importance too for its sustainability. It discards exploitation and

stands as an alternative to violence and terrorism while enabling people to live in harmony with nature.

7.1.1 Modern World and the Problem of Terrorism

When we are not particular about the moral nature of the means, we easily assume falsity and fraud, deceit and dishonesty, opportunism and violence. But the immoral means that we adept to achieve success too quickly demoralize us morally and lead us to view humans as a means rather than the end. This is to forget that man is the supreme consideration and violence deadens our finer feelings and sensitivities, making us suspicious of everyone around us; engendering counter-violence, revenge and counter-revenge and war. The growth of heavy Industrialization too appeared to Gandhi as a great source of menace for the realization of basic moral values in the human society. In other words, the modern industrial world misguides its youth that disrespects human values. They are discontented and frustrated and as they are desperate - they resort to all evils. Further, for their sustenance and lack of income, they opt for crimes. Several evils have beset the modern industrial world as it is vulnerable to them. The young mind however, does not tolerate injustice and exploitation for long and eventually rebel against the established order.

In modern times, some people resort to theft, kidnapping, maiming and murder for their material gain. Violence and terrorism bring down not only themselves but also mankind. It is counterproductive and invokes the beast in us. There are many examples of inciting terror by other means ranging from killing children, women and innocent passengers in plane explosions or through transistor bombs. Riots arise due to social, industrial and political reasons. Gandhi's objections to the school of violence were deep in nature. For him, to see human nature being dragged into the mud was not pleasing but for those who take pleasure and pride in killing innocent persons, for Gandhi they are never brave but cowards of the first order. Gandhi said:

My experience teaches me that truth can never be propagated by doing violence. Those who believe in the justice of their cause have needed to possess boundless patience (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 181).

Unlike Gandhi's time, which recorded sporadic incidents of violence and terrorism, in modern times terrorism is taking place in an organised manner on a much larger scale and at an increasing rate. This is mainly because violence is beneficial, for example, political blackmail has immediate consequences. In addition, terrorists convicted of crimes are released in the short term and often at a large ransom. Furthermore, terrorist ideas travel much faster than terrorism itself, partly due to the latest modern communication networks, although its underlying politics is not necessarily violent, however, can carry the seeds of violence.

Terrorists, of course, are influenced by certain notions of nobility, but how their plans are carried out is often accompanied by intense hatred and a sense of vengeance, impatience and anger, with the ultimate goal of killing innocent people or committing other wrongdoing with methods and thus distanced itself from the sympathy and support of the people. Therefore, terrorism can never become a mass-movement or does not invite mass-involvement. *Hind Swaraj* was written by Gandhi, "in answer to the Indian school of violence" (Gandhi, 2017, p. 62). particularly defining 'who is a terrorists?' There is need to understand the problems of the terrorists, and their weak points by studying their operations and techniques to devise out alternative methods to solve their problems amicably and non-violently. Terrorists often extort money on the promise of engaging in political blackmail for the release of their fellow terrorists in prisons; and they sometimes seek to amend laws that are already in force to suit their convenience. The purpose of urban guerrillas is to incite repression, especially to form a government that harassed people by creating a sense of fear and insecurity by conducting searches, curfews, arrests and detentions. Gandhi said, "Non-violence is a slow, long-drawn out process but it is the swiftest, the world has seen, for it is the surest" (Kumarappa, 1955, p. 75).

The total numbers of terrorists constitute a very small group. Therefore, it is necessary to mobilize international cooperation against them. He was convinced and had a right to believe that, "those who will rise to power by murder will certainly not make the nation happy"⁴ (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 12.4.1942, p. 199). The history of post-independence India has clearly shown that terrorist movements in India can never be successful. Terrorism differs from violence in the sense that it is a special type of organised violence. Gandhi expressed, "A terrorist is not a

warrior who fights openly and bravely. All their actions are secret and deceptive. They attack like thieves and kill even innocent persons” (Gandhi, *Young India*, 2.1.1930, p. 81).

The separatists exercise violence and terrorism to overthrow the government or pressurize the foreign governments to accede to their demands (for independence). In fact, terrorism is designed to terrorize innocent people by the use of organised violence as a psychological and political weapons, as well as other strategies aimed at overthrowing the democratic system and keeping the population under fear-based control are also included. The success or failure of terrorism depends upon the nature of the society and its socio-economic and political conditions and thereafter, deciding how to deal with it. Gandhi said:

For me popular violence is as much an obstruction in our path as the Government violence. Indeed, I can combat the Government violence more successfully than the popular. For one thing, in combating the latter, I should not have the same support as in the former (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 184).

Gandhi stood for the emergence of a non-violent decentralised democracy that promotes the full growth of all its individuals by promoting - fellow feeling, mutual trust and cooperation. When the government is non-violent and all the people are involved in the affairs of the state, it results in a healthy and dignified interdependence as well as protecting the freedom and independence of all its individuals. Everybody is a ruler in such a state, without being a hindrance to his neighbour. In such a type of government terrorism does not flourish unlike amongst the authoritarian and ruthless governments which work by force and violence. On the contrary, a liberal decentralised democracy with its multi-party system operates based upon accepting universal suffrage, followed by freedom of expression. In such a system terrorism would not flourish and, even if any incidents happen, they would be easily be suppressed or controlled. Gandhi says:

The non-violent ways will be found to be the shortest even though it may appear to be the longest to our impatient nature. The way of peace insures internal growth and stability (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 199).

The act of terrorism and revolutionary activities are suicidal to the progress of the nation. By the heinous act of violence, the terrorist drag down themselves along with the dignity of entire mankind and thereby violates the human rights. They stand as a great threat to the human security in the modern times. Even if the terrorists justify their act as the expediency or for a good cause, yet Gandhi never accepted such acts. He clearly stated that, “I do not regard killing or assassination or terrorism as good in any circumstances whatsoever” (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 184).

Gandhi did not repose his faith on terrorism and gives a solution as an alternative method to terrorism without relying upon any exercise of violent methods. When the cause is reasonable and just for the common good, an inclusion of non-cooperation and civil disobedience based upon the well organised and well defined non-violent principle is recommended. It is assumed as having more potential- morally, and as extremely effective for the removal of unjust and unscrupulous elements including all other evils that have beset the modern world.

7.1.2 Environmental Crisis and Challenges to Possible Gandhian Solutions

Such an environment is unique where no organism lives without affecting. In the lap of nature, all organisms, including human being, are flowered and flourished. Culture has a direct and indirect impact on the environment and thus creating an ‘environment culture’ where human is friendly with culture and nature, and where the development of ‘cultural environment’ and ‘human culture’ are its dynamics. Life on Earth is possible as a result of mutual coordination of the Earth's unique structure and other natural causes. In ancient times human relationship with the environment was based on mutual cooperation. But today man neglects the environment in the name of progress.

Today, environmental pollution is a grave concern. Environment provides us with all amenity services and certainly not to pollute or destroy it in return. This obviously means that we have to enjoy environmental quality, without causing environmental pollution. The environment can be defined as: “the circumstance or condition that surround an organism or group of organism, or the complex of social or cultural conditions that affect an individual or community.

Since human inhabit the nature world as well as the built or technological, social and culture world, all constitute important parts of our environment” (Purohit & Agarwal, 2004, p. 9).

Environment is everything that is around. The concern for environment is rooted in our past. It is not a new idea to prevent the environment for survival of the human being. Nature is being tampered by man for its safety and progress, from which imbalance is born. This danger can be seen in all areas of land, water, air, mineral vegetation etc. Environmental problem is one of the most complex challenges of the 21st century. The wrong concept of development has not only kept humans at the door of destruction but by exploiting nature, is further creating a crisis of environment which is very dangerous. Human should have a sense of charity like the forest. *Lord Buddha* has said, “The forest does not demand anything, but it provides strength and protection to every creature, but it also provides shadow to it which comes to bite it with the axe” (Roy, 2006, p. 69).

Environment acts as a supplier of resources and energy, on the one hand, and on the other hand, acts like a sink, to receive wastes from economic activities. If these wastes are biologically or chemically processed, then it will not draw the attention of environmentalists, but most of the wastes are not bio-degradable. These wastes will lie in the environment in its original form for years together. They create problems like genetic mutations, acid rain, and depletion of ozone layer, global warming and finally imbalance in the eco-system. Moreover, the unprecedented growth of population, increasing urbanization and rising standards of living have all lead to the state of environmental stress furthered through increase in both the amount and variety of waste generated. In *Young India*, He writes that:

In my opinion after worshiping the cow, she has done wonderful help in the development of mercy religion; it is a practical use to keep faith in the unity of the animal and therefore the sanctity (Gandhi, *Young India*, 20.10.1927, p. 277).

From this it is clear that any creature who believes in the unity of all living beings will certainly believe in the coexistence of animals, birds, rivers, mountains, and rest of the wild. Gandhi was much aware of the importance of campaign for tree planting in the name of

environmental protection, something which is much common today. Thereby while expanding the scope of religion, he has included the Tree worship in it. In *Young India*, he writes:

When we honour any book as sacred, we are idolaters. The meaning of going to temple or mosques with the same purity or worship is also the same. I do not see any harm in all these things (Gandhi, *Young India*, 26.9.1929, p. 107).

Gandhi's production method desires to be capable of satisfying the physical needs of the human and at the same avoid any exploitation of nature. Gandhi was a man of religious nature. And in every group of nature, he looks at God's pattern. Religion's approach to God nature is unique in Gandhi's environment views. There is tradition of worshiping nature in India. Ideas like Gandhi's indigenous self-reliance and non-violence have become indispensable for both humanity and the environment today. He said that to understand the environmental conditions, there would be a natural relationship with nature. He has said this many times in his articles that mankind should find solutions to their health in nature itself. It is also notable that Gandhi was against the environmental damage in the name of science development. In the contemporary times, there is an industrial structure to the development of science, wherein lies both the destruction of natural resources and overall pollution of nature. Gandhi mentioned that:

In the good olden days people used to work in the open air which they liked much but in the modern times people work in the heavy industries at the risk of their lives in their most dangerous occupations to their great disadvantage (Gandhi, 2017, pp. 36-37).

Gandhi stated that industrial society is not ecologically sustainable and it has come true. He held that the industrial civilisation is all evil and is a disease which is by no means indispensable for the lasting welfare of mankind. Gandhi said that:

Where there is machinery there are large cities. Honest physicians will tell you that where means of artificial locomotion have increased the health of the people has suffered (Gandhi, 2017, p. 96).

In fact, the whole problem of environmental hazards, degradation, is mainly due to Industrialization and urbanization which adversely affects the climatic conditions, causing terrible losses like, living in the slums. Growing urban population poses many problems like shortage of housing, safe drinking water, lack of drainage facilities, waste disposal etc. With the increase in population and increasing demand for food and other essential commodities, the amount of waste generated by each household every day has increased. And even the simple matter of garbage disposal becomes a problem. Gandhi conceived this and in the early 1910s said:

Nature works unceasingly according to her own laws, but man violates them constantly. In different ways and at different times nature tells man that there is nothing in the world is not subject to change. And yet extraordinary occurrence startles us and sets us thinking (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 16.9.1929, p. 344).

Proper ecological understanding should be promoted where people think globally and act locally. There is a need to provide the impetus for non-violent and radical, social and economic transformation throughout the world so as to put an end to the destruction of the environment. It is appropriate time for every individual to think of achieving a state of harmony with nature. Ecology is to live in harmony with the living organisms. It is a positive balance of multi-dimensional matrix or web of interdependent life and growth. Man has to make the proper use of the land for land is the greatest material resource. The modern man does not make proper use of the land, for getting the reality that he is the child of nature, and he acts as the master of the nature.

Violence and exploitation are involved in the large-scale industries resulting in its evils of pollution and heavy consumption of non-renewable natural resources. Gandhi believed in adopting a simple and ennobled life involving non-violent technology in small-scale and cottage industries as a solution to the growing human problems and as a part of human duty towards the groaning world. What the people in the modern times need is a different lifestyle - a lifestyle to live nobly, a simple life in harmony with nature with the spirit of conservation of natural

resources; and by developing a non-violent technology in the place of heavy industries which reduces employment of the poor and needy and enhances the problem of pollution to a greater extent. Small industries can help to preserve the sanctity of the environment while saving the humanity from the environmental crisis, and enabling it to meet the environmental challenges ‘non-violently’ as well as keeping the ecology sustainable.

Thus, I end by saying that creating environmental awareness is important, essentially among the slum dwellers by reducing the problems of safe disposal on the Gandhian lines, i.e., keep one’s home and surroundings clean.

7.1.3 Role of Industrialization in Modern Civilisation: A Gandhian Perspective

Gandhi tried successfully to reverse the course of the national movement towards villages and therefore he challenged the very basis of modern civilisation which was responsible for impoverishing the Indian villages. The basis of modern civilisation, according to Gandhi, lay in modern technology; hence his entire critique was focused at it. Gandhi said, “If modern civilisation stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it satanic” (Kripalani, 1960, p. 161). He felt strongly that non-violence and factory civilisation were incompatible and they could not co-exist. Gandhi said:

Formerly, men worked in open air only as much as they liked. Now thousands of workmen meet together and, for the sake of maintenance, work in factories or mines. Their condition is worse than that of beasts. They are obliged to work, at the risk of their lives, at most dangerous occupations, for the sake of millionaires..... (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 297).

In his philosophical thought Gandhi elaborated on the nature and civilisation of *Swaraj*. He firmly believed that only a newly innovated and renewed Indian civilisation could achieve *Swaraj*. Gandhi mentioned, “Modern Civilisation takes note neither of morality nor of religion”

(Gandhi, 2017, p. 29). *Gandhi* made a clear distinction between self-government in the form of *Swaraj* and self-government or home rule in the form of *Swaraj*. Gandhi said that:

I do believe that if India has patience enough to go through the fire of suffering and to resist any unlawful encroachment upon her own civilisation which, imperfect though it undoubtedly is, has hitherto stood the ravages of time, she can make a lasting contribution to the peace and solid progress of the world (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 299).

Therefore, Gandhi relentlessly opposed the increasing use of machines. He knows that it sows the seeds of exploitation both within and outside the country; and might give rise to new forms of violence, class struggle and misery since an unchecked upper edge might loot from the majority while providing unwarranted leisure to some; it would promote unemployment, recession, unequal distribution of wealth, war and imperialism. Gandhi further explained that:

Thus, for instance, I would welcome any day a machine to straighten crooked spindles. Not that blacksmiths will cease to make spindles; they will continue to provide spindles, but when the spindle goes wrong, every spinner will have a machine to get it straight. Therefore, replace greed by love and everything will be all right (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 301).

Industrial civilisation has also led to loss of community factor and social relationship bringing social morality at the lowest ebb. The entire society becomes ill functional. There is a conflict between labour and capital, bureaucracy and technocracy and so on, whereas, true industrial revolution is the fountain-spring of prosperity in which production becomes large scale and cheap. But on the other hand, it had resulted in massive unemployment, constant conflict between labour and capital, international organizations of profiteers, international market competitions etc. Drinking, prostitution and gambling- these are three curses of industrial civilisation. Our society becomes crime-prone and our attitude becomes most mechanical. It does not care for noble human values. There is no place for tender human feelings. Machine qua machine becomes the real source of corruption and de-civilisation of modern man. Philosophies

of modern technology are mutually contradictory. On one hand, it has removed drudgery of cruel, inhuman conditions of manual work, and on the other hand, it makes human labour more monotonous. He says, “Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilisation; it represents a great sin” (Gandhi, 2017, p. 61). His aim was not to destroy the machine but to ban it.

Hence it is useless to call him a faddist. In short, Gandhi’s theory of machinery is, ‘machine is for man, not man for machine. Machine is after all machine. It must not become the master of man’.

7.2 Gandhian Model of Development

In the advanced countries, the development has resulted in excessive consumption and multiplication of wants. The exploitation of natural resources and pollution of the environment have reached such dangerous levels that the very survival of humanity on this planet is threatened. It should be distribution and conserve natural resources, especially of the non-renewable type. In short, development should be need-based, endogenous, self-reliant and ecologically sound.

The plan of development envisaged by Gandhi was contrary to the creation of a powerful combat capability. Being an advocate of truth and non-violence, he could not approve of modern armament and war for defense or victory. According to Gandhi, life itself has to be patterned in such a way as to render the very necessity of war outmoded and obsolete. But so long as this menace amidst the very vitals of the social fabric is not finally destroyed, no improvement in the conditions of man can be brought about and hopes of a better world will always remain a distant dream. Writing in *Harijan*, 1946, Gandhi held that:

I believe that independent India can only discharge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting simple but ennobled life by developing her thousands of cottages and living at peace with the world. All the graces of life are possible only when we learn the art of living nobly (Prabhu, 2016, p, 31).

Gandhi further explained that man should be satisfied with his real needs and become self-reliant. The old must be worn out and renewed in the light of modern science. He emphasizes that for this everyone will have to do manual labour for the betterment of others. Moreover, such a village will not deny modern facilities like railways, post and telegraph to anyone.

He further adds that village people if remain intellectually and culturally backward, no improvement in their condition would not be possible, as long as they do not change. Instead of pursuing ideals which were rather vague and difficult to comprehend, he says, it is more useful to try to achieve some concrete objectives such as- food sufficiency, clothing, housing, education, sanitation, etc. for everyone without discrimination, at least up to the minimum requirement of a country and its individuals. And as in the case of development, people are also dissatisfied with the pursuit of peace, it should be restored at all times.

7.2.1 Gandhian Approach to Human Resource Development

Globalization is now considered as a factor of economic growth and it is also regarded as a pre-requisite for social progress. But growth by itself may not be enough to guarantee social progress; it must be sufficient condition for poverty reduction. The improvement of human well-being is related to economic growth. The growth of any economy influences human resource development. Human development is the most strategic and crucial determinant of economic growth. In terms of better education, nutrition and health, it should help in increasing labour productivity, increasing people's adaptability and capacity for change, and creating an appropriate social and political environment for a stable government. However, man is the source, center and purpose of all economic, political and social life. He is the foundation, end and subject matter of all the institutions through which social life runs. Gandhi said that, "Institutions are for man, not man for institutions. Man is above institutions. He is superior to the system." (Gandhi, *Young India*, 13.7.1921, p. 112).

Human resource development is a multidisciplinary concept, which includes the problems of health, food and nutrition, better housing, safe water supply and sanitation which are

essential for human beings as production resources are one of the important strategies advocated for economic development especially in less developed economies. Man is a multi-dimensional being and neither a mere mechanical machine nor an economic unit or a biological creature. He is a human-society-a social being, who has been in search of peace, justice, harmony and happiness for centuries. He cannot live without society. He is most indebted to the society. He owes his very existence, development, civilisation and culture to social life. Therefore, we must develop a mood of giving. *Einstein* said that:

A hundred times every day I reminded myself that my inner and outer life depends on the labours of other men, living and dead and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received (Singh, 1988, p. 2).

Human development centers focus on what pace human well-being depends upon on the factors like health and education, in addition to per capita GDP. In traditional measures of economic output, the contribution of health and education is essentially measured by the cost of producing the results, i.e. spending on schools and medical facilities. The concept of human development was emphasized by Gandhi and he advocated the different dimensions with distinct style and values embedded. Gandhian thoughts relating to truth, *Dharma*, celibacy and non-misappropriation, indeed are not new. He elaborated these abstract principles of the past which since ancient times percolated to present society. Origin of these principles could be found in ancient Indian wisdom, pronounced by sages, out of which Gandhi further advocated non-violence, *dharma* and truth.

No one is given leave to force others to do what they themselves would not choose for themselves. All persons are fundamentally equal; diversity is respected and the quest for dominance is replaced by collaboration. Gandhi held that, “History is the saga of man’s driving to discover his humanity, which is but a reflection of the Supreme.” (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 7.6.1942, p. 72). Gandhian principles are spelled out in our scriptures. The ancient sages condensed and codified the whole process of human development into ‘*Yama*’ and ‘*Niyama*’. *Patanjali*’s ‘*Astang Yogasutra*’ is comprehensive treatise on the art of Yoga which is a system for perfecting human efficiency and simultaneously corrects the defeats of the body and mind. It invigorates

the body, rejuvenates the energies and helps to establish health, happiness, intelligence and reveal full knowledge of self.

The central tenets of Gandhi are based on voluntary effort and individual reflections and actions. And the implementation of Gandhi's constructive programs on a micro-level basis is taken up by non-government organizations as volunteers by which the average farmers are slowly and gradually accepting Gandhi's methods in their lives and economic activities. Gandhi taught people to protest in a non-violent manner. This vision of Gandhi for social change certainly was set in motion. Gandhi mentioned that, "Human life being an undivided whole, no line could ever be drawn between its different compartments, nor between ethics and politics." (Prabhu & Rao, 1960, p. 137).

Enlightening the rural people for hygienic living, get education, training and provide them demonstration in the areas of health, hygiene and eradication of contagious diseases is one way of enlarging the Gandhian ideal of mobilizing the community. Creating awareness among people and forming cooperative bodies, clubs or organizations is necessary. Instead of depending on the governmental institutions, the people can be mobilized to build their own roads and drainages for better living conditions. Gandhi regarded human life, "As one indivisibly whole and all his activities run into one another, and they all have their rise in my insatiable love of mankind" (Singh, 1988, p. 2).

Planting trees in urban areas is another area for adoption of Gandhian ideals. The central point is to create awareness among the public and encourage them to put own efforts for creating a healthy and pleasant environment. This surely generates communal harmony that Gandhi envisaged in his constructive programs. Human nature is not necessarily bad because he is definitely getting higher every day. This is optimism born out of faith in the triadic progress of man- the horizontal, the in depth dimension and the vertical one. Gandhian concept of human nature and its progress is in conformity with the sociological findings. The human civilisation has been a march from barbarity to civilisation, from egoistic struggle to altruistic existence.

Therefore, we can say proudly Gandhi's views on various indicators of human development are in vogue now- in fact all of his principles which he mentioned a century ago. All his ideas reflect a healthy image of the development of a nation. Hence, it is necessary to practice his philosophy for human development and for a better society.

7.2.2 Gandhian Approach to Modern Science and Technology

Discussing and constructing Gandhi's response to modern science and technology needs no justification. However, it is as well to notice that Gandhi's concerns are for the civilisation. He calls the modern civilisation *satanic*. Science and technology are one of the major foundation pillars of the modern civilisation. So, in far as Gandhi sets himself to meeting the challenges of the modern civilisation, he should also meet the challenge of modern science and technology.

Without any external constraints the very nature of science and technology should be such that things happen naturally for example, science and technology should conform to the logic of the moral fiber of society where it becomes the bearer of the initiative of all, expressing an inner creative dynamic of society. Much of this may appear wishful and prescriptive and much more will appear so when more and more is discovered of Gandhi's views on it, and especially about science and technology the way he expressed himself but all of this is real and possible only when seen from the fact how it was in the past and since Gandhi represents that social force of people perhaps to make possible in future. Gandhi wrote in *Young India*:

Round the *Charkha*, that is, amidst the people who have shed their idleness, and who have understood the value of cooperation, a national servant would build up a programme of campaign, improved sanitation, settlement of village disputes, conservation and breeding of cattle and hundreds of other beneficial activities. Wherever the *Charkha* work is fairly established all such ameliorative activity is going on according to the capacity of the villages and the workers concerned (Gandhi, *Young India*, 14.10.1926, p. 322).

His '*Swadeshi Samaj*' which knew only a subordinated and privatized life got for the first time, a new face in Gandhi and an identity to his people by him rising to prominence in 1920. These people were ordinary rural folk's whose traditional rights and privileges were usurped by the modern state, and their control over local resources was declared unlawful; the resources were concentrated in the hands of the state only to be used eventually, against them. The liberation of these people from the enslaved state demands exercising self control over their own resources of life which is not possible until modern science and technology dominates the scene, because it necessarily leads to concentration of the control over resources. Also, generally speaking, to the extent *swadeshi samaj* must and can do away with the modern ways to the same extent it must extend to do away with modern science and technology. *Swadeshi samaj* has a civilisations promise to keep as it was held out by Gandhi; this much for now, on Gandhi's direct response to modern science and technology.

Therefore, science and technology seems to be consistent with the Gandhian view of civilisation, society, science and technology. Thus the Gandhian path of scientific and technological reconstruction is a practical *Swadeshi* challenge to modern science and technology and to its imperial campaign.

7.3 Gandhian Method of Conflict Resolution: A Universal Approach

The study and analysis of the entire human history also compel us to agree to this reality. In the continuous process of increasing population and progress at different levels of all walks of life, conflicts have also multiplied. It should be borne firmly in mind that the process of emergence of conflicts in society and their resolution or struggles, and their transformation will continue. This is in fact a subject, which is inextricably linked to human existence on the one hand and their development on the other. Therefore, it will continue until human beings exist and the process of development also goes on. One should bear this truth firmly in mind that harmony and balance are not only needed for existence, but also for the continuation of the process of development.

The scope of non-violence is free of tension and conflict. It is full of harmony and balance. In place of tension, acceptance prevails. From the basic spirit of non-violence, unity and peace are created. Undoubtedly, the non-violence based Gandhian way or the method remains till today significant and adaptable in resolving conflicts, or to the solution to various socio-political, economic, ideological or cultural problems. It will be so in future as well. In current perspective the Gandhian way of *Satyagraha* is as unique, effective and adaptable as it was in Gandhi's own lifetime or during the non-violent actions for the establishment of justice and equality. Its application will remain so in times to come not only in the global perspective, but in the universal context.

Therefore, it is now perhaps most significant to develop understanding of this very perspective, not only at national level but at global level realizing the principle of universal law of balance, harmony and unity. By this, the unnecessary inner human conflict would pave the way for settling external disputes, conflicts and struggles.

7.3.1 *Satyagraha* for Conflict Resolution: A New Way of Life

Satyagraha is primarily and essentially a new way of life. The orientation of *Satyagraha* was quite different from other methods of fighting evil and injustice. *Satyagraha* is based on truth-force and non-violence, a *Satyagrahi* never thinks of using violence even if he suffers prejudice from his opponent. Passive-resistance, civil disobedience and such other methods when adopted in the pursuit of truth and justice and when they are free from violence, are at best corollaries of the *Satyagrahi* way of life. There is no doubt that when a true *Satyagrahi* is faced with evil or injustice he does employ a new technique of nonviolent resistance, which on its surface and in certain aspects, does resemble an ordinary passive resistance. The foremost duty of a *Satyagrahi* is to protest injustice by non-violent resistance or engage in such steps which, if necessary, would put an end to violence.

An extension of this principle to all fields of life and to the solution of all conflicts, socio-economic as well as political, is again a new feature that Gandhi introduced. *Satyagraha* is not only the inherent birthright of an individual, but also a sacred duty. It is our good fortune that

Gandhi has provided us with a new world of new way of life. *Satyagraha* is a *Sanskrit* word. It is a compound of two words: *satya*- truth, that which is according to what is or exists; and the *agraha*- insistence or adherence. Both together now indicate a 'new way of life'. The word non-violence or love is not included in the compound word. It is understood that the insistence on truth is to be non-violent. It was reserved for Gandhi to coin the word as well as to evolve its full connotation during his eventful life. It is now not only a way of life with a philosophy of action but also a new technique of social change with high potentialities in the future.

In the midst of global peace and anti-nuclear movements and a growing realization of the problems of management of natural resources and preservation of environment world over, a thesis on the Gandhian way of resolving indigenous group-conflicts would appear to be reversal of global interest-based dimensions. India too is also beset with tremendous problems not only of economic poverty but of spiritual poverty, erosion of moral values on a massive scale, rise of terrorism, environmental destruction, and so on. All this demands a fresh approach, a rethinking of a Gandhian alternative. And Gandhi said, "For me the path of salvation leads through unceasing tribulation in the service of my fellow-countrymen and humanity" (Gangrade & Mishra, 1990, p. 119) and he insisted that his life is one indivisible whole of his insatiable love for mankind. By practicing non-violence step by step, from the nearest to the remotest, we learn how to make friends with all; Gandhi was thus interested in generating love that establishes a continuity of interpersonal relations.

Underlying *Satyagraha*, we find several basic principles and conceptions which run through the whole of Gandhi's philosophy. *Satyagraha* means 'truth-force' and it was, for Gandhi, both based on and directed towards truth seeking. The main objective of *Satyagraha* is to resolve the conflict. In the Gandhian plan, 'it should not be tolerated that the struggle just goes on' because 'conflicts have to be resolved'. The prime aim should be the reorganization of the opposing elements, whereby a truth judged on the basis of the fulfillment of human needs through the conduct of nonviolent action, will emerge as a mutually satisfactory and agreeable solution. Gandhi held that:

The word *Satyagraha* is often most loosely used and is made to cover veiled violence. But as the author of the word I may be allowed to say that it excludes every form of violence, veiled or unveiled, and whether in thought, word or deed. It is a breach of *Satyagraha* to wish ill to an opponent or to say a harsh word to him or of him with the intention of harming him (Prabhu, 2016, p. 85).

Satyagraha is based on a constructive reading of conflicting situations. According to Gandhi, conflict, understood in a broad sense, is both positive and desirable. Differing from other non-violent movements, *Satyagraha* does not aim at avoiding conflict. For Gandhi, conflict is a, “gift, a rich opportunity, potentially to the benefit of all that far from separating two parties... should unite them, precisely because they have their incompatibility in common” (Mishra, 2008, p. 145). Accordingly, *Satyagraha* does not seek a conflict-free society. Conflict is seen as a chance to reaffirm the unity of life and to restructure the social order so as to produce a more human society. In short, conflict is regarded as a perfect opportunity to pursue the different aims of *Satyagraha*.

In relation to its origin, Gandhi, on one hand, understood conflict as built into social structure onto people. *Satyagraha*, distinguishing between actor and structure, locates the evil not in the former but in the latter. Therefore, it involves attempts at changing the system itself. Nevertheless, according to Gandhi, the purification of the structure is not enough, self purification is also indispensable, and the purification both of structure and of self is an open-ended process.

In other words, moving beyond the strictly structuralist interpretation of some Gandhian scholars, one should be aggressive not against the opponent, but against the condition, against the antagonism but not against the antagonist. In view of that, we find Gandhi’s distinction between ‘*man and his deed*’ and his admonition to ‘*hate the sin and not the sinner*’. On the other hand, from a more interpersonal perspective, *Satyagraha* views conflict as a tension between different sets of relative truths and, therefore, it aims at synthesis, rather than at compromise as a middle ground. In his own words:

I mean to suggest that truth and *Ahimsa* were not virtues confined to individuals but were practiced by communities. To me virtue ceases to have any value if it is cloistered or possible only for individuals (Prabhu, 1959, p. 15).

Satyagraha will be mainly examined as a non-violent dialogical process that strives for a creative, constructive and mutually agreed solution through both determination and openness and aims to resolve the underlying conflict.

The Gandhian approach to conflict and by way of summing up I will briefly refer to some of the main precepts of *Satyagraha*. I will try to synthesize them in the following four normative points:

(1) According to Gandhi, one should always act positively and non-violently to solve the conflict. Parties should seek negotiation and not continue the struggle forever. Opponents should view conflict positively as an opportunity for personal and social change and act in a non-violent manner, without humiliating or aggravating the other party, nor allowing themselves to be provoked or humiliated. The motive should not be coercion but conversion.

(2) One should define the conflict well and avoid polarization. Disputants must be clear and honest about the elements of their case and the purpose of their conflict, so that the other party can understand their position. Moreover, efforts should be made to formulate essential common interests and establish cooperation on that basis. In addition, one should be empathetic with the case of her opponent and always distinguish between antagonism and antagonist.

(3) One should be willing to compromise on non-essentials but not in aspects of principle. *Satyagraha*, as it has been pointed out above, is a process of synthesis rather than compromise. Accordingly, the aim would be to seek solutions that are acceptable by both parties.

(4) One should see oneself as fallible and be generous when viewing the opponent. Opponents should remember that they might be wrong and be open to admit their errors. Conversely, they should trust their adversaries without judging them harder than themselves or exploiting their position of weakness.

Finally, the Gandhian approach to conflict resolution also aims at social transformation. *Satyagraha*, through non-violent direct action, provides a way of fighting for justice, striving for the creation of a superior social structure.

7.3.2 Non-violence for Conflict Resolution: The Gandhian Way

Despite the permanent presence of non-violence in man's nature, in the process of his progress, jealousy and competition, the two temporary tendencies, which are also inherent, get enlarged. They then give birth to selfishness, appetite, violence and passion, and rapidly enhance the potency of these two tendencies. So, he tries to become the master of others, which generates the state of conflict.

Thus, the emergence and increase in the state of conflict could be attributed to man's longing for selfishness- narrowness in outlook leading him to fear and distrust that creates grounds for disharmony. In this context, man always has two options at his disposal- (i) to overcome those temporary tendencies, which give birth to the state of conflict and to step forward courageously for harmony; (ii) to steer the cause of disharmony for attaining selfish motives. Generally, people adhere to the later. They stretch it to an extent that it aggravates trouble and gets transformed into conflicts of serious nature, be it at the local, regional, national level, or even war at the international level and what could have been transformed to harmony by intellect, firm determination and true ability at the individual level, at the beginning worsens and becomes untoward.

Despite the necessity of conflicts in man's life, what we need to accept further is that, right from the time of emergence of conflicts, efforts for their resolution are also initiated. Particularly, on the basis of the natural, eternal and supreme human value of non-violence, the

process of transformation of conflicts into cooperation should be started. Interestingly, this non-violence based process always accord victory over the violent-originated states, eventually transforming the state of conflict in one way or the other into cooperation. In this regard, the following statement of Gandhi is worth quoting here: “If mankind was not...non-violent, it would have self-destroyed ages ago” (Gandhi, *Young India*, 2.1.1930, p. 192).

Non-violence relates to mind and action both. However, its fundamental source is the human nature. Man ultimately realises it, longs for it, cultivates it and on the basis of it, steps forward for cooperation. This is the first and the supreme human value; the *Jnana* of morality, or as many scholars have rightly described, is the highest form of morality in itself. And, that is why; after disputes, conflicts, fights or wars, non-violence has always been taken as the basis of their resolution in various forms, dialogues- negotiations, compromises or treaties. Moreover, this reality does not apply only to Earth, but as a necessary condition of existence, progress and achievement of goals, which is unique and the most effective method of conflict resolution, would be so on any planet in the universe or wherever human presence may occur.

Gandhi, thus, chose a wonderful non-violent based way. Along with this many other people also adopted Gandhian method in different parts of the world for seeking justice, freedom and equality. They applied it in prevailing situations of space and time, and recorded unprecedented success on the basis of it. It has indeed, remained exemplary in the whole human history. Hopefully, it remains important for the present and will be so in all times to come, if it is taken in refined form by those wishing justice, freedom and equality. Moreover Gandhi viewed that Indians must stand up and fight against injustice on the basis of highest human value of non-violence.

A new and noble non-violence based way could open to resolve problem, dispute or conflict- in the all spheres of life. Gandhi, who fought for truth- freedom, equality and justice on the basis of non-violence and proclaimed that non-violent means- to have the patience in action and to be ready to make sacrifice for any desire for success in resolving conflict, or wishing justice through peaceful or non-violent means.

Not only in Gandhi's lifetime, but even after his passing away, his strategy remains significant and effective in non-violent actions. These strategies, if are planned well can prepare according to the demand of time, in fact they are still important and adaptable, and fully capable of ascertaining success. Risks as well as demand for self-sacrifice are always there in non-violent methods. This must be understood by those who desire resolution of conflicts through this noble non-violence based way. Many other examples are also before us, which prove that conflict can be resolved through non-violent means, if people plan strategies befitting to the prevailing circumstances, and step forward to action with patience, determination and a sense of sacrifice.

The people of the region lack understanding pertaining to the importance of non-violent ways, its capacity of initiating fundamental change, and its proper application. They need to understand this way for achieving equality, freedom and justice simultaneously. They would need honest, able and selfless leaders who are firm, dedicated and ready to make sacrifice for the cause. Hopefully, this will take place sooner or later. Although the Gandhian way in resolving conflicts or in settling disputes seems quite simple, but it is simultaneously abide by certain principles, which are the essentials of the moral structure of the universe. For this, having the life of Gandhi in the centre, *Martin Luther King* has rightly pointed out:

Gandhi embodied in his life certain universal principles that are inherent in the moral structure of the universe. These principles are as inescapable as the law of gravitation (Kumar, 2013, p. 126).

Those who wish for success in resolving conflict through the Gandhian way, they first of all need courage. Along with this, instead of compulsion, they by accepting the reality need to establish atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. Further, for resolution, the Gandhian way can be taken in the following two situations -

- (1) When the conflict is over for the time being, or it is continued at any level or in any walk of life, and involved parties that wish or long for a resolution, or when a resolution becomes necessary, not due to compulsion, but for the larger interest of people.

- (2) To the establishment of justice, or to an urge for equality and freedom. The method established by Gandhi remains intact even today and seem fully capable particularly in political sphere, but the condition is that they are implemented in a refined form according to the demand of time and place.

Along with this, justness of cause, fair intent, and commitment to non-violence are also required. The spirit of larger welfare of people should be there in the root of the cause. Under an able leadership, strategy, which in fact is an art for ascertaining success, occupies an important place in this universal Gandhian way. But, in this too the condition is that any strategy should not be planned with the intention of defeating the opponent, but winning him and that too with the sole purpose of achieving justice. For this, it must be borne in mind that the opponent- in conflict or dispute, is an opponent until it is afraid of loss, which is again a subject related to mentality. Therefore, as soon as possible the state of fear must be eliminated. The opponent is also an inseparable part of one and the same human family; he has the equal right to exist and rise. Despite the ideological differences his role and contribution in the establishment of harmony is evident and less than none.

7.3.3 Gandhian Message of World Peace

The issue of peace assumes greater significance than before in the modern times. Peace is not only considered a state of absence of war, tension, conflict and unrest. The concept of peace has been discussed endlessly at the national and international levels by the statesmen, thinkers and social reformers. They have struggled relentlessly to find the possible solutions to end the internal and external wars between the nations and within the nations. It is more relevant and proper to give a serious thought for the establishment of an enduring and lasting peace in the world.

The human life becomes meaningful and purposive and thereby gains significance and relevance when the long cherished dream of world peace is realised. Peace cannot be achieved by mere craving or desire. Peace prevails only under certain circumstances. Peace demands

sacrifice and the total human effort. Non-violence plays a vital role to this tension-ridden, weary and disturbed world carrying with it the message of the change of heart, that result into the ultimate transformation of the modern society through its betterment. The world has been dominated by politics of power, diplomatic relations and other constraints. Gandhi stated that:

The successful application of non-violence ushers in a new peaceful world order, involving a great deal of moral strength, and readiness to undergo self-suffering on the part of the person who applies it. The success of the application of non-violence depends upon the conviction of the person which has to be gradual, with the attitude that one step is enough for me. The beginning will be small and the rest will follow (Gandhi, *Harijan*, 28.1.1939, p. 442).

Peace is the absence of physical and mental violence between nations, regions, religions, creeds, races, classes, sexes and between man and man. It is only by love and unadulterated non-violence, that peace could be established. The belief in the ability of man to live peacefully is contradiction in terms to reality of the present world with its unending violence and constant conflict due to the result of biological and psychological drives inherent in mind. So there is no option for man except to rely on non-violence; and practice it till the realization of truth and experience of peace in the modern world. Gandhi had a firm belief in man. He hoped that the future world would be a world of peace, free from wars and bloodshed, based on non-violence. It is not unrecoverable and can be prepared from now on.

Gandhi showed the significance and the applicability of love, peace and non-violence in a most unique manner as a panacea to the modern world ridden with several evils and problems. He held that violence results in counter-violence and there is no end for violence. Gandhi said that, “The virtue of mercy, non-violence, love and truth in any man can be truly tested on when they are pitted against ruthlessness violence, hate and untruth” (Gandhi, 1949, p. 85).

The application of non-violence is extendible from the smallest group to the global society. The person who uses non-violence as well as on whom it is used gets blessed because of the tremendous moral force it releases. It creates a climate to promote understanding, good-will,

mutual trust and cooperation and puts an end to the prejudices, suspicions, fear, hatred and overall sense of insecurity which are the general causes of violence.

Gandhi had a global perspective, a world-view which has dimensions- sacrifice and coherence. His world-view has become an experienced feeling of non-violence and truth which universalizes his ethics and ethicizes his world-view. To Gandhi, world-view is at once an intellectual framework, an emotional attitude and a social reality. Gandhi held that all people are the members of the vast human family. So love of the human mind is an aspect of non-violence. The universal love of humanity finds its concrete expression in the internationalism. India has to be free before she could cooperate herself on equal terms with other nations, said Gandhi. Similar is the opinion of *Kant* who held that practical idea of federation of states has to be extended gradually over all the states with an agreement between them for the establishment of eternal peace. *Immanuel Kant* postulated the law of world citizenship as a precondition for the establishment of perpetual peace. In his famous book '*Perpetual Peace*', a philosophical essay, he stated thus:

Without a compact between the nations, however, this state of peace cannot be established or assured. Hence there must be an alliance of a particular kind which we may call a covenant of peace, which would differ from a treaty of peace in this respect that the latter merely puts an end to one war, while the former would seek to put an end to war forever. This alliance does not aim at the gain of any power whosoever of the state but merely at preservation and security of the freedom of the states at the same time. The latter do not however, require for this reason to submit themselves like individuals in the state of nature to public laws and coercion. The practically or objective reality of this idea of federation which is to extend gradually over all states and led to perpetual peace can be shown (Kant, 1948, p. 17).

Bertrand Russell, the world renowned philosopher, also aimed at a world government for the establishment of world peace. He maintained that the world government should be federal with a constitution, embodying the principle which should control the entire federation, and the

federal government should concern itself with the external acts of constituent states or at any rate with such of these states which affect interests of other states directly. He advocated the ideal that, mankind is one family with common interests. So cooperation is much more important than competition. Henceforth, '*to love one's own neighbour*' is not only a moral duty but it is the wisest policy to promote the human happiness.

The establishment of international peace requires the development of the world community. This creates a sense of mutual tolerance, respect and goodwill necessary in social practice for the establishment and operation of a community, in which nonviolent resistance is used to rectify faults and wrongs. *Leo Tolstoy* says:

The miseries of men are due to their discord. And their discord results from their not following the truth which is one, but falsehood which is legion. The only means by which men can be united is by union in the truth. And therefore the more sincerely men seek the truth the nearer will they approach to union (*Tolstoy*, 1960, p. 410).

India needs to develop its non-violent power to become a good example to the whole world and usher in a peaceful world order. Gandhi was confident of the permanent peace. Gandhi gave the message of peace and concord to the modern world. It is the human responsibility to keep the desire for peace alive and make the mankind to relentlessly strive for it; for peace makes people to dwell in safety. When people turn away from evil, only then they can do any good: '*Turn away from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it*'. Permanent peace is a human possibility as well as to usher in a peaceful world order is human responsibility.

Therefore, non-violence has to be made as the governing principle of all the individuals, of all the nations, as their social conduct for the establishment of world peace. Thus, the practice of non-violence contributes to progress and peace to the humanity at large.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the crisis of our time is multi-dimensional and it takes different forms in different parts of the world. Gandhian thought and practice has become today a subject of world-wide interest, one has to make the effort to interpret and reinterpret him in the context of time and space. The modern world is confronted with the unprecedented crisis due to violence, terrorism, ecological unsustainability, mounting tensions and wars, which are interrelated and have great impact on the world. Terrorism is a special kind of organised violence or threat of violence by small number to put large in fear and it is on increase in the modern times. In advanced countries, development has resulted in excessive consumption and at the same time in the multiplication of wants. The exploitation of natural resources and pollution of the environment has reached such a dangerous level that the very existence of humanity on this planet is threatened. Science and technology are some of the major pillars of modern civilization. The orientation of *Satyagraha* was quite different from other methods of fighting evil and injustice. *Satyagraha*, through non-violent direct action, provides a way of fighting for justice, striving for building a better social structure. Non-violence plays an important role in a stressed, weary and disturbed modern world. It carries with it the message of love and the message of change of heart which results in ultimate transformation for the betterment of modern society. Therefore, in place of violence and hatred, non-violence and love have to be brought together, to establish a new peaceful world order. World peace can be established only through non-violence. The Gandhian method has all the possibilities of resolving conflicts in a just and peaceful manner. So, we can proudly say that Gandhi's views on various indicators of human development are now prevalent in all his theories, which Gandhi mentioned a century ago. All his thoughts reflect a healthy image of the development of the nation. Hence it is necessary to practice in his philosophy for human development and for a better society.

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CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

- **Major Findings**

In the present study, various aspects of Gandhian thought have been discussed. In doing so, an analytical, authentic and critical approach has been followed. In explaining Gandhi's views, his original writings and views have been quoted. It is worth mentioning that many critics of Gandhian philosophy have tried to point out inconsistencies and contradictions in his thought. Some have even regarded his philosophy as impractical.

In the present study, it becomes clear that many inconsistencies and confusions that can be observed in the Gandhian theology pertain to the lack of a systematically coherent study of the Gandhian philosophy. We are inclined to hold that much of these inconsistencies, confusions and contradictions in Gandhian thought would disappear if a coherent and an all-round study of Gandhian philosophy is made.

As a student of Gandhian thought and having studied various aspects of his life and work, it can be added with some degree of belief that the entire gamut of Gandhian philosophy is governed by the principle of truth alone. This is the main concept of Gandhi's life and philosophy. The term Truth is the most comprehensive term in Gandhian thought and literature around which the entire activity of this great personality of modern India revolves. He reflects and explains on all aspects of human life, be it - social, moral, religious or political, and with these key concepts he shows the mankind its own unfathomable beauty manifesting itself in all circumstances unmistakably and at all times. Gandhi's undaunted faith in Truth made him realise that 'Truth alone is'. And it was due to this conviction that he equated Truth with God. This self-acting force called Truth constitutes the basic unity which manifests itself in multiplicity of life. Gandhi's each activity is rooted in and centered on this notion of 'Truth'. Hence, Truth has been regarded as 'the basic unity of life'. In the end, we can say that with the help of truth we can solve all kinds of present conflicts.

It is from the concept of truth that Gandhi has derived the notion of *Satyagraha*. *Satyagraha*, as we have held, means holding on to truth and a *Satyagrahi* is one who holds on to

truth. It is a uniting force where there is no room for conflict and division. Its gains are perfect and stable. It is an instrument, a weapon for Gandhi. He used this pure and noble tool to solve all the conflicts and on all of the fronts of human life - social, moral, religious and political. Gandhi very sincerely believed that it is through this technique and this technique alone, that men can get solutions to their present conflicts.

It is true that Gandhi lived in an age which is regarded as the age of science and technology, and nuclear weapons. But he did not misunderstand nuclear energy above spiritual powers of man, in other words, he never for once believed in the false that human growth was dependent on over use or dependency upon nuclear energy and war weapons. Scientific developments, according to him, brought happiness only so far as material prosperity was concerned. As we have held and discussed, his concern was not material prosperity but 'spiritual prosperity' which as per him, alone could bring salvation for mankind. It should be amply emphasized that, though he was not averse to scientific developments, he was very conscious of their proper use and misuse. Since, if and when used improperly, they may lead to the destruction and annihilation of - entire human race. Therefore, he stressed and very sincerely advocated the philosophy of *Satyagraha* which, according to him, was a panacea for all human miseries. *Satyagraha* is thus such a mighty force which cannot be deferred in any circumstances but can bring, only and only, cohesion and unity in human life. Spiritual unity cannot be attained through subversive methods thereby, in order to achieve spirituality; Gandhi adopted and practiced the pure means of non-violence. No society can march along the path of progress and prosperity so long as it engages with violent methods. If we want all-round progress, a *Satyagrahi* should unhesitatingly practice the discipline of non-violence.

It may be stated in this connection that 'Gandhi was never pessimistic in his approach to life'. He was thoroughly confident of the efficacy of non-violence as a means. *Satyagraha* based upon non-violence, answers some of the deepest urges of mankind: the urge of love and goodness, the urge of truth and suffering. It can also bring to an end - the growing inequalities, economic insecurity, fear, hatred, injustice and violence existing in the 'modern world'. It is no exaggeration to say that 'none before him, not even *Mahavir* and *Buddha*, had demonstrated so thoroughly and so widely the use and implication of non-violence. He has explained with great clarity and emphasis that nonviolence and democracy are closely intertwined and they work

together quite successfully. His interpretation of non-violence was thus deeper, more comprehensive and positive than that of all other thinkers who had gone before him’.

The credit of Gandhi lies not in the fact that he practiced the traditional method of non-violence, but in the fact that he interpreted it in a new way and made it a universal application. In short, he widened the connotation and the scope of the application of non-violence. It is, to my mind, one of the most important features of Gandhian philosophy and a relevant contribution to the global thought. The philosophy of non-violence has been renovated and expanded in his hands. Gandhi, who is thus regarded as one of the most authoritative exponents of non-violence in the contemporary world, has made an invaluable contribution the field of morality, society, politics, economics, and National and International level.

Gandhi’s ideas have since evolved and had played an identical role of non-violence, Truth and *Satyagraha*. The entire gamut of his philosophical thought is mainly based on truth and non-violence and Satyagraha. His philosophy on truth, non-violence and Satyagraha is a viable source of strength to resolve conflicts not only in the present world but also in the future world. All these methods were used in order to establish – ‘Morality, Justice, Truth and Peace’. Therefore in modern times, his philosophical ideas and theories are becoming increasingly important for resolving all aspects of conflict, and are more relevant than ever.

- **Critical Analysis of the Core Chapters**

This research is broadly classified in seven chapters excluding the introduction and conclusion. The seven chapters are as follows:

The First Chapter is entitled as “*Brief Outlines of Gandhian Philosophy*”. The chapter is further divided into two sub-chapters, *The Origin and Development of his Thought* and *Gandhian Principles and their Applications*. These sub-chapters discusses about the influences upon Gandhi- from childhood and religious influences to the influence of books and authors, and western influences, and Gandhian thoughts on - role and limits of reason; role and importance of experience; the concept of Truth, non-violence and *Satyagraha*. All of these concepts have been dealt in this chapter and are explained as follows:

- Gandhi was an open-minded and accommodative at the same time. The influence of his parents especially his mother left on him a lasting memory of *saints*, religiosity and practice of truth. The experience he had with his father helped him to know of the ways and means to solve the most intricate problems; and later both national and global issues too. The impression of *Shravana* was lasting and prompted him to render service to the humanity. The play *Harischandra* captured his heart too and made him to learn that there is no higher value than truth and that Absolute Truth is knowable through the relative truth, which is commonly experienced between human relations. The influence of *Jainism* and *Buddhism* and their emphasis on non-violence in reverence for life was noticeable. The central teaching of *Gita* is bounded by Truth and non-violence. The words such as *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *sambhava* (equability) held a strong grip on *Gandhi*. The influence of *Raichand* helped him to imbibe the religious consciousness. *Gopalakrishna Gokhale* influenced him to recognize the significance of the spiritualization of the politics. *Vivekananda*'s conception that *service to the poor is service to God* impressed him a lot. The influence of *Dadabhai Naoroji* from whom Gandhi learnt the first lesson of non-violence, that is to fight against the evil not by violent force but by the power of love made Gandhi, in his later life to adopt non-violent methods against even heaviest of the odds. *Lokamanya Tilak* taught too Gandhi to practice the truthful and non-violent means. Likewise, in Western Literature too Gandhi could notice much emphases stressed upon holding on to the principles of non-violence and Truth. He had great admiration for *Socrates* who was deeply committed to Truth. The teachings of *Jesus* especially the *Sermon on the Mount* appealed to him greatly and he found the spirit of renunciation present in the *Sermon on the Mount*. Through *Theosophy* he learnt to give the equal treatment to all religions which promoted religious tolerance, interreligious dialogue, getting rid of the tensions arising out of religious difference. The writings of *Tolstoy* helped Gandhi on his later stages to leave his skepticism and become a firm believer of non-violence. From the Russian writer *T. M. Bondureff* he learnt work ethic and the concept of 'bread labour'. *Bondureff* stated that, If a man work not, neither shall he eat. The writings of the modern writer, *John Ruskin* influenced Gandhi and brought about an instantaneous change in him. The influence of *Henry David Thoreau*, his lifestyle and his famous concept of *Civil Disobedience* helped Gandhi to resist the

immoral laws of the state and inspired him to set a moral order non-violently, in his times, and disobeying the unjust laws framed by the state.

- All our activities must be centered in truth. Non-violence represents mutual adjustment, social coordination and socio-mental correlation. It stands for accommodation and co-operation in place of tension, antagonism and conflict. Gandhi believed that the force of violence would be replaced by the authority of justice, truth and peace. *Satyagraha* is a right and it is evident that this right is inherent in all human beings. This is not only a right but also a sacred duty. Therefore, if these three fundamental principles, i.e. truth, non-violence and *Satyagraha* had been followed in all social, religious, political and economic activities, the India of Gandhi's dream would not have been far away.

From the foregoing discussions it appears that Gandhi was not a man of limited circumstances. He went through the important literature of the East as well as the West. He did not accept anything simply because it came from authority but through reason and experience. He accepted only those principles of thought which after several experiments, proved to be true. His main objective in life was to eradicate the miseries and sufferings of mankind through the principles of Truth, non-violence and *Satyagraha*.

The Second Chapter of this research traces "*Moral Foundations of Gandhian Philosophy*". The chapter is further divided into two sub-chapters: *Gandhian Doctrine of Morality* and *Gandhian Views on Cardinal Virtues*. These sub-chapters are explained as following:

- Gandhi applied his moral power for the welfare of the public. Being a powerful moralist, he applied his weapon of moral power in every field and tried to solve all problems on the basis of morality, whether social, religious, economic, political, National or International. Gandhi gave utmost importance to the purity of means and ends in recognition of the significance of the Moral Law that abides man. He studied and evaluated the human situation to take the non-violent action in the event of necessity, and without losing sight of purity of means and ends. The adoption of purity of means has great and significant bearing on human life alongside utmost relevance to the modern world. To realise Truth, non-violence is the means. This protects the purity of means and

ends. Gandhi was opposed to relative morality. And was always in favour of prescribing one norm for all men. Therefore, he always stressed the need for universal morality.

- Gandhi advocated certain virtues of life that he expounds as necessary for living a pious and moral life. These primary vows are- Truth (*Satya*), Non-violence (*Ahimsa*), Celibacy (*Brahmacharya*), Non-Stealing (*Asteya*) and Non-Possession (*Aparigraha*), Control of the Palate (*Asvada*), Fearlessness (*Abhaya*), Removal of Untouchability (*Asprishyatanivarana*), Bread Labour (*Sharira-Shrama*), Equality of Religions (*Sarva-Dharma-Samanatva*) and Duty towards Neighbour (*Swadeshi*). These virtues should be practiced not only externally, but also in thought, speech and action. Gandhi said that the aim of ethical activities is the attainment of purity. And complete holiness can be attained only when one is virtuous- not only in action but also in thought and speech.

Thus, we mentioned that Gandhi revives the old ethical and spiritual basis of society which was being destroyed by the materialistic culture of the West. Therefore, Gandhi always emphasizes the cultivation of love, truth, freedom and brotherhood. His every act is directed towards the good and welfare of all mankind and we see that Gandhi in his last analysis of morality tends to present the notion of *Sarvodaya*. It is, therefore, imperative for us to present his notion of *Sarvodaya* in the concept of morality.

The topic of the Third Chapter is “*Gandhian Resolution for Religious Conflict*”. This chapter is further divided into three sub-chapters: *Communal Problem*, *Religious Pluralism* and *Secularism*. These sub-chapters discuss about the Gandhi’s concept of communal harmony; Hindu-Muslim unity; religious plurality from Gandhian perspective; application of truth to religious pluralism and the modern India and the rejection of Gandhian Secularism;. All these have been dealt with this chapter. These concepts are explained as following:

- Religious conflict is one of the most affecting issues in present society. Today on the global stage religious conflict are emerging in many forms. Gandhi studied all religions very deeply and found that they all bear a common thread of *Love and Compassion*. His religious philosophy was characterized by upholding of Truth, non-violence and religious tolerance. Today the feeling of religious violence in Indian society is increasing day by

day. The solution to complex religious violence and conflicts can be found only in Gandhian philosophy. So we people need to be mentally prepared to follow and spread their ideals. The issue of communal harmony is quite relevant and important in the present circumstances, in which communal frenzy and religious intolerance are a serious threat and danger to the unity of the national fabric. Communal bigotry from ignorant people can only be eradicated through Love and Compassion, non-violence and service to men irrespective of their caste, colour and creed. But in the Indian perspective, communal harmony is almost always taken to mean the persistence of fraternal relations between Hindus and Muslims. Communal harmony has been accepted by the peace-loving and secular people as very useful for solving the problems of communalism and Hindu-Muslim conflict.

- Pluralism as a theory of religion accepts all religions on equal footing without giving any special status to one religion. His interreligious experiences together with his devotion to truth facilitated him to deal with certain problems that arise with in a multi-religious context in a manner that is acceptable to different religious traditions, once they are sincere and open to embrace. If we apply Gandhi's position of truth to religious pluralism, we can justifiably say that each one of the varied religions is *validatable* provided that it enables its respective believers to approximate the Absolute Truth in their own life-contexts - cultural, historical, societal and national. In fact, Gandhi argues that all religions are valid since all of them have produced great saints.
- Secularism arose because Indian societies tended to become multi-religious or at least multi-sectarian but much more because religion had begun to lose its hold on people as an institutional force. Secularism, in India, helps to promote harmony among many religious faiths and the soul of common brotherhood among all peoples beyond religious, semantic and territorial or sectional varieties. Gandhi's version of secularism is not only relevant but crucially relevant if we have to survive as a society because his secularism is an indigenous product, capable of touching our most sensitive moral nerves.

Therefore, Gandhi was the most troubled man- deeply hurt by the violence and communal hatred around him. We all fully accept and believe that communal bigotry from

ignorant people can only be eradicated through love and compassion, non-violence and service to men irrespective of their caste, color and creed. So, the Gandhi's teaching and his lifelong efforts and sacrifices become relevant.

The Fourth Chapter is entitled as "*Gandhian Resolution for Social Conflict*". The chapter is further divided into three sub-chapters, *Problem of Caste and Untouchability*, *Upliftment of Women* and *Gandhian Education and Moral Values*. These sub-chapters discuss about the prevailing caste system and the abolition of untouchability; problems and social status of women; present position of women in modern India; equality between the sexes; women education; *pardah* system; marriage and love; child marriage; dowry system; widow remarriages; household and divorce; population and birth control; the awakening of women; education and moral values; basic education and the significance of moral in education for modern times. Now these concepts are explained below:

- In the present society, people are classified into different groups, in which social conflicts arise due to lack of ideological co-ordination. To resolve such social conflicts, there should be a spirit of unity, love and harmony among all the sections living in the society. Gandhi resolved various conflicts during his own time in a non-violent way. If Gandhi's principles are used today then, surely a non-violent and peaceful society can be formulated. In free India, Gandhi's *Satyagraha* has paved the way for the enactment of laws against untouchability and caste system. As a result of his *Satyagraha*, the attention of the mass could be focused upon the fruitlessness of the long prevailing caste distinctions that had led up to the heinous practice of untouchability.
- In the present scenario, the upliftment of women has become one of the most important concerns of everyone. There is no difference in the basic mental faculties of man and woman, and she too deserves the same liberty and freedom. Today the world speaks of pure love, one family, and one husband and wife in a monogamous and faithful relationship; this echoes Gandhi's teachings concerned with the family. The age-old social customs and traditions adopted in the Indian society had greatly brought down the status of women. Gandhi sought to change the customary social status of women by

persuasion and by law. He wanted to provide them with the same rights and privileges as men had abiding to his principle of equality of status. From the Gandhian time we noticed many changes in the society like – the education of the women improved, marriage age was increased for both boys and girls, *purdah* system was abolished and many more. So as a youth we should also change our mentality regarding gender inequality. So that even women get equal opportunity in every aspects of life. This we have to insure, in order to improve their status in tradition and society.

- Gandhi's educational ideas were taught after in depth understanding and thorough investigation of their results in contribution to human progress and moral upliftment. An outstanding feature of the current Indian education system is the acceptance of the Gandhian ideas on basic education and its long-term objectives. This brings about a social change and makes the individuals economically sound. The significance of education in the modern times lies in parts to morality. Modern society recognizes the significance of the job-oriented courses and it lays more stress on such courses in order to widen the scope for better professional opportunities for the people.

Therefore, this makes it very clear that Gandhi wanted to bring about the reformation in the society gradually and aimed at establishing - a classless and casteless society that promotes brotherhood, communal unity and harmony as they are very essential for any society to progress and co-exist peacefully. He transformed the traditional concepts for the betterment of all sections of the community and improves their social conditions. So, the relevance of the Gandhian social philosophy lies in his conceptualizing the social issues and making them relevant and dynamically operative to the modern world.

The topic of the Fifth Chapter is "*Gandhian Resolution for Political Conflict*". The chapter is further divided into three sub-chapters: *Gandhian Model of Democracy*, *Ideal State and Society: Ramraj and Swaraj* and *Gandhian Political Approach*. These sub-chapters discusses about- the concept of majority and minority in democracy; political objective of non-violent democracy; decentralisation; *panchayat raj* and decentralised administration; rights and

duties; *Satyagraha* as a tool of political method; and non-cooperation and civil disobedience. These concepts are explained thus:

- Political conflict can be found between citizens, social groups as well as political representatives and political parties. The method presented by Gandhi in the field of politics is not based on power but based on spiritual values. It has acquired great relevance and significance in this modern era, as its foundation depends on the politics of power. If citizens are aware enough then democracy will surely move towards true self-government. A disciplined, responsible and aware democracy can become a true government of the people. Therefore, Gandhi's views regarding democracy cannot be taken lightly. Because true democracy is to be based on non-violence. Therefore, no perfect democracy is possible without perfect non-violence in principle behind it. A true democrat defends his freedom and that of the mankind. For Gandhi, decentralisation was - the best, quickest and most efficient way of building a country, from the bottom up, and for this purpose, Gandhi asked every educated Indian to go back to the village and build a prosperous India.
- Gandhi often used the words *Ramraj* and *Swaraj* for indicating his concepts of an ideal state and society. Gandhi's highest achievement in the field of political thought is the replacement of the ideal of the legal state by the moral state. *Panchayat raj* as a political structure operating at the village level comprises five members with the functional ability of legislature, executive and judiciary. This system suits to the modern requirements and contributes to the progress of the people from the grass-root village level.
- Gandhi established co-relation between the rights, duties and obligations. In establishing a moral order in the society, he integrated the rights of the individual with the duties. Gandhi used *Satyagraha* as a political weapon to fight against injustice and exploitation and to redress grievances. *Satyagraha* transforms the individual and society and ushered in a new socio-economic and political order which is non-exploitative, non-oppressive and which is governed by non-violence, Truth, Love, cooperation, equality and fraternity.

The concepts of non-cooperation and civil disobedience are offshoots of *Satyagraha* designed to fight against evil as a part of human duty to establish a just society.

Therefore, in the modern times, politics has become a means of change from one party to the other for their political gains and thus reducing the purpose of politics into a matter of business, corruption and exploitation further promoting hatred, antagonism and violence. *Satyagraha* as a political weapon resists non-violently against the evil of the society. The solutions *Satyagraha* finds are permanent and lasting, as it has its basis in love and truth. If the cause is good and the people are firm in their resolve and non-violently resist the evil and exploitation, success becomes a certainty.

The sixth chapter studies, “*Gandhian Resolution for Economical Conflict*”. This chapter is further divided into two sub-chapters, *Gandhian Approach to Economical Equality* and *Gandhian Solution for the Present Economical Crisis*. These sub-chapters discuss about the problem and solutions of rural and urban development; the role and significance of *Khadi*; regeneration of employment opportunities; relevance of *Swadeshi*; and the role and relevance of trusteeship in economical development have been dealt in this chapter. These concepts are explained as following:

- Gandhian economics aims to develop a framework of economic theories based upon Gandhian ideas and practices; considering that Gandhian ideals are not only relevant but are actually essential to the well-being and for conflict resolution between individuals, communities, societies and the world. By economical equality Gandhi meant only an approximate but not absolute equality. Gandhi stated that he would bring about economical equality through appealing to the reason of the people using the forces of Love, and an appeal to stand against hate and finally transforming them to his point of view and setting himself as an example for the same by reducing himself to the poorest of the poor. The present agrarian situations prevailing in the rural and urban economy indicate that the Gandhian type of rural and urban development process cannot be initiated successfully. *Khadi* seeks to revive the economy primarily to the needs of the village and make its people self-sufficient, remove unemployment and poverty, given it

gets necessary training in village industries and handicrafts. Gandhi was against big machines which save human labour; bring about unemployment, idleness and starvation. The mechanical civilisation of today considers man to be secondary and machines to be primary while for Gandhi man is primary and machines only as subordinate to man.

- Gandhi's advocacy of *Swadeshi* and trusteeship centers on the principles of economic self-reliance. The aim of the *Swadeshi* movement was to organise the rural masses to make them economically and socially self-reliant. Such a situation is based upon artificial stimulation of demands. Modern economical conflicts and international tensions of capitalism and communalism alike prompted Gandhi to develop a new economic philosophy.

Thus, as per the above discussions the appeal of reason and love helps to create an environment conducive to such awareness and self-purification. Gandhi held that non-violence could play a big role in establishing economical equality in which each individual can fulfill the needs of the society by becoming a trustee for himself and for others. This would remove all inequalities at both individual and social level and contribute to the welfare of all.

The last chapter is entitled as “*Application of Gandhian Method to Modern Time Conflict*”. The chapter is further divided into three sub-chapters: *Reoccurring Global Issues and Possible of Gandhian Solutions*, *Gandhian Development Model* and *Gandhian Method of Conflict Resolution: A Universal Method Approach*. These sub-chapters discussed about the modern world and the problem of terrorism; environmental crisis and challenges; Role of Industrialization in modern civilisation; human resource development; modern science and technology; *Satyagraha* is the new way of conflict resolution; conflict resolution through non-violence and message of world peace. These concepts are explained thus:

- We have all kinds of conflicts including war tensions, Naxalism, terrorism, communal, caste, regional and linguistic conflicts. These have become permanent features of our so called civilian life. Therefore, Gandhian principles are more relevant than ever in Indian society today. His philosophy on truth and non-violence has been accepted by world

politicians as a viable source of strength to resolve conflicts not only in the present world but of the future world as well. We can say that, in the modern industrial world the misguided youths without any respect for human values are on the increase. Due to lack of income, they resort to crimes for their sustenance. There is need to understand the problems of the terrorists, and their weak points and study their operations and techniques to suggest alternative methods and solve their problems amicably and non-violently. What the people in the modern times need is a different lifestyle - a lifestyle to live nobly a simple life in harmony with nature with the spirit of conservation of natural resources by developing a non-violent technology in the place of heavy industries which gives employment to the poor and needy, and reduces the problem of pollution to a greater extent. This can help to preserve the sanctity of the environment as well as save the humanity from the environmental crisis while enabling them to meet the environmental challenges non-violently and at same time makes our ecology sustainable. Gandhi was greatly influenced by Indian thought, life and value system. And prophesized that indiscriminate use of machines and technological development will destroy that value system. Therefore, he relentlessly opposed the increasing use of machines and had famously said, *Machine is for man, not man for machine*. Machines are after all machines, it must not be allowed to become the master of man.

- Mankind has steadily progressed towards Love and it is bound to progress further. All Gandhian ideas reflect a healthy image of the development of the human being and the nation. Hence, it is necessary to practice his philosophy for human development and for building a better society. Science and technology seems to be consistent with the Gandhian view of civilisation and society. The Gandhian path of scientific and technological reconstruction is a practical *Swadeshi* challenge to modern science and technology and its imperial campaign.
- The Gandhian method as a way of conflict resolution has existed for over a century. *Satyagraha* will be mainly examined as a non-violent dialogical process that strives for a creative, constructive and mutually agreed solution through both determination and openness and aims to resolve the underlying conflict. Non-violence plays an important

role in a stressed, weary and disturbed modern world. It carries with it the message of love and appeal for a change of heart that could result in the ultimate transformation for the betterment of modern society. Therefore, in place of violence and hatred, non-violence and love have to be brought together, to establish a new peaceful world order. World peace can be established only through non-violence.

Therefore, as we have pointed out that the Gandhian method has all the possibilities of resolving conflicts in a just and peaceful manner, its analysis becomes imperative if it is adopted in a refined form as the demands of time and place require. This is due to the fact that his philosophy holds more relevance and importance for the modern times than before as his ideals are laid down on the firm foundation of the immutable moral maxims like ‘truth, non-violence, *Satyagraha*, peace, love’ etc.

Finally, after accepting the reality of conflicts in men’s life, their source of emergence and continuous efforts, which human beings have been making through the ages for their resolution, now, we shall come to the prime problem of the thesis, which is – ‘*Locating a Gandhian Way to Resolve Conflicts*’. Undoubtedly, the ‘Truth, non-violence, *Satyagraha*’ based Gandhian way or the method remains, till today of significance and adaptability for resolving conflicts, and for finding solution to various - socio-political, economic, National or International problems. It will be so in the future as well.

Gandhi did not make any wall of separation between the social, economic, religious, political, National and International. For Gandhi, all facts of human endeavor are interconnected. Gandhi felt an urgent need to maintain a harmonious balance between the moral and the social; economic and political; National and international spheres so as to avoid the possible dominance of one region over another which may destroy the identity of one for the other. Thus, as in the past, Gandhi's ideals have been nurtured and practiced in modern times in India and other parts of the world, leading to widespread and lasting results.

This is due to the fact that his philosophy now holds ‘*more relevance and importance for the modern times than before*’, and since his ideals are laid down on the firm foundation of the immutable moral maxims like – ‘Truth, non-violence, *Satyagraha*, Peace, and Love’.

• **Suggestions**

This research has been completed through an analytical study of the relevance of Gandhian philosophy in resolving conflicts. It gives a clear idea as how Gandhian philosophy is relevant for conflicts resolutions. However some suggestions of Gandhian philosophy still need more exploration, these are as following:

- i. It is recommended that every educational institution should make students realise the feasibility and value of having Gandhian studies as an optional subject within the curriculum. It can be argued that we as a society have failed to understand the relevance, urgency and paramount need of Gandhian philosophy, something that can help to free our society from growing conflicts and violence. Let us encourage Gandhian studies as an urgent academic pursuit of public interest.
- ii. It is also suggested that the culture of peace and non-violence should be inculcated in the mind of the younger generation. Most notably, there should be no illusion like Gandhian studies are merely reverential and apologetic. But in fact, Gandhian studies are most suitable to our national brilliance alongside reserving a wide global acceptance.
- iii. Consequently, in today's time, it is essential to live Gandhian ideals more than merely following them. It is exceedingly rare to observe where both Gandhian theories and practices coherently meet in a single plot. Most certainly if we can mold these ideals into our lives, then we could get success in every sphere of life.
- iv. Finally, let's agree that we all have to live together in Love, Peace and Brotherhood to find a solution to whatever violence is happening today. India achieved independence in his times by following his path of Truth and non-violence. If we follow the path of Truth and non-violence taught by him, then there might never sustain any violence amongst us and within our minds.

By adopting the above Gandhian ideology and suggestions, may every person will be happy and prosperous.

- **Future Scope for Further Research**

This research can be carried forward in many other ways. There are still many areas that are not explored and need our attention. There are many aspects in Gandhian philosophy that deserve further exploration. This research offers several areas where further research works can be extended in the future.

Gandhian philosophy will remain relevant to all times, so there is a lot of potential for research on it in the future. The fact that these studies are still being read even after being written decades ago, ignites a curiosity in the minds of its readers. The authors wrote with such great enthusiasm that they still manage to gain new readers in the contemporary times.

Current research is useful for the students of Gandhian studies or anyone interested in Gandhian philosophy and ideologies. This research provides a fine example of Gandhian studies in every sphere such as - moral, social, economic, political, National and International. In other words, this research is helpful for the scholars interested in studying the Gandhian perspective with respect to present conflicts in every spheres of life.

The present research can also be found helpful for the students of Gandhian studies that have undertaken a survey of Gandhian philosophy for resolving present or reoccurring conflicts.

Therefore, I certainly do not wish to imply or suggest that there are no longer any problems or questions left in the Gandhian philosophy. On the contrary, I am very well aware of the fact that there are many more clarifications needed. But, I have tried to my level best, to sketch out '*a possible way of dealing with conflict resolution through Gandhian philosophy*', Also, I am well aware that this still can undergo a more prolonged and comprehensive treatment, to which I too must and shall return to continue with respect to my future analyses of Gandhian thought.

GLOSSORY

GLOSSORY

abhaya	fearlessness
ahimsa	nonviolence; love
anekantavada	many-sidedness
aparigraha	non-possession
ardhangini	wife, sahadharmini
ashram	a place of spiritual retirement, hermitage
asprishyatanivarana	removal of untouchability
asteya	non-stealing
asvada	control of the palate
bania	member of the trader caste of Hindus
bhagwadgita	see 'the gita'
bhakti	devotion
brahmacharya	celibacy, life of self-restraint
brahman, brahmin	member of the priestly caste or class among Hindus
buddha	founder of Buddhism
charkha	spinning-wheel
daridranarayan	God in the form of the poor
dayananda	swami dayananda sarasvati, founder of the arya samaj
dharma	religion, duty, law of one's being
gram panchayat	village tribune or 'council of five'
guru	teacher; preceptor; religious leader
harijan	people of the lord; formerly untouchables
hartal	temporary suspension of business by a large number of people as a mark of protest or mourning

himsa	violence
isaavasyopanishad	one of the major Upanishads which inculcates renunciation of the desire for the fruits of one's action
jainism	ancient Indian religion
jnani	followers of Jainism
kamaja	born of desire or love
khadi	hand-spun and hand-woven cloth
koran	book of revelation of Islam
krishna	central figure of the epic, Mahabharata
kshatriya	member of the warrior caste or class among Hindus
mahabharata	hindu epic of about 1,00,000 verses, the central theme of which is the great war between the Pandavas and their cousins the Kauravas, who were rival claimants to the throne of Hastinapur (ancient Delhi)
mahatma	a high-souled person
mahavir	vardhamana, 24th tirthankar or prophet of jainism
mantra	a sacred text or formula
nai talim	new education, pre-basic
nirvana	salvation, Buddhist equivalent of 'moksa'
niyama	rule; law; regulations
panchayat raj	rule of the panchayat
poorna swaraj	full self-government or complete independence raj kingdom, rule, regime
ram, rama	hero of the epic, Ramayana, who is regarded as an incarnation of God by Hindus
ramarajya	kingdom of rama, ideal social order
ramayana	hindu epic which relates the story of the abduction of sita, wife of Rama, prince of Ayodhya, by Ravana, demon-king of Lanka

rishi	sheer
sahadharmini	ardhangini; wife
samskaras	innate tendencies inherited from past life, religious customs
sanatanist	faithful follower of ancient vedic religion
sarvodaya	welfare of all
sat	absolute archetypal reality, eternal truth
satvika	tending to truth
satya	truth
satyagraha	clinging to truth; civil or nonviolent resistance
satyagrahi	civil or nonviolent resister
syadvada	the doctrine that all judgments are conditional
sharira-shrama	bread Labour
shastra	scripture
shudra	member of the menial caste among Hindus
smritis	the codes, based on recollection of the shastras
swaraj	self-government
swadeshi	belonging to or made in one's own country
tuldsidas	hindi poet-saint of northern India, who lived in the 16th century A.D. and whose work, Ramacharitamanasa, held in the highest by all Hindus
upanishads	ancient philosophical treatises which are believed by Hindus to contain revealed truth
vaishya	member of the cultivator and mercantile caste or class among Hindus
varna	a class, a caste
varnashrama	four-fold division of hindu society
vedanta	a system of philosophy springing from the upanishads

vedas	oldest scriptures of Hindus which are believed to embody revealed truth and which are divided into four books, Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda
vyabhichara	adulterer; adulterous;
yama	self-control; self-restraint
yajna	sacrifice
yoga	hindu system of contemplation for effecting union of the human soul with the supreme being
zamindar	landlord
zamindari	landlordism

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ANNEXURES

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EXPLORING THE GANDHIAN VIEW OF NON-VIOLENCE IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN CONTEXT

Amir Khan Ahmed*

ABSTRACT

Gandhi gave much importance to non-violence in India's independence movement because without it, he feared that it would flow into the channels of hatred and violence. If this happened, there would be more complicated problems that are difficult to be solved. At least Gandhi instructed the people to follow the method of non-violence as it is the final solution to all kinds of problems and conflicts in society, nation and the world. The contemporary practice of non-violence aims at the removal of the ills of Indian social system such as untouchability, human rights, peace and justice, mutual understanding and renewal of brotherhood. Obviously the practice of non-violence method at the national level can change the nature of the people and violent society. Thus, we can say that only the practice of non-violence method we can get success and peace. This paper attempts to critically discuss and analyze the similarity between the Gandhian practice of non-violence and its contemporary varieties.

Keywords : Gandhi, Non-violence, Satyagraha, Truth, Society, Contemporary Indian Context, Practice.

INTRODUCTION

“If the whole India accepted the eternal law of love, India will become the unquestioned leader of the whole world.”

(M.K. Gandhi)

Gandhi was not an academician, he was not a philosopher, he was not an economist or a sociologist, he was not a prophet and he was not a Sadhu. Gandhi was a very practical man who applied himself to the solution of all everyday and small problems. Gandhi was, after all, a single man who guided millions of Indians against the mighty empire with weapons of non-violence. Gandhi was unique in showing a new method to solve the complex problems of the world when non-violence occupied the most space in his life. It was indeed a great mission of his life to educating people in non-violence.

For Gandhi God, truth, non-violence, beauty, infinite, unborn and indomitable, absolute bliss, are all one and the same. He experimented with truth and also experimented with the practiced non-violence (Mehta,

1987, p. 63). Truth is an abstract concept, non-violence has a physical aspect also and it would be easier for us to understand Gandhi's ideas within the framework of non-violence. Gandhi mentioned,

“I have been a 'gambler' of my life. In my passion for finding truth and in relentlessly following out my faith in non-violence, I have counted no stake too great. In doing so, I have erred, if at all, in the company of the most distinguished scientist of any age and claim” (Gandhi, 1930, p. 61).

Gandhi's first experiment in the field of non-violent resistance against evil was in South Africa, where a large number of people were involved in the struggle for their rights and justice against their government. The Satyagraha campaign of Indians was directed in this direction. The Satyagraha campaign in South Africa began in 1906 and continued until 1914. In this perspective, Gandhi said,

“Events were so shaping themselves in Johannesburg as to make this self-purification on my part

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a preliminary as it were to Satyagraha. I can now see that all the principle events of life, culminating in the vow of brahmacharya, were surreptitiously preparing me for it. The theory called Satyagraha came into existence before that name was made-up” (Gandhi, 2015, p. 294).

In the end, the Indian community emerged victorious using the method of non-violence or Satyagraha. Before the Satyagraha campaign started in South Africa, Indians had complaints about a number of issues - political, social and economic. Earlier, after being followed by South African government, the Indian community was a silent spectator of the policy of ruthless oppression. Originally with a non-violent method succeeded and independence was achieved. Thus, non-violence as a technique of opposing injustice gained great value on the national level.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Few books, journals and newspapers have been reviewed to focus on the present study. Some books and articles are as follows:

Sunanda Sharma (2017) in her article *Gandhi Strategy: Combination of Truth, sacrifice, Violence and Solidarity*, discussed that, “by adopting nonviolence, social, political, economic and religious conflicts shall be removed. Undoubtedly, the social doctrine of nonviolence that has emerged from Gandhian ideas has now become the key to forge and sustain the new social and political order. Today, there is need to adopt Gandhian philosophy and ideology in overall world to remove all kind of problems and creating peaceful environment. Gandhi is not the past, he is the future. He is an early sign of what we can be” (Sharma, 2017, p. 2).

Apu Sutradhar (2018) in his article *Truth and Non-violence: A Gandhian Concept*, mentioned that, “Gandhi, being a vibrant visionary, could easily see the consequence of colonization on the mind of the colonized people. He knew that people would remain mentally enslaved even though they became politically free. To maintain the integrity of the people of his nation he coupled non-violence with the search for truth. However, when we thoroughly observe the current sociopolitical situations of Indians we still find that they are in the domain of complete enslavement and politically unfree.

Gandhi's dream of freedom and non-violence still remains unfulfilled in the 21st century” (Sutradhar, 2018, p. 29).

However, understanding and philosophical analysis of the present study has been attempted. From several perspectives, the present study will try to fill this gap with the discussions below.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the similarity between the Gandhian practice of non-violence and its contemporary varieties.
- To explore the Gandhian view of non-violence in the contemporary Indian context.
- To identify the Gandhian non-violence is still relevant for contemporary India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary sources have been used in this study. Research materials were collected and thereafter analyzed through the Gandhian perspectives. The materials are collected from various books, research journals, magazines and from the relevant websites. Therefore, the analytical and descriptive method used in this study.

DISCUSSION

Non-violence, which is the first human importance, is also a natural importance and permanent. It has played an important role in India's immensity, particularly from the viewpoint I discussed earlier. It is non-violence that has brought energy in the life of Indians. It directs their day-to-day behavior in such a way as to ensure their survival; their struggles, inevitable in daily life, have transformed and settled. Furthermore, it has ever given new scope to the process of collaboration, resulting in unprecedented and unending development in various walks of life.

Now, before deeply discussing India and non-violence, it is essential for us to make clear the meaning of non-violence and the major Indian concepts related to it.

The Indian Etymology :

According to the Indian etymology, Ahimsa (non-violence) comprises the following three elements:

- A
- Hims and

- A(Kumar, 2013, p. 20).

Like the English word non, 'A' in Indian language also denotes the negative position of the word concerned. Clearly speaking after any place as a prefix makes the opposed meaning of the word clear. For example, Asahayog, Asvikar or Amaryaadit (Kumar, 2013, p. 20).

Hims, as is evident, again (as a suffix of nominal), divides the state of Himsa (violence), that is, the perform of hurting others and spoiling life in any shape (Kumar, 2013, pp. 20-21).

Indian scholars have been discussing Himsa (violence) extensively since ancient times. On the basis of these explanations and examination of Himsa (violence), they are also trying to identify Ahimsa (non-violence). As a result, in both East and West, many outstanding, distinctive and commendable concepts of non-violence have evolved over time. Most concepts developed in the East belong to India. The importance of non-violence as ultimate human values has been explained by Indian scholars and thinkers. Since ancient times, they have made it the basis of their day-to-day practices by thorough analysis with the sole purpose of motivating people, because existence, wealth and harmony, is possible through the constant practice of non-violence.

Non-violence holds its appropriate place in philosophy associated to the four major Indian religious communities- Hindu (Vedic), Jain, Buddhist and Sikh (Kumar, 2013, p. 22). In fact, non-violence is considered as the highest human honor. Not only this, while ancient times, but non-violence has played an important position in the life of followers of religious communities like Hindu (Vedic), Jain, Buddhist and Sikh. In a comprehensive way, it can be said that non-violence is the major point in the daily behavior of almost all Indians. Gandhi pointed out,

“I must be dismissed out of considerations. My religion is a matter solely between my Maker and myself. If I am Hindu, I cannot cease to be one even though I may be disowned by the whole of the Hindu population. I do however suggest that non-violence is the end of all religions” (Gandhi, 1924, p. 175).

The Gandhian concept of non-violence not only indicates a good co-ordination between India and the rest of Asia have concepts of non-violence, but it also synthesizes various concepts of East and West. Moreover, apart from maintaining its distinct identity, it harmonizes between the non-violence concepts of ancient, medieval and the contemporary times. In this perspective, Gandhi pointed out, “I hold that non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like the other virtues. Surely society is largely regulated by the expression of non-violence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale” (Gandhi, 1939, p. 417). That is why; I have repeatedly said that Gandhi gave a great aspect to the theory and practice of non-violence.

India is an active civilization. It has maintained its unique position in the world, and today it has its own uniqueness and role to play. Without any doubt, India should move ahead with the eternal and natural value of non-violence as its center. India is an active civilization. It should lead the world by playing its role in international affairs, and turn it into reality based on Gandhi's message.

From the above discussions, we can realize that the only hope in our chaotic environment is the path of truth and non-violence. Because non-violence will always remain a good model to achieve. We feel that more than ever before, the relevance of the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi to have more relevance in modern times.

Non-violence in the Contemporary Indian Context:

Human being basically wants peace, security, freedom and property that are at stake in the times of war. Violence is the major characteristic of war. By propounding the philosophy of non-violence, Gandhi gave a new dimension to the future of humanity and also gave a possible answer to many serious problems. He believed that, “The path of true non-violence requires much more courage than violence” (Gandhi, 1946, pp. 248-249). He proved his success to a large extent in his personal life and in the national struggle for independence in India. Gandhi expressed himself,

“I venture to suggest, in all humility, that if India reaches her destiny through truth and non-violence, she will have made no small contribution to the world peace

for which all the nations of the earth are thirsting and she would also have, in that case, made some slight return for the help that those nations have been freely giving to her” (Gandhi, 1931, p. 31).

Today there is talk of national integration in India. Gandhi's spiritual outlook on his concept of non-violence is a good enough answer to the current problems of national disintegration in Indian society. There is no overall feeling in India today and different regions have a tendency to be concerned only with their specific problems only in a narrow way. When people behave like this they forget the basic fact that there can be no difference between one person and another only on the basis of caste or region. Moving fast on the road to disintegration, Contemporary India should take a lesson from Gandhi's non-violence. Not only India but the whole world should take this lesson and reduce its suffering, trials and tribulations. Gandhi stated,

“Individuals or nations who would practice non-violence must be prepared to sacrifice there all except honor. It is, therefore, inconsistent with the possession of other people's countries, i.e., modern imperialism, which is frankly for its defense” (Gandhi, 1936, p. 236).

Gandhi's non-violence is important because if it is currently chosen by the people as political action, his future will be bright. He performed an important duty because his concept of non-violence brought the world closer to the peace and brotherhood of mankind. Now it is for the world's leading politicians to choose the right path. In the past, humanity was not faced with such a great danger of being annihilated. The need for the hour is that man should try to rise above his feelings of jealousy, hatred and fear and by doing so he should try to save his culture from being destroyed by the poison of disharmony. If he is able to do so, he will move towards peace and prosperity otherwise there will be a lot of confusion for him. We have to choose one of the two paths. 'One leads to anarchy, to violence and to death. The other leads to Government, to peace and to life' (Gaur, 1977, p. 133).

It is quite difficult to say whether non-violence can be applied in every situation. Yet if his message is followed, the world would be a superior place to live.

Pandit Nehru commented on Gandhi, “I have no doubt that in the distant as in the near future this towering personality will stand out and compel homage” (Tendulkar, 1951, p. 12).

Clearly, Gandhi is dynamic for non-violence; is actually a dynamic power of the uppermost order, and is in fact a spiritual force. Furthermore, it is absolutely free from every prejudices. Relatively, its eternal nature is advancing. Integrity, acceptance of compromising position and readiness in the current perspective are among its key features, which are indubitably extremely important in the contemporary Indian perspective. And, when these uniqueness connect the acid test of Gandhian non-violence, its viability increases manifolds. This status gives Gandhian non-violence a unique place and inspires people to imagine seriously about it and adopt their everyday ways to create human life more prosperous and peaceful.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Thus, to conclude this paper, it can be said that non-violence is used internationally or nationally and can miraculously change the nature of the people by producing public sentiment and good nature. Because non-violence created an atmosphere of friendship rather than bitterness. One of the most important developments of the twentieth century has been the development and extends of non-violent action techniques. The result of non-violent practice always remains a source of inspiration to change the nation for those who are seriously engaged in changing themselves to change what they want to see in the nation. People should implement Gandhian non-violence in their behavior, which ensures their personal freedom and is free from all kinds of conflicts.

If Gandhian non-violence is not used in contemporary India, then all cultural traditions will gradually be eradicated. Our nation will be desolate and nothing precious will be left. If efforts have not yet been made to protect his civilization, it may be too late in the future. People should try to follow Gandhi's idea because the non-violent approach is the answer to current problems. Non-violence is the only way to remove all kinds of present-day conflicts.

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CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL ISSUES : THE GANDHIAN WAY OF SOLUTIONS

Amir Khan Ahmed*

ABSTRACT

The modern world is facing some crisis due to violence, terrorism, ecological imbalances, rising tensions, and wars. For all these reasons the modern world is going through a difficult time. Whenever there is a problem, we can find a solution in a Gandhian way. Because the Gandhian way is more relevant in establishing a new and peaceful world. During his time, he faced many social, religious, political, and economic problems and tried his best to solve them based on non-violent methods and was quite successful. Gandhi demonstrated the practical applicability of non-violence to all fields of human endeavor and its usefulness throughout the world. Therefore, in the modern context, non-violence is more relevant to solve all the global issues. So, the Gandhian views of the present world systems need to be considered, as it is the only ideology that is relevant today. In my present paper, I will discuss contemporary global issues such as the evil effects of modern civilization, the problem of unemployment and non-violence and global peace. I will try to solve all these contemporary global issues with the help of Gandhian ways.

Keywords : Gandhi, Non-violence, Modern Civilization, Unemployment, Peace, Violence.

INTRODUCTION

Humanity is going through a very difficult period. People all over the world are constantly living in fear and insecurity. The modern world is facing many crises due to violence, terrorism, ecological imbalances, rising tensions, and wars that are interlinked. Some contemporary issues like environment its sustainability and challenges, steps towards a non-violent world, bad effects of modern civilization, harmony between religious groups, the problem of terrorism and violence, the problem of unemployment, etc. In the 21st century when the world is facing many global issues in every aspect of human life, Gandhi's thoughts and ideas are very relevant. For this, Gandhi is being appreciated in this war-weary of today. He said, "The virtue of mercy, non-violence, love, and truth can be truly tested in any man on when they are stands against ruthlessness violence, hate, and untruth" (Gandhi, 1942, p. 85). His thoughts and ideas are applicable to establish a new social order based

on love, peace, and non-violence.

During his own time, Gandhi was confronted with many social, political and, economic problems and he tried his best to solve them based on the non-violent method and was considerably successful. The influence of his parents especially his mother left him a lasting memory of saintliness, religiosity, and practice of truth and he never deviated from these values since childhood. The experience he had with his father helped him learn ways and means to solve the most complex problems. This experience helped him to solve the national problems and find solutions to global issues in his later life.

Gandhi showed the significance and applicability of truth, non-violence, and love in the most unique way as a solution to a modern world ridden to many evils and problems. It is because that "love does not burn others, it burns itself" (Gandhi, 1968, p. 78). Violence can be eliminated only through truth, non-violence, and love.

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Gandhi said,

“The first step in non-violence is that we cultivate in our daily life, between ourselves, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving-kindness. Non-violence is an unchangeable creed. It has to be pursued in the face of violence spread around you. Non-violence is not a virtue with a non-violent man. It becomes difficult to say whether it is non-violence at all. But when it is pitched against violence, then one realizes the distinction between the two. We cannot do this until we are ever restless, ever attentive, ever determined” (Gandhi, 1938, p. 64).

Gandhi demonstrated the practical applicability of non-violence in every field of human endeavor and its usefulness throughout the world. Gandhi interpreted non-violence in a new perspective and applicable in the religious-moral, socio-economic, and political spheres of this world. The technique of non-violence is a way of life for humanity at large and helps to achieve permanent and lasting global peace. The Gandhian way of the present world order needs to be seriously considered, as it is the only ideology that will solve all contemporary global issues.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Few books and articles have been reviewed to focus on the present study. A few books and articles are as follows :

Ananth Kumar & N. Vijayalakshmi (2016) in his article *Relevance of Gandhian Philosophy in the 21st Century*, highlighted that, “Gandhian philosophy is not only simultaneously political, moral, and religious, but also traditional and modern, simple and complex. There is much that is not new at all. After many years of martyrdom, Gandhi is no more globally relevant than before. His relevance in various fields is undeniable. For a human being to survive, an act on our part requires that he open his advice because only on his relevance, we shall survive together or if we fail in our venture, we are destroyed together” (Kumar & Vijayalakshmi, 2016, p. 8).

Douglas Allen (2019) in his book *Gandhi after 9/11: Creative Non-violence and Sustainability*, he pointed out that, “My central claim is that Gandhi's

writings, philosophy, and practices, when selectively appropriated and creatively reformulated and applied, are essential for formulating new positions that are more non-violent, more sustainable, and provide invaluable resources and hope for dealing with our contemporary personal, social, economic, environmental, and other crises” (Allen, 2018, p. 4).

Sanjeev Kumar (2019) in his article *Gandhi's Relevance in the 21st Century*, stated that, “Gandhi provides us with the most profound and influential theory, philosophy, and contemporary practices of non-violence, as well as dealing with other multifarious challenges that confront humanity today” (Kumar, 2019, p. 12).

However, understanding and philosophical analysis of the present study has been attempted. From several perspectives, the present study will try to fill this gap with the discussions below.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find some Gandhian tools or methods this will help to solve the contemporary global issues.
- To know that Gandhian philosophy is necessary for the establishment of a new peaceful world.
- To examine the Gandhian philosophy is still relevant for present-day conflicts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present paper is based on both primary and secondary sources. The materials were collected from various books, research journals, relevant websites, magazines, and the use of the library. This paper is an attempt to analyze the contemporary global issues through Gandhian philosophy. Therefore, analytical and descriptive methods are used in this paper.

DISCUSSION

When we talk about contemporary global issues, many things come to our mind. Such as the effects of modern civilization, the problem of unemployment and non-violence and global peace, etc. With the help of the Gandhian way, I will try to solve all these contemporary global issues.

Effects of Modern Civilization :

The process of modernization has brought many effects on our lives. Here we have tried to analyze

modernization keeping in mind the changes in our lifestyle. Modernization involves a wide range of aspects such as economic specialization, political secularism, urbanization, particularly the inauguration of mobility through expanding proper education, the increase of a extremely differentiated political formation, the cultural and value systems differentiation, and the development of extension communication networks. Modernization has led to the rapid industrialization of the nation, thus the exploitation of natural resources resulted in a great threat to human existence. While Gandhi has not entirely rejected the different values for which modernization stands, He sees a danger in blind quest of these values and highly adopts the principle of modernization.

Gandhi's modern civilization is widely criticized in his book *Hind Swaraj*, in his own words, *Hind Swaraj* is a brutal criticism of modern civilization. In his book, he debated not only in Western countries but also among Indians. His *Hind Swaraj* is a warning against an insane caste following the wrong model of modernization, materialism, and development based on cottage industries. He followed non-violence, emphasized the moral aspects of life and limited human desire and fought for freedom and equality for the poor, disparate status control over individuals, pleaded for *Swaraj*, explained the concept of 'trusteeship' for the welfare of all, opposed big industries to save cottage and Khadi. All these concepts flow directly or indirectly, from the focus of centralization. According to Gandhi,

“Civilization is the mode of conduct that points man to the path of duty. Performance of duty and adherence to morality are variable terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. Therefore, we know ourselves” (Gandhi, 2017, p. 29).

Unrestricted industrial and population increase, it warns, the breakdown of society and life support systems on this planet should be the reason. The Gandhian way of life finds enough relevance in any society in the world-western, socialist, or under-developed. Therefore, modernization should be associated with ecological problems. Modernization includes rapid industrialization in each sector. This development movement in India has

moved on a resource-intensive path, rejecting the conception of 'small is beautiful'. This has severely disrupted the ecological sustainability of life sustain systems that have been maintained for centuries. Environmental consciousness is extremely important in the process of modernization in India today.

The simple suggestion is that we need sustainable development. There is a need to shift the overall concept of development, and from mechanistic to holistic and mass production to domestic production. Simple living and high thinking can resolve lots of problems related to the environment. Gandhi has given many answers to today's questions in his suggestions about the proper use of air, water and soil. The need is to reflect on his ideas and exercise control of the 'self' to keep the Earth cleaner and make sure sustainable development. It can be concluded by saying that environmental challenges provide a turning point in the field of humanitarian approaches to development and modernization.

Problems of Unemployment :

The problem of unemployment is the most burning problem in the world. In comparison with other countries of the world, the problem of unemployment in India has become more acute and this is reducing the vitality of the people. This problem is the direct or indirect creation of centralized big factory's labor-saving machines, private ownership, over population, capitalism, inequality in social status, early marriage, caste system, joint family, defective educational systems, short-sighted political ideas, lack of manual labor, etc.

Gandhi was against those machines which save human labor, bring about unemployment, idleness, and starvation. Instead of big machines, he was in favor of these simple tools and instruments that could be easily made, easily purchased, easily repaired in the locality, and easily handled by all. Today's mechanical civilization considers humans as secondary and machines as primary. Gandhi considered the man to be primary and machines to be secondary. The preceding attitude cannot, whereas the latter may solve the problem of unemployment.

The greatest role in meeting the problem of unemployment is the suggestion of Gandhi's bread labor. According to his principle of bread labor, everyone has to

depend on compulsory labor for bread. There will no unemployment as soon as people will realize this fact. Everybody will engage himself in some productive manual labor. Agriculture and village industries provide a lot of opportunity for bread labor. They provide employment to local men and women. They are the backbone of non-violent society and state. In Gandhi's words,

“The revival of village industries for the production of articles of everyday use and the utilization of the limitless capital as labor is now lying unused which is the best and only means for the achievement of this goal” (Gandhi, 1957, p.7).

Khadi comes first in various village industries as a subsidiary to agriculture. Production of Khadi will include cotton growing, dyeing, weaving, spinning, warping, etc., and as such it will provide employment to starved and semi-starved millions. So Khadi should struggle till all are not employed. Khadi will put an end to exploitation, misery, poverty, and starvation. Therefore, Gandhi suggested the machinery to be displaced from its state of uniqueness and exploitation.

But Khadi alone cannot solve the problem of unemployment. Therefore, other existing or dead village industries should also be revived. In Gandhi's words, “But Khadi is not the only struggling industry. So, I suggest you to direct your attention and efforts to all the small scale, unorganized industries that they are today in need of public support” (Gandhi, 1948, p. 7). Besides Khadi, all great and small, organized and unorganized industries silken and woolen cloth industry, match-making, shoe-making, paper-making, rope-making, pottery-making, tailoring, tanning, carpentry, needle work, embroidery, metal industries, etc., should also be revived for achieving the goal of employment.

The above account presents a picture of the Gandhian way of solving the acute problem of unemployment.

Non-violence and Global Peace :

The issue of peace assumes greater significance than before in modern times. Peace is not only considered a state of absence of war, stress, tension, conflict, and disturbance, but it is a positive position of contentment,

bliss, and love. The concept of peace has been endlessly discussed at the national and international levels by politicians, thinkers, and social reformers. They have struggled relentlessly to find the possible solutions to end internal and external wars between the nations and within the nations. It is more relevant and appropriate to give serious thought to the establishment of enduring and lasting peace in this world.

Gandhi studied the concept of non-violence deeply and considered it to be the basic principle of human existence. He conducted many experiments with non-violence and applied it to solve national and international problems. He demonstrated in front of the whole world that non-violence is the only undeniable way to achieve peace and tranquility and is clearer. Gandhi says,

“A new peaceful world order involves the successful application of non-violence, a great deal of moral strength, and the readiness to undergo self-suffering on the part of the person who enforces it. The success of the application of non-violence depends on the conviction of the person who has to be gradual, with the view that one step is enough for me. The beginning will be small and the rest will follow” (Gandhi, 1939, p. 442).

Gandhi presented non-violence which is the purest, the highest and the most inspiring ideal so that people can live in peace and progress. Gandhi had a strong faith in man. He was hopeful that the future world would be a world of peace, free from wars and bloodshed based on non-violence. He said that non-violence is the means and truth is the end. He says that “non-violence is not the goal. Truth is the goal. But we have no means of understanding the truth in human relations except in the practice of non-violence” (Gandhi, 1946, p. 119). He was confident of lasting peace. He says that “if there is peace in the world, then non-violence is the means to that end and no other” (Gandhi, 1949, p. 670). His advocacy of non-violence is closely linked to his attitude towards ends and means.

The world is dominated by the politics of power, the balance of power, diplomatic relations, and other obstacles. Therefore, non-violence and love have to be replaced by violence and hatred to establish a new peaceful world. The observance of non-violence is an

absolute necessity in the modern world. Gandhi said that “unless now the world adopts non-violence, it is definitely suicide for mankind” (Gandhi, 1946, p. 335). Therefore there is no option for human beings but to practice non-violence and to realize the truth and to experience peace in this modern world.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In the above discussion, we can say that Gandhi's ideas were not only relevant to his time, but they are very relevant and necessary for the present as well as the future. His life is itself a message of saving our earth for the people. Gandhi's outstanding contribution lies in his presentation of truth and non-violence. Non-violence plays an important role in the tension-ridden, weary and, disturbing the modern world. It carries with it, the message of love and the change of heart to result in the ultimate transformation of the modern society for its betterment. Therefore, non-violence and love have to be brought together in place of violence and hatred to establish a new peaceful world. So people have to follow a non-violent method to get solutions from contemporary global issues. There is a need to examine how Gandhian ideals have been followed in India as well as other parts of the world and how they take a new shape in their social action against the existing order based on violence and exploitation. Gandhian ideology poses many challenges, theoretically and practically. The reason for this is that his philosophy has more relevance and importance than modern times because his ideals are laid on the true

foundation of unchanging moral maxims and the foundation of truth and non-violence.

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