PREFACE

Today, the humanity has reached at such a critical point, where people can do any thing and can give birth to many “Black Tuesdays” (September 11, 2001), where not only the people of United States but of the whole world were shattered and shocked in pain and agony.

We all know about what happened on the Black Tuesday. Actually, it was the result of militancy, fear, anger and cowardly act and one could imagine that the mastermind behind all this could not be a human being but a devil. If Gandhi would have been alive in this world today, he would have condemned it and might have started an agitation against such inhuman act. It seems that, while entering the new age, we have become more strangers to each other. If we examine our life-styles, we will find our new phase of life different from our past. No doubt we had started our civilization with the violent ways but slowly and with proper growth we started adopting non-violent ways of means and living. Mahatma Gandhi, the millennium man and a person of the 20th Century, a man with the weapon of Truth and Non-violence, a messenger of peace, the real follower of Non-violence, clearly proved that the only solution of peace, brotherhood and togetherness lies only in the non-violent ways and not in misguided violent actions.

But again the question arises here that where are we going wrong? Why again and again we are adopting the path of violence (the short-cut to hell). The paralysed world watched silently when terrorists dismantled the skyline beautiful World Trade Centre Towers of its greatest city, once, twice, thrice and killed countless people crying and resulting in fear in the heart of its most powerful nation, the United States – designated as the super power in the world which looked like a crying and helpless child in the middle of fire and debris. With the advancement in science, technology and armament race, we are heading towards a stage where the mighty and stronger has the complete remote control over the others. Our strategy is towards the violent ways, we are spending more than 1000 billion dollars every week just to achieve the status of supreme power. But why are we all
forgetting here that the war will neither abolish war rather it will abolish us? Counter result of violence is always violence and it will give birth to hatred, anger, disrespect, bloodshed revenge, jealousy, murder and constant fear.

It is not only arms race that generates the violence but the mad rush for the Western material comforts also which results in constant dependence, dissatisfaction, cut-throat competition, exploitation and hatred leading to unending chain of untruth and violence. Today, the modern military weapons have become so indiscriminate and their effects so catastrophic that the very existence of mankind has been threatened. Unscrupulous pursuit of material hunger, without respecting ethical and human values, has eaten into the very vitals of our life and culture. As a result, the moral fibre of the people has been weakened. It seems that the only practical way to resolve these problems in a lasting manner is to turn once again to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, study them in depth and find proper solutions for our present day ailments. No shadow of doubt can exist that the world needs Gandhi in the new millennium much more than ever before. It has now been accepted that he is not a relic of the past, but a prophet of the future. In his own words, “So long as my faith burns bright as I hope it will even if I stand alone I shall be alive in the grave and what is more, speaking from it.” Therefore, Gandhi’s ideas are by no means out dated as some believe, and on the contrary these might well be applied more often in today’s dismal world. However, many still have questioned the significance, relevance and feasibility of Gandhi’s non-violent approach in the present context.

However, it has been admitted fully that violence to persons and property has the effect of clouding the real issues involved in the original conflict while non-coercive, non-violent action invites the parties to a dialogue about the issues themselves. Gandhi, therefore, warns that we must hate the sin and not the sinner. And, this is one of the basics of Gandhi’s approach to world peace, where we have to search out the proper treatment or create the soothing atmosphere and environment to reduce the extent of violence in our day-to-day life and behaviour.
As we know violence and non-violence are two opposite terms, so the arguments against violence often revolve around the assumption that it does not work, that there are inherent laws governing violence that prevent it from producing positive results. On the other hand, non-violence always gives us positive results. However, it must be clarified here that Gandhi does make a distinction between the non-violence of the brave and the non-violence of the coward. And, in this respect he does not approve of the latter one as to him a coward or a weak does not know anything of non-violence. Only brave can understand and practice non-violence. Similarly, non-violence is not helplessness but a manly act and in case of extreme injustice and dishonour of one’s country or of oneself or one’s women folk, Gandhi does permit the use of violence. However, it depends upon the actual situation or circumstances. Accordingly, there is no place of helplessness or tolerance of injustice or exploitation. On the other hand Gandhi always fought against injustice, exploitation and racial discrimination at all levels. Accordingly, it required a thorough analytical study to examine and explore the possibility or truth about Gandhi’s non-violent approach becoming a dynamic and relevant one in the present context.

In this respect, keeping in view the significance and relevance of the proposed study, the main objectives of the work were set to thoroughly examine the non-violent philosophy, initiatives, practicability, its consequences, achievements and vision of the ‘Man of the Millennium-Mahatma Gandhi’ who fought for a peaceful, exploitation free and non-violent society based on truth and non-violence and who not only lived but also died to safeguard the interest and welfare of human race. In this respect, it was very important, firstly, to define and clarify the wider and specific meaning and interpretation of the concepts of violence and non-violence. Similarly, it was also quite significant to clarify Gandhi’s view of non-violence as many do not know the meaning of Gandhi’s non-violence. Gandhi, being a practical man clearly distinguished between absolute and progressive (practical) non-violence, non-violence of the brave and non-
violence of the coward. Besides, Gandhi did discover a very scientific, dynamic and practical way to offer “Satyagraha” for the resolution of our conflicts. However, he had emphasised that its success always depended upon its proper application. Accordingly, one of the major objectives of this study was to examine, analyse the application and efficacy of Gandhi’s philosophy of non-violence in the present context. In addition, it was thought to look into the matter of the success achieved during mass movements initiated by the Mahatma himself in the past and their feasibility and relevance in the contemporary fighting world.

For research material, no doubt, the library was one of the best source of information and data collection, but along with this, these days the Media in the form of T. V. talk shows, Video cassettes, Video compact discs and the internet have also been given a due place and the help of the educational institutions has also been taken keeping in view the significance of the present study. Undoubtedly, the nature of this work is mainly theoretical one, however, an effort has been made to make it as empirical as possible. Keeping in view the need and significance of this study, interaction with the personalities who are directly or indirectly connected with Gandhi or with the subject of research work, has been done either personally or through correspondence depending upon the availability, financial constraints and utility. An interview schedule and a questionnaire were prepared to facilitate personal interviews with many and through correspondence respectively, and as a result the collected data has been thoroughly examined, analysed and presented in the light of the observations made during the course of this study.

The work has been divided into six chapters with suitable titles, namely, Violence and Non-violence: The Past and the Present Scenario, Gandhi’s Understanding and Interpretation of Non-violence, Methods and Application of Non-violence, Efficacy of Non-violence: The Present Context, Voice of the People: Nonviolence is the Only Way and finally Conclusion.
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(MANISH SHARMA)