CHAPTER – V

Theory and Practices of Non-violence in Satyagraha

Gandhi defined “Satyagraha” as the “vindication of truth, not by the infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one’s own self.” According to him, Satyagraha is “Love-force or Soul-force”. The theory and practice of Non-violence in Satyagraha, as Gandhi conceived, is the most necessary requirement of a just, peaceful and perfect society. It could help to remove one’s ill thoughts, ignorance, passion, hatred, jealousy, ego-centrism and malevolence. Gandhi maintained that it could be practiced in each and every moment in our practical life. The root meaning of Satyagraha is “holding on to truth”, or “insistence on truth”. ‘Truth’, for him, is God and this ‘Truth’ can be attained through love i.e. non-violence. Gandhi and Martin Luther King considered truth was perhaps the most suitable name of God. It is widely translated as Truth Force.

In the earlier stage, Gandhi described his movement in South Africa as ‘passive resistance’, a nomenclature borrowed from Christian and Pacifist literature that practiced in the West. Gandhi was not satisfied with the phrase ‘passive resistance’. In this expression, it is allowed to internal violence, the harbouring of opponent and anger among resisters. This expression was used by the Non-conformists in England under the leadership of Dr. Clifford to fight against the
Education Act and another movement which arose by the Suffragists whose demand is right to vote to women in England.

Gandhi announced in his Journal *Indian Opinion* published in South Africa that a nominal prize would be given to one who would find out a suitable name to describe his movement against the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance introduced into the Transvaal Council in 1906. Maganlal Gandhi, his nephew, won the prize by suggesting the term “Sadāgraha” which literally means holding firm to reality or truth firmness, i.e., firmness in a good cause or in the cause of truth. As concerning the term *Sadāgraha* he says,

“I like the word, but it did not fully represent the whole idea I wished it to connote. I therefore corrected it to ‘Satyāgraha’. Truth (Satya) implies love, and firmness (agraha) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus to call the Indian movement ‘Satyāgraha’, that is to say, the Force which is born of Truth and Love or Non-violence .......”\(^2\)

Gandhi felt ashamed to use the English expression “passive resistance” so that it was deliberately substituted as “Satyāgraha”. Satyāgraha is essentially different from what we construe to mean in English term ‘passive resistance’. He gave up the use of the expression
passive resistance. He differentiated between Satyāgraha and passive resistance. In passive resistance, there is an idea of harassing or inner hatred to the opponent that could finally lead to violence while such idea does not consist in Satyāgraha. In Satyāgraha, there is full scope of love towards the opponent. He rejected the term passive resistance on the ground that it is not sufficient, and it may be interpreted as a weapon of the weak. He considered Satyāgraha is a means for the realization of truth and carried for him the implication of the method of love i.e., non-violence. He said that there is a great and fundamental difference between the two. He says,

“Satyāgraha differs from Passive Resistance as the North-Pole from the South. The latter has been a weapon of the weak and does not exclude the use of physical force or violence, for the purpose of gaining one's end; Whereas the former has been conceived as a weapon of the strongest, and excludes the use of violence in any shape or form.”3

Satyāgraha is a positive doctrine of resistance, which is non-violent. It is a weapon of the strongest, active resistance which acts on the path of the truth. In Satyāgraha, there is no room for hatred, ill-will and the like. The way to purify the world of evil by good, hatred by love, selfishness by unselfishness, untruth by truth and violence by non-violence. All these things are found in Satyāgraha.
His doctrine of Satyāgraha is the very foundation of all his religious and metaphysical beliefs which concern about the idea of Truth or God, the soul or atman and the essential unity of all existence. He writes;

"That the tyrant whom the satyāgrahi seeks to resist has power over his body and material possessions, but can have no power over the soul. The soul can remain unconquered and unconquerable even when the body is imprisoned. The whole science of Satyāgraha was born from knowledge of the fundamental truth".\(^4\)

His notion of Satyāgraha is the implementation of truth and non-violence. He derived his concept of Satyāgraha from his Vaiśṇavite faith but neither from Christ nor Tolstoy. He discovered 'the science of Satyāgraha' from his series of experimentation with truth. Truth and non-violence are the highest virtues and can be practiced by all communities.

Gandhi practiced Satyāgraha as a matter of faith which is trying to bring out an integrated philosophy of the universe. It can develop the inner strength to the satyāgrahi. Satyāgraha is essentially peace so that the satyāgrahi is a man of peace who accepts non-violence or love as a matter of principle. A satyāgrahi loves the opponent but
hates evil, not the evil doer. One must be conscious of the difference between evil and evil doer. Gandhi also hates the system of British in India but not the British in India.

Satyagraha is ultimately based on love. A true satyagrahi loves the enemy as a fellow being. It cannot be done unless one is not practice the doctrine of Satyagraha. It aims at rousing one opponent to a sense of equity by an appeal to the best level, in other words it is a means of converting an enemy to a good friend. This conversion indicates that the opponent realizes his own mistakes and it could lead to a peaceful adjustment of discrimination.

A satyagrahi, positively speaking, will always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, violence by non violence. From the negative standpoint, it may be mentioned that satyagrahi always try to avoid all kinds of violence, all intentional injury to the opponent whether by body, mind or deed. The use of violence can destroy or injure others. This is not the way to convert or reform the opponent.

A satyagrahi must cultivate fearlessness in every field that helps him to the way of ultimate end. He must possess of more courage than one who has physical strength. The necessary condition of a satyagrahi is to have firm belief in truth and pursuit of truth.
Gandhi's principle of Satyagraha gives the highest respect to the higher law which implies the Law of Truth or God. It also includes the respect of the others. In Satyagraha, use of violence is completely forbidden. It resists the ill-will wholeheartedly and demands not to use violence or hatred as a means.

Purity of motive which can lead to purity of means and it can produce good end so that non-violent Satyagraha is the means for the realization of good end. It involves self-sacrifice that must have ready to bear suffering until the last moment with courage.

Gandhi considered that the law of Satyagraha is an eternal principle which can be universally applicable in every circumstance. It can also help to solve the conflict situation. It may be considered as the moral equivalent of war. This moral weapon can solve domestic, social, political, economic, religious and cultural problems.

Satyagraha is, thus, based on the three principles i.e. Satya (truth), (ahimsa) non-violence and (tapas) self-suffering. The principles of truth and non-violence will be discussed later as a vow of satyagrahi. "Self-suffering in Satyagraha is directed, first of all, towards the moral persuasion of one because of whom it is undertaken." The use of violence is not admitted in self-suffering if it leads a victory over an opponent. Satyagraha is not the weapon of the weak. Violence alone is the weapon of the weak; it consists of doing
injury to others. Self-suffering has to be undergone in Satyāgraha. It is the purest form of Satyāgraha. Gandhi called Satyāgraha as "the law of suffering." He greatly attached to suffering for the maintenance of peace and harmony.

Sources of Satyāgraha:

Gandhi propounded the term 'Satyāgraha' in his struggle movement in South Africa. Though it had very foundation and imprinted in his mind by the concept of Christianity and Western thoughts. The backgrounds of Christianity and Western thoughts which greatly emphasize on his concept of Satyagraha.

Christianity: Gandhi was influenced by the teaching of Christianity especially Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament. The teaching of Christ gives the idea of righteousness, non-violence, renunciation, sacrifice, universal brotherhood etc. He considered that the New Testament is not only a book of theology but it revealed on the idea of eternity, the idea of spiritual life and the idea of Satyāgraha. Jesus Christ strongly condemned the physical force but preached law of love and non-resistance. This law of love implies love of man and God, the idea of brotherhood etc. In the teaching of Christ it states,
“Love your enemies, Bless them that curse you,
Do good to them that hate you,
And pray for them which
Despitefully use you and prosecute you” 5

He preached love, non-violence and compassion towards all living beings. He strongly opposed physical force. We should try to overcome evil by using only soul-force but not by physical force. From this standpoint, the concept of Satyagraha was born. Gandhi’s concept of Satyagraha is a practical application of the teaching of Jesus Christ. The teaching of Jesus Christ involves utmost suffering on one’s own self which acts on the path of truth. S.K. George observes, “Satyagraha is the Christian weapon in the fight for Truth and Justice in the individual and in society, to which the Christian is committed by his profession.”6 Jesus and his teaching are the very foundation of Gandhian philosophy of Satyagraha. Gandhi called Jesus as “The Prince of Satyagraha.”

Leo Tolstoy: The influence of Tolstoy’s philosophy and his book *The Kingdom of God is within you* is deeply impressed in the mind of Gandhi which make a powerful thought in his concept of Satyagraha. Tolstoy developed the idea of non-violence i.e., love. His concept of love is the internal principle as well as external law of life. This love is the long lasting weapon; it can be effectively and efficiently wielded in every circumstance. It can root out all evil thoughts, jealousy,
malevolence etc. This love is based on his principle of Non-resistance and Non-cooperation. Tolstoy's philosophy is the application of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount which gives to solve the socio-political problems in the modern world.

**John Ruskin:** Ruskin's book *Unto this Last* was also give great impact on Gandhian Satyagraha. He translated this book later into Gujarati entitled *Sarvodaya* (the welfare of all). Ruskin never uses the concept of truth and non-violence explicitly but he gives the greatest importance of man. Man should not be considered as a physical entity but a spiritual one. He advised that the supremacy of the spirit, trust in the nobleness human nature and human character are very much important for the establishment of the welfare of a society. In order to attain an ideal society, there must be necessary to free from violence, coercion, exploitation, socio-economic and political evils. Without the philosophy of Ruskin and his book, the spirit of Satyagraha adopted by Gandhi would be unfruitful. For the welfare of all, Gandhi adopted the idea of Ruskin in the Satyagraha movement.

**Henry David Thoreau:** Thoreau was an American Anarchist whose thought made an impact on the spirit of Gandhian Satyagraha. He was the first man who introduced the term 'Civil Disobedience' in 1849. He refused to pay his taxes as a protest against slavery in America. Gandhi read his essay *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* in South Africa Jail. He derived his civil resistance and finally turned
into non-violent resistance. From the concept of Civil Disobedience Gandhi applied non-violence as a weapon for solving all major socio-political life. Civil disobedience of Thoreau is not only a technique but a parcel of Gandhi's concept of non-violence which can fight non-cooperation with unjust, evil doer, tyranny etc. Gandhi wrote in his journal 'Indian Opinion' that Civil Disobedience left a deep impression on him. It also reveals how deep this impression was.

Qualification of a Satyāgrahi:

Gandhi wanted every human being to adopt the principle of Satyāgraha for all struggles against injustice by following strict moral and religious discipline. If it is conducted in a loose or an insincere manner, it will be a failure. Gandhi mentioned a number of qualifications that a satyāgrahi must possess. Such qualifications are as follows:

1. A satyāgrahi i.e. a civil resister must have living faith in God.

2. He must believed in truth and non-violence as his creed and therefore, have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by his truth and love express through his suffering.

3. He must leading a chaste life and be ready and willing, for the sake of his cause, to give up his life and his possessions.
4. He must be a teetotaler and be free from the use of other
intoxicants in order that his reason may be always
unchloned and his mind constant.

5. A satyāgrahī must be the habitual wearer of Khadi
clothes. This is essential for India.

6. He must carry out with a willing heart all the rules of
discipline and may be laid down from time to time.

7. He should carry out the rules of jail unless they are
specially devised to hurt his self-respect. 7

Gandhi believed that a true satyāgrahī is one who can fulfill the
above qualifications. He who can work for the maximum number of
good of the others, such person alone can face the opponent without
fear. By describing clearly, he admits that a true satyāgrahī can easily
meet a violent person in a non-violent situation.

**Vows of Satyāgraha:**

In order to make a satyāgrahī intellectually, morally and
spiritually successful in the Satyāgraha movement, Gandhi prescribed
some essential Ashram observances which are known as ‘vow’ for right
conduct. This code of conduct must be observed more by the
Satyāgrahī leaders than by the satyāgrahī masses in their daily life.
He formulated the vows of Satyāgraha specially followed from the
virtues of Prāśastapāda (Vaiśeṣika thinker) and Pātañjali of Yogasūtra.
The vows are divided into two categories – principal and subsidiary. In
the principal categories, there are *Satya* (Truth), *Ahiṃsā* (Non-violence), *Brahmacharya* (Chastity), *Aparigraha* (Non-stealing) and *Asteya* (Non-possession). These five virtues are recognized by Upaniṣads, Buddhist, the Jainas, the Yoga system and others. Control of palate, fearlessness, removal of untouchability, bread labour, equality of religion and swadeshi are under the categories of subsidiary which are propounded by Gandhi. These eleven vows are briefly explained as follows:

**Satya (truth):** The first vow is truth, which is not easy task to observe. He stressed the concept of truth in various circumstances. It is the supreme and perfect. We must be truthful in speech, action and thought. Truthfulness in speech and action, is natural outcome of the truthfulness in thought. So, he believed that ‘truth alone conquers’ (satyameva jayate). When it is practiced as a vow it assumes the form of ‘Moral Law’ (Dharma) which is regarded as the backbone of all morality. It can be realized by devoted constant practice and complete detachment. All men should practice and consider it as a moral virtue. This virtue can discriminate man from the brute. All our activities and experiences should be centered in truth. Truthfulness in speech and action can imply love towards other fellow beings. Truth and love are indispensable in Gandhian philosophy. The concept of truth can help the establishment of the idea of brotherhood. It is the vital code of morality and very foundation of life. The observance of the Law of Truth is understood as we must speak the truth. Knowledge always
represents truth. Where there is no truth, there will be no true knowledge. He said that it is impossible to observe other virtues without truth.

Ahimsā (Non-violence): “Ahimsā” literally means non-injury or non-killing. This negative concept is re-interpreted by Gandhi in a positive way. For him, it is a virtue which expressed as love and good will towards living beings. He says that a true follower of this vow never try to hurt physically or mentally to the others. Even they may be evil doer, he must love them. He should have the spirit of opposing the tyranny and injustice through non-violence, whether it may be parents, government and others. Violence cannot be met by violence but by non-violence. Lord Buddha says “Enmity is never appeased by enmity: enmity is appeased by non-enmity. This is the eternal law” (Dhammapāda 1.5). Thus, ahimsā is nothing but love and tolerance, it can also draw a maxim that all men are equal.

Brahmacharya (Chastity): The term Brahmacharya is directly derived from ‘Charya’ which means course of conduct and Brahma i.e. Truth. It means the course of conduct adopted to search of Brahman i.e. Truth. The realization of Brahman demands perfect selflessness. On the contrary, a selfish person can never be realized truth. So, Brahmacharya is an integral part of Truth and of other vows at the same time. Gandhi greatly emphasized the importance of control of all senses under all circumstances. Control of all senses is basic feature
of brahmacharya. It can help one to devote his entire energy to social and political work. A perfect brahmachari can control all his senses and nothing is impossible for him. It has been recognized as the essential requisite of the life of a selfless social worker. Gandhi considered the vow of brahmachari as a moral weapon which is a means of self-control.

**Asteya (Non-Stealing):** It is generally meant that not to take away the property of anyone unless it is given by that person. Such virtue is based on the recognition of the right of everyone to his own property. Jainism believed that stealing is a kind of violence that property is the outer life of a person and to rob one of his properties is just like to take away his outer life. That is to say, stealing is committing injury or harm to anybody. It is against the principle of truth and Non-violence. So, non-stealing is also an integral part of Truth and Non-violence. Gandhi recommends that a true moral person must take oath to cultivate the virtue of non-stealing.

**Aparigraha (Non-possession):** Man by nature, the habit of possession is an inherent one. It is the security for the maintenance of livelihood in future. In one way, possession of property breeds jealousy and animosity. This virtue demands that we should minimize our necessities and possession unless it may bring cause of all evils. Gandhi puts in his diary of 25th November, 1944, “not to accumulate things not necessary for the day”. He aware that aparigraha cannot be
practiced in absolute way. Absolute non-possession means giving up all ownership. So, we should possess only those things that are indispensable for the simple life. A satyagrahi who observes non-stealing must also observe the virtue of non-possession since possession induces him to violate the former.

**Control of Palate:** Control of palate is a part of the vow of brahmacharya. There is closely connected between self control and the control of palate. He says, "Control of palate is very closely connected with the observance of brahmacharya. I have found from experience that the observance of celibacy becomes comparatively easy, if one acquires mastery over the palate." A person who observes brahmacharya can control all his senses and even he can control his food. His food should be simple; spiceless and even uncooked. In such way a layman can uplift his own mental and physical; in doing so it can minimize his passion, anger, ill-will etc.

**Fearlessness:** Fearlessness is one the ethical principles propounded by Gandhi which is indispensable for the development of his doctrine of truth and non-violence. It is a necessary condition for the practitioner of non-violence who can fight the evil doer with courage. Fearlessness is the absence of all kinds of fear. It implies the freedom from fear of death, molestation, hunger, humiliation, criticism and fear of ghost and spirits. It lies at the root of truth and non-violence but cowardice which comes from fear.
Removal of untouchability: For Gandhi, it is not considered as a vow but it must be observed. Removal of untouchability is a universal appeal in its spiritual implication. He wanted to root out the concept of untouchability from the society. It would lead a perfect order, harmony and hearty co-operation amongst religion. There will be no superior or inferior complex between individual and religion. He tried to establish a social and social equality which free from exploitation and oppression.

Bread Labour: For Gandhi, the term Bread Labour is, in order to live man must work. It also implies the division of labour or duty. The person who performs his duty according to his stations in life, and his duty must include some kind of productive physical labour. So, the concept of bread labour is closely connected with Varṇāśrama. This virtue gives the message of service to humanity, the close co-operation and universal brotherhood. The virtue of Bread labour is not a compulsory one because it gives rise slavery. Every human being must take it voluntarily. Voluntary bread labour is a blessing. He says,"Bread labour is a veritable blessing to one who would observe Non-violence, worship Truth, and make the observance of brahmacharya a natural act." ⁹

Equality of religion: Gandhi added this virtue to the traditional virtue. He said that the religion is the way of realization of truth. There is no superior or inferior religion between the individuals or
communities. Religion is differentiated by the people but not the religion itself. The meaning of religion is differing from the person to person according to his creed, sect and ritual culture in which he belonged. He studied different religious books and found that the moral element of all religions is equal. He saw the religion in the image of truth. He recommended that different religions are the different visions of the same reality.

Swadeshi: The literal meaning of Swadeshi is ‘belonging of one’s own country.’ In the wider context, it means ‘the use of all local products to the exclusion of foreign things.’ The root meaning of swadeshi lies in the multidimensional concept; it may be concerned in the field of ethical, cultural, socio-political theory, metaphysical, cultural, educational and economic outlook. Gandhi advocated swadeshi as the most important relevance in the economic thought. For the economic aspect of swadeshi, Gandhi introduced khadi. Khadi is a symbol of swadeshi which can decentralize economy. It implies in itself a comprehensive preference of local production which can take out their small income and boycott of foreign cloth but not all foreign goods. Gandhi’s concept of swadeshi was introduced for the first time in his famous manifesto “Hind Swaraj”.

Techniques of Satyāgraha:

There are various steps of Satyāgraha that have been used by Gandhi and his followers. He believed that violence can never
overcome evil but can suppress it for a short period, it can be overcome by following the principle of non-violence i.e. love. Thus, Satyagraha is an idea on the basis of moral appeal to the heart and conscience, which is more effective than that of an appeal based on threat of bodily pain—that is in the sense of violence. The steps of Satyagraha, for him, are non-cooperation, civil-disobedience, peaceful picketing, boycott, hartal and fasting. All these steps make Satyagraha 'a strong and perfect weapon' for fighting against socio-political evils which alone can lead to a new philosophical outlook in his lifetime. He aware that if the intention is impure or if these steps are taken as a resort without the spirit of love, it would become unsuccessful.

**Non-cooperation:** It is the first and foremost steps of Satyagraha which means withdrawal of cooperation by the people from Government authorities, institutions etc. Its movement is against the system of which the person or persons are merely the victims. The purpose of it is "to rid ourselves of the feeling of helplessness by being independent of all governmental control or supervision, i.e. to govern ourselves in all possible." It may be withdrawal of Government services, surrender of all kinds of titles of honours, boycotting of schools, colleges etc. It can be adopted by the individual as well as by the masses in every circumstance. It includes non-violent resistance for the vindication of truth. His concept of non-cooperation is based on love, i.e. non-violence towards the opponent. Non-violence is the most essential part of it. His non-violent non-cooperation is extremely
self-sacrificing. He always seeks truth by imposing suffering on himself but not to give suffering to the others. As he says,

"Intolerance is a species of violence and therefore against our creed. Non-violent non-co-operation is an object lesson in democracy. The moment we are able to provoking, that moment we have achieved our end, because this is the movement when we can offer complete non-co-operation."\(^{11}\)

Non-cooperation would be effective only when non-cooperation against the system or policy that must be non-cooperating with whole area or system but not a particular area. This step of Satyāgraha is a form of direct action. It is a right of citizen to refuse to co-operate with a ruler who misrules.

**Civil Disobedience:** It is a technique of Satyāgraha which comes into the political sphere. It means the violation of law on the basis of truth and non-violence against the unjust Government. The term *Civil Disobedience* was coined by Henry Thoreau, and American moralist who considers civil disobedience to unjust law is the duty of all citizens. This term is further developed in the hands of Gandhi as he used it as a technique of Satyāgraha during the freedom struggle. It becomes a revolutionary weapon to resist the immoral laws of the state. It is a necessary part of non-cooperation. It is a method for
substituting the use of violent action. It can be adopted by any law-
abiding citizen with the spirit of non-violence and ready for utmost
sacrifice. A perfect civil resister will do for the welfare to the state
without using violent arm. He differentiated civil disobedience and
criminal disobedience. Civil disobedience must be respectful, sincere,
non-violent restraint and not defiant. While criminal disobedience
does not belong to such qualities.

**Peaceful picketing:** It is considered to be valid and useful form
of Satyagraha which aims at the protest against certain evils or
abuses through the application of non violence. It always tries to
achieve peace by converting the wrong doer or opponent with the
spirit of non-violence. It is the way to practice non-cooperation in the
sphere of socio-economic and political situation and gives a spirit of
swadeshi on the mind of Indian people. Women took up a leading role
in respect of organizing picketing against the foreign clothes and
liquor shops.

**Boycott:** It is another method of Satyagraha introduced by
Gandhi. It is considered as a weapon in the field of socio-economic,
political, educational, legal and other institutional situation which is
different from strike. It is the direct and forceful non-cooperation with
an oppressor. The economic boycott is implied in the spirit of
swadeshi. It implies boycott of foreign clothes. In 1920-22 he took up
the step of destruction of foreign clothes in India. In July 1921, in
Bombay, he himself inaugurated the bonfires of foreign cloth. Thus, boycott takes the form of non-violent social ostracism. Ostracism may be violent or non-violent according to manner in which it is practice. It will do only in the extreme cases. "When a defiant minority refused to bend majority, not of any regard for principle, but from sheer defiance or worse."^{12}

Gandhi says that social ostracism does not mean to deprive the social necessities of an individual in which he lives. In the political field, it takes the form of civil disobedience. The boycott of legal, educational and any other institution also take up on the basis of non-violent situation.

**Hartal:** Hartal or peaceful stoppage of work is a voluntary cessation of work which protests against particular act, the policy of state government or some evil authority. It may be occurred in a particular place and may be observed for a day or a few days. It is a spiritual weapon through which all satyagrahis try to know the problems of the public against the policy of opponent. During the performance of hartal, the shops are voluntary closed and suspension of business. It is a way to practice non-cooperation. It should be performed with a genuine cause.

**Fasting:** It is considered by Gandhi as the ultimate and most powerful weapon of Satyagraha. It is suffering unto death and it gives
no infliction upon the opponent but in him. It is the last duty to be performed by the satyagrahis when other techniques become futile. Fasting is different from hunger strike because fasting is undertaken with certain condition, a previous preparation and adequate thought. It requires a firm belief in God, Truth and Non-violence. A satyagrahi who practices fasting must be free from anger, malice, lust, selfishness, impatient etc. All these make fasting violent. Self-purification is one of the necessary conditions in fasting. Without it on the part of Satyagraha, there will be no successful in fasting. A satyagrahi should have inner strength, love for the opponent and having the tendency to renounce all worldly desires. Gandhi called it ‘a fiery weapon’ and ‘last resort’ of Satyagraha.

The practice of non-violence in the Satyagraha movement may be classified into two divisions. The first one is the Satyagraha movement in the political field which includes Satyagraha movement in South Africa, Rowlatt Satyagraha and Salt Satyagraha. The second one is the Satyagraha in socio-economic field which we find in the Champaran Satyagraha, Ahmedabad Satyagraha, Kheda Satyagraha, Vykom Satyagraha and Bardoli Satyagraha.

Satyagraha in South Africa:

When we talk about the practice of non-violence in Political field here it corresponds to the situation of South Africa Indians, where Gandhi launched Satyagraha movement against South African
Government. On many occasions, when he was in South Africa, Indian people were ill-treated by people of that country. As a barrister, he came in South Africa in April 1893 for a professional reason but the situation he had faced made him a leader of the masses. All Indians were addressed as cooli. Even Gandhi, a well educated barrister was called cooli barrister. There was no respect for the Indians in South Africa. He came to face to face with racial prejudices and other oppressive atmosphere.

While traveling from Durban to Pretoria, the capital of Transvaal, he was not allowed to first class compartment in spite of possession of first class railway ticket. Not only first class but the second class tickets were never issued to Indians in Transvaal.Only the third class was issued. He was forcibly thrown out with his luggage. It was a very cold night and he had to sit the whole night in the waiting room at Moritzburg station. One thought that haunted him throughout the night as he mentioned in his autobiography,

"Should I fight for my rights or go back to India, or should I go on to Pretoria without minding the insults, and return to India after finishing the case? It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligation. The hardship to which I was subjected was superficial - only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice. I should try, if
possible, to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process. Redress for wrongs I should seek only to the extent that would be necessary for the removal of the colour prejudice.\textsuperscript{13}

This decision laid the foundation of his great life in future. After many years, when asked about, ‘the most creative experience of his life’, he gave the answer with reference to these incidents. Another fresh incident was that when he arrived at Johannesburg he was not allowed to stay in any European hotel.

In 1894, the South African Government, on the basis of racial discrimination, introduced a bill to deprive Indians of their right to vote in Natal Legislative Assembly. Though the Bill was passed, the campaign had become a large moving force to the Indians.

In 22\textsuperscript{nd} August 1906, the Transvaal Government drafted an Asiatic Law Amendment ordinance which was totally against the Indians. Gandhi called this ordinance as ‘Black Act’ and taking that seriously, people exhorted to fight such situation. In that proposed ordinance, it gave a notice of new legislation that every Indian including, men, women and child above eight years of age should report to the registrar of Asiatics and take out a certificate. In the certificate, it should be recorded ten finger prints and identification mark on the person’s body. If fail to register before the given date, he
must had a fine of 100 pounds, three month’s imprisonment or deported. Such a new law is not only discriminatory but extremely humiliating towards the Indians.

On 11th September 1906, Gandhi called a meeting to all Transvaal Indians in Johannesburg. A resolution was passed by the meeting that Indians refused to obey the ordinance. They also took oath that they never submit. This agitation against the Black Act advocated by Gandhi was perhaps the first Satyagraha. A man who practices Satyagraha would become a Satyagrahi. with mass of people took up the burning the thousands of registration certificate in front of the Hamida Mosque in Johannesburg.

The Satyagraha campaign under the leadership of Gandhi, was formed two figures – to eradicate the Black Act and to remove the restriction on the entry of Indians into Transvaal. Not only this, Justice Sarle of Supreme Court in the Cape colony declared that only the Christian marriage could be valid in South Africa, but the Indian marriage to be illegal. It lead the Indian women were degraded to the rank of concubines and their children were bastards. This became a violent situation to the Indian community. Most of Indian women including Kasturbai also joined the Satyagraha movement.

A group of women went to the coal mines at New Castle and the indentured labourers to go on strike. Such strike was spread next by
next and it became strike out up to five thousand coal mines. The strike was performed only through non-violent. The entire strike had to the industrial set up to a halt. All the strikers including Gandhi were arrested. The Jails of South Africa were filled with Indians.

Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, demanded a commission of enquiry and the idea was taken up in London. Both Botha and General Smut were faced with new difficulties. In order to solve the problem, they released Gandhi with his friend Kallenbach and Polak on 18th December 1913. He was invited to Pretoria for discussing their agreement. On 30th June 1914, Indian Relief Bill was passed by Union Parliament and it became a law in July 1914.

**Rowlatt Satyagraha:**

The so-called Rowlatt Satyagraha was nothing but the act, to suppress the political revolution in the countrywide, which was passed by the Government of India under the aegis of Mr. Justice S.A.T Rowlatt. This act was condemned by all sections of Indian people including Gandhi, and launched a Satyagraha against the Rowlatt act. This Satyagraha was launched on 6th April 1919 which can make a situation of encouraging Gandhi to transform his ideas into political action. He appealed to all Indian people to wake up from darkness and observed this day as a day of humiliation and prayer in protest against Rowlatt act. The Rowlatt Act was designed by the
Government of Indian with authority to crush the revolutionary movement in Bengal, Maharrastra and Punjab. In 1917, the Government of India appointed a committee which recommended the investigation of the revolutionary movement in the country and the suggestion for its eradication to the imperial Legislative Council. In this council the Government of India drafted two bills on 18th January, 1919. “The first of these bills sought to amend the Indian Penal Code in a manner which would enable the executive authority effectively to check activities prejudicial to the security of the state. The second bill was designed to invest the Government of India with the discretionary power to short circuit the processes of law in dealing with political crime.”¹⁴ This two bills reflected a deep rooted distrust of the common people. They deny with the arbitrary power of British Government. On 18th March one of Bills was passed, by doing so Gandhi was against such oppressive law and decided to challenge the Government.

Before the Rowlatt Bill was passed into a law, Gandhi wrote a letter with his disciples signed a pledged refusing to obey the Act. On 24th February 1919, he sent a telegram to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, for ready to start a Satyagraha against Rowlatt Act. After two days, he addressed an open letter to the people of India urging them to join the Satyagraha.
An organization called Satyagraha Sabha was established by Gandhi as its President, in the city of Bombay. Under the leadership of Gandhi, public meetings were held. He appealed a nation-wide hartal on 6th April 1919 and all the people should suspend business for a day. It gave a wonderful response all over India. This day is observed as Satyagraha Day. In Bombay, civil resistance was started by selling certain books which includes two most important books namely Gandhi's Hind Swaraj (Indian Self Rule) and Sarvodaya (Welfare of all). These two books had been banned by British Indian Government and considered as seditious.

The Rowlatt Satyagraha was succeeding in certain areas where the local leaders were participated enthusiastically. In Bihar, Bengal and Delhi, the prominent local leaders were participating from the beginning. But the places where the Rowlatt Satyagraha was really not continued in Amritsar, Gujarawala and a number of some smaller town in Punjab; Ahmedabad, Viragam and Nadiad in Gujarat, Delhi, Bombay; and to a lesser extent of Calcutta. In such places, the mass of people took serious deeds out of control. They burnt main post office, the magistrate’s office, railway, bridge, railway station, church, school, telegraph wires, telegraph offices and when they beat two European soldiers they succumbed to death.

In such incidence, he felt that he had committed a great error in calling upon the mass people to launch a campaign of civil
disobedience. Volunteers who participated in the campaign must be well trained, pure hearted and thoroughly understood the strict conditions of Satyagraha. Ahimsa is a fundamental principle which governs the behaviour of a satyagrahi. With the principle of it, the very act of resistance would appear to be futile. It is very critical to the entire exercise of satyagraha.

**Salt Satyagraha:**

Gandhi intended to take up Satyagraha movement in respect of Salt Law against the British. Salt was a British Government monopoly in India. No one could manufacture it. If some one wanted to buy it, it would be from British Government. He wanted to defy salt monopoly through non-violence. In order to violate the salt monopoly, he suggested that he would himself performed the first act of Civil Disobedience with a group of satyagrahis to prepare salt from the sea water.

On 12th March 1930, Gandhi with seventy eight followers including men and women started to walk out two hundred and forty one miles from Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmendabad to Dandi, the West Coast of Gujarat. They expected to cover ten miles per day on average. It became the historic Dandi march and salt Satyagraha, one of the most important events in the history of India. Salt march lasted twenty four days.
Gandhi with his followers reached Dandi on 5th April. In the early morning of the following day, after prayer they went down to the sea. Gandhi dipped into the water and picked up some salt from shore. It became the breaking of the Salt Law. Salt is one of the necessary requirements of all people and it had been monopolized by the British Government. It was a gift of God and had stolen from the people by the British Government. There were a large number of people manufacturing Salt, and it spread out the seacoasts of India. The step towards breaking the Salt Law was perfectly the practice of non-violence, it hurts nobody. The All Indian Congress party organized the illegal salt of sold throughout the nation. The mass meetings were held in all cities where illegal salt was sold and boycott of foreign clothes were pledged. One after another Indian congress leaders were entered into jail including Nehru, Raja Gopalchari, Patel, Rajendra Prasad. Gandhi also arrested on the night between 4th and 5th May 1930.

The Satyagraha campaign was continued throughout the year until the direct negotiation between Gandhi and Lord Edward Irwin, Viceroy of India. The Gandhi–Irwin Pact was signed on 5th March 1931. The ultimate goal of his campaign was the complete independence and the agreement was, for him, provisional and conditional.
A new viceroy named, Lord Wellingdon had been planning a counter attack towards the mass movement. In due course, Government had begun illegal actions such as arrest without warrant, imprisonment without trial etc. Gandhi insisted to the masses that non-violence must be observed in thought, word or deed. In May 1933, mass civil disobedience came to end. In April 1934, Gandhi called a final halt. Gandhi towards the end of salt Satyagraha had reached the pinnacle of glory and established himself as the supreme leader of the masses.

**Satyagraha in Champaran:**

Champaran was the place where Satyagraha movement was launched by Gandhi in 1917. Champaran, north western corner of Bihar, was under the control of European planters. The Champaran Satyagraha enforced the Government to adopt the Champaran Agrarian Act whereby the planters compelled to let their land for indigo plantations were given some relief. The peasants of Champaran were all ignorant and were facing extreme grievance in order to produce indigo under the contract system called tinkathia (three kathas out of the twenty had to be planted with indigo) and the indigo harvest should be paid to the British as a part of their rent.

Rajkumar Shukla was one the agriculturists who requested Gandhi to come over there for investigating their grievances with the planters. When Gandhi began the investigation, the local Government
intervened and ordered him to leave Champaran immediately. His investigation was on the basis of experiment with *Truth* and *Ahimsa*. Gandhi met thousands of rioters for cross-examination and their statements were recorded by an officer from C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department). He was always present with a C.I.D. officer.

He received a letter from the Bihar Government to the following effect: “your inquiry has been sufficiently prolonged; should you not now bring to an end and leave Bihar?”¹⁵ He replied that the inquiry would be prolonged unless it became some relief to the peasants. He had no intention to leave Bihar unless his struggle becomes fruitful. He had firm attitude in mind that his investigation would be terminated only if the Government recognizes the peasant’s grievance as genuine and redressing them.

A commission was eventually formed of planters and Government officers while Gandhi was the representative of peasants. By investigation he had around 8,000 evidence of tenants, it could make no single Agrarian problem with which he was not fully acquainted. With his firm belief, knowledgeable, persuasive he could to make out an irresistible case for the tenants. Sir Edward Gait, the Lieutenant Governor, who accepted the conditions. The committee in favour of the peasants recommended the abolition of the *tinkathia* and the planter should refund 25 percent. The actions and imposition of planters was extra ordinary power and their supremacy came to end.
The tinkathia system which had been in existence for many years was abolished by law.

**Satyagraha in Ahmedabad:**

The Satyagraha movement at Ahmedabad was broken out through the inter-quarrelling between mill owners and labourers. In August 1917, a ‘plague bonus’ which is equivalent in some cases 80 percent of wages that was paid to dissuade the labourers from fleeing the plague ravaged. When it was over, the mill owners decided to discontinue the monetary benefit. Their decisions made hit them adversely because of the price-rice. In this situation, Gandhi was invited by Anusuyya Sarabhai, social worker and sister of Ambalal Sarabhai, the president of the Ahmedabad Mill Owner’s Association.

When Gandhi began investigation with three representatives from both sides regarding the cost and profits of textile mill in Ahmedabad, he came to know that the raise of 35 percent was justified. But the mill owners proposed only 20 percent bonus. This was not acceptable to the labourers. On 22nd February 1918, the mill owners locked out the labourers. Gandhi started Satyāgraha movement against the mill owners. More than five thousand of the labourers in the textile mills of Ahmedabad participated in the Satyāgraha movement.
During the lock out period, the strikers took up the constructive programmes in which alternatives trades were applied, repairing the houses and cleaning the road around workers' colonies. They were not to indulge quarrelling, robbing, mischief, damage to mill owners' property. No violence, no molestation of blacklegs, no dependence upon also and no surrender but to continue strike long in the spirit of satyagrahi.

On 15th March 1918, Gandhi began fasting unto death. His fasting lasted for three days. It became a force to the mill owners who deeply respected Gandhi to come to an agreement with the striking labourers. As per the agreement suggested by the arbitration board – went in the favour of labourers, the demand of labours 35 percent was almost fulfilled. The actual duration of this Satyagraha movement was only 25 days.

**Kheda Satyagraha:**

In March, 1918, Kheda Satyagraha was launched under the leadership of Gandhi. He reacted against the government in order to keep non-text for the peasants. This Satyagraha campaign lasted four months. Kheda, a district in Gujarat, where almost all the peasants of more than six hundred villages owned their own land and paid their taxes on government. A drought had come due to blighted in the previous year. Because of the drought, all the peasants of the Kheda wanted a complete remittance of land revenue. The government
refused their petitions but threat them that if anybody failed to pay the land revenue in full, they would risk the confiscation of their land. These were hard threaten to the poor peasants. Some people had paid their taxes due to their adamant act and some poor peasants were surrendered.

The situation brought to the notice of Gandhi. He used non-violent as a weapon in order to maintain non-tax for the poor peasants in Kheda. He insisted that we must feel for the interest of the peasants. His non-payment of tax campaign tried to achieve free from the fear of peasantry, and free from forfeitures of land property. Some people refunded to Gandhi to adopt non-violence in that situation. In June, the Chief Collector decided to drop their demands against the poor peasants and did not imply any order to them who failed to pay the taxes. The culture of collecting taxes from the poor peasants were reprieved. The changed in the position of the Government from their earlier stands, as Gandhi felt that his non-violent Satyagraha for non-tax campaign is somewhat fulfilled which could awakened the poor peasants in Gujarat.

**Satyagraha in Vykom:**

In 1924, there was a great movement for the removal of untouchability in Kerala, State of Travancore. This movement was launched at the village of Vykom through Satyagraha as a weapon. In this village, Brahmans and the priests of the temple asserted that if
the low caste or untouchables walked on the road, around or on road
covering on the scared temples and entering of temples would be
polluted. Even the Government of Travancore also used sign boards
on the public roads near temples, palaces and abodes of Brahmins
prohibiting low caste to enter such areas.

There should be equal right even if one is born in low caste. To
discriminate against the particular human being due to their birth
and occupation is inhumane. The followers of Gandhi decided such
inhuman nature must necessary be abolished and to throw a road
open to all human beings. Gandhi was not the leader of this
movement.

Vykom Satyagraha was launched for the recognition of human
rights. Gandhi says, “they (untouchables) do not want anything more
than recognition of the most elementary human rights.” The rights
of untouchablities are assaulted by the upper classes like Brahmin.
Those groups of untouchable – Ezhavas, Pulayas, Pariahs and
Shannars helped to the high or low caste by household works and
even their finished goods were used in the temples. Among the low
caste one who was educated and cultured always remained the same
as untouchable because of their birth and occupation.

In order to achieve their demands, satyagrahis stood against the
Government and Brahmins. Many people were joined to the
Satyagraha and opposed not only to the upper class but also to the police and Tranvancore Government. The Government was against the satyagrahis and police used violent means towards them. The police built four barricades to prevent satyagrahis who entered the road. By the instruction of Gandhi, the reformers stood firmly against the police barrier with an attitude of prayer. They organized themselves there by taking in turn standing for six hours and perform hand spinning. This programme continued for months. Gandhi advised them it must continue until the hearts of the Brahmins were changed. They continued to stand even the times when the water was up to their shoulders. Police also prevented the road by using small boats.

The time had come to Brahmins who changed their heart and mind; accepted the demands of satyagrahis. In April 1925, Gandhi met state authority, the Government also passed a resolution favouring for the reform. The Brahmins declared that they were ready to receive the untouchables and opened the roads of the three sides of the temple for entry. The Vykom Satyagraha took over sixteen months. This was the immediate aim of satyagrahi that they had dreamed for many years ago. Vykom Satyagraha had grand successes through self-suffering without anger and malice. It is his theory and practices of non-violence as an instrument.
**Satyāgraha in Bardoli:**

Bardoli was a sub district in Surat, Bombay presidency in which Satyāgraha was launched for non-tax payment. It was occurred in 12th Feb, 1928 for increasing of tax of land revenue. The immediate enhancement of 60 percent caused a hardship to the peasants. The rate of enhancement was unjust. The peasants of Bardoli protest against the representatives of the Bombay Legislative Council. When the peasant's request goes in vain, they approached to Vallabhbhai Patel to lead them in a struggle for redress of their grievances.

Patel knew their cause and followed the Gandhian doctrine. He took up first to teach the technique of Satyāgraha to the people of Bardoli. Women were also joined their movement and insisted to the peasants never to think about the resorting the violence. Above all, village headman and several numbers of member in Legislative Council also joined the Satyāgraha campaign and had resigned on the adamant act of Government policy. On 12th June, it was observed in India as *Bardoli Day* with a hartal. Gandhi appreciated on the deeds of Patel on the basis of non-violent. Patel was arrested and after four days the Government of Bardoli retreated. The struggle was ended on 4th August, 1928. The victory of Bardoli became only through the application of non-violence, this victory became a mark and symbol of hope and strength of the Indian peasants.
With his firm belief in ahimsa, Gandhi preached and practiced the spiritual weapon – Satyāgraha to the wider context. The implementation of his weapon can bring to solve the discrimination of rich and poor, capital and labour; all kinds of exploitations. In every circumstance he applied his doctrine of non-violence. He loved all including poor, opponent and even the evil doer. He tried to change the system or policy of evil authority, evil doer, and unjust law through the application of non-violent. In certain conditions he had withdrawn the Satyāgraha movement in which the satyāgrahi could not remain true of their pledges i.e. non-violence. He insisted to satyagrahi to keep the notion of non-violence and its disciplines. When the other techniques of Satyāgraha became unfruitful, Gandhi himself undertook several fast including fasts unto death. Fasting is the extreme self-suffering which cannot inflicted suffering upon the others or opponents but in himself. It also shows that the application of non-violence is implicitly included in Satyāgraha. All his techniques of Satyāgraha, vows of Satyāgraha and qualifications of Satyāgraha has demonstrated as the unwillingness to do injury to others. It is the universal love and trying to establish peaceful and harmonious society. He himself called the spiritual weapon – Satyāgraha as Love-Force or Soul-Force.

Satyāgraha is the insistence on truth which involves self-suffering (tapas) and pertinence even to death. Truth then requires the tapas of ahiṃsā; it means self suffering and self-sacrifice in the midst
of society. The practice of *ahimṣā* involves the true feeling of love. Gandhi always rejected the use of violence as a means for attaining national freedom. He often says, 'for me *Ahimṣā* comes before Swaraj'. This is how he practiced his doctrine of *ahimṣā* in Satyagraha.
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