Chapter – III

GANDHIAN PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT – AN OVERVIEW
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3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter an attempt is made to review the studies on management practices in dairy cooperative societies. In this chapter deals with the Gandhian Principles of Management and the Relevance of Gandhian Principles in entrepreneurial activities at present context. Gandhian management is based on Gandhian philosophy of love, truth and nonviolence. His philosophy is integrated with his principles and practices that add to new dimension to the fields of management. It is essential to understand his qualities of management style. It is for the betterment of the country and business to interpret and adopt these principles correctly. And in the first part we shall study various Gandhian principle of management. And in the Second part efforts are made to compare these principles with modern management streams. In the age of globalization, if anybody talks about ethical management and code of conduct, then it is not so easy to implement the same. It is because ethical management and value-based management requires clear-cut base of ethics and values. Even today business gurus are talking about Gandhiji's principles, to consider Gandhiji as role model of nation. But application of Gandhiji's principles in today's management is a matter of discussion or debate.

As we know that Gandhiji is the best example of an effective manager and an extraordinary leader. It is high time, we analyzed his principles and qualities to understand his management style. The new-found faith in Gandhian principles means good for the country and businesses, only if interpreted correctly.
In the age of globalization, if anybody talks about ethical management and code of conduct, then it is not so easy to implement. This is because ethical management and value-based management requires clear-cut base of ethics and values. Even today business gurus are talking about Gandhiji’s principles, to consider Gandhiji as role model of nation. But application of Gandhiji’s principles in today’s management is the matter of discussion or debate for the present situation.

And many great leaders throughout history have demonstrated effective leadership principles. And some of these leadership principles have been highly effective; however other principles should obviously be avoided. Pranay B. Gupte (2000) noted that Gandhi as saying, “Industrialism is going to be a curse for mankind. The world we must strive to build needs to be based on the concept of genuine social equality – in it, the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the less well-off, the employer and the employee are on the same level only. The Economic progress cannot mean that few people charge ahead and more and more people are left behind” this. The Gandhi understood that an industrialized society created two classes, the have and the have-nots only. The Gandhi’s concept of non-violence and his high moral standards are what today’s leaders must emulate in order for organizations to have the advantage in the global markets only. And his concept of a self-ruled society can be compared to a project orientated organization, where individual teams are self governed and highly efficient. By Using the Hill Model to analyze Gandhi’s leadership principles, I will attempt to show which of Gandhi’s leadership principles should be emulated by today’s project manager and which, if any, should be avoided gradually.
3.2 Social Orientation – Collectivism in Management

We know that as per Gandhi, the interests of the group are of high importance. He believed that the needs of the community and the service of the poor should always override every selfish or individual interests. (Alexander, 1984). And His wish was that every village in India to become a self-supporting and self-contained entity, much like a team environment in today’s corporations only. Then these villages would share information or commodities with other villages where they are not locally producible. (Andrews, 1949). The Teams in today’s organizations often must share information with other teams in order to work more efficiently only. And Take for example, the Information Engineering Associates (IEA) department within DuPont Corporation. Because of internal marketing within the company and sharing of their expertise, the IEA department was able to move from team to team, sharing their knowledge and improving the information technology service within the corporation. (Pinchot, 1996).

Particularly Gandhi recognized the mutual dependence between self and society only. He also felt that the individual remained important because he was the most active component of society; therefore, corporate growth is dependent entirely on individual growth also. Roy (1985) quotes Gandhi as saying, “...the one discovery I have made is that there is no distinction whatever between individual growth and corporate growth, the corporate growth is therefore entirely dependent upon individual growth and hence that beautiful proverb in the English language that a chain is no stronger than the weakest link in it” as noted by Gandhi.

And Gandhi believed in the ancient caste system, but he entirely refused to have anything to do with the idea of “untouchability” only. Then He refused to regard any caste as superior in ranks. He has regarded men and women equally as his brothers and sisters, treating them in every single
act of life as equals in the society. (Andrews, 1949) Within a hierarchal organizational structure, managers are thought of as superior to the workers only. Then the hierarchal structure represents the caste system in many ways. The placing superiority to management where the workers are considered “untouchable” or inferior. And when you break down the hierarchy and lead the organization more toward a flatter structure, you must regard all workers as equals. Then the managers and workers must create a unity much like the Hindu-Muslim unity that Gandhi often referred to the society. This unity explained that all people have a common purpose, a common goal, and common sorrows. It is promoted by co-operating in order to reach the common community goal also. And this is obtained by sharing one another’s sorrows and by mutual toleration in the community. (Andrews, 1949).

Mahatma Gandhi has believed that each man should find his own way to perform his appropriate duty within the community also. He also believed that the performance of intelligent and useful work for the community was different than servile duty to the state only. (Alexander, 1984) He has believed that people could not be masters or owners but instead they should be caretakers and trustees only. And a sound social system discourages all forms of exploitation, domination, and inequality and promotes the values of love, truthfulness, cooperation, and solidarity. (Prabhu, 2001) You can also contrast this idea with organizations of today only. In the hierarchal organization, the worker is told what to do and expected not to produce more than what s/he is told, much like a servants. However, in a project-enriched environment, where managers are replaced with leaders, the worker is expected to learn and expand their knowledge bases. The workers are empowered with more responsibility and accountability for their actions also. This also provides the worker with a sense of community and higher feeling of pride for their work in the society.
And Gandhi’s theory of trusteeship focused on the achievement of a society in which the villages of India were largely self-contained in the country. (Ishii, 2001) He is believed that ultimately the individual was the unit. However this did not exclude dependence and willing help from neighbors or from the world. Trusteeship is a free and voluntary play of mutual forces only. (Dallmayr, 2001) Within a project organization, teams are largely self-contained entities or units that provide a product or service to their customers also. However, these teams sometimes have to rely on other teams for ideas and information therefore enforcing the need for mutual cooperation’s. And a team is a self-contained unit that sometimes has to rely on others for help and assistance.

Roy (1985) in his study rightly quotes Gandhi as saying, “The Ocean is composed of drops of water; each drop is an entity and yet it is a part of the whole; ‘the one and the many’. So in this ocean of life, we are little drops.”. In an organization, many systems work together to make the whole. And it isn’t just one person or one department that makes the organizations. It is the entire compilation of people within the organization that creates the ‘whole system’ in the concern.

3.3 Power – Power tolerant and Management

Mahatma Gandhi believed that decentralization of power in the village was the fundamental unit of politics only. He has felt that Indian independence must begin at the bottom and that each village should be a republic having complete and full power. And every village would be self-sustained and capable of managing its own affairs. (Ishii, 2001) As Alexander (1984) states, “decentralization of authority accords best with the dignity of man in the society”.

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And the most important feature of Gandhi’s leadership style is not mind or rationality, but rather the heart and the soul. Gandhi’s belief was that people should rule not by coercion but by caring solicitation only. He is believed that home-rule was self-rule and the way to accomplish this was by passive resistance, which he called soul-force or love-force also. He is believed that national self-reliance needed to be supported and sustained by moral practice in order to prevent its deterioration into a dysfunctional state of nationalism. (Dallmayr, 2001). The Leaders in today’s volatile environment must also possess these characteristics for which Gandhi believed in. A leader today must be honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent only. Kouzes and Posner (1996) states that the first law of leadership is, “If you don’t believe in the messenger, you won’t believe the message” only. And a leader must be truthful and honest in order for people to follow. As many as have said, a leader must walk the talk only. But without followers there would be no leaders, therefore the first milestone toward earning leadership credibility is clarity in personal values in the system. (Kouzes and Posner, 1996).

And the hierarchal organizational structures operate from the top down. And the workers at the bottom are dominated and told what to do and when to do it. The Gandhi felt that the people should control their own destiny in small-scale groups. (Yates, 2001). He is also believed that independence must begin at the bottom, that self-rule could not be imposed on people from above. He also believed that self-rule or self-government must first be nurtured, through education and examples. The education must start at the local or village level and then be encouraged to spread out into larger communities also. (Dallmayr, 2001).

In today’s organizations the leaders must have strong values and a belief in the capacity of individuals to grow. In other words, they empower
others within the organization. They have envisioned a society in which they wish to see their organizations and themselves live. And they are visionaries and believe strongly in their ability in shaping the future and they do not hesitate to act on these beliefs through their own personal behavior and actions. They have energized the organization as a whole. And when compared to Gandhi’s leadership principles, you can see that Gandhi had a rock-solid value system and he wanted to make major changes in society. He had a totally interdependent relationship with his followers, as he was often seen walking with “commoners” as well as having high tea with “dignitaries”. His leadership style incorporated the four “E’s”: Envision, Enable, Empower, and Energize. (Yates, 2001).

In order to energize his followers, Gandhi chose causes that were important to them. This brought alive his vision and showed his followers what success looked like. The Examples of some of these causes are his fight to bring fair treatment to people in South Africa, repealing the Salt Tax, as well as Indian Independence. (Yates, 2001). The leader of today must be conscious of their followers’ ambitions. And when a leader supports values that are not representative of the collective will, they will not be able to mobilize the peoples. The Leaders must gain consensus on a common cause and a common set of principles. And they must build a community of shared values. (Kouzes & Posner, 1996).

3.4 Uncertainty – positive response to change in Management

And Gandhi, his main goal was to return India to a central village existence only. He was also opposed to industrialization. The Gandhi has noticed thriving village crafts and industries slowly being destroyed in the interest of British manufacturers. He was also upset with the shift from several hundred thousand villages, where the vast majority of the population lived, to a few cities dominated mostly by colonial rules. He is believed that
cities were filled with landlords, mill owners, the moneyed man, the professional class and the government servants only. He has looked at urbanization as an evil, and that cities were the agents of exploitation that ‘sapped the lifeblood of the village’. (Nanda, 1985). And in hierarchical organizational structures you can compare managers to landlords and the general worker as the organizational servants. Then the worker is oppressed in this type of organizational structure also. The Information is passed through the chain of command, from the bottom up. The information is rarely passed back down system.

The Gandhiji’s idea of trusteeship was his attempt to transfer the financial resources from the rich to the poor in the society. He is believed that the nation should be built up from the bottom and trusteeship was aimed at eradicating the unbridgeable gap that existed between the ‘halves’ and the ‘have-nots’. And His belief was that the poor of the nation could not be helped by mass production also. And in other words, production of the masses was the solutions (Ishii, 2001).

Particularly, the purpose of trusteeship was to construct self-contained villages based on self-rule and cooperation system. And you can compare this to leadership in a team environment. And in a purely project based corporation, each team governs themselves. Then the team leader is responsible and accountable for each team members’ work and whether the work is completed on time only. The Team cooperation is important and essential for a team environment to succeed only.

And Gandhi is believed that the western path of modernization was fundamentally unstable and alienating. He also felt it was materialistic and exploitative to nature and peoples. He is believed that modernization lacked a clear sense of direction and moral purpose only. (Prabhu, 2001). However,
mechanization was acceptable to him only if it did not displace useful labor and did not lead to the concentration of production and distribution in a few hands in the economy. (Nanda, 1985).

Hence, instead of abandoning the idea of modernization, Gandhi sought to assimilate the best of tradition with modernity in the economy. (Prabhu, 2001). And this can be compared to an attempt to assimilate an old corporate culture with a new evolving culture also. The Leaders cannot arbitrarily change the corporate cultural dynamics by eliminating the dysfunctional elements only. And they must attempt to evolve a new culture by building on the corporate strengths while letting go of the dysfunctional elements over time also. (Schein, 1996).

Generally Gandhi had felt that for India to become independent, it first must free itself from modern civilizations. (Ishii, 2001) Then though Gandhi was adamant about making drastic changes to India’s existing social structure, he wanted the change to affect the people only at the right moment and in accordance with his non-violent strategy also. (Nanda, 1985) Instituting change within an organization must be done in slow and methodical manners. And the leader responsible for implementing the change within an organization must have the skills to empower others and the knowledge necessary to institute successful and positive changes. Then these leaders must have strong value systems along with a clear dedication to the cause and effect system.

3.5 Goal – passive behavior in Management

Mahatma Gandhi is best known for his use of non-violent and passive resistance principles, Satyagraha. The Satyagraha means to apply pressure for social and political reform through friendly passive resistance practices only. The Gandhi advocated non-violent resistance as a revolutionary;
legitimate and humane means to bring about partnerships with the government of the country and the people based on equality only. (Nanda, 1985) The Passive resistance and non-violence goes beyond defying authority in the society. The Passive resistance principles should be incorporated into a person’s value system. And therefore you must not offend or harbor any uncharitable thoughts toward anything or anyone even when one considers themselves your enemy also. (Andrews, 1949) and this principle is not unlike the value system that leaders of today should have it. And a leader in today’s organization must be honest and patient when dealing with customers and fellow workers only. Generally people will not willingly follow a dishonest person especially through a crisis period, which is not all that uncommon throughout a project lifecycle also.

The Satyagraha begins with reasoning with ones opponent or adversary in an attempt to arrive at just solutions. And neither person neither has a monopoly on the truth nor is either side wholly corrected. And the purpose is to work out a rational compromise that is agreeable to both sides. (Prabhu, 2001). And a leader must have the ability to communicate and diffuse disagreeable situations in the society. The Conflicts naturally occur between individuals who are passionate about something wrong. And often a leader must stand the neutral ground and help facility a win-win situation when dealing with conflicts only.

3.6 Time – long-term outlook and Management

The Gandhi believed that economic growth should proceed in harmony with nature and between people, even if that growth was slower and more gradual than growth brought on by heavy industry and high technology also. (Prabhu, 2001) The Gandhi was always more concerned with the means then about the ends. (Alexander, 1984) and Building a learning organization takes time and efforts. And the leader responsible
with incorporating change within an organization must have a complete view of the big pictures. And promoting any type of change can be difficult, but the leader must always keep site of the final destination particularly.

And building trust in an organization takes time only. The Team members must trust the leader and believe what s/he says in order for them to willingly follow. The Gandhi believed that the rule of community behavior must be found through long practices. And this was the best for all involved. (Alexander, 1984) Gandhiji rated the character building higher than book learning’s. He had also no use for an educational system that was geared to moneymaking. (Nanda, 1985) and within an organization, open communication and honesty is highly valued. The leader with a strong character has integrity and integrity is important within an organization system only.

The Gandhi felt that it was important to understand that the perception of truth undergoes an ongoing process of refinement, which is evolutionary in nature (Murphy, 1991). He also felt that the process of learning was evolving. Learning within an organization evolves with time. And the learning curve may be slow at first, but as more people learn they become confident in their abilities and are content with their working conditions.

3.7 Management of Mahatma Gandhi

Particularly the management in all organizational activities is the act of getting people together to accomplish desired using available resources efficiently and effectively also. The Management comprises planning, organizing etc., The Mahatma Gandhi knew the important of management very well. He also applied it in his every Ashram and constructive work also. He also taught his every associate about management also. Mahatma
Gandhi wrote about management in this word; “I am sorry to say that the management of these houses is far from satisfactory and consequently they are not doing a swinging business. And I should like educated traders who have a good knowledge of English to go there, mix with the people, see the secret of their success and then return to India, open up branches in England and India in an improved style. I have been told that we stand a fair chance of doing a good business in selling carved wood and stones and feathers in England. Everyone knows how many feathers are daily wasted away in almost every part of India. Since they are a saleable commodity in Europe, we are wasting away real wealth simply through sheer ignorance or indifference attitude.

And he regards as soldiers in this campaign. It is not possible for you to reason out things for yourselves. You have come to the Ashram because you have faith in the management. That does not mean faith in me. I am not manager. I am directing the movement so far as ideals and general direction are concerned. Your faith therefore must be in those who are managers for the time being also.

The choice before coming to the Ashram was yours. But having made your choice and come to the Ashram it is not for you to reason why. If we are to become a powerful nation you must obey all directions that may be given to you from time to time. That is the only way in which either political or religious life can be built up. You must have determined for yourselves certain principles and you must have joined the struggle in obedience to those principles. Those who remain in the Ashram are taking as much part in the struggle as those who go and offer Satyagraha at the barricades in the world.
Hence, I am intend to propose at the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress Committee that it should accord the Swaraj Party the dominant place and set up a separate body to promote spinning, make this body a part of the Congress and entrust it with the responsibility of carrying on the movement. If this is done, it will also make the propagation of khadi easier in a way, and the body set up to promote spinning, not being dependent on votes, will also be free from the uncertainty resulting from changes in public opinion. Once a public opinion in favour of spinning has come into existence, the spread of the movement depends wholly on money and management, that is, on business ability. Hence the body to be set up should be the business wing of the Congress. The leaders assembled in Calcutta seemed to be in favour of this too in the management system.

Therefore, we can only pray for their deliverance from all their troubles. But the situation in China reminds us that our slavery is not merely injurious to ourselves, but it is also injurious to our neighbours. Every rupee voted for its management must be devoted to the development of cottage industries, and, therefore, all the activities of the Institute should be devoted to the exploration of possibilities of hand-spinning, and the antecedent processes and instruction therein in the development of the management system.

There are no instruments there for examining the quality of the milk and other products. There is no one there who can say whether it is possible to increase the yield of milk. And the institution seems to be the responsibility of no one can do it. And I would advice those who are in charge of it to consult experts in the management of goshalas and employ paid workers who know their job and leave it to them to run it. Institutions of this kind should train people in rearing cattle and bullocks, provide instruction in regarded to improved techniques of castration, cattle feed and
the methods of growing them, hygienic processes of obtaining milk and of removing skin and processing it. So long as there is indifference in those matters, we should feel that goshalas are not being put to the best use. We should feel ashamed even if a single cow or bullock dies an untimely death or is exported. I am convinced that this can be easily prevented through goshalas also.

Particularly the Ashram has a branch at Wardha, which observes nearly the same rules, but which is independent of the Ashram in respect of management and finance. Sjt. Vinoba Bhave is the Manager of the branch.” “But either he or you will please inform the Secretary of the Ashram beforehand when he may be expected. With reference to your questions, you can answer them for yourself if you are a constant reader of Young India or Navajivan. If you are not, I should suggest your searching the files of these papers. I think it is possible for you to receive training at the Young India office if you can begin work as a common labourer. But this depends more upon the manager than upon me as I do not interfere with the management of the press respectively.

The All India Cow-protection Association has not been able to command public attention and sympathy commensurate with the all-India character it has claimed, and inasmuch as its activities have been confined to the slow spread of the objects of the Association and especially to helping to conduct a dairy and tannery at the Satyagraha Ashram in terms of the objects of the Association, and in as much as the subscriptions and donations are mainly confined to those who are interested in the experiment, and inasmuch as the numerous goshalas and pinjrapoles which were expected to respond to and be affiliated to the Association have failed to do so, the existing members of the Association hereby resolve to disband it and to adopt the less pretentious title of Cow-protection and Preservation Society.
and to entrust the affairs, management and control of the funds and stock of
the Association to the following Committee of Management of the Society
with full powers to disburse the funds, conduct the said experiments, to add
to their number and otherwise carry out the objects of the Association and to
frame a constitution and rules for the management of the Society and to
make such amendment thereof as may from time to time be required for the
same.

Very particularly the management of the said Navajivan Institution
and the use and administration of its property was carried on by Swami
Anand for the past several years and is now being carried on for the past two
years by one of us Mohanlal Maganlal Bhatt on its behalf in pursuance of
the aims and objects of the Institution as mentioned in paras 3 and 4 of this
Deed. Having declared these aims and objects, we declare by this Deed that
the said printing press, weeklies, the publishing house, its rights of
publication and goodwill and all other property belong to the said Navajivan
Institution; that its management and administration was carried on behalf of
the Institution in the name of Swami Anand in the beginning and is now
being carried on in the name of one of us Mohanlal Maganlal Bhatt as
Trustee of the Institution; that we, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and
Mohanlal Maganlal Bhatt or guardians and heirs of both of us never did
have or have any personal share, interest or right in it, and that we have not
drawn for our personal profit or benefit or in any other manner any amount
of money from it for the betterment.

Generally the Trustees have the right to manage and administer
affairs of the Institution in such manner as is not in any way detrimental to
the aims and objects of the Institution; to form a body of workers who
pledge themselves to their work for life and will perform their work in the
spirit of pure service and to give the charge of the internal management or
the whole conduct of the affairs of the Institution to such a body of workers if they deem it proper; to lay down rules, bye-laws, etc., and to execute them for such a body of workers and for other purposes regarding management and administration also.

For the management the exhibition too should not be a side-show to defray the expenses of the Reception Committee which should easily pay its expenses if it did its work in a businesslike manner. The W. C. notes with sorrow that Dr. Syed Mahmud has recently had three deaths in his family including the loss of his elder brother who was the manager of his large joint household and its mainstay. The difficulty is intensified by the fact that Dr. Mahmud’s wife is suffering from a serious illness. In the circumstances the W. C. is of opinion that Dr. Mahmud should not be allowed to run the imminent risk of being arrested and therefore relieves him of the office of Secretary of the Congress and membership of the Committee till such time as may be necessary for making satisfactory arrangements for the management of his domestic affairs also.

He further observed that the foregoing appeal will receive a quick response from the public. It has been purposely not signed by any except those who are connected with the management of the hospital, because it is not to be in any way considered as a national. And the reader should know that from the commencement of the hospital she has been its soul. The public may wonder why the appeal treats the hospital as a temporary thing. The idea is to watch how the institution works and by actual experience to know what will be the real need. The Managing Board is naturally anxious to end this controversy and also to avoid a continuing loss that the deprivation of the press causes to them. I hope therefore that the matter will be finished one way or the other without delay. On this way we can say that Mahatma Gandhi had a deep knowledge of management system.
3.8 Gandhian values in participatory management

We know that Gandhian values and his principles are ever applicable in participatory management. On the whole Gandhiji’s contribution was much more than leading the non-violent struggle to achieve India’s freedom system. And he was a great visionary with a universal idiom who recognized syncretism of Indian society that transcends differences of religion, caste, language and ethnic differences as its strength. He has used it with great success to rally the masses in the freedom struggles. Hence he reinforced India’s national identity and enabled the people to regain not only their freedom but their pride and dignity, eroded by two centuries of colonial rule also.

The Gandhiji’s greatest achievement was in motivating and mobilizing the masses of India across the states, regardless of their differences in language, religion, caste, creed and sex, to come together and fight for the cause of freedom under the banner of Indian National Congress. There cannot be a greater example of participatory management than this in the system. This is actually a real truth in the real life.

And Gandhiji has managed like anything to achieve all this when electronic media was practically non-existent, most of the Indians were illiterate, and physical communication excluded rural India where most of the population lived in the country. And how did he manage to do this? It was through his technique of participatory management that he appealed to one and all to see it as their campaign rather than this opinion.

And Gandhiji did not consider himself pacifists. And in fact, speaking at Geneva in 1931 he said “I regard myself as a soldier, though a soldier of peace also.” He has used quite a few principles of war - selection and maintenance of aim, flexibility, and economy of effort, sustainability and
cooperation to name a few - in his campaigns. And his leadership style also shared many features of the armed forces’ leadership. These included ruthless adherence to goals, flexibility of approach, constantly testing and validating the strategy and tactics, and clear communication of objectives of the society. Gandhiji led from the front like military leaders, persevered in spite of setbacks. His approach was not doctrinaire but based on doctrines. He inspired by example. Finally, his planning was centralized, but execution decentralized system.

Gandhiji wanted military commander’s reduced complex operational objectives into small achievable targets that gave everyone a sense of participation and achievements. That was how he motivated and involved the masses to voluntarily undergo hardships. Sometimes I wonder whether Gandhiji picked up many of these military practices when he participated in the Boer War in South Africa as a soldier of the British ambulance services also. The participatory management was based on an ideal armed forces, Gandhiji’s style of was rooted in his vision of ideal society always.

The Gandhiji has identified seven important social ‘sins’ as obstructive to the achievement of ideal society. They are as follows: politics without principles, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, and worship without sacrifice. We find the seven social sins to be relevant even today as they continue to cause of social and political aberrations in our country particularly.

Mahatma Gandhiji’s practice of participatory management was driven by ethical and moral considerations without sacrificing goal orientation system. And its core values include: evolving a collective vision, balancing stakeholders and shareholders’ value, customer driven approach, and 360
degree communication system. And all these values were woven around his unique leadership style also.

The Gandhiji had evolved a collective vision after protracted sessions at conclaves from the lowest to the highest level also. Though at times he was stubborn in his style of execution, he gave a hearing to contrarian views also. And though there was difference of opinion in national leadership on issues like non-cooperation and participation in legislature, he did not allow the differences to affect his personal equation with those who differed with him in the management issues.

Mahatma Gandhiji was firmly believed in looking after the interest of both stakeholders and shareholders. He also believed in trusteeship management. For example, Gandhiji considered every shareholder who invested a single rupee to buy a share of ‘Young India’ magazine, not only invested his money but trust as well. And his ideas on stakeholders’ value were rooted in their needs. And The Bardoli Satyagraha (1925) is a good example of this. And the Bardoli taluka had suffered from floods and famine, resulting in total loss of crops and farmers faced financial ruin. The Mindless of their problems Bombay Presidency authorities increased the revenue tax by a crippling 30% and refused to revise it although farmers represented against it. And a young Vallabhai Patel approached Gandhiji to seek his concurrence to launch a movement of farmers’ struggle and refuse payment of tax system. And though Congress was not involved in the movement Gandhiji gave his blessings to it because he considered rural Indian as important stakeholders. And though the government confiscated the land initially, ultimately a settlement was reached during 1928 only.

The Gandhiji was an instinctive marketing man who can translate the ordinary thing into an extraordinary icon also. The Khadi – the homespun
cloth woven by villagers all over India – came to symbolize their survival struggle in the face of imported clothing system. And similarly, the charkha to which the common man could relate became the symbol of Congress-led freedom struggle also. Hence, the use of symbols provided the rural masses rallying points to identify and participate in the Congress movement only.

At present the Communication is a key element in modern life - be it politics, business or entertainment system also. And even in those days also Gandhiji realized its importance also. And he had an instinctive ability to communicate across the lines – the rich and poor, the upper and lower castes with equal facility also. And the Simplicity, sincerity and clarity of thought were the keys to his communication system. He has used it as a powerful tool in spreading his inspirational message not only across the country but the entire globe.

The Gandhiji’s successes inspired a host of leaders – from Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to Abul Kalam Azad to Motilal Nehru and the young Jawahar Lal – who had their own ideas on freedom. During the World War II Netaji also inspired soldiers of the colonial Indian army to join the Indian National Army also. This has sent a clear message that the British cannot depend anymore upon the colonial Indian army’s unshakable loyalty system. The British got a real scare when sections of the Indian Navy mutinied for the cause of freedom system. The War had crippled British economy and British troops stationed in India were keen return to their homeland after six years of war period respectively.

The Gandhiji showed his real time strategic skill when he leveraged these vulnerabilities to hasten the exit of British from India. Hence to my mind the greatest contribution of Gandhiji was not merely leading the freedom movement but in using the dynamic environment to further his aim
of enabling Indians to regain their freedom, dignity and national identity also.

Particularly, Gandhiji’s style of management was ruthlessly leadership-driven; yet he ensured it related to the poorest of the poor, the downtrodden and the enslaved, the weak and the discriminated classes. And this is what made Gandhiji’s message universal system. And it was this universality that influenced Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, two great leaders of our times, to adopt Gandhiji’s methods for their non-violent struggle and succeeded also. And Gandhian principles of management are always quite relevant.

And the major trend of socio-economic development in the 20th century had been towards the displacement of socialist systems by free market economics system. And with the withering away of the Soviet Union and the dethronement of communist parties in Russia and East Europe the communist model stood discredited system. And the capitalist model, on the other hand, though triumphant worldwide, brought to the fore the problems involved in unbridled exploitation of the earth’s resources and the sharing of these resources among the nations of the World over.

And there was felt the need to rethink the issue of the norms and modes of development planning, to redefine man’s relation to his environment and at a more fundamental level still, to reformulate an ethic of human relationships appropriate to an over organized techno-centric society also. This is in this context that the Gandhian conception of social organization acquires a new urgency and relevance today. And the Gandhian model is based on the practice of truth and non-violence, on the recognition of the sanctity of the individual human person, and on the unity and harmony between all forms of life and their material environment system.
And a society that adopted the Gandhian paradigm would evolve a social order better equipped to meet technology’s relentless thrust towards exploitation of natural and human resources in the country.

The Gandhiji’s writings clearly indicate that how widely his thoughts ranged on these issues. There was hardly any-political, social, religious, labour, industrial or other problem, which did not come under this purview. And there was hardly any aspect of life in India which he did not influence and fashion according to his own pattern in the life.

And the bedrock of Gandhian management is the Gandhian philosophy, which is a monolithic structure of truth, love and non-violence. And Gandhi has applied his philosophy as a litmus test to confirm his principles, and as a fire-test to warrant his practices in the life style. And it is the integration of this philosophy with his principles and practices that adds a new dimension to the field of management. It defines a new set of management values and hence a new school of management thought. As we know that most of the corporate and competing institutions often issue their mission statements in which they declare their philosophy by defining their identity and stating in broad terms their intent or goal, competitive edge or strength, target groups and markets in the economy.

Mahatma Gandhi, also, carved a philosophy, which he nurtured and upheld throughout his life, only to be known later as Gandhian philosophy. The importance of the human factor in contemporary management can be seen in its finest form in Gandhian management system. And his humanitarian canvas was so global, and clarion call for natural justice was so intense, that he became an institution by himself much before the world discovered this reality also. And the three cardinals of Gandhian philosophy, truth, love and non-violence, are so coherent, cohesive and co-focal, that all
together they stand like a solid rock etc., The absence of even one breaches the wholesomeness of the structure of the management.

Hence, all these elements ought to be understood across a much wider plane and in a much deeper sense beyond the threshold of their common meaning only. The truth is difficult to listen, more difficult to speak, and most difficult to practice, yet it is simplest, purest, and clearest since it is irreducible, irrevocable and irreversible. Knowing ‘truth’ means knowing the ‘reality’. Humans by nature are truth seekers, and they have always been inquisitive, investigative and argumentative to probe more than what they know, to go deeper than what they see in themselves, others and their surroundings, and anything else with which they can interact through physical senses and mental processes. Truth is the aim of a scientist; truth is the goal of judicature; and, for a saint or a prophet, truth is the name of God. But certain parameters, which decide the end results, should also be checked out before arriving at the truth; and they are: credibility of an analyst or experimenter, dependability of an instrument or technique and the reliability of the data from primary or secondary sources also. And if all these parameters are bias-free and error-free, they add credence to the results that can be accredited as ‘true’ in the real system.

And Gandhi observed that common masses cannot manage themselves for perfect non-violence, and elements of imperfection are unavoidable in the market. Hence Professor Gene Sharp of Harvard University argues that according to Gandhi, although imperfection in practicing perfect nonviolence is inevitable, one’s duty is therefore to strive constantly for the least imperfection in the economy.

The second important element of the Gandhian philosophy is love, which too has varied meanings and shades in different societies, and for
different groups of people in the society. And one may instantly relate it to liking, fondness, passion, infatuation, attachment and adoration whereas, in Gandhian context, we must expand its horizon to encompass compassion, empathy, sympathy, kindness, reverence, esteem and devotion respectively. Then we need to transform our mind-set from passion to compassion, from antipathy to empathy and from individuality to plurality in order to understand the expounded meaning of love in the management.

The third significant element of his philosophy is nonviolence. And which does not only mean non-killing, nonaggression or non-injury, but also being free from prejudice, jealousy, hatred, animosity, pride and ego, since these elements too implicitly cause some kind of perturbation, a sort of violence towards one’s self or others. As a researcher in the fields of science and management, Gandhi always experienced, be it with myself or my peer group, that presence of the above said elements inhibit the recognition of truth in others’ work, and create hurdles in searching for the truth within and assessing oneself truthfully also. Then the truth and science, hence the scientific management, are closely linked to each other in the reality.

Nobel Laureate C.V. Raman meticulously draws a semblance between truth and science: “Science is nothing but a research for truth also. The Truth not only in the physical world, but in the world of logic, psychology, behaviour and so on. And the virtue of a truly scientific frame of mind is the readiness to reject what is false and untrue.” And we know as well from our exercises in the pursuit of science that fear, fright and coercion also strongly interfere in the process of finding truth as they also create perturbation, distort our perception and delude our findings. What one logically deduces is that for scientific management, a manager has to manage the affairs of an organization without ego, pride, predilection,
prejudice, jealousy, hatred, and coercion, fear etc., because they all reflect violence in one form or the other form.

Absolutely, the absence of truth and love on any pretext, and/or the presence of ‘violence’ in any form would interfere with SWOT analysis and PEST analysis, and would jeopardize the setting of SMART goals, while all these are, in fact, important tools of organizational management system. It is ironic that Gandhi has been often misquoted by a few critics as a symbol of ‘weakling’ and has been mistaken as failed, because they measured his success with a narrow and myopic view arrested within the frame of material gains and gratifications. And what they failed to notice is the paradigm shift that Gandhi actuated in human resource management and the very basis of modern corporate management system.

3.9 Summary

As a whole the Mahatma Gandhi was not only a visionary and a political thinker but also a hard-headed realist with a shrewd eye for the exigencies of corporate social life and in every individual life. And it is important to note that his biography was titled My Experiments with Truth which gives a prominent ethical slant and spiritual dimension to his views. And in a sense his was a spiritual quest for the meaning of life in all its manifestations - social, political and economic system. This has a direct bearing on the managerial philosophy of the present century when liberalization, globalization and consumerism have thrust the claims of the individual too far forward while draining his activity of all ethical contents.

In order to apply the Gandhian model would require a revamping of current management practices. This is true that Gandhiji has nowhere formulated a theory of management as such. Hence, a model can be evolved from his social philosophy of which the corner stone is the conception of
truth as God and faith in the essential goodness of man in the real world also. Then the Non-violent struggle and sarvodaya are practical expressions of this faith. Enshrined in them is a body of doctrine that could be worked out into the principles of management system.

Hence, the applications of the secondary principles of trusteeship viz., workers’ participation, decentralization, non-violent trade unionism social accountability, co-operative movements etc., are workable propositions etc., and each of these concepts needs to be separately examined and assessed in relation to their applicability in the current industrial system. And the Man is master of the machine, but, with Nature he is only a humble co-operator in the management system.

References


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