CHAPTER V

GANDHI’S VIEW OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

It seems impossible that any set of reforms of the existing system, with its structural characteristics kept intact, can improve the situation for the South or the poverty-ridden people of the third world. Some countries may benefit from reforms, but by and large what goes under the general demand of a New International Economic Order is either impossible to achieve or irrelevant for the poor of the South. Therefore, an alternative approach or response to the prevailing situation, which is characterized by Darwinism, has become absolutely necessary. It is futile to suggest abstract models. It is even more important that no institution should be demolished unless an alternative institution can replace it. Therefore, in our view, the only alternative approach can be Gandhian. It will press such reforms of the existing system as make its replacement smoother and easier and with minimum damage.

There can be four primary thrusts in the Gandhian response to the prevailing crisis. First, in view of the exploitative character of the local order in which, for the first time, exploitation is taking the shape of violent structural dualism, rupture or the ghetto syndrome, the LDCs will have to avoid integration with this system dominated by the big powers, the multinationals and technologies, which further divide the world. The LDCs will have to demystify such concepts as interdependence, one world model, or mutually reinforcing growth, which cover up underlying dualisms. The more they try to integrate with this world, the more brusquely will they be pushed out. Therefore, they have to adopt a strategy of first detaching themselves from the system
and then reattaching with it when their economic position is less vulnerable.

Second, excessive reliance on trade, foreign aid and investment, import of technologies relevant to ADCs and on the economic theories of the west, will have to be given up. This approach would certainly cost high initially and even mean some disruption of inessential sectors, but in the long run, it would give a push to greater self-reliance. To minimize the damage of giving low priority to trade, aid and foreign investment, it would be necessary for the countries of the third world to enter into mutual cooperation in a wide variety of areas. The South has to treat itself not merely as an entity but as a developing mode of production outside the ADC system. It is seldom realized that the prevalent LDC cooperation on an individual basis militates against South-South cooperation. The power rests in mercantilist absolutism in the garb of GATT, etc. For instance, multinationals restrict the area of export from one developing country to another. For genuine South-South cooperation, all multinationals which impose such restrictions will have to be blacked out. Gandhi’s theory of dumping of low-grade industries from the ADCs into LDCs has proved to be absolutely correct.

Third, and the most important Gandhian response, would be an absolute reversal of the existing strategy of growth and development being pursued by the LDCs. All the western models are based on a single paradigm in which capital accumulation, incremental capital-output ratio, and capital-labour ratio are designed to save labour rather than capital. This paradigm has to be rejected and replaced by one in which human and natural resource development, employments maximization and production by masses, instead of mass production of goods, become the central features.
Fourth, there is a deep relationship between the economic, political and cultural processes. In most of the LDCs, authoritarianism, poverty and cultural dependency have gone together. India may seem to be an exception but it is not really so. Her cultural dependency is legitimised by the so-called democratically elected elite. A Gandhian would begin by demonstrating cultural resistance to the ADCs approach because therein lie the roots of elite consumption, poverty and massive state repression.

Of the five billion people living in the world, about one billion are identified as poor, and that too on a rather restricted definition. Another one billion and a half live on subsistence level, that is, on a level which is a little above the poverty line. There are not more than a billion who may be said to have most of their needs satisfied. In general, half the people live in economic poverty of one type or another.

The other half also lies in another kind of poverty i.e. social, moral, and spiritual poverty. A man as a social being has social needs which in modern mass industrial societies are not always satisfied. Indeed man has become largely alienated and feels socially deprived. The more he is subject to pressure of modern consumerism, the more relatively he feels poor, even if he is rich enough to satisfy his economic requirements. The concept of poverty is built into the definition of economics in which scarcity is the central concept. No matter how rich a man or a nation is, they remain constrained by scarcity.

Spiritual deprivation or poverty is a far more serious matter for those who apparently have no economic problem. They do not find meaning in life or do not know how to transcend or self-transcend their existentialist situation through culture, spirituality, or consciousness. Their poverty is deep seated in a relation to self, self-actualisation, or self-fulfillment. Mahatma Gandhi gave another definition of such
poverty. He called economic poverty a moral collapse of the affluent. Affluence coexisting with poverty is an absolute theft. However, he stated quite categorically that there was no flight from poverty to spirituality. He concerned himself at once with all types of poverty as he thought and tried to prove that one was inseparable from the other. For instance, everybody knows that with the help of modern technology and knowledge, it is possible not only to satisfy the basic needs of every one and yet have a large surplus. In a technological sense, there is an economic problem. But economically, the problem is unchanged because the economic system is not based on needs. It is based on laws of demand and supply. It is want-driven. It is based on inequalities of wealth and income. It is subject to global trading regimes of inequalities of the nation-state system. Such a system does not and will not permit the removal of poverty, because one-half of the world lives on economic exploitation of the other half. But in this process, it also gets spiritually exploited by itself, implying thereby that it loses freedom.

Therefore, the problem of poverty and loss of human freedom are not separate from each other. In the short run, societies can ensure one at the cost of the other. But, in the long run, it is difficult to see how one can survive without the other. Obviously, the issues of poverty and freedom are subject to the structure of economic and political systems as well as of value parameters. Indeed, absence of freedom, a value parameter, is a kind of poverty par excellence.

Herbert Marcuse sharply stated this problem and he was only rephrasing Gandhi when he said that the welfare states succeeded only in “raising the standard of administrated living: below which there is no freedom but above which increase in the living standards may reduce “the use-value of freedom”. There is an economic and technological threshold that can act to exclude or impel the action
towards freedom. This is also the point at which the state bureaucracies and power elite can arrest material and intellectual growth. In simple words, poverty is a state of absence of need satisfaction which may arise from stimulation to wants and the state grabbing power by a small group.

Just as Gandhi did not believe in the concept of a pure economic man, he did not look upon the problem of poverty as a pure economic phenomenon. The society which left millions unemployed could not morally justify its economic system, no matter how high was its growth rate. Therefore, he fixed on full employment as the foundation stone of any rational and moral economic model. But neither morality nor rationality alone is enough for explaining the problem and finding a solution for it. All economic theories before Gandhi, and even after him, have been based on the concept of rationality. Both the extreme theories of pure laissez faire on the one hand and of the totalitarian planning on the other rested their case on the principle of rationality, according to which man is a calculating being who wants to optimise his utility. His rationality is subject either to the market principle or to the rational dictates of the planner. Gandhi believed that any model based on pure rationality may ultimately alleviate poverty but it will not eliminate exploitation. Therefore, some ethical principles have to be built into social and economic planning.

It is also because he did not permit economic parameters and their linkages to rest on any cetris perilus. For instance, in the neo-classic and Keynesian economic theories, poverty is attributed to absence of employment and low level of productivity, while other things remain the same. Marxists also add wealth and ownership of property as another basic parameter. Gandhi accepted these three parameters but found them inadequate. For instance, the pattern of production and consumption and the technology were two very important determinants
which the other theories assume as additive. In all other economic theories, technology is taken as a factor of productivity and nothing more. Mahatma Gandhi thought it as a factor which not only competed with labour but also competed with nature. Indeed, some technologies degraded and destroyed when competed with nature. Besides, when consumption takes a qualitative shift to consumerism, it ceases to be additive. It could play a negative role in generating psychological poverty. Another parameter is the rate of accumulation. A poor country does not have a high rate of accumulation of capital. But beyond a point, higher rate of accumulation may become an inevitable source of inequalities. Inflation, high interest rates, fiscal concessions for stimulating savings etc. all help to increase the saving rate but do so at the cost of the poor.

It is not uncommon to regard Gandhi as an enemy of science, technology and management. People thought and some still do that he wanted to banish machinery, to abolish all large-scale industry, to take people back to the villages, in short, to put the clock of history back. There is a semblance of truth in that notion; but it is exaggerated and deformed to such an extent as to constitute a caricature of what Gandhi stood for. Somebody said to Gandhi: “You are against machines in this machine age.” And he replied back: “To say that is to caricature my views. I am not against machinery as such, but I am totally against it when it masters us.”

It is clear that Gandhi was misunderstood. To a certain extent, he himself was to blame for it. He made extreme statements and later on proceeded to clarify what he had said. But his ideas were, and continue to be, important; and we owe it to ourselves to interpret them in the proper perspective. So, let us try to understand what Gandhi really stood for. We start with the question of machinery or high

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1 Harijan, 27-02-1937, p. 18.
technology. Gandhi would be prepared to accept machinery provided it was free of certain basic objections. Two of these objections may be noted immediately.

“Machinery has its place,” wrote Gandhi, “it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace necessary labour” Gandhi thought that machinery had an inherent tendency to displace labour; and this he disliked. For a country like India, where Gandhi noticed much under-employment and unemployment all around, he considered this especially objectionable. Economists might argue that machinery did not simply displace labour but also led to growth and employment by creating new possibilities for profitable investment. But Gandhi was more impressed by the tendency inherent in modern technology towards the adoption of more and more labour-saving methods of production.

Gandhi also noticed in industrialism a second characteristic which he deeply detested. Industrialism, on mass scale, leads to the exploitation of the country by the city. Industry, commerce and major financial institutions tend to be concentrated in the bigger urban centres. With that goes the centralisation of power, both economic and political. The cities impoverish the villages. This happens through the market mechanism and the system of competition that accompanies industrialism. “Industrialization on a mass scale,” said Gandhi, “will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the village as the problems of competition and marketing come in.”

We are familiar with theories of imperialism, which try to explain how the imperial nation or the metropolis exploits the colonies. For Gandhi, the whole scenario appeared in a different light. For him, it was not simply a question of one nation dominating over and exploiting...
another. It was rather a matter of town-dwellers of a dominant nation
and their counterparts elsewhere joining hands to exploit the village.
“Little do they (town-dwellers) know,” wrote Gandhi, “that their
miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they
do for the foreign exploiter.”\textsuperscript{4} Note the use of the phrase, “little do they
know.” It matters little whether they know or not, but the partnership
among exploiters grows as if by the force of a law, inherent in the kind
of society and economy that industrialism brings into existence. It
followed from what Gandhi said that, even if the imperial nation
withdrew, exploitation would continue, the cities draining away wealth
from the village, until the evolution of a new relationship between towns
and villages, and a technology appropriate to that new relationship.

The tendency of machinery to displace labour figures
prominently in Gandhian thought. Marx had something similar in his
system of thought. He spoke of the “rising organic composition of
capital”. The organic composition of capital has really reference to the
proportion in which capital invested in machinery is combined with
labour. Marx noticed that there is a persistent tendency to substitute
machinery for labour, thus raising the organic composition of capital.
But he thought of this ‘law’ as operating under capitalism. The capitalist
has a tendency to substitute machinery for labour, so as to reduce the
demand for labour and to prevent a rise in the level of wages. Gandhi
did not regard the operation of this ‘law’ to be confined to capitalism,
but thought that there was something in the very nature of high
technology which produced this tendency.

In our time, industrialism has been incarnated in alternative
social and economic systems, capitalism and socialism. Whatever its
form, it has some common characteristics derived from its base in high
technology. The new technology has vastly increased man’s power

\textsuperscript{4} Young India, 23-02-1922, p. 119.
over the physical world. Children of nature, men, now have an intoxicating sense of mastery over nature. This has, at the same time, created the idea, an illusion, that happiness can be indefinitely increased by an indefinite augmentation of our possession of material goods. We may change the ownership of the means of production but if these basic attitudes persist, then the roots of the evil of industrialism will also remain.

In the modern industrial society, there is a continuous attempt to abridge labour. It seems that the ideal state of high technology will be one in which automata will do all or most the necessary work and living human beings will have to do as little as possible. The basic idea is that labour is something unpleasant and the less of it there is to be done, the more we move towards an ideal state. Some socialists may say that this negative attitude towards labour is only due to the fact that workers have to perform labour under capitalists who own the means of production. But this is very far from whole truth.

The distaste of labour in an industrial society has indeed a material root, but it goes deeper than the system of ownership of the means of production. Adam Smith and the young Marx came much closer to the truth of the matter. Modern technology has given rise to division of labour to such an extent that each worker is concerned with a very small part of the whole work. The meaning of the whole work is not reflected in that minutely sub-divided work; hence there is no creative satisfaction in the work to be performed. The individual worker becomes a part of a mechanised system. This appears rational at one level, at the highest managerial level perhaps. But at the level of the individual worker, it robs the work of spontaneity, of creativity, of a human touch. This is the price that has to be paid for high technology, large-scale production and the kind of sub-division of labour that comes
along with that technology. Industry comes to be saddled with what appears like a soulless authority and labour becomes soul-killing.

Interestingly, this was very clearly noticed and recognised by Engels, Marx's closest companion. He wrote: “If man, by dint of his knowledge and inventive genius, has subdued the forces of nature, the latter avenge themselves upon him by subjecting him, in so far as he employs them, to a veritable despotism independent of all social organisation. Wanting to abolish in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself, to destroy the power-loom in order to return to the spinning wheel.”

Thus, it is somewhat superficial to suggest that the tendency to displace labour arises simply from the desire of the capitalist to substitute machine in replacement of labour in search of higher profit. What is equally central is that labour becomes distasteful and unsatisfying under high technology and the organisation of industry that constitutes its counterpart whatever the social system under which these are adopted. It might be thought that there should be no harm in the abridgement of labour, if hours of work are shortened for all concerned. Now, to say this, is really to accept that work is distasteful and then proceed to reduce it as far as possible. If there is no other way out, this may be the best course to take. But this still leaves the basic problem unsolved.

For the basic problem is not simply to reduce work, but to make work fulfilling. Let us take note of the positive value of labour. Gandhi would agree that dirty and distasteful labour should be reduced and, as far as possible, equally divided out among all. But he also speaks of “the necessity of physical labour.” To the hungry, labour is bread. But

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beyond that, labour, properly organised and properly performed, fulfills a deeper human purpose in a number of ways.

Labour is man’s way of forging a bond of solidarity with fellow humans. The point is not simply what we receive, but what we give. Gandhi quoted the Gita to explain that labour is a kind of yajana, sacrifice or an offering to humanity. There are ways of organising society, so that robots will be performing the yajana; but they do not need it for they have no souls to save. It is good for men to be able to perform labour and have the feeling that they are serving society. Beyond a point, a further reduction of labour does not contribute towards the enlargement of the humanity of man. Also, labour, appropriately organised, can keep man close to nature. Modern technology tends in the opposite direction, building the edifice of society where nature has no access and men try to overcome boredom through artificial and pleasurable stimuli. This is not Gandhi’s conception of the good life. Work should be one of the avenues of establishing harmony with nature.

The competitive spirit is supposed to be an adjunct of capitalism. In a sense it is. But, again, when we look deep into the matter we find its root in the industrial society created by modern technology. Supported by this technology, men have come to believe that progress lies in an indefinite multiplication of wants; and happiness lies in an endless gratification of these wants by material means. At the same time, work has come to be regarded as something to be avoided or minimized. Granted these postulates, a spirit of competition becomes inevitable. People will compete among themselves for the possession of more material goods as well as for avoidance of work. Thus industrialism, by producing the lust for material goods, also supports and strengthens the spirit of competition. The competitive spirit will
remain as long as men set their hearts on material goods of which the supply is necessarily limited.

With greed and competition as motive forces among men, even those professions which might otherwise offer the best avenues for the service of humanity get corrupted. Gandhi makes a fierce attack on lawyers and the medical profession. Lawyers ideally should try to secure justice and make peace. Instead, they develop an unnatural interest in promoting quarrels and in prolonging them.

Large-scale industry is not large simply on account of capitalism or the system of ownership of means of production. Technology itself is one of the chief determinants here. By an extension of the same argument, technology is one of the principal factors determining the degree of centralisation of power in society. Marxian law of concentration and centralisation of capital is well known. But socialist society resting on high technology tends equally to produce an over-centralised economy. It also produces a powerful bureaucracy for the exercise of centralised power. A highly centralised economic and political structure comes to be marked by a distinct hierarchy of positions. This, in turn, introduces a kind of fierce competition, as the highest positions are necessarily few while the aspirants are many. This then completes our picture of the modern industrial society. There are some differences, particularly in the distribution of wealth, which depend upon whether the system is capitalist or socialist. But modern technology has an inner logic of its own. Once it is accepted, it tends to produce a social system, called by whatever name, marked by a high degree of centralisation of power, a strong bureaucracy, a materialistic ethics and culture, and a strong competitive spirit expressed through a relentless struggle for the higher positions in the organisational structure of society. Gandhi believed that centralised society of this description can only rest on violence. A nonviolent
society has to be decentralised in form and its technological base has also to be appropriate to that form.

Gandhi had a step-by-step method of thinking, the steps leading from bottom upwards. This is particularly true of his thinking on social organisation and economic planning. One must begin with one’s immediate neighbourhood, which is a face-to-face community, a village, let us say. It is here that human problems, whether of poverty or sickness or lack of education, appear not as an abstraction but as something immediately felt and seen; and it is here that love of one’s neighbour and the good life begin. We have to find out first how much of the necessary productive activities can be planted and made to grow in the village.

Now, this is, in fact, a very moderate statement. If something can be equally well produced by the villages, it is surely better to produce it there. But we have to understand it with that full measure of sympathy for the village which naturally came to Gandhi. At present, cities have a comparative advantage in producing a great variety of things for extraneous reasons. The whole system of education and research favours the cities. The transport system has been so constructed that the cities are more advantageously placed. The credit system operates in favour of big industry. And so on. Gandhi wanted rural industrialisation. Before we can fairly and truly decide which productive activities or industries can develop well in the village, we have to correct this imbalance between infrastructural facilities enjoyed by towns and villages. Until this imbalances is corrected, it will only be fair to offer rural industries a countervailing subsidy in accordance with the same principles on which protection is granted to infant industries against foreign competition.

One mistake that many people, including some Gandhians, quite commonly make is to think too much in terms of spinning wheel.
The spinning wheel came into prominence during our national struggle because of some special circumstances. His basic idea was that agriculture alone could not produce a healthy and balanced rural economy, but a supplementary industry was essential. "I have not contemplated, much less advised, the abandonment of a single healthy, life-giving industrial activity for the sake of hand-spinning," said Gandhi.6

Once this is fully understood, it must be admitted that there is still an important range of productive activities which cannot be placed within the village: they have to be organised in towns or central places at various levels. The point may be clarified with the help of a parallelism. It is important to organise primary education and appropriate kinds of vocational training in the villages. But it will be a waste of resources to try to set up a college in every village, nor can we have a university in every district without waste of funds and a deplorable lowering of socially necessary standards. The same is true of industries, some of which have to be centralised at the district level and some at a national level. Gandhi was suspicious of all efforts at centralisation, but he was realistic enough to admit the necessity of a minimum degree of centralisation. In 1941, while explaining his own conception of industrialisation, Gandhi said: "Heavy industries will necessarily be least part of the vast national activity in the village."7 Evidently, Gandhi wanted to move in the direction of rural industries much more than many of us are prepared for. But it will be doing him an injustice to suggest that he ruled out heavy industry altogether. He noticed that the movement was all in favour of large industry. He decided to throw his weight against it. He wanted research and new

6 Young India, 27-05-1926, p. 189
7 Ganguli, B. N., Gandhi's Social Philosophy (Delhi: National Gandhi Museum), 1999, p. 150.
thinking, which is heavily weighted today in favour of big industry, to be directed towards the possibilities of rural industrialisation. But he was a man of the world. He had some idea of what was within the realm of possibility. He knew that our objectives and ideals had to be related to definite time-horizons. The wider our time-horizon the more are we free to soar on the wings of our absolute ideas. In the short term, we have to make compromises; but these should be so made that we do not entirely lose sight of our far-off objectives.

What about the question of ownership? Ideally speaking, Gandhi was opposed to private ownership in the means of production and exploitation of man by man, for the simple reason that this was not consistent with non-violence. But he had also deep misgivings about the ownership. The state, he thought was soulless machinery, and he did not have much trust in it. Steering clear of private ownership and state ownership he preferred cooperation. "As far as possible," he wrote, "Every activity will be conducted on the cooperative basis". That was his picture of village Swaraj. However, he had to make concessions to practical realities. So, he was prepared to give approval to state ownership in a limited way. Thus he said with reference to certain industries: "I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalised or state-controlled." But the main thrust of his argument on such questions was in the direction of continuous experimentation for decentralisation. He also knew that in such matters the institutional form was not all that mattered, rather the spirit in which these institutions were worked was important. He, therefore, stressed all the time the need for putting a limit on one's material wants. If this was not done, a spirit of competition and possessiveness took hold and corrupted society.

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8 Young India, 13-11-1924, p. 378.
The theory of “trusteeship” has come in for a lot of controversy. For Gandhi, it was an extension of the idea of non-possession. He wanted to apply that idea to special situation. Granted that we want the abolition of private ownership, how do we move in that direction? Expropriation achieved through violence will create problems, as things born in violence tend to perpetuate violence. After expropriation, the property in question will have to be put in the hands of somebody for its proper management. So why not ask the present proprietor to manage that same property as a trust on behalf of society? Trust so reposed may be returned. In any case, the society may lay down certain conditions on which the trustee will be obliged to function. As Jai Narain Sharma, pointed out Gandhi’s concept of trusteeship “does not recognise any right of private ownership of property except so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.”\(^9\) If the trustee breaks the conditions so stipulated, the remedy may lie in Satyagraha, which is Gandhi’s chief instrument against all injustice. If Satyagraha and trusteeship did not achieve the desired results, Gandhi foresaw a violent revolution as the outcome. The concept of trusteeship was designed as an alternative to both private ownership and monopoly of power by a soulless state machinery.

**Nonviolent Management**

A by-product of the post-industrial revolution has been the development of a new mode of organizational management. Building on earlier twentieth century efforts to make management a science, the current approach further rationalizes the behaviour of those chosen to run organizations. Shorris argues that this new corporate form of

organization has developed totalitarian characteristics. The organization defines happiness for its members and controls them accordingly.\(^\text{10}\) Happiness in the market place has been defined as the acquisition of material products. Each organization spells out the route to obtaining these products, and thereby happiness. The aspiring person is haunted by rewards of increased status and wealth, while simultaneously instilled with the fear of being "out of place" or "not with it".

Management science is now applied in virtually all societal institutions in industrialized countries, from military organizations to social welfare organizations.

These "new managers" are young and eager, in search of power and prestige within their organizational homes. Most have been trained along similar lines. They are equipped with a value-orientation consistent with the ideology of the large organization; a knowledge of computer-based information systems, and skills in a variety of accounting management techniques (e.g., zero-based budgeting, cost accounting, management by objectives, etc.).

Each manager is socialized to accept a common set of organizational goals: (i) to optimize production; (ii) to improve efficiency; and (iii) to maximize profits. In this context, the contemporary large organization, albeit public or private, becomes in our judgement, violent in its operation; and those who manage such organizations practise a form of violent management".

Is it fair to charge the large modern corporation with being inherently violent? By violent, we mean a condition wherein the means used to accomplish organizational goals exploit or in some way cause

harm to humankind over and above any positive contribution they may make.

For the past fifty-five years, the world has witnessed the growth of a post-industrial (high technology) corporate revolution. These corporate giants often superseded the nation-state in economic power and political influence, and serve as the model or smaller organizations in industrialized societies. Yet, world-wide peace and prosperity seem as remote today as before the corporate evolution began. Despite this, elites of most societies welcome the new organizational trend. They desire the material prosperity it promises, and openly accept the organizational means required to achieve it. Owners of high technology developments are happy with the approach, since they define happiness in terms of profits and power, which the high technology industrial approach brings.

Politicians accept the new approach because it affirms their status as power brokers between the state and the private sector. Scientists and managers embrace the approach because it vindicates their personal educational investment. It wins them entry to a corporate world of power, prestige and position. Management literature extols the virtues of the mega-corporation (e.g., In Search of Excellence); supplies endless volumes on managerial control and “techniques”; and offers shortcuts to employee management (e.g., The One Minute Manager). It is silent on the issue of organizational violence, and the part the new managers may play in the violence.

How does the current organizational model display tendencies toward violence? Six areas of potential organizational violence may be identified:

1. The products may be violent
2. The mode of distributing profits, or goods and services, may be violent.
The use of environment and natural resources may be violent.
The use of human labour may be violent.
The use of consumers may be violent.
The tension among competitors (local, national, multinational) may lead to violence.

Violent Products

A large share of economic activity in developed economies is related to weaponry. High technology products include carefully crafted tools that kill. Such tools include traditional weapons such as bombers and bullets. More exotic tools, particularly tools that kill en masse, including missiles, robotic rockets controlled by cameras, and lasers are now available. Some argue that these tools are peace-producing, since they are sold for military détente or defence. A body count in the Middle-East or Central America over the past decade exposes the absurdity of such an assertion. Products that kill are in great demand. They yield exceptionally high profits. During the past decade, nations enjoying the greatest increase in per capita income have been “munitions makers”. Nations which have experienced the largest reduction in per capita income, have been “munitions buyers”.

Other products of the post-industrial system, while not expressly designed to do violence, nonetheless become instruments of violence. The auto has become a major killer on the world’s highways. At times, killing with immediacy (as in a head-on collision), autos also kill insidiously, with toxic poisons from their exhausts.

Scientifically-tested drugs designed to cure, may at times kill or maim. Side-effects may not be discovered or disclosed in the rush to
enter the market. Food “doctored” to look good over the counter sales may provide more carcinogens than calories.

Violent Distribution

Industrialization has not brought peace to the world. Material productivity and material wealth have been its principal achievements. Competitiveness and material wealth have been its principal achievements. Competition for scarce resources and scarce markets has turned nation-states into adversaries. Each seeks to gain a competitive economic advantage.

After three centuries of industrialization and several decades of post-industrialization, it is apparent that an increase in the world’s material productivity does not necessarily translate into a higher standard of living for all people. On the contrary, some people are poorer as a result of world economic growth than they were before it began.

Who wins and who loses under the new high technology economy is an interesting question. Obviously, the North wins over the South, since the North monopolizes technology. Educated people, basic to the needs of a high technology society, win over the uneducated. The uneducated have little value as either investors, producers or consumers in a machine-dominated society. Economic indicators clearly show the rich become richer and the poor become poorer under conditions of modern development.
Violence to the Environment

Violence to the environment is, perhaps, the most evident form of violence and needs the least elaboration. The air, earth, and water have been abused and damaged by the industrial process.

The appetite for more material goods taxes both non-renewable, as well as the renewable resource, of our planet. The modern industrial system has no language to comprehend the meaning of “use no more than you need”. To the contrary, “need” is defined precisely as anything you do not already possess. The proliferation of needs parallels the advent of each new mass produced product.11

Violence to Labour

With the Industrial Revolution, we witnessed the struggle between owners of production and labour. Marx viewed this struggle as a natural dialectic between the opposing interests of two groups. Today, it is no longer a conflict over working conditions and wages, but a struggle among labourers whether a person will work at all.

Gandhi reveals the violence underlying the development of “labour saving” machinery: “Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of men.”12

Labour no longer competes with available supply of workers as part of free enterprise. It now competes with non-human technology, which has few limits. To industry, the efficiency of labour must be

12 Young India, 13-11-1924, p. 378.
slightly better than the machine. And yet, with each new advancement in technology, velocity increases, and labour is left panting in the dust.

Management, consequently, may rule labour as it chooses. Management is secure in the knowledge that a drop in production—or strike activity—may be met with a technological solution. Under such conditions, labour is easily viewed as an expendable unit, and no more than another cost of production. Labour also loses its countervailing force of the strike. Labour is manipulated as are the other units of production, in the interest optimizing profits.

### Violence to Consumer

Consumers today make few real market choices. Their wants are media-induced and manipulated as they make market decisions. People are trained to buy almost anything. Rather than fulfilling the minimal needs of the consumer, the organization uses the consumer to accomplish its own ends of growth and profit. The scale and complexity of the modern corporation makes it difficult for a consumer to register a grievance that will affect product demand or supply. Consumer choice is limited by monopolistic control of selected product areas. Many products are superfluous, adding little substance or quality to life. Material goods are sold as bits of the elusive super product called happiness. To ensure that the desire for happiness remains strong, technology makes yesterday’s purchase obsolete in the light of newer, bigger or better products. Ironically, the cost of advertising often is more than the cost of a product.
Violence Through Competition

Today, a score of industrial giants compete for control of the world’s markets. Governments that are home to these giants directly subsidize their activities to gain a favourable balance of trade.

Third World nations borrow themselves into impossible debt to modernize production capacities and defence systems, and to satisfy rising consumer expectations. The Third World now operates in a state of “fiscal feudalism,” buying only at the company store of the industrial giants where they have credit.

Within these complex relationships between and among nations lies conflict. As conflict between nations increases, munition makers watch their markets grow. If conflict recedes and nations return to consumer consumption, the markets grow again. It is a win-win situation for industrial powers. Maintaining a competitive edge over other suppliers requires careful cultivation of political alliances and use of economic threats. Covert para-militaristic actions may be taken to protect economic interests or advantage.

We have attempted to show the inherent tendencies for violence present in the current large-scale organizational arrangement. Although our argument used the industrial corporation, the same penchant for violence can be found in other bureaucratic organizations (e.g., education, welfare government).

Social services in the United States are funded and delivered primarily through some type of public or private social agency. The ideological base of a social agency is altruistic humanism. This base emphasizes the worth and dignity of the individual. It emphasizes personal accomplishment, growth and satisfaction. But the structural base of the social agency is corporate capitalism. This base emphasizes efficiency, and effectiveness. It stresses hierarchical
structure, cost accounting and job specialization. Through competition for funding that grows ever scarcer and comes increasingly with bureaucratic “strings” attached, violence is done to those whom the agency purportedly serves.

**Toward A Theory Of Non-violent Management**

In developing a theory of nonviolent management based on Gandhian thought, we draw heavily on Gandhi’s concept of Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya is translated from Sanskrit as “the welfare of all”. This concept, along with Satyagraha or “truth through non-violence”, forms the cornerstone of Gandhi’s personal and political philosophy.

Detlef Kantowsky delineates five values associated with Sarvodaya: material simplicity; personal growth; human scale; self-determination; and ecological awareness. We will use these values to contrast non-violent management with scientific management.13

**Material Simplicity**

The root of “administration” means to administer or to serve. It was in this spirit that Gandhi conducted his administrative life. The contrast between Gandhi’s leadership style and the modern corporate management present an exercise in extremes. To Gandhi, material symbols of organizational power were neither important nor desirable. He felt them to be dangerous and corrupting. He believed a leader should be characterized by personal virtue and moral authority, rather than externalities of power. A leader was a servant to the people, not their “manager”.

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Perhaps nowhere more than in dress do we find Gandhi's material simplicity so well expressed. His personal attire consisted of his Khadi loincloth, which he wore as a badge of simplicity and humility. He dressed like common people to affirm he was one among equals. His office was equally simple. The floor of his Ashram served as the setting for his administrative work. His desk rose barely 10 inches off the floor. Few other furnishings were required.

How unlike the style of the corporate executive or middle manager. The tailored suit, ostentatious office-setting, expensive furnishings even the executive toilets are coveted as symbols of place and power in the organization. Perks and privileges are welcomed and worn conspicuously by the modern manager.

Gandhi rejected the notion that privilege should follow power in the administrative leader. He believed leadership was reflected in willingness to sacrifice. This represented a high stage of moral development. Gandhi chose second-class train travel from the conviction that he should have no comforts greater than those around him. How different from the executive who feels it is a right to travel first-class.

Management geared to economic ends produces a management style that stresses economic values - material symbols of power and authority. The material excess of corporate management encourages managers to fight and compete among themselves for access to material power symbols. A first step toward developing nonviolence is to incorporate the principle of material simplicity into management style. The image need not be austerity, but simplicity; the symbols not of power and privilege, but humility and service.
Personal Growth

Gandhi believed organizations and institutions exist to promote personal development of the individual. The market system, the political system, religious institutions and the family - were essentially institutional arrangements to further the purpose of human enrichment. Gandhi states of political institutions:

While the organization shall produce to the satisfaction of the natural requirements of every member of society, material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at healthy living and the moral and intellectual development of the individual.\(^{14}\)

The concept of a human development purpose for all organizations is in marked contrast to economic ends, to which the modern manager subscribes. The new managers are largely responsible for increasing productivity, efficiency and profits (or their equivalent) for the organization. They accomplish this by combined management of technology and people.

As a consequence, human development is subordinated to economic productivity. Workers become units of production and customers units of consumption. As Gandhi dramatically states: The economics that disregard moral and sentimental considerations are like wag works that being life-like, still lack the life of living flesh.\(^{15}\)

Failing to acknowledge human development as the ultimate goal, an organization greatly increases the opportunities for doing violence to people through management decisions. If we accept human development as the final purpose of an organization, it is necessary to offer managers an appropriate technology for developing human beings, as they now have for developing products. Such orientation

\(^{14}\) Quoted in Walz Thomas, op. cit., p. 763.
\(^{15}\) Harijan, 09-10-1937, p. 292.
and skills are obviously lacking in today’s management education and training. Gandhi addresses this issue with his remark:

“Modern (management) education tends to turn our eyes away from the spirit. The possibilities of soul force therefore do not appear to us and our eyes are consequently riveted on the evanescent, transitory, material force. Surely this is the very limit of dull unimaginativeness.”

**Human Scale**

Part of the concept of Sarvodaya is that organizations must be limited in scope and scale. Schumacher, a protégé of Gandhi, pointed to the need for small scale production and organization to create a non-violent society. A theory of non-violent management must include the redesign of organizations to “human scale”. Business organizations necessarily produce problems that tend toward violence.

In the large organization, public or private, ethical issues often get lost. Too much is at stake economically to face human and moral factors that may impinge on the behaviour of the organization. Such issues are over-shadowed by productivity goals, efficiency ratings or profit margins. Macro decisions are made against the so-called “bottom-line”, where individuals are rarely visible. Individuals easily become just members of a category of employees.

Personal self-realization almost never enters into the relationship of individual to the organisation. Such a consideration as part of the corporate world would be incomprehensible to most managers, who believe people freely sell labour, and management is free to use labour as they see fit. Employment is viewed as just another

16 Walz, Thomas, op. cit.
economic exchange. Managing for human scale means individualizing not just the experiences of those employed by the organization, but those served by it. It requires a healthy social milieu in which people can comfortably and safely work and in which they can also grow as people. Gandhi’s feelings about human scale as a factor in organizational structure grew out of his concern for democratic participation and control by individuals over their organization. Theoretically, in an organization of a small size, individuals should have greater input into organizational decisions, and greater control over their destinies within the organization. Institutions, Gandhi felt, should be of and for the people, even when profit-oriented.

Gandhi accepted the right of organizations to seek profit. But he also held it to be their moral duty to act as trustees, not owners of profits, and to use them for the betterment of humankind. Many individuals feel alien to their organization, and excluded from decision-making process. This form of anomaly creates conditions for violence. Too much organizational behaviour is de-personalized, stripped of moral responsibility or consequence. Personnel in an organization can be easily cut back when those removed and those doing the “cutting” remain faceless. Tears may be shed with loss of a job, but they are shed privately. In the corporate world, notification of layoff or dismissal may be little more than a mimeographed memo stating the decision which accompanies the final pay cheques. The decision is de-personalized, justified principally on economic grounds. No moral defence is necessary. This type of action is violent, and managers who carry it out, practise violent management. Practice of non-violent management, while not assured in a human scale setting, has its greatest hope in such an arrangement.
Self-determination

A significant aspect of Gandhi’s concept of Sarvodaya includes individual self-determination. Gandhi clearly felt organizations exist for the individual, and not vice versa. Resulting from his belief in individual self-determination, Gandhi believed an individual could be trusted to develop and live by certain standards of moral conduct.

His expectations seemed to produce remarkable results. His leadership came not from positional authority or physical power. It came through his respect for the dignity of the individual, and his belief in individual self-determination. Whether as citizens of a nation-state or members of a private firm, an individuals’ self-determination should not be compromised. Gandhi would have been insulted by the corporate organization’s pre-occupation with performance accountability, and the resources wasted by its enforcement. Gandhi would have viewed the problem as one of organizational structure, not individual motivation. Gandhi respected work, including physical labour. It was through work that individual discipline and character-building were facilitated.

Administration of an organization of self-determining individual is quite different from managing people as units of production. Respect for the self-determining nature of the individuals by managers is a necessary component in the practice of non-violent management.

In contrast to the corporate belief that “bigger is better” and “more is better,” Gandhi espoused the philosophy of “less is more”. He felt it important that needs, not wants, be met. In his words: “If I take anything that I do not need for my immediate use and keep it, I thieve it from somebody else”. Beyond this, Gandhi desired to reduce needs themselves to a minimum.¹⁸

In his own life, Gandhi regarded such behavior as evidence of growing moral discipline. In his perception of market institutions, Gandhi felt that:

“the chief aim of socio-economic organization should not be the multiplicity of wants and the accumulation of comforts/luxuries, although a minimum standard of living should be assured to all human beings.”19

Fulfillment of such ethics would greatly reduce pressure on environmental resources and lessen the frequency of environmental damage. More moderate exploitation of world resources would also lessen the potential for violence among nation-states competing for scarce resources. Arguing for less exploitation and violence to nature, Gandhi, in effect, promotes less violence among people. This explains why environmentalists and peace advocates feel akin to one another.

Practice of non-violent management requires a manager to practise efficiency through propitious use of resources, not for profit, but for the sake of pace and the development of humankind.

The modern corporate organization, characterized by size, ownership pattern, and scientific management style is a widely expanding development. Virtually institutions are organized according to the principles of scientific management. This management model is designed to achieve material productivity - with little regard for associated human or environmental costs. We contend that this organizational style is violent, and that those who guide such organizations practise a form of violent management.

A new philosophy of non-violent management needs to be introduced into the education of future administrators. This training should include preparation in human development, as it now trains managers in the technologies of product development.

19 Ibid.
We contrasted Gandhi’s administrative behaviour with the violence prone nature and administrative lifestyles of executive and corporate managers today. Using Gandhi’s concept of Sarvodaya and the five values associated with it, we developed action steps for a non-violent approach to management.

These included the notion of human development as the foremost goal of social organizations; the imperative of reorganizing social institutions at human scale; the moral value placed on material simplicity within organizational life; unqualified importance placed on respecting and building on the self-determining nature of the individual in organizational life; and finally, the practice of resource conservation and non-exploitation. Implementing these values would help assure nonviolent management practice.