CHAPTER III

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Mahatma Gandhi evolved and creatively applied nonviolent techniques for the resolution of conflicts and to build up peace with justice. He was fully aware of the creative aspects of conflict as a means to oppose injustice and untruth.

Most of the conflicts, if not solved, take violent turn. Violence causes harm to the society and to individual. So conflicts have to be solved peacefully and creatively through negotiation, arbitration, nonviolent direct action etc.,

Gandhi was not only concerned with the immediate aspect and the curative approach; he equally stressed the long-term aspect and preventive approach. Constructive work and nonviolent action were the methods he used to reconstruct the conflict-ridden society into sarvodaya order where conflicts would be dealt creatively and nonviolently in all spears of society including industries.

**Conflict Resolution - Concept and types**

Conflict Resolution is a process that leads to a state where the condition of two or more incompatible goal states are no longer present. There are many ways in which this can be brought about, ranging from complete agreement on one of the conflicting goal states or some compromise to total annihilation of one of the parties to the conflict and suppression of one of the parties.

Dr. Mark Jergensmeyer\(^1\) gives the following different types of Conflict Resolution.
1. Forced victory -- Removes the person but the underlying conflicts between principles remain.

2. Accommodation & Compromise -- Let each side wins a little; but each side loses a little as well:

3. Arbitration & Law - Judges which side is right.... But often neglects the truth in the loser's position.

According to Gandhi, Conflict Resolution is a natural process. It is not a reactionary one. Here conflict resolution is more than a strategy or tactics. It is a change of mind or heart. Gandhian concept of conflict resolution certainly brings a new wisdom and vision; hence it is a new vision of the world,

Gandhian concept of Conflict Resolution is based on the advaitic wisdom of oneness: all are one- one soul; awareness of the one great family including every being; friendship for all; ethics and morality.

Gandhian concept of conflict Resolution is explained in the following lines:

The advaitic wisdom of oneness shapes the Gandhian approach to Conflict Resolution and gives the different criteria. They are

1. Friendship for all
2. Spiritualization of politics
3. Ahimsa, and
4. Openness.

Gandhian concept of Conflict Resolution aims not merely at the resolution of conflict, but it further aims at Swaraj. Swaraj means to take responsibility by each one of us as individuals and groups.
Demands of the Gandhian concept of Conflict Resolution

Gandhian concept of Conflict Resolution does not expect a person who enters into the resolution process to be a perfect one. Ordinary common people are eligible to undergo and handle the conflict resolution process. Gandhian conflict resolution processes are simple and direct. They demand self-suffering or *tapasya*.

Basic assumption of Gandhian Approach to Conflict Resolution

1. Conflicts are found in human history.
2. Conflicts are opportunity to disclose the inarticulate difference of opinions among the individuals.
3. Conflicts are inevitable factors in human life.
4. Conflicts cannot be eradicated totally. It is against the natural law.
5. Mere resolution of conflicts is not so important as the means used to resolve the conflicts are equally important.

Skills in the Gandhian Concept of Conflict Resolution

The Gandhian concept of conflict resolution demands the following skills:

- Quest: for Truth.
- Sharing the vision of truth- Communication skills.
- Mental and physical discipline.
- Skills of non-cooperation.
- Skills of love.

**Quest for truth**

It is the first procedure in the Gandhian approach to Conflict Resolution. Gandhi made a fine distinction between absolute truth
and relative truth. Absolute truth is a goal but it can never be reached; rather it is an unending quest. But the truth perceived is relative truth and it should be continuously tried to improve and perfect one's perception. While clinging to the relative truth at hand the search for absolute truth has to be pursued with utmost humility and care. The technique for the search for truth includes learning, listening, reading, contemplation, inner voice, prayer, visits to holy places, discussion, analyzing, empathising etc. Unless one understand and practice all these aspects, it may not be possible to progress in understanding creative and peaceful conflict resolution.

Communication Skill

The second skill and procedure is the sharing of the vision of truth, the communication skill. It includes awareness building, negotiation, persuasion, mediation and arbitration skills. It makes the people see the realities of one's own and of the others. But it is not a one-way process. People can effect changes in one's own perception and help the others to change through the process of mutual sharing, learning and working. Communication skills may be widely diversified. But listening and learning are the basic elements.

Discipline

The third skill and procedure of Gandhian Conflict Resolution is mental and physical discipline. This is the purificatory process. Undergoing fasting and silence will do this. Purificatory process helps one to have clarity over the issue, strengthen the faith; and gives courage and motivation. It also checks one's anger and violent behaviour. During the Ahmedabad Textile Mill Labourers
strike 1918, Gandhi took fasting to check the lapses on the part of the mill owners and the workers.

**Non-Cooperation**

The fourth skill and procedure of Gandhian Conflict Resolution is non-cooperation. It has two phases of work

1. Confrontation and
2. Constructive Work.

*Confrontation*

The significant aspect of Gandhian Conflict Resolution is the confrontation, which is gentle and firm in nature. Johan Galtung calls this as creative conflict.

Creative conflicts are engineered to fight the evil. Gandhi coined a special term to his nonviolent creative conflict as *Satyagraha*. *Satyagraha* is the type of principled nonviolent direct action developed by Gandhi.

*The Constructive Work*

It is part of *Satyagraha*. Gandhi considered constructive work as the training ground for *Satyagraha*. It helps to build up awareness to mobilize the masses and to establish a just world order. Constructive Work is the 'Peaceful' and 'Proactive' form of Gandhian method for realizing a nonviolent social order, which deals with conflicts before it arises (latent conflict). It helps one to understand and predict the possible future problems and their dynamics in advance and try to deal with them with most care and concern. Since it makes an attempt to address the roots of the conflict, it prevents conflicts arise and before they become violent or
destructive. *Satyagraha* is a militant form of dealing with conflict and it deals with open conflict. Gandhi did not conceive the Constructive Programmes in a single day. It took long years of experience that gave shape and form to these Programmes, Satyagraha and Constructive Programmes are closely interconnected.


In this study, though the Labour welfare is mainly focused upon, an attempt is made to study the other programmes as they are also interconnected with the welfare of Labour. Gandhi has considered labour movement as one of the main points of his constructive programme.⁷

Skills of Love

Ultimately the entire thing springs for love. Love sustains the entire operation. It is the beginning, means and the end of all activities. Love makes us disciplined, responsible, caring, humble, cooperation; confront injustice, altruistic and selfless. The entire Gandhian system stands on the foundation of love.
Any action can be classified into inaction and action. Inaction means passivity, surrender, cowardice, ignorance, unconcern etc. Inaction is death and that is to be rejected. For Gandhi, Action may be classified into violent action and nonviolent action.

Nonviolent action can be broadly classified into three,

1. Avoidance
2. Negotiation
3. Non-cooperation/Satyagraha (Nonviolent direct action)

Avoidance cannot be accepted as part of nonviolence in Gandhian Conflict Resolution. Avoidance represents cowardice, Avoidance communicates a lack of concern for the other and for the relationship,

Negotiation can be classified into persuasion, compromise, reconciliation, and peaceful institutional procedures.

1. Persuasion is an art of influencing others by argument in person or through letters.
2. Compromise is an adjustment of conflicting claims or principles by the sacrifice or surrender of a part of each,
3. Reconciliation means the renewal of friendship by means of
agreement of things seemingly opposite or inconsistent.

4. Peaceful institutional procedures are those, which are formal and officially accepted mode of conflict resolution.

Non -cooperation/ Satyagraha

The Gandhian technique of conflict resolution is known by its sanskrit name of Satyagraha which has variously been interpreted as "passive resistance", "nonviolent resistance: nonviolent direct action" and even as "militant nonviolence". "Satyagraha", Gandhi explained, is "literally holding on to Truth and it means, therefore, Truth-force. Truth is soul or spirit. It is therefore known as soul-force".

Satyagraha means, in effect, the discovery of truth and working steadily towards it, thus converting the opponent into a friend. In other words, Satyagraha is not used against anybody but is done with somebody.

*The principles of Satyagraha*

Satyagraha has some principles to be strictly followed when a conflict exists between two parties. So Satyagraha is an attitude. For example, when the Labours are indulging in a boycott, the principles of Satyagraha should be presented otherwise that boycott cannot accurately be described as Satyagraha. There are about ten principles of Satyagraha:

1. Violence is invited from opponents if they are humiliated or provoked, It is never the intention of a Satyagrahi to embarrass the wrongdoer. The appeal is never to his fear; it is, must be always to his heart.

2. A violent attitude is less likely on the part of a would-be *Satyagrahis* if they have made clear to themselves the essential
elements of their case and the purpose of the struggle. The sincere undertaking of a conflict along Gandhian line requires an affirmative answer to the question: 'Is my motive when starting this new direct action unmixed--- is it just to realize the goal of the campaign, and not also to wish to injure the opponent or due to other deviant motive?'

3. Opponents are lesser likely to use violent means the better they understand the Satyagrahis case and conduct. "As a Satyagrahi I must always allow my cards to be examined and reexamined at all times and make reparation if an error is discovered."

4. The essential interests which opponents have in common should be clearly formulated and cooperation established on this basis. We have to think of things as our opponent thinks of them; three-fourth of the miseries and misunderstandings in the world will disappear, if we step into the shoes of our adversaries and understand their standpoint.

5. Opponents should not be judged harder than the self. People are supposed to have different kind of vision about life and the truth. So it is a good guide for individual conduct, imposition of that conduct upon all will be an insufferable interference with everyone's freedom of conscience. "We must not use any coercion to persuade other people to adopt our way. We must guarantee to them the same freedom we claim for ourselves".

G. Opponents should be trusted. Satyagraha is based on the principle "that the only way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him and the surest way to make him untrustworthy is to distrust him". "He who trusts has never yet lost in the world".
7. Unwillingness to compromise on non-essentials decreases the likelihood of converting the opponent. Satyagraha requires that demands made be the "irreducible minimum"; they should never be lowered just to please the adversary, but both the parties should be prepared to "make large concessions on all points except where a principle is involved." In fact in cases short of matters of principle "A Satyagrahi never misses, can never miss, a chance of compromise on honorable terms" Gandhi claimed that he himself was essentially a man of compromise "because I can never be sure that I am right". 19

8. The conversion of an opponent is furthered by personal sincerity. Genuine Satyagrahi cannot be sued in an unjust cause.

9. The best way of converting the opponent is to make sacrifice for the given cause.

10. The weakness of the opponent should not be exploited. Advantage should not be taken of an opponent's weak moments "if they have not been the result of Satyagraha, but due to extraneous reasons". 20

Fundamental concepts of Satyagraha

A Satyagrahi is expected to observe certain fundamental concepts. The fundamental concepts are as follows:

1. Faith in human goodness
2. Truth
3. Nonviolence
4. Self-Suffering
5. The relationship of the means to the end
6. A rejection of coercion
7. Fearlessness. 21
Faith in Siuman goodness

When a Satyagrahi indulges in a conflict resolution process, he has to admit, "Every one of us is a mixture of good and evil". So the opponents' respect and dignity should be protected, that the opponent is given the same credit in this matter that the Satyagrahi would demand for themselves. "Every man may know and most of us do know what is a just and an unjust act"; "Everyone can think for himself" and "unlike animals, man has been given the faculty of reason". So man is endowed with reason, that man can utilize reason to direct his actions, and that a technique for conducting conflict can appeal to the rational in man. So it should be noted that belief in the goodness of human nature and operation of reason ultimately is the optimist's act of faith in the empirically untestable.

Truth

According to Gandhi Truth is the very reason for existence; the search for Truth is actually a search for God. Gandhi explains the metaphysical nature of the connection between 'Truth' and 'God'

"God is Truth" is certainly does not mean 'equal to' nor does it merely mean, 'is truthful'. Truth is not a mere attribute of God, but He is that. He is nothing if he is not that. Truth in Sanskrit means Sat. Sat means Is. Therefore Truth is implied in Is. God is, nothing else. Therefore the more truthful we are, the nearer we are to God. We are only to the extent that we are truthful.

Gandhi further divided Truth into two distinctive categories. That is Absolute Truth and Relative Truth. For him God was an impersonal, all pervading reality. ("I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives"). This reality is 'Absolute Truth', whereas discoveries on the way to the realisation of Truth he
called 'Relative Truth'. "As long as I have not realised this absolute Truth, so long must I hold to the relative truth as I have conceived it. That relative truth must meanwhile be my beacon, my shield, my buckler", \(^{27}\)

While Truth is the goal, \textit{ahimsa} or Nonviolence becomes the necessary and only means of realizing it. Because of the conflict that may result from the differing conceptions of truth, nonviolence and self-suffering become very important elements in ensuring that coercion does not occur.

\textit{Satyagraha}, being a search for Truth, rejects the justifications that end justifies the means. Its method of nonviolence insists that \textit{Satyagrahis} "magnify the molehills of our errors into mountains and minimize the mountains of others' errors into molehills". \(^{28}\) The most important practical way to live the life of truth that \textit{Satyagraha} requires is that 'A lover of Truth will not appear different from what he is. His thoughts, words and actions will be harmonious.

Nonviolence

Violence arises from ignorance or untruth whereas Truth conversely arises out of Nonviolence. "Gandhi strongly believed that Nonviolence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is manlier than punishment", \(^{29}\) because "Nonviolence affords the fullest production to one's self-respect and sense of honour"\(^{30}\)

For Gandhi Nonviolence means far more than what is implied by the negative terminology used in English. Ahimsa (for which there appears to be no better translation than 'Nonviolence') means more than not doing physical harm to an opponent. It embodies a positive concept --- it requires doing, not merely the refraining from injury. Ahimsa is not merely a negative state of harmlessness but it
is a positive state of love, of doing well even to the evildoer, But it
does not mean helping the evildoer to continue the wrong or
tolerating it by passive acquiescence. On the contrary, love, the
active state of ahimsa, requires you to resist the wrong — doer.\textsuperscript{31}
Gandhi further adds "it is no Nonviolence if we merely love those
that love us. It is Nonviolence only when we love those that hate
us".\textsuperscript{1} Gandhi explained that Nonviolence meant not only the non-
injury of human life, but of all living things.

Creative Self-suffering

Self-suffering in Satyagraha is essentially the application of
moral persuasion towards the opponent through voluntary and
creative suffering. Gandhi said "Individuals and nations who would
practice nonviolence must be prepared to sacrifice their all except
honour."\textsuperscript{2} To him "Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the
law of the jungle. But suffering is infinitely more powerful than the
law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears,
which are otherwise shut, to the voice of reason."\textsuperscript{3} Gandhi believed
love with self-suffering only could win the opponent; not hate or
violence. He further explained this as "The hardest heart and the
greatest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering
without anger and without malice."\textsuperscript{4} Self-suffering in creative
conflict includes facing official and unofficial brutalities and meeting
the reaction to the provocative nonviolent direct action. The role of
self-suffering is to break a deadlock, "to cut through the rationalized
defenses of the opponent".\textsuperscript{5} Gandhi insisted on retaining a faith in
human nature that maintained that such a process does work.
Gandhi warned that the suffering or hardship undertaken had to be
functional; "he was not in favour of martyrs or suffering not caused
by acts conducive to the solution of the present conflict or future conflicts".\(^6\) The opponent must not be encouraged to act against the Satyagrahi to bring on self-suffering because "brutalizing the adversary can but make his conversion the more difficult."\(^7\) This brutalisation must be avoided so that the opponent is not compelled to inflict punishment- "the secret of Satyagraha" according to Gandhi, "lies in not tempting the wrong-doer to do wrong".\(^0\)

Even where self-suffering does not touch the conscience of opponent it can have objective benefits in a conflict situation. The opponent may be converted indirectly (or coerced by Nonviolence) if the endured suffering moves public opinion to the side of the Satyagrahis.\(^9\) Care must be taken to ensure that "self-abnegation become self-affirmation and a tool of truth rather than a weapon of revenge".\(^10\)

Finally, it should be remembered that self-sufferng is a necessary part per se of any nonviolent action, because, as Sharp points out, it is the price paid for maintaining resistance in a nonviolent way.\(^11\)

Means and Ends;

Gandhi asserted that "the means might be likened to a seed, the end to a tree: and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree".\(^12\) Gandhi further said, "Means are after all everything. As the means, so is the end. There is no wall of separation between means and ends".\(^13\)

... if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself.\(^14\)
If techniques employed by *Satyagraha* are used as means to an end in a conflict situation, that is, to secure victory, the process becomes one of *duragraha* (Unlike *Satyagraha*, *duragraha* starts off with prejudgments aimed at overcoming and destroying the position of the opponent). The users lose their integrity and purity of intention and the campaign is essentially futile even if victorious in some superficial way.\(^{15}\) Gandhi made it clear that he believed his energies had to be devoted to looking after the purity of the means rather than to seeing if they would be the most expedient way of achieving the immediate goal. He believes "the method may appear to be long, perhaps too long, but he is convinced that it is the shortest".\(^{16}\)

**Rejection of Coercion**

Gandhi cautions against the use of coercion. He makes it clear that "there is no such thing as compulsion in the scheme of Nonviolence.\(^{17}\) "Nonviolence is never a method of coercion, it is one of conversion"\(^{18}\) and that "coercion is an offspring of violence. Conversion is the fruit of Nonviolence and love".\(^{19}\)

Nonviolent coercion is not to be seen as a just means of settling conflicts because it not only militates against the moral development of the parties to the conflict, or because it fails to express the respect which Nonviolence claims for an opponent, but also because it does nothing to clarify the Truth, to confirm the justice of the objectives sought.\(^{20}\) So coercion is simply means the use of force, including moral force, to compel an opponent to act in a way that is contrary to either their will or judgement.
Coercion in any form is not in keeping with the spirit of Satyagraha: moral coercion, however, is always preferable to physical coercion. It can galvanise public support and has a greater chance of leading eventually to conversion than has physical coercion. It is generally also more indicative of sincerity than a mere reliance on strength would be.

**Fearlessness**

A certain amount of courage is obviously necessary to endure self-suffering and to Gandhi it is an axiom that Nonviolence and cowardice are contradictory terms, "The path of true Nonviolence", he points out "requires much more courage than violence", however, he firmly believed that it was possible for a violent person to some day become nonviolent, there being no such hope for cowards. The possession of arms was, for Gandhi, a sign of fear and cowardice and cowards could never be moral.

Along with his famous dictum that violence was preferable to cowardice, Gandhi explained that, although "violence is not lawful, when it is offered in self-defence or for the defence of the defenceless it is an art of bravery far better than cowardly submission". In fact:

If you feel humiliated, you will be justified in slapping the bully in the face or taking whatever action you might deem necessary to vindicate your self-respect. The use of force, in the circumstances, would be the natural consequence if you were not a coward. But if you have assimilated the nonviolent spirit, there should be no feeling of humiliation in you.
An atmosphere of fear and impotence makes people helpless even to accomplish the simplest of things. Without fearlessness the growth of other noble qualities becomes difficult—"how can one seek Truth, or cherish love, without fearlessness", asks Gandhi rhetorically. The courage that Satyagraha calls for is not dependent on physical strength, "it is not a matter of muscle; it is a matter of the heart. The toughest muscle has been known to tremble before an imaginary fear".23

How then is one to find this element of fearlessness? Even trying to be fearless out of policy rather than creed can work; however, care must be taken that it does not become an emasculating cloak for weakness. In the end such courage must come from ""determined and constant endeavour... by cultivating self-confidence".24

Necessity of Satyagraha

Gandhi firmly believed that life could not be compartmentalized, that actions, and the reasons on which actions are based, whether they be political, economic or social, are interrelated, and that these actions have a direct bearing upon the achievement of the ultimate aim of life. Gandhi himself named this aim as Truth or Moksha55, which in a Western perspective can be translated as self-realization (or the 'manifestation of one's potential to the greatest possible degree'57), and claimed that his life including his 'ventures in the political field are directed to this same end.58 The ideal of conscientious action which is conducive to the attainment of this aim must in Gandhi's moral philosophy, continually be borne in mind-and this obviously includes the way one goes about resolving conflicts.
Sharp and Gregg both point out that the conversion of an opponent may not be achievable in all cases— that occasionally they must be defeated first.  

The problem is how to know this in advance. How long does one keep up satyagaraha before accepting failure? If a Satyagraha action is commenced with the attitude that failing the achievement of the desired result within a certain specified period (that is, if Satyagraha is used as a policy rather than a creed) another method will be used, then the desired outcome may be doomed to non-actualisation from the outset. Satyagraha, to be effective, requires complete effort.

The Satyagrahi lifestyle is one, which reduces the likelihood of conflict reaching the grievance stage. It is based on humility yet it is designed to build self-respect, it teaches patience and tolerance in the face of insults, it does not threaten opponents, it insists on compromise on all but fundamental matters of principle and it acknowledges the truth in the opponent's position. Satyagraha campaigns, on the other hand, are methods of fighting where conflicts have reached this stage. That in this sense Satyagraha is effective but it should be noted that as a method it guarantees no automatic and unfailing success; no method of conflict resolution does. Naess sums up Gandhi's probable answer to those who are pessimistic as to the utility of Satyagraha as a solver of conflicts as: "Have you tried? I have, and it works". 

Gandhi was quite aware that his belief in a better, more peaceful world resulting from the increased practice of Nonviolence could not be proved by argument, but this did not overly concern him, His answer was that if Satyagraha failed the attempt has not been pure enough:
"Supposing I cannot produce a single instance in life of a man who truly converted his adversary, I would then say that it is because no one has yet found to express Ahimsa in its fullness."  

The failure to reach an ideal, therefore, is not to be seen as the defeat of either the individual or the ideal. Personal victory comes from effort and although the ideal may remain ever unattained it is never unattainable.

This along with his assertion that 'sometimes men of truth appear to have failed, but that is no more than a fleeting appearance,' may well leave empiricists grossly unsatisfied. Iyer, however, quite correctly points out that it would certainly be wrong to judge *Satyagraha* 'entirely on utilitarian grounds, on the practical results achieved', because the doctrine depends essentially 'on non-utilitarian assumptions'.

Even where *Satyagraha* does fail to resolve a conflict, the subjective benefit of dignity that comes from leading a moral life, is always present and this is missing with other methods.

**Strike**

If all else failed in an industrial dispute Gandhi noted that "strikes are an inherent right of the workingmen for the purpose of securing justice." But the right should be exercised with extreme discretion and after the failure of all possible efforts at reconciliation. It is always an extreme step and is fraught with great risks. As the labour strike generally involves hundreds, thousands and sometimes-even lakhs of families in economic ruination, starvation and worse, it should be launched with the greatest caution. Gandhi has given the following conditions of a justifiable, nonviolent labour strike:
The cause of the strike must be just

There should be practical unanimity among the strikers

 Strikes should never depend upon public subscriptions or other charity but should occupy themselves in some useful and productive temporary occupation

A strike is no remedy when there is enough other labour to replace strikers

Strikers must fix an unalterable minimum demand and declare it before embarking upon their strike

There is no room in a nonviolent strike for violence in the shape of intimidation, etc.,

The above type of the strike can be called the industrial or the economic strike. The second variety is the political strike. The political strike, as far as the workers are concerned, should be judged on its merits and should never be mixed with an industrial strike, The third type is of the sympathetic strike. Labour being naturally sensitive to humanitarian emotions is easily tempted into resorting to such a strike. Such a strike should be generally taboo but might be undertaken with great precaution.

Picketing

This comes as a supplement to strikes, but has an additional function. A strike should ideally be unanimous. But there will always be those who try to break the strike ant thereby weaken its effectiveness. They may do so in order to be on the safe side, the employer side, in case the strike should fail. They may also, of course, politically be opposed to the majority favouring the strike, meaning that the conflict is also among the employees.
When Gandhi recommends picketing, it is not to force the strikebreakers to become good strikers, but to argue with them. Picketing is a form of agitation, trying to make the other side among one's own understand their own case better. If they were still not convinced then to prevent them from working would not be Satyagraha.

The Gandhian element would be the objectivity and richness of information beyond simplistic slogans. That the picket should not use violence goes without saying, but that norm also applies to verbal violence. Gandhi was also against the form of picketing that would consist in forming a live wall of people, in front of the entrance to a factory. This would constitute coercion, and stand in the way of conversion even if it was only difficult, not impossible to enter.

**Fasting**

The question is whether a fast has a place in a labour strike. A fast, though it is a very potent weapon in the Satyagraha armoury, has 'very strict limitations and is to be taken up only by those who have undergone previous training'. The general principle in this regard enunciated by Gandhi is A Satyagrahi should fast only as a last resort when all other avenues of redress have been explored and have failed. It has been seen that fast undertaken by a competent strike-leader when the labour morale seems flagging, invariably proves most effective in pulling it up. Thus it serves as a potent weapon for the purification of one's own self and of the group. During the wage-strike of Ahmedabad workers in 1918, the strikers showed signs of fatigue after 22 days. Gandhi, as their leaders, felt that 'that was a sacred moment and
declared that he would not take food so long as they did not get a 35 per cent increase or did not give up the fight altogether.\textsuperscript{70} The result was that the workers were greatly stirred, they began to do manual work, and their honour and integrity remained intact.\textsuperscript{71} Thus the struggle terminated in favour of the strikers.

Duties and Responsibilities of Capital

According to Gandhi, "the rich cannot accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor in society".\textsuperscript{72} But unfortunately, we are under the hypnotic influence of capital and have come to believe that capital is everything on earth. But "a moment's thought would show that labour has at its disposal capital which the capitalist would never possess".\textsuperscript{73} Labour is free of capital and capital has to woo labour. And it would not matter in the slightest degree that capital has guns and even poisonous gases at its disposal. Capital would still be perfectly helpless if labour would assert its dignity by making good its 'No'.\textsuperscript{74} Thus, capital, in reality, 'should be labour's servant, not its master'.\textsuperscript{75}

When the acquisition of wealth and property by the industrialists has become a possibility mainly through the co-operation of labour, it follows that 'they have no moral right to use any of it mainly for personal advantage'.\textsuperscript{76} They have no justification to live more comfortably than an ordinary worker or the peasant who labours and provides wealth for them.

Trusteeship

This does not mean that there should be uniform economic equality. People with more talent will have more money and more comforts. Gandhi would allow a man of intellect to earn more but
he wishes that such a man should not retain more than his needs. The modern industrial distemper centers round the accumulation of wealth with the few and the starvation wages with the majority of the members of society. 'The rich have, Gandhi wrote, a superfluous store of things which they do not need and which are therefore neglected and wasted; while millions starve to death for want of sustenance.' He has at another place described the economic disparity between the rich and the poor classes as existed during British rule. He wrote;

Every place that one sees in India is a demonstration not of her riches but of the insolence of power that riches gave to the few, who owe them to the miserable requited labours of millions of paupers of India.

What was Gandhi’s remedy in the face of this appalling economic inequality? It was trusteeship. Gandhi wanted that workers should have access to the working of mills and their business transactions. This was a natural corollary to the trusteeship concept and the idea of considering workmen as part-proprietors. One of Gandhi’s arbitration awards regarding an industrial dispute in Ahmedabad contained the following significant sentence: it is vital to the well-being of the industry that workmen should be regarded as equals with the shareholders and that they have, therefore, every right to possess an accurate knowledge of the transactions of the mills.

Gandhi’s trusteeship concept considered not only capitalists but also labours as the custodians of public interest. This is based on the assumption that both employers and workers would develop an enlightened, constructive, and nonviolent outlook in the
discharge of their productive functions and mutual obligations to promote the interests of the community.

According to the principle of trusteeship, the present capitalist order can be transformed into an egalitarian one. The principle does not recognize the right to property except to the extent permitted by society for its own welfare; the individual does not have any right to hold or use wealth in disregard of the interests of society; and the character of production is to be determined by social necessity rather than by personal whims or greed. The capitalist is expected to hold industry in trust for the community; and it is envisaged that, as individual workers in collaboration with employers, they to, are expected to be co-trustees with the latter.

The trusteeship theory implies that there is no room for conflict of interests between the capitalist and the labours. Though wealth legally belongs to its owners, morally it belongs to society. If capitalists fail to pay minimum living wages to workers, workers should appeal to the employers' conscience. If this does not work, they should resort to nonviolent non-co-operation. As a precondition to this, two things are expected from workers:

One is an awakening and the other is unity and organization among them. By awakening among workers what Gandhi meant was the growth and development of faith in their moral strength and their awareness of its existence. The workers should realise the fact that without their co-operation, capitalists cannot exploit Labour, If workers therefore resort to non co-operation, their exploitation by capital would stop.

Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owing class a
chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.

- It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except in as much as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.
- It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.
- Thus under state regulated trusteeship an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interest of society.
- Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that would be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.
- Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.\(^7\)

Trade Union

Gandhi wants the labour organization on Indian lines\(^8\). He has described the Indian lines in the following way:

I want its (labour's) organization along Indian lines, or, if you will, my lines; I am doing it. The Indian labour knows it instinctively. I do not regard capital to be the enemy of labour. I hold their co-ordination to be perfectly possible.\(^9\)
He believes that India has her distinct tradition and she is capable of finding her own solution to the question of capital and labour. Even some of the western thinkers today stand aghast at the abyss to which their industrial system is heading.\(^{82}\) "I owe whatever influence I have in the West", Gandhi once wrote "to my ceaseless endeavour to find a solution which promises an escape from the vicious circle of violence and exploitation. Let us study our eastern institutions in that spirit of scientific inquiry and we shall evolve a truer Socialism and a truer Communism than the world has yet dreamt of. It is surely wrong to presume that western Socialism or Communism is the last word on the question of mass poverty".\(^{83}\)

Gandhi conceives industrial ideals in terms of truth and Nonviolence. The truth in this case is social justice. All who labour must have their due. Those who do not labour must be made to labour. Those who do not labour would not be allowed to exploit those who cannot afford to live without labour. The working classes have all these centuries been isolated and relegate to an inferior status. They should be restored to their proper position,

Trade Union on Family Lines

The realisation of the republic is brought about not by violent revolution and strikes, but by Nonviolence and co-operation. Gandhi’s conception of a trade union is based on family model where all the constituents are inter-connected and inter-dependent and supplementary to one another.\(^{84}\) While describing his industrial ideal before the Indian association, Jamshedpur, he declared;

I have always said that my ideal is that capital and labour should supplement and help each other. They should be a great family living in unity and harmony,
capital not only looking to the material welfare of the labourers but their moral welfare also—capitalists being trustees for the welfare of the labouring classes under them.  

Amplifying the same theme in one of his Ahmedabad speeches, he said: "The relation between mill-agents and mill-hands ought to be one of father and children or as between blood brothers. I have often heard the mill-owners of Ahmedabad refer to themselves as 'masters' and their employees as their 'servants'. Such loose talks should be out of fashion in a place like Ahmedabad which prides itself on its love of religion and love of Ahimsa."  

The only sanction necessary for such relationship is "of mutual love and regard as between father and son, not of laws". But then the duty of the employers is to see that all the employees get the living wage, better housing and other ordinary comforts. Such relationship is possible only when both or at least one party accepts Nonviolence as its basic ideal. So far as labour is concerned, Nonviolence is their only insurance.  

But Nonviolence needs to be organized in order to be made effective. The organisation based on co-operation, both among employees and with employers, possession of technical skill and participation in local movement—these factors are implied in the acceptance of Nonviolence. 'Without that necessary discipline and Nonviolence, they (workers) would have inter-necene strife, and would never be ready to develop the strength that is needed to enable them to realize the power that they possess'. Indeed, it is nonviolence alone which would teach 'the poor to free themselves from the crushing inequalities which have brought them to the verge of starvation'.
If at all conflicts are to be resolved in true sense, Gandhian concept of conflict resolution has to be understood and practiced in its holistic sense by all in Industries and society at large.
ENDNOTES


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6Ibid.,


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13Naess, Arne., Gandhi and Group Conflict op cit., pp. 70-89.

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34 Ibid., p.153.
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36 Ibid., op cit., P. 228.
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44 Young India, 17 July 1924
45 Harijan, 11 February 1939.
47 The American Bazar Partika, 17 September 1933.
48 Young India, 23 September 1926
49 Hanjaai 23 July 1938
50 Young India, 26 November 1931.
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53 Harijart, 27 March 1940.
54 Young India, 6 June 1929.
    Gandhi, From Yeravda Mandir, p. 19.
56 'Salvation' in the sense of liberation from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth by achieving perfection.
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60 Naess, op.cit., p.78.

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63 Indians Opinion, 8 February 1908.


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65 Young India, 16 February 1921.


67 Harijan, 18 March 1939.

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73 N.K.Bose, Selections from Gandhi, Op cit., p. 80.

Ibid., pp.86-87.

74 Ibid., p. 139.

75 Harijan, 16 February 1947.

77 Yeravda Mandir, Chapter VI.

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