CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Human minds always want to know the unknown and explore unexploited areas. Social research is a means by which unknown factors may be explored to explain a social phenomenon.

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In Research Methodology,
VERMA & VERMA, P.G.
The present investigation attempts to establish the co-relation between action and the development of personality as it manifests in Gandhi. The study of personality is perhaps, the most volatile area of current psychological research. It is a fact that no one's personality is exactly the same today and tomorrow, for each day is unlike another day and each life situation is slightly different from another, no matter how much they resemble each other. If personality is viewed as something flexible and pliable, something that is changeable from an actual self to an ideal self, it follows that one can transform the personality if one so desires, whatever the age of the person. This dynamism of personality that enables one to transform oneself is what development of personality is about. How is this development possible? This study attempts to establish that such a development is possible through deliberate, sustained, recordable voluntary actions.

A voluntary action "is an act performed knowingly, deliberately, with desire, decision, precision, and a free choice of both the goals and the means. It is an action mediated by ideas." When a particular voluntary action is constantly and regularly repeated almost in the same way under similar circumstances, that action is converted into a habit. Habits are deep-rooted actions and modes of reaction which are fixed.
According to Garrett, "Habit is the name given to behaviour so often repeated as to be automatic." For Ryburn, a habitual action "is the result of many repetitions of the act in approximately the same way.... It is done without conscious thought, performed smoothly and with the maximum speed required." Not only actions but interests, aptitudes, attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, opinions, faith, feelings, emotions and sentiments are influenced and controlled by habits. Therefore, what a man is, has been or will be is decided by his habits of thoughts, actions and feelings.

Habit forms an integral part of one's character. According to Vivekananda, "The character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind." A man's character is built up by controlling his emotions and instincts on the basis of his reason.

McDougall "believes that the units of character are the sentiments and asserts that character is the system or organisation of sentiments." A sentiment, according to Valentine, "is a more or less permanent and organised system of emotional tendencies and impulses centred about some object or person." According to Dumville, "character is the sum of all the tendencies which an individual possesses." Character is also expressed in actions, but a person cannot be judged by a single act. One can describe a man as a bad character only if he persists in his bad habits. Conversely a man with high moral values and consistent good habits can be described as a man of good character. Man is known by his character as his personality is clothed in "bundle of habits" where character forms an integral part. "Character is repeated habits and repeated habits alone can reform character."
Character plays a crucial role in shaping one's personality. Therefore, there is a close relation between action and habit, habit and character, character and personality. Hence it can be said that action plays a decisive role in the development of human personality.

1. **Action and the development of personality**

   The effect of action in the development of personality can best be brought out with the help of a model whose life has revolved around actions. The search for such a model has led us to the personality of Gandhi.

   It has already been posited that the youth today, particularly in India, live and move and have their being in a historical context marked by violence, hatred and tension. "The best lack all conviction and the worst is full of passionate intensity". There is no easy way of redeeming the youth who are like rudderless ships in a turbulent sea. Youth can be awakened into a new world only by bringing about a major change in their character, the core of personality. In a world of habitual violence and greed, in order to mould a strong character one has to discipline oneself in the habits of love and service and fearless non-violence.

   Gandhi is chosen as the model personality in this investigation primarily because his message is relevant and his message is his life. Gandhi's answer to the problem of violence and hatred has been unparalleled in modern history. He showed the world by his life and example that "non-violence is the only successful remedy for violence, at all levels, individual, social, national or international."
Gandhi says that non-violence or love is a "power of God within us"\(^\text{14}\) a power, which is capable of transforming even the opponent.

It is a common human experience that disharmony results when there is no clear aim in life. The harmony of Gandhi's life depends mainly on the goal around which the personality is built up. Self-realization, the ultimate goal, is clearly recognised as the \textit{Sumum Bonum} of life. Gandhi says, "what I want to achieve is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain Moksha."\(^\text{15}\) This goal of human life and aspirations gives every aspect of his life - economical, political, social, educational - a new and perfect dimension. Even the seemingly disparate elements in Gandhi's thinking are knit together, sharpened and highlighted by the very goal of self-realization or God-realization.\(^\text{16}\)

In order to attain this ultimate goal, Gandhi had gone through a process of a metamorphosis in his life. This process was a continuous struggle, an unending succession of actions in support of what he believed was right and just and against what he perceived as unjust and inhuman. External evil was, in his eyes, a reflection of the evil inside oneself. Gandhi was as heroic in fighting the evil and injustice outside him as in conquering the evil and weakness inside him.

Gandhi's integrated approach to self-realization is reflected in his emphasis on \textit{jnana yoga} and \textit{bhakti yoga}, culminating in \textit{karma yoga}. His intense love of God on the personal level is reflected in his life of prayer and asceticism, and in his love of the poor. The down-trodden and the lowly were in Gandhi's eyes the children of God.
The synthesis of the love of God and of man generated an immense power to transform himself as well as others. Gandhi is not willing to accept a spirituality restricted to mountain tops, nor a life divorced from the service of the poor. "Self-realization I hold to be impossible without service of an identification with the poorest."\textsuperscript{17}

Even as one is overwhelmed by the personality of Gandhi, one cannot miss the light radiating from his life. The heart of the message of Gandhi, inseparable from his life, was \textit{satya} and \textit{ahimsa} embodied in the principle of \textit{Satyagraha}. Even those who may often be puzzled by certain inconsistencies in his thought, will definitely derive strength and inspiration from the way Gandhi exemplified truth and non-violence in his personal life as the basic dimension of his action. Gandhi writes, "My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of Satyagraha, which is a direct corollary of non-violence and truth."\textsuperscript{18}

A close look at Gandhi's life will convince anyone that it was by means of his actions based on truth and non-violence that he rose from an erring, faltering, and struggling youth to the eminence of the \textit{Mahatma}. Over-awed by the heights attained by Gandhi, Albert Einstein exclaims, "Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this even in flesh and blood walked upon this Earth."\textsuperscript{19}

Gandhi's plan of action was aimed at building an integrated individual, in harmony with the development of society. When the individual is integrated with society, society itself becomes a harmoniously integrated whole. Thus Gandhi could perceive the need for an integrated human being, not only integrated in body, mind and
soul but also integrated into the society as a full productive member. The above mentioned ideas may be diagramatically presented as follows.

2. **Statement of the problem**

Personality is projected by action and it is acknowledged that the development of an integrated personality is possible by a continuous process of voluntary habitual action that leads to a strong character. Hence action plays a central role in the development of human personality.

In the process of the development of an integrated personality
in the Indian context, action is considered crucial. For the development of such a personality the action-oriented approach of Gandhi, holding fast to truth and non-violence, is proposed as the ideal in the Indian context.

Hence the theme, **THE ROLE OF ACTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY: A STUDY BASED ON MAHATMA GANDHI'S LIFE AND WRITINGS.**

3. **Objectives**

The major objective of the study is to show how action played a significant role in the development of Gandhi's personality. With this in view, the following objectives are proposed:

a) To investigate the salient features of the personality of Gandhi.

b) To analyse the sources such as early influences, the 'Bhagavad Gita', the 'Bible', the writings of Western thinkers like Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau et al that influenced the development of Gandhi's personality.

c) To examine how satya and ahimsa, the basic dimensions of Gandhi's action, shaped the personality of Gandhi.

d) To find out how a steady process of transformation took place in the personality of Gandhi as a result of his actions.

e) To investigate the views of Gandhi regarding the concept of personality development and action.

f) To examine the extent to which 'self-actualization' of Maslow...
coincides with 'self-realization' of Gandhi and how Gandhi differs from Maslow.

g) To suggest measures regarding the role of teachers in moulding the personalities of their students using the model Gandhi provides.

4. Definition of Key Terms

4.1. Action

An action can be defined as "A complex entity consisting of three parts - the motive, the act and the consequences." 20

Actions fall under two categories - involuntary and voluntary. In this study action stands for voluntary actions.

a) Involuntary action

Actions which are not under our control are called involuntary action eg. the sudden blinking of the eye against bright light.

b) Voluntary action

Voluntary actions are deliberate visible attempts, well thought-out, assessed and executed with an integration of physical and mental aspects that mediate, regulate and control the relation between the organism and the environment. 21

4.2. Personality

Generally, personality is spoken of as uniqueness of a person. In psychology the term personality "is the reflection of the consistency
or 'style' in an individual's behaviour. It refers to special characteristics, abilities, emotional and social traits, interests and attitudes of a person." 22

Personality in this investigation means a person whose physical, mental, emotional as well as social components will integrate into a whole.

4.3. Integration

Integration means not the compartmentalisation of different aspects of the totality into smaller units but the reverse, that is a combination of those units into a whole.

4.4. Development

Development can be defined as the proper and balanced growth or advancement of the various aspects of a person in the horizontal, vertical and abyssal dimensions. Such integrated development leads to the transformation of the very personality.

a) Horizontal dimension

The knowledge gathered about the universe and its laws through the senses, is the horizontal dimension.

b) Vertical dimension

The perception of morality, ethic, beauty, spirituality and divinity is the vertical dimension.
c) **Abyssal dimension**

Assimilating and personalising the knowledge gathered in the horizontal and vertical dimensions is described as the abyssal dimension. These three dimensions interlap and interact to produce personality traits and changes.

5. **Limitations of the study**

The present study is mainly based on the personality of Gandhi. The task is forbidding. People believe that to interpret Gandhi is like trying to Interpret Mount Everest. M.E. Jones echoing the same view says, "Gandhi will even elude definition if the attempt is made to set him in some frame of thought and realization alien to genius of his own life." 23

Mindful of the difficulties inherent in the study of Gandhi's personality, an attempt is made to interpret his personality in the light of the available psychological data.

a) Personality has been studied by different psychologists in the foreign context. The theoretical frame of reference of this study is confined to the self-actualization theory of Abraham Maslow.

b) In the analysis of personality only character, the core of personality, and deliberate, visible, conscious actions that help in studying the development of personality are taken into consideration.

c) The final suggestions are made chiefly from an educational angle since the specified application is limited to the field of education.
6. Method of investigation

The present study comes under descriptive research with its techniques of analysis, synthesis, application, generalisations and conclusions. It seeks to find answer to questions through the analysis of the relationship between non-manipulated variables in a natural setting rather than an artificial one. The researcher culls only the relevant variables for the study of their relationship since the events and conditions dealt with belong to the past.

The process of analysis has two dimensions — external and internal. However, major thrust in the methodology is geared to the internal criticism. Hence the analytical operation in a sense concerns itself with the collection, scrutiny, sifting and testing the validity of the data.

The second half of the methodology consists of synthetic operation which is both an intellectual and a physical activity since an attempt is made to combine all relevant data into a connected whole and to organize all isolated facts into a coherent picture. It is mostly joining, grouping, arranging, explaining and interpreting the data so as to make the narrative meaningful and interesting.

The synthesis of the central thought of the present study leads to generalisations and conclusion by means of the logical method of inductive-deductive reasoning.

In the present investigation an objective study is made of the personality of Gandhi based on his autobiography, some of his other writings and the writings of others about him. Hence the study has
to have a historical dimension as well. The first variable is action and its effect on the development of personality. For this a brief survey of different approaches to the nature of human personality is taken and focussed on the self-actualization theory of Maslow which is taken as a frame work of the study. As the second variable the salient features of Gandhi's multi-dimensional and integrated personality is brought to light. The relationship between these two non-manipulated variables has been posited through the transformation of the shy, timid Mohandas into a multy-dimensional integrated personality - the Mahatma.

The salient features of the personality of Gandhi, the first objective, are derived from an analysis of the different aspects of his personality with the help of various documents. The second objective is to show the effect of action in the development of personality. For this the two important guiding principles of Gandhi's action - satya and ahimsa, are analysed. The third objective, the influences on the personality of Gandhi, is also achieved by the process of analysis.

It is by the use of synthetic operation that the central theme of the transformation of personality, the fourth objective, has been drawn out. The data has been grouped on the basis of similarity, explanation and interpretation. A clear picture of Gandhi's concept of personality development and action emerges from the above material and the clarification of this is the fifth objective.

The sixth objective is attempted in the culmination of analysis, synthesis, generalisation and conclusion. Here the investigator compares the concepts of personality development of the West and the East with reference to the self-actualisation theory of Maslow and self-realization.
theory of Gandhi and shows how Gandhi differs from Maslow. With the help of this culmination, a model personality in the Indian context in the Gandhian perspective is presented.

The research becomes relevant and valid for it has a practical application to modern society, prone to violence, particularly to youth in school and college campuses and outside.

7. **Tools of data collection**

The tools used are analysis of literature, interview and panel discussion.

Relevant pieces of information and details were collected primarily from the writings of Mahatma Gandhi and the writings of various psychologists, especially of Maslow, regarding their approaches to personality development.

Data has been collected secondarily from the writings about Gandhi and also the approaches to personality by different writers. Besides this, magazines, popular journals, articles in newspapers regarding Gandhi also were consulted.

A chief problem in dealing with the writings of Mahatma Gandhi and of others about Gandhi is its voluminous nature. It should be noted that Gandhi's writings were mostly scattered and contextual. So his life experiences, experiments and the repeated statements which relate directly or indirectly to the issues of personality development and action have been taken into special consideration.
In order to acquire a broader vision of the various aspects of the present investigation, unstructured interviews and panel discussions were conducted with some eminent persons. The views of different scholars have helped in the conduct of the study and in the formulation of the findings.

8. **Pilot study**

In the beginning of the investigation a pilot study was conducted by visiting a number of schools and colleges and interviewing teachers, office-bearers and students without framed structures. In addition, discussions held with a fairly representative cross-section of eminent people helped the researcher in clarifying perspectives and issues. The objectives of the pilot study were the following:

- To discern the relevance and scope for conducting a research with the above said objectives.
- To decide the design of a model personality in the Indian context.
- To determine the tools, techniques and methodology of the investigation.
- To collect adequate data of a suitable personality for framing a model.
- To ascertain the views regarding the transformation of personality by voluntary actions.

It was in the light of this pilot study and also of the researcher's own experience as a teacher that this research project was selected.
The important investigation in this designed research is to establish the role of voluntary action in the development of a strong, stable character, the core of one's personality which is attempted by showing the transformation of the personality of Gandhi. In this process of transformation two distinct and significant factors Satya and Ahimsa played an important role as media of action and development and to these we shall turn in the next chapter.

REFERENCES


15. Autobiography, p. X.


17. Young India, October 21, 1926, p. 364.


PART II

PROCESS ASPECT OF THE STUDY

Theoretical Analysis
CH. IV SATYA & AHIMSA: MEDIA OF ACTION & DEVELOPMENT

CH. V DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY IN GANDHI: AN EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

CH. VI GANDHI'S THEORY OF ACTION & PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT