PREFACE

Life is a series of interruptions and recoveries. If social life has its conflicts it also has its adjustments. Individuals quarrel, then make it up. Workers strike but also negotiate for settlement. This world is suspended in balance between conflict and its resolution. Sometimes there seems to be hope that conflicts will be averted and sometimes it looks as if they would erupt very soon. Thus, the heart of every person wavers between these two opposite poles. However, conflict is followed by peace. It is probably true that the greater part of human energy is devoted not to out and out antagonism against opponents but to efforts to get along somehow with them. Conflict is not an incidental or abnormal phase of man’s behaviour but is intermittent in human society.

Social life is always an admixture of conflict and peace. In society in every state of peace the conditions of future conflict and in every conflict the conditions of peace are formed. In contemporary as well as historical societies, from primitive to civilized, perhaps we cannot find even a single instance in which a society exists or has ever existed without social conflict in its system. Cleavages and consensus are simultaneously present in all societies at all times. We can see elements of co-operation and conflict in all human relations and conflict cannot be excluded from social life.

Conflicts are ubiquitous, come in many forms and involve vastly different kinds of parties, ranging from individual persons to large macro units such as nation-states. Some are dynamic and well
publicized, whereas others are much more subtle and hidden from public views. Social scientists have in general focused their attention more on former than the later, but this does not imply that the basic processes involved are all that different. Conflicts are perhaps most obvious when the contestants are either individual persons, as for example in material conflicts or major corporate actors, such as social classes or ethnic groups, the boundaries of which are often fuzzy and difficult to define. Conflict may involve overt physical violence, at the one extreme or much more subtle punitive processes at the other.

Conflict is an important element of social interaction. Far from being always a negative factor that tears apart, social conflict may contribute in many ways to the maintenance of groups and collectivities as well as to the cementing of interpersonal relations.

Conflict may break out over the distribution of a great variety of scarce value and goods, such as income, status, power, dominion over territory or ecological position. In certain types of conflicts such as modern management, labour conflicts, the antagonists may harbour only a minimum of hostile emotions towards each other.

Realistic conflict arises when men clash in the pursuit of claims and the expectation of gain. It is viewed by the participants as a means toward the achievement of specific goals, a means that might be abandoned if other means appear to be more effective. On the other hand, non-realistic conflict arising from the aggressive impulses that seek expression no matter what is the objective. It is not aimed at the attainment of a concrete results but at the expression of aggressive impulses.
The impact of conflict on social structures varies according to the type of such structures. In a loosely structured group and in open pluralistic societies, conflict aims at a resolution of tension between antagonists. In such flexible structures, multiple affiliations of individuals make them participate in a variety of group conflicts so that those who are antagonists in one conflict are allies on another. Thus, multiple conflicts although varying in intensity are likely to criss-cross one another and thereby prevents cleavages along one axis.

In a rigid social structure and in closed groups, the impact of conflict is likely to be quite different. The closer the group, the more intense are conflicts, the more highly involved the parties. There is a fear of disruptive effect. Closed groups tend to absorb the total personality of their members, they are jealous of members affiliation with other groups and desire to monopolize their loyalty. The lack of multiplicity of criss-crossing associations and multiple allegiances between members is likely to have as a consequence the superimposition of the various latent sources of conflict.

With this perspective in mind the present study aims to present conceptual analysis of Conflict Resolution in its broadest form. The study also aims to elaborate the various causes, forms of methods and techniques of conflict resolution. The main regional and international conflicting issues have been discussed to give a broad view to the study. The study also aims to discuss to what extent the conflicts can be resolved in a non-violent way in the light of Gandhian principles.

The methodology followed in reconstructing the thesis is partly descriptive and partly analytical and interpretative. In order to describe
the major developments in the historical sequence and to establish their inter-connectedness, a chronology based narration has been done. In highlighting the most significant developments, historical explanation and critical interpretation is very essential.

The work in hand is theoretical one and is based upon the data collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data for the thesis has been culled out mainly from the original documents preserved in the various national libraries and Nehru Museum, National Gandhi Museum and National Archives of India.

The researcher has also collected the requisite data from all the sources within her reach. These include some important works by eminent peace experts, writers, biographers, personalities and other vast scattered published literature related to this work. The collected data has been thoroughly investigated, critically analyzed and presented accordingly.

I take this rarest of the rare opportunities to place a record my extreme gratitude to Dr. Jai Narain Sharma, Professor, Department of Gandhian Studies, Panjab University, my guide and supervisor, for the consistent encouragement and able guidance, and also the blessings lavishly showered upon me, for undertaking this study with confidence, and perseverance. It was a unique experience of working under his guidance. I shall cherish with fond memory the scholarly views shared by him with me and appropriate interpretations given on diverse concepts of relevance to the study. But for the timely interventions by Dr. Jai Narain Sharma, I would have been often caught in the maze and labyrinth of the voluminous literature, and world have been lost.
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Chandigarh

POOJA KATARIA
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