CHAPTER – VI

The Relevance of Gandhi’s Concept of Ahimsa in Present day Society

Gandhi’s philosophy of ahimsa is more relevant today than ever before. In our present day society, we are living in a situation of great turmoil where there is no place which is secure and peaceful. We are, now facing crime, hatred and distrust between one individual and another, and between one community and another community. Also, with the complexity of life, one group of people wants to eliminate the other for no reason. In order to achieve supremacy or pleasure or reward, they resort to violence as a means, which affects the entire humanity. These violent acts have eroded human values. In the midst of the present international scenario, 192 members of General Assembly of United Nations unanimously adopted a resolution on 15th June, 2007 declaring 2nd October, the birth anniversary of Gandhi, as ‘the International Day of Non-violence’. This declaration clearly proves how much Gandhi’s concept of ahimsa is relevant in the present day world.

The declaration undertaken by United Nations gives a message to the world that if we are living in the shadow of violence for a long time, it is high time to wake up from the darkness of himsa. The message of ahimsa is to work towards the culture of peace, tolerance and understanding between individuals through understanding and
good will. The resolution was not simple but significant, reaffirming the universal relevance of the principle of the non-violence.

Almost all countries of the world are facing the problem of conflict, corruption, dispute, unemployment, evil practices in the socio-economic and the political life. In this present age of crisis, we have to remember Mahatma Gandhi, his message and teachings. Gandhi was the symbol of selfless service, compassion and dedication for the welfare of all. Albert Einstein stated that Gandhi's philosophy and his work are relevant in modern times and will be remembered forever. Smt. Sonia Gandhi gave an speech in Cape Town University, South Africa on 23rd August, 2007 in favour of Inaugural Lecture of Gandhi Lecture series, on the theme: "Relevance of Gandhian Philosophy in the 21st Century" – she says,

"Today, we face the challenge posed by the continuing confrontation in the name of religion and ethnicity. At its worst, there is terrorism, which inflicts untold suffering on innocent women, men and children. We confront also the challenge of growing inequality both within and amongst nations. Economic disparities are accentuated by lack of access to education, health and food security. To these are now added the new threat of environmental degradations and climate change, as well as new
disease like HIV – AIDS. The question to ask is not whether Mahatma Gandhi is relevant or not. The real issue is whether we have the courage and strength of mind to follow in his footsteps, whether we are prepared to live our lives by what he preached and most importantly, practiced. The simple truth is that instead of diminishing in relevance, Mahatma Gandhi has actually become all the more pertinent in the 21st century. Whichever the challenge we confront, you can be sure that the Gandhian way is real, live option, an option that informs and illuminates.¹

Gandhi’s philosophy, ideology, speech, message etc. are appreciated and followed by the masses. There are lots of people who greatly emphasize on his principles. Among them some particular person seriously followed his ideal in their fields and could receive the world’s most coveted honour – ‘Nobel Prize’. Such persons are Dr. Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Dr. Amartya Sen. Dr. Martin Luther King was one of the youngest Nobel Prize Laureates. He got Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 through his struggle for the love of humanity and service to mankind. Dr. Amartya Sen, an economist, who also received Nobel Prize in the field of Economics by following the Gandhian ideals such as removal of poverty, elimination of inequality and economic social welfare based on ethics. They got the
world's famous honour as they followed the principle of non-violence advocated by Gandhi. Gandhi was never awarded Nobel Prize in spite of been nominated in five times, i.e. 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941 and few days before his assassination. Many Nobel Peace Laureates agreed that before giving honour to them it was indispensable to honour Gandhi. Gandhi was a multi-dimensional person who contributed his ideal in different fields. He is above and beyond all Nobel Prizes.

Gandhi was honoured with the title “Mahatma” – the Great Soul by Rabindranath Tagore. He got that honour for his great achievements during the freedom struggle. He was the pioneer of Satyagraha – resistance to tyranny through mass civil disobedience and propounded the principle of ahimsa, not only in preach but also practice each and every moment. Through the spiritual approach of ahimsa, India got independence from British rule in 1947. He is officially regarded in India the honour of Father of Nation and his birth anniversary is commemorated each year as Gandhi Jayanti, a national holiday. He dies for this motherland, his principles are immortal. The Noble Peace Prize winner of America, Martin Luther King came to India in 1959. He says, “Gandhi is inevitable. If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable’. He lived, thought and acted inspired by the vision of humanity evolving towards a world of peace and harmony. We may ignore Gandhi at our own risk”. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru delivered a speech on the radio,
"The light has gone out of our lives", and then corrected himself: The light has gone out, I said and yet I was wrong. For, the light that shone in this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light represented .... the living truths .... the eternal truths reminding us of the right path, drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom."²

The term "ahimsā" is not a new one in the history of Indian Philosophy and religion. It was prescribed as a vow in the 6th-5th century B.C. by Gautama Buddha and Mahavira. The concept of non-violence is described as the core of human being. By following the traditional concept of ahimsā, Gandhi knew that the path, which can lead to harmonious co-existence in the society is 'non-violence'. It is the only way to fight injustice and exploitation. Gandhi himself was a man of action. He gave not only the way of the goal but he himself had walked on it. All his thought, speech and actions are founded on truth and non-violence. He had given more stress on the importance of non-violence rather than truth in practice. He got a great achievement in South Africa struggle through the proper application of non-violence. Then he made Independence of India quite certain. He never thought
to take violence as a means in any circumstances whatever it may be big or small complications. He was a great seeker of truth as well as a votary of non-violence. He applied it in our practical life. His mind is completely scientific and search for the law of life that would promote the common people and help to reach higher elevation of consciousness. His thought, speech and actions are always open and fresh. He declared that no war or no violence could solve any problem. I, here, discuss his concept of non-violence which is relevant in politics, economics, society, education and conflict resolution.

Relevance to Politics:

The term *politics* is considered as the highest form of all social activities. It must necessarily involve the understanding and knowledge of the state. It means that politics should play an important role for the welfare of the society, love of humanity, to do right action, but not selfish minded. Today, we find conflict between the parties, crisis, dispute, degeneration of human values, diminishing of their moral standards and norms in the democratic system. It is a fact that in our present legislative system, we find very few moral and intellectual legislatures. As a result, it breeds the misunderstanding in the mind of the innocent citizens. The term *politics* and *politicians* become pejorative connotations. India has a democratic form of government. The best definition of *democracy* was given by Abraham Lincoln as “Democracy is the government of the people, for the people and by the people”. From this definition, we know that democracy is
the best system of governance. If the state or country is able to adopt
the democracy in its true essence, the leaders or legislatures must be
able to think about right action, just, serve for the main ideals to the
establishment of peace, welfare of all, freedom etc. It is the necessary
for one to adopt democracy with the spirit of non-violence. Non-
v violence has the wider connotation which means not merely non-
killing or non-injury to others but good will, love, honesty, respect the
others. Gandhi says,

"Democracy must in essence .... mean the art and
science of mobilizing the entire physical, economical
and spiritual resources of all the various sections of
the people in the service of the common good of all."³

For a true democracy, there is no place of violence. One, whose
speech, thought and actions are based on violence, he can never
respect the voice of layman. He says,

"The spirit of democracy is not a mechanical thing
to be adjusted by abolition of forms. It requires
change of the heart ... requires the inculcation of
the spirit of brotherhood."⁴

Gandhi's concept of democracy is dedicated to the welfare of all
which includes socio-economic and political sphere. Democracy has
become the best form of governance in 21st century, although Gandhi’s notion of democracy is far from universally accepted. He wanted democracy to become well thriven with moral values. The concepts of moral values are inseparable parts of non-violence. Democracy without moral value is a democracy without meaning and essence. In the present society, we are all aware of the bitter experiences of many countries that contradicts and go beyond democracy. It arises the selfish consideration, persuasion of power, desire to accumulate wealth etc. Not only this, there is rapid growth of criminalization and erosion of moral values in politics.

When it comes to the present political scenario, it will be an eye opener, to observe the drama of political scenes in India, which is said to be the largest democracy in the world. There are reports on the nexus between the underworld dons and legislators. Such reports have demonstrated that in certain states, the criminal syndicates with political patronage are running parallel government. Even in the time of election, a good number of gang leaders and criminals were helping the mentors. The true nature of politics becomes degenerated and remains as notorious criminals, smugglers, murderers, terrorists are swarming in politics.

In politics, criminal acts are perpetrated by the political masters in the name of patronage and protection. It involved the competitive use of anti-social forces for the mobilization of party funds, for the
management and manipulation of elections, for the elimination of political opponents. Such criminal intelligence and criminals are used as the political tool for blackmailing political adversary and thus the term "politics" is degenerated. The meaning of it is to have power. So, politics in the present scenario is just sharing political power i.e. decision-making.

Mahatma Gandhi has been an integral part to Indian politics. The essence of his political philosophy was the empowerment of every individual, irrespective of class, caste, colour, creed or community. His politics was primarily concerned with the welfare of the masses. It enquires into the upliftment of all with political authority to determine their own destiny. It is a new phase that Gandhi struck in the Indian politics. He launched the civil disobedience movement in 1930 which made a land mark in Indian political history. His political actions were based on the attaining power. According to him power is 'one of the means of enabling people to better their conditions in every department of life'. Such power should be considered in the hands of few but disseminated to all people. His political ideal becomes relevant in the present political context, where there is accelerate tendency of power concentration in the hands of few privileges.

The Gandhian notion of politics is associated with religion. He wanted to bring religion into politics. He says,
there is politics devoid of religion. They sub serve religion. Politics bereft of religion are a death trap because they kill to soul.”

In the present context, the notion of religion is totally rejected from politics. Gandhi’s concept of politics is the incorporation of justice and truth. A true religious person never think or tolerate any kind of oppression and exploitation. His concept of religion gives a message of love to humanity i.e. non-violence in the wider context and love of God. There is no true religious person in the present political scenario. It brings hatred, dishonesty, selfishness in the society. He says, ‘My life is my message’, his concept of politics gave the specific importance of moral connotation to the political deeds. He also give importance of intellectual and saintly orientations to political action, to the purity of means for pure end, to the principle of truth and non-violence that must be observed in the inner conscience. And lastly, he give most important to the ideal of social justice and freedom. The ultimate quest for Gandhi in politics is goodness. Such goodness is mainly based on non-violence. Non-violence, in the context of politics, implies not only the abstention from killing but implies love which is free from feeling of anger, enmity, hatred, jealousy etc. His concept of politics gives us the message of dedication or to serve for the welfare of all on the basis of non-violence. So, the spirit of non-violence that Gandhi introduced in Indian politics is relevant in modern times. He added morality and religion to the politics. His concept of politics is
ultimately based on morality, and religion too is rooted in morality. If morality is completely dissociated from politics, it would become as an act of disaster. Gandhi's message of morality in politics is relevant today and it will remain relevant for all time to come in future.

**Relevance to Economics:**

Gandhi was not an economist in the conventional sense of term, but he developed his economic ideas on the basis of the situation of India where there is poverty, hunger and degeneration of human values. His economic philosophy cannot be separated from his philosophy as a whole. He was very much concerned with the application and practice of economic ideal for the welfare of all. The essence of his economic ideas are closely related to ethics, non-violence, purity of means, sanctity of labour, and economic decentralization. He greatly emphasizes on the production by the mass but not mass production. It became a part of his life. Gandhi's concept of *Swaraj, Sarvodaya, Swadeshi, Trusteeship, Decentralization* etc. are based on the five fold path of Yama from Pātañjali Yogasūtra and which are given in Gita, Buddhism and Jainism (*Ahimsā, Satya, Brahmacharya, Asteya* and *Aparigraha*).

Economics, for Gandhi, is "to be worth anything must be capable of being reduced to terms of religion or spirituality ..... that economics is untrue which ignores or disgraces moral values." His economics dealt with the ideal society – *Swaraj* or in other words
Ramrajya. For him, the ultimate goal of society is Swaraj but for the individual is mokṣa.

Swaraj, for him, is self-rule based on self-restraint. It implies as a means for the material and spiritual welfare of all. Therefore, he stressed on economic self-sufficiency and decentralization for the basic fundamental needs of the individual. His concept of decentralization is not isolation from the government but it could help to work all villagers. In a centralization state, it is impossible to employ all villagers by the government. So he did not believed in a centralized state. His concept of decentralization was trying to solve certain basic issues such as arbitrary state power, unlimited violence, economic exploitation of man by man, removal of poverty and socio-economic inequalities.

As a part of decentralization in India, he advocated the universal use of khadi – is a patriotic spirit of Swadeshi. Swadeshi is a way of service to the motherland. It is free from competition or opposition to other nation. The spirit of Swadeshi is a kind of religion which arises out of love and non-violence. It gives us a lesson to produce goods what can be produced easily within the country and to import those goods which can be produced easily by them. He always extols the need and sanctity of physical effort ‘life to work with hands and feet’. He says, “God created man to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow.” He believed that if the khadi is produced by the villagers in all villages
then the economy power can be distributed to all villages. He also firmly believed that economic salvation of India depends on the economic regeneration of the people living in villages.

In *Hind Swaraj*, he condemned the use of machine for large-scale production. His objection to the machine was not to machine *per se*. He thought that large scale production by machine would result the exploitation of labours by capital. It would destroy the simplicity and harmonious life of all villagers. It would be impossible to provide full employment to the Indian workers. He says,

"I am uncompromisingly against all destructive machinery. But simple tools and instruments and such instrument and machinery to save individual labour and lighten the millions of cottages. I should welcome."  

For him, the moral values play important role in the field of economics. He thought that the large scale industries could never tackle the problems which every nation was facing for the removal of poverty and unemployment. He took up the non-violent step in economic field that would solve at least in such problems with less capital outlay and with more labour intensive scheme. Hence, he made *Charkha*, a new symbol of such techniques. He spoke of *Gospel of work* or *Bread labour* to provide large number of employment to the
large number of population. His principle of bread labour is associated with love and non-violence, and it also gives us a message that man must earn his bread by labouring with his own hands. But the use of large scale production by machine will lead to destruction of the entire rural decentralized economy. To solve such problems he advocated the concept of Gram Swaraj for making rural village economics of self-reliant and self-sufficient.

Gandhi’s programmes of social reconstruction based on the ideal of Sarvodaya will be relevant not only in this present time but also for future. This sarvodaya ideal implies that the good of individual involves the good of all. He says,

“A votary of non-violence cannot subscribe to the utilitarian formula of the greatest good of greatest number. He will strive for the greatest good of all and die in the attempt to realize the idea.”

From this standpoint, it clearly shows that he wanted to entitle his ideal state as Ramarajya (Kingdom of God). Such entitle was a moral concept but not a religious concept in which there would be no consideration in case of inequality between the individual such as caste, creed, colour etc. This moral conviction expresses his eagerness to live a just, perfect, peaceful and harmonious life.
All men are equal in the eye of God and there should not be any economic discrimination among different individuals in respect of income and basic need of human life. He rejected the difference between the daily labourer and the intellectual labourer. He said that there is conflict in the world between the rich and the poor. Such conflict can be resolved when all the people work manually to earn their daily bread. Due to this, his principle of trusteeship comes out which emphasizes on a balanced relationship between the rich and the poor. His principle of trusteeship aims at

"transferring accumulated private wealth to community ownership, where labourers and peasants are co-partners with capitalists and landlords. Through trusteeship every individual would be able to get sufficient work to able him to provide his daily requirements. Such an ideal could be universally realized if the means of production of basic necessities of life could remain under the central of masses."

Gandhi always contradicts the view that – "wants are unlimited". He believed in Buddhist concept of desire, is the root cause of human sorrow (duḥkh). He insisted that man should have ethical order in economic life. He said that economics without ethics is rootless. If we try to minimize our wants then we will be able to make a list of necessities of life.
In *Hindi Swaraj* he writes,

"Civilization in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication of wants but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment and increase capacity for service. The mind is a restless bird. The more it gets, the more it wants and still remains unsatisfied".\(^{10}\)

In his economic philosophy, he always tries to eradicate the unemployment problems and problem of poverty. His economic ideals are followed by Dr. Amartya Sen, an Indian economist.

The economic thought of *Dr. Amartya Sen* is essentially based on Gandhian economic philosophy. The economic system of Dr. Amartya Sen is based on the removal of poverty and the elimination of inequality. From the economic policies of Dr. Amartya Sen, we know that how deeply his concept of economic system is influenced by Gandhian economic philosophy. In his work *Poverty and Famines*, Dr. Amartya Sen says that "the famines or shortages are not due to niggardliness of nature which reduces the availability of food, but due to a failure of the mechanism that provides the means to the starving people to command food through legal means available in society".\(^{11}\) He gives more importance to the social welfare based on economic activity. Like Gandhi, he insists that the economic system should
concern itself not to the production of the masses but also dividing it to all individuals. The economic goal for Gandhi is the *production by the masses* but not *the mass production*.

His concept of ‘poverty’ is not only its basic connotation but it defined it elaborating as the widespread of illiteracy, poor health-care system, inadequate land reforms, inequality in gender, deprivation of women and positive neglect of children.

Dr. Sen’s concept of economics is associated with ethics. He rejected the *Utilitarians’ doctrine ‘the greatest good of the greatest number’*. His rejection is on the ground that the outlook of utilitarian at the welfare is very limited. He says that the well being of a person does not depend on the amount of goods or commodities. In order to achieve the ultimate goal, some particular people would prepare to renounce all their well being. He says,

“whatever economics is concerned with it is concerned with welfare and if economic activity does not promote welfare, it ceases to be a real economic activity”.

With the advancement of science and industries, it emphasizes on man’s material needs but there is degeneration of human values like lack of love and lack of the feeling of co-operation. In the present
context, economy is based on money values and desire for quick
profits by exploiting the nature. But the term economics is the
scientific term of human welfare so that its ultimate goal is ought to
be Sarvodaya. In today's world no one concern economics with the
welfare of all. But the term welfare is completely rooted in
materialism. Gandhi's economic system is aimed at the upliftment of
the rural economic condition and his non-violence approach to
economy is very much relevant not only in the village but throughout
the world. Now it may be said that,

"there is no other visible alternative than the
Gandhian model of economic development, given the
compulsions of the contemporary world situation.
The drive towards rapid industrialization and
urbanization, the persisting tendency towards
concentration of economic and political power,
political and economic corruption, heavy exodus of
rural population into cities, poverty, unemployment
all have infused a sense of urgency and relevance to
the Gandhian model. For the maladies of recent time,
Gandhian idealism and moralism can provide
effective solutions and results".12

Today, we live in a world where there is full of injustice,
corruption, exploitation, discrimination on the basis of wealth and
religious fundamentalism. Almost all the countries of the world are facing the problem of unemployment. In this present crisis, we have to remind ourselves of the Gandhian notion of economic system. Gandhi tried to solve the problem of unemployment on the basis of Swadeshi, which he greatly emphasized on small scale industries. His philosophy of economic development of all is certainly needed to take up for reviving cottage and village industries. Such steps will certainly lead to peace, prosperity, and they will give a chance to full employment to all.

The present economic scenario has totally changed. Selfish minded, profit making, competition and violent means are extreme measures in economics. The time has come to remind ourselves of ‘Gandhi’ in this present century for his simple life, dedication for the welfare of all, non-violence as a means in economics, equal sharing and equal distribution. To solve the economic problem one must be open minded, and follow non-violence – in word, thought and deed as suggested by Gandhi. The non-violent economy of Gandhi is more relevant in this present situation than during his lifetime.

**Relevance to Education:**

Gandhi’s concept of education is of quite significance in the contemporary situation. His philosophical concept of education is entirely based on the development of human personality, to maintain the discipline, to create the manual work with learning, and to
develop the culture of the peace. He was a great educationist and an individualist par excellence. He knew that education is the most important means in the society which can be used as an instrument of socio-economic progress, material advancement, political evolution and moral development of an individual. Gandhi's whole philosophy and work was based on ethics and morality. His concept of education is also founded on ethics and morality. It may be said that his concept of education has full of religious. In every sphere he talked about the religion is not religion and his idea of religion is different from common concept. But his concept of religion is 'service of humanity'. For the spirit of religions he propounded 'Nai Talim' or 'basic education'. This new education system, Archarya Kriplani says, '... is the coping stone of Gandhi's social and political edifice'. His philosophical thought on education is highly pedestal that creates the socio-economic development of the society.

We may raise the question: how his concept of education is relevant in our society or in any country? With a deep search for his basic education system we can draw a conclusion that his concept of education is not only the eradication of illiteracy but he has given a message learning by doing. He preaches the doctrine of simple living and high thinking. His education system are greatly emphasizing the culture of peace, sincere work, dedication of the cause of the nation, social minded, friendliness, right feelings, economic advancement, physical improvement, socio-cultural progress. His education system
based on work-centre education which can provide the necessary
economic self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Education can bring a
development. The famous education commission of 1964-66, the
*Radhakrishnan Commission*, observed:

"for achieving change on a ground scale the only
effective instrument is education. Education does
initiate changes in social institutions and sub-
systems, and this effects the social situation of the
country."

For Gandhi, the primary task for education was to give priority
to all boys and girls from seven to fourteen years. He recommended
that there must be free and compulsory education during this period.
His dream is trying to make education available to vast millions of
students living in rural areas. His concept of basic education has
three aspects – psychological, sociological and economical. The
*psychological* aspect of education tell us that education through work-
culture can make a creative balance between intellectual development
and practical activities. It develops the faculties of the heart and mind
by developing the habitual inquiry of an object. The *sociological* aspect
of education helps to eradicate social conflicts and tensions in a
society by inculcating a spirit of dignity of labour. It also helps the
removal of social evil of untouchability. The *economic* aspect of
education emphasizes on work-culture. It creates productive labour
which produces increase in production of good and services. It promotes rapid growth of improvement in the standard of living.

Etymologically the term ‘education’ is derived from two Latin words ‘e’ and ‘duco’ which means ‘out of’ and ‘to lead’ respectively. It is defined as to bring out the inside to outside. Therefore, education is to draw out rather than to put in. Read education, for Gandhi, is not formal literacy. He says, education is

“an all round drawing out of the best in child and man-body mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education not even the beginning. It is one of the means whereby man and women can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education” 13.

Gandhi wanted education is to follow the education of manual work or work experience. For this purpose, his basic education Nai Talim based on the principle of learning by doing was established. Gandhi himself was a practical idealist. He thought that education is closely associated with the socio-economic development of the society. He took up scheme for basic education in which vocational training or work experience is the utmost important. It is due to the fact that it stimulates the human mind for creative thinking or dignity of manual labour. He thought that such creative thinking should be taken up from primary to higher level education. It would lead to a large saving
of scarce public money. His view on basic education is greatly influenced by his philosophy of satya (truth), ahiṃsā (non-violence), firm belief in God, dignity of labour. The Kothari Commission also followed Gandhis' ideal of vocational training in education. This commission says,

‘we recommend that work experience should be introduced as an integral part of all India education—general or vocational. We define work experience as participation in productive work in school, in the home, in a workshop, on a farm, in a factory or in any other productive situation.’

This commission re-emphasizes the Gandhian principle of learning by doing in the modern education. Though Gandhian notion of education has been influenced by Tolstoy's book The Kingdom of God is Within You, Ruskin's book Unto This Last and Raychand Bhai by his living contact. The philosophy and teachings of Tolstoy and Ruskin made Gandhi perceive that the education without the use of one's hand and feet would atrophy the brain.

The main aim of education is the development of human personality. He expanded fourfold personality in the individual that is body, mind, heart and spirit. True education stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical strength of the individual. His view on
education of heart which brings the idea of sympathy, fellowship and deep feelings of love. The aim of education is not only to produce good individual but one must understand one's own responsibilities in which one live. One who understood his or her responsibilities it would lead to the spirit of social consciousness and social minded. Then, all the activities of such persons will have a social content as well as co-operation to others.

Another important aspect of education is discipline. It is regarded as one of the most important parts and parcels of education. Without discipline, the sound education system is impossible. It is a quality that one's self can lead to the regulation of one's intellectual, moral, spiritual and social behaviour. It is stated that the goal of education is consists of character-building. Such character-building requires the moral, intellectual and social behaviour under all circumstances e.i., strength of personality, the virtue of compassion, kindness, fair-mindedness and the spirit of dedication. Gandhi strongly hold that education is not end in itself but it is the most powerful weapon which creates all persons of genuine characters. There is degeneration of education when the qualities of truthfulness, firmness, tolerance are absence from it. True education is life process which help in cultivating the spirit of co-operation, tolerance, public spirit and a sense of responsibility. All these qualities are considered as disciplines for the development of human personality. Such
disciplines can create the harmonious balance between the individuals and social aim of education.

Manual work is the most important one in Gandhi's view on education. It is not hard work but all students should have the spirit of work experience from the earlier period. The manual work should be done under the guidance of teachers. Such inter-relationship between teachers and students brings co-operation, disciplines, sacrifice, integrity and fearlessness. Gandhi wanted that education should be responsive to socio-economic development of the society in which vocational training must be occupied a central position. For this reasons, Gandhi had aversion to book-centered education at the expense of education through craft. But he aware that craft education was not substituted for book education. It was a crucial adjunct to it. The systematic knowledge of skill can be acquired from 'book-learning'. His principle of 'learning by doing' tries to stimulate the individual's mind to think creatively, independently and critically. His great emphasis on work-culture to the students from the primary stage to higher stage is to enable the students to start producing from the time he started his training. So, his primary information of basic education is Head, Heart and Hand rather than Reading, Writing and Arithmetic.

Gandhi also maintains that education is essential for the attainment of the goal of peace. It can be attained only through
morality and ethics. According to Gandhi, education is the realization of the best in man - body, soul and spirit. He maintained that education must be based on ethics and morality. Ethics and morality are integral to Gandhi's life. All his thoughts, actions and speeches are based on these two concepts. From the ethical perspective, education may be considered as a means of attainment of salvation. It helps to the path of the complete peace. Peace is the absence of violence and hostile thought. As a daily practitioner of non-violence, Gandhi right from his earlier stage considered that non-violence is an indivisible, important and essential part of education. We cannot be separated education from ethics, morality and spiritualism. For this purpose Gandhi has given some rules for all students so as to ensure that morality and righteousness always be considered as an essential part of their education. Regarding this, such rules can make to right thinking, self-control, service to the society, respect to others and constant awareness for their duties and responsibilities.

In our present society, we are facing so many conflicts. One of them is rooted on our knowledge which has been separated from work-ethics. Knowledge is separated in thought, in life as well as in market values by faulty psychology, faulty sociology and faulty economics respectively. Education plays an important role which helps to equip individuals with the skills and attitudes, that are necessary in order to adapt in changing situations and to add the creative spirit in the task of social change. Work and knowledge
should be go together’ is the Gandhian principle of education. The educational systems try to develop the individual soul and mind, courage and self-reliance, try to cultivate the highest intellectual, scientific, moral and ethical accomplishments. In order to develop a society Gandhi greatly emphasizes on – man should be dedicated to his doctrine of truth and non-violence. His basic educational scheme is trying to eliminate the discrimination of rural-urban and redress the imbalances of socio-economic which are around in India.

What is conflict?

Conflict is that aspect of human interaction which arises from unfulfilled needs, unrecognized differences, as well as difficulties that follow from changes in life. It can produce either negative or positive results depending on the communication techniques which are used in it. But most of the issues on conflict is negative – the feeling of injustice. The major issue of conflict arises from the difference in the opinions of human beings, that the human beings do not think alike as well as feel alike. Difference in perceptions about like or dislikes, right or wrong, etc. are formulated in the mind. So, the conflicts are created in the human minds and it is the human mind that chooses the means which are employed in conflicts. Conflicts are created or imposed upon by the interested persons in order to achieve their own personal gains. It arises through differences, differences which can lead to intolerance, for intolerance can lead to confrontation and then finally hostile confrontation lead to conflict. In other words, feeling of
injustice and false ego give rise to conflict. Even a developed country is facing various conflicts today. It may be political, social, cultural, religious, race of nuclear weapons etc. In India, various conflicts like ethnic, communal or cultural problems among the individuals are frequently taken place as India is a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-racial country. Such conflicts arises the contradiction between the privileged and deprived sections of the people, educated and uneducated people, people of higher caste and lower caste within the same religion, social discrimination between men and women. Even in the inter-country relations, the conflicts are initiated like economic, political or military domination of strong countries over weak countries. The so-called violence arises through conflict situations. If conflicts are reduced or settled through negotiation or any other constitutional means, there will be no violence.

The term ‘violence’ is derived from Latin word *violentia* which means vehemence, a passionate and uncontrolled force, the opposite of a calculated exercise of power. Somewhere violence is taken as a short cut method for resolution of conflicts. Gandhi himself never ruled out violence absolutely. He conceded the necessity of arms in certain situations. He said, “where choice is set between cowardice and violence, I would advice violence.... I prefer to use arms in defense of honour rather than remain the vile witness of dishonour...” Violence can never establish peace. Gautam Buddha and Gandhi hold that violence cannot be put to an end by counter violence. Violence
includes killing, injury to others, hatred, ill-will. Suppressed sense of deprivation or injustice would be found through violence and in extreme cases it leads to terrorism. All over the world concern about the attacks on World Trade Centre in New York and Pentagon in Washington on 11th September 2001 (now the day is known as Black Tuesday in the human history) as an act of terrorism but not root cause of conflicts or their resolution. Such terrorist attacks are extreme violence which causes mass destruction, wipe out mass populations, and inflict death and suffering. War against Afghanistan is also a kind of revenge. It tries to suppress terrorism. Such war causes devastation or destruction of the country, lots of people get death, suffering etc. Such a war can never be an end to terrorism. It is understood by every sensible person. It is already recommended by Lord Buddha that enmity cannot be put to an end by enmity. ‘Let a man overcome anger by non-anger, let him overcome evil by good, let him overcome the liar by truth’ (Dhammapāda- Kodhavāggo).

There are so many events that show violence prevails not only in a particular country but we can find it throughout the world. For instance, in Africa on 7th August 1998, 224 persons were killed and thousands were wounded . It is for the purpose to attack American Embassy through car bomb blast. Besides this, on 25th June 1996 in Saudi Arabia, a truck bomb blast was happened in which 19 American armies were killed and many citizens of other countries were wounded. On 13th September 1995 in Moscow, through a grenade
launched the building of American Embassy was blown. Even in India serial terrorists attacks were happening in many states. On 11th July Tuesday 2006, terrorist attack on Mumbai local trains, it injured 240 people and 146 died. There were eight high power blasts and it was considered as the second worse such tragedy to have hit Mumbai after the 1993 blast. Another serial bomb blast occurred in three cities – Lucknow, Varanasi and Faziabad in 23rd November, 2007. Such conflict situation, chaos, crisis are increasing day by day. It results to affect the mass of innocent people. There is no place of peace in every country. In order to establish peace we should try to resolve conflicts. Here it may be asked: How to resolve conflict?’

**Conflict resolution:**

Conflict resolution is the way which tries to attempt to resolve a dispute or a conflict. It aims to end conflicts before the fighting whether it may be verbal, physical or legal. It usually involves two or more groups with opposing views in respect of specific issues. A person or group of people is necessary who stood as a neutral in their opinion on the subject. Resolving a conflict becomes successful only when it occurs by listening to and providing the opportunities to meet each sides needs and to address their interest well. Then both sides get satisfaction. Conciliation, mediation, arbitration or litigation are different ways of resolution methods.
Conflict resolutions through non-violence:

Gandhi tries to seek a positive means to resolve conflict which should not be temporary but for permanent. He knows that the way of conflict resolution involves the aim of reconstructing the present world by liberating the human narrow mindedness from the dogmatism of economic and political barbarism, religious bigotry etc. His positive means to resolve conflict tries to establish peace among the individuals and among the nations. So that his philosophy of peace and its significance can solve the crucial problems of conflicts and violence. The fundamental principle of his philosophy of peace is 'Ahimsā'- law of love. It is all over the world to proclaim again and again that Gandhian notion of pacifism is needed for present crisis. For this perspective, it clearly shows that how much his concept of ahimsa or non-violence is relevant today.

Ahimsā is the way for establishing peace. The opposite of peace is not war but violence and such notion has been adopted by peace researcher today. Non-violence not merely means absence of violence, non-killing or non-harming to other. It connotes the positive attitudes of mind which comprehends all living beings. This positive state of mind is nothing but love. The concept of the establishment of peace has been found in history like Buddha, Ashoka and Jesus Christ. Lord Buddha preached the message of non-violence (ahimsa) and compassion (karunā). Asoka, one of the greatest emperors, who had followed Buddha’s teachings for the path of peace, gave up war. It was
only after being vexed with carnage, which Kalinga war had brought out. Jesus Christ was regarded as the Saviour and Lord of Christians. He not only preached but also lived on the path of peace, love and forgiveness. He was considered as the *Prince of Peace*. In the contemporary world, Gandhi had preached the efficacy of non-violence against violence. He maintained that one must cultivate the spirit of non-violence in order to achieve peace. The peace has been equated with the absence of conflict. The major conflict can lead to war. For Gandhi, means and ends are inter-connected like the connectivity between seed and tree. The unjust means cannot bring just ends. Means must be pure.

In every sphere or in any conflict situation, Gandhi adopted non-violence as a means. It is a means for realization of the ultimate goal – *Truth*. *Truth* alone can resolve the conflict. The so-called peace can occur only in truthful environment. There cannot be peaceful where there is full of anger, hatred, fear, cowardice, unjust. Gandhi's truth has two fold –absolute truth and relative truth and Gandhi made a distinction between the two. This distinction is mentioned in Chapter II. But, here, it can be said that through the relative truth, the absolute truth can be approached. The relative truth is the means for the realization of the absolute truth. Gandhi maintained that the truth can never be discovered in this world except through the proper application of non-violence. The Gandhian way of peace is the way of
Truth. This way of truth can be attained through *ahimsā* or non-violence.

*Ahimsā* is opposed to himsa – the cause of hatred, death, destruction, jealousy etc. For Gandhi, man ought to cultivate the concept of *ahimsā* – merely not killing but also non-injury to others whether by body, mind or action, at social, national and international level. We should follow it from the personal level which can lead to national then international level. As the individuals are built so the nations are built. And as the nations are built so then the world is built. If we wish to avoid personal, social, national and international conflicts, we must cultivate the spirit of non-violence at all levels. It is regarded as the most powerful weapon to avoid conflict. Non-violence affords the fullest protection to one’s self-respect and sense of honour. It is a power which can be wielded equally by all individuals including children provided they have a firm belief in the God of Love and have therefore equal love for all mankind.

Gandhi was a great apostle of peace, nonviolence and a moral genius whose approach and way of resolving conflict is an ethical and moral solution. He believed that all conflict arise from moral degeneration. Moral degeneration is the root cause of all evils. All individuals should eager to acquire the moral values like truthfulness, non-violence or love, self-control, forgiveness, friendliness, compassion, mercy etc. It has been clearly predicted by researchers
that the root cause of all various problems lies in the infringement of values such as moral, religious, spiritual economic and political principles.

During freedom struggle Gandhi proposed and adopted Satyagraha movement. His philosophy of Satyagraha aims at winning over opponent by love and gentle persuading and arousing in him a sense of justice rather than forcing him to surrender out of fear. His satyagraha movement is purely moral and holistic. It involves faith in the inherent goodness and good sense of the opponent coupled with good will towards him and readiness to come to an understanding and compromise. This satyagraha or truth-force was adopted by Gandhi as a means to eradicate the unjust policy of British government. He believed that violence begets violence and such violent spirit cannot liberate violence. One who practices violence at combat, injustice merely contribute to it. Gandhi had discovered a very scientific, dynamic and practical way for resolution of our conflicts. He propounded a new moral weapon ‘Satyagraha’. He greatly emphasized that its success depended upon its proper application. He recommended that human social conflict can never be eliminated altogether. It is because that every human being does not think alike or feel alike. Conflict is originated from different views, different opinions, and different perceptions. Gandhi again recommended that resolution of such social conflict could be achieved through non-violent means. *Justice, equality and freedom* are laudable goals but if
we try to use violent for achieving them, the means should be regarded as self-defeating.

Beside this, conflict may be resolved through religious spirit and education. Religion plays an important and positive role in the elimination of sense of hatred and violence among the individuals. It also develops the moral values and love towards other. A true religious person can never think of ill-will, harm, injury or violence towards living beings. The concept of non-violence, brotherhood, justice, peace and love are found in all different religions. All religions are one and same. The Christianity teaches love, justice and peace. An important preaching of Bible is *Thou shalt not kill*. The religion of Islam is also preached justice, peace and love. For Hinduism, the most exponent for peace is Lord Buddha who preached ahimsa and compassion. From the different religious outlooks the conflict arises. Non-violence and peace is the most valuable asset of human civilization. From the different religious spirit Gandhi also preached, *Sarva Dharma Sambhāv* in order to prevent conflict caused by religious bigotry or religious fundamentalism. According to him, man cannot live without religion. His concept of religion is based on truth and non-violence. ‘Truth is God’ and *ahimsā* is the means for the realization of God. He maintained that all religions are true. Men should have the attitude of respect, sense of honour, dignity of labour, etc. Religion plays a positive role in order to remove one’s narrow mindedness, sense of
hatred, feeling of violence etc. It can developed a sense of moral values and love for others.

**Role of education in conflict resolution:**

In order to establish peace in society, one of the necessary conditions is, not to resort violence as a means. Peace is a positive state of life which strengthens social cohesion and makes life worth living. The UN General Assembly has been observed on 21st September each year as *International Day of Peace*.

Peace is a state of harmony which is free from violence and war. Everybody fundamentally desires peace. It may be said that in the 21st Century, there is no peace in the mind of people in different fields. With the advancement of nuclear weapon the developed countries like United States and the then Soviet Union were in conflict. Conflicts have gradually become war. The so-called war does not bring peaceful society but it makes disturbances to the masses. War also breeds no respect to the life of others, lack of co-operation and lack of fellowship. Buddha preached complete renunciation of war. Leo Tolstoy also opposed to any kind of war and he became a follower of non-violence. He was a pacifist who advocated the end of all wars.

In this crucial situation we should remind the ideal of Gandhian philosophy. He was a man who had optimistic view for the development of all and welfare of all. For this, he always insisted that
every man should work and walk on 'Ahimsā'. Man by nature has the
tendency of self-centrism and ego-centrism. In order to achieve their
desires, they resort to violence as a means and it leads to the idea of
confrontation. Gandhi opposed to the policy of British Government. He
developed a method of war through the non-violence means i.e.
Satyāgraha which is regarded as a moral equivalent of war.

According to Gandhi, peace requires not only the absence of
violence but also the presence of justice. Justice is one of the inherent
and necessary aspects of Gandhian notion of peace. Like Gandhi, Dr.
Martin Luther king also maintained that the true peace is not merely
the absence of tension but it is the presence of justice. Martin had an
outlook on the civil rights movement in America that peace is more
important than the absence of violence. He began with single personal
acts of non-violent resistance. He took various methods of non-violent
means which aimed at ending segregation where the government
deprived African American of equal rights. Dr. Martin Luther king was
an American black minister and also one of the main leaders of the
American black movement for the equality of the rights. He applied
Gandhian philosophy of non-violence in the movement of boycott of
Montgomery's buses in protest against the application of racial
segregation in public transport where the blacks had to sit in the
back. He rallied the protesters with the words of Gandhi, "Rivers of
blood may have to follow before we gain our freedom, but it must be
our blood." He was arrested, imprisoned and received numerous
threats of death. The eleven month struggle led all the way to the Supreme Court which declared segregation on buses as unconstitutional. It was the first obvious victory of non-violent action. Such a victory made Martin Luther King internationally recognized as the "American Gandhi". He preached the combination of agape (spiritual love) with non-violent action. His commitment to the non-violent action could bring a social change. Because of his commitment he received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Nelson Mandela, a successful lawyer, struggled for the anti-apartheid movement in the 1940s. Apartheid is the discrimination by Whites against Black people because of their skin. It has become one of the great crimes of the 20th century. For the struggle of apartheid movement Mandela used Sabotage which is shifted from civil disobedience. Mandela said, "I followed the Gandhian strategy for as long as I could," he later wrote "but then there came a point in our struggle when the brute force of the oppressor could no longer be countered through passive resistance alone." This sabotage did not involve the loss of life. In 1962, he was arrested and later sentenced to life as a symbol of struggle against apartheid. He, the South African leader, was imprisoned for twenty seven years for fighting against apartheid. In 1993, Nelson Mandela was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid movement and for laying the foundations for a new democratic South
Africa. In 1994 he became the first President of Post-apartheid South Africa.

Not only this, there are many great people who have fought bravely for social or political justice through the Gandhian principle of ahimsa. Dalai Lama seeks a peaceful resolution on Tibet. Aung San Suu Kyi fought for democracy in Myanmar. And Cesar Chavez, struggled to reduce exploitation of farm workers in California. Among these Suu Kyi and Dalai Lama have received the Nobel Peace Prize. All such Nobel Prize winners have proudly acknowledged their debt to Gandhi’s philosophy of ahimsa. Gandhi was regarded as an apostle of peace and non-violence.

Peace may be defined into two ways - negative and positive. The negative meaning of peace is absence of war while the positive meaning of it is the in cooperation the promotion of social justice issues as well. Many peace researchers have adopted that the opposite of peace is merely not the absence of war but violence \( (\text{hiṁsā}) \) and the opposite of violence is non-violence \( (\text{ahimśā}) \). \text{Ahimśā} in some way is identical with peace. Dr. Martin Luther King says that the Gandhian way of peace is non-violence. Peace in-cooperation with freedom, equality; and justice is one of the most desirable values in almost every individual and every country. Peace has become a universal symbol which includes the positive qualities that are cherished and
aspired by every individual. *The campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* has been widely recognized as *peace symbol*.

While 'war' or 'violence' is initiated from the human mind, the culture of peace should be constructed from the human mind. Each and every person ought to be committed to peace in present day's human predicament caused by conflict situations such as ideological extremism, religious fundamentalism, economic injustice and inequality, violation of human rights, suppression of freedoms, militarism of power politics, racial and ethnic discrimination, egocentrism and uncontrolled human instincts etc.

Regarding the establishment of peace it may be raised the question – how far education can help in resolving the conflict? Education is not merely the development of human personality but it also prepares mind with universal love and tolerance towards all religions, caste, ethnicity, language and culture. It can develop a culture of peace with love for others, mutual respect for each other and it also easily understands for one's feeling. But many young people from many countries are caught up in conflict everyday. Tension, teasing, jealousy and physical aggression become increasing everyday. How to manage such situations in a productive way? In which way incidents of violent behaviour can help to reduce? We should take up conflict resolution education programmes which help to prevent violence situation in the mind of the children. These
programmes appear to be most effective involving multiple components such as problem-solving process of negotiation, mediation and consensus decision-making and principles of conflict resolution, the basics of effective communication and listening, critical and creative thinking and an emphasis on personal responsibility and self-discipline. Such programmes encompass problem solving in which the groups or both sides express their points of view, well address their interest and listen and finally comes to mutual acceptable solutions.

The ideas of fearlessness, self-control, tolerance, humility are attained through education. If we cultivate or employ such qualities, it would lead to culture of peace and to help in developing proper attitude towards life. Proper humanistic education taking care of developing scientific skill, accumulation to knowledge and promoting humane faculties will create a society where conflicts may be resolved amicably with justice. If we are unable to remove the structure of violence in the very system of education, we cannot hope to make it can instrument of peace and social change.

Gandhi's philosophy of ahimsa has relevance and significance for the past as well as the present and the future. Now, it has been very effective instrument in solving all kinds of conflicts throughout the country. All over the world many people have appreciated his philosophy of *ahimsā* in the present situation of conflict, crises,
tension, teasing etc. The literal meaning of *ahimsa* is non-injury but he expanded the meaning of it as *love*. His philosophy of *ahimsa* demands *universal love*. He recommended that every individual should walk and work on the path of *ahimsa*. It is not an easy thing to understand, still less to practice. It is an attribute of soul so that it can be practiced by everybody in all the affairs of life. But it needs great patience. Through the non-violence means he worked for the welfare of all. *Ahimsa* became an effective tool for social reform. He gave a message of *ahimsa* in political, economic, education and conflict resolution. In politics he says that it will go with morality. In the field of economics, he talked about swadeshi and greatly emphasized on the production by the mass. The spirit of swadeshi comes from love and non-violence. For education, he greatly emphasized learning by doing. Because, from the primary level he wanted to have the dignity of manual labour. In the conflict situation, he tries to establish peace among the people. Peace can be achieved through non-violent means. So, his concept of *ahimsa* plays an important role in different fields.

Today, the world is suffering from immense crisis from many sides. Crimes, conflict, hatred and distrust between one community and another, hunger, unemployment, poverty and literacy, paucity of resources and pollution of environment, deforestation and desertification, swelling number of migrants and refugees, ethnic and sub-national violence, terrorism, drug trafficking, AIDS all these
altogether make a grave danger to peace. The present day crisis is greater than the crisis that occurred during the time of Gandhi. The world is now full of violence. In such a violent world some particular persons search for peace. In order to establish peace it is necessary to adopt non-violence as a means. Regarding this, Gandhi’s philosophy of *ahimsā* is more relevant than even before. His philosophy of *ahimsā* has been appreciated by the people more and more after his death. The Government of India and the entire Indian nation have observed the centenary year of Gandhi’s Satyagraha Movement. The U.N.O. has also given befitting honour and respect to Mahatma Gandhi by celebrating this centenary year as “The Year of Non-Violence”. Our greatest tribute to Gandhi, however, will be by following his teachings on truth, non-violence and international peace rather than by merely celebrating his birthday with rituals.
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