CHAPTER VIII
GANDHIAN PRAXIS - II
GANDHIAN TECHNIQUE OF CHANGE: RESISTANCE AND RECONSTRUCTION

In the last chapter we have examined the nature and organization of the new society - Sarvodaya - of Gandhi's vision, and in this chapter we will discuss the technique that Gandhi evolved to translate that vision into practice. As is well-known, every prophet is dissatisfied with the way of the world and wants to create a new man and a new world. And Gandhi's mission in life was nothing different. As a great leader, Gandhi dreamed great dreams. But, as Pearl S. Buck has pointed out for a potential leader mere dreaming is not enough (1). Whether he can fulfil the dream and the extent to which he can fulfil it determines the quality of his leadership. Pearl S. Buck calls this quality genius abetted by talent (2). The potential leader needs not only genius, i.e., the flair for vision, conceptual thought etc., but also talent for its practical expression. Otherwise he would fail as a leader. According to Pearl S. Buck, Gandhi possessed both genius and talent - the art and the craft of leadership - in abundance (3). Gandhi's dreams were solid, anchored firmly to the needs of his people. Also, he developed a comprehensive technique fully in tune with the basic premises of his vision to translate this vision into reality.

Article 1
Need for a Comprehensive Technique of Change

A technique of change or revolution must fulfil at least two important conditions to be comprehensive. (1) it must be an effective weapon for fighting and eradicating the existing evils in society, and (2) it must be capable of paving the way for the creation of a new order which will be totally free
from the evils and shortcomings of the social order that it tries to transform or replace. Gandhi saw that the technique of change experimented in different parts of the world till his times suffered from certain grave limitations, the most perilous of which was that they were either steeped in violence or they justified and rationalised the use of violence. According to Gandhi, the emphasis laid on the element of coercive force and violence in the technique of revolution was due to a basically wrong perception of human nature. Human nature, according to the prophets of violent revolutions, is essentially baneful which cannot be radically altered but can be manipulated and at best, controlled. In order to check and control the bellicose nature of man, they argue, there is nothing wrong in resorting to violence. There are others, the Marxists for example, who justify the use of violence on the ground that temporary suffering is a small price one has to pay for ushering in a millennium of greater freedom and peace.

Gandhi, on the contrary believed that human nature, though a mixture of good and evil, is essentially good and that man is never irredeemable. Man has a lower and a higher self. Strong are the pulls and pressures of the lower self, but it is possible for man to overcome them and liberate himself from the framework of the empirical or lower self through a process of self-discipline and attain self-transformation and self-illumination. Gandhi, therefore, insisted that the technique of change or revolution must be in consonance with this perception of the perfectibility of human nature and its inherent evolutionary urge for self-illumination and self-realization.

The violence and other evils, both concealed and manifest, present in the social order which legitimise the use of violence as a technique of change, are due to the primacy
given to the empirical self and its demands. If the empirical self is considered as the true self (as people are made to believe), it logically follows that priority should be given to the satisfaction of the demands of this (lower) self. So in all civilizations which consider the lower or empirical self as the true self the emphasis falls chiefly on the material or physical aspects of life. This, according to Gandhi, is the chief drawback of the Western civilization. Any society, like the Western industrial society, that emphasises physical comforts as the goal to be sought for in life naturally falls an easy victim to what Gandhi calls 'brute force' and eventually institutionalises violence in the entire structure of society. The existence of systemic or structural violence so often identified as the raison d'être of counter-violence, thus, is the product of a wrong conception of man which perceives the empirical self as the true self and therefore, gives primacy to the satisfaction of its requirements.

A shift in the emphasis from the lower to the higher self of the human individual is the point of departure for Gandhi in his pursuit of a new social order and the higher goals of life. The vision of a new social order and the technique for translating that vision splendid into reality must be rooted in this perception, believed Gandhi. So a new revolution i.e., the attempt to radically transform society or an entire civilization founded on violence and exploitation, must be based on forces that would effectively countervail the forces that sustain it. Gandhi, therefore, pits soul force or love-force that corresponds to the higher self against brute force i.e., the forces of violence and exploitation (that correspond to the lower self).

The central message of Hind Swaraj as Gandhi formulated it in 1921, suits this context very well. "It
teaches the gospel of love in place that of hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul-force against brute-force. . . . " (4). And the message of Hind Swaraj as formulated above is nothing but the message of Satyagraha and it is perfectly in tune with his metaphysical presuppositions, his view of human nature and his vision of the ultimate purpose of life. And we shall see from the following exploration that Satyagraha, the Gandhian technique of revolution as it combines the forces of resistance and reconstruction, fulfils the two major criteria of a comprehensive technique of revolution and thus serves as an effective weapon to fight and remove the social evils and injustices and a means for transforming the existing exploitative social order into a non-violent and egalitarian one.

**Article 2**

**Satyagraha**

Satyagraha (5) has generally been acclaimed as the most revolutionary contribution of Gandhi to political thought and action. Dr. Rammanohar Lohia lauds it as Gandhi’s "gift to mankind" (6). Gandhi did not claim to have worked out a final or finished theory of Satyagraha. On the other hand, he made it clear that as the principles of Satyagraha constitute a gradual evolution, Satyagraha is a science in the making. "I have no set theory to go by", says Gandhi. "I have not worked out the science of satyagraha in its entirety. I am still groping. . . ." (7). Later also he repeated the same position: "I am myself daily growing in the knowledge of Satyagraha. I have no text book to consult in time of need. . . . satyagraha as conceived by me is a science in the making" (8).
VIII. 2. 1. A comprehensive concept

In spite of this admission of no-finality, we can see that Satyagraha, to the extent Gandhi developed it, through many a private and public experiment, is a comprehensive concept like Sarvodaya. If Sarvodaya incorporates his vision of a new and transformed social order, Satyagraha provides the means or technique for translating that vision into reality.

Satyagraha literally means "holding on to Truth" or "insistence on Truth". And adhering to truth, according to Gandhi, means being truthful in thought, word and deed (9). But as a concept, Satyagraha connotes non-violent and peaceful adherence to truth. Truth, for Gandhi, is God or the Ultimate Reality which manifests itself through the cohesive force of love or non-violence. Gandhi, therefore, insists that one's pursuit of Truth must be through non-violent means. In fact, there is nothing new or revolutionary about Gandhi's insistence on non-violence as the rule of private morality or personal conduct. This is obviously the common heritage of all great religions of the world. What is unique about Gandhi's emphasis on the non-violent adherence to truth is, of course, the way he applied it to life and its problems.

It is not enough that truth and non-violence are practised as personal virtues, according to Gandhi. For the sages and seers of yore the practice of truth and non-violence at the personal level was good enough as they believed that it would lead the individual to moksha or salvation. But for Gandhi even self-realization is not attainable by scrupulously upholding these values in one's private life. Life is a complex of good and evil and evil encircles one like the coils of a snake (to use Gandhi's favourite imagery) and therefore, it is incumbent upon man to confront and resist evil and overcome it in order to clear the paths to self-realization. So, in the Gandhian framework, what is more crucial than the personal
sadhana of truth and ahimsa is their praxis, their social and political application. Satyagraha, thus, reflects the deontic logic of Gandhi's metaphysical conceptions (10). In fact, the most unique contribution of Gandhi lies in the way he developed truth and non-violence into an infallible technique of social change which can be used both for removing the existing evils from society and for ushering in a new order free from all the ills that plague the present social order. Thus, Satyagraha is the application of 'truth-force' or 'soul-force' towards the promotion of social reform and social welfare. "These two dimensions of satyagraha are indivisible aspects of a single standpoint, for truth-force is a ceaseless witness to justice and its transcendental and immanent implications, and it must resist injustice whenever and wherever it occurs" (11).

VIII. 2. 2. Why Non-violence?

As a result of his repeated experiments in social reform and political action Gandhi came to the conclusion that if applied properly non-violence is an infallible weapon to achieve the twin aims of the removal of social evils and the realization of social transformation. Gandhi's insistence on non-violence has the support of strong reasons behind it. As he believed in the basic unity and oneness of all life, injury or violence to 'the other' is ultimately injury to oneself and so violence is self-defeating and have to be a abjured. Gandhi knew that there is no finality or infallibility about the truth as perceived by one person and therefore, he has no right to thrust it upon others. As the instruments of cognition are imperfect as they suffer from certain inherent limitations, it is not given to man to have the correct perception of truth. So, what appears to be truth to the one may appear to be untruth or error to the other (12). Therefore, one must be prepared to take up upon oneself any
But this condemnation does not necessarily put us into the paradox of vicious circle. "Our existential *himsa* has not taken away our freedom to follow the ideal *ahimsa*. For in the depth of our existence we are always free, and the dialectic of *himsa* and *ahimsa* is always open there..." (16). Gandhi is of the view that by resorting to violence under whatever compulsions it might be, we will be legitimising and further strengthening the institutionalisation of violence. In order to dissolve the paradox of violence, Gandhi, therefore, prescribes the practice of non-violence not merely as the basis of personal conduct but as a means we employ to transform the existing violence-ridden social order into a non-violent, non-exploitative one. And as D.P. Chattopadhyaya rightly concludes, any other moral way of dissolving the paradox (of violence) is yet unknown (17). Thus, non-violence becomes our supreme duty.

Convinced as Gandhi was about the utter futility of violence, equally deep was his faith in the efficacy and infallibility of the power of active non-violence in resolving conflicts and in bringing about social transformation. "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man", wrote Gandhi (18). He said subsequently:

I have been practising with scientific precision non-violence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life, domestic institutional, economic and political. I know of no single case in which I have failed. Where it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfections... (19).

As non-violence for Gandhi means not merely non-injury, but active love and the positive will to sacrifice oneself for the sake of others, the use of non-violence for the redressal of grievances and the correction of mistakes will not normally provoke any unfavourable or undesirable adverse reactions in
the adversary. Under the moral pressure of non-violence one is more likely to introspect and change his position than if he were threatened by the weapon of violence. The purer the motive of the votary of ahimsa, and progressively subtler the steps in the process of its application, non-violence would bring about changes of a permanent nature in the attitudes and behavioural patterns of even aggressive persons. If what we want to achieve is a change of heart, a voluntary conversion as far as possible, then non-violent methods are indisputably the most efficacious (20).

Moreover, in life man is placed in the midst of constructive and destructive forces. "He is placed between life and death, between love and hatred, between peace and war" (21). As man is not capable of creating life, he has no right to take any either. And, therefore, it is the bounden duty of man to range himself on the side of construction, life and love and not on the side of destruction, death and hatred. Insistence on non-violence, on its negative and positive dimensions, is the only way open to man to align himself on the side of the positive force of life. That is why Gandhi repeatedly reminded us that non-violence is man's supreme duty.

VIII. 2. 3. Certain misconceptions clarified

a) Not inaction

It has to be made clear at this juncture that for Gandhi, ahimsa is not an apology for inaction or an escape from confronting conflicts, as some critics of satyagraha have laboured hard to establish (22). A satyagrahi, as a seeker after truth, can ill afford to compromise with untruth or evil and therefore, wherever and whenever he comes across untruth in any shape or form — injustice, exploitation, violence, open or concealed — he resists it with all the might he can command. He never fights shy of uncovering and exposing conflicts. Satyagraha is a method of conflict-resolution and not conflict-
insulation and in order to resolve a conflict one has to confront it first and take it by the forelock. In fact, Gandhi had displayed almost microscopic accuracy in detecting conflicts, be it covert or deliberately concealed and thus invisible to the ordinary eyes, and has shown consummate skill in exposing them to the public, including the victims and the perpetrators thereof. Gandhi's life bears ample testimony to this; recall the episode at the Pietre Maritzberg railway station, the reaction to the Asiatic Registration Act of South Africa, or the Rowlatt Act or the Salt tax. Instances can be multiplied. All these show that as a true Satyagrahi, Gandhi did not run away from confronting and resolving conflicts. On the contrary, he faced them squarely and by a prudent use of the non-violent technique resolved them to the best advantage of all concerned. That a satyagrahi cannot but resist injustice and evil wherever and whenever it occurs is, thus, clear from the life and work of Gandhi. "My soul refuses to be satisfied so long as it is a helpless witness of a single wrong or a single misery", said Gandhi (23). Therefore, he considered Satyagraha his prerogative and birth right (24).

b). Not passive resistance

During the early phase of the non-violent resistance of the Indians of South Africa, Gandhi himself used the expression, 'passive resistance' in the sense of satyagraha and it has resulted in creating some confusion and misunderstanding, whose hang-over still lingers on with some simple souls. Gandhi had tried to clear this misunderstanding as early as the South African struggle in Germistone (25), and ever since he repeatedly emphasised the difference between passive resistance and his variety of non-violence.

Passive resistance is a misnomer for non-violent resistance. It is much more active than violent resistance. It is direct, conscious, but three-fourth invisible and only one-fourth visible. In its visibility it appears ineffective, but it is really,
intensely active and more effective in ultimate result" (26).

Passive resistance is a weapon of the weak whereas satyagraha can be practised only by the bravest (27).

Gandhi draws a distinction between the non-violence of the weak, non-violence of the brave and non-violence of the coward. Gandhi writes:

The doctrine of non-violence is not for the weak and the cowardly, it is meant for the brave and the strong. The bravest man allows himself to be killed without killing. And he desists from killing or injuring because he knows that it is wrong to injure (28).

The non-violence practised as mere expediency or policy is what Gandhi means by the non-violence of the weak. Non-violence and weakness was a contradiction in terms for Gandhi (29). The passive non-violence of the coward and the effeminate is no non-violence. Cowardice, he said, is wholly inconsistent with non-violence. That Gandhi detested cowardice more than violence is borne out by many a strong condemnation of cowardice by him (31). For example, he says:

Cowardice is impotence worse than violence. The coward desires revenge, but being afraid to die, he looks to others, may be the government of the day, to do the work of defence for him. A coward is less than a man. He does not deserve to be a member of a society of men and women (32).

Preaching non-violence to a coward, according to Gandhi, was like tempting a blind man to enjoy beautiful scenery. His condemnation of cowardice is uncompromising because he believed that there is hope for a violent man turning non-violent some day but there is none for a coward (33). Passive resistance for Gandhi is the expression of the non-violence of the weak and the coward and therefore, he coined the word satyagraha chiefly to distinguish the superior and brave use of non-violent resistance from passive resistance. Thus it is clear that in addition to love, complete fearlessness and a sense of human dignity forms the basis of non-violence (34).
VIII. 2. 4. Basic premises and principles.

A brief consideration of the basic premises and principles of satyagraha is called for here. As Gandhi explained:

Satyagraha is literally holding on to Truth and it means, therefore, Truth-force. Truth is soul or spirit. It is, therefore, known as soul-force. It excludes the use of violence because man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth and, therefore, not competent to punish (35).

As we already saw, it is based on the intuitive perception of the oneness of all life and seeks to extend the law of love, self-suffering and self-sacrifice from the level of personal and domestic life to that of groups and communities. Gandhian ahimsa reaches out in concentric circles of friendship where the intimate relationships of family life are extended to neighbours, the citizens of the state and finally to all mankind (36). Rooted in the mystical experience of the oneness of life, Gandhian ahimsa, as the noblest expression of the purest love, becomes redemptive suffering.

The basic assumption of satyagraha is that human nature is essentially spiritual, rational and good. It naturally follows therefore, that it is bound to respond to spiritual and rational appeal. It also holds that temporary aberrations of brother-humans would pass away if the right attitude namely, of love and suffering is adopted (37). In other words, a satyagrahi proceeds on the assumption that, as human nature is basically good and at its deepest layers consists of the noblest feelings, if properly appealed to it will respond positively. A satyagrahi cannot condemn any one as totally irredeemable - whether he be a Lucifer, Hitler or Stalin. On the other hand, "he separates the evil from the evil-doer and while trying to eradicate evil, tries to save the evil-doer by making him cognizant of the evil..." (38).

Gandhi’s own words aptly summerises the assumptions:

A satyagrahi must never forget the distinction between evil and
evil-door. He must not harbour ill-will or bitterness against the latter. He must not employ offensive language against the evil person, however unrelieved his evil might be. For it should be an article of faith with every satyagrahi that there is no one so fallen in this world but can be converted by love. A satyagrahi will always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, himsa by ahimsa. There is no other way of purging the world of evil. Therefore, a person who claims to be a satyagrahi always tries by close and prayerful introspection and self-analysis to find out whether he is himself completely free from the taint of anger, ill-will, and such other human infirmities, whether he is not himself capable of those very evils against which he is out to lead a crusade. In self-purification and penance lies half victory of a Satyagrahi (39).

Gandhi has said quite a few times that satyagraha admits of no violence, no pillage, no incendiariism (40). A Satyagrahi should avoid all intentional injury to the opponent in thought, word and deed because satyagraha is based on the assumption that a human being is not just his body, but a spirit, a spark of the Divine. So it is not by appealing to his physical instincts or by using brute-force which corresponds only to the lower (physical) self in him that satyagraha intends to bring about the transformation of the individual and through them of society. As the satyagrahi experiences a spiritual kinship with the adversary, he appeals to the moral and spiritual elements that lie dormant and recessive in him and thus, by awakening them try to overcome evil by good and untruth by truth (41).

The faith of the satyagrahi in the redemptive power of suffering is absolute. That is why Gandhi went to the extent of calling satyagraha the law of suffering (42).
In a reform the satyagrahi seeks to convert his opponent by sheer force of character and suffering. The purer he is and the more he suffers, the quicker the progress. . . . He must not only bear hardships cheerfully but he must actively love his persecutors. They honestly believe that the reformer is doing something sinful and therefore, resort to the only means they know to be effective to wean him from his supposed error. The satyagrahi, on the other hand, does not seek to carry out his reform by a system of punishment, but by penance, self-purification and suffering. . . . (43).

In a satyagraha struggle, the satyagrahis suffer all hardships and do nothing in retaliation. This attitude of continuous suffering without any resentment or retaliation ultimately weakens the opponents. It weakens not their capacity to inflict more suffering but their will to do so. They are touched by the serenity and patience with which the satyagrahis undergo all the suffering with the result that they feel a sense of remorse and experience a change of heart. This, in fact, is the psychology on which the theory of satyagraha is based (44).

That suffering endured patiently and without any resentment of the persecution weakens the will of those who inflict suffering is evident from the words of the secretary of General Smuts quoted by Gandhi:

I do not like your people and do not care to assist them at all. But what am I to do? You help us in our days of need. How can we lay hands upon you? I often wish you took to violence like the English strikers, and then we would at once know how to dispose of you. But you will not injure even the enemy. You desire victory by self suffering alone and never transgress yourself the imposed limits of courtesy and chivalry and that is what reduced us to sheer helplessness (45).

Citing the example of the early Christian martyrs who welcomed Emperor Nero's persecution and suffered unto death with a smile on their lips, Pyarelal points out that just as in the case of those martyrs, noble suffering will not be in vain. The suffering of a century and more of the martyrs finally resulted in the conversion of the oppressors. Pyarelal writes:

The triumphant smile on the face of the Christian martyr, as he calmly proceeded to the stake to be burnt alive, at first surprised, then exasperated and finally undermined and overwhelmed the complaisance and
smug self-confidence of the proud Patrician. The javelin-proof coat of mail of the Roman Cohorts was not proof against this subtle force. It insinuated itself secretly into the families of the high and mighty and finally gained a footing in the imperial household itself (46).

Gandhi turns eloquent when he speaks about the transforming and redemptive power of selfless self-suffering:

Suffering is the mark of the human tribe. It is an eternal law. The mother suffers so that the child may live. Life comes out of death. ... No country has ever risen without being purified through the fire of suffering. ... It is impossible to do away with the law of suffering which is the one indispensable condition of our being. Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone. The purer the suffering the greater is the progress towards freedom, God and religion (47).

Thus if a satyagrahi can suffer and find joy in the suffering it is possible for him, says Gandhi, to defy the whole might of an empire (48). What is more, he can initiate a process of the moral regeneration of an entire people.

As we saw in the section Vows and their observance Gandhi is of the view that mankind has steadily progressed towards ahimsa and that it has to progress towards it still further. As human being are endowed with free will and the capacity for discretion, he must consider it his duty to organize all the functions and activities of his life in such a way as would accelerate the evolutionary progress towards non-violence. For this life in its entirety must be informed and guided by the principle of non-violence. This is why Gandhi argues that non-violence is not a cloistered virtue confined only to the Rishis, Saints or cave-dwellers. It is capable of being practised by the millions (49). According to him non-violence is the law of our species and the dignity of man requires obedience to this higher law, to the strength of the spirit. So he states emphatically that "non-violence is a power which can be wielded equally by all - children, young men and women or grown up people - provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have, therefore, equal love for all.
mankind. When non-violence is accepted as the law of life, it must pervade the whole being and not to be applied to isolated acts" (50).

As Satyagraha, is for Gandhi, the most powerful method of direct action capable of eradicating social evils and preparing the ground for genuine and lasting change, he laid down strict conditions for offering it. The following are the rules and qualifications he specified for the satyagrahis.

VIII. 2. 5. Rules for satyagrahis

It was before the starting of the Dandi March in 1930 that Gandhi drew up the following rules for the conduct of the satyagrahis:

1. A satyagrahi, i.e., a civil resister will harbour no anger.
2. He will suffer the anger of the opponent.
3. In so doing he will put up with assaults from the opponents. never retaliate, but he will not submit out of fear of punishment or the like, to any order given in anger.
4. When any person in authority seeks to arrest a civil resister, he will voluntarily submit to the arrest, and he will not resist the attachment or removal of his own property, if any, when it is sought to be confiscated by the authorities.
5. If a civil resister has any property in his possession as a trustee he will refuse to surrender it, even though, in defending it he might lose his life. He will, however, never retaliate.
6. Non-retaliation includes swearing and cursing.
7. Therefore a civil resister will never insult his opponent. and therefore, also not take part in any of the newly coined cries which are contrary to the spirit of Ahimsa.
8. A civil resister will not salute the Union Jack, nor will he insult it or officials, English or Indian.
9. In the course of the struggle if any one insults an official or commits an assault upon him, a civil resister will protect such official or officials from the insult or attack even at the risk of his life (51).

VIII. 2. 6. Qualifications for a satyagrahi

Gandhi held the following qualifications essential for a satyagrahi.
1. He must have a living faith in God, for He is his only rock.

2. He must believe in truth and non-violence as his creed and therefore have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by his truth and love expressed through his suffering.

3. He must be leading a chaste life and be ready and willing for the sake of his causes to give up his life and his possessions.

4. He must be a habitual _khadi_ -wearer and spinner. This is essential for India.

5. He must be a teetotaller and be free from the use of other intoxicants in order that his reason may be always unclouded and his mind constant.

6. He must carry out with a willing heart all the rules of discipline as may be laid down from time to time.

7. He should carry out the jail rules unless they are specially devised to hurt his self-respect.

The qualifications are not to be regarded as exhaustive. They are illustrative only (52).

VIII. 2. 7. Forms of _satyagraha_

_Satyagraha_ as a technique of fighting social evils and ushering in a just social order can assume varied forms of non-violent direct action. Three major types namely, Non-co-operation, Civil disobedience and Fasting, as demonstrated and exemplified by Gandhi are briefly discussed below.

a). Non-Co-operation

The technique of non-co-operation in _satyagraha_ is based on the assumption that exploitation is impossible without the co-operation of the victim and therefore, in order to put an end to exploitation the first step is the immediate withdrawal of co-operation by the victim. The first condition that Gandhi lays down for non-co-operation is that it must be fully non-violent. "Non-co-operation in the sense used by me must be non-violent and, therefore, neither punitive, nor vindictive nor based on malice, ill-will or hatred" (53), said Gandhi. He said subsequently: "Non-violence is the most vital and integral part of Non-co-operation. We may fail in everything else, and still continue our battle if we remained non-violent. But we

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capitulate miserably if we fail in adhering to non-violence. . .
is resorted to for the good of the wrong-door and will become
effective if love is the motive that has prompted the
withdrawal of co operation (55). So a non-co-operationist
must make sure of the correctness of his position and through
his unobtrusive humility convince the opponent of his
intention. In certain cases non-co-operation is likely to cause
inconvenience and even some suffering to the adversary. It has
to be offset by the purity of the motive which is nothing but
love, pure and simple.
The act of non-co-operation might invite the wrath of
the authorities and therefore, a non-co-operationist must be
ready to undergo any fiery ordeal. Non-co-operation can be
undertaken only after due preparation. "The result of hasty
non-co-operation can lead only to harm" (56). Strict discipline
and the willingness for suffering are preconditions for
launching non-co-operation movement (57). In short, Gandhi
considers non-violent non-co-operation to be such a powerful
weapon that "if it is enforced in an earnest spirit it will be
like seeking first the kingdom of God and everything else
following as a matter of course. People will have then realised
their true power" (58).

b). Civil disobedience
Like non-co-operation, civil disobedience is
another branch of the tree of satyagraha (59). Gandhi considered
it the duty of every satyagrahi to resist and disobey all those
laws which he considered to be unjust and immoral (60). But he
insisted that such disobedience must be civil in the sense of
being polite, dutiful and non-violent. "Disobedience to be
civil", writes Gandhi, "must be sincere, respectful, restrained,
ever defiant, must be based upon some well-understood principle,
must not be capricious and above all, must have no ill-will or
hatred behind it" (61). Gandhi wanted every one to accept that civil disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen and shall not give it up under any duress. Civil disobedience can be used by a son against his father if he tries to impose upon him a law that is repugnant to his conscience (62). It should be used against the state when it becomes lawless, autocratic or corrupt. Thus, civil disobedience becomes a person's sacred duty according to Gandhi (63). But he warns that as it is as sharp as a knife it should be used most carefully and sparingly if at all (64).

Mass civil disobedience is also possible and sometimes necessary, holds Gandhi. But as it stands on a different footing and is likely to be manipulated for selfish ends, and is prone to lead to the outbreak of violence and general lawlessness, extreme care should be taken to conduct it in a clam atmosphere and every possible provision should be made to ensure its peaceful conduct. Civil resisters must be prepared to face the severest trial and undergo any suffering. According to Gandhi, "Civil disobedience is a terrifying synonym for suffering" (65). Even crowds must be disciplined to behave like disciplined soldiers if mass civil disobedience is to become possible (66). But if properly performed

Civil disobedience is a state of peaceful rebellion - a refusal to obey every single state-made law. It is certainly more dangerous than an armed rebellion. For it can never be put down if the civil resisters are prepared to face extreme hardship. It is based upon an implicit belief in the absolute efficiency of innocent suffering. . . . (67).

Disobedience combined with love is the purest form of agitation and if organized and conducted according to the rules of the game is the quickest and the best remedy for the removal of abuses and injustices (68).

c). Fasting

"Fasting is a potent weapon in the satyagraha armoury", says Gandhi (69). Fasts may be limited or unto
death. Either way, it is a fiery weapon and has its own science (70). "No one, as far as I am aware, has a perfect knowledge of it, admits Gandhi (71). Yet it cannot be undertaken by every one. As it is a very powerful but dangerous weapon, it shall not be handled amateurishly. One must earn a right to fast by devotedly following the laws of ahimsa and thus achieving complete self-purification. Without a living faith in God accompanied by infinite patience, firm resolve, single-mindedness of purpose, perfect calm and no anger or ill-will, no one can attempt to undertake it. One must be pure in body, mind and spirit to deserve the right to fast. He must be internally calm enough to hear the dictates of his conscience on the authority of which alone he shall undertake fast.

Fast is the last weapon in the armoury of the votary of ahimsa, warns Gandhi (72). Therefore, no fast shall be undertaken unless the relation between the persons concerned has been intimate, and the lapse really grave enough (73). Moreover, "a satyagrahi should fast only as a last resort when all other avenues of redress have been explored and have failed" (74). Then, when human ingenuity fails, the votary of ahimsa throws himself out at the hands of God and fasts. "Such fasting is a spiritual act, addressed to God and will awaken the sleeping conscience of the people to whom the fasting person is closely known" (75).

Fasting unto death, according to Gandhi, is an integral part of satyagraha programme (76). But as it is the last and most potent weapon in the armoury of satyagraha, it must be handled with extreme care and devotion. "It is a sacred thing. But it must be accepted with all its implications. It is not the fast itself but what it implies that matters" says Gandhi (77). Inspite of all the training and discipline and the purest of motives, fasts can become coercive. Gandhi's fasts, by his own admission, were his acts of obedience to the
dictates of his conscience, the voice of God within. Still, in his Rajkot fast an element of coercion crept in. This throws sufficient light on how difficult and risky a task it is to undertake a fast, whether limited or unto death. So in order to undertake a satyagrahi fast, one has to reduce oneself to a cypher and submit oneself unconditionally to the will of God and act as his instrument. But certain it is that there is no power more potent and effective than the spiritual energy generated by a true fast in removing social evils and creating conditions congenial for social transformation.

VIII. 2. 8. The hope of human race.

In his Ends and Means Aldous Huxley remarked: "non-violence is so often regarded as impractical or at best a method which only exceptional men and women can use, that it is essential to show that even when used sporadically and unsystematically . . . the method actually works" (78). Ever since this, through the innumerable experiments, at personal as well as mass levels conducted all over the world by such eminent persons like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Vinoba Bhave, Jayaprakash Narayan et.al., and by hundreds of thousands of unknown votaries of ahimsa, it has been proved to the hilt that satyagraha (or non-violent direct action as it is popularly known in the West), 'actually works' and that it can be used for resisting any injustice big or small, for bringing about any reform in any institution or society, for the repeal of any unjust or bad laws, for the removal of any grievances, for the prevention of communal riots or disturbances, for bringing about a change in the existing system of Government, for resisting an invasion, for replacing one government by another. Thus the range and purpose for which satyagraha can be used as a remedy are wide and varied enough (79).

Gandhi was, in fact, referring to the universality of the scope of satyagraha when he said that he had applied it in every walk of life, domestic, institutional, economic and political. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, today, the choice
before humanity is not between violence and non-violence but between non-violence and non-existence. And therefore, if humanity wants to exist, wants to choose life, then non-violence is an imperative. It must pervade all aspects and departments of life, all levels of human interactions, intrapersonal and interpersonal, national and international. As Gandhi said:

"Non-violence is like radium in its action. An infinitesimal quantity of it embedded in a malignant growth acts continuously, silently and ceaselessly till it has transformed the whole mass of diseased tissue into a healthy one. Similarly, even a little of true non-violence acts in a silent, subtle, unseen way and leaven the whole society." (80).

**Article 3**

**Constructive Programme**

As already indicated, the Gandhian technique of social change is chiefly two-pronged, combining resistance (*satyagraha*) and reconstruction (constructive work). Some describe the two as the negative and positive elements of *satyagraha* (81). "Gandhi envisaged the constructive programme as the indispensable positive component in the systematic practice of *satyagraha*" (82). According to Gandhi, the constructive programme is designed to build up the nation from the very bottom upwards and he defines it as "the truthful and non-violent way of winning *poorna swaraj*. Its wholesale fulfilment is complete Independence" (83).

**VIII. 3. 1. The agenda**

Following are the items of the Constructive Programme given to the country by Gandhi. He invited the readers of the booklet to add unhesitatingly to his list. "My list does not pretend to be exhaustive. It is merely illustrative. The reader will see several new and important additions" (84). In response to Gandhi’s suggestion one more item, ‘improvement of cattle’ was added to the programme (85). The list as modified in 1946 is as
follows:-
1. Communal unity - an unbreakable heart unity among the various religious groups and castes of India.
2. Removal of untouchability.
3. Prohibition of alcoholic drinks and drugs.
5. Other village industries such as hand-grinding, hand-pounding, soap-making, paper-making, match-making, tanning, oil-pressing etc., which once served as the back-bone of village self-sufficiency in India.
6. Village sanitation
7. New or basic education
8. Adult education
9. Uplift of women or liberation of women.
10. Education in health and hygiene.
12. Promotion of National language - Hindi as the lingua franca of India. Crucial for national unity and regaining the cultural autonomy of the country.
13. Economic equality - 'master-key' to non-violent swaraj.
14. Service of kisans - kisans are farmers who constitute the back bone of India - its economy.
15. Organising labourers.
16. Service of the Adivasis i.e., the aborigines.
17. Service of lepers.
19. Improvement of cattle - cattle is a vital factor in the rural economy of India (86).

VIII. 3. 2 Training for civil-disobedience

Gandhi considered discipline and training essential for the proper practice of satyagraha. "Training is necessary as well for civil-disobedience as for armed revolt" (87). And Gandhi visualised the constructive programme primarily as a training for satyagraha (88). The training imparted through constructive programme is comprehensive in the sense that it covers both the satyagrahis and the masses of people for whom it is meant and it
educates all concerned in the practice of positive non-violence. Doubtless it is that constructive work among the masses is the best preparation for satyagraha (89). It creates an atmosphere of confidence and comradeship, hope and fearlessness among the people. As Gandhi says: Truth begotten in the pursuit of continuous constructive work becomes a tremendous asset at the critical moment. Constructive work is for a non violent army what drilling etc., is for an army designed for bloody warfare. . . . The more, therefore, the progress of constructive programme, the greater the chance for civil disobedience (90).

That Gandhi valued the training and education imparted through constructive work as vital for the successful conduct of satyagraha is borne out by his well known observation: "My handling of civil disobedience without the constructive programme will be like a paralysed hand attempting to lift a spoon" (91).

VIII. 3. 3  Way to swaraj

But one must hasten to add here that the constructive programme of Gandhi is much more than a training scheme. A glance through the programme is enough to convince one that it aims at the multi-sided regeneration of a whole nation. A non-violent and just social order will not come into being by the mere removal of social evils through non-violent direct action. Much more needs to be done. The creation of an ideal social order calls for continuous and concerted all-round efforts in the form of constructive work as proposed by Gandhi. He wanted to accelerate the speed of the people's progress towards swaraj through socio-economic reform activities which he incorporated into the Constructive Programme. "To postpone social reform till after the attainment of swaraj is not to know the meaning of swaraj", he wrote (92). That is why Gandhi says: "The constructive programme may otherwise and more fittingly be called construction of Poorna Swaraj or complete independence, by truthful and non-violent means" (93). It is clear thus, that
what Gandhi aims at through the constructive programme is the
realisation of swaraj, and complete swaraj at that.

Although the word swaraj simply means self-rule Gandhi gave
it the content of an integral revolution that encompasses all
spheres of life. "On the individual level swaraj is vitally
connected with the capacity for dispassionate self-assessment,
ceaseless self-purification continuous self-restraint,
progressive self-realisation and growing Swadeshi or self-
reliance" (94). Politically swaraj is self-government and not
good government. (for according to Gandhi good government is no
substitute for self-government) and it means continuous effort to
be independent of government control, whether it is foreign
government or whether it is national (95). In other words, it is
the sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority.
Economically, Poorna Swaraj means full economic freedom for the
toiling millions (96). For Gandhi swaraj of a people means the
sum total of the swaraj (self-rule) of individuals and so he
clarifies that for him swaraj means freedom for the meanest of
his countrymen (97). And in its fullest sense, swaraj for Gandhi
is much more than freedom from all restraints, it is self-rule and
self-restraint and could be equated with moksha or salvation.
"Government over self is the truest swaraj", remarked
Gandhi, "it is synonymous with moksha or salvation. . . ." (98).

Gandhi did not believe that the attainment of political
independence would automatically and effortlessly usher in an era
of freedom, justice and prosperity. Swaraj, for Gandhi, was not
synonymous with the Western idea of political independence as was
the case with most political leaders of his time. Swaraj was not
the replacement of British rule by native rule. It was much
more. He looked upon political independence as a first step in
the direction of swaraj. But here again Gandhi warns that unless
eternal vigilance is exercised the fruits of independence will
be hijacked by the elite classes and they will perpetuate
their hegemony through cunning or deceit. Real swaraj will come, says Gandhi, not by the acquisition of the authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused (99). It is important to recall in this context that the belief in the capacity of men— even the illiterate rustics— to control their own destiny is crucial to the world-view of Gandhi (100). And it is his conviction that if properly worked out by a band of committed workers, the constructive programme would be the best available means to educate, train and mobilise people's power which would serve as the bulwark of society against the misuse of state power and would lead the masses to Poorna Swaraj, the heaven of freedom.

It is well known that Gandhi was highly suspicious of the ever increasing and all pervasive influence of the state. As he believed that the state being a soulless machine destroys individuality which lies at the root of all progress, he wanted the future society of his dream to be totally free from the strangulating control of the monolithic state. He had no difficulty to infer from the Indian experience under the British rule that dependence on the state would stifle all individual initiative and people would be gradually demoralised and reduced to a state of utter mental slavery. Retrieving the self-respect and the autonomy of the people Gandhi considered a matter of vital importance and great emergency. The items in the Constructive Programme are, therefore, directed towards the realization of these goals. That is also why he described swaraj as the continuous effort to be independent of government control and included swadeshi or self-reliance as an integral component of swaraj. The constructive programme, if it could be successfully worked out would help the helpless and marginalised masses of people to regain their self-respect, sense of dignity and personhood. Moreover, as Gandhi was committed to the ideal of a state that governed the least and wanted the state to
scatter away eventually, he envisaged a crucial and revolutionary role for autonomous movements and voluntary activities at the grassroots level like the constructive programme.

In fact, he saw such efforts as the beginning of the progress by which the people would be able to manage their affairs effectively without the intervention of the state and that would lead to the latter withering away. This was Gandhi's vision and the rationale of the constructive programme (101).

VIII. 3. 4. The political thrust

Gandhi considered constructive work more basic than political work in bringing about the revolutionary transformation of Indian society. That is why he, even while engaged in the struggle for political independence, placed before the nation his Constructive Programme and devoted more time and energy and deputed the most dedicated and brilliant of his fellow-workers for their effective implementation on a country-wide scale. Gandhi wrote:

"My work of social reform was in no way less than or subordinate to political work. The fact is that when I saw that to a certain extent my social work would be impossible without the help of political work, I took to the latter and only to the extent that it helped the former. I must therefore confess that work of social reform or self-purification of this nature is a hundred times dearer to me than what is called purely political work (102).

This admission by Gandhi that constructive work is foundational to political work and therefore, it should precede the latter or at least go hand in hand with it must not mislead us into believing that the Constructive Programme of Gandhi is mere social service and lacks political content. On the contrary, a diligent perusal of the Programme and an evaluation of its impact during the Indian freedom movement are enough to convince anyone that it is highly subversive of any kind of domination and monopoly. In fact, the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist thrust of the Constructive Programme and its contemporary relevance, especially of such items as Khadi, village industries, economic equality, new education and national
language which emphasise self-reliance, village self-sufficiency and cultural autonomy, cannot be gainsaid (103).

While evaluating the revolutionary potential of the Constructive Programme, it is important to note that Gandhi's social criticism is based on clear value judgements and that the technique of change devised and developed by him presupposes a world-view i.e., a way of looking at the world and its problems and a framework for analysing them (104). Gandhi attributes the ills of modern civilization whose predominant character is violence or the exploitation of the weaker sections of the earth by the strong, to a wrong choice of values. "The predominant character of modern civilization is to dethrone God and enthrone Materialism" (105). Needless to say that God and Materialism denoted antithetical value premises. Gandhi believed that human activity inspired and guided by normative values play the most decisive and crucial role in the transformation of society. And as social change, according to him, is a process and as he did not accept the argument that a single variable or factor is the final determinant in effecting a social revolution, he developed a multi-pronged approach which lay great emphasis on the role of moral and spiritual values. And the techniques of change that Gandhi developed, whether it be satyagraha or constructive work, are designed to bring about a silent revolution in values and thus radically alter the attitude of the people to life and its problems. Thus, the Constructive Programme would lay the foundation for long-term change and transformation of life and would create a new milieu and conditions conducive to the realization of Poorna swaraj which is nothing short of moksha or liberation, the Summum Bonum of life, according to Gandhi.

Gandhi had admitted that the Constructive Programme "does not purport to be exhaustive, but it is sufficiently indicative of the way the programme should be worked" (106). The programme, as Manmohan Choudhuri aptly points out is not a "cut and dried
recipes". It only gives a broad indication of the direction in which change is required (107). It is up to us to take the cue from it and work it out to suit the demands and needs of our times.

Summing up

In short, Satyagraha and Constructive Programme constitute a comprehensive technique of social change as they combine the combative and constructive components which are indispensable in any effective method of change. By tempering righteous indignation with love, Gandhi was able to elevate human emotions to sublime heights at which they would become infectious by their sheer potency and transform the entire surrounding. Thus the objectives of social engineering get dovetailed to the moral and spiritual pursuits of the people and achieve a grand synthesis of the multi-dimensional quests inherent in human nature.

NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.


5. "The term satyagraha was coined by me in South Africa to express the force that the Indians there used for full eight years and it was coined in order to distinguish it from the movement then going on in the United Kingdom and South Africa under the name of Passive Resistance", wrote Gandhi in Young India, January 14, 1920, p. 5. In fact, the philosophy underlying the movement and its technique were all different from those of Passive Resistance. Gandhi felt the need for a suitable term and he announced a prize in his weekly Indian Opinion. Meganalal Gandhi, Gandhi's own nephew, suggested the Gujarati word "Sadagraha" meaning firmness in a good cause or adherence to a good cause. Gandhi modified the word to Satyagraha which means Truth-force or Love-force or Soul-force as Gandhi himself has explained. See Satyagraha in South Africa. (1972 Reprint) chapter XII. p. 102.

6. Dr. Rammanohar Lohia Marx. Gandhi, Socialism, New Delhi, p. XVII.


8. Ibid. September 24, 1938, p. 266.
11. Ibid., p. 12.
12. Young India, January 14, 1920, p. 5.
13. The utter futility of violence has become clearer today than during Gandhi's times.
17. Ibid., p. 49.
19. Ibid., July 6, 1940, pp. 185 - 186.
20. For an in depth exposition of the power of love in bringing about changes in individuals and society see Manmohan Choudhuri, Op. cit., pp. 77 - 98.
22. For example, see the assessment of satyagraha made by writers of the Marxist persuasion like Hiren Mukerjee, in Gandhi - A Study. C.G. Shah in Marxism, Gandhism, Stalinism, etc. See also reference 43 of Chapter I (Introduction) of the present study.
23. Young India, November 17, 1921.
24. Ibid., July 2, 1925. See also Young India, September 13, 1919.
25. Satyagraha In South Africa, Op. cit., pp. 103 - 107. It must be mentioned here that Gandhi did not give up the phrase 'Passive Resistance' totally since this clarification. For example, in an article in the Indian Opinion in December 1914 under the title "Theory and Practice of Passive Resistance he used the term passive resistance in the sense of satyagraha though 'Satyagraha' was coined nearly seven years earlier.
31. See Young India, May 29, 1924, p. 176, August 12, 1926, p. 285, Harijan, November 4, 1934, p. 331 etc.
32. Harijan, September 15, 1946, p. 312. Here one is reminded of the famous lines of Shakespeare in Julius Caesar:
"Cowards die many times before their death, The valiant never taste of death but once." Act II sc. 1

33. Young India, June 16, 1924, p. 176.
35. Young India, March 23, 1921 p. 90.
38. Ibid., p. 39.
39. Young India, August 8, 1929.
40. See for example Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 476.
41. Harijan. April 15, 1933, p. 8. See also Young India, August 8, 1929.
42. Young India. August 11, 1920, p. 3.
43. Ibid., September 18, 1924.
47. Young India, June 16, 1920, p. 3.
48. Ibid., p. 4.
50. Ibid., September 5, 1936, p. 236.
51. Young India, February 27, 1930, p. 69.
52. Harijan. March 25, 1939, p. 64.
54. Ibid., July 28, 1921, p. 237.
55. Ibid., April 10, 1924, p. 122.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., June 2, 1920, p. 3.
59. Ibid., December 26, 1924, p. 429.
60. Ibid., January 21, 1920, p. 3.
61. Ibid., March 24, 1920, p. 4.
63. Ibid., January 5, 1922, p. 5.
64. Ibid., p. 3.
67. Ibid., August 4, 1921, p. 244.
68. Ibid., December 29, 1921, p. 434.
69. Harijan, March 18, 1939, p. 56.
70. Ibid., October 13, 1940, p. 322.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid., December 21, 1947, p. 476.
74. Harijan, April 21, 1946, p. 93.
75. Ibid., December 21, 1947, p. 476.
76. Ibid., July 26, 1942, p. 248.
77. Ibid., August 18, 1946, p. 262.
80. Harijan, November 12, 1938.
81. This identification of *satyagraha* and constructive work as the negative and positive components of the Gandhian technique of revolution shall not be confused with the categorisation of *satyagraha* into positive and negative by Vinoba. See Manmohan Choudhuri, Op. cit., pp. 89 - 90.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., p. 37 (Appendices I).
87. Ibid., p. 4.
88. Ibid.
90. Young India, January 9, 1930, p. 13.
92. Young India, June 28, 1928, p. 772.
95. Young India, August 6, 1925, p. 276.
96. Ibid., April 16, 1931, p. 77.
97. Harijan, March 25, 1939, p. 64 and Young India, June 12, 1924, p. 195.
98. Young India, December 8, 1920, p. 886.

101. Ibid., p. 149. It may be relevant to point out here that the world over voluntary and autonomous movements have become astonishingly pervasive. As Manmohan Choudhuri explains, "We find that there have been and are scores of voluntary and autonomous movements in the democratic countries and they have been able to achieve changes that have been far more effective and wide ranging than anything achieved by the revolutionary regimes. The labour movements, women's liberation movements, movements for educational reforms, jail reforms etc., and now the environmental movements are examples." Ibid., p. 147.

102. Young India, August 6, 1931, p. 203.

103. It must be pointed out in this context that in the prevailing third world scenario in which the economic, political and cultural sovereignty of these nations is being sabotaged under the overarching influence of the Multi-National Corporations etc., the anti-imperialist thrust of the Gandhian discourse of the Constructive Programme must serve as a model to guide them in their struggles for liberation.


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