

Relevance of Gandhian Ideology in Conflict Resolution

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After the end of Second World War, international issues became very active to resolve the conflicts, at all the levels and to establish peace. Today, the entire world particularly the developing countries are passing through a period of transition in which the rate of change is very fast, leading to great uncertainty and insecurity in the minds of the people. Modern world is full of multidimensional and multidisciplinary conflicts involving use of physical and psychological tools. Though everyone is aiming at the conflict free world, but conflicts are at their highest level of history. Conflict resolution aims at the elimination of the source of conflict. The history of mankind shows how great men have always struggled and fought against prevailing social evils and human sufferings. Out of those men in human history, the twentieth century produced one outstanding personality- Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi taught, the people of India, it's very first lessons of peace, tolerance, truth

& non-violence, Satyagraha, the non-cooperation movement, the quit India Movement, the Dandi March, and of belief in one's own faith. Gandhi responded to the challenges of the given historical situations, realized the historical necessities of their time and tried to actualize the needs and aspirations of the people of his times in his own ways. Gandhiji tried to evolve a revolutionary approach to political and social change. His originality lay in the formulation of a new technique of non-violent, non-cooperation and Satyagraha for social action. Gandhi had given his theories on resolving the conflicts to this changing world.

Our aim of this study has been to understand the Gandhian philosophy of conflict resolution. We find out that Gandhi's approach is still very relevant in modern complex resolution. Conflict resolution is the distinctive field in the peace research area. It is a problem solving method in order to restore peace and harmony



to situations where it has been disturbed. Conflict resolution theory is more applicable in international, regional, group and personal level issues. In the 21st century when the world is facing violence and terrorism in every aspect of human life, the ideas and thoughts of Gandhi are found to be very relevant. There have so many problems such as racism, proliferation of nuclear weapons, increased armament industry, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty etc. His ideas and thoughts are applicable to establish a new social order based on love and violence. There existed a belief that peace could never be attained without an equal division of power and an equal distribution of the resources that sustains power. This concept which was especially concerned with justice and an analysis of structural violence brought about a new development in peace research area.

Gandhi was the one of the greatest leader in the last millennium. The life of the Gandhi was guided by certain fundamental principles like truth, non-violence, ends and means, and human goodness. Gandhi is the maker of modern independent India as

a Republic. He rejuvenated Indian politics and spirituality; he is the pioneer of modern non-violence. He expressed his innovative knowledge in various fields. Gandhian concept of Satyagraha is the most effective solution in various problems that existed in our society. Gandhi formed Satyagraha in the basis of spiritual and moral values. The concepts of Satyagraha and conflict resolution are closely related. Satyagraha, the Gandhian principle based on truth and non-violence is itself a conflict resolving mechanism. Satyagraha is a method of conflict resolution based on nonviolent resistance directed against injustice, corruption and unjust laws of the society and state. It provide for peaceful resistance to social and political authority. Resistance on individual or massive basis, focused to change the society and politics. His Satyagraha was designed not only for India, but for the whole world, it could transform the relation between individual, as well as between communities and nations. The most peculiar nature of Satyagraha with its consistent emphasis on non-violence in thought and action is clearly seen when contrasted with the major political upheavals of contemporary



world with their equally consistent record of violence, brutality and terror.

According to Gandhi, Non-violence is an essential condition of existence, development and achievement of the life's goal. Perhaps for the first time in the entire human history Gandhi applied non-violence in its refined form and as per the demand of time and space in the political sphere. He adopted non-violence as a means to achieve unprecedented success. He established with certainty that on the strength of nonviolence, evils like exploitation, inequality and slavery could be eliminated. All kinds of estrangements, disputes, conflicts, hostilities and struggles could be settled amicably whereby conflict and disagreement could be transformed into a state of harmony and peace. Gandhi applied his method of non-violent resistance not only against foreign rule, but against social evils such as racial discrimination and untouchability. Indeed, he claimed that nonviolence lay at the root of all his activities, and his mission in life was not merely the freedom of India but the brotherhood of man. Gandhian

principle of Non-violence is very relevant in our times because non-violence is a very fundamental belief. So, the Gandhian principle of non-violence has to become the most important thought of which everyone should believe and practice to have a peaceful world.

Gandhian Satyagraha and his concept of conflict resolution is more relevant in recent times, this study is mainly focus on international, social, religious, economical and political conflicts. Gandhian point of view says violence cannot solve any issues at international, social, religious, economical and political levels. Tit for tat is not the proper way of Gandhian Satyagraha. It makes endless cycle of violence. Using violence, people try to solve the dispute by targeting and conquering the opponent. Violence deliberately harms the opponent in order to challenge the opponent's defeat or destruction. Destruction is the key element of violence, it occurs in destruction of people's bodies, destruction of people's psyches, destruction of property. But non-violence helps create the conditions of meaningful conflict resolution. It does

not inflict pain to any issues. The object of non-violence is to use methods of self sacrifice that are designed to melt the hardest of hearts in the opponent and it also converts him.

Undoubtedly each and every person or we should say every citizen of the global family, ought to be committed to peace in today's human predicament, caused by conflict due to Ideological Extremism, Religious Fundamentalism, Misguided Nationalism, Economic Injustice and Inequality. Violation of Human Rights, Suppression of Freedoms, Militarism of Power Politics, Population Explosion, Racial and Ethical Discrimination, Egoism and uncontrolled human instincts etc. Gandhi recognized the potentiality these various kinds of conflict as occasion to contemplate over the confirmed problems and also as opportunity, to search peaceful means to resolve them, because of his positive attitude. He knew very well that the process of conflict resolution involved the painstaking the task of reconstructing the present world by liberating the human mind from dogmatism of various kinds such as

economic, social diversity, political barbarism, religious bigotry etc. Our need is to proclaim again and again the significance of Gandhi pacifism to solve crucial problems of conflict and violence. Gandhi recognized the potentiality these various kinds of conflict as occasion to contemplate over the confirmed problems and also as opportunity, to search peaceful means to resolve them, because of his positive attitude.

The relevance of Gandhism and conflict resolution is increasing day to day in every quarter of our society. Gandhian concept of conflict resolution provides remedy to the various conflicts and tensions existing in contemporary world. Conflict resolution is very much relevant in the present world. In recent times we have been facing lot of challenges in various parts of the world. Every country faces a lot of internal and external threat. In the twenty-first century, serious problems like proliferation of nuclear weapons, ethnic conflict, religious conflict, terrorism, and ecological destructive form a threat to human survivals. Gandhian concept of conflict



resolution is a peaceful method with a nonviolent outlook.

In the some rising specter of conflicts which face India today, *communal violence, the Moist challenge, violence in the Kashmir valley and in some of the North-Eastern states, farmers' protests against land acquisition, movement against corruption, the threat of terrorism*, how far can Gandhian methods be applied? There are no short cuts finding out what a Gandhian solution to a particular contemporary problem would have been, there is no ideological document to which easy reference can be made. We can go back to a particular Satyagraha as an example to be emulated but each situation is different and has its own specificity. Methods used in resisting a foreign government may not be appropriate in an independent country. How do you resist injustice in a parliamentary democracy? However, Gandhi's concept of non-violent protest, emphasis on means as ends in themselves, the insistence on conversion of the opponent rather than coercion are recognized as valid and usable weapons in conflict

situations. According to Gandhi, debate, discussion, dialogue, persuasion, were the best ways to deal with a conflict situation. He laid stress on compromise, consensus, winning over the opponent rather than overt clashes. Avoid violent conflicts and find out areas of agreement that could lead to a settlement remained central to his technique. Opposing points of view could coexist without leading to violence. In a conflict situation, when compromise is not possible or desirable, then the task of the exponent of non-violent means as to assist the oppressed people to become empowered by learning to apply Satyagraha to change their situation.

Gandhi did more than anyone else in advancing the development of a non-violent struggle in the twentieth century. He and the movement in which he was involved contributed to a world-wide recognition of the existence of the potential of non-violence as a means of solving conflicts. This is the Gandhian method for solving conflicts and building peace.



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