
UNIT 9

APPROACHES AND PERSPECTIVES

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

Relationships between individuals and groups flow naturally during normal times. However, this ‘natural flow’ gets disrupted when conflict takes place. Conflict is thus viewed as a disruption in relationships. So if the relationship has to become normal and healthy again, this disruption has to be resolved. This would require constructively changing or ‘transforming’ the ways of relating to each other. Proponents have suggested several ways or ‘approaches’ and ‘perspectives’ to go about ‘transformation’.

Aims and Objectives

This unit would enable you to understand

- the reasons for choosing the term ‘conflict transformation’ over other popular terms and what it means;
- the concept of ‘conflict’ in conflict transformation and its relationship with ‘change’;
- various approaches to conflict transformation; and
- The multiple perspectives on conflict transformation.

9.2 WHY ‘CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION’?

For years the idea of ‘resolution’ was a more widely recognised term. However, some individuals, theorists and practitioners were not comfortable with it. One such practitioner, John Paul Lederach referring to the idea of ‘resolution’ wrote in *Conflict Resolution* in 2006:

“Perhaps unintentionally, this term carries the connotation of a bias toward ‘ending’ a given crisis or at least its outward expression, without being sufficiently concerned with the deeper structural, cultural, and long-term relational aspects of conflict.”

Earlier in 2003 in *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, Lederach described his shift from the term conflict resolution to conflict transformation in the following way:

“I began using the term *conflict transformation* in the 1980s, after intensive experience in Central America caused me to re-examine the language of the field.

When I arrived there my vocabulary was filled with the usual terminology of conflict resolution and management. I soon found, though, that my Latin colleagues had questions, even suspicions, about what was meant by such concepts. For them, *resolution* carried with it a danger of co-optation, an attempt to get rid of conflict when people were raising important and legitimate issues. It was not clear that *resolution* left room for advocacy. In their experience, quick solutions to deep social-political problems usually meant lots of good words but no real change.

.....In my work of helping to find constructive responses to violent conflict, I became increasingly convinced that much of what I was doing was seeking constructive change. “Conflict transformation” seemed to convey this meaning better than conflict *resolution* or *management*.”

Martina Fischer & Norbert Ropers in the 'Introduction' to *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation* consider the term conflict transformation to be "the most comprehensive" in comparison to the other terms being used in the field. In 2004, they said:

"Several terms are used to describe the field as well as activities within this field, such as conflict management, conflict resolution, conflict transformation, conflict prevention, peacebuilding etc. We regard the term *conflict transformation* as the most comprehensive to cover all activities which influence inter-group conflicts with the aim of promoting sustainable peace and social justice. This understanding comprises structure- and process-oriented endeavours of crisis prevention, strategies for empowering groups and building communities, conflict management and resolution activities, as well as rehabilitation, reconstruction and reconciliation efforts in post-war situations."

Further in *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, John Paul added that the guiding questions in conflict resolution and conflict transformation are very different. The guiding question in conflict resolution is: "How do we end something that is not desired?" while in conflict transformation the guiding question is: "How do we end something not desired and build something we do desire?" Transformation thus goes beyond resolution.

9.3 ORIGIN AND CONTEXT

Conflict transformation as a concept emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the context of early conflict research and development research. The idea of conflict transformation was already present in the works of peace researchers like Senghaas and Krippendorff. In 1973, they suggested that conflicts were connected to deeper structures in society, at both the national and international level. Smaller conflicts were related to national conflicts and larger conflicts in turn were rooted in the structure of the world society and international economy. Earlier in 1971, Adam Curle had suggested the transformation of asymmetric relationships by shifting from unbalanced to balanced relationships. For Curle development plays a key role in transformation as it involves:

"restructuring of a relationship so that the conflict or alienation that had previously rendered it unpeaceful is eliminated and replaced by a collaboration that prevents it from recurring."

Yet another conflict transformation exponent who believed in the notion that conflicts are a result of the contradictions in the structure of the society is Johan Galtung. In 1996, he deliberated that incompatibilities between the parties can be removed by transcending these contradictions, which could be done in one of the following ways: by compromise;

by deepening or widening the conflict structure, or by associating or disassociating the actors. Additionally, the development of the concept of conflict transformation within the framework of peace-building was furthered by the end of Cold War and the publication of the United Nation Secretary General's report, 'An Agenda for Peace' in 1992.

9.4 DEFINING CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Martina Fischer & Norbert Ropers in the 'Introduction' to *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation* written in 2004 define conflict transformation as "a generic, comprehensive concept" which refers to:

".... actions that seek to alter the various characteristics and manifestations of conflict by addressing the root causes of a particular conflict over the longterm with the aim to transform negative ways of dealing with conflict into positive constructive ways. The concept of conflict transformation stresses structural, behavioural and attitudinal aspects of conflict. It refers to both the process and the structure of moving towards 'just peace'."

Writing in 2006 in *Conflict Resolution*, John Paul Lederach talks of the advantages of conflict transformation as such:

".... being both *descriptively* rich in regard to conflict dynamics and *prescriptively* embedded in a framework that underscores a more holistic view of conflict. Descriptively, 'transformation' suggests that conflict affects and changes things in potentially destructive or constructive directions. Conflict transforms relationships, communication, perceptions, issues, and social organization..... Prescriptively, transformation is concerned with broader social structures, change and moving toward a social space open for cooperation, for more just relationships and for nonviolent mechanisms for handling conflict, or what might be understood as dynamic and increasingly peaceful relationships."

In 2009, Laurent Goetschel defined conflict transformation in *Post-conflict Peacebuilding: A Lexicon* as referring "to a process in which parties to a conflict consciously work towards a modification of the structural dimensions of a conflict with the short-term objective of prevention of renewed violence (or a reduction in its intensity) and with the long-term objective of sustainable peace."

To conclude, conflict transformation seeks constructive change of the deep-rooted problems located at the socio-political, cultural and relational levels by working on the structural, behavioural and attitudinal aspects of conflict. It constitutes the process as well as the structure of sustainable peace.

9.5 CONCEPT OF ‘CONFLICT’ IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

One major distinction between the conflict transformation approach and conflict settlement, management or resolution approaches is their perspective about conflict. Within conflict transformation, the focus is on the positive aspects of conflict. For John Paul Lederach, conflict transformation means being “engaged in constructive change efforts that include, and go beyond, the resolution of specific problems.” These efforts are based on “two verifiable realities: conflict is normal in human relationships, and conflict is a motor of change.” Conflict and change both are normal and dynamic processes. Conflict impacts situations and leads to changes in four areas – the personal, the relational, the structural and the cultural. Galtung too believed that conflicts have both positive and negative—or life-affirming and life-destroying—actors.

Conflict transformation thus sees conflict as an ‘opportunity’ wherein the deep-rooted issues of injustice can be dealt with and constructive change effected by minimising the negative effects of conflict and maximising the positive ones.

9.6 APPROACHES TO CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Various types of approaches have developed over the past years in the field of conflict transformation – western approaches, non-western approaches and approaches which have a mix of western and non-western elements. This typology has been developed just for the purposes of clarity as in reality all these approaches have been influenced by western and non-western ideas and practices.

9.6.1 TRADITIONAL (NON-WESTERN) APPROACHES

In 2006, Volker Boege in the article ‘Traditional Approaches to Conflict Transformation – Potentials and Limits’, delineated the context, features, strengths and weaknesses of the traditional approaches to conflict transformation. Boege opines that many contemporary violent conflicts in the countries of the Global South are “hybrid socio-political exchanges in which modern state-centric as well as pre-modern traditional and post-modern factors mix and overlap.” In situations of violent conflict, the state here is neither an actor nor does it enjoy any framework of reference. While referring to the traditional societies generally, Boege focuses specifically on the segmentary type—which are most of the time patriarchal and may be sometimes acephalous (headless societies that have no formal political leaders and no institutionalised system of power and authority). These segmentary types of societies are “farthest away from the modern state type with regard to the organization of political order and the control and regulation of violence.” However, they are “not chaotic” but “have their own institutions of control of violence...”

The first feature of the traditional approach to conflict transformation is that there is no one way of doing it; it is actually context specific. Secondly, traditional conflict transformation aims at restoring the order and social harmony of the community generally and social relationships between conflict parties particularly, for which reconciliation based on restorative justice (as opposed to retributive justice) is necessary. Restitution and not punishment is the basis for reconciliation. It “is thus geared towards the future.” Next, although traditional approaches are oriented towards the future, it does not forget to deal with the past. There has to be some sort of a consensus within the community generally and the conflicting parties specifically about what issues/events led to the conflict in the past. This will lead to confession by the perpetrators and request for forgiveness. This usually ends in compensation instead of violence, which mostly takes the form of exchange of material goods, either “blood money” or other gifts such as cattle. All these “endeavours are pursued in accordance with the customary law” and are sealed through rituals. Moreover, in traditional approaches the various dimensions of life such as social, economic, cultural and religious-spiritual, are not separated; they are part of the whole, making it holistic. Lastly, traditional conflict transformation is best suited to small communities—“conflicts within and between families, between neighbours, within and between villages or clans”—as they all adhere to the same customary laws or ways. Thus conflict between members of the “we-group” can be addressed within these approaches but conflicts between ‘us’ and ‘them’ such as those between local communities and state authority, are difficult to tackle as they adhere to other sets of laws, which can be either customary or formal.

The strengths of the traditional approaches are: they are best suited to situations where the state is either absent or weak; they are not state-centric and thus seen to be more legitimate by the communities where it is used; they are process-oriented and take the time factor into account as conflict transformation processes can be very time-consuming; they are inclusive and participatory; and lastly, they include mental and spiritual healing, thus focusing on psycho-social as well as spiritual dimensions of conflict transformation. Moving on to the weaknesses of the traditional approaches – they may not be able to put an end to violence in the long run, as recourse to violence is seen as ‘normal’ in traditional societies; they may contravene universal human rights and democratic principles; they are applicable to a limited community – the “we”-group; they believe in preserving the status quo or the old order; and they can be abused by traditional authorities for their own selfish interests and against the disadvantaged members.

9.6.2 WESTERN APPROACHES

This section intends to discuss the structural, civil society, dialogical, step-by-step and procedural approaches. Within the structural approach, focus will be on the contingency approach, development approach, state reforms approach, and systemic approach,

9.6.2.1 STRUCTURAL APPROACH

Conflict and often violence is a result of fundamental causes. Conflict transformation aims to work on the fundamental or structural conditions or causes of conflict. There are two dimensions of the structural conditions of conflict:

- Substantive dimension: This refers to real incompatibility or discrimination (which may be in the realm of either political, social, economic or cultural or a combination of two or more of these) against conflicting parties;
- Relational dimension: This refers to perceptions, prejudices, stereotypes and impressions which are a result of present and past interaction between the conflicting parties. This dimension is based on the endogenous (i.e. originating from within) interests of the conflicting parties. Conflict transformation attempts to change these interests by using adequate tools and methods. This is what distinguishes conflict transformation from other conflict theories as the latter consider interests a given thing.

The structural approaches touch upon a wide-area of issues and can thus be further classified into several sub-approaches. The approaches discussed in the succeeding sections are a combination of the two structural dimensions mentioned above.

9.6.2.1.1 CONTINGENCY APPROACH

The contingency approach to third-party intervention in armed conflicts was developed by Ronald Fisher and Loreleigh Keashly. They believe that the substantive or the objective and the relational or the subjective elements constantly interact in a conflict. The contingency approach aims to intervene in the conflict with the appropriate third party at the appropriate time. Fisher and Keashly suggest that the right time to work on the relational dimension of a conflict is the pre-negotiation phase. But in the event of the escalation of conflict, power mediation (substantive dimension) should be used. However, once a peace accord is in place, it is time to go back to relationship building (relational dimension). Thus the contingency approach involves various third party actors, making coordination among them a necessary prerequisite for effective conflict intervention.

9.6.2.1.2 DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Development assistance or aid plays an important role in the structural aspects of peace-building. It brings in the necessary funds needed for infrastructural development and provides economic opportunities to the masses, which can lead to their development and empowerment. If attention is paid to the equal distribution and proper channeling of

development aid it can promote participation and inclusive citizenship, which has the potential for conflict transformation.

9.6.2.1.3 STATE REFORM APPROACH

These approaches stress on state reform as a means of transforming war-torn areas. This is very critical especially for fragile states. Gunter Bachler in *Conflict Transformation through State Reform* written in 2004 laid out three strategic approaches to state reform and conflict transformation:

- participatory strategies, which will enhance social and political stability (democratisation, strengthening of civil society etc.);
- all forms of institution-building and institutional reform, which will contribute to a stronger societal fabric (decentralisation, constitution, justice system etc.); and
- security needs and demands (human rights and human security).

Bachler emphasizes on democracy as an essential condition for stable peace.

One institution which plays an important role in building a stronger societal fabric is the judicial or justice system. Justice is a prerequisite to peace. Gunnar Theissen in the article *Supporting Justice, Co-existence and Reconciliation after Armed Conflict* written in 2004, explored the judicial approach to conflict transformation especially in investigating and regulating injustices in the post-armed conflict phase. Amnesty, reparation and grassroots initiatives for reconciliation can contribute to conflict transformation. Tribunals, community courts and truth commissions set up by the state have some positives but there are certain risks involved in them as well and therefore local initiatives and institutions should be encouraged to develop ways and means to deal with the past injustices. Dealing with the past and reconciling is a long-term process but it is something that cannot be forced on former adversaries. If past atrocities and injustices are not investigated properly, victims can refuse to reconcile.

9.6.2.1.4 SYSTEMIC APPROACH

Systemic approach to conflict transformation is based on the systemic perspective, which arose as a reaction to separating and atomising things with a view to controlling the course of events. This fragmentation led to the loss of key features of the “whole”. The “whole” is more than the sum of its parts.

The systemic approaches were applied to conflict resolution in the 1980s and 1990s to analyse conflicts and conceptualise interventions. However, in most of these applications only few elements were used and the difference between “systemic” (holistic efforts for intervention) and “systematic” (comprehensive efforts for intervention) was blurred. John Burton, influenced by the general systems theory, emphasized that “first-order learning”, i.e. learning *within* a given order, as well as “second-order learning”, i.e. learning which

questions the values, principles and structure of this order, both are necessary to address protracted conflicts.

The concept of multi-track diplomacy was developed by John McDonald and Louise Diamond in 1996. They stressed on the need of transforming protracted conflicts on several “tracks” of engagement at the same time. They also emphasized on either ensuring complementarity of the tracks or to build strategies to balance difficulties on one track with activities on other tracks.

In 2006, Peter Coleman introduced the “dynamical systems” approach to address protracted conflicts in a comprehensive manner. Coleman argued that the main purpose of conflict intervention should be to change the overall *patterns of interaction* of the parties and not to foster one particular *outcome* such as a peace agreement. These modifications in interactive patterns could make social change sustainable.

Researches have been conducted by organisations to further develop the potential of systemic conflict transformation especially to assess and evaluate peace-promoting interventions. One such organisation is CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (earlier named Collaborative Development Action) which initiated a project called “Reflection on Peace Project”. The CDA uses systemic conflict analyses to identify potentially useful strategic variables for conflict transformation. Oliver Wils *et al* explored the potential of systemic thinking under the aegis of the Berghof Foundation for Peace Support. They focused more on outlining main elements for applying systemic thinking to designing and implementing peaceful interventions, which are in the form of following clusters: Systemic Conflict Analysis and Monitoring; Strategic Planning of Systemic Interventions; Engagements with Key Stakeholders; Mobilisation of Agents of Peaceful Change; and Creativity in Imagining Alternative Peaceful Futures.

The main features of systemic conflict transformation are as follows:

- All conflict analyses are assumed as mental models, which are linked to the interests and interactions of the parties involved including the third parties.
- Systemic approaches make use of multiple tools to analyse conflicts and also accept different narratives and perspectives as essential parts of a conflict.
- Complex social changes are rarely linear.
- Peace processes in particular are likely to be confronted with a series of setbacks and resistance. Systemic approaches try to explain the inherent fragility of peace processes such as why well-intentioned actions have counterproductive effects.
- Any constructive peace initiative must take into account all “like-minded” as well as “unlike-minded” forces with interest in the peace efforts.
- Mobilisation of “internal resources” is the best way to resolve problems.

- Interaction with and among the conflicting parties and other stakeholders in the conflict region is a “learning space”. This space has the following three parameters as mentioned by Oliver Wils *et al* in *The Systemic Approach to Conflict Transformation: Concept and Fields of Application*, written in 2006: “multipartiality in elaborating and reviewing processes & structures; constructive-critical engagement with the stakeholders; and envisioning multiple peaceful futures.” These parameters are useful in the context of long-term processes.

In conclusion, two advantages of the systemic approaches are that first, the tools of system dynamics provide new insights into the self-production of protracted conflicts and secondly, the tools focus on addressing the analysis of solutions as well as the analysis of problems.

9.6.2.2 CIVIL SOCIETY APPROACHES

The World Bank uses the term civil society organisations to refer to:

“non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. This includes a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations.”

Civil society organisations generally occupy a place of prominence in contemporary times especially in the field of peace-building and conflict transformation, wherein they are expected to contribute positively to the post-conflict scenario.

Martina Fischer in her article *Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Ambivalence, Potentials and Challenges*, written in 2006, gives an overview of the civil society approaches to conflict transformation. Civil society groups can work in the area of reconstruction, rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees and displaced people. Moving from reconstruction towards conflict transformation would require a combination of “development approaches, economic perspectives, empowerment of local actors for civil society issues, peace-education and social work.” However, such wide-range of activities will need to be coordinated in order to be effective. Civil society actors can thus play a positive role in peace efforts but they can also play a negative role in mobilising people for war efforts. Moreover, mere presence of civil society is not a guarantee of positive contribution to peace efforts. Besides, civil society organisations cannot compensate for the deficits of state-building.

9.6.2.3 DIALOGICAL APPROACH

Norbert Ropers emphasizes on the role of dialogues in dealing constructively with conflicts. Track II diplomacy, as opposed to classical diplomacy, gives centre-stage to “communication, direct encounters and mutual understanding.” In the article, *From Resolution to Transformation: The Role of Dialogue Projects*, written in 2004, Ropers delineates four practical forms of dialogue projects based on the objectives they pursue:

- Dialogue projects as grassroots peace-building and interpersonal reconciliation efforts: They relate to the local or neighbourhood level and bring together people who have similar interests or are caught in similar situations. “The central elements are personal encounters and the elimination of barrier to communication”.
- Dialogue projects combined with individual capacity building: These projects are a “combination of training and conflict management” and “enhance participants’ skills in interacting with one another.” Such “encounters provide an ideal setting to try out dialogue skills.”
- Dialogue projects combined with institution building, networking, and practical projects: These dialogues are “only possible after the successful conclusion of a fairly-long process of confidence-buildingThe task in many cases is either to institutionalize the dialogue in the form of inter-ethnic advisory bodies, reconciliation commissions, or NGO networks, or to set up or build the capacity of individual NGOs.”
- Dialogue projects as pre-negotiation: These projects are designed “to exert influence on the management of the conflict at the political leadership level.” Interactive conflict resolution and problem-solving approaches intend to do just that by having confidential workshops with influential participants of the conflicting parties with the aim of generating ideas that will “later facilitate and give new life to the official negotiations.”

To conclude, dialogue projects can contribute the most by promoting a dispute culture based on dialogue, which can be used by individuals, groups and organisations to deal with conflicts constructively.

9.6.2.4 STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

Conflict results in mistrust and suspicion between conflicting groups. Thus small but coordinated steps are required for transforming the conflict from war to the negotiation stage. The step-by-step approach is mostly about ‘confidence-building measures’. Talking about this approach in the edited volume on *Conflict Resolution*, John Paul Lederach wrote in 2006:

“The strength of this approach lies with building momentum based on clear and mutually understood signs that indicate that the people involved are moving

toward change. However, the approach is vulnerable, placing so much emphasis on the interpretation of and need for verifying the good faith of the enemy.....Further, the focus is short-term, on the immediate, and may become myopic as it attempts to verify what can easily appear to be insignificant signs in order to move forward. Nevertheless, it does highlight several key aspects of any endeavor in the transformation of armed conflict: At some point, concrete steps must be taken.”

9.6.2.5 PROCEDURAL APPROACH

The procedural approach as laid out by John Paul focuses on peace efforts that aim at clarifying with each side to the conflict what process would be acceptable to each of them. These are referred to as ‘talks about talks’. The positive aspect of this approach “lies in the transformation that comes with achieving a clear and mutually defined process.” But the downside is that it does not guarantee or assume the sincerity of either side to the conflict.

9.6.3 MIX OF WESTERN & NON-WESTERN APPROACHES

Both western and non-western inputs have contributed to the development of these approaches. One example is the non-violent approach.

9.6.3.1 NON-VIOLENT APPROACH

Non-violent approaches believe that peace is *created* by establishing a social order which manages conflict in a non-violent manner. In 1918, Alfred Fried formulated the doctrine of causal pacifism wherein the main purpose was to establish “a new world order” or a new form of global governance. This intention was “inspired by a purposeful spirit of peace.” Abolition of conflict is not the main feature here but conflict transformation, which in the words of Fried, will consist of “the shaping of international relations in a way which will imbue conflicts with a character which frees them from violence and makes them entirely suitable for management by legal means.”

Within non-violent approaches, non-violence is a value wherein injustice and violence are opposed, whatever the context – individual, organisational, social, national or international. Injustice and violence has to be opposed here through an active resistance without taking recourse to violence in that struggle. Non-violence thus is not just an ideology but rather a stance that is adopted in all walks of life, i.e. in what one does and how one lives. Gandhi was one of the major exponents and practitioners of this approach. Non-violent approaches are participative, interactive and based on experience. These approaches work on attitudes as well as behaviours and explore the connection between them. Again, this kind of an initiative will be marked by progress as well as set-backs and thus the time line here is not linear.

Johan Galtung's TRANSCEND approach is also based on non-violence. He believes that much violence occurs because conflicts are mishandled. At the root of conflict is *contradiction*; *attitudes* and *behaviour* come in later forming a triangle. The three corners of the triangle stimulate each other. The TRANSCEND approach focuses on peaceful conflict transformation based on four pillars of activity: action, education and training, dissemination, and research. Writing in 2002 in *Searching for Peace: The Road to TRANSCEND*, Johan Galtung *et al* mention the mission statement of TRANSCEND as "peace by peaceful means". They further elaborate:

"By *peace* we mean the capacity to transform conflicts constructively and without violence; a never-ending process.

By *transforming conflicts* we mean helping bring about a situation so that the parties can proceed in a participatory, mutually acceptable, and sustainable manner.

By *constructively* we mean channeling conflict energy towards new, innovative ways of satisfying basic human needs for all.

By *without violence* we mean that this process should avoid:

- any threat or use of direct violence that hurts and harms,
- any use of structural violence that demobilizes the parties."

9.7 PERSPECTIVES ON CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

There are various perspectives on conflict transformation – political, economic, socio-cultural, relational, psychological, short- and long-term. Some of these have already been touched upon in the approaches section, for instance the political and economic perspective touches on issues that fall within the structural approach (e.g. state reforms and development approaches). Therefore this section will briefly focus on perspectives that have not been explicitly discussed in the earlier sections. Psychological approach is a case in point. Conflict transformation believes that it is important to focus on trauma issues that arise in the wake of violent conflict situations and leave individuals, groups and communities traumatised. Trauma work should thus be an integral part of conflict transformation. Another important perspective is the socio-cultural. Communities and groups need to process the events and results of conflicts as a community. They can choose as a community, the events they want to remember and the events they wish to forget. Symbols, rituals, ceremonies, stories, norms, healing practices, which could be religious and/or spiritual, do play an important role in this connection, especially in traditional societies. Thus the culture of a given society or community does contribute to conflict transformation. On the other hand, John Paul Lederach talks of a long- and short-term perspective in the article *Conflict Transformation in Protracted Internal Conflicts; The Case for a Comprehensive Framework*, written in 2006. The short-term perspective

is about immediate issues of the conflict such as ceasefire while the long-term perspective is about agenda such as electoral or constitutional reforms. However, John Paul opines that these perspectives are not contradictory. He suggests a comprehensive framework wherein both the perspectives can be incorporated as legitimate concerns.

9.8 SUMMARY

Conflict is a disruption in relationship. Overcoming conflict would mean transforming the ways of relating to each other. The field of conflict transformation suggests various approaches to bring about transformation. These approaches range from traditional to western to a mix of traditional and western. They touch upon a wide range of issues such as structure, which includes state reforms, economic and systemic aspects; civil society, dialogue projects and non-violence as a guiding factor. Other approaches touch on issues such as small steps like confidence-building or the complete procedural framework. Conflict transformation touches on several perspectives which individuals and communities encounter in the course of a conflict – political, economic, socio-cultural, and psychological. The key aspect in the various approaches and perspectives on conflict transformation is relationship-building.

9.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What guided the shift of terminology from ‘conflict resolution’ to ‘conflict transformation’?
2. Define conflict transformation and enumerate its origin and the context in which it originated.
3. How is ‘conflict’ conceptualised in the field of conflict transformation?
4. Describe briefly the various approaches used in conflict transformation.
5. Write a note on the structural approach to conflict transformation. Briefly, discuss the main features of the systemic approach to conflict transformation?
6. What is the civil society approach to conflict transformation? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
7. What are the various kinds of dialogues possible within the dialogical approach to conflict transformation?
8. Distinguish between the step-by-step approach and the procedural approach to conflict transformation.
9. Discuss the non-violent approach to conflict transformation.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 10 THEORIES OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Structure

10.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

10.2 Theories of Conflict Transformation

10.2.1 Gene Sharp

10.2.2 Adam Curle

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10.1 INTRODUCTION

The discipline of conflict transformation became an established field in the late 1980s and 1990s, having a distinctive theory, concepts, tools and models. However, the roots of the field go much beyond the 1990s and draw on the concepts of conflict management and conflict resolution. The conflict transformation school asserts that conflicts are always in a flux, in a constant state of change and the aim is to transform them into something socially useful and non-destructive. Conflict, therefore is a dynamic and changeable process and the process which seeks to alter conflict must be equally dynamic and changeable. Conflict transformation also asserts that some conflicts are better off being transformed, rather than being resolved.

Aims and Objectives

After going through this Unit, you will be to understand

- the major theories and the theorists' contributions to the development of the discipline of conflict transformation; and
- the theoretical underpinnings of conflict transformation.

10.2 THEORIES OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

The theorists of conflict transformation draw on a wide variety of conceptual building blocks, some of which are borrowed from other schools, some are old and yet some others are recent. The theories of conflict transformation reflect both differing paradigms and different types of intervenors (state and non-state, internal and external).

The functionalist school of thought represented by Georg Simmel and Lewis Coser are one intellectual source that informs the field of conflict transformation. Both these thinkers had stressed on the positive social function of conflict. Simmel (in his extended essay, *Conflict*, published in 1955) articulated that conflict has an integrative nature as it brings together disparate and contending influences. He saw it as a source of social cohesion and creativity. Coser (*The Functions of Social Conflict*, 1956) too believed that conflict served specific and useful social functions. In 1968, he wrote:

Conflict is not always dysfunctional for the relationship within which it occurs; often conflict is necessary to maintain such a relationship. Without ways to vent hostility toward each other, and to express dissent, group members might feel completely crushed and might react by withdrawal. By setting free pent-up feelings of hostility, conflicts serve to maintain a relationship.

Conflict thus served the function of maintaining established social relationships. Besides, it had another purpose as well:

Conflict not only generates new norms, new institutions ... it may be said to stimulating directly in the economic and technological realm. Economic historians often have pointed out that much technological improvement has resulted from the conflict activity of trade unions through the raising of wage levels. (1957)

Coser, therefore, focused on both the functional and dysfunctional role of conflict. He contended that conflict breaks people out of old and dysfunctional habits, serving a positive social function.

Yet another school of thought that enlightens the field of conflict transformation is that of structural theory, which entails the idea of conflict formation and its analysis. The most influential work in this school of thought was that of Johan Galtung's. Another significant contribution to the discipline of conflict transformation has come from the theorists on non-violence such as Gene Sharp. Nonviolent resistance is seen as an integral part of conflict transformation that offers one possible approach to achieving peace and justice. Edward W. Azar's work on protracted social conflicts has also had an important influence on conflict transformation theory, wherein he offered an explanation for the

protracted quality of contemporary conflicts. However, one of the most comprehensive works on the application of the field of conflict transformation is that of John Paul Lederach's.

10.2.1 Gene Sharp

Sharp recognises that conflict in society and politics is inevitable, and in many cases, desirable. Some conflicts can be resolved by 'mild methods' such as negotiation, dialogue and conciliation – methods that basically involve compromise. However, these methods are feasible only when the issues at stake are not fundamental. In "acute conflicts", the fundamental issues are or are believed to be, at stake; such conflicts are not suitable for resolution by compromise because hostile violence may be applied to impose oppression, injustice, dictatorship or even to threaten survival. In these circumstances, it is unreasonable to aim for a "win-win" resolution. In fact in 2003 Sharp said, "Brutal dictators and perpetrators of genocide do not deserve to win anything."

The usage of violence in conflicts cannot be eliminated by protests against such violence. If violence is not an option in acute conflicts, Sharp says, "There has to be a substitute means of conducting the conflict powerfully with the chance of success equivalent to or greater than the violent option." He further elaborates:

A very important clue that such an alternative is possible lies in the fact that the strength of even dictatorships is dependent on sources of power, in the society, which in turn depend on the cooperation of a multitude of institutions and people.....Such a substitute for violent conflict is a realistic option.....This technique is called nonviolent action or nonviolent struggle. This is 'the other ultimate sanction'. In acute conflicts it potentially can serve as an alternative to war and other violence.

Sharp categorises non-violent action into three methods: protest and persuasion, non-cooperation and non-violent intervention. Protest and persuasion are actions that highlight the issue in contention and/or a desired strategy for responding to the situation. Specific methods include petitions, leafleting, picketing, vigils, marches, and teach-ins. Non-cooperation is an action in which protestors refuse to participate in the behaviour to which they object socially, economically and/or politically. Sanctuary, boycotts, strikes and civil disobedience are some of the specific non-cooperation methods. Non-violent intervention is a technique in which protestors actively interfere with the activity to which they are objecting such as sit-ins, fasts, overloading of facilities, and parallel government.

The usage of nonviolent methods is not a guarantee of success; there are requirements for achieving success with this technique. Two crucial special processes that may be present

in some nonviolent conflicts, but not in everyone are: “(1) an ability to defy and at times reverse the effects of repression, and (2) an ability to undermine and sever the sources of power of the opponents.”

Gene Sharp’s “mechanisms of change” (1973) is a process by which change is achieved in successful cases of nonviolent struggle. The four mechanisms of change are conversion, accommodation, nonviolent coercion and disintegration. Changes of attitude lead the opponent to make concessions voluntarily because it is right to do so – this process is known as conversion. However, Sharp feels that conversion happens rarely as a result of non-violent struggle. Accommodation takes place more often, wherein the opponent is forced to agree to a compromise because of the withdrawal of political and economic cooperation. Non-violent coercion takes place when the defiance and non-cooperation is strong and skillfully targeted and the sources of the opponent’s power are sufficiently weakened; the opponent is thus left with no option but to capitulate. In some rare cases, the defiance and non-cooperation is massive and the severance of the sources of opponents’ power is so complete that the regime falls apart – this is known as disintegration.

Proponents of principled non-violence favour the process of nonviolent conversion. But the strategic school of non-violence opines that it is unrealistic to apply the process of conversion to acute political conflicts, such as inter-ethnic rivalries, that are likely to have high levels of polarisation and antagonism. Conversion can most likely occur in conflicts arising out of misperceptions but when human needs are involved, rulers are unlikely to yield to persuasion. Moreover, conversion is an inter-individual mechanism; it would be difficult to translate conversion to large-scale conflicts as that would require the conversion of all the opponent’s troops, supporters and elites (Sharp 1973).

Planning a nonviolent uprising is almost similar to devising a military campaign: it starts by identifying an opponent’s “pillars of support” and areas of vulnerability. Here the political and psychological factors of power are emphasized, such as undermining the opponent’s sources of authority, and increasing division in its base of support.

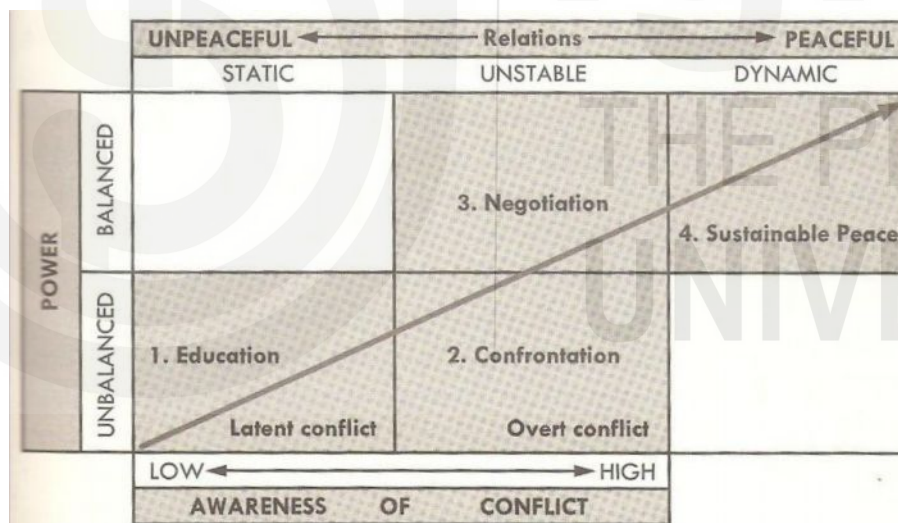
A special process that may operate during a nonviolent struggle to change power relationships is referred to as “political jiu-jitsu” by Sharp. Here the opponent’s violent repression against nonviolent resisters is turned to operate politically against the opponents, weakening their power position and strengthening that of the nonviolent resisters. This can only operate when violent repression is met with continued nonviolent defiance. This may result in shifting of opinion among third parties, the general grievance group and even the opponent’s usual supporters. These shifts may produce withdrawal of support for the opponents as well as increased support for the nonviolent resisters leading

to widespread condemnation of the opponents, internal opposition among the opponents and increased resistance. These changes can produce major shifts in power relationships in favour of the nonviolent resistance group.

However, political jiu-jitsu does not operate in all cases of violent struggle and when it is absent; the shift of power relationships depends highly on the extent of non-cooperation. Thus Sharp's strategic approach is helpful in establishing a link between non-violence theory and the transformation of conflicts.

10.2.2 Adam Curle

The Conflict Progression Model conceptualised by Adam Curle (1971) facilitates an analysis of the dynamics and progression of conflict. Curle's model is based on the premise that conflict is never static or linear but moves along a continuum from an unpeaceful to a peaceful relationship (see *Figure 1*). The progression is charted out in a matrix that compares two key elements: the level of power between the parties in conflict and the level of awareness about the conflict. The matrix helps intermediaries and stakeholders to locate, at any given point, where the conflict is situated and consequently, what might be the appropriate approaches to peacebuilding.



The Progression of Conflict

Source: Adam Curle, *Making Peace* (London: Tavistock Press, 1971).

Figure 1: The Conflict Progression Model

The first quadrant represents a situation of latent conflict. Here people are unaware of the power imbalance and the injustice prevalent in relationships/institutions/structures. Educators and activists, who work to "conscientize" the masses, play an important role. As people become aware of the denial of their legitimate needs and rights, and begin to assert these, the conflict moves into the second quadrant – the stage of confrontation and becomes "overt". As the parties begin to realise that they can neither impose their will on,

nor eliminate, the other side, they agree to negotiate and the groups reach a stage of “strategic power balance”. However, this balance of power is often shaky. Moreover, the progression is seldom linear (in reality moving back and forth between the negotiation and confrontation stages). But this is a very simplistic interpretation and conflicts might never follow this progression. Some might never reach the negotiation stage and get caught in a cycle where negotiations consistently break down and violence resumes. Negotiations often fail because the parties in conflict lock themselves into position making, seldom articulating their “needs and values”, at least in the initial stages. People’s “core values and needs” cannot be negotiated and the challenge therefore lies in helping the conflictants to accept the other’s needs and to try to move to a place where these can be respected. Consequently, the challenge for those working to transform conflict lies in how best to prevent the negotiations from lapsing into open confrontation, and how to support the process so that it reaches the stage of “sustainable peace”.

10.2.3 Terrell A. Northrup

According to Northrup, conflict resolution is based on four assumptions: parties to conflict are rational; misperception constitutes a central cause of conflict; conflict resolution principles apply across social settings (such as interpersonal, organisational, national, international); and high value is placed on peaceful resolution. Northrup centres the evolution of the school of conflict transformation on the rejection of these assumptions. She contends that the parties to conflict may be rational but they are rational in different cultural contexts. Therefore, for Northrup, rationality is a culturally specific phenomenon. Secondly, the idea of misperception “does not seem powerful enough or a deep enough notion to deal with drastic differences in world views.” Additionally, simple misperception fails to explain long-festering and deeply entrenched conflicts. Thirdly, she points out that conflicts may go through various stages and each stage may demand a different treatment at different points of time. Finally, she observes that many parties may be interested in continuing the fight rather than switching to peace; in such a case peaceful resolution may not be an alternative at all.

10.2.4 Edward Azar

The concept of protracted social conflict developed by Azar has had an important influence on conflict transformation theory. Protracted social conflicts are on-going, deep-rooted and seemingly unresolvable. Azar has concentrated on the genesis and maintenance of protracted quality of contemporary conflicts. The concept of protracted social conflict can be used as a theory of conflict transformation to show the formation as well as transformation (or deformation) of protracted conflicts (Hugh Miall).

The formation of a protracted conflict can be traced to the historical context, to the denial of basic human needs of access, identity and security, as well as to the roles played by the

state, international political and economic linkages and the military in politics. If the state and communal groups choose suppression and violent rebellion as their strategies, the conflict may become destructive. Destructive conflict further results in a dependent and exploitative pattern of development, a distorted pattern of governance and a militarised form of politics. This leads to an added denial of basic needs. The result is a protracted cycle of institutional deformation and destructive conflict. On the other hand, if there is sufficient capacity in governance and society, if politics is not too militarised, and if the international environment is supportive, states may instead choose accommodation, and communal groups may choose political forms of confrontation. This can lead to a pattern of constructive conflict that in turn will promote legitimate decision-making capacity, strengthen autonomous development and sustain civil rather than military politics. All these are conducive to the meeting of basic needs. Azar has thus contributed to conflict transformation theory by suggesting how patterns of conflict interact with the satisfaction of human needs, the adequacy of political and economic institutions, the choices made by political actors and how different options can lead to benign or malignant spirals of conflict.

10.2.5 Raimo Vayrynen

In 1991, Vayrynen argued for an analytical conflict theory based on the idea of transformation, stressing that it is important to understand how conflicts are transformed in dynamic terms:

The bulk of conflict theory regards the issues, actors and interests as given and on that basis makes efforts to find a solution to mitigate or eliminate contradictions between them. Yet the issues, actors and interests change over time as a consequence of the social, economic and political dynamics of societies.

He suggested four types of transformation:

- Actor transformations – internal changes in parties, or the appearance of new parties;
- Issue transformations – altering the agenda of conflict issues;
- Rule transformations – changes in the norms or rules governing a conflict;
- Structural transformations – the entire structure of relationships and power distribution in the conflict is transformed.

10.2.6 David W. Augsburger

All cultures and societies have created pathways for channeling conflict. Augsburger therefore looks at different cultures to see what they can teach concerning conflict transformation, for the objective in most non-western cultures is to manage differences and resolve disputes in a way that will restore friendly relations and maintain harmony in interpersonal relations. In several traditional societies, conflict avoidance is a basic orientation and in some of them conflicts are dealt with based on face-saving (e.g.

Chinese society where harmony is seen as the goal of human society). In such situations, confrontation is avoided but there is no genuine resolution of conflicts. In 1992, Augsburger pointed out:

The more harmony-oriented that a group is, the more conflict-sensitive the group will be; the more committed the group to practicing the cultural value of harmony, the more intensely conflict will be internalized.

Augsburger defines conflict transformation as the task “to reopen the future for the parties to the dispute in ways that empower them to move back into responsible relationships.” Conflict transformation requires a metamorphosis in each of the three elements: transforming attitudes (“by changing and redirecting negative perceptions”), transforming behaviour (“by limiting all action to collaborative behaviour”), and transforming the way the conflict is structured (“by seeking to discover, define, and remove incompatibilities by creative design”). Augsburger further cautions that an understanding of the forms which conflict takes in each culture does not necessarily ensure the transformation of conflicts without violence, but no real conflict transformation can take place without an understanding of the cultural roots of the ways in which conflict is expressed.

10.2.7 Johan Galtung

Conflicts have life-affirming as well as life-destroying aspects and they are formed from contradictions in the structure of society. They then become manifest in attitudes and behaviour. Galtung suggested that conflict could be viewed as a triangle (see *Figure 2*), with attitude (A), behaviour (B) and contradiction (C) at its vertices.

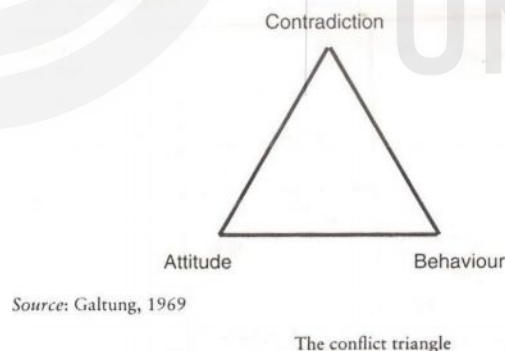


Figure 2: Conflict Triangle

Contradiction refers to the underlying conflict situation, which includes the actual or perceived ‘incompatibility of goals’ between the conflict parties. In a symmetric conflict, the contradiction is defined by the parties, their interests and the clash of interests between them. In an asymmetric conflict, it is defined by the parties, their relationship and the conflict of interests inherent in the relationship. Attitude includes the parties’

perceptions and misperceptions of each other and themselves and can be either positive or negative. However, in violent conflicts parties tend to develop demeaning stereotypes of each other, and attitudes are often influenced by emotions such as fear, anger, bitterness and hatred. Attitude includes these three elements: emotive (feeling), cognitive (belief) and conative (will). Behaviour can include cooperation or coercion, gestures signifying hostility or conciliation. Violent conflict behaviour is characterised by threats, coercion and destructive attacks. All the three components have to be present together in a conflict.

Conflict is a dynamic process wherein structure, attitudes and behaviours are constantly changing and influencing each other. A conflict formation takes place with the emergence of a conflict as the parties' interests come into conflict or the relationship they are in become oppressive. Parties then organise around this structure to pursue their interests and develop hostile attitudes and conflictual behaviour. This leads to the growth and development of conflict formation, drawing in other parties and deepening and spreading, resulting in secondary conflicts within the main parties or among outsiders who get pulled in. This complicates the task of addressing the original, core conflict.

Finally, the resolution of the conflict must involve a set of dynamic changes that involve a de-escalation of conflict behaviour, a change in attitudes and transforming the relationships or clashing interests that are at the core of the conflict structure. The transformational processes therefore include several things: articulation or disarticulation, conscientisation or de-conscientisation, complexification or simplification, polarisation or depolarisation, escalation or de-escalation. The incompatibility which arises between parties may be eliminated by transcending the contradiction, by compromise, by deepening or widening the conflict structure, and by associating or dissociating the actors.

Another concept that was the brainchild of Galtung was the notion of cultural violence. Galtung distinguished between direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence depending on how it operated. Direct or overt violence involves direct strikes (verbal or non-verbal) against others and it intends to do actual harm. It emerges as a response to the experience of structural violence. Structural violence emerges out of the creation of social structures and institutions that deprive some people of their rights and the ability to satisfy their basic human needs. In this case, systems discriminate between groups, communities and nations to the point of threatening lives and livelihoods. Galtung categorised structural violence into two: vertical and horizontal. When people are repressed politically, exploited economically and alienated culturally by structures, systems or institutions, it is vertical structural violence. The needs that are violated in this case are freedom, well-being and identity. On the other hand, horizontal structural

violence denies the need of identity by keeping people who want to live together apart and people who want to live apart together. In cultural violence the intention is to harm, even kill directly but through words and images. Cultural violence is used to justify direct or structural violence. Direct violence can be ended by changing conflict behaviours, structural violence can be brought to an end by removing structural contradictions and injustices, and cultural violence can be ended by changing attitudes.

Galtung therefore contributed substantially to the discipline of conflict transformation specifically by devising and defining several key concepts and developing the conflict triangle model.

10.2.8 John Paul Lederach

Lederach is of the view that conflict is experienced as a disruption in the natural flow of relationships, in which we most often tend to focus on the immediate “presenting” problems and look for a solution to the presenting problems without seeing the underlying causes and forces (the bigger map) of the conflict. He thus suggests that we must look at conflict with a different lens. Three lenses can help create a bigger map:

- A lens to see the immediate situation (the content);
- A lens to see beyond the presenting problems toward the deeper patterns of relationship (the context); and
- A conceptual framework that connects the immediate situation with the deeper relational patterns (the structure of relationships).

Conflict transformation thus seeks to create a framework to address the content, the context and the structure of relationships. Lederach defines conflict transformation thus:

Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships.

Lederach’s definition touches upon several key aspects and notions of conflict and conflict transformation. First of all conflict is envisioned as a natural, normal and continuous dynamic within human relationships; it brings with it the potential for constructive growth. For positive change, engagement with this opportunity is necessary. Secondly, conflict has a rhythm and pattern; there is escalation and de-escalation. Next, conflict flows from and returns to relationships, making relationships the centre of conflict transformation. Relationships have visible and invisible dimensions, immediate and long-term issues and transformation must pay heed to all of them. Additionally, conflict creates life because it is the motor of change that keeps relationships and social structures honest, alive and dynamically responsive to human needs. Furthermore,

conflict transformation pursues the development of change processes that explicitly focus on creating positives from the negative and improving relationships.

Lederach sees peace-building as a long-term transformation of a war system into a peace system. The key dimensions of this process are changes in the personal, structural, relational and cultural aspects of conflict. For John Paul conflict and change both are a reality and conflict impacts situations and changes things in these four broad categories:

- *Personal*: Minimise destructive effects of social conflict and maximise the potential for growth and well-being in the individual at the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels;
- *Relational*: Minimise poor communication, maximise understanding and work with fears and hopes related to emotions and interdependence in the relationship;
- *Structural*: Understand and address root causes and social conditions that give rise to violent and other harmful expressions of conflict and promote non-violent mechanisms; and
- *Cultural*: Identify and understand the cultural patterns that contribute to the rise of violent expressions of conflict and build upon resources for constructively responding to and handling conflict.

John Paul envisions peacebuilding as a *process* – one that incorporates different functions, roles and strategies employed by different people at different stages of conflict progression. He articulates this in the form of a pyramid (see *Figure 3*) on the basis of where individuals (the conflicting parties and peacebuilders) are located in a system and the approaches that work best in a particular sector/level of society.

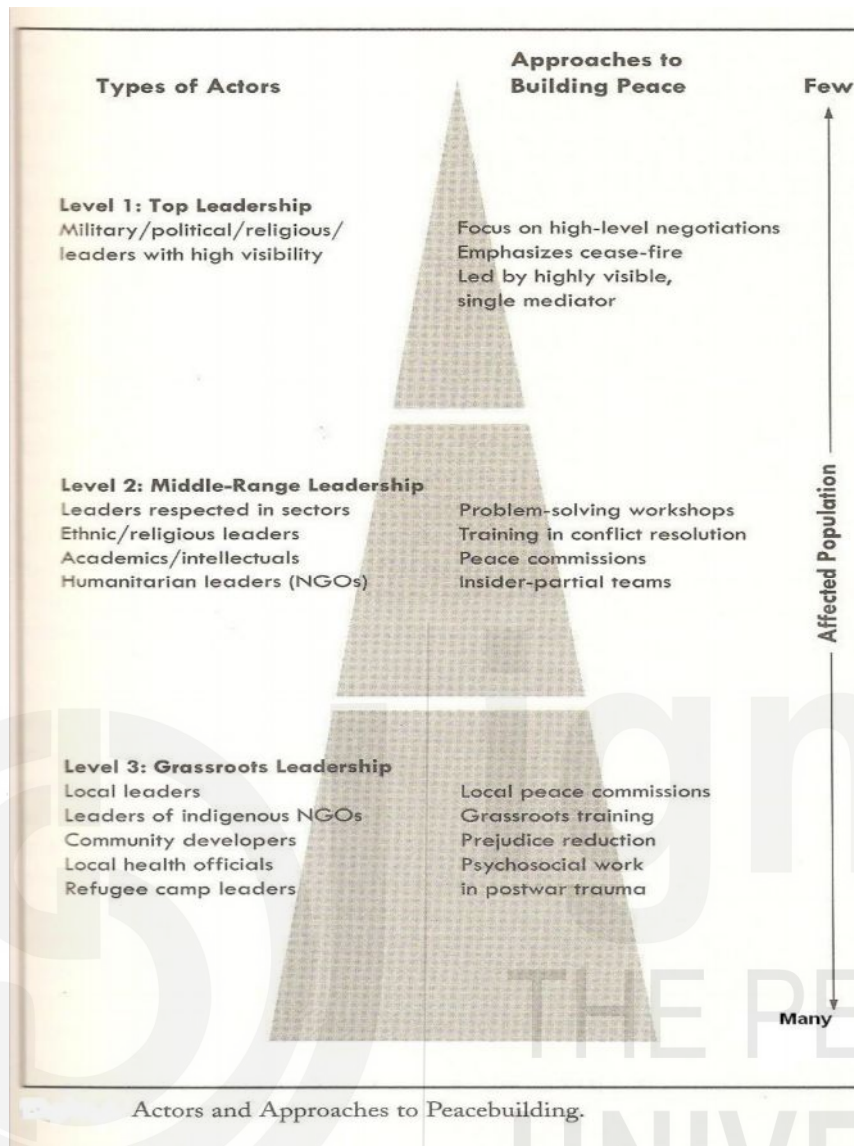


Figure 3: The Pyramid

The pyramid captures the overview of how an entire affected population in a setting of internal armed conflict is represented by leaders and other actors, as well as the roles they play in dealing with the situation. The pinnacle, or top-level leadership, represents the fewest people, in some instances perhaps only a handful of key actors. The grassroots base of the pyramid encompasses the largest number of people, those who represent the population at large. On the left-hand side of the pyramid are the types of leaders and the sectors from which they come at each level. On the right-hand side are the conflict transformation activities that the leaders at each level may undertake.

The pyramid lays out the leadership base in three major categories: top level, middle range and the grassroots. The pinnacle represents the top-level leadership or track one (policy makers, politicians, military people, diplomats) and the base represents grassroots workers (members of indigenous NGOs, psychologists working with trauma victims etc.) The middle-range leadership comprises of individuals representing NGOs, educational institutions, humanitarian and relief organisations, the academia and the media. The grassroots-level leadership represents the voices of people who are directly affected by the conflict and for whom issues of livelihood are crucial.

Individuals/groups at each level of this pyramid use different and unique methodologies to contribute to the processes of transformation. Top-level peace-building is characterised by high profile peace missions led by diplomats, negotiations between government representatives etc. At the middle-level, peace-building (also known as the “middle-out” approach) comprises of problem solving workshops, conflict resolution training etc.

It is difficult for the top-level to arrive at creative solutions because it often gets locked in position-making and is under tremendous pressure to maintain a “position of strength” vis-a-vis adversaries and its own constituencies. The middle-level leadership is connected to both the grassroots and the top-level leadership and this is its biggest strength. Leadership at this level is not necessarily based on political or military power and this gives intermediaries greater flexibility and room to maneuver. Thus the middle range, if integrated properly, might provide the key to creating an ‘infrastructure’ for achieving and sustaining peace. The pyramid was one of the first models that dealt with middle range peace-building and was thus seen as an important contribution by John Paul to the field of conflict transformation.

10.3 SUMMARY

The theories of conflict transformation are either analytical and interpretative (Azar and Vayrynen as they attempt to explain the formation and transformation of contemporary conflicts), or they are prescriptive (Curle and Lederach as they offer peacebuilders a means to conceptualise the path from conflict towards desired outcomes). Galtung’s approach is an attempt to synthesise the two. Sharp was not explicitly talking in terms of conflict transformation but he was necessarily concerned with achieving success and bringing change in violent conflict situations where fundamental issues are at stake, through the usage of nonviolent means.

The field of conflict transformation is relevant to most contemporary violent conflicts as they are asymmetric, protracted and complex. Therefore, conflict transformation theorists argue that contemporary conflicts require more than the reframing of positions and the

identification of win-win outcomes. The very structure of parties and relationships may be embedded in a pattern of conflictual relationships. Conflict transformation is the process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, and if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict. It sees constructive conflict as a catalyst for change. It also recognises that conflicts should be transformed gradually and should include a variety of actors.

10.4 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Briefly discuss the main strands/schools of thought that have directly contributed to the development of the theory of conflict transformation.
2. What is Adam Curle's Progression of Conflict? How is it related to conflict transformation?
3. What is Gene Sharp's strategic non-violence? How can his strategic non-violence transform power relations in a violent conflict situation?
4. What is Azar's protracted social conflict?
5. What is Galtung's conflict triangle?
6. Discuss the notion of direct, structural and cultural violence as laid out by Galtung.
7. What are the lenses of conflict transformation according to Lederach? In what areas does conflict impact change?
8. In Lederach's pyramid, who are the actors and what are the corresponding approaches?

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UNIT 11

GANDHIAN VISION

Structure

11.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

11.2 Critique of Modern Civilisation

11.3 Gandhi's idea of *Swaraj*11.3.1 *Gram Swaraj*

11.3.2 Swadeshi and Self-reliance

11.3.3 Ramrajya

11.3.4 Sarvodaya and Antyodaya

11.4 Religion and Society

11.5 Education

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11.7 Role of Women

11.8 Freedom from Untouchability

11.9 Conservation of Resources

11.10 India's place in Modern World

11.11 Summary

11.12 Terminal Questions

Suggested Readings

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Truth and non-violence form the two main pillars of Gandhi's vision and practice. Gandhi's vision could be articulated and executed only through the means of non-violence, for he believed that only good means could lead to good ends. Ends and means were thus interrelated in Gandhi's thought.

Gandhi opined that human beings were not capable of knowing the complete or absolute truth and that is why nobody had the right to commit violence on others, lest they may be in the wrong. Gandhi also believed in the goodness of human beings and that they had divine powers. These divine powers could be used to awaken the conscience.

Gandhi laid out his vision for India in *Hind Swaraj*, as well as in his speeches and writings in *Young India* and *Harijan*. His vision was a holistic one which touched upon all the areas of life – religious, moral, social-cultural (includes education), political (includes foreign policy), and economic. He wrote and spoke about it extensively and therefore it will not be possible to touch on all the facets of his vision for India. In the

section given below, some important and most talked about aspects of his vision have been discussed.

Aims and Objectives

After going through this Unit, you will:

- Understand Gandhi's criticism of modern civilisation;
- Comprehend the Gandhian alternative to modern civilisation; and
- Appreciate the ideas and programmes to actualise the alternative to modern civilisation as expounded by Gandhi.

11.2 CRITIQUE OF MODERN CIVILISATION

Gandhi was among the few leaders of the world who thought deeply about the problems afflicting human civilisation and ways to overcome them. He had done intensive study of works of thinkers like Edward Carpenter, John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle, Thoreau and Leo Tolstoy. These thinkers, in various ways, were critical of modern western society and its materialistic achievements behind which lay hidden deep-seated social and moral problems. Gandhi was also deeply moved by the moral ideas found in different religious traditions including Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, and other traditions. Gandhi's experience of colonial oppression in South Africa further disillusioned him and led him to develop a far reaching critique of Modern society as it had developed in the west. This he published in the form of a booklet named *Hind Swaraj* in 1909. Throughout his life, Gandhi stood by the thoughts he had expressed in *Hind Swaraj* which contains the most coherent expression of Gandhi's world view.

According to Gandhi, the basic problem with the Modern civilisation was that there was too much emphasis on increasing people's physical comforts through production of goods and services rather than ensuring true physical, social, emotional and spiritual well being of the people. Gandhi measured the progress of a civilisation not through its material comforts but by its morality. He said in *Hind Swaraj* in 1909:

“The people in Europe today live in better-built houses than they did a hundred years ago. This is considered an emblem of civilization, and this is also a matter to promote bodily happiness...This civilization takes note neither of morality nor of religion.”

Gandhi's critique of modern civilisation was not just a philosophical or abstract critique. Displaying acute insight into the social problems resulting from industrialisation, he pointed out the poor condition of millions of workers in Europe, the decline in quality of life with new diseases and new forms of exploitation, the degradation of women, the stranglehold of money and selfish interests on the Parliamentary system, and

consumerism and unbridled competition that took away all fellow feeling and enslaved man to his darker side and dehumanised society.

Gandhi's critique of modern civilisation was also related to the nature of impact that British rule had on India. He believed that rather than Britain as a country, it was Modern civilisation as it was expressed in British rule in India that was responsible for the suffering of the Indian people. In *Hind Swaraj* he opined:

“It is my deliberate opinion that India is being ground down, not under the English heel, but under that of modern civilization. It is groaning under the monster's terrible weight.”

Gandhi argued that India was not won by physical force but the temptation that East India Company offered to Indians in the form of commerce and profit. In *Hind Swaraj* he wrote:

“The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them... Recall the Company Bahadur. Who made it Bahadur? They had not the slightest intention at the time of establishing a kingdom. Who assisted the Company's officers? Who was tempted at the sight of their silver? Who bought their goods? History testifies that we did all this... it is truer to say that we gave India to the English than that India was lost.”

Under the impact of the British rule India had been impoverished, its traditional village economy destroyed, seeds of communalism sown between Hindus and Muslims, and its traditional culture transformed. Gandhi was acutely aware that what British rulers called the gifts of civilisation in the form of new system of government, laws and technology had actually been instrumental in the exploitation of India. He wrote to that effect in *Hind Swaraj*:

“Railways, lawyers and doctors have impoverished the country so much so that, if we do not wake up in time, we shall be ruined...the railways, too, have spread bubonic plague. Without them the masses could not move from place to place...Railways have also increased the frequency of famines because, owing to facility of means of locomotion, people sell out their grain and it is sent to the dearest markets.”

Gandhi was thus not making a statement against progress by opposing Modern civilisation, what he was opposing was the greed and brutality that were the driving forces behind colonialism which had no moral justification. Colonialism represented the worst aspect of Modern civilisation where abandoning all moral principles, the British were exploiting India.

11.3 GANDHI'S IDEA OF *SWARAJ*

Since the root cause of India's exploitation was not Englishmen as such but the civilisation they represented, for India, freedom did not mean just replacement of British rule by Indian rule. He did not just want the 'replacement of British Rockefeller by Indian Rockefeller'. For him *Swaraj* meant cultural freedom or the freedom from the domination of modern civilisation. It implied recreating a society based on India's traditional civilisation. For Gandhi, Indian civilisation lived in its villages. The essence of this civilisation was moral restraint and spirit of fellow feeling among the people. In other words it was the moral fiber of village society that Gandhi considered as the hallmark of Indian civilisation. This made Indian villages the basis of Indian civilisation. For Gandhi, therefore, the true meaning of *Swaraj* lay in recovering the civilisation that India had lost. *Swaraj* has political, economic, moral and social connotations.

11.3.1 GRAM SWARAJ

Panchayats had become defunct during the British rule. They would have to be revived. The revival of Panchayats would ensure participation of the villagers in the political life and the decision-making process of the village community. This would lead to Gram *Swaraj*, the political dimension of *Swaraj*.

11.3.2 *SWADESHI* AND SELF-RELIANCE

Swadeshi or the use of indigenous resources, is the economic aspect of *Swaraj*. Reconstruction of the village economy that had been destroyed by the British rule was essential in order to make villages self-reliant. *Swaraj* would then mean freedom for the Indian villages. The Constructive Programme could make the village economies self-reliant. The Constructive Programme was an integral part of the Gandhian strategy. The use of indigenous resources plus the development of village handicrafts and khadi industries were to be the moral and economic means for the regeneration of Indian villages and hence the attainment of *Swaraj*.

11.3.3 *RAMRAJYA*

Gandhi's vision of *Swaraj* was part of a wider programme of social transformation which emphasised removal of the wants of millions of poor who had suffered as a result of British rule. Gandhi did not separate the political, the economic and the cultural aspects of *Swaraj*, rather they were part of his holistic conception in which all these aspects were interrelated. This holistic conception was represented by the idea borrowed from Ramayana tradition – *Ramarajya*. *Ramarajya* was Gandhi's vision of a just society and he elaborated it in the following way:

“In my opinion *swaraj* and *Ramarajya* are one and the same thing... We call a State *Ramarajya* when both the ruler and his subjects are straightforward, when both are pure in heart, when both are inclined towards self-sacrifice, when both

exercise restraint and self control while enjoying worldly pleasures, and, when the relationship between the two is as good as that between a father and a son. It is because we have forgotten this that we talk of democracy or the government of the people. Although this is the age of democracy, I do not know what that word connotes; however, I would say that democracy exists where the people's voice is heard, where love of the people holds a place of prime importance. In my *Ramarajya*, however, public opinion cannot be measured by counting of heads or raising hands.....The rishis and the munisafter doing penance came to the conclusion that public opinion is the opinion of people who practice penance and who have the good of the people at heart.”

Ramrajya was thus not a theocratic state. It was essentially a moral idea defined by people's sense of duty towards right social conduct and fellow feeling. The British justified their rule in India by saying that they were trying to modernise the Indians. *Ramrajya* provided an alternative to that Western modernity. By rejecting the Western form of parliamentary democracy and nation-state, Gandhi also undermined the ideological hegemony of colonialism.

Ramrajya, an idiom that was taken from rural Indian society, found an echo in the hearts and minds of millions of peasants in India. It provided the ideology for mobilising the masses of India against the domination of the British.

11.3.4 SARVODAYA AND ANTYODAYA

Sarvodaya represents Gandhi's vision of the new human society, a new social order, which would strive for the betterment and welfare of all humankind and living beings. It has both positive and negative connotations. B S Sharma in his article “*The Philosophical Basis of Sarvodaya*”, in the journal *Gandhi Marg* published in July 1960 defined the negative conception of *Sarvodaya* as “... not something which one man or set of men can gain or enjoy to the exclusion of others.” Positively speaking, it is “an activity in which all may partake and in which all must partake if it is to amount to a full realization of the human faculties of the human soul.” *Sarvodaya* would thus mean the welfare of all – every individual and all individuals, in all the areas – religious, moral, political, social and economic. The ultimate goal of *Sarvodaya* is the greatest good of all living beings. What constitutes ‘the greatest good’ has been explained by Gandhi in a note written in August 1947:

“I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it

restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?
Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away.”

Gandhi's ideal of *Sarvodaya* was borrowed from John Ruskin's *Unto His Last* and contains three concepts: community, equality and dignity of labour. Each individual has to work for the welfare of all, as there is no growth without the growth of the society and vice versa. Thus the growth of the individual and the society are interrelated. Equality means equality of both intellectual work and body work. Dignity of labour acknowledges the dignity of physical labour. Through the doctrine of *Sarvodaya*, Gandhi rejected the laissez-faire theory as well as the utilitarian concept of the greatest good of the greatest number.

Gandhi believed that *Antyodaya* was the means to achieve *Sarvodaya*. *Antyodaya* literally means the rise of the last. A *Sarvodaya* society can only come about when we have reached the poorest of the poor.

11.4 RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Gandhi was a deeply religious person. The moral principles underlying various religious traditions had played an important part in shaping his basic attitudes. For example, the Jain principles of *aparigraha*, *asteya*, *brahmacharya*, *satya* and *ahimsa* were his abiding guide to social conduct. Yet Gandhi did not hold any narrow view of religion or religious identity. As he wrote in *Young India* on 22 December 1927:

“I do not expect India of my dream to develop one religion, i.e., to be wholly Hindu, or wholly Christian, or wholly Musalman, but I want it to be wholly tolerant, with its religions working side by side with one another.”

Gandhi never accepted the idea that the basis of nationality has to be religion in spite of his belief that religion plays an important role in society. He expressed this view categorically in *Hind Swaraj*:

“India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation; they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty of assimilation.... India has ever been such a country. In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals; but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dreamland. The Hindus, the Musalmans, the Parsis and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow countrymen, and they will have to live in unity, if only for their own

interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms; nor has it ever been in India.”

Gandhi, while standing for the freedom of a person to live according to the dictates of his or her religion, upheld the principle of coexistence of faiths and principle of non-interference. It was this openness of Gandhi that made him a votary of Hindu-Muslim unity which he built as a pillar of his vision of *Swaraj*. Gandhi never accepted the two-nation theory and was deeply saddened by the partition.

11.5 EDUCATION

The idea of education and how it should be conducted was another important theme in Gandhi’s vision and thought. Gandhi’s ideal of an educated man is as described by Huxley in the following words:

“His body is the servant of his will and does its work with ease and pleasure....his mind is stored with knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature; his passions are under the control of a vigorous will and a tender conscience; he has learned to hate all vileness and to respect others as himself. Such a man and no other has had a liberal education.”

Gandhi believed in a conception of education where man was in harmony with nature and was able to control his senses. His vision of education was thus one where it had to be necessarily geared towards character-building. Primary education or *Nai Talim* or *Buniyaadi Talim* should be focused on character-building—this becomes the foundation—a building built on this foundation will be able to sustain itself. Education had to be training of the body, mind and soul. Ethical education or training of the spirit was to be given prime importance. Children had to be taught the dignity of labour right from their infancy. Gandhi wanted teachers to teach students through the medium of handicrafts, laying emphasis on manual training, not just intellectual training. Also they had to lead by example. Gandhi wanted the Indian children to be educated in their mother tongues. He felt that English education was of very little value to the Indians. Higher education was missing out from the Gandhian visionary thought; however, he did mention that higher education could be left to private enterprise and should be related to national necessities.

The most unique suggestion that Gandhi proposed with regard to education especially compulsory mass education was that India’s national system of education should be made self-sufficient. He wrote in *Harijan*:

“..as a nation, we are so backward in education that we cannot hope to fulfill our obligations to the nation in this respect in a given time during this generation, if the programme is to depend on money. I have therefore made bold, even at the

risk of losing all reputation for constructive ability, to suggest that education should be self-supporting...I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufactures of these schools." (5:197)

Henry Fagg in his book *Back to the Sources: A Study of Gandhi's Basic Education* written in 2002 is supportive of the above idea on three counts:

"Gandhi's confidence in the practicality of self-support although abrasive, was not ill-founded...Part of his motives were undoubtedly financial; the task of educating India's millions would be an undertaking of colossal proportions, for which there were simply no funds.....A second reason....was that to produce saleable items would be a kind of quality control, a check put in place to ensure that the education imparted had been truly vocational. His scheme of education can also therefore be understood as facilitating a form of economic planning....The third reason...is that craft training results in 'the conservation of the intellectual energy and *indirectly also the spiritual*.'"

Thus Gandhi's main purpose in advocating for education that was self-supporting was that it would not just ensure imparting of education but will also cut at the roots of unemployment and develop the body, mind and soul.

Gandhi also gave some thought to adult education. He elaborated upon it in his *Constructive Programme* in the following manner:

"If I had charge of adult education, I should begin with opening the minds of the adult pupils to the greatness and vastness of their country.....My adult education means, therefore, first true political education of the adult by word of mouth....Side by side with the education by the mouth will be the literary education."

Gandhi managed to do some practical experiments in the field education during his days in the Tolstoy Farm. These experiments further affirmed his ideas on education.

11.6 TRUSTEESHIP

Gandhi explained the theory of trusteeship as expounded by him in the following words in *Harijan* written on 3 June 1939:

"Suppose I have come by a fair amount of wealth either by way of legacy, or by means of trade and industry, I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me, what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than

that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community.....”

Trusteeship thus meant that “each would hold whatever assets they possessed in trust for the good of the society.” The rich would use their wealth for the benefit of all those who worked for them while the labourers on the other hand would provide their labour to all those who needed them. In the Gandhian vision, nobody should indulge in an extravagant life but just take only that which is required for a simple, comfortable life. Gandhi also talked of trusteeship more as a conviction, not something that can be forced and therefore even if one person adopted the approach, it was worth it. Henceforth, he said the following on 3 June 1939 in *Harijan*:

“The question how many can be real trustees according to this definition is beside the point. If the theory is true, it is immaterial whether many live up to it or only one man lives up to it. The question is of conviction...”

Gandhi’s aim in proposing the theory of trusteeship, was to inculcate the spirit of *aparigraha* or non-possession.

11.7 ROLE OF WOMEN

Gandhi’s vision of creative social transformation by non-violent means did not ignore the women of India. In his vision of *Ramarajya*, men and women had an equal place in society. Speaking at the Women’s Conference, Sojitra on January 16, 1925, he said:

“To women I talk about Ramarajya. Ramarajya is more than swarajya. Let me therefore talk about what Ramarajya will be like—not about swaraj. Ramarajya can come about only when there is likelihood of a Sita arising. Among the many *shlokas* recited by Hindus, one is on women. It enumerates women who are worthy of being remembered prayerfully early in the morning.....As long as women whose body and mind tend in one direction—i.e, towards the path of virtue—do not come into public life and purify it, we are not likely to attain Ramarajya or swaraj. Even if we did, I would have no use for that kind of swaraj to which such women have not made their full contribution.....”

In Gandhi’s vision, women were thus not confined to the walls of the household but were encouraged to play a part in India’s freedom struggle. Under Gandhi’s leadership, women leaders like Sarojini Naidu and Sucheta Kripalani, came to the fore.

11.8 FREEDOM FROM UNTOUCHABILITY

The practice of untouchability represented for Gandhi not only a social evil which had no place in civilised society but also something which he held to be a ‘sin against God and

man', something profoundly immoral. While reformers like Dayanand Saraswati, Vivekananda, Jyotiba Phule had attacked untouchability, what was significant about Gandhi was that he made the campaign against untouchability a part of the freedom movement. Thus when the Non-cooperation movement was launched, removal of untouchability was included among the basic prerequisites for the attainment of *Swaraj*. He stated in *Young India* on 29 October 1920:

“Non-cooperation against the government means cooperation among the governed, and if Hindus do not remove the sin of untouchability there will be no swaraj whether in one year or in hundred years....swaraj is unattainable without the removal of the sins of untouchability as it is without Hindu-Muslim unity.”

Gandhi considered himself to be a 'Sanatani Hindu', that is someone who abided by Hindu scriptures like Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas and yet he was not orthodox in his religious beliefs. For him 'truth' was the highest expression of religion and truth in a relative sense was something that represented the 'inner voice' or the 'voice of conscience'. Gandhi thus rejected anything which he considered to be immoral and against truth. Religion for him was a matter of praxis or a lived reality rather than a body of beliefs or rituals. He constantly reminded that morality and truth should not be dissociated from religion. He always tested scriptures on the yardstick of reason and truth. It is in this perspective that we can understand his rejection of untouchability even while retaining his belief in *Varnashram dharma*.

Varnashram, according to Gandhi, was simply a 'law of heredity', a scientific truth which Hinduism accepted. Thus he said "Not to abide by one's varna is to disregard the law of heredity". What Gandhi rejected however, was division into numerous castes or *jatis*, the idea of high and low or superior and inferior and the concept of pollution by touch. While *varna* division related to division of labour by defining duties, they did not define privileges. He wrote in *Young India* on 6 October 1921:

"I hold against the genius of Hinduism to arrogate oneself a higher status or assign to another a lower. All are born to serve God's creation, a Brahmin with knowledge, a Kshatriya with his power of protection, a Vaisya with his commercial ability and Sudra with his bodily labour. This however does not mean that a Brahmin for instance is absolved from bodily labour, or the duty of protecting himself and others... But a Brahmin who claims superiority by right of knowledge falls, and has no knowledge. And so with others who pride themselves upon their special qualities. Varnashrama is self-restraint and conservation and economy of energy".

It is clear therefore that Gandhi considered all *varnas* as equal. Moreover Gandhi attached highest value to the dignity of labour which he demonstrated from his personal example. For him no work was ‘polluting’. All the members of Sabarmati Ashram, which was founded in 1915, were enjoined to clean the toilets themselves. The rejection of the idea of social hierarchy and pollution erased the very basis of untouchability. He rejected the view that untouchables were a ‘fifth caste’ or *panchamas* as it was against the *varna* theory. He considered untouchability to be ‘a blot on Hinduism’ and an ‘excrescence’. He spoke thus in *Young India*:

“In my opinion, untouchability in the form in which we practise today is not and ought not to be, an essential part of Hinduism. There is sheer ignorance and cruelty behind it. I look upon it as an excrescence on Hinduism.”

The attack on untouchability reflects the depth of Gandhi’s vision of creative social transformation. Gandhi differed from Ambedkar in two fundamental respects in his criticism of untouchability. One, he did not reject *varnashrama dharma* which Ambedkar considered to be the real basis of untouchability and was thus not willing to separate untouchables from Hinduism. It was for this reason that he opposed the Communal Award by Ramsay Macdonald in 1932 recognising the separate electorates for Scheduled Castes and went on a fast unto death.

Secondly, unlike Ambedkar who considered caste Hindus to be antagonistic to depressed classes and believed in social struggle on their behalf, Gandhi believed that change has to come from within caste Hindus by changing their attitude. It was for this reason that he addressed untouchables as *Harijans* and launched his *Harijan* campaign in the 1930s for the acceptance of *Harijans* as legitimate Hindus and as equals.

11.9 CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES

In the Gandhian conception, ‘nature’ had a very inclusive meaning. The interaction between human and non-human nature was necessary only to the point where humans were to use nature to earn subsistence and nothing more than that. In a speech given at YMCA, Madras on 16 February 1916, Gandhi said:

“If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use, and keep it, I thieve it from somebody else. I venture to suggest that it is the fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world.”

Gandhi thus emphasized the need to conserve resources and use nature only to meet our daily subsistence needs. Today’s conception of sustainable development and movements

for conservation of the environment draw heavily from Gandhi's ecological ideas. The Chipko Andolan is one such movement.

11.10 INDIA'S PLACE IN MODERN WORLD

In the Gandhian vision, India's foreign policy post-independence had to be guided by cooperation rather than conflict. Writing in *Young India* on 11 August 1920, he said, "If India takes up the doctrine of the sword, she may gain momentary victory. Then India will cease to be the pride of my heart." Indulging in violence and making it a creed was thus out of question.

Gandhi wanted India to be different from the rest of the countries of the world and emphasize on soul-force and stand for peace. There would then be no need for weapons. He said the following to this effect:

".. India's mission is different from that of others. India is fitted for the religious supremacy of the world.India is less in need of steel weapons, it has fought with divine weapons, it can still do so.....India can win all by soul force...."
(Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi).

As far as maintaining an army was concerned, Gandhi wanted India to have the "smallest army imaginable". The core of Indian foreign policy had to be non-violence. Writing in *Harijan* on 21 June 1942, Gandhi's advice to future foreign policy makers was:

"...I would advise the adoption of non-violence to the utmost extent possible and that will be India's great contribution to the peace of the world and the establishment of a new world order."

In Gandhi's vision thus, India had to assume a higher position in the world through the use of soul-force. This would lead to the establishment of a new and peaceful world order.

11.11 SUMMARY

Gandhi believed that the Indian civilisation was superior to the western one and it had the necessary ability to endure and survive the onslaughts of modernity. Only India could provide the alternative to modern civilisation as millions of Indians who lived in villages had not been influenced by the frills and fancies of modern civilisation. The idea of *Swaraj*, *Ramrajya*, *Sarvodaya*, Trusteeship, basic mass education and India's usage of soul-force to bring about peace and a new world order formed some of the major aspects of Gandhi's vision. All these components of the Gandhian alternative were essentially Indian.

In the later years of his life, Gandhi realised that practically speaking, it was not possible to rid India of many of the facets of modern civilisation such as railways and hospitals. They will have to be accepted as a 'necessary evil'. However, what he wanted or advocated for, was a vision of a world in which human beings would not be ruled by these things.

Gandhi's vision was essentially a transformative one, for he wanted to bring about these changes through the methods of non-violence, persuasion, appealing to the conscience, and attitudinal and behavioural interventions.

11.12 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on the Gandhian critique of modern civilisation.
2. What is the Gandhian ideal of *Swaraj*? What are the means or mechanisms to achieve *Swaraj*?
3. What is the Gandhian alternative to modern civilisation? Discuss its major ingredients.
4. Discuss the Gandhian vision of education for India.
5. Describe the idea of Trusteeship as expounded by Gandhi.
6. Why is the abolition of untouchability a major goal for Gandhi? What were some of steps he undertook for the removal of untouchability?
7. What, according to Gandhi, should be India's role in the creation of a new world order? How does he suggest going about it?

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THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

UNIT 12 CASE STUDIES (CHAMPARAN AND SOUTH AFRICA)

Structure

12.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

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12.2.4 Characteristics of the Gandhian Satyagraha Campaigns in South Africa

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12.4 Features of Gandhian Conflict Transformation in Action

12.5 Summary

12.6 Terminal Questions

Suggested Readings

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a dynamic and changeable process. The main aim of conflict transformation is to transform conflict into something socially useful and non-destructive. Gandhi too was of the view that conflicts should be transformed into something constructive. He thus came up with an alternative way, one which was free of violence. He not only explained the details of his alternative way but most of all practiced them in his personal and political life. The section below discusses two case studies from Gandhi's life—South Africa and Champaran—wherein he tried to transform the conflict into a constructive thing. The two case studies have two common threads. Firstly, both the cases had Gandhi leading the campaigns and secondly, they both took place in a colonial context. The main aim of the present unit is to understand how conflict can be transformed in practice.

Aims and Objectives

After going through this Unit, you would be able to

- Understand how Gandhi transformed the conflicts in South Africa and Champaran; and
- Become familiar with some of the practical aspects of conflict transformation as put into practice by Gandhi.

12.2 SOUTH AFRICA

Gandhi was trained as a lawyer and was offered work in South Africa by a Gujarati merchant named Dada Abdullah. He took up that offer and landed in Durban, South Africa in 1893.

A few days after his arrival in South Africa, on his first day in court, Gandhi was asked by the judge to remove his turban. He refused to comply and left the courtroom. Some days later, during a train journey from Durban to Pretoria, Gandhi was told by a railway official to move from the first class compartment to the third class, even though he had a valid first class ticket. Gandhi refused to go and was bundled out by a white man and left to shiver in a waiting room. Later he was forced to travel in the driver's coach, even though he possessed a first-class ticket. Soon after he was asked to vacate that seat as well and sit on the foot-board of the coach. When he ignored that order, he was beaten viciously. Finally he reached Johannesburg and started looking for a hotel to put up for the night. However, all the hotels claimed to be full. For the return train journey from Johannesburg to Pretoria, he managed to secure a first-class ticket but only after he quoted extensively from the railway regulations. He boarded the train but was again on the verge of being pushed out from his first-class railway compartment; eventually a European passenger intervened and saved him. These acts of racial discrimination transformed the course of his life and inspired him to fight for the rights of the Indian community living in South Africa.

Once the law suit for which he had come to South Africa was settled, Gandhi wanted to leave for India, but the Indians in South Africa urged him to stay for a month or so, as the bill to disenfranchise Indians was in the process of being passed by the Natal legislature. Gandhi stayed on but not for a month or so but for twenty long years.

Indians had been living in South Africa since 1890 when they were taken to that country to work as indentured labourers on sugar plantations by the white settlers. Some Indian merchants followed them. Ex-indentured labourers along with their children settled down in South Africa after the expiry of their contracts. All these groups of Indians were subjected to racial discrimination. Gandhi refused to accept the inferior status that had been imposed on the Indians by the racist white rulers of South Africa. He fought against the various restrictions that had been imposed on the Indians living in South Africa and in the process developed the new technique of Satyagraha as well as his social vision. Besides, he also established small communes in which an alternative way of life could be practised on a daily basis. These led to the development of his political, social and spiritual ideas.

From 1894 to 1906, Gandhi followed the moderate techniques of prayers and petitions in the fight against discrimination. He tried to unite the various groups of Indians and also tried to give their demands wide publicity by setting up the Natal Indian Congress and starting a newspaper called *Indian Opinion*. This phase depicted Gandhi's organising, fund-raising, advocacy and journalistic skills. However, by 1906, he realised that these moderate methods will not lead him anywhere.

Gandhi's second phase in South Africa began in 1906 and it was characterised by the novel method of passive resistance or civil disobedience. Gandhi renamed it as *Satyagraha* in 1907. The second phase was marked by three campaigns in South Africa in the years 1906-08, 1908-11, and 1913-14. These campaigns were against the following issues: Transvaal ordinance on compulsory registration and passes for Indians, the immigration restrictions, the de-recognition of non-Christian Indian marriages, and the £ 3 tax on ex-indentured labourers.

12.2.1 1906-1908 SATYAGRAHA CAMPAIGN

The Gandhian passive resistance (renamed as *Satyagraha* in 1907) was first used in 1906 in Transvaal when the South African Government enacted a legislation making it compulsory for all Indian residents to get their registration and fingerprinting done. The Indian residents, under the leadership of Gandhi, resolved that they would not submit to this legislation but were prepared to face the consequences. Gandhi formed the Passive Resistance Association to conduct this campaign. After the last registration date, legal proceedings were started against Gandhi and twenty-six others. All of them pleaded guilty and were ordered to leave the country, which they refused to do. Hence they were sent to jail. Slowly the number of passive resisters increased to 155. General Smuts invited Gandhi for talks and promised that if Indian residents registered voluntarily, he would withdraw the legislation. Gandhi accepted this proposal but General Smuts went back on his words and ordered the ratification of voluntary registrations under the law. As a result, the Indian residents publicly burnt their registration certificates.

12.2.2 1908-1911 SATYAGRAHA CAMPAIGN

The Government now brought in a new legislation, the purpose of which was to restrict Indian immigration. Now the campaign against registration was widened to oppose this new law as well. In August 1908, several Indians crossed over from Natal to Transvaal to defy the immigration law. They were arrested. Indian hawkers opposed the law by operating without licence. They too were arrested. In October 1908, Gandhi too landed in jail. He, along with other Indians, was sentenced to a prison term which involved hard physical labour. Still the campaign continued. The Government then started deporting poor Indians to India. There was a sort of a deadlock as both sides stuck to their positions. Gandhi then visited London to speak to the authorities but there was no

significant breakthrough. Finances meant for supporting the *Satyagrahis*' families were running out. Gandhi then set up Tolstoy Farm to house the families of the *Satyagrahis*, thus providing them a way to sustain themselves. In 1911, an agreement was reached between the Government and the Indians but it lasted only until 1912.

12.2.3 1913-1914 SATYAGRAHA CAMPAIGN

Meanwhile Gopal Krishna Gokhale visited South Africa and the Government promised him that all discriminatory laws would be abolished. However, that promise was never kept and thus in 1913 the *Satyagraha* was resumed again. The movement was further widened to protest the imposition of a poll tax of three pounds on all ex-indentured Indian labourers. This movement acquired a mass character now as it drew the indentured and ex-indentured Indian labourers, who too joined the campaign. Further, there was a Supreme Court judgement which invalidated all marriages that had not been conducted according to Christian rites. This meant that all Hindu, Muslim and Parsi marriages were illegal and the children born out of such marriages were illegal too. This judgement added fuel to the fire. Gandhi then launched a final struggle, a march which now included women and Indian mine workers as well. Gandhi was arrested twice and released during the course of the march. The third time he was arrested and sent to jail. Several others were sent to jail as well. The people in the jail were subjected to severe treatment. The use of brutal force against unarmed people led to widespread condemnation of the Government. Eventually the Government and General Smuts were forced to go in for negotiations with Gandhi. The negotiations were fruitful as the Government of South Africa agreed to concede to the major demands of the Indians relating to poll tax, registration certificates, and solemnisation of marriages according to Indian rites. It also promised to sympathetically consider the question of Indian immigration. Thus the *Satyagraha* campaigns in South Africa ended on a positive note.

12.2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GANDHIAN SATYAGRAHA CAMPAIGNS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Gandhian Satyagraha in South Africa involved careful training of disciplined cadres in the Phoenix Settlement and the Tolstoy Farm; non-violent peaceful violation of specific laws such as compulsory registration, entry permits, trade licenses, etc.; mass courting of arrests; and occasional hartals and spectacular marches. Gandhi paid a lot of attention to organisational and especially financial details. He was always open to negotiations and compromises, so much so that he would withdraw the satyagraha unilaterally and abruptly (most people were highly critical of this, but Gandhi stuck to his approach). These were some of the characteristics of the Gandhian *Satyagraha* campaigns that took place in South Africa.

12.2.5 GANDHI'S EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Education was a crucial aspect in the Gandhian scheme of things. Gandhi got an opportunity to conduct experiments in the field of education during his stay in South Africa. During a train journey from Johannesburg to Durban, Gandhi read the book *Unto this Last* by Ruskin and this motivated him to live the “life of manual labour, of the artisan and the tiller of the soil.” He thus founded the Phoenix Settlement in Durban in 1904 in order to be able to live that kind of a life. But there were too many outside pressures and Gandhi, in spite of having the willingness to work in the Settlement, was unable to do much.

The book *Hind Swaraj* written by Gandhi in 1909 on board ship on the way back to South Africa from England contained his vision of the ideal of an educated man. Marjorie Sykes, in her book *The Story of Nai Talim*, says that “Gandhiji dreamed of finding out by experience and experiment ‘a true system of education’ which would put into practice the ideal he had put forward in *Hind Swaraj*.” The Tolstoy Farm set up near Johannesburg became that experimental ground for Gandhi. Hermann Kallenbach, a German architect, played an instrumental role in giving the land for the farm as well as setting it up. The Farm was run like a big joint family which consisted of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians. There was a common kitchen in the Farm. The women were in-charge of the kitchen and the children took turns to help them. Even Gandhi frequently tried to assist in the kitchen. The whole community worked on the farm and in the vegetable gardens as well.

The Tolstoy Farm had a workshop too, where children and adults could learn carpentry and sandal-making. Kallenbach was a trained man and he taught Gandhi sandal-making. Regular classes were held at Tolstoy Farm school—two or three classes each day in subjects such as languages, arithmetic, hand-writing, history, geography, general knowledge, science—these classes were mostly taught by either Gandhi or Kallenbach. Gandhi believed that these subjects were to be taught through stories and interesting talks for he believed that “children learned more readily and more thoroughly through their ears than through their eyes.” Another important aspect of the Tolstoy Farm School was that there were classes in religion and the children had to attend all those, irrespective of the religion they belonged to. Thus the residents of Tolstoy Farm were not only faithful to their own religion but also respectful towards all religions. The Gandhian education system thus consisted of education of the body, mind and spirit but what mattered most to Gandhi was conduct.

Both Kallenbach and Gandhi were unable to stay in the Farm throughout the week due to other work pressures and as a result teaching suffered; still Gandhi felt that “the most substantial result of the (satyagraha) struggle is the school”. In any case, the Farm school

lasted for only one year as the Transvaal *Satyagraha* came to an end after an agreement was reached between Gandhi and General Smuts. The residents of Tolstoy Farm, most of whom were the *Satyagrahis* or their families, withdrew from the Farm and returned to their normal lives. Although the Tolstoy Farm educational experiment was a short one, still in Gandhi's words, "My faith and courage were at their highest in Tolstoy Farm."

Writing about the importance of Gandhi's South Africa experience, Sumit Sarkar in his book *Modern India: 1885-1947*, published in 2004 opined: "The South African experience (1893-1914) contributed in a number of different ways to the foundations of Gandhi's ideology and methods, as well as to his later achievements in India."

12.3 THE CHAMPARAN SATYAGRAHA

Gandhi returned to India in 1915 and took a while to settle in. However, he was not one to remain far from action and soon started championing the cause of the peasants. The Champaran *Satyagraha* was the first movement that Gandhi led on his return from South Africa, which was followed by the Kheda *Satyagraha* in 1918. The peasants of Champaran district of North Bihar were protesting against the white indigo planters.

Champaran had had a long history of agitation and discontent against the planters. Several European planters had settled in Champaran and they were engaged in the cultivation of indigo for more than a hundred years. The planters set up factories in places where indigo was grown in the Champaran district. The Bettiah Estate constituted a large part of the Champaran district. The planters used to realise land revenue from most of the villages of the Bettiah Estate on behalf of the British Raj. They once helped the British Raj to raise loan in England when it badly needed money. In return, the British Raj mortgaged most of the villages under its control to the planters. The planters acquired *mokarri* right for many villages—they could raise any amount of money they wanted from these villages—however, they were supposed to pay a fixed amount of revenue to the British Raj. Increased income thus went to the planters. For non-*mokarri* right villages, the planters had to pay fixed rent to the Raj for a term of years and keep the rest for themselves.

In the early nineteenth century, European planters forced the cultivators of Champaran to cultivate indigo on one-fourth or three-twentieth of their holdings. This system was known as *panch kathia* or *teen kathia* system. The cultivators were forced to divert the best part of their land to cultivating indigo. Those who defied the *teen kathia* system were harassed and subjected to atrocities – their crops were destroyed, houses were looted, cattle was let loose on their lands, they were dragged into false cases, forced to pay fines, and the adamant ones were even beaten up. The *teen kathia* system thus became a norm.

However, by the end of the nineteenth century, cultivated indigo was forced out of the market because of the easy availability and cheapness of German synthetic dyes. The planters started losing out on profits as the price of cultivated indigo declined steeply. The European planters now wanted to relieve the cultivators of Champaran from the obligation of cultivating indigo, but not before they had enhanced the rent and other illegal dues in return for the release. This move was resisted by the cultivators in 1908 in a slightly violent manner, which eventually led to police repression, arrests and jail sentences.

In 1914 the First World War broke out in Europe and it became difficult to import foreign dye from Germany. This brightened the prospects for indigo once again. The cultivators, who had been released from indigo-cultivation, were now being forced by the planters to cultivate indigo. This further agitated the hapless cultivators.

Things were however due for a change in 1917. A local peasant, Raj Kumar Shukla, followed Gandhi all over the country to persuade him to come to Champaran and investigate the matter. When Gandhi reached Champaran, the Commissioner ordered him to leave the district immediately. However, Gandhi refused to leave and instead preferred to take punishment for his defiance of the law. The idea of offering passive resistance or civil disobedience to an unjust order was a very novel one to Indians.

Gandhi was an advocate of conducting careful open-minded investigations based on a scientific spirit. He believed in conducting detailed fieldwork, which would involve testimonies and statistics. This was to be done neutrally and openly and the future course of action depended on this investigation. He applied this approach in Champaran as well. He investigated the complaints made by the peasants against the white indigo planters. This investigation revealed the abuse of power by the local elite and authorities. Thus the authorities were obviously not happy with this and arrested Gandhi. In a statement given on April 18, 1917 before the Motihari Court, Champaran District, Gandhi said:

“I have entered the country with motives of rendering humanitarian and national service. I have done so in response to a pressing invitation to come and help the ryots, who urge they are not being fairly treated by the indigo planters. I could not render any help without studying the problem. I have, therefore, come to study it with the assistance, if possible, of the administration and the planters. I have no other motive and I cannot believe that my coming here can in any way disturb the public peace or cause loss of life. I claim to have considerable experience in such matters. The administration, however, have thought differently.”

The First World War was going on and Gandhi was supporting the war efforts of the British at that point of time. The British thus did not want to alienate him and therefore

the prosecution was abandoned by the local authorities and the survey was allowed to continue unhindered.

Gandhi along with colleagues like Brij Kishore, Rajendra Prasad, Mahadev Desai, J B Kripalani and others toured several villages and recorded the statements and evidences of thousands of peasants by interrogating them thoroughly, to ensure that the information provided by them was correct. The Government, on the other hand, appointed a Commission of Inquiry to investigate into the matter. Gandhi was nominated as one of the members of the Commission. Gandhi convinced the Commission that the *teen kathia* system needed to be abolished. He also asked for compensation for the peasants who had had to pay illegal enhanced dues. However, he later agreed to a compromise settlement wherein the planters had to refund only twenty-five percent of the money they had illegally taken from the peasants. Some critics questioned this compromise and asked Gandhi as to why he did not ask for a full refund. But there were several legal hurdles in asking for a full refund—many planters had sold off their properties and new owners could obviously not be asked to return the money they had never received—this is why Gandhi had agreed to the compromise. Moreover, Gandhi was of the view that the twenty-five percent refund had done enough damage to the prestige and position of the planters'. He was right, for the planters left the Champaran district altogether within a decade. Elaborating on this aspect, Dr. Rajendra Prasad in his *Autobiography* written in 1957 said:

“What the Commission offered to the ryots was far less than their demands. But the main achievement of the year-long agitation lay in this: the planters lost their foothold in Champaran. They had been rendered too weak to be tyrannical or even aggressive.”

Gandhi was committed to non-violence and to ensure that the movement did not turn violent, he brought in his followers from Gujarat and also recruited like-minded members of the local middle class to work amongst the people. As a result, the 1917 protest was characterised by low levels of violence in comparison to earlier such agitations. In 2003, David Hardiman in his book *Gandhi in His Time and Ours: The Global Legacy of Ideas* gives due credit to Gandhi for this by saying:

“When Gandhi took over the leadership of the Champaran peasants in 1917, he insisted on strict non-violence, which, in the context of a society in which landlord violence and peasant counter-violence was an everyday fact of rural life, was a very novel idea.”

Gandhi's enquiry and all-India publicity to the grievances of the indigo cultivators of Champaran led to the abolition of the *teen kathia* system. The movement was thus successful in achieving its main aim without the usage of violence. Talking of the

importance of the Champaran movement and the lessons learnt therein, Dr. Rajendra Prasad in his *Autobiography* said:

“We saw in Champaran on a smaller scale Gandhiji’s *satyagraha* which he later organized through the length and breadth of the country. This agitation which had a very limited objective and covered a small area took one year and even then success was qualified. But valuable lessons were learnt. We all worked as one team, in perfect unison, carrying out the behests of the leader. He taught us a new lesson in public affairs. Though he wanted to put an end to the atrocities of the planters, he bore no ill-will against them and no bitterness against the adversary. Nor did we harbour any resentment or malice. The Champaran struggle was a fine rehearsal in the technique of *Satyagraha*. The results achieved were quick and satisfactory because it was *Satyagraha* conducted.”

Champaran was thus seen as a victory for Gandhian methods. But the movement had other impacts as well. Sumit Sarkar in his book (2004), *Modern India: 1885-1947*, written in 2004, says:

“.....the psychological impact far surpassed the concrete activities: Gandhi ‘is daily transfiguring the imaginations of masses of ignorant men with visions of an early millenium’, reported the Bettiah S.D.O. on 29 April 1917. A *raiyat* compared Gandhi to Ramchandra, and declared before the enquiry committee that ‘tenants would not fear the Rakhshasa-planters now that Gandhi was there’.

However, by late 1917, some peasants refused to pay the reduced rent or *sharahbeshi*. This reduced rent had been accepted within the Gandhian settlement. Before leaving Champaran, Gandhi told Rajendra Prasad that the only real solution ‘was the education of *raiya*ts and a constant process of mediation between them and the planters’. Gandhi left behind a group of fifteen volunteers in Champaran, who started constructive village work. But by May 1918 only three village-level workers were still active in Champaran. Success in Champaran was thus partial in terms of conflict transformation as the situation had not been transformed completely.

12.4 FEATURES OF GANDHIAN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN ACTION

Conflict transformation is the process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, and if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict. Mark Juergensmeyer in his book *Gandhi’s Way: A Handbook of Conflict Resolution* written in 2002, emphasizes the core of Gandhian *Satyagraha* very aptly when he says, “Winning in the Gandhian sense, requires a transformation of relationships.” Besides, conflict transformation sees conflict as a catalyst for change. Gandhi too tried to bring out constructive and positive changes through the non-violent *Satyagraha* campaigns in the conflict situations of South Africa

and Champaran by fighting for truth, respect, rights and justice against racial, discriminatory and exploitative policies. Non-violence was a critical aspect of Gandhian Satyagraha but in practice, Gandhi settled for less than complete non-violence sometimes, as was the case in 1918 when he campaigned for military recruitment in the hope that the British would give some political concessions to the Indians in the post-war period.

Additionally, conflict transformation recognises that conflicts should be transformed gradually. In both the cases of South Africa and Champaran, Gandhi did not intervene at the drop of a hat. He first tried to understand the situation and then tried to reason out with the authorities against discriminatory policies, ever willing to negotiate and compromise. But if these things did not yield results, then he tried to organise the people by raising awareness through his writings and public speeches and finally, training them to perform *Satyagraha*. Gandhi therefore never tried to do things in a hurry as his guru, Gopal Krishna Gokhale had suggested this to Gandhi when he visited him at Tolstoy Farm - never to do anything in a hurry, rather think about it and then express it. Besides, training, capacity building and empowerment of the *Satyagrahis* was important in order to make *Satyagraha* successful.

Moreover, in the course of campaigns against a specific law or an exploitative policy, Gandhi never forgot to work on constructive programmes of reform and social service, for he was of the opinion that only such programmes could build a new social order. The Constructive Programme comprised of “working toward communal unity, the removal of untouchability, a program of adult education and village improvement, peasant uplift and the development of nonviolent labor unions, economic and social equality, decentralized economic production and distribution through the promotion of cottage and small-scale industries, and the abolition of various social evils.” Education was a very important component of Gandhi’s work and this was demonstrated in his two experiments of Phoenix Settlement and Tolstoy Farm. Rajendra Prasad’s *Autobiography* written in 1957 gives a glimpse of how Gandhi tried to strike at the root of social evils while concentrating on the Champaran Satyagraha:

“As a result of our stay with Gandhiji, a revolutionary change came in our day-to-day life. I was, for example, a strict observer of caste rules and restrictions. I would never eat any food touched by a non-Brahmin which was not ordinarily eaten by caste people. Gandhiji told us if this sort of culinary separatism continued we would not be able to carry on public work. People having the same objective belonged to one caste, he said. There was no answer to that sentiment and I changed my ways, as did the others.”

Furthermore, conflict transformation efforts involve a variety of actors. Gandhi too tried to include different kinds of actors in his campaigns in South Africa and Champaran. Most of all, his movements were grassroots based and enjoyed mass participation that was “controlled” rather than uncontrolled and violent. Affirming this fact, Sumit Sarkar in his book *Modern India: 1885-1947*, written in 2004 says: “.....Gandhi acquired the reputation of a man who would take up local wrongs and usually manage to do something concrete about them—a political style in sharp contrast to the established Congress pattern of starting with somewhat abstract all-India issues or programmes and proceeding from top downwards.” Gandhi thus had more faith in the bottom up approach to conflict transformation. Any campaign or movement can only be sustained when the grassroots participate in it.

In the Gandhian scheme of things, understanding and knowledge of the ground situation is important. Gandhi was always open to listening to the other point of view to get a better, objective and wholesome perspective of the problem, for example, in Champaran, the planters took Gandhi to their places to give their side of the story and see things for himself. He did give a patient hearing to their stories. Another feature was that Gandhi always separated the person from the problem. For instance, he maintained good relations with the white planters of Champaran and even visited their houses. As a result the planters too were not bitter. In fact, he sought their help in starting some schools for the ryots in Champaran.

Transparency was another key aspect of Gandhi’s transformative perspective. The following incident narrated by Rajendra Prasad in his *Autobiography* written in 1957 bears testimony to it:

“Once when one of our colleagues was recording the statements of a batch of villagers, a Sub-Inspector of Police came and took a seat near him. Our colleague shifted to another place and the Sub-Inspector followed him. Enraged, our friend asked the officer to see and hear whatever he liked from a distance. The Sub-Inspector complained to Gandhiji, saying: ‘We have orders to keep an eye on what is going on. We do not disturb your men in their work but they do not allow us to go near them. We too have our duty to perform.’

Gandhiji at once called for our friend and asked him if he was working alone or was with other people. The latter replied that he had with him many kisans who were narrating their complaints. Gandhiji asked, ‘Are you doing anything in secret?’ The other replied in the negative. Gandhiji wondered why he was trying to conceal anything from the Sub-Inspector. Our colleague replied that he was not trying to conceal anything but that his nearness disturbed him. Then Gandhiji made a characteristic remark: ‘If you were not disturbed by so many cultivators

crowding around you, why should you be disturbed by the presence of another individual?’

While working on conflict transformation, it is important for the leadership to pay attention to organisational details as well as plan for the future. This incident from the Champaran campaign, described by Rajendra Prasad in his *Autobiography* written in 1957, demonstrates that:

“The Governor of Bihar sent for Gandhiji. The letter from Ranchi said that owing to the presence of Gandhiji anarchy and lawlessness were spreading fast. The Government, therefore, wanted to remove him from Champaran but before any orders were issued, the Governor would like to meet him. We felt that Gandhiji might be imprisoned or expelled from Bihar and that we might not be later permitted to carry on the work. Gandhiji, therefore, began to make future plans. He divided us into two batches, one to work from Bettiah and the other from Motihari. He gave us full directions about our future course of action in the event of arrest. We prepared duplicates of the thousands of documents we had and arranged for their safe custody. His plans finalized, Gandhiji left for Ranchi.”

Building and cultivating relationships and networks is important for conflict transformation. Touching upon this aspect, in his *Autobiography* written in 1957, Rajendra Prasad said: “We were able to meet and know many public workers from different parts of the country and this contact was a valuable experience for us.” These relationships and networks proved crucial in working for the independence of India.

12.5 SUMMARY

Gandhi lived in South Africa for almost twenty years. It was here that he formulated and practised his novel method of *Satyagraha* in order to fight against the racial discrimination, which Indians living in South Africa were subjected to. He also carried out his educational experiments in the Tolstoy Farm set up near Johannesburg. Personally this was a very rewarding and productive period for Gandhi. The three *Satyagraha* campaigns held in South Africa also proved to be a success as all except one discriminatory policy was taken back by the Government. Champaran was the first *Satyagraha* campaign that he led in India after coming back from South Africa. Here he fought for the peasants and cultivators against the exploitative policies of the British Raj especially the *teen khatia* system. The campaign was a successful one for the limited aim of abolishing the *teen khatia* system was achieved.

12.6 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What were some of the life transforming incidents that inspired Gandhi to formulate the method of *Satyagraha*?
2. Discuss the *Satyagraha* campaigns led by Gandhi in South Africa.
3. What were some of the characteristics of the *Satyagraha* campaigns led by Gandhi in South Africa?
4. Describe the educational experiments carried out by Gandhi during his stay in South Africa.
5. What were the reasons behind the initiation of the Champaran *Satyagraha* campaign? How did Gandhi go about resolving the main issues therein?
6. Discuss the features of Gandhian conflict transformation in action.

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