CHAPTER III

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT : A GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Introduction

The major trend of socio-economic development in the twentieth century had been towards the displacement of socialist systems by free market economics. With the withering away of the Soviet Union and the dethronement of communist parties in Russia and East Europe the communist model stood discredited. The capitalist model, on the other hand, though triumphant worldwide, brought to the fore the problems involved in unbridled exploitation of the earth’s resources and the sharing of these resources among the nations of the world. There was felt the need to rethink the issue of the norms and modes of development planning, to redefine man’s relation to his environment and at a more fundamental level still, to reformulate an ethic of human relationships appropriate to an over-organized,
techno-centric society. It is in this context that the Gandhian conception of social organisation acquires a new urgency and relevance. The Gandhian model is based on the practice of truth and non-violence, on the recognition of the sanctity of the individual human person, and on the unity and harmony between all forms of life and their material environment. A society that adopted the Gandhian paradigm would evolve a social order better equipped to meet technology’s relentless thrust towards exploitation of natural and human resources.

Gandhiji’s writings show how widely his thoughts ranged on these issues. “There was hardly- any-political, social, religious, labour, industrial or other problem, which did not come under his purview. There was hardly any aspect of life in India which he did not influence and fashion according to his own pattern.”

With the passage of time Gandhiji’s ideas have attracted an ever-broadening circle. Gandhian values have often been invoked to solve crises arising from social, political conflicts. His philosophy of action and value is emerging as a credible alternative to secular, scientific ideologies in solving such issues as those between affluence and poverty, freedom and repression, technology and man, social relations and alienation. Although Gandhian philosophy is clear and uncomplicated in conception and formulation, its simplicity can be exaggerated. Problems of individual and social lives were deeply pondered and solutions found that incorporated the wisdom of generations of Indian thinkers and sages. For this reason his views on human relations may be studied with advantage by those planning development strategies.
3.2 Conceptual Framework

J. D. Sethi pertinently remarks:

What Gandhiji was looking for was not a system but a framework of concepts and values, as well as a method to arrive at them so that many a system could be built upon them for the immediate present and for the many future stages of development in the unfolding or fulfilling of human destiny. This to my mind is the central fact about Gandhiji and any system or model based on the Gandhian approach would, by definition, have to be dynamic and historically limited, while being firmly based, in all stages on his framework of concepts and values.

These basic concepts and values must then be taken into account in any discussion of Gandhian social philosophy. Equally, a study of the Gandhian approach to management especially human resources management has to start with his basic value system and philosophy of life.

The difficulty one faces in analyzing Gandhiji’s concept and ideas is that he did not propound his thoughts on management in a systematic and consistent way. He stressed only the basic values and broad general principles without attempting a systematic exposition. The general principles are not discussed as such but only referred or alluded to in connection with problems he had to tackle from time to time. He developed his principles in and through contact with practical life while dealing with contemporary problems and finding solutions to pressing challenges. He was a man of action, a shrewd leader but not a theoretician.
Gandhiji’s approach to management is based on his approach to life and society. It was a philosophy of life and organisation. It envisages a new social structure and a system of organisation based on non-violence, the welfare of all, the sharing of responsibilities and fruits of production as well as decision making.\textsuperscript{iv} His approach was distinctly humanistic and spiritual whatever be the field of activity. His was an ideology that had direct practical implications. The empathetic approach that Gandhiji took in the Ahmedbad mill strike and the Champaran struggle is a classic instance of his philosophy in action. The Mahatma was keen to protect the dignity and spiritual integrity of workers and others involved in the struggle. At the termination of the Kheda Satyagraha campaign Gadhiji wrote. “The end of a Satyagraha campaign can be described as worthy only when it leaves the Satyagrahis stronger and more spiritual than they were in the beginning.”\textsuperscript{v}

Gandhiji was not an organiser or administrator or manager as we understand the term in the present business world. But, he certainly had a definite conception of enterprises and organisations. This was integrated into his way of life. His role in guiding the Congress party, in leading the freedom struggle, and in administering the Ashrams is illustrative of this conception. It was a holistic vision. Gandhiji believed that there is an ultimate unity and harmony in all that exists. This holistic vision led Gandhiji to develop his own concept of God, self, society and the norms and values to live by.\textsuperscript{vi}
3.3 Gandhijis’ Philosophy of Life

Philosophy attempts to identify and differentiate one concept from another. Gandhian concepts are normative, dialectical, dynamic and evolutionary in nature. As they are dynamic and evolutionary Gandhiji’s concepts and their mutual relationships changed with his experiences and experiments. As experience unfolded new truths, he changed his stance and approach to problems. But he was not inconsistent with respect to fundamental concepts. “As Gandhiji went through an evolutionary process of change in his own life his ontology, epistemology and method merged into a single unified process which can be identified with his search for truth.”vii Ontologically he reduced God to truth, a shift from his earlier position in which he had tried to approximate truth to God. The search for both relative and absolute truth was his epistemology. Satyagraha and non-violent practice became a strategy as well as a technique. These strategies and techniques form the quintessence of the Gandhian practice of management and his basic tenets like truth, non-violence, sarvodaya etc. form the guiding principles of management.

3.3.1 Truth as God

The core of Ganhiji’s philosophy is his concept of God. Gandhiji did not regard God as a person. “Truth for me is God,”viii he declared. There are, he says, “innumerable definitions of God because His manifestations are innumerable. They overwhelm me with wonder and awe and for a moment stun me. But I worship God as truth only.”ix Gandhiji would rather say that Truth is
God and not that God is Truth. The reason he put forward for the distinction between the two is that in their passion for discovering truth the atheists denied the very existence of God rightly from their own point of view. “And it was because of this reasoning that I saw that rather than saying God is truth I should say that Truth is God.” A truth-fearing man therefore will automatically be a God fearing man whether he accepts it or not.

Truth literally means that which is ‘sat’. The word ‘Sat’ in Sanskrit means “being” or that which is self-existent. This is the most important name of God. God alone is ‘Sat’. i.e. God is the only reality: Where there is Sat-Truth, there will also be knowledge ‘chit’; where there is true knowledge there is always bliss ‘Ananda’. Hence, God is Satchit Anand or Sachitananda. The fundamental notion of Gandhism is the metaphysical conception of an omnipresent spiritual reality, an all embracing living light which can be called sachitananda or Brahman or simply truth.

3.3.1.1 Devotion to Truth

Faith in God was the lodestar of all the actions Gandhiji performed in any field. Faith did not sidetrack reason or contradict it. On the other hand it transcended reason. Gandhiji had what he called a living faith in God and he was sure of the existence of God more than he was of anything. The pursuit of truth was true bhakthi or devotion to God. It was the path that led to God.

Elaborating further on his notion of truth Gandhiji said that truth was what the voice within told one. But there was a difficulty that what may be truth
for one may be untruth for another and hence different people might think of
different and contrary truths. For this Gandhiji put forward certain conditions
which one should follow so that his conscience was clear. These were the vow of
truth-speaking and thinking of truth, the vow of *brahmacharya*, of non-violence,
poverty and non-possession. Only those who underwent these disciplines could
claim the right of conscience. The quest for truth involved *tapas* – self suffering,
sometimes even unto death. There could be no place in it for even a trace of self-
interest. In such selfless search for truth nobody could lose his bearings. Thus
truth in action, speech and thought was true devotion to God. A person got closer
to God by attaining a greater measure of truth in actions of life.

Faith in God expressed itself fully in actions of love. “The nearest
approach to truth is through love”.
Thus, faith in God for Gandhiji is not faith
in ritualism but it is an expression of truth and love, of purity of heart, truthfulness
in action and speech “To me God is truth and love. God is ethics and morality;
God is fearlessness”. “And when you want to find truth as God the only
inevitable means is love, non-violence and since I believe that ultimately means
and ends are convertible terms I should not hesitate to say that God is love.”

For Gandhiji firm faith prompts selfless service as selfless service prescribes firm
faith. “Perfection in faith is attained through service.” Thus we find that,
fundamentally, Gandhiji stood for truth and love with all that they implied in the
different spheres of life. From truth is derived the principle of love because love
is the principle of God.
3.3.2 Non-violence

The moving image and decisive test of truth is non-violence. Gandhiji believed that no man is capable of knowing the absolute truth and therefore he is not competent to punish anybody else. As nobody is capable of knowing truth in its entirety, nobody has the right to impose his truth on somebody else. To do so would amount to an interference with the freedom of conscience of another which is against love. “I don’t believe in a personal deity, but I believe in the eternal law of truth and love which I have translated as non-violence.” Hence, he believed that pure love is a means of attaining God; this means that truth is the end of all our striving. In other words, non-violence springs out of truth.

The path of non-violence for realisation of truth led Gandhiji to frame certain basic principles for human behaviour. They are capable of universal application. Gandhiji insisted that these principles are to be accepted as vows or virtues. This is because only with such a determination and strong will power could truth be realized. He articulated these vows under seven heads, viz., celibacy, control of the palate, non-stealing, non-possession, self-sufficiency, fearlessness and elimination of untouchability.

3.3.3 Supremacy of Man

Next to God, Gandhiji’s supreme being was man, the individual. He upheld and esteemed the worth and sacredness of human life in preference to other creatures. The Indian tradition affirms that man is potentially divine. This is the cornerstone of Gandhian philosophy of man. According to Gandhiji man is
essentially a spiritual entity, not just a psycho-physical aggregation. Beyond his material being he has a continuing spiritual existence. He has the capacity to transcend the mind and body and realize the wholeness lying dormant within him. Every man must reach this highest good. Therefore Gandhiji asserts that the purpose of man’s life is self-realisation “I believe it to be possible for every human being to attain that blessed and indescribable sinless state in which he feels within himself the presence of God to the exclusion of everything else.”xxiii The preponderant interest Gandhiji showed in human life compared to sub-human life springs from the spiritual and intellectual qualities of the individual. The dignity of the human person demands a spontaneous commitment to the protection and well being of human life. All Gandhiji’s endeavours were oriented towards the promotion of human dignity and spiritual growth.

The eminence of man is brought out in Gandhiji’s discourse on modern civilization. He opposes modern civilization on the ground that it dehumanises man. Man has become an object rather than the subject of civilization.

Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the back of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not atrophy the limbs of man.xxiv

According to Gandhiji, the machine is like the body, useful if and only to the extent it subserves the growth of the soul. Hence, he advocated elimination of
machine where it ceases to help the individual and encroach upon his individuality. xxv

Gandhiji’s critique of modern culture, strongly reminiscent of the philosophy of Carlyle and Ruskin, is not to be taken as an argument against industrialisation. It is a plea for prime importance to be given to the dignity and creativity of the individual. Gandhji firmly believed that technology did not serve the basic needs of people but prompted consumerism and encouraged idleness. All systems that hurt the moral well being of the individual is immoral and therefore sinful according to Gandhiji.

3.3.3.1 Man as a Spiritual Entity

Gandhiji’s concept of man is basically spiritual. He affirmed that man is destined for God-realization. We are born as human beings in order to realise God who dwells within our hearts. This is the basic distinction between humans and beasts xxvi. Gandhiji being a man of God always underlined the spiritual dimension of the human person and his destiny, viz. God realisation. Man’s aim in life should, therefore, not be to add to his material prospects and to his material possessions but to come ever nearer to his maker xxvii

The belief that man partakes of the divinity of God implies that man is basically good. “Men are good. But they are poor victims making themselves miserable under the false belief that they are doing good.” xxviii All evils to be found in men are passing phenomena and are due to ignorance about his original nature. As every human being is a spark of divinity, the innate potential in him
when kindled will lead him/her to perfection through realization. The aggressive person is one who is still subject to animal instincts. He must evolve from a lower to a higher nature. Self-discipline and self-culture are the two guiding principles for this.

3.3.3.2 Interdependence of Individual and Society

The belief that man partakes of the divinity of ‘God’ implies that human beings are interrelated by the same bond. Therefore, each person deserves to be respected. Gandhiji compares the relationship of man and society to that of the drop of water in the ocean. The ocean is composed of drops of water, each drop is an entity, yet is a part of the whole. “In this ocean of life, we are so many little drops. My doctrine means that I must share the majority of life in the presence of God.” xxix To share in the life of the majority is to establish identity with the many that is comprised in the one. “The authentic person, in the Gandhian perspective, is true to oneself and to all other fellow beings. Thus society is an integral part of one’s self. In Gandhiji’s view society is not conceived as something out there but as an extended self.”xxx

The extension of the self as a basis for identification with others implies interdependence. This interdependence is not a mere functional one as to the exchange of goods and services but based on the principle of oneness of all things. This implies that behind the apparent discords of life there is to be found a unity and harmony. To seek harmony is to initiate a process of integration of
oneself with others and society. True self-realisation and transformation is to be achieved through attempts to harmonise one’s relationship with others.\textsuperscript{xxxi} 

Strained relationships are by no means uncommon. Gandhiji admits this. At the same time human nature is perfectible. Since man is a part of the divine, no one is beyond redemption as all are partakers of the same essence.\textsuperscript{xxxii} For Gandhiji, swaraj or freedom means rule over one’s self.\textsuperscript{xxxiii} Swaraj does not and cannot in Gandhiji’s opinion come from any external circumstances. It is an inward change, a change of heart. Therefore, the starting point of Gandhiji’s proposal for the construction of a social order, a better society, is the individual, the self. Through the transformation of the self the whole society could be reformed.

Belief in God and in the oneness of life enables one to treat others on an equal footing. It precludes any idea of superiority or inferiority. The authentic person, in the Gandhian perspective, is true to oneself and to one’s responsibilities to society at large. Society is an integral part of one’s self. The extension of self as a basis for identification with others implies interdependence.

Even when Gandhiji recognizes the mutual dependence between self and society, the individual has prime importance in his view. This is not because the individual is prior to society but because he is the most active component of society. Corporate growth is dependent entirely on individual growth.\textsuperscript{xxxiv} This concept is at variance with Marxian thinking where the individual is expected to conform completely to the society.
The importance of individual growth as an essential condition of corporate growth does not, however, mean the supremacy of the individual over society. Individuality has no meaning if there are no other individuals. As a matter of fact, in Gandhiji’s view, one of the important traits of personality is the person’s willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of the society. xxxv Thus, a true personality requires respecting the integrity of others. Sarvodaya and Ahimsa, therefore become the ground rule for interaction with others. Here again the divinity enshrined in man forms the basis and the unshakable foundation of Gandhian philosophy.

Once the inner reality of man - his divine nature, is ignored man becomes selfish. He tries to fill the void thus created through external possessions. He absorbs as much as possible that which lies outside him. He is never satisfied with what is necessary but perpetually strives after something more and better. But the inner man or self cannot be satisfied by any outward possession. Man is dissatisfied mainly because he turns a deaf ear to the claims of the inner voice.

3.3.3.3 Empowerment of Man

Ahimsa is a pro-active concept for Gandhiji. “Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of Ahimsa. But it is its least expression. The principle of Ahimsa is violated by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody.”xxxvi Ahisma in the widest sense means willingness to treat all beings as ourselves. xxxvii The divine nature of man and divinity pervading all creatures makes it imperative to love and protect all creatures especially, the
human beings. Where there is active love for the poor and the afflicted, the powerless, God is present there. It is the noblest way of worshipping Him. “In its positive form ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity.”

The roots of violence and himsa lie in the mind and heart, and therefore mere external restraint or abstention from violence cannot be considered true ahimsa. Therefore, those who seek the practical reduction of himsa in their lives should be engaged in constant self-purification. Citing the example of punishing thieves Gandhiji says that the thieves may transfer their attention from us to another person. The trouble from the thieves continues to increase as they think it is their business to steal. In the end we see that it is better to endure thieves than to punish them. Since we regard the thieves as our kith and kin, they must be made to realize the kinship. And so we must take pains to devise ways and means of winning them over. This is the path of Ahimsa. It is interesting to note that Victor Hugo has touchingly fictionalised this doctrine in his Les Miserables.

Clarifying the point for a correspondent, Gandhiji says that Ahimsa finds its expression in compassion. “where there is no compassion, there is no ahimsa. The concrete form of ahimsa is compassion.” Thus, Gandhiji’s ahimsa derived its power from the strength of his love for fellow human beings. This conviction forced him to fraternalise with weavers and peasants, the destitute and the despised of the nation. Strengthening the weak, consoling the afflicted, upholding the dignity in everyone and empowering everyone, especially the marginalised is real ahimsa. Gandhian compassion for the struggling masses was
neither patroninsinig nor sentimental. “Service of the poor has been my heart’s desire and it has always thrown me amongst the poor and enabled me to identify myself with them.” In his pursuit for the uplift of the poor as prompted by the gospel of love, *ahimsa*, Gandhiji found it fit to revive the traditional spinning so that the poor could earn something from their own labour. He proposed it as a supplementary industry for India in which all could participate.

3.3.3.4 Women’s Empowerment

Gandhiji extolled women as the incarnation of *ahimsa*, of infinite love, which involves infinite capacity for suffering. “*Ahimsa* means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but women, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure?” It is the duty of women to transfer that love to the whole of humanity “She will occupy her noble position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader.” It is the mission of woman to exhibit *ahimsa* at its highest and best. While upholding women’s stature Gandhiji exhorts men to respect women and treat them on an equal footing. “A country or community in which women are not honoured cannot be considered as civilized.” Empowering women is thus the path to the progress of a country.

3.3.4 Bread-Labour

All men have an equal right to the necessaries of life even as birds and beasts have. Every right carries with it a corresponding duty too. “The corresponding duty is to labour with my limbs and the corresponding remedy is to non-co-operate with him who deprives me of the fruit of my labour.” Gandhiji
put forward his idea of bread labour as an extension of ahimsa. Ahimsa is nothing if not a sensitive, well balanced consideration for one’s neighbour, and an idle man is wanting in that elementary consideration. Every man who idles away a single minute becomes to that extent a burden upon his neighbours. This is against ahimsa.

Labour in all essential occupation counts as bread labour. The question of the use of special talents hardly needs separate consideration. “If every one labours physically for his bread it follows that poets, doctors, lawyers etc will regard it their duty to use those talents gratis for the service of humanity. Their output will be all the better and richer for their selfless devotion to duty.” A person who labours for the general good of all serves society and is worthy of his hire. Therefore such bread labour is not different from social service. Hence, work offered in a spirit of sacrifice for the welfare of others is true yajna. The spiritual significance of work is highlighted here. “Bread labour is that every healthy individual must labour sufficiently for his food and his intellectual faculties must be exercised not in order to amass a fortune, but only in the service of mankind.” In ashram life usually, there is no scope for social service although there are sanitary services, washing one’s clothes, cooking, cleaning the roads, agriculture, dairying etc.; hence, Gandhiji made it compulsory for all ashramites to spin for at least one hour in the name of God incarnated as the poor (Daridranaryana). Here also Gandhiji brings out the spiritual significance of human work. “I cannot imagine better worship of God than that in His name I
should labour for the poor even as they do.” All work when so done assumes equal merit. A scavenger who works in His service shares equal distinction with a king who uses his gifts in His name and as a mere trustee.

This service also stems from ahimsa - love. True love is boundless like the ocean and, rising and swelling within one, spreads itself out and, crossing all boundaries and frontiers, envelops the whole world. This service is again impossible without bread labour in Gandhiji’s view. “Intelligent bread labour is any day the highest form of social service; for, what can be better than that a man should by his personal labour add to the useful wealth of the country. “Being is doing.”

3.3.4.1 Work as Yajna

Gandhiji’s understanding of human work is closely associated with the Gita’s ideal of yajna - sacrifice. The Gita sees work as offering of the self rather than an external sacrifice. “When the Gita says that ‘rain comes from sacrifice’ (verse 14). I think it indicates the necessity of bodily labour. The residue to sacrifice is the bread that we have won with the sweat of our brow. Labouring enough for one’s food has been classed in the Gita as yajna.”

The dignity of labour becomes very clear where Gandhiji equates work with yajna - sacrifice. Every kind of work assumes this status of worship. 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. “I entertain such great respect for the dignity of labour that I have thrown in my lot with
labourers.”\textsuperscript{lix} The law of ‘Being’ is doing. Hence there is nothing to be ashamed in any kind of labour.

3.3.5 Sarvodaya

Sarvodaya expresses in compact form the essence of Gandhiji’s social philosophy. If signifies active services to bring about the welfare of all the people one has to deal with. A good life for all and not just the majority is the test of worthiness of an action. In democratic systems, the majority interest always tends to get an upper hand on all decision making processes. Some people like the Benthamites advocate the greatest good of the greatest number. But in Gandhiji’s view only welfare of all the people will usher in peace and that implies an egalitarian society where the status of each individual is recognized by all. He writes: “the lawyers’ work has the same value as the barber’s inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood.”\textsuperscript{lix} Thus, sarvodaya is the distinctive technique developed by Gandhiji for the whole world. “Sarvodaya may well be regarded as India’s distinctive contribution to social philosophy”.\textsuperscript{lx} The ideal is not new to the Indian mind; yet it is Gandhiji who lived upto it with utmost sincerity and brought it to the world’s attention. It is a tradition that stretches back nearly 3000 years when the seers of India preached non-violence through the centuries and practised austerity and self-control in the spirit of a peaceful co-existence. John Ruskin’s Unto This Last was a powerful influence in confirming the native tradition. Gandhiji read this book on a railway journey from Johannesburg to Durban in South Africa. The various dimensions of the concept
were elaborated and paraphrased by Gandhiji and published under the title Sarvodaya in Gujarathi in 1908. An English version of that book came out in 1951.

3.3.5.1 Basic Tenets of Sarvodaya

Sarvodaya, the welfare of all, represents the ideal social order according to Gandhiji. Its essence is all embracing love; excluding none in the society from its ambit of love. In such a society nobody exploits another. The strong protects the weak and functions as a trustee of the weak and each promotes the welfare of all. This presupposes a self-giving or self-lessness. Thus self-suffering and self-control form one of the prime requisites for realizing Sarvodaya.

The philosophy of all embracing self-suffering love presupposes deep spiritual foundations. When Gandhiji speaks of Sarvodaya, he emphasises the omnipresence of the soul anywhere and everywhere. It implies a living faith in God that pervades all. Thus, he advocates appeal to the conscience of the oppressor to restrain him from oppression. The technique he evolved for that is Satyagraha or devotion to truth. Truth and no-violence at the cost of suffering even unto death will definitely change the hard heartedness of even the most wicked man, Gandhiji believed. Thus, in his thesis on Sarvodaya Gandhiji endeavours to bring about a transformation of men through transcendence towards spirituality. The humanistic spirit of Sarvodaya is evident in the three principles which Gandhiji enunciated from the teachings of Unto This Last. They are:

1. The good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. A Lawyer’s work has the same value as the barber’s inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.

3. That a life of labour i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living. The practical application of these principles is Sarvodaya.

3.3.5.2 Sarvodaya : The Moral Law

“The fundamental notion of Gandhism is the metaphysical conception of an omnipresent spiritual reality, an all embracing living light which can be called sachidananda or Brahman or simply truth.” The basis of sarvodaya being spiritual, the means for achieving it is also spiritual. “Fundamentally Gandhiji stood for truth and love with all their multifarious implications in the different spheres of life.” Every kind of violence, injustice and exploitation was against truth and had to be resisted truthfully. This led to the discovery and use of satyagraha. Communism holds out the hope that the ideal social order can be realized only when the exploiter is put down with physical force. For this, class hatred is encouraged. On the other hand such a method seemed entirely futile for Gandhiji because hatred and violence were bound sooner or later to recoil on their perpetrator and to produce more hatred and violence in their wake. Thus, Sarvodaya is the antithesis of communism even when the goal of both is same i.e. a better social order. But even in goal setting communism is materialistic and sarvodaya is predicated on a spiritual principle. In Sarvodaya, Gandhiji writes, “The exclusive search for physical and economic well-being presented in
disregard of morality is contrary to divine law. The morality is engraved in the conscience of every man and commonsense indicates the necessity of observing the moral law.

The spiritual basis of Sarvodaya lies in the divine nature of man. According to Gandhiji man is basically a spirit, which is a portion of God. Since man is essentially spirit, he is intrinsically good. Many good qualities may be lying dormant in him but he is capable of developing them. Evil, on the other hand, is not an inherent but an acquired trait. This could be overcome through conscious efforts. Therefore, Gandhiji says that if people are approached with trust and affection they return the same a thousandfold. There is no reason to disbelieve humanity. Humanity is like an ocean. If a few drops are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

The belief that man is one with God implies that there is a common bond between all men and that the entire humanity shares the same destiny. Therefore, we cannot gain spiritually at the cost of our fellow being. Man becomes divine to the extent of cultivating the good qualities inherent in him.

The Sarvodaya view of man stems from this basic concept. Accordingly, even when we say that man is as he is not good, we have to admit that he is capable of becoming good. The inherent goodness of man may not be evident in the practical life. The majority of people may fail to achieve the greatness inherent in them. But this does not disprove the inherent goodness of man. What is possible for one should be equally possible for another. In other words, in spite
of being imperfect, man can reach perfection. “Nonviolence, the means to attain Sarvodaya depends on man’s moral potentiality for effecting reforms.” Therefore coercion need not be used for achieving the good end of Sarvodaya. Gandhiji was always the prophet of a revolution in the human heart because he was convinced that such a revolution alone would be a lasting one.

3.3.5.3 Sarvodaya: The Ideal Social Order

The optimism that the welfare of all is attained through non-violent methods, by appealing to the conscience of the people, is very often not supported by the realities of life. In spite of the noble schemes developed after the ideals of Mahatma by eminent personalities like Vinoba Bhave, Jayaprakash Narayanan, Bhartan Kumarappa and several others across the country, the society today is full of inequalities, injustices and exploitations. Around 40% of the people are still below the poverty line while a minority leads an affluent life. The number of criminals has not come down. The women of our country are still subject to slavery and exploitation in the male-dominated society. The non-violent method of revolution, does not, therefore, seem to work.

Gandhiji approached this problem from the idealistic point of view. According to him this is only an apparent failure. He says, “When it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfections.” Success of non-violence pre-supposes a certain degree of evolution of the individuals. Attainment of perfection of character is necessary for the operation of non-violence. Human nature, as it is now, may not be perfect enough for the success
of Sarvodaya. Purification of the mind and soul through austerity, *brahmacharya*, non possession and other virtues is a pre-requisite for the successful implementation of the Sarvodaya ideal.

Sarvodaya may not be fully realised in life. Like other ideals sarvodaya is a reference point indicating the direction rather than destination of man. So “Gandhi, like Plato in ancient Greece, conceived of a second best’ or attainable goal. He called it a ‘predominantly non-violent society’ which, too should be striving for the good of all or Sarvodaya.” Sarvodaya maintains that if the right type of approach is made even a bad person may become good. They cite the example of dacoits surrendering to Jayaprakash Narayanan on his request based on moral authority. This is true in individual cases or in certain groups. But whether a mass conversion is possible is yet to be explored. When inequalities, exploitation, injustices, corruption and other vices are rampant and pervade the whole society, how a change of heart can be initiated and where to begin are all big questions yet to be answered. The Bhoodan Yajna initiated by Vinoba Bhave originally aimed to be effective by 1957 but is still a dream. He received a few million acres of land for distribution but there are still millions and millions of landless people in our country.

Sarvodaya represents the ideal of a social order according to the Gandhian scheme of life. It essays to establish a small economically self-sufficient community organisations in which the individual will live for all through service and self-sacrifice. It is at once a code of personal conduct, a plan of community
work and a means to achieve the higher ends of universal brotherhood.\textsuperscript{lxix} Gandhiji advocated sharing of the necessaries of life among all; he suggested nationalisation and state control of factories to achieve this end. Sarvodaya aims at all-round progress without collision of interests. The 18 point programme propounded by Gandhiji is a blueprint for building a sarvodaya society in India.\textsuperscript{lx}

Gandhiji believed that social harmony could be realised through the realisation of this social order. Vinoba Bhave, J. B. Kripalani, Jayaprakas Narayan and others heroically took up the ideals put forward by Gandhiji and they extended and elaborated them in their own way. The Bhoodan, Gramadan, Sramadan, Gramaraj movements etc. initiated by these great disciples are exemplification of the Gandhian technique of social revolution and reconstruction. Various organisational and functional groups like Shanti sena, Khadi Gramodyog, Mahilakarya etc. were set up to realise these noble objectives.

The Sarvodayites emphasise that the power of love is the prime mover of history. This law finds expression in the service of others. One can never employ the power of violence or power of law to achieve this. To be a true sarvodayite one should practise certain virtues\textsuperscript{lxxi} according to Gandhiji. These are part of the ethical conduct of any good individual. These virtues should be adhered to both in private and in public life.

Sarvodaya may seem to be an utopia for this reason. But “that should not however be taken as a sign of its weakness, for all noble ideals have always been
Sarvodaya is the reference point to which man should direct his private and public life. An ideal cannot be achieved in its absolute and complete form. Nevertheless it stands as a supreme objective which points the way to ultimate happiness. Sarvodaya may be called a kind of spiritual humanism, because its main aim is solution of human problems. Gandhiji says, “Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper perspective of what we want, before we can have something approaching it.” Sarvodaya was Gandhiji’s vision of future India. The vision was of a new social order, a non-violent society based on love and human values, a decentralized, self-governing, non-exploiting co-operative society.

In a democratic world priority is given to the greatest good of the majority of people. Gandhiji does not subscribe to the utilitarian idea of the greatest good of the greatest number. The greatest good of all inevitably includes the good of the greatest number. But the difference is that one who holds this theory of greatest number, will not sacrifice himself. The absolutist will sacrifice himself. Thus according to Gandhiji, Sarvodaya in the true sense of the term stands for the awakening of one and all. In other words a good life for all and not just the majority provides the acid test. Practically speaking equalization of status of all persons is envisaged in sarvodaya. The concept of trusteeship where the strong protects the weak and each acts as a trustee of the other finds practical application here. Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the great exponent of Gandhiji extended this idea through his Boodan Yajna, Sampathi dan yajna, and Shramadan yajna.
3.4 Systems and Process of Management: The Gandhian Way

Having outlined the basic principles of management enshrined in the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhiji, we may now examine how these principles might operate in the system of management. An organization is a means to achieve certain predetermined objectives. The structure of an organisation is so designed that the objectives are achieved with the active participation of everyone involved in it. People who work together require a defined system or structure through which they relate to each other and through which their efforts can be coordinated. The forming of a structural, inter-personal relationship is the process of management. Companies, partnership, co-operative societies etc. are some of the prevailing systems of organization. In all these systems interpersonal relationship is structured in the hierarchical form where various levels of authority and responsibility are clearly demarcated. It may consist of top management, middle management, first line management, operating employee etc. depending on the size and nature of the organisation. Unlike these Gandhiji evolved the unique concept of the trusteeship form of organization. He wanted to achieve a cultural reconstruction through every organization based on the principles of equality, non-violence and morality. The trusteeship doctrine was designed to suit this objective. The objective of trusteeship is an egalitarian society where everyone enjoys equal rights and opportunities and where no one
will dominate over others. Trusteeship is a philosophy of life opposed to authoritarianism, riches and monopoly of decision making.

### 3.4.1 Trusteeship

Gandhiji’s theory of trusteeship was developed as an alternative to the doctrines of the corporate structure of the capitalist economy and the socialistic pattern of state bureaucrat system. Following the Russian revolution of 1917 the idea of confiscating the wealth of the wealthy had some appeal in India too as it was an alternative to the exploitative functioning of private property. Against this, Gandhiji held that all that we can legitimately expect of the wealthy was that they would hold their riches in trust and use them for the service of the society.

#### 3.4.1.2 The Rationale

The rationale of trusteeship is that everything on earth came from and belonged to God. Therefore man is only a trustee of what he possesses and not to owner. If an individual had more than a proportionate share of ability, talent or wealth that person became a trustee of that part for the people as a whole. Therefore, the rich can increase their wealth, but it should be for the sake of the nation only. Trusteeship was thus a form of moral responsibility. It is different from charity or benevolence.

Gandhiji held that there is a spark of divine intelligence in everything. Nature and men are regenerated by the divine. Therefore, all human beings are implicitly responsible to God, for their use and treatment of all goods, gifts and talents that fall within their domain. Therefore, a meritorious use of resources and
moral choice becomes necessary. The very idea of ownership is a form of violence in this sense. When we attain the mental posture of the trustee who regards all possessions as things held in trust for the good of all, we can attain the high spiritual state of mental renunciation. The theoretical foundation of trusteeship can be found in Isopanishad which says “All that in the Universe is pervaded by God. Renounce first therefore, in order to enjoy, covet not anybody’s riches.”

Gandhiji interpreted this in the light of the Gita “I understood Gita’s teaching of non-possession to mean that those who desired salvation should act like the trustee who though having control over great possessions, regards not an iota of them as his own.” The laws of love dictate the distribution of wealth. This would lead to the transformation of the society, by creating solidarity and brotherhood.

The immediate and basic context of trusteeship was the need for economic equality. The craving for material comforts of life caused a few to accumulate the wealth of the society, disproportionate to their needs and at the cost of the majority who were ignorant and poor and lived a life of ceaseless misery. Against this background Gandhiji formulated his theory of trusteeship which could bring about equal distribution of accumulated wealth. Gandhiji developed this as an alternative to the class warfare advocated by Communism. “Trusteeship was a non-violent alternative to class warfare and violence, since it emphasises the ethico-religious dimensions in human beings.” Gandhiji wanted to rid men of selfishness by appealing to their moral consciousness. In developing this theory he gave a socio-economic content to the moralistic idea of trusteeship. The
objective of the trusteeship theory was to destroy capitalism and not capitalists. Since Gandhiji had firm faith in the ultimate goodness of human beings, he was optimistic about transforming human nature for human good. Trust in God justifies trust in man because man partakes of the divinity of God.

Gandhiji’s basic tenet was that people came really together only when they rose above conflicting interests and learned to trust each other. If we accept this profound yet simple view of life then we realize that this will be possible only when power, ownership, property and means of production are not left in the hands of any group of people or institution including the state. For power, wealth, arms and weapons never bring people together. If power, wealth, skill or knowledge are owned by society, then there is no cause or room for conflict. Society means a living entity, a sum total of relationships. The way of emancipating ourselves from the concept of ownership is trusteeship.

3.4.1.3 Three Basic Tenets

Gandhiji favoured trusteeship mainly on three grounds:

1) It is a non-violent means for a better society. Communism favoured violent means against exploitation of the poor by the capitalists. Gandhiji believed that such a social order will not succeed in the long-run. Violence, he believed, is against human nature and use of force is unethical.

2) Secondly, he believed that capitalists by themselves need not be exploiters every time. They could acquire wealth by benevolent means also. “It is possible to acquire riches without consciously doing wrong.” This explains
why Gandhiji was able to establish a good working relationship with rich people. It is true that Gandhiji was friendly towards many in exalted financial positions. But he would not compromise principles: “I have never concealed the fact that I am a friend of everybody, irrespective of caste, colour or personalities. The rich have no hold on me. I can shed them at a moment’s notice, if the interest of the masses demand it.” For these reasons Gandhiji never asked his followers or friends who had a business background to give it up. This is a golden mean between the painful choice of total renunciation exhorted by religious leaders on the one hand and the sinful selfish aggrandizement and monopoly of all wealth on the other. In this sense the Gandhian ideals cannot be dismissed as the utopian project of a half-naked fakir.

3) Thirdly, trusteeship takes account of the fact that natural ability is unequally distributed. While we all have a right to equal opportunities, nevertheless, we have not all the same abilities. Therefore Gandhiji insists that the business talents and know-how of the capitalists should be encouraged and made use of for the benefit of the poor people. Wealthy people should act as trustees of their wealth.

3.4.1.4 Trusteeship and Ownership

The final draft of the Trusteeship formula as prepared by Pyarelal and modified and approved by Gandhiji contained six clauses. In this practical formula, Trusteeship rejects private ownership except such as may be permitted
by society for its own welfare. All property, public and private alike, is held by trustees. This also applies to positions of power and to intangible and non-transferable property like time, skill etc.

This concept of non-possession flows from the ideal of *aparigraha*. This is an ethical ideal sanctified by religion. Isopanished says “enjoy by renouncing, do not covet, or cling to possession”. To Gandhiji this lays down the code of conduct for the individual as well as for society. Ethical norms relate to man’s conduct in society. They are meant to govern his relationship and attitude towards others in society.

In a trusteeship organization the state has only a minimum role. The trustee’s personal wealth cannot be inordinately high, it has to be proportionate to the income of others. His emoluments will be determined by the State. “What I personally prefer would be not a centralization of power in the hands of the state, but an extension of the sense of trusteeship; as in my opinion the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the state. However, if it is unavoidable, I would support a minimum of state ownership.” Gandhi preferred trusteeship to state control because he views the state as a soulless machine which can never be weaned from violence. Trusteeship organization envisages a higher level of co-operation among capitalists and workers. This will eliminate class war.

3.4.1.5 Trusteeship and Industrial Relations
The Gandhain perspective of industrial relations is distinctly humanistic, even spiritual. The empathetic approach that Gandhiji took in the Ahemedabad Mill Strike and Champaran Struggle is a classic instance of his philosophy in action\textsuperscript{xxxvi}. The Mahatma was keen to protect the dignity and spiritual integrity of workers. At the termination of Khada Satyagraha Campaign Gandhiji wrote “The end of a Satyagraha Campaign can be described as worthy only when it leaves the satyagrahis stronger and more spiritual than they were in the beginning.”\textsuperscript{xxxvii} He put the values of Ahimsa, Satyagraha, truthfulness etc, above expediency and material gain. These are highlighted in trusteeship.

Industrial relation in the trusteeship perspective eliminates class war. In the trusteeship system owners and workers will become co-trustees for society. The relationship is built on co-operation rather than conflict. It means that workers are co-sharers. This, of course, presupposes a change of heart which results in a new social order. The change of outlook on the part of the industrialist helps him to consider the labourers as partners in a common enterprise. This implies that the employers should not only pay a living wage but also ensure a decent life environment, providing better facilities, education, health care etc.

Trusteeship also implies that workers have certain obligations too. They have to put all their energy into the industry so that it grows. In the prevailing climate of industrial relations employers try to get maximum work from employees. Employees on the other hand try to put as little effort as they could and get a maximum return. And both are dissatisfied. Even if wages are increased
because of threat of strikes or legislation by government that does not lead to improvement in efficiency. If industrial relations are based on trusteeship there would be positive change. There will be a willing sense of participation in a common enterprise. In a speech at the opening of a crèche in Ahmedabad Gandhiji said “From the moment your men come to realize that the mills are theirs, no less than yours they will begin to feel towards you as blood brothers, there would be no question of their acting against the common interest and the need for having a heavy supervisory establishment over them.”

Such a system, according to Gandhiji, had economic as well as ethical merit. Strikes and lockouts would become much less frequent and productivity would be increased. This system will naturally lead to profit sharing and to workers’ participation in management.

3.4.1.6 Trusteeship and Labour Unions

In a trusteeship organization industrial relations will be cordial as both labourers and managers act as trustees of each other and of the society. But there can be friction as the wealthy class may not always voluntarily give up their wealth and powers. Hence, Gandhiji favoured workers’ non-violent organisation to strengthen themselves and vindicate their rights. Asked whether capitalists would not use force to suppress workers Gandhiji answered, “In my humble opinion labour can always vindicate itself if labour is sufficiently united and self-sacrificing. No matter how oppressive the capitalists may be, the labour union leaders should know the strength of labourers. It is labour that is capital and that
living capital is inexhaustible.” If workers intelligently unite they will become an irresistible power. The management will then be forced to seek the participation of labourers.

Workers should be aware of their strength and resources “If labour would only understand and recognize that capital is perfectly helpless without labour, labour will immediately come into its own.” However labour organisation should not organize themselves in a spirit of hostility to capitalists. He wanted the organisation to work along the specific line of non-violence. He proved this kind of organisation successful in his own life time. “The organisation of labour that I undertook in South Africa, Champaran, or Ahmedabad was in no spirit of hostility to the capitalists. The resistance in each case and to the extent it was thought necessary was wholly successful.” The labourer has to realize that labour is also capital. As soon as labourers are properly educated and organised and realize their strength, no amount of capital can subdue them. Organized and enlightened labour can dictate its own terms.

There need not be any clash between capital and labour. Each is dependent on the other. “In my opinion the mill-hands are as much the proprietors of their mill as the shareholders, and when they are the mill-owners, there will be no quarrel between them.” Even if there is conflict of interest between capital and labour, it could be resolved by doing each one’s duty. Hence, class war is not inevitable. It could be avoided through the correct understanding of the message
of non-violence. Those who talk about class war as inevitable have not understood the implications of non-violence or have understood them only superficially. They do not understand the true meaning of non-violence.

If every right flows from duty well performed, then it is unassailable. “Thus, I have a right to my wage only when I have fully performed the duty undertaken by me. If I took the wage without doing my work, it becomes theft. I cannot associate myself with continuous insistence on rights without reference to the performance of duty on which the rights depend and from which they flow.”

Raising of industrial status rather than raising pay scale and bonus is what is needed. This is the psychological need of the workers. Labour unions should take up this cause as their prime task.

3.4.1.7 Appeal to Innate Goodness

Gandhiji invited the capitalists to regard themselves as trustees for those on whom they depend for the making and the increase of the capital. But the rich man may not always be ready to act as real trustee of his possessions. Even so Gandhiji does not approve of any violent remedy. In a talk with Manu Gandhi, Gandhiji said that wealthy people should act as trustees of their wealth. But if they are robbed of their wealth through violent means, it would not be in the interest of the country. By adopting violent means we would be depriving the society of the services of capable individuals. Gandhiji rejected the claim that a better society could be created by the use of violent means. Even after utmost effort and persuasion if the rich do not become guardians of the poor in the true sense of the term, Gandhiji advocated non-violent non-co-operation. The rich cannot
accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor. Satyagraha and non-co-operation are the true means to change the heart of any hardhearted rich man. In the application of the methods of non-violence Gandhiji had firm faith in the essential goodness of human beings. In *Young India* he wrote, “no human being is so bad as to be beyond redemption, no human being is so perfect as to warrant his destroying him whom he wrongly considers to be wholly evil.” xcvi We must appeal to the good in human beings and expect a positive response. “I expect to convert the Zamindars and other capitalists by the non-violent method, and therefore there is for me nothing like an inevitability of class conflict.” xcix “I must not aim at the destruction of the capitalists, but I must strive for his conversion.”

3.4.2 Conflict Resolution

Even if we admit that capital and labour are to work in unity both acting as trustees of the society, elements of disunity and conflict arise between them. Gandhiji evolved a mechanism for resolving this conflict in tune with his basic tenets. Satyagraha, *Ahimsa* and *tapsya* are the tools with which such conflicts may be resolved.

3.4.2.1 Satyagraha

Faith in God led Gandhiji to the conception of Satyagraha. Every kind of violence, injustice and exploitation was against truth and had to be resisted truthfully. cix This attitude of Gandhiji and this fundamental thought in him led to the discovery and use of satyagraha. Satyagraha is, therefore, nothing but a way of life in which there is complete faith in and dependence upon God. ciii This faith
in God was the source of strength for Gandhiji in all his actions, especially in satyagraha. “Rightly or wrongly I know that I have no other resource as a satyagrahi than the assistance of God in every conceivable difficulty.” Gandhiji knew that the heart has its own logic and reason as the intellect has.

Satyagraha — holding on to truth — was Gandhiji’s way of managing and resolving conflict. But truth itself may become a source of conflict as what appears to be truth to one may appear to be falsehood to another. This is because human beings have access to relative truths only. However, absolute truth (God) acts as the unifying element. Satyagraha is the way and means to absolute truth. No philosophical system or creed enjoyed a monopoly of the truth. People with all their differences would become Satyagrahis. Thus, faith in God is an essential prerequisite in the satyagrahi. Even the atheist who genuinely sought the truth possessed unknowingly that faith.

3.4.2.2 Ahimsa

Satyagraha excluded the employment of violent means. Since man was incapable of reaching absolute truth he should not take it upon himself to punish falsehood. Patience and sympathy, so long as these virtues were not made excuses for palliating what was believed wrong, were the weapons of satyagrahis. Unlike weapons of violence these weapons were consistent with respect for the opponents’ personality. Human ability to know absolute truth required an unceasing openness in the approach to those who differed. Since what appears to be truth to one may appear to be false to another the pursuit of truth did not admit
of violence being inflicted on one’s opponent but insists that he must be weaned from falsehood by patience and sympathy according to Gandhian philosophy. The only test of truth is action based on the refusal to do harm.

Gandhiji applied the term *ahimsa* to human and social interaction giving it a positive connotation, viz. love. *Ahimsa* is a positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil doer. “Man and his deed are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth approbation and a wicked deed disapprobation. The doer of the deed, whether good or wicked, always deserves respect or pity as the case may be.” However this does not mean helping the evil doer to continue the wrong or tolerating it. On the contrary, love, the active state of *ahimsa*, requires you to resist the wrong doer by disassociating yourself with him even though it may offend him or injure him physically. Thus, *Ahimsa* for Gandhiji is not an abstract virtue. He wished to see it realised in some form of humanitarian service or as a demonstration of resistance to injustice.

The idea of *ahimsa* was not invented by Gandhiji. It was there in Indian tradition, in Buddhism, Jainism, and in Hindu religion. Gandhiji made a politico-social obligation from what had been primarily a personal duty. “Gandhiji created a gospel of social action where before there had been only an individual quest.”

Thus, the truth-love combination is the nucleus of the Gandhian solution to conflicts. Without *ahimsa* it is not possible to seek and find truth. *Ahimsa* and truth are so closely interrelated that it is practically impossible to realise either in
isolation. Nevertheless, *ahimsa* is the means; Truth is the end. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later. When once we have grasped this point final victory is beyond question. Even though in practice this proved difficult, Gandhiji made strict adherence to *ahimsa* the criterion and test of one’s truth and truthfulness. Nonviolence in this sense is at once a supreme moral value and the norm of truthful action and of social truths. Holding on to truth by nonviolent means, being the constituent element of Satyagraha, avoids the practical difficulty of ethical relativism.

Nonviolence being the operative principle of satyagraha in interpersonal relations and conflicts, the individual can determine the truth where people’s notion of truth differed. Here nonviolence becomes the moral criteria for judging the truth in a given situation. In an individual world of relative truth society is the objective standard of truth. Thus, Sarvodaya becomes yet another principle of Satyagraha.

Satyagraha is at once a philosophy of non-violence and a technique for the creative resolution of conflict. *Ahimsa* is the theory behind Satyagraha and Satyagraha its practical application. Non-co-operation and civil disobedience are specific methods prescribed by Gandhiji for conflict resolution where the employer proves too obstinate.

### 3.4.2.3 Tapasya

In Gandhiji’s view active non-violence is conscious suffering. Self-suffering is the test of love. It is not a meek submission to the will of the evil-doer
but it means the pitting of one’s whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under the law of our being it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire.\textsuperscript{cxii} In preferring suffering to submission to evil one is at once suffering for truth and justice and identifying oneself with truth. This affirms one’s indivisibility from truth at the very point of self-sacrifice. The human and the divine dignity of the individual is thus established by voluntary self-suffering.

Suffering is undergone voluntarily not for its own sake but as a demonstration to an opponent of one’s seriousness of purpose and as a guarantee of sincerity. In striving for the right a Satyagrahi should be prepared to endure unto death.\textsuperscript{cxiii} He must be ready to detach himself from material things. Gandhiji believed that Satyagraha together with Sacrifice could guarantee sufficient spiritual force to transform the world. Indeed it would be enough for the release of this tremendous energy if only one person is possessed fully by the force of truth even as one general is enough to regulate and dispose of the energy of millions of soldiers who enlist under his banner even though they do not know the why and wherefore of his dispositions.\textsuperscript{cxiv}

*Tapasya* as penance was a self-centred practice. Gandhiji turned it inside out by de-centering the self. In Gandhiji’s vision the penitent concentrated on the other’s self, for whose moral persuasion and conversion the penance was undertaken. Suffering injury in one’s own person is the essence of non-violence and is the chosen substitute for violence to others. This, in fact, is the political dimension which Gandhiji gave to Christ’s Sermon on the Mount. Self-suffering
is different from passive resistance. Passive resistance implied a physical incapacity to resist the violence combined with an inner compulsion or drive toward violence. Passive resistance is therefore the non-violence of the weak. Non-violence cannot be taught to a person who fears to die and has no power of resistance.

In any given conflict resolution the three different methods may be used as the case may be, viz.,

a. persuasion through reasoning - satya
b. emotional persuasion - tapasya
c. non-violent coercion - ahimsa - non-cooperation, and civil disobedience.

These are not mutually exclusive. Any or all methods could be present simultaneously in a given situation.

What distinguished Gandhiji from other thinkers was that he made truth and non-violence dynamic. According to him they must serve not only the individual actively but also the society. Industrial relations as pictured by Gandhiji do not represent only an isolated piece of the industrial sector. They relate with the totality of life, interrelations between labour, employer, consumer and government. Non-violence is a fundamental, dynamic concept which permeates every phase of our life. Unless the principles are carried out in the right way in all fields of industrial activity in its administrative, economic and educational contexts such reforms are not likely to bear fruit, because the problem
of peaceful industrial relations becomes ultimately the problem of peaceful industry and in turn a peaceful community.

3.4.3 Oceanic Circle

A structure is a pattern of relationship among the various positions in an organization. It is in fact an authority structure i.e., the relationship between the superior and subordinate. Apart from the existing line, line and staff, committee and other structures, Gandhiji formulated a new concept: the oceanic circle.

In this structure the means of production are owned in common and not individually. In the hierarchical structure a group of people become owners and are separate from the managing group. In the hierarchical structure management is entrusted to professional people. In the oceanic structure there is communal form of ownership and hence there is responsible participation and meaningful involvement of everyone concerned with the work.

There is also mutuality of control in oceanic structure. This control is exercised through each one’s contribution to the formation of policies by participating in various committees. As far as execution of policy is concerned there is no management of people. Management of people is a communal function based on self-discipline.

The symbol of the new structure is the circle. People see themselves as working in a circle as if around a table. In this circular organization there is no fixed leadership. Leadership passes from one to another depending on the particular task attached to it. However, one of the positions is designated as chief
executive or general manager, because somebody has to make all those tactical decisions that enable an organization to keep working. In the hierarchical organization leadership is always located at the top echelon.

In this structure there will be ever widening and never ascending circles. Management will not be a pyramidal structure with the apex sustained by the base. The outermost circumference will not wield power to control the inner circle, but gives strength to all within and derives its own strength from the centre. In this new structure management of people is not a function earmarked for a separate department but it becomes a community of work as a whole. Discipline and justice are looked after by a council consisting of members elected by all interested in the institution. People from outside the institution who are interested in the welfare of all are also taken on as trustees to act as the conscience of the community. The personal growth of the individual and that of the institution are well taken care of in the Gandhian structure of the organization. Development of individual potentialities and human values get priority in this model whereas in the traditional hierarchical structure increase of technical efficiency gets priority. Power is recognized on the basis of knowledge, experience abilities and the like only. There is no dichotomy between managers and workers because all have the same responsibility and every one acts as a trustee of the other.

Circular organization is a typical example of non-violent organization. The characteristics of non-violence is that everyone has full freedom and yet every
one follows voluntarily all rules and regulations. There can be no place for hierarchy, the superior or subordinate.

3.4.4 Decentralization

Gandhiji’s idea of decentralization of industrial power was based on the political framework which he was trying to establish in India. As the power of the state is to be decentralized to the villages, there must be decentralization of industrial power from the hands of the industrialist to the workers as a unit within the industry. This can be termed factory democracy running parallel to village democracy. The objective of this factory democracy is the uplift of workers through decentralization of power concentrated in the industrialists. The principle adopted for this was that of trusteeship and the form of organization was conceived as the oceanic circle.

This process begins with a change of heart of capitalists. Here, Gandhiji appeals to the conscience of the capitalists. The means adopted for this moral transformation of the capitalists should be non-violent. Satyagraha and non-cooperation are the specific methods prescribed by him to achieve this end. There should in no way be any coercion, intimidation or compulsion. If the capitalists do not change their mentality even after persistent campaigns, state capitalism is preferred. Even in state capitalism the workers should have real participation in the management of the concern along with the government. “The mill hands are as much the proprietor of the mills as the shareholders, and when the mill owners realize that the mill hands are as much mill owners there will be no quarrel
between them.”

In 1937, Gandhiji wrote, “My advice to the employers would be that they should willingly regard workers as the real owner of the concern which they fancy they have created.” The equality of the workers along with the owners is clear in his statement. “It is vital to the well being of the industry that workmen should be regarded as equals with the shareholders, and they should have, therefore, every right to possess an accurate knowledge of the transaction of the mill.”

3.4.5 Participative Management

Participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political process that affects their lives. “It is not merely people’s involvement in particular projects or programmes but people should have greater role in all spheres of life.” There are different dimensions of participation like household participation, economic participation, social and cultural participation, political participation etc. The vital factor in all these is that people have constant access to the decision making process and power. Participation in this sense is an essential element of human development. In the Gandhian participative theory emphasis is on this aspect of sharing the power. In his opinion a non- violent organization has essentially to be participative in nature. Real participation takes place where everyone involved in the organization has a say in the management and control of the affairs of the organization. The essential characteristic of such an organization is decentralization of management and power.
In the first stage of establishing a non-violent society Gandhiji wanted to inculcate in the people the basic tenets viz., truthfulness, non-violence and co-operation. In the second stage he wanted decentralization both in the political framework and in the industrial set-up. “I suggest that, if India is to evolve along non-violent lines, it will have to decentralize many things.” Centralization as a system is inconsistent with the non-violent ethos of society. Therefore, power should not be concentrated in the hands of a few hands whether it is in industry or politics.

In Gandhian thinking all members of the society have equal status and, hence, workers are to be regarded as equals with the shareholders; they have every right to obtain an accurate knowledge of the industry. Work committees, joint consultation, joint committees etc. are various stages and forms of participative management. Gandhiji envisaged labourers as co-partners, co-sharers and co-workers. As such, the workers are entitled to their share of profits. This will instill a sense of responsibility in them; consequently, they will look upon work not as a burden but as a sacred duty.

Another instrument for people’s participation is their organisation into community groups. The NGOs and other people’s movements are a powerful means of correcting the negative features of both markets and governments. They can effectively contribute to empowering the marginalised and provide emergency assistance in needful areas. Human development reports indicate that people participate more effectively through group action as members of a
community organisation or a trade union or a political party. Communities like Sarvasevasang and various non-violent trade unions organised by Gandhiji were of this nature.

3. 5 Gandhian Concept of HRD

The human element is the central subject of development and the individual should be the active participant and beneficiary of development. The United Nations adopted The Right to Development as a fundamental human right in 1986. By this declaration the international community placed human beings individually and collectively at the centre of all economic activities. Hence, each country has to create a development model in tune with this core idea. Mahatma Gandhiji was the prophet and visionary of holistic development where the individual is the central subject and principal beneficiary. An HRD programme consonant with his thought should take into account the need for genuine respect to each individual, his freedom and dignity as well as commitment to the demands of the community.

3.5.1 Gandhian Perspective on Sustainable Development

Sustainable development in the Gandhian view is a strategy of development that manages all assets — natural, human, technological and financial — to increase long term wealth and human well being. The process of development becomes unsustainable on account of erosion of co-evolutionary development processes entailing the elements of knowledge, values, social organisations, technology and resource system. Sustainable development is
consistent with social justice in respect of the socially deprived, intergenerational equity and justice to nature. Hence, sustainable development should be taken to mean a thriving socio-economic order in which production structures and relationship ensure fair distribution of resources and opportunities based on the principles of equality, liberty, justice and fraternity. This should be accompanied by the long term carrying capacity of the eco-system with minimum negative impact on society. Until and unless a congenial social environment is created, the fruits of development cannot be sustained.

Gandhiji visualised an integral society which fosters a lifestyle based on the vows of truth, non-violence and sarvodaya. Through these vows he visualised the transformation of the individual which in turn would lead to the transformation of the society. He firmly believed that a development based on moral values alone can sustain the system. Economics and ethics are inextricably co-related. Therefore, economics that violates the moral well-being of mankind is immoral and sinful. Genuine need, not greed, should be the motive of one’s actions.

3.5.2 People as Means and End

Today, expenditure on HRD is considered as sound an expenditure as conventional expenditure on machines, building and physical infrastructure. The problems of expansion of human capabilities are addressed as a means to increased production. Amartya Sen warns:

We must not make the mistake of taking the growth rate of GNP to be the ultimate test of success and of treating the removal of illiteracy, ill-health etc as possible means to that hallowed end... it is a mistake
to see the development of education, health care, and other basic developments as expansion of human resources as if people were just the means of production and not its ultimate ends.\textsuperscript{cxxv}

The basic Gandhian approach to HRD is that to human beings, their limitless resources are both the means and the ends of economic and overall national development. Any meaningful transformation and development in an organisation or a country would require human initiatives. Hence, development of human resources is the ultimate end of the overall development strategy in an organisation. It is true that the quality of human resources is the key asset and prerequisite for development of organisation, community, economy and the nation. However, the emphasis should be on protecting the basic needs, on mobilizing a broader process of sustained, overall development of human resources in the long term rather than on short term goals. The focus should be on a sustainable process of expanding the capacities of people by means of addressing directly the concerns of their inner selves.

The progress of an individual is judged with reference to the inner life and not simply in terms of material advancement. This idea is basic to Gandhiji’s thinking on life as a whole. The inner life of a man is the divinity enshrined in him. The objective of life is to realise this divinity which is equivalent to God realization.\textsuperscript{cxxvi} Unlimited and unchecked material development will lead man towards destruction. The role of material progress is just that of meeting the basic necessities of material life. Therefore, the spiritual domain of man must be strengthened and his moral development encouraged constantly.\textsuperscript{cxxvii} This spiritual
and moral awakening can be of immense help in solving socio-political and economic problems.

Faith in the essential goodness of human nature and in man’s innate capacity to reach a higher life ought to serve as an incentive to serve one’s fellow men and humanity as a whole. Hence, development of an individual necessarily calls for the development of society in general. The belief that man partakes of the divinity of God implies that all men are interrelated by a common origin and destiny. Each person is to be respected in his own right. If a particular person fails to attain a higher level of life this is no reason for thinking him to be beyond redemption and for renouncing faith in humanity.

The materialistic approach to development revolves around a higher standard of living, increase in national wealth, innovations and improvement in science and technology etc. The quest for social, economic and political supremacy has become the singular goal of modern societies and is legitimized in the name of development. However, in the Gandhian perspective development is viewed as a value based process. Since man is the supreme consideration, development would mean realising to the full the human capacity for spiritual, intellectual as well as physical excellence.

3. 5.3 **Bottom-up Approach**

Contemporary development programmes are based on top to bottom or trickle-down approach. Accordingly, strategies are designed at macro-level with a centralised mechanism and imposed on the micro-level or grassroot
societies. By contrast, Gandhian development programmes start at the grassroots. This can be termed the bottom-up approach. Instead of development coming down from a hierarchical power structure it goes up from below. At the grassroots level are the common people. Hence, all development programmes start with the common people, addressing their basic needs. Only such developments can sustain themselves in the long run. The grass roots are Indian villages -- the veins of national integrity and development. Every unit of the macro-society will be meaningfully integrated to the other without losing its identity as the individual sacrifices himself for others without losing his identity. Each village works for other villages and for the circle of villages. It is an oceanic circle in which individual development and social progress are harmoniously integrated. In this structure of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, and never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the base. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individuals. The outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its strength from it.

Today, there is growing realization of the fact that it is easier, more humane and less costly to deal with issues of human security and development up-stream rather than pursuing the down stream strategy. Mahabub Ul Haq’s views are an index of the new thinking:

Did it make much sense to incur a staggering cost of $240 billions in the past decades due to HIV/AIDS when even a small fraction of that amount invested in primary health care and family planning
education in the developing world could have prevented such a fast spread of this deadly disease.\textsuperscript{xxxi}

The Gandhian approach to development is conceived so as to avoid the waste, inefficiency and impersonality of planning that issues from some remote source of authority.

\textbf{3.5.4 Village Development}

The UN declaration on human development unambiguously states: “Development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom.”\textsuperscript{xxxii} The declaration redefines the objectives of economic activity towards the attainment of human and social goals through the improvement of the social, economic, political and cultural well-being of individuals, groups and peoples. It also provides that these objectives must be determined by people themselves and that their benefits must be equally distributed. The meaning of development is thus subjective and requires effective participation by all in decisions affecting people’s lives.

The development concept set out in the UN declaration is envisaged in the village development concept of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji’s constructive programme was designed to ensure people’s participation in the work of social reconstruction. People’s planning and Panchayatraj stem directly from this
conception. Gandhiji’s emphasis on village economy, village industries and small scale industries is not just a matter of economic policy; it is based on an ethical conception of means and ends as well.

When Gandhiji returned to India in 1915 at the age of 45 after his prolonged stay of 21 years in South Africa, he did not know much about social conditions in India. Therefore, on the advice of Gopal Krishna Gokhale Gandhiji travelled all over the country to see how people lived and worked. Afterwards, he wrote in Harijan that India lives in her villages, not in her cities. "I have believed and repeated times without number that India is to be found not in its few cities but in its 7,00,000 villages." It is significant that the first ever cause that Gandhiji was involved in was a movement of peasants in the Champaran district of Bihar which was a humanitarian mission to secure justice from the indigo estate owners in 1917. The very next year in 1918 he led an active non-violent resistance of the farmers of Kheda district in Gujarat for remission of land revenue owing to floods and consequent crop failure. Living among the villagers he conceived a plan for securing the economic, physical and moral betterment of villages. By uplifting these villages he was sure to make them fitter to serve the country. If Indian civilization is to make its full contribution to the building up of a stable world order, it is this vast mass of humanity that has to be made to live again. For the reconstruction of the villages he outlined an 18 point programme. In 1941 he published the pamphlet titled ‘Constructive Programmes’. These constructive programmes serve as the basis for human resource
development in villages. They are a concrete expression of truth and non-violence. These programmes should enable the villagers to attain self-realization or God realization, the ultimate aim of any HRD programme: “You will have rendered human bodies worthy of becoming temples of God and efficient tools for doing a good day’s work.”

3.5.4.1 Expansion of Social Opportunities

Amarthya Sen argues that the creation of social opportunities means much more than the mere freeing of markets. He emphasises that reforms that are needed in India require not only greater access to economic opportunity offered by the market and exchange but also greater ability of common people to make use of these opportunities. He further clarifies that fuller use of opportunities opened up by appropriate reforms requires commensurate expansion of social opportunities in the form of more schooling, expansion of basic health care, removing gender-discrimination, greater availability of micro-credit etc. In order to be able to seize the opportunities that markets offer, social reform is as important as economic reform itself. This is the way the process of overall reform of the society and economy can enhance the living conditions and effective freedom of the masses.

Amarthya Sen’s observation has come in the event of globalization and privatisation. As a visionary, Gandhiji had foreseen this fifty years before and envisioned a model for the integral development of the society. Even without
government’s initiative social opportunities for development could be created and expanded with constructive programmes as he had pointed out.

### 3.5.4.2 Constructive Programme

The formulation of HDR 1993 says that development must be woven around people and not people around development and the Gandhian emphasis on the supremacy of man go together. Moreover, Gandhiji visualises a programme of intensive micro-level activities for social welfare in his constructive programme. The organisation of co-operative groups and small farmers and artisans is a specific proposal for realising these aims. As group activities are natural to man better results could be produced if this social instinct is ethically strengthened. The package of constructive programme provides this facility for development.

Constructive Programme is a programme of development based on self-reliance and freedom. The project is supposed to function independently of the state. It begins with improvement of individual life and extends to the whole society. This is mainly carried out through co-operatives and voluntary organisations. These organisations will pave the way for new institutions in the society, marking a further stage in the progress towards a new social order. The programme is to be carried through in a spirit of service. The volunteers of the programme must identify themselves with the poorest of the people.

Promotion of village industries was the main task of Gandhi’s village reconstruction programme. As Gandhiji viewed work primarily as the expression
of the human person and only secondarily as a means to material achievement, he cherished all kinds of traditional village industries and encouraged their revival. Gandhiji’s insistence on small scale production and decentralized economy as well as his refusal to go along with the craze for urbanization is a measure of his humanist commitment. The village reconstruction programme facilitates fellow feeling among men, encourages the use of locally available products and avoids exploitation and consumerism.

Gandhiji’s unerring grasp and understanding of HRD as evinced in the comprehensive package of constructive programme are indeed remarkable. The social context of his thought was life in rural India. This project was aimed at reorganising the nation from grassroots upwards. He put forward bold new proposals for adjusting the delicate balance between individual and social values and did so from a firm base of the inviolability of the human personality. In the even bolder and novel conception of non-violent struggle, he opposed the evil in the human heart. The eighteen points in his programme are not meant to be exhaustive but might serve as a basis for further initiatives on the same lines.

The previous century which saw the end of political ideologies has only made Gandhiji’s thought on the role of the individual and the goals of society more relevant to our times. Thus, “the overall programme of human resources development in Gandhian approach is intended to focus on the broad development process of people as resources to themselves, groups, organisations, communities, economy, society and large cultures.”

"next"
3.5.5 Critique of Modern Development

Development in science and technology is certainly a great blessing when it makes possible a better life for all. But it becomes a disaster when factors like profit, consumerism, power, greed, war with nature and men etc. take over control of science and technology. Gandhiji was one of the thinkers who drew attention to the perils of modern civilization. Crass consumerism, vulgar display of material wealth, exploitation of man by man, pollution of nature, the alienation of man-all these constitute the basic characteristics of modern civilization and combine to render man’s existence barren, purposeless and insignificant. In the pre-modern age man was considered an integral part of a larger order. However, in the modern age he is treated as an autonomous self-defining and self-sufficient subject. This has broken the solidarity of man and his environment. Technology although of course, the product of man, tends to develop by its own laws and principles and these are very different from those of human nature or living nature.

Gandhiji was well aware of the dangers of modern technological advancement. He dreamt of a world free from mad mechanization and senseless competition. Automation, in his view, did not increase labour and the purchasing power of the people. Replying to a question whether he was against all machinery, Gandhiji said:

What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour saving machinery. Men go on saving labour till thousands are without work and thrown on the open
streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour not for a fraction of mankind but for all.\textsuperscript{cxli}

Gandhiji always stood for production by masses and not mass production. In the Gandhian view modern technology only caters for a few and, then enslaves rather than liberates them. Ancient India was rich in industries carried on in almost every house and village. We were self-sufficient so much so that the ship from East India Company could carry nothing for trade which we needed. So they carried salt. To find market for this import Government imposed excise duty on Indian made salt which led to Gandhiji launching the Salt Satyagraha in 1930.\textsuperscript{cxlii}

Referring to the invention of steam engine - a technological revolution in those days, - J.B. Kripalani observes, that the steam power of England only extended the economic power. If England had not destroyed our industries and created markets for their goods, steam power could not have destroyed our industry.\textsuperscript{cxliii}

The importance of technical achievement is challenged by Gandhiji on yet another ground. It results in a highly mechanized life which leaves our innermost being unsatisfied. The reason is that the human values are lost in transit.\textsuperscript{cxlv} For Gandhiji the only progress worth its name is the progress in self-discovery. A civilization that does not give due recognition to it is not worth preserving.\textsuperscript{cdv}

Mechanization and industrialization also dehumanize the individual. Originally, machine was invented to ease man’s burden, to give him more leisure,
to develop his higher faculties and enrich his life. But, with the passage of time, machine induced an ever increasing skill of specialization. Labour became more mechanized and impersonal. “The machine which was conceived as a willing slave of man became a demanding master. Machine which was to serve man also made man its servant. What counted most was the individual’s use value in industry.” Hence, there is the danger of losing the uniqueness of personality and individuality through mechanization.

Gandhi also condemns industrialization for its tendency to ignore vital differences in national economies in terms of their geographical location, resource development, cultural tradition and level of economic development. “A big country with a teeming population, with an ancient rural tradition which has hitherto answered its purpose need not and must not, copy the Western model. What is good for one nation situated in one condition is not necessarily good for another differently situated.” There is also the danger of an industrialized country colonizing non-industrialized countries. Industrialization demolished barriers between differing national economies. It sets in motion a process of homogenization that tolerates no deviance and suffers no autonomy.

Machinery, to be well used, has to help and ease human effort. “The present use of machinery tends more and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few in total disregard of millions of men and women, whose bread is snatched by it out of their mouths.” This statement shows that even when Gandhi gives importance to the individual above all other institutions, he always gives
preference to the poor man. This is also made clear in the famous ‘talisman’, “Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you apply this test. Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him.” In Harijan he wrote; “there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as means of exploitation of others.” For Gandhiji the supreme consideration is man. The application of machinery should not lead to atrophy of human limbs. “I am not against machinery as such; but I am totally opposed to it when it masters us.” It is beneath human dignity to lose one’s individuality and became a mere cog in the machine. “I want every individual to become a full blooded, full developed member of society.” His opposition was against the enslavement of man by machines.

3.5.5.1 Ethics and Development

Ethics is a discipline involving inquiries into moral judgments. People make rules and principles upon which judgments are based. Ethics sets up norms against which an action can be considered to be right or wrong. In the modern age, a great ethical problem is posed by reckless pursuit of material riches. All too often, acquisition of material wealth becomes the sole concern of one’s life. Emphasis on increasing one’s worldly possessions makes every individual a competitor of scarce resource. In Gandhiji’s view, if self-interest occupies the centre of one’s thoughts and actions, inequality becomes the primary
characteristic of social order. Pursuit of self-interest leads to exploiting others which in turn creates inequality. Thus getting rich becomes an act of establishing the maximum inequality in one's own favour. It pays little heed to morality or religion. In Hind Swaraj Gandhi wrote, “Formerly, men were made slaves under physical compulsion. Now they are enslaved by temptation of money and other luxuries that money can buy.” This civilization takes note neither of morality nor of religion. Its votaries calmly state that their business is not to teach religion. Referring to the new ‘religion’ of Europe Gandhiji stated “It has taken such a hold on the people in Europe that those who are in it appear to be half mad.” No wonder Carlyle dubbed it ‘pig philosophy’.

The uniqueness of human being and his development are an ethico-religious question which cannot be answered in biological, psychological or sociological terms. If this spiritual principle is rejected, whatever material well-being acquired becomes of no use in the individual’s development. Hunger for wealth and the greedy pursuit of worldly pleasures lead to violence because resources are limited. Violence does not always mean physical violence but an exploitative social order in which inequality, opposition and deprivation prevail. This violates human justice and dignity. Only a very few can succeed in this rat race for wealth. They will succeed only at the cost of others who are forced out of the race. This is immoral and irreligious. The thirst for amassing wealth which has become a distinctive feature of modern civilization does not favour the flowering of individuality. Multiplication of wants and machinery reduces man to
a mere cog in the machine. He has no influence on decisions which greatly impinge upon his life.

3.5.5.2 Materialism and Consumerism

In Gandhiji’s critique the most important pillar of modern civilization is the gratification of ever proliferating material wants. This leads to moral selfhood. When morality is forsaken, man’s pursuit of self-interest knows no bounds. In this pursuit he treats his fellow beings and society only as instruments for serving his own purposes.

Schumacher points out three crises arising from a craze for material well-being and technological development.

a) Human nature revolts against inhuman technological, organizational and political patterns.

b) The living environment which supports human life aches and groans and gives signs of partial breakdown.

c) The inroads being made into the world’s non-renewable resources, particularly those of fossil fuels, are such that serious bottlenecks and virtual exhaustion loom ahead in the foreseeable future. Today, twenty-eight years after Schumacher made his prediction, what he and Gandhiji foresaw, appears to be a recognizable feature of the real world. What is quite clear is that a way of life that bases itself on materialism, i.e., on permanent, limitless expansionism in a finite environment, cannot last long. It may well turn out to be deadly in its impact on man and his environment. Moreover, the stress on technical achievement and the amassing of
Material comforts and luxuries result in a highly mechanized life. One’s innermost being will be stifled because many human values are lost in the process of accumulation of wealth. This is a dangerous prospect both for the individual and for the state.

Materialism will ultimately lead to consumerism of which the effect is to dehumanize the individual. Unless cautiously avoided consumerism might enslave him. “The present consumer society is like a drug addict, who no matter how miserable he may feel, finds it extremely difficult to get off the hook.”

Therefore, Gandhiji warns, “Let us not be deceived by catch words and phrases. This industrial civilization is a disease.”

“Now that we know the use of steam and electricity, we should be able to use them on due occasion and after we have learnt to avoid industrialism. Our concern is, therefore, to destroy industrialism at any cost.”

Industrialism does not increase man’s spiritual stature. Tolstoy observes, “Fifty years of brilliant inventions and discoveries have not added one inch to the moral height of mankind.”

In Gandhian ethics, next to God, the individual is the supreme being.

Hence, only that which upholds the dignity of the human person as a supreme being is ethical for Gandhiji. Economic or business action that hurts the moral well being of the individual is immoral and therefore sinful in Gandhian view. Gandhi’s contribution of ethical dimension to development culture is unique and remarkable:

He attempted and achieved what no one could do before. He transformed the so-called eternal values of religion into politico-economic ethics and put them together as a moral structure. By
doing so, he removed the distinction between religion as such and the projection of ethical laws through morally justifiable social instruments into the realms of social action.

Summary

Mahatma Gandhi was not only a visionary and a political thinker but also a hard-headed realist with a shrewd eye for the exigencies of corporate social life. It is significant that his biography was titled *My Experiments with Truth* which gives a prominent ethical slant and spiritual dimension to his views. In a sense his was a spiritual quest for the meaning of life in all its manifestations - social, political and economic. It has a direct bearing on the managerial philosophy of the present century when liberalization, globalisation and consumerism have thrust the claims of the individual too far forward while draining his activity of all ethical content.

A careful study of Gandhian thought would yield valuable lessons on how to reconcile the conflicting claims of the individual and the collective. Taking his stand on the essential goodness of man, Gandhiji pondered ways of channelling individual initiative and enterprise into expressions of social purposes, these latter being formulated at the grassroots.

To adopt the Gandhian model would require a revamping of current management practices. It is true that Gandhiji has nowhere formulated a theory of management as such. However, a model can be evolved from his social philosophy of which the cornerstone is the conception of truth as God and faith in the essential goodness of man. Non-violent struggle and sarvodaya are practical expressions of this faith. Enshrined in them is a body of doctrine that
could be worked out into the principles of management. The practical application of these principles could be discerned in the proposition of trusteeship, oceanic circle, Satyagraha and so on. Trusteeship is a call for action of the harmonious growth of the society and prosperity of all concerned. It must not be thought that trusteeship offers a readily available replacement of the corporate structure. However, the application of the secondary principles of trusteeship viz. workers’ participation, decentralization, non-violent trade unionism social accountability, co-operative movements etc. are workable propositions. Each of these concepts needs to be separately examined and assessed in relation to their applicability in the current industrial milieu.

The Gandhian notion of human resources development -- the aim of human resource management -- is at once person-centered and society oriented. It appeals to the spiritual principles in man and places social goals within a frame of action larger than the pursuit of material riches. Gandhiji’s master plan for the organization and development of villages could easily be translated into categories of a Gandhian HRD. Rejecting top-heavy planning, it gives back to the ordinary man his share in decision making; in place of alienation, there is a sense of belonging, of proprietorship. Authority is not exercised by command, but by moral influence. In place of power pyramid, the vertical hierarchical structure, there is the harmonious balancing of centripetal and centrifugal forces on a horizontal plane, as in circular motion. Man is master of the machine, but, with Nature he is only a humble co-operator.
Notes


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xxi *Gandhian Holistic Economics* 85.


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xxvi “Speech on 25 March 1938”, *CWMG*, LXVI,44.


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