
UNIT 1 RELEVANCE OF NON-VIOLENCE

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

Terrorism and violence have pervaded every nook and corner of our society. There are reports of widespread violence in different countries of the Third World, including India. Indeed, it is distressing that violent trends in human society should grow at such a fast pace when developmental activities have also been taking rapid strides. All efforts of international and national institutions as also respective governments have not been successful in curbing the violent trends in human society and rooting out the causes for such occurrences.

While materialism and the resultant greed, generated by such values have contributed to the increased violence in society, there is need to think seriously of ways and means to curb such trends. In India, there has long been the legacy of non-violence propagated by Mahatma Gandhi. It was used by Gandhi successfully in mobilizing the masses to fight the British, which ultimately was forced to leave. But what is significant is that in addition to the removal of foreign rule, he wanted to establish a democratic order, free from political, economic and social exploitation. The success of this strategy became the subject of much discussion and analysis and volumes have been written on the Gandhian technique of ahimsa or non-violence. The Unit attempts to understand the relevance of non-violence in today's times.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of Gandhian concept of non-violence;
- to comprehend the relevance of non-violence;
- to grasp the limitations of the method of non-violence.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As is well known, Truth and non-violence were the basic tenets of Gandhian philosophy. Moralization of politics had been the dream of many political thinkers, to make it a reality had been Gandhi's endeavour. As he aptly remarked: "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind." Referring to the problems of humanity created through exploitation of man by man and group by group, he thought these could be solved through *Satyagraha*, the organized use of truth, non-violence and the purity of means. Gandhi's *Satyagraha* attempted to guide the individual towards the goal of higher life and also solve political and social problems. He called it the moral equivalent of war and that the 'soul force' or 'love force' used by the *Satyagrahis* in the form of non-violent resistance and civil disobedience with no hatred for their antagonists is more powerful, effective and creative than the destructive and death-dealing weapons of war.

Ahimsa-the non-violence was a *Dharma*, no matter if, for Gandhi, it was a plant of slow growth; and along with its activities, applicable in day-to-day practices, it was the means to achieve the goal. *Satyagraha*, pursuit of Truth and fully imbibed with *Ahimsa* was the weapon applied in political actions. He, as we know, largely succeeded in *Ahimsa* and *Satyagraha*, because he was brave, humble and free from hatred. All these three were, and are, fully within the scope of non-violence; in other words, they were, and are, themselves the best introduction of *Ahimsa*. And Mahatma Gandhi practiced them in best possible manner both in his individual life and public life.

Further, he loved everybody without any discrimination. Love is a value supplementary to *Ahimsa*. It is an ornament of the brave. In it everything is good, positive and beneficial provided it is not momentary. Mahatma Gandhi saw the ultimate Truth in love and said, 'To see the universal and pervading spirit of Truth face-to-face one must be able to love the meanest of certain as myself.' That is why; his non-violence was that of the brave. It was not born out of cowardice.

Extending the principle of non-violence into political space, he envisaged non-cooperation movement. Non-cooperation involved the purposeful withholding of cooperation or the unwillingness to initiate in cooperation with an opponent. The goal of noncooperation is to halt or hinder an industry, political system, or economic process. Methods of noncooperation include labor strikes, economic boycotts, civil disobedience, tax refusal, and general disobedience.

Gandhi's emphasis was both on opposing the British Raj and on building a society that would make India worthy of her freedom. He led the famous "Salt March to the Sea" to make salt in defiance of the British tax laws and spent countless months in British jails, and at the same time he worked to end the caste system; he transformed the despised outcastes into "Harijans" (the children of God); he instituted the hand-spinning of thread and the hand-weaving of Khadi cloth;

he improved sanitation, and he established an entirely new concept of “basic education” to meet the needs of Indian villagers.

1.2 CONCEPT OF NON-VIOLENCE

Mahatma Gandhi and non-violence have become integral to each other and one cannot think of Gandhi without non-violence and non-violence without Gandhi in our own times. Gandhi's concept of non-violence is very comprehensive and seminal. As we know violence has many forms, it could be physical or psychological, it could be individual or institutional and it could be obvious or subtle. To refrain from physical violence is not enough, one has to pledge oneself even to avoid any thought of violence. Now let us analyze the concept of *ahimsa* (non-violence) and its relation with *Satyagraha*.

The word *ahimsa* literally means non-injury, non-killing. Or in other words, it means abstaining from harming anyone in any form. It implies completely renunciation of one's will or intention to hurt or harm any living being. First of all *ahimsa* means not only injury but also positive love and charity and this charity and love for everyone including to our enemy. The real *ahimsa*, according to Gandhi is that, one should not possess ill will even towards one's enemy. True observance of *ahimsa* requires self-suffering rather than inflicting suffering upon the wrongdoer. Thus, it is clear that, to be follower of *ahimsa* in the Gandhian sense is not a very easy task. As according to Gandhi the follower of *ahimsa* must always be ready to die without any desire ever to hurt or kill anyone.

Gandhi distinguishes three kinds of *himsa* and took abstention from all of them as true *ahimsa*. The first one is *Krita himsa*, (violence done by one's own self). Then there is *Karita himsa* (violence instigated and got done by somebody else). Lastly, there is *anumodiata himsa* (watching passively some violence done by someone else). According to Gandhi, the follower must abstain from all of these. Here *ahimsa* includes all moral virtues, like humility, forgiveness, love, charity, selflessness, fearlessness, innocence, nonattachment, etc. *Ahimsa* is such a moral virtue without which we could cease to be a human. *Ahimsa* is our fundamental law. According to Gandhi, *ahimsa* is the soul force and without that we cannot become nonviolent. Therefore nonviolence is possible by the strength of the soul. *Ahimsa* is the weapon of the strong, not the weak. As Gandhi says, 'Nonviolence presupposes ability to strike. It is a conscious, deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance.' So true nonviolence resides in our mind and it is an inner disposition.

Non-violence is not a negative virtue, but the positive one of love and compassion. He writes, '*ahimsa* is one of the world's great principles which no power on earth can wipe out. Thousands like myself may die in trying to vindicate the ideal but *ahimsa* will never die. And the gospel of *ahimsa* can be spread only through believers dying for the cause.' What Gandhi means by this is that non-violence is an eternal principle underlying human civilization because human existence depends on this principle. Man has been learning to practice this principle in life through centuries, though complete non-violence has not been possible yet.

Gandhi considers non-violence as the foundation of human civilization because it is this principle that prevents destruction of the human race along with the rest of the creation. It is this principle that has made man realize that human progress lies in the mutual love and respect for one another's life. Man has come to realize this truth about ahimsa after centuries of experiments. History of man is testimony to the triumph of non-violence because violence has never brought any good to mankind.

He believes non-violence as a means to Truth because he thinks that only a non-violent person can attain Truth. Truth which is the supreme principle of existence is attainable only by a person loving all existence. Non-violence is the love for all beings. Thus truth is fortified by and ushered in by love, according to Gandhi. Truth and non-violence thus are the two fundamental principles of existence, one standing for the ontological principle that sustains all existence, the other for the moral law that ensures and fortifies the former. Truth is the law of existence while non violence is the law of love. Both are moral laws in a sense but the law of Truth is more fundamental because the law of love presupposes it.

Gandhi writes, ' I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant for the *rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit.' Here Gandhi holds that the law of non-violence is the law of the spirit and is therefore superior to the law of the physical might. The law is the foundation of human life and culture. In this sense it is the law of the spiritual progress of mankind in general. Gandhi writes, 'The *rishis*, who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through nonviolence.' Non-violence is not the weapon of the weak but of the strong in the sense that only the strong man knows the limits of the physical strength. Nonviolence lies outside the boundary of violence because only when the limits of the latter are known or realized that we come face to face with non violence. The might of non-violence is far superior to the total strength of violence in the world.

The kind of non-violence advocated by Gandhi is based on cultivating a particular philosophical outlook and is integrally associated with Truth. According to Gandhi God is Truth and Truth is God. Thus one cannot think of non-violence without being accompanied by truthfulness. Gandhi believed in what he called Satyagraha, i.e., insistence on Truth. Thus first of all one should be thoroughly convinced of Truth of one's cause before launching any struggle for that. Without such deep rooted conviction one cannot consistently avoid violence in ones struggle. Gandhi stressed purity of soul time and again. One is faced with crises in life, especially when such crises Gandhi used to deeply reflect on the causes and would not take any decision unless he felt his soul is pure and without any malice. It is not easy to practice such rigorous self-discipline for ordinary people, howsoever desirable. Nevertheless it should remain an ideal for us to be achieved. We see so much violence to achieve them. Similarly we see so much state try to pursue their own desire and to perpetuate their hold over the state.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Is it the case that preferring Non-violence amounts to being cowardice?

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2) Discuss the relationship between Non-violence and Truth?

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1.3-VIOLENCE AND SATYAGRAHA

The philosophy of *Satyagraha* and non-violence had been adopted by Gandhi from his religious beliefs. Some Western thinkers believe that he got the idea from the New Testament, specially from the Sermon on the Mount. It is true that Gandhi was greatly influenced by the Sermon. But he found that it only confirmed his own *Vaishnavite* faith. As is generally known the *Vaishnavites*, the *Jains* and the *Buddhists* believe that ahimsa or non-violence is the highest virtue. And Gandhi used this philosophy to the solution of political, economic and social problems.

Though non-violence may not seem to have any authority in Hindu religion, Gandhi had his own way of interpreting the Gita. He did not consider it a book on politics or political or military strategy but a religious scripture. It showed the way to self-realization through right action undertaken as one's *dharma* (duty) without consideration of its fruit, favourable or unfavourable. Whether Hindu scriptures sanction violence in asserting one's legitimate rights or not, may be a question under dispute but Gandhi believed that they lay emphasis on ahimsa or non-violence as a great virtue.

All founders of great religion have exhorted us to avoid violence and have stressed need for peace. It is not Buddhism and Christianity alone, even Islam's central emphasis is on peace and non-violence. But he find so much violence precisely because religion as soon after the death of their founder turn into huge establishments and the politics of controlling these institutions begin and violence ensue. And of course, religious doctrine are used to legitimize violence giving false impression about the doctrines themselves. Individual violence, though condemnable is not as dangerous as institutional violence and particularly state violence.

He believed that injustice can be removed through Truth, non-violence and purity of means has been considered too idealistic to be put into practice. Those who make this criticism forget that by these means alone Gandhi achieved a great measure of success in the movements he led both in South Africa and India. He did not believe that the practice of non-violence in the political field was beyond the capacity of man, as he said: 'The first condition of non-violence is justice all round in every department of life.... The votary of non-violence has to cultivate the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear. He who has not overcome all fear cannot practice ahimsa to perfection'.

It is also proved that any conflict between individuals or communities or races or nations can be resolved, when the traditional methods of reasoning and peaceful negotiations fail, not taking recourse to the usual armed rebellion or war which is immoral and against human nature and divine law of love, but by adopting the technique of Satyagraha, i.e., the spirituality of combat. It enjoins and empowers the *Satyagrahis* to hang on firmly or adhere steadfastly to truth and non-violence in resisting and defying unjust laws unmindful of the suffering which civil disobedience brings. *Satyagraha* seeks to convert the opponent to the Truth through self-suffering and sacrifice of the *Satyagrahis*. In other words, by putting the law of 'Condemn the Evil but, at the same time Love the Evil-doer', *Satyagraha* pierces through the heart of the opponent, opens his eyes to see the Truth, and weans him away from untruth and violence. In order to bring about such a radical transformation in the antagonist, the *Satyagrahi* must have absolute faith in self-suffering as a means of revealing the Truth to the opponent and hence a source of new life to the antagonist. He says 'the appeal of reasoning is more to the head, but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding of man.'

In order to be effective, self-suffering, the core of *Satyagraha* should be reinforced with courage of conviction and strong will power to hold on steadfastly to *Ahimsa* in the face of brute force. in fact , Gandhi advised that 'when there is only a choice between cowardice and violence I would advice violence'. He understood and practise non-violence as in its positive sense as 'love in action'. Thus for rigorous practice of non-violence strict self-discipline is highly necessary. Gandhi had practiced this strict self-discipline to a degree of perfection. If one accepts Truth through self-discipline no violence of any degree will be involved. Anything enforced from above, be it truth, involves. Thus non-violence has to be accompanied by strict self-discipline. A non-violence resister has to have great patience. In fact truth and patience are

quite integral to each other. One can hardly pursue the truth without inexhaustible amount of patience.

Such an approach when carried out in the best spirit of nonviolence has four important characteristics: (1) Participants fight tyranny, aggression, an evil system with all the vigour at their command, but they believe in the worth and dignity of their opponent and insist upon loving him even when he showers abuse or inflicts physical punishment upon them, yes, even when he kills them. (2) Participants try to bring about a change of attitude within their enemy; they strive to raise his sights, not to subdue, cripple, or kill him. (3) They take loss and suffering upon themselves. They do not inflict pain upon another, nor threaten him with pain. There is no warning of retaliation, massive or otherwise. It is important to bear in mind that nonviolent action does not mean the absence of violence, nor the absence of anguish and suffering, but that the agony involved is taken upon one's self and not visited upon an opponent. (4) Constructive work is undertaken wherever possible. Protest against injustice, against destructive systems and practices is not enough. The eradication of poverty, the building of cooperatives, the establishment of village industry, the improvement of educational facilities, these and similar efforts must be constantly entered into.

The term "nonviolence" is often linked with or even used as a synonym for pacifism; however, the two concepts are fundamentally different. Pacifism denotes the rejection of the use of violence as a personal decision on moral or spiritual grounds, but does not inherently imply any inclination toward change on a socio-political level. Nonviolence, on the other hand, is most often associated with the intent to achieve social or political change. Indeed, the desire to pursue change effectively may be a reason for the rejection of violence. Also, a person may advocate nonviolence in a specific context while advocating violence in other contexts.

1.4 RELEVANCE OF NON-VIOLENCE

The acid test of relevance of works and views of a great man is definitely the application of them in prevailing conditions of time and space. Mahatma Gandhi is fortunately among those few great men in the entire human history whose individual life, works and views not only had proved to be great and exemplary during his own lifetime but their relevance and significance remained intact after his passing away. Recognizing the relevance and effectiveness of non-violence, United Nations observes October 2– the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi as International Non-Violence Day.

For, Gandhi became ideal hero for thousands around the world in general and renowned figures like Martin Luther King Junior of America, Nelson Mandela of South Africa and Ninoy Aquino of the Philippines in particular. Simultaneous to this, his views and works are still worth giving a thought, and if they are applied according to the prevailing conditions of time and space, no doubt, they are fully capable of bringing sound and beautiful results and some time beyond expectations.

Many examples of non-violent action include: Martin Luther King's adoption of Gandhi's nonviolent methods in the struggle to win civil rights for African Americans, and César Chávez's campaigns of nonviolence in the 1960s to protest the treatment of farm workers in California. The 1989 "Velvet Revolution" in Czechoslovakia that saw the overthrow of the Communist government is considered one of the important of the largely nonviolent revolutions. Many

ruthless dictatorships have been undermined as a result of mass protest by unarmed civilians, such as those of the shah in Iran (1979), Marcos in the Philippines(1986), Pinochet in Chile (1989) and Ceausescu in Romania(1989). Most recently the nonviolent campaigns of Leymah Gbowee and the women of Liberia were able to achieve peace after a 14-year civil war. In an essay, "To Abolish War," evolutionary biologist Judith Hand advocated for the use of nonviolent direct action to dismantle the global war machine.

It may be pertinent to mention here that Gandhi believed and showed that civil resistance is the inherent right of every citizen and is a sovereign remedy in the hands of the people. His political theory and action can only be appreciated if this note of defiance of evil and resistance to any irresponsible authority, irrespective of political forms, which tramples on the individual's liberty and freedom, is duly recognized. The legacy of Gandhi, Dr. King and many others stands to be seriously challenged at this juncture of human history. Both of them as also several political thinkers have viewed violence and democracy as incompatible. But Gandhi's interpretation gains relevance and appreciation from communist thinkers as he considered any sort of exploitation of man by man indistinguishable from violence.

It is not possible to indefinitely bear injustice and tyranny. The unchecked violence of tyrants degrades human beings. Pioneers in every field have always worked for freedom of belief, expression, movement etc. If nations do not adopt Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence to remove injustices and resolve national and international disputes, there is no escape from hate, violence and war. There is also no escape from weapons of war becoming sharper and ever more destructive. Today, we have reached a stage when their use will not only destroy civilization but may also destroy the human race itself.

One can legitimately ask: why should non-violence be used when violence offers more tangible and faster solutions? It is important to realize that the use of violence to solve a social or political problem creates a host of other problems in its wake. No matter how pure and sublime one's aim is, use of violence to achieve it can never be justified. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi: 'Violence breeds violence...Pure goals can never justify impure or violent action...They say the means are after all just means. I would say means are after all everything. As the means, so the end....If we take care of the means we are bound to reach the end sooner or later too' that is available to all. One doesn't need either time or resources to acquire this tool. Every single person in this world can practice non-violence right from this moment, if one realizes its importance.

Also, non-violent approach breaks the cycle of violence and counter-violence, which is usually triggered by the use of violence as a solution. If one group attacks another one violently, the attacked group is naturally instigated to retaliate with violence. This, in turn, provokes the first group to counter-attack with fiercer violence. This chain reaction continues until the government agencies effectively quell it or one of the groups is completely wiped out i.e. until a group has 'won.' How can we term this outcome as a 'win' when there is no one to celebrate the 'win' because this disastrous cycle results into nothing but massive bloodshed and deaths? Ethnic cleansing and communal riots are the obvious examples in which there is widespread bloodshed.

In fact, retaliatory violence legitimizes aggressive violence in the eyes of people. Also, violence 'empowers' victims and they begin to behave with the sense of power, which is the root of evil. Thus 'empowerment' of victims of violence through violence aggravates the situation. The

victim in fact is not empowered through violence as he thinks. He, in turn, also become part of the same game and both aggressors and victims find justification in each other and become each other's mirror image.

It is a fact that non-violent Satyagraha sometimes takes longer time but, definitely, it cause less damage to persons and property and does not leave trace of hatred and ill-will. Ultimately imbibed with Ahimsa it is pursuit of Truth and Truth wins always. It is not argued that everyone will have faith in non-violence. It is very natural that some will not like it due to difference in perception. Non-violence, as a strategy, was often rejected and criticized by many, basically on the grounds that violence is a necessary accompaniment to revolutionary change and that right to self-defense is fundamental.

Whichever side of the coin one chooses to look at, violent means cannot ensure a sustainable peace. To achieve a good end, means should also be good. A fragile peace is no peace at all. Non-violence, in essence, is the use of peaceful means to bring about a positive and lasting social or political change. Use of non-violence as a solution is tantamount to giving aid to the injured, water to the thirsty and food to the hungry.

The obvious question which arises is: whether a non-violent society is foreseeable in the distant future. While attitudes have to change, so does the character of the state and its relations and behaviour with the people. One cannot deny that not until humanity dies will Gandhi's philosophy have relevance for us...it was a voice against injustice and oppression – the eternal voice of humanism. To practice non-violence, all we have to do is to understand what non-violence really is. What changes it can bring and how we can apply it to our personal, social and global life. There is a saying, 'No creation is possible without imagination'.

1.5 LIMITATIONS

Many people felt that non-violence as a principle and as a tactic could work in the context of colonial rule in India, for it wrong-footed the British, putting them on the defensive. Until then they had been able to counter what was normally the petty violence of protesters with a ruthless use of their superior gunpowder. Faced with non-violence they were left in a quandary, as their counter-violence merely served to reveal the moral bankruptcy of their rule. In this respect, Gandhi's insistence on complete non-violence was critical in achieving a moral advantage for nations.

But can we consider non-violence as an absolute value? It is often argued that non-violence works very well against opponents with a moral conscience but not so much useful against an enemy without moral sense. For example, Nelson Mandela who is a great admirer of Gandhi felt that non-violence could not succeed in South Africa against a white regime which was not prepared to accept the morality of the struggle for democratic rights and which was prepared to use the most violent and murderous means to suppress it. As Mandela wrote 'Non-violence passive resistance is effective as long as your opponent adheres to the same rules as you do. But if peaceful protest is met with violence its efficacy is at an end'. Gandhi did not accept this sort of critique-there was, he held no human without some form of moral conscience, and even the Nazis might be made to yield. As he stated 'The hardest metal yields to sufficient heat'. Dennis Dalton, otherwise a strong admirer of Gandhi, felt that Gandhian method may not have worked in Nazi Germany. Under such a totalitarian regime, even the slightest dissidence was crushed, with arrests in the dead of night and instant executions or incarceration in

concentration camps in such a way that the population as a whole remained in ignorance. He felt that *Satyagraha* can only succeed when the government is ambivalent, as was the case in India and in western democracies. In situations in which rulers are prepared to eliminate many of their citizens to remain in power, it cannot work. For example, Martin Luther King does not hesitate to call upon governmental authorities to use force to restore order when nonviolent Negroes are mobbed by violent whites. This is a tacit admission of the limits of human endurance in the given situation; it is not possible to ask men to suffer perpetually or to seek victory only through sainthood.

In a sense, it can be said that Gandhi's quest for a predominantly non-violent society as the realizable goal as unattainable due to human imperfection. It indicates the direction rather than the destination, the process rather than the consummation. The structure of the state that will emerge as a result of a non-violent revolution will be a compromise, a *via media*, between the ideal non-violent society and the facts of human nature. It will be the attainable middle way of Gandhi, the first step after the revolution, towards the ideal.

1.6 LET US SUM UP

We have looked at the Gandhi's concept of non-violence and his search for and perfection of a tool of political action that would yet remain faithful to his philosophical commitment to non-violence. We tried to understand the call of *Ahimsa* is to use the 'love-force' or 'brute-force' to overcome evil not by inflicting injury or death on the evil-doer but by self-suffering with ardent and earnest hope of bringing about a change of heart in the evil-prone antagonist. The purpose here was to review the dynamics of Gandhian non-violent resistance - its operation and functioning in the system - and to see how it was used by Gandhi as a political weapon with the spirit of positive, liberative and self-suffering love.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What is the role of a *Satyagraha* in Non-violence?

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2) Is Non-violence an absolute value?

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1.7 KEY WORDS

Satyagrahi: seeker to convert the opponent to the Truth through self-suffering and sacrifice.

Pacifism: opposed to war or rejection of the use of violence of any kind.

1.8 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 HOLISTIC VISION OF LIFE

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

The entire Gandhian thought rests on a holistic unity of conception. It is grounded in a basic moral vision of the world. Gandhi invoked traditional concepts but he imparted to them a new social content. As in the case of religion, the very word 'religion' received a refreshing definition from him; it was not the Hindu religion, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and whichever purifies. True spirituality was not merely speculation on the Absolute, however profound or philosophical nor was it a quest for personal salvation. It manifests itself according to the extent he realizes his humanity i.e. his oneness with his fellow-men. His religion sometimes looks indistinguishable from humanism. He gave a creative interpretation to several age-old Indian concepts. As for *Maya*, the world being an illusion, he argued that we cannot dismiss the suffering of our fellow creatures and therefore provide a more alibi for ourselves. *Dharma* was the performance of duty not only by the citizen, but by the ruler as well. Fasting had long been part of a spiritual regimen; Gandhi made it a part of the armory of *satyagraha*. An ashram was considered a refuge from the hurly-burly of life for one's personal spiritual discipline; Gandhi used his ashrams to train social and political workers.

The Unit attempts to discover the underlying holistic vision and perspective that informs his views on a variety of topics. Thus by the end of the Unit you should be able

- to comprehend Gandhi's vision of holistic unity of concepts;
- to appreciate how different elements meet in Gandhi's thinking and reinforce one another.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Gandhi's philosophy has been interpreted from different angles. Some treat it primarily as a political theory. Others approach it as a religious philosophy of great contemporary relevance. Still others see it as an original theory of conflict resolution and non-violence. There are those who regard it as containing ideas extremely relevant for both economic development and for the maintenance of a sustainable economy. Finally there are those who find in it significant ideas on the relationship of art to society.

There is of course a great deal of truth in what these interpretations have to say. Taken individually, each gives an in-depth, but unavoidably partial understanding of the whole. The fact is that individual themes in Gandhi's philosophy make full sense only when they are seen in their relationship to one another and to the whole. It is the reality of this interaction that needs to be understood. It is not enough to juxtapose a series of different Gandhi's - the political, the religious, the ethical, or any other. It is not enough to know that Gandhi teaches non-violence. To know his doctrine of non-violence really well one has to know how it interacts with his position on war or his theory of the state and the relations between states. Likewise it is not enough to know that he put his religious insights into socially and politically beneficial practice. To know his religious philosophy really well we have to know how it comports with secularism that he also professed. And so on with the other major themes of his philosophy. The point is that there is an inner dynamism that brings the diverse elements into a fruitful relationship with one another. And it is necessary to understand the nature of this inner dynamism if we are to understand his philosophy accurately and fully.

"Being more things than one" is a label that fits Gandhi well. Any study of his thought that aspires to be comprehensive is bound to expose to the comparative perspective that it provides. The ancient and the modern, the Indian and the Western perspectives jointly illumine the substance of his thought. The point is how the different elements come together and constitute a coherent whole. Now, let us look at Gandhi's interpretation of *purusharthas* as a case in point to understand how he brings in commonality between seemingly incongruent themes.

2.2 INTERPRETATION OF PURUSHARATHAS

The etymological meaning of the term *purushartha*, made up of *purusha* (spirit) and *artha* (for the sake of) is that which is pursued for the sake of the spirit or the immortal soul. As understood in Indian thought, there are four *purusharthas*: *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*. *Dharma* is righteousness. *Artha* is material possession. *Kama* is the enjoyment of this-worldly sensuous pleasures. *Moksha* is seeking spiritual liberation, thereby attaining salvation. These classifications establish an account of the individual and his objectives that incorporates both the social and the transcendental. The four *purusharthas* are interrelated and do not operate in isolation. Their relation is hierarchical though, not necessarily unidirectional.

Dharma is of two kinds: *varnashrama dharma* and *samanya dharma*. The former is specifically related to each *varna* and *ashrama* and the latter is general and universal. The universal *dharma* consists of *ahimsa* (non-injury to all living beings) *satyam* (truthfulness), cleanliness, freedom from malice, compassion and tolerance.

The other two, namely, *artha* and *kama*, are not autonomous and are placed under the supervision of *dharma* and are directed towards *moksha*. For instance, *kama*, which is seeking sensuous pleasure, is not ignored. Pleasure is not to be gratified by following individual desires and wants but is related to other *purusharthas*. If it is left unsupervised it can relapse into a lower level. It is in fact regulated by *dharma* that allows only ethically sanctioned enjoyment. Whereas *Dharma Sastras* centralizes *dharma*, *Artha Sastra*, while not rejecting the primacy of *dharma*, tends to restore more importance to *artha* and *kama*. *Moksha* is liberation. There are different paths to achieve *moksha*. They consist of: *karma yoga*, *jnana yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, etc.

The mutual relationship between *purusharthas*, whether they share an oppositional relation or a harmonious one, is a matter of contention. But one can say that in most parts of the tradition, there is a radical separation of the spiritual from the political, the economic from the ethical which had cost Indian civilization dearly. Indian religious philosopher-saints are also to be blamed for placing too much emphasis on otherworldliness and *Vedanta*, and for not placing equal or greater emphasis on the importance of the active life. Some commentators felt that because of the excessive emphasis on the other-worldly, Indians did not form a permanent state for the whole of India, they did not develop manufacturing and industries, and they were unable to resist successfully external aggression. Indian intellectuals were mostly engaged in mental gymnastics about Logic, Vedanta, Poetics and similar subjects, giving little attention to the means of removing the weaknesses and the defects of the country's political and economic systems.

However, in Gandhi, with his holistic vision of life, one can find a refreshing account of *purusharthas*. He discards the old ways and attempts to creatively reconstitute the four aims of life. As a result there is now a new Gandhian paradigm. It has a specific view of the universe and of human nature, as being composed of perishable body and imperishable soul. Above all, it has a new theory of the *purusharthas*. Whereas the old paradigm saw the *purusharthas* as working in mutually exclusive terms, the new paradigm shows how they may be made to work in interactive terms. The starting point of such rethinking should include a new understanding of the meaning of the theory of the *purusharthas*. He actually demonstrated through his life how mutuality between the four goals of life could be realized. He considered his struggle for political and economic betterment of the masses as the only path to *moksha* available to him. Accordingly, a radical separation of *moksha* from the rest was not justified. The theory as Gandhi understood it was applicable to individuals, nations, and civilizations. It was not aligned to any particular theology or metaphysics. If it needed a theological grounding, Christian and Islamic theology could do as easily as could Hindu theology.

In *Hind Swaraj*, he pointed out for the first time that a dynamic relationship ought to exist between the pursuit of *swaraj* as political freedom and *swaraj* as spiritual freedom, for the pursuit of one assisted the pursuit of the other. He advocated that a moral link ought to exist between the arts and the political life. Even in Sabarmati Ashram, politics and economics were

not unconnected matters, being linked to *dharma* and *moksha*. Celibacy was an important part of ashram life, thereby underlining its dynamic relationship to the pursuit of politics, ethics and spirituality.

In his Autobiography, the pursuit of *Moksha* is identified as the pursuit of Truth. Those who aspire to *Moksha* cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. He says, in his case, his devotion to Truth has drawn him to the field of politics. To maintain the holistic relationship of *moksha* to *artha*, one needs the support of *dharma* as well. That was why those who say that *dharma* had nothing to do with politics did not know what *dharma* meant. Also, the pursuit of *moksha* understood in this way involved a continuous process of self-purification which brings in celibacy too. In his translation of *Gita* also he says, the author of the *Gita* has dispelled the delusion that in activities such as trade and commerce, *dharma* has no place. He also redefined the concept of *purusharatha* to include women as well. He says that the word *purusha* should be interpreted in its etymological sense, and not merely to mean a man. That which dwells in the *pura*, the body, is *purusha*. If we interpret the word *purusharatha* in this sense, it can be equally used for men and women.

In this sense, Gandhi attempted to reconstitute the system of values of Indian civilization and to rehabilitate the principle of mutuality especially between *artha* and *moksha*. One can observe how two Gandhis - the politician and the *sannyasi* (ascetic) - co-exist with internal integration. It was as if the two Gandhis were unable to separate from each other. To the British, Gandhi appeared to be a political representative of Indians, to the Indians he appeared to be a holy man.

2.3 MORALITY AND RELIGION

The dynamic unity between morality and religion in Gandhi accrues from the centrality of Gandhi's moral vision. All of Gandhi's thinking is based on a fundamental moral science of the world. For Gandhi, man is essentially involved in the moral enterprise of getting at the truth-very fundamentally at the truth of himself by overcoming the ego and its self-projection, as also and, consequently at the truth of the other, in one's knowledge of the other. All of life's activity must be based in truth and for this *ahimsa* or love and freedom from ego-projection must inform man's life and action so that man, through his mundane life, actualizes the moral enterprise. For Gandhi, morality has to inform a complete life. It cannot be the domain of just one aspect of man's existence while he lives out the other moments using whatever means he deems appropriate. There is no distinction between means and ends in Gandhi's moral thinking, and the moral life cannot be alienated from the rest of man's existence. The moral vision, if it is to be genuine, is the core of a good life and must be reflected in the whole of life.

For Gandhi, religion is nothing if, not a culture-specific articulation of a community's moral vision, and its spiritual experiments in trying to internalize that vision. Religion for Gandhi is built up around a core moral vision. It is a culture specific articulation of this moral sense and develops in to a religious tradition with the moral and the social and cultural elements interlinked in to a system. Thus it is that Gandhi himself attempts to distinguish the core of a religion which it shares with other religion from the social aspect, which is culture-specific. When religion is grounded in a moral response to the human predicament it is certain to share element of that

response with other religion born of other cultures, for the fundamentals of morality and moral consciousness remain the same.

He elucidates the relationship between morality and religion by saying 'I reject any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and is in conflict with morality. I tolerate unreasonable religious sentiment when it is not immoral'. As soon as we lose the moral basis, we cease to be religious. There is no such thing as religion overriding morality. Man of instance cannot be untruthful, cruel and incontinent and claim to have God on his side. He explains what he means by religion, 'It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and whichever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the maker and itself'. So, for Gandhi, religion articulates a moral vision and it shares the core moral vision across traditions with other religions. The basic point of connection between religion and politics is furnished by morality. For him, religion is to be understood not as the dictates of a transcendent being, but as a spiritual understanding of a moral vision from within particular religious traditions. It is meant to articulate moral and ethical insights within a particular cultural and spiritual tradition. Thus religion and morality are inalienable.

He maintained that there is a core moral consciousness within every religion. Different religions share elements of their basic moral core, for humanity has a common moral response to the human predicament. This has important lessons for religious toleration and for the cross-cultural borrowings for where different religions are culture-specific articulations of a fundamental moral vision, the dichotomy between them is peripheral and secondary. At heart they are all about righteousness and virtue. This is an important lesson in religious toleration and explains Gandhi's own on the same. Each religion can reevaluate itself from time to time and question its cultural and social periphery in terms of the core moral vision. It can, if it finds certain customs and practices wanting, rejuvenate them by bringing aspects of the moral vision to bear upon their understanding and evaluation. It is the moral vision which is sacred and not the customs and social framework that is simply part of cultural baggage, as it were.

Another interesting point about Gandhi's conception is that, since morality is the core of religion, moral consciousness and moral ideas can quite comfortably be articulated in religious and spiritual terminology. This is in contrast to the Kantian enterprise which tries to understand morality as independent of religion. Though both the Kantian and Gandhian endeavour have a common opposition to utilitarianism in morality, they differ in this very important aspect. For Gandhi's moral sense can be undergrounded in religion and use its spiritual and belief framework. Thus, true religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other. Religion is to morality what water is to the seed that is sown in the soil.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Reflect on the uniqueness of Gandhi's interpretation of purusharathas.

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2) Can Religion be coterminus with Morality?

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2.4 THE POLITICAL AND THE SPIRITUAL

Now, we look at the reconciliation of the political and the spiritual, a moral obligation on every citizen in Gandhian scheme of things, based on the understanding of Truth about politics being a part of a *purusartha* where the ethics of the means had to be as legitimate as the ethic of the end itself.

For Gandhi, politics must be grounded in morality, in the moral vision. As the most important activity which is the condition of ensuring a civilized existence and the possibility for the good life to its citizens, politics cannot be alienated from the moral enterprise. The good man makes politics a part of his moral life. It is the one place where man can be of most service to his fellow men, where he has the greatest opportunity of moral growth. There the overcoming of the self projection of the ego has the best and most far reaching results. Morality is the basis of what Gandhi calls “true politics” in contrast to “power politics” or degenerated ego-centered political action where the political life is alienated from the moral. Further, since politics is grounded in morality and morality can be well articulated, and the moral enterprise lived, in religious and spiritual terms, the whole political enterprise can become moral one.

As long as religion is understood in terms of the moral vision, Politics can be interpreted as a spiritual exercise for moral growth. This can be done by understanding politics in terms of service and social well-being. Contemporaneously, the whole exercise can be done of self-purification and overcoming of ego-aggrandizement by a practical ahimsa interpreted in terms of love and service, beautifully coordinating the political into an enterprise of moral growth and development.

This is the “true politics” of Gandhi which he means by the constructive programme in politics, as in service oriented politics. This is instantiated by the issue in his “constructive programme”. i.e., issues like those of village upliftment, sanitation, education, removal of untouchability, *khadi*, and so on.

Being a *purushartha*, politics belongs to the field of *artha*. As such it is the pursuit of legitimate self-interest, individual and collective, attained through the exercise of constitutionally permitted use of force. Politics is both a mode of life and a mode of activity. As a mode of life, it is life lived in the political community, which today, in most cases, is the civic nation. As a mode of activity, it is the striving for power and wealth within the bounds of ethics (*dharma*) and within the requirements of a healthy spiritual life (the pursuit of *moksha*). Because politics is a *purushartha*, it is necessary for full human development. Again, because it is a *purushartha*, it is by definition, compatible with the other basic ends of life - *dharma*, *kama*, and *moksha*. The practice of sound politics should therefore be mindful of the need to cultivate the relationship between all the *purusharthas*. Such cultivation should take place in the realm of civil society, however. It therefore forbids the use of the coercive power of the law or other means of coercion to promote spirituality. That is to say, the maintenance of the relationship between the spiritual and the political may not lead to the establishment of a state-religion, persecution, tyranny, or theocracy of any kind. On the contrary, the reconciliation between the political and the spiritual is possible only in a free society.

Gandhi's notion of the "spiritual" concerns the pursuit of truth in all its diversity. More specifically, spirituality is concerned with the eternal in us as distinct from the temporal that surrounds us. In another sense, the pursuit of the spiritual is concerned with the desire for communion with God. In still another sense, the spiritual is what concerns the welfare of the immortal "spirit" - *purusha*, or *atman* - that dwells within. In Gandhi's ordinary language the term used for spirit was soul. This concern expressed itself in many ways: for example, in the exercise of soul-force, as in *satyagraha*. All that contributed to and maintained the welfare of the soul was part of the spiritual life.

Very typically, the spiritual life for Gandhi was inseparable from action in the world, from the active life in the fields of politics, economics, and social reform. In this respect his spirituality differed radically from the spirituality of the yogis and ascetics of the past and the present. Social and political action informed by true spirituality was able to take the true measure of wealth, power and pleasure. In this sense the spiritual life facilitated the 'practice of justice and non-violence.

Finally, true spirituality for him was an indispensable means of overcoming the most evil of all hatreds - hatred based on religion. That was why in his spiritual life respect for all religions was counted as one of the eleven virtues. Gandhi's humanism had a very deep spiritual content. In affirming the intrinsic connection between the spiritual life and the political life, he stands almost alone among the great teachers of India. The spirituality that Gandhi has in mind has nothing to do with sectarianism coming from any quarter. Any spirituality that promotes justice, non-violence, and peace is compatible with Gandhian politics. This left Gandhi with a unique conception of politics and it was this conception which he actualized in his political experiments.

Critique of Civilization

Gandhi articulated his conception of civilization in response to the disturbing features he perceived in modern civilization. His critique of civilization becomes important to the final development of his understanding of politics and spirituality. His work *Hind Swaraj* was a political, economic, moral and cultural response to the colonial experience. In that he opposes industrial revolution, which brought into existence the modern western civilization. Gandhi disliked India turning into a capitalistic country. As he remarked "It would be folly to assume that an Indian Rockefeller would be better than an American Rockefeller." Therefore, culture from Gandhian perspective is based on spiritual, moral and non-mechanical.

Gandhi thinks that that modern civilization is obsessed with 'hunger of wealth and greedy pursuit of worldly pleasure. Here, human being devotes his whole energy to increase wealth in order to get pleasure and bodily comfort for his live and living. But this sort of life brings cruelty, the oppression, exploitation, and indignity etc. And that we can call the hypocrisy of modern civilization. Therefore in the quest for material comfort modern civilization "takes note neither of morality nor of religion". And human being's entire effort is vested in acquiring wealth and material pleasure to satisfy his materialistic life in this materialistic world. According to him modern civilization based on violence and does not respect all life and, in its progress onward, it has not hesitated to resort to wholesale destruction of even human life.

Thus, the quest for material pleasure leads man to ceaseless activity in order to satisfy his unlimited material comfort. So the industrialization took its birth and it becomes the means of satisfying the individual's hunger for more and more worldly goods. But Gandhi condemns the industrial mode of production. Because industrialization helps pamper the human body through a proliferation of wants and it reinforces the structures of inequity, exploitation and domination. The industrial mode of production brings two types of tendencies towards physical and social mobility. The 'multiplication of wants and machinery contrived to supply them' reduce man to a mere cog in the machine. Thus, for Gandhi, modern civilization stands for the emasculation of man, promoting exploitation and dominance and unleashing violence and killing morality. He rejects this sort of industrialization. According to him discontent, unrest and conflict become endemic in modern civilization. There are factors like, machine including railways, professions like those of lawyers and doctors and the institution of modern education, that reinforce the

tendency of modern civilization to prefer the pursuit of self-interest against morality and religion. And railways symbolizes man's attempt to annihilate space and time and thus transgress natural limits. It has several adverse consequences. Mainly it violates the natural rhythm of human body.

Thus, by rushing about from place to place by means of railways and 'such other maddening conveniences,' man transgresses natural limits. Secondly it has been instrumental in the rapid spread of disease. Thirdly railways, by joining distant places have made it possible to transport goods in a short time from cheaper markets to dearer markets creating conditions of scarcity at some places that ultimately lead to famine. Gandhi denounces the professions of lawyers and doctors. Apart from the fact those lawyers have a vested interest in advancing quarrels, which for them is 'one of the avenues of becoming wealthy'. They have also helped in consolidating and tightening the grip of English rule in India by accepting and giving legitimacy to English law for regulating Indian affairs. As far the doctors, they receive Gandhi's wrath not only because they practice vivisection and use animal fat or spirituous liquors in the preparation of medicines, but also because they encourage indulgence and therefore weaken control over mind.

Gandhi also is very critical of modern education as well. Gandhi argues that knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic or of geography, astronomy, algebra, geometry, etc., may help in performing the responsibilities of an occupation but it does not help in character building on which depends the performance of one's main role in life. According to Gandhi true education is something different. Man is made of three constituents, the body, mind and spirit. Spirit is the one permanent element in man. The body and mind function on account of it. Hence, we can call that education which reveals the qualities of spirit. Having looked at Gandhi's views on education and training, we now turn to his observations on modernity and his critique of materialism and his alternative ideas.

On Modernity

Gandhi has been a staunch critique of the modern civilization based on the modern science and technology. In his *Hind Swaraj* he has outlined the moral bankruptcy of this civilization because of its excessive reliance on the brute force and the materialist values. Gandhi is of the view of that science and technology of the West which have shaken the spiritual foundations of human civilization are pursuing an amoral goal. He rejects the ideal of science and technology which consists in securing human progress and happiness through introduction of machines and other mechanical devices. Science and technology have in fact contributed to the human misery, according to Gandhi, by their relentless pursuit of material progress at the cost of spiritual progress and happiness.

According to Gandhi, introduction of machines and industrialization have resulted in more poverty and misery because man has been displaced from his natural habitat and work. This has made man dependent on the heavy machines and the other gadgets which have replaced human labour. For Gandhi, the industrialized civilization of the West has caused the moral and spiritual sickness in man leading to a total collapse of the moral values. Thus modernity has failed to bring progress to mankind. Modernity has been associated with the material progress and the

consequent loss of human values. Hence Gandhi calls for a total rejection of the soulless civilization of the modern West. Gandhi's calls for a return to the simple and ideal village life and the life of the less material; needs and more spiritual aspiration is predicated upon his belief that human spirit is higher than the human body and that the moral and spiritual values are higher than the material values.

Gandhi's critique of modernity is based on his ideal of spiritual progress of humanity which is based on the pursuit of truth and nonviolence. A spiritually enlightened human society will be far more nonviolent and wedded to truth than any other civilization. The foundation of this new society will lie in our total dedication to truth and nonviolence. Modernity is based on the cognitive idea of truth as the foundation of a scientific world-view, not a moral one. Only if truth is so conceived can science become the paradigmatic pursuit of our culture, without it the scientific outlook lacks its deepest theoretical source. It is a mark of Gandhi intellectual ambition that by making it exclusively and exhaustively moral and experiential notion instead, he was attempting to repudiate the paradigm at the deepest possible conceptual level.

He strives to drive home the point that the cognitive ideal of truth is the source of the technological exploitation of man and nature and therefore he pleads for a total replacement of this ideal by the ideal of truth as a moral and spiritual ideal. With truth as cognitive being replaced by truth as moral and spiritual, Gandhi has turned the modern civilization on its head. He envisages the new world-order based on the spiritual grasp of truth through non-violent actions and thus on the actions based on spiritual understanding of life of man and nature. This is predisposed to bring about a moral and spiritual transformation of man thus entailing a transformation in the metaphysics of man and nature.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) How Gandhi reconciles polity and the spirituality?

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2) What are the criticisms against Western Civilization?

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2.5 LET US SUM UP

Gandhi challenged conventional wisdom, broke through traditional categories of thought, stretched the boundaries of imagination in all areas of life, and opened up new philosophical and practical possibilities. He was a man of both thought and action, a rare combination. As a man of thought, he saw through the madness of modernity, and offered an alternative vision that combined the best insights of both the pre-modern and modern world-views while avoiding the self-indulgent individualism and moral complacency of the currently fashionable post-modernism. He also discovered a uniquely moral method of political change in the form of *satyagraha*, and provided an effective alternative to violence. As a man of action he led the greatest anti-colonial struggle in history, encouraged a humane and liberal form of patriotism, showed how to lead a successful political life without compromising one's integrity, and offered a rare example of morally responsible leadership.

2.6 KEY WORDS

Purushartha: *Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha* are pursued to find meaning or purpose in our life.

Holistic Vision: seeks comprehensive understanding aimed at reconciling some of the apparent contradictions.

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UNIT 3 SOCIAL EGALITARIANISM AND GANDHI

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Gandhi and the problem of Untouchability
- 3.3 Empowerment of Women
- 3.4 *Sarvodaya*
- 3.5 Secularism and Religion
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 References and Further Readings

3.0 OBJECTIVES

Egalitarianism is a belief that favors equality of some sort. Its general premise is that people should be treated as equals on certain dimensions such as race, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation, economic status, social status, and cultural heritage. Egalitarian doctrines maintain that all humans are equal in fundamental worth and all people should have the same rights. The Unit discusses Gandhi's concerns as an ardent social reformer committed to such egalitarian vision of the society. He was very much against social injustices, tyrannies and oppressions. He fought against the evils of racism, imperialism, communalism, gender injustice, communalism and social segregation. His ideas on equality continue to generate interest among the admirers as well as critics. The Unit examines his efforts especially in the areas of annihilating untouchability, empowerment of women, the principle of *Sarvodaya* and diversity and dialogue between religions.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of Gandhian idea of social equality;
- to appreciate his ideas on complex social issues like caste, gender and *sarvodaya*;
- to understand his nuanced position on religion.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Gandhi's genius as a social reformer lay in his intuitive ability to fuse timeless principles with evolving strategies. Throughout his life, Gandhi gradually shifted the emphasis of his political endeavours from non-violent resistance to constructive schemes for the social good. For him, non-violent resistance (*satyagraha*) and *sarvodaya* were logical corollaries of the same philosophical perspective. Non-violent resistance, however, aimed to set right entrenched abuses or to abolish some patently unfair laws or practices. But persisting non-cooperation with perceived evils cannot by itself create an egalitarian society. He believed that everybody must earn his bread with the sweat of his brow. This was the crux of his theory of 'bread labour'. His concept of egalitarianism was centred on the preservation of human dignity rather than material development. He visualised a society based on the principles of non-violence and truth. His ideal social order was not a sort of platonic myth of 'Republic'. He built strong bridges between theory and practice. His goal of life was to live in a non-exploitive society. His '*Hind Swaraj*' was anchored on trusteeship and anti-machine and technology that displace men from livelihoods. He exploited indigenous (*swadeshi*) resources and shunned foreign goods. He emphasised on the purity of end and means. He respected diversities and pluralities. According to him, religion and politics are inseparable, whereas politics is inspired by morality and spirituality. His experiments with truth are aimed at a new moral and societal order.

3.2 GANDHI AND THE PROBLEM OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Untouchability in India, as the race and colour problems in the West, rested upon the idea of the superiority of one section of people over another on account of their birth. Eradication of untouchability was one of the central concerns of Gandhi. The disease of untouchability permeated in our society was seriously diagnosed at various levels by Gandhi and his numerous associates dedicated to the cause of eradication of this evil. The long-drawn struggle for more than three decades had initial difficulties on account of serious opposition from orthodox Hindus. The customs of treating untouchables by our society had greatly lowered their social status. Their dwellings were outside the villages and were not permitted to use public tanks, ponds, wells and other places. The very 'touch' of an untouchable was hateful. Untouchability, in practice, has been almost a total negation of fundamental rights as well as of all criteria of civilized and decent existence. It may appear shocking to people to imagine that in many parts of India, some decades back, a higher caste Hindu could touch a cow, a goat, a dog and a cat without being contaminated but the touch of a human being of the untouchable community could pollute him.

Gandhi fought against these social practices and advised the status-conscious people to behave in a decent way towards untouchables. He opened schools for them, afforded them an honourable place in his Ashram, fought for their temple entry at numerous places, lived amongst them and participated in their social and religious functions. In a society like ours, where religion and social status play dominant role, Gandhi found numerous obstacles in his mission. But his practical examples were eye-opener to millions of people who still did not wish to come out of the dilemma of religious thoughts. His efforts, however, paved the way for promoting their cause and afforded them a social status which was somewhat improved than what was in the past.

Gandhi sought to revolutionize the entire Hindu society. For him, the interdependence of Dalit and Hindu society is crucial. The two societies are organically linked with each other. He uses this as a knife that cuts both ways. There is no point in changing 'myself', excluding the 'other'. The 'other' also should experience a process of change. The inseparability of 'the self' and the 'other', which was the philosophical mainstay of the *Bhakti* movement, was invested by Gandhi with a new kind of radical militancy. The upper caste liberals romanticise the poor and the untouchables. For them, guilt is the only authentic emotion vis a vis untouchability. Gandhi transformed the notion of historical guilt into a concrete model of action for the present. He sought to convince and convert the caste Hindus and mobilise their energies by means of moral and religious appeals. He aimed to awaken them to the moral enormity of untouchability and to inspire them both individually and collectively to do all in their power to eradicate it. He encouraged them to undertake welfare activities among the untouchables in a spirit of remorse and guilt. He thought that this would have desirable effects on both. It would 'cleanse' the caste Hindus, redeem their guilt and draw them physically, morally and emotionally closer to the untouchables. It would also give the latter a measure of pride and dignity, increase their self-confidence and improve their habits and ways of life, thereby removing some of the causes of caste Hindu prejudices against them

He shocked the Hindu orthodoxy by his repeated declaration that untouchability was not a vital part of Hinduism, but was, as he used to say, only an excrescence and a plague. He claimed to be the devout follower of the spiritual and moral teachings of the Hindu scriptures. He refused to accept any interpretation of the religious scriptures including even the *Vedas* if it conflicted with the commands of conscience. Even if a religious and scriptural source would be quoted in support of untouchability he would brush it aside as an interpolation. Thus in his own gentle but terrifically powerful way, Gandhi tried to demolish the religious foundation of untouchability. By so doing not only did he bring the criteria of conscience and right reason to bear their impact on this institution but he damaged its centuries old scriptural support. Untouchability in its extreme form always caused him so much pain, because he considered himself to be a Hindu.

Gandhi maintained that in Hinduism there was no sanction for treating a single human being as untouchable. The *Bhagavad Gita* has never taught that a *chandala* was in any way inferior to a *Brahmana*. He regarded himself a *Sanatan* Hindu, because he obeyed the eternal precepts of the faith as embodied in the *Shastras* as he understood them. He had no doubt that there are many interpolations in the *Smritis* and the other scriptural books. He rejected as interpolations everything in the *Smritis* or other writings that was inconsistent with Truth and Non-violence or other fundamental and universal principles of ethics. He argued that the "idea of superiority and inferiority is repugnant to the most elementary principles of morality. A *Brahmana* who considers himself superior to any single creature of God ceases to be a *Brahmana*. If we are children of the same God, how can there be any rank among us? What will happen to the body, if these members begin to quarrel about rank? The verses in the *Smritis* about *Sudras* deserve to be summarily rejected as being contrary to the spirit of humanity." (Gandhi, M. K., September 1934)

He felt that if religious equality was provided to the Dalits, their political and economic conditions would quickly improve. His view of the problem of untouchability is basically a religious and spiritual one. He refused to recognise any separate entity for the untouchables. As an advocate of the Varna system, he wanted only four divisions. He did want the untouchables to have "all the rights common to the four Varnas." It must be reiterated here that in the Gandhian scheme, the four divisions did not signify any sense of superiority or domination, but were simply functional divisions.

Gandhi remarked, "Hinduism has sinned in giving sanction to Untouchability. It has degraded us, made us pariahs." He argued, that the *shastras* "cannot be above reason and morality." He also said, " ... if it is proved to me that it is an essential part of Hinduism I for one would declare myself an open rebel against Hinduism itself." (Fischer, L., 1997. p.185)

Gandhi believed that *varnashrama* and the caste system in ancient India had a constructive role to play. It helped to integrate the different ethnic groups under Hindu society. Further, it gave rise to a practicable system of social division of labour. But subsequently the caste system became oppressive and exploitative. This is where Gandhi brings his modern ideas of truth, justice, equality dignity of the individual etc., to the very corpus of traditional values. In view of this he urges people to see or to realize the inhuman and irrational nature of caste system. Gandhi is convinced that unless people realize this, untouchability cannot be removed by force or law.

Gandhi-Ambedkar Controversy

A few words are in order regarding the very important Gandhi-Ambedkar discussion on the issue of caste and untouchability; their difference of opinions and the mutual influence on each other. Gandhi and Ambedkar looked at the problem of untouchability from two very different perspectives. Gandhi had a very keen sense of justice and human dignity, but it was conditioned by his religious convictions. Ambedkar's views were shaped by personal experience of the inequities of the caste system; he had personally suffered the humiliations and insults meted out to an untouchable by a caste ridden society.

Gandhi's take-off point was that the problem of untouchability was a problem of the self, in this case the collective Hindu self. He had transformed the notion of individual self and the necessity of clearing the cobwebs of the caste ego was shifted to the level of the larger notion of the collective self. But he maintained the importance of internalizing these values at the personal level too. The Untouchable is a part of the Self. He saw the movement to eradicate untouchability as a sacred ritual of self-purification. He discredited and undermined the intellectual and moral basis of untouchability, but he did not concentrate on its social, economic and political roots. Ambedkar has defined the problem in terms of building an independent political identity for Dalits in the structures of social, economic, and political powers, whereas for Gandhi it was purely a religious question, that too an internal one for Hinduism.

D R Nagaraj in his article “Self-purification versus Self-respect” argued that while Ambedkar and Gandhi were political adversaries, in the India of today we need both. We need Ambedkar to remind ourselves that while criticism and even anger are sometimes necessary, so are action and reconstruction. Both Ambedkar and Gandhi were not the same persons they were when they had set out on a journey of profound engagement with each other. They were deeply affected and transformed by each other.

Ambedkar and Gandhi transformed each other. The latter extended the very scope and definition of the dalit cause. It was no more a question of mere untouchability. It had become a larger holistic understanding of the untouchables. Because of the debate between them both had changed their emphasis, to put it crudely, Gandhi had taken over economics from Ambedkar, Ambedkar had internalized the importance of religion. Both Gandhi and Ambedkar can and should be made complementary to each other.

3.3. EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Gandhi respected traditions of the society, but not at the cost of loss of individual dignity. He never hesitated to criticize the evils which had gripped the Indian society, and tried to mobilize public opinion against such evils. He realised that there were deep-rooted customs hampering the development of women, and women's freedom from such shackles was necessary for the emancipation of the nation. He assumed a pioneering role in attempting to eradicate the social wrongs committed against the women of the country through ages. When Gandhi emerged on to the political scenario, social evils like child marriage and dowry system were rampant. The percentage of women with basic education was as low as two percent. The patriarchal nature of the society confined women to the status of an inferior sex subordinate to their male counterparts. The *purdah* system was in full vogue in Northern India. Unless accompanied by their male guardians, the women were not permitted to venture out on their own. Only a handful few could avail of education and attend schools. It was in such a dismal milieu that Gandhi took the responsibility of shouldering a social crusade that led to a major reorientation of the common notion of women in the Indian society.

According to Gandhi, social reforms were essential for the restructuring of the societal values that had so far dominated the perception of Indian women. He realized that certain customs and traditions of the Indian society were antithetical to the spirit of development of the women of the nation. His practical and dynamic advice was, "It is good to swim in the waters of tradition, but to sink in them is suicide". The system of *purdah* came under Gandhi's attacks and he questioned the very foundation of this practice. For him, the *purdah* system was no less than a "vicious, brutal and barbarous" practice. The predicaments of the *devadasis*, a part of the lower, untouchable segment of the society, had an indelible effect on the sensitive mind of the Gandhi. The pathetic conditions of the child prostitutes disturbed him immensely. He left no stone unturned for rehabilitating this segment of the society, as for him guarding the honour of women was no less than protecting cows. According to Gandhi, one of the first tasks that need to be accomplished as soon as the country won freedom was to abolish the system of *devadasis*. Gandhi throughout his life waged a crusade for the upliftment of the socially downtrodden, making significant contributions for the enhancement of the status of women in India. Women under his aegis, took a milestone step towards re-establishing their identity in the

society. Gandhi's inspiring ideologies boosted their morale and helped them to rediscover their self esteem.

With the emergence of Gandhian Philosophy, a new conception of women gradually gained currency. For Gandhi, women were not mere toys in the hands of men, neither their competitors. Men and women are essentially endowed with the same spirit and therefore have similar problems. Women are at par with men, one complementing the other. According to Gandhi, education for women was the need of the time that would ensure their moral development and make them capable of occupying the same platform as that of men. In Gandhi's views, women can never be considered to be the weaker sex. In Gandhi's words, "To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to women." In fact, women for Gandhi were embodiments of virtues like knowledge, humility, tolerance, sacrifice and faith. These qualities were essential prerequisites for imbibing the virtue of *Satyagraha*. The capability of enduring endless suffering can be witnessed only in the women, according to the *Mahatma*. The doctrine of *ahimsa* as preached by Gandhi incorporates the virtue of suffering as is evident in the women. Therefore, Gandhi envisaged a critical role for women in establishing non-violence. Gandhi invoked the instances of ancient role models who were epitomes of Indian womanhood, like *Draupadi*, *Savitri*, *Sita* and *Damayanti*, to show that Indian women could never be feeble. Women have equal mental abilities as that of men and equal right to freedom. To sum up in Gandhi's words; "The wife is not the husband's slave but his companion and his help-mate and an equal partner in all his joys and sorrows - as free as the husband to choose her own path." Gandhi's reformist spirit seasoned the role that he played in uplifting the status of women in India.

In order to improve the condition of women and to carry out the social reforms effectively, social reformers felt the need for providing education to girls. Gandhi strongly criticized "excessive subordination" of the women to the men. Education, though is the key to progress in women's rights, has been sadly neglected. Tradition and custom played important parts in determining women's position in the social life. Women are deprived of equal status both in opportunities and also under law. Gandhi called upon women to join national movement with the idea that there can be no national awakening without the awakening of women. He was of the view that once the women of India were awakened, national awakening would not be delayed.

Gandhi had great faith in the Indian women about their potentialities. Women in India have suffered from numerous oppressive social customs, traditions, laws, and values, norms and deprivations that are sanctioned by various religious scriptures besides being a part of everyday essential life. Even today, an overwhelming majority of them are suppressed because of being women. From the final *non-violence* campaign in South Africa in 1913 until his death in 1948, Gandhi was supported, and was inspired by and also inspired women to a degree incomparable in Indian history. Gandhi brought women to the frontline of the national fight. Never before in Indian history women joyfully participated in public activities as they did under the charismatic call of Gandhi

In various *ashrams* and other educational and social work organizations including *Sewa Ashram*, *Sabaramati Ashram*, *Hitakarini Sabha* carried on Gandhian lines, where the women's various social problems were discussed. Girls and women were treated on par with boys and men and were paid equal attention. Gandhi was keen that women should be given equal responsibilities as

men not only in the national struggle but also in the building up of the nation. Gandhi observed that the general condition of women in India was distressing due to several oppressive social practices, values, norms and laws. Their condition was miserable both in the public and private sphere, i.e. in the family as well as in the society.

Not only there was a general awakening among the women, but under Gandhi's leadership, they entered into the national mainstream, taking parts in the National Movements. According to Gandhi, the role of women in the political, economic and social emancipation of the country was of overriding importance. Gandhi had immense faith in the capability of women to carry on a non violent crusade. Under his guidance and leadership, women shouldered critical responsibilities in India's struggle for freedom. Gandhi's urge to women to join India's struggle for independence was instrumental in transforming the outlook of women. *Swaraj* uprooted age old taboos and restrictive customs. Through their participation in Indian struggle for freedom, women of India broke down the shackles of oppression that had relegated them to a secondary position from time immemorial.

Gandhi made women into a subject, making her realize that she had freedom, qualities and attributes which are crucial to contemporary society. In a radical reconstruction, he gave her confidence in herself and in her essence. He made woman realize that she has a significant and a dominant role to play in the family, that both she and her husband are equal, and that within the family they both have similar rights. In a path-breaking intervention, he made it possible not only the involvement of women in politics, but made them realize that the national movement could not succeed without their involvement in the struggle. Gandhi ultimately empowered woman in the family and in marriage.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) How did Gandhi attack the problem of Untouchability?

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2) What is the role played by Gandhi towards empowering women?

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3.4 SECULARISM AND RELIGION

Religion as an Idea and as an Institution:

Gandhi used the word religion in two different senses: one in its denominational or sectarian sense, that is, in terms of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, etc., and the other in the traditional Indian sense of Dharma, that is, the moral code which guides a person's life and the social order. Religion as an idea is timeless whereas religion as an institution is time-bound. Without the Institutional religions the idea of religion would not find actual expression in time and place; without the idea of religion, institutional religions would lack the specifically religious element in them.

Many people criticized Gandhi for mixing religion and politics, however, these critics did not fully understand what Gandhi meant by religion. There can be no religion devoid of morality. A pure life, unruffled by passions and prejudices, is an essential prerequisite for religious experience. He emphasized that the institutional religion, or religion in its organized, denominational form, not as Dharma or a code of morality, but in the form of Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, etc. should be kept separate and that religion should be treated as a private or personal concern of the individual.

Secularism

Gandhi had a modern understanding of secularism. According to him, religion should not intrude into politics; there should be separation of religion from politics, economy, education and large areas of social life and culture. In a multi-religious society, secularism also means the state should show equal regard for all faiths including atheism. Secularism has emerged as a uniting force of Indian people against colonialism and also meant an opposition to communalism.

He was not bothered by the western idea of separation of church and state. He felt, in India religion is so powerful in the social order that the western concept of secularism did not make sense in the geo-cultural context. In deviance to the western concept of secularism, he suggested *Sarvadhrama Samabhava*, to prevent conflicts caused by religious bigotry. He believed that God is ethics and morality. He had deduced a simple but significant logic: people lived by a set of beliefs whether they are rooted in atheism, secularism or spiritualism and these need to be accommodated in secular polity. He opens up the avenues of interreligious understanding and of a spiritually justified limitation of the role of religious institutions and symbols in certain areas of contemporary life. Inter-religious harmony can be secured without requiring the people to become irreligious or anti-religious.

His idea of secularism is informed with a sense of history, tradition and is sensitive to religion. There is a scope for inclusion and accommodation in his characterization and it is normatively different from the received understanding from the West. He believed that religion and the state are inseparable, that irreligiosity encouraged by the state leads to demoralization of the people and that, therefore, the state's religious policy should be pluralistic with equal respect to all religions.

Gandhi pioneered a way of moral-political experimentation in which the relative autonomy (or, in other words, the non-absolute separation) of religion and politics from each other is used for the reconstruction of both the religious traditions and the modern state. The reformist intervention of the modern democratic state in the socio-religious sphere had to have as its complementary side some form of moral-political intervention for transforming the modern state by integrating its institutions and practices with the principles of *satya* and *ahimsa*.

While resisting religious fundamentalism, he is also skeptical about the hyper-secularism of the Western type. Some of the characteristics which are unique can be identified in his alternative are: He is committed to the idea of principled distance between religion and state which is different from one-sided exclusion or mutual exclusion or strict neutrality. He has conceptual space for community specific political rights- the right of religious communities to establish and maintain institutions for the survival and sustenance of their religious traditions. His idea of secularism entails a conceptual distinction between depublicization and depoliticization -not hostile to the public presence of religion but does not aim to de-publicize it. He is concerned as much with inter-religious as well as intra-religious domination. He combines active hostility to some aspects of religion (a ban on untouchability) with active respect for other dimensions as he believes religion has multiple values. His vision combines critique of the religion with respect consistently.

Pluralism and Co-existence of Religions

Religious Pluralism means in principle all institutional religions are legitimate. Gandhi believes all religions have their origin in divine revelation. The one true religion subsequently became many "as it passed through human medium". In other words, God had revealed himself to the humanity at the same time humanity expressed the meaning of the received revelation differently, depending on language and culture. The unities of religious truths are guaranteed because of their divine sources but their diversity becomes unavoidable. Diverse philosophical and theosophical systems, dogmas, cults and codes reflect this diversity. He used number of metaphors to convey the ideas of religious pluralism: that all institutional religions were roads that led to the same destination; they were the branches of the same tree. Further, he believed that there is a core and a periphery to all religions. The core reflects the eternal essence which is by and large common across all faiths.

Religious Pluralism provides objective basis for religious toleration within the state and also supplies the foundation for the dialogue between religions. Since all religions have a common

origin, humans had a moral obligation to respect them. The Gujarati term he uses for toleration was *Sahishnuta*, which is a more positive term than toleration. It means respect and sympathy for religions different from one's own, whereas toleration can imply an assumption of inferiority of the other. He was convinced that the future of peace between religions lay in the dialogue between religious. Dialogue was not a process of superimposing one's own religious views on the other but of understanding the other as a different religious being. To have a genuine dialogue, the participants had to maintain their own identities and beliefs. In a dialogue, one speaks from one's position. One need not hope to discover what one's position would be at the end of the dialogue, but one has to have a position grounded in truth. Such being the case dialogue can become an exercise in joint search for truth, tolerance being only means to truth. The outcome of such openness would not be the fusion or the uniting of the religions concerned but it would enable an orthodox Hindu to remain what he was and to yet to respect an orthodox Muslim. The outcome would be towards assimilation as much as possible, of the truths that were in the religion of the other. This would lead towards harmony and peace between diverse beliefs, faiths and communities.

3.5 SARVODAYA

Gandhi lived in an age of colonialism and imperialism. During his life span, two world wars were fought causing great devastation, and threatening human existence and civilization. In his own country he witnessed poverty, hunger, destitution and deprivation of millions along with many social evils. In such a scenario he was very much skeptical of the prevailing political and economic ideologies to fare better for a peaceful world. His primary concern was to build a non-violent, peaceful and progressive society with a humanistic agenda; under the above historical compulsion he imagined a socio-economic alternative with the greatest stress on moral elevation. Gandhi visualizes an integral development in society through *Sarvodaya*. It consists of the welfare of all beings. It is a spiritual and moral approach to the problems of mankind. As Gandhi claims, it is not a new approach that he is offering; it is on the other hand rooted in the ancient Indian thinking. It is not only stand for the welfare of all but visualizes a world order based on equality. The merger of one in all is based on self-sacrifice and selfless service.

The greatest good for all living beings is the goal of *Sarvodaya*. While rejecting the principles of the greatest good of the greatest number, it upholds the maximum welfare of every individual on the basis of sharing goods and services regardless of one's own contribution. By providing sufficient opportunities to every individual for their personal initiatives and capacities *Sarvodaya* aims at the total and integral development of every individual in the human society. Gandhi states: "I want to save time and labour, not for a section of mankind, but for all; I want the concentration of wealth not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all." No individual or group will be left out suppressed in the *Sarvodaya* society. Gandhi firmly believed that the individual has to work for the welfare of all. There is no growth of the individual without the growth of the society and vice-versa. Both are inter-related. Further he advocates economic equality in the sense that both intellectual work and bodily work are equal in status. He also advocates dignity of labor.

Gandhi firmly believed that economic equality is the master key to removal of conflict. Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It means leveling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth, on the one hand; and the leveling up of the semi starved naked millions, on the other. A nonviolent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. *Sarvodaya* then is the application of the principle of nonviolence in the transformation of societies: from their present forms which are mostly exploitative and disfavour the most disadvantaged, towards more balanced, inclusive and equalitarian forms in which there is Social Justice for All. Thus Gandhian concept of *Sarvodaya* advocates a casteless society in the social realm, in politics it shares a democratic vision of the power of the people, in economics it promotes the belief that small is beautiful and in religion it asks for tolerance for all faiths and its final goal is to promote peace for all mankind.

Trusteeship

Gandhi evolved the theory of trusteeship not only on his deep religious conviction that everything belongs to God and therefore, a human being can hold either his property or talent only as a trustee, but also on a number of practical considerations. He knew that to dispossess the men of property or of talent by force was bound to involve class war, hatred, proletarian dictatorship, an all powerful and coercive State, and the consequent elimination of all hope of creating a non-violent society. He also felt that many men who had acquired property had some special abilities for increasing production and many men of talent had exceptional contributions to make, and, therefore, to destroy them by force, may lead to much less of production and would be like killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. Hence his emphasis on persuading them to function as trustees rather than dispossessing them, by force, of their income or wealth. At the same time, knowing human nature as he did, he knew that mere persuasion may not be enough. He, therefore, conveyed the warning that the alternative to their being amenable to persuasion would be the triumph of forces that would dispossess them by violence. At the same time, he reminded both tenants and workers that their exploitation was possible only because of their failure to recognise their own strength and the consequent passive acceptance of their exploitation. He wanted the poor to know that the rich cannot accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor in society; and he recommended non-violent non-co-operation and civil disobedience as the right and infallible means for getting the rich to change their attitude and become trustees in the public interest instead of continuing as exploiters. He was prepared to advocate the implementation of ameliorative measures through the legislative channel, give trusteeship a statutory form, and make it a legalised institution. Appeal to the better instincts in the rich, persuasion, education regarding the inevitability of change and the greater unattractiveness of the alternative of change by violence, non-violent, non-co-operation by the exploited that would make the exploiter's functioning impossible, and finally legislative action were the series of measures that he contemplated for his programme in bringing about the change that he desired in property relations and the use of personal talents in the public interest.

Gandhi also claimed for his socialism of *Sarvodaya* and Trusteeship the ability to survive on a self-sustaining and permanent basis which, he held, was not possible in the case of the socialism

or communism of the Marxian conception. This was not only because the latter used violence as its means but also because socialism through violence only destroyed possession. According to Gandhi, nothing secured by violence could survive on a permanent basis.

The theory of trusteeship, elimination of exploitation in every shape or form; a classless society which offers no privileges by the birth or wealth or talent; mutual cooperation being the driving force of motivation and behavior; and above all, securing the welfare of all without any distinction of race, religion, sex, political affiliation: these may be said to be the highlights of the *Sarvodaya* society envisioned by Gandhi. Further human values, individual development that's always consistent with its use for the development of society; promotion of altruism to the highest degree; integration of the individual with society; lifting the whole human society to the highest level of existence where love and fair play will have the most crucial roles to play; these are the most predominant characteristics of the *Sarvodaya* ideal. *Sarvodaya* then is the application of the principle of nonviolence in the transformation of societies: from their present forms which are mostly exploitative and disfavour the most disadvantaged, toward more balanced, inclusive and equalitarian forms.

Trusteeship as a viable revolutionary force can be seen in the *Bhoodan- Gramdan* Movement initiated by Vinoba Bhave during 1950s. Bhave relentlessly pursued voluntary contributions from all land owners whether of wealthy or moderate means to be redistributed to the landless. Bhave was once criticized for accepting a land donation from someone who had barely enough to sustain his family. The man donated it to the village elders to redistribute to the landless. Bhave commented that such an act shows that the spirit of sacrifice has no limits. He pointed out that such acts inspire gratitude on the part of those receiving the gift and shame those who are reluctant to share.

Sarvodaya makes it absolutely clear that *Swaraj* cannot be identified only with economic prosperity and political power. As Gandhi thinks even if India gets free and achieves economic prosperity it would still not a real *Swaraj*. Real *Swaraj*, for Gandhi, means not only political power and economic prosperity but more importantly it means a certain moral development among people. A man who is having a moral life can alone have this attitude. He is the man, as he puts it, "does not cheat anyone, does not forsake truth and does his duty."

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) In Gandhian framework, what is the relationship between religion and state?

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2) How Trusteeship contributes to egalitarian ideals?

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3.6 LET US SUM UP

We have looked at the views of Gandhi on various unjust aspects of society and examined his efforts regarding some of the aspects. Gandhi believed in egalitarian ideals of a society which has basic economic, social and political equity as ingredients and supported a fundamental equality amongst all citizens. He doubted that the centralized state could serve these ends unless it had actually arisen from a people already dedicated to them. The social transformation of a nation could not be achieved in purely social terms, if for no other reason than that social action and political authority cannot be wholly disentangled. Gandhi was deeply convinced that political power could be brought to bear on institutionalized practices which subvert social and economic ends, but just as his radical ideas of social and economic reform require that these arenas be purified and understood in a new light, politics too must be purified and understood anew.

3.7. KEY WORDS

Varnas: Four divisions of traditional Hindu society.

Sarvodaya: It means welfare of all beings, 'good of all', 'service to all' and 'welfare of all'.

Trusteeship: Human beings holding their property or talent only as a trustee.

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UNIT 4 TOWARDS PEACE AND HARMONY

Contents

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Gandhi and World Peace
- 4.3 Tolerance in Gandhism
- 4.4 Peace Education
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Key Words
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4.0 OBJECTIVES

Gandhian thought and technique acquired universal appeal. Having forged the new weapon of non-violent non-cooperation he chalked out a new path not only for India but for the world as a whole. He always attempted a synthesis between theory and practice, between thought and work. For him a thought or theory had no meaning unless it was translated into practice.

The world has reached the cross-roads of history. Innumerable issues have cropped up posing a grave challenge to humankind. These issues are global in their dimensions and nature. Hardly any of them is amenable to violent means. They need to be faced on a long term basis with international cooperation. No nation, howsoever powerful, is in a position to grapple with them. Nations are tied together in an inter-dependent framework. We have to band together otherwise each one will have to hang separately. There is no escape from the relentless logic of our commonality. This will be in tune with the humanistic and holistic approach that Gandhi so well espoused. Ever active, Gandhi believed that silence and inactivity in the face of injustice amounted to cowardice and escapism. All instances of injustice have to be opposed. His technique of Satyagraha singled him out as a great fighter. Freedom, justice and equality were the ends he had in mind. He wanted to recreate a peaceful society as a just social order. But Satyagraha was to be carried out with non-violence. It was a technique of non-violent resolution of conflict. The Unit attempts to capture his vision of a non-violent peaceful and harmonious world.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have an understanding of Gandhian vision of peaceful world;
- to appreciate the moral dimension he brings forth in resolving conflicts.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Gandhi approach to non-violence places him as a farsighted, sensitive and perceptive man of peace. Modern peace researchers who have contributed to the idea of direct and indirect

violence and particularly structural violence find Gandhi as an equally original contributor to the thinking of peace research. The concept of structural violence is a product of social relationships of exploitation. Viewed from this angle, the control exercised by an imperial power is a classic case of structural violence, the British domination over India being one of them. The fight that Gandhi carried on against it was a non-violent fight against violence.

He shares with many others the goal of a decent, just and equitable society. He wants to see an end to injustice, tyranny, corruption, and the exploitation of men by their fellows. With others he is deeply concerned to establish peace in the world, but not a peace purchased at any price. He knows that the only peace that can endure and be worthy of the name is based on justice.

A believer in peace is not content with the *status quo*. He is sensitive to the poverty, the distress, and the abject misery in which millions of his fellowmen live, not only in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. He realizes that, although overt violence comes vividly to the fore when desperate people take a situation into their own hands and blood runs in the streets, violence is in fact the daily lot of a staggering number of people.

All over the world most people think that only two reactions are possible in the face of tyranny, aggression or injustice. Men and women can either use violent methods, can kill, torture, or engage in sabotage, or they can be cowardly and surrender. When it is suggested that without recourse to violence strong and forthright resistance may be offered, many people simply fail to see this as a third alternative. Instead they equate it with the second, still thinking of nonviolent resistance as the equivalent of surrender.

The pacifist, however, strives to be closer in spirit to the soldier than to the coward, and sees far more of courage than of cowardice in the lives of such practitioners of nonviolence as Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Martin Luther King and Abbe Pierre. Such men reject violence because of a deeply held conviction that the employment of violence leads men and nations away from the decent society which is their goal. Wars fought to end war, though calling forth tremendous courage and immeasurable sacrifice, have led to more rather than to less war, nor have they made the world safe for freedom and democracy.

The task is to ensure harmony and peace in this strife-torn world. The ball is in the court of the Gandhians and all social groups which stand for peace and harmony and above all — responsible leaders of different streams of society. Both, leaders from polity and civil society, have a tremendous responsibility in setting up an agenda for peace and harmony. This agenda should take its cue from Gandhi's doctrines of Truth and Nonviolence.

4.2 GANDHI AND WORLD PEACE

Gandhi in all his undertakings proved himself to be one of the greatest messengers of peace the world has witnessed and peace becomes the quintessence of his political philosophy. It is Gandhi's contributions to world peace that the world at large has aptly recognized in him. Gandhi showed the world not only the goal of peace but the supreme method of achieving

world peace. George C. Mashall writes, “In his devotion to peace and tolerance of the brotherhood man, the Mahatma was one those rare spokesman for the conscience of all mankind”. Peace and tolerance, for Gandhi, were the supreme means for the realisation of Truth and Love which were identical to the Ultimate End of man. Gandhi’s spiritual, political, and economic tenets were permeated by the principle of peace. In the light of peace alone could the human being witness truth.

Gandhi developed his world-view against the background of a world of violence. Violence by the foreign rule, economic violence against the poor, political violence against the down-trodden and underprivileged, educational violence against the illiterate and the backward and above all the violence of war and crime. Gandhi’s message of peace took all its sharpness and sensitivity against this background of violence. He says, “What you gain by violence will be lost by greater violence”. Gandhi recognized violence as the root-cause of all evils and all evils are thus reducible to violence against the spirit of truth. Hence for him non-violence or *ahimsa* becomes the only path to truth and only solution to the problems of life- individual, social and national. Hence the great role of *ahimsa* in the framework of Gandhian thoughts. Thus non-violence becomes the identified with peace. Peace becomes the true and positive way to the realization of truth.

Peace is an active and dynamic state in which one gets the opportunity to move forward towards development without confusion, fear or worry. On the other hand conflicts, disputes, dissensions, fights or struggles are illustrative of the absence of peace. Undoubtedly, harmony, cooperation and love emerge as chief characteristics of the state of peace. Despite several negative human tendencies, efforts for progress are desired by all since advancement at all levels and in all walks of life is a prime necessity of human life. In other words, it is a part and parcel of human endeavours. Hence, through the ages man has made constant efforts to gain peace either by individual or by collective means. This state remains intact today and will be so in the times to come.

Before proceeding further one more thing should be clarified. Peace is a dynamic state and not a situation of the status quo. Furthermore, it has nothing to do with inactiveness. In a state of peace, man accepting the reality of *Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam*, and freeing himself from the state of confusion, fear, tension, conflict, struggle or war, through harmony and cooperation of others in society continuously work to ensure welfare of humanity. Peace is also the best means to progress. Hence, it can be asserted that through the ages efforts for peace have been made individually or collectively and for this the method of non-cooperation has also been adopted from time-to-time. Today, because of the unprecedented scale of globalization, the importance and the need for such an effort multiplies many folds, more than in the past.

As we know, the Gandhian view in general pertains to the welfare of the human world. Moreover, Mahatma Gandhi carried out his practices accordingly. Whatever he preached he practiced them to clearly illustrate to the world that his life itself was his message. Therefore, it is necessary to take his ideas and practices together while discussing or analyzing his views. We can categorically say that Gandhian approach or view can be comprehended in real sense only if his ideas and practices are both put together in perspective.

Firstly, the basis or the centre of Gandhian view is *Ahimsa* [non-violence] as the highest human value. *Ahimsa* is a natural and eternal value. Besides being the essential condition for the existence *Ahimsa* is the means of development and achieving the goal of life. All high human values, including morality, at the centre of this discussion, originate from *Ahimsa*. Furthermore, *Ahimsa* itself is also the protector of all human values and the basis of ethics. Therefore, thousands of years ago, *Ahimsa* was declared as the *Parmodharma* by the Vedic-Hindu philosophy and it was also accepted as the *Parmabrahaman* by Jainism. Hence, *Ahimsa* is interpreted as the basis of the supreme moral law. It is the foundation of universal principles and also its leading force. It is an eternal law or the rule. To repeat, *Ahimsa* is the essential condition for existence and continuity. This fact is emphasized by Martin Luther King Junior who underlined the non-violent philosophy of the Mahatma many a time. For example he said, “I found in the non-violent resistance philosophy of Gandhi... the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom.”

Secondly, Gandhian view admits the reality of differences, disputes, conflicts and struggles, and their impact on various walks of human life. It accepts cooperation and struggle both as the necessities of society. But, at the same time it is determined to settle or resolve all states of violence by adopting *Ahimsa* in its refined form as per the demand of time and space. Thus, admitting the reality of the law of change Gandhism calls for resolution and solution of each and every struggle and dispute through the value of *Ahimsa*. In comparison to other available methods of conflict resolution Gandhism has a certain distinct and striking sense of justice. That is why; for almost a century the people of the world have looked at this method with high hopes and expectations. Not only this, some of the non-violent actions launched per the Gandhian way in different parts of the world achieved unprecedented successes.

Gandhian peace is an individual value. Just as truth and *ahimsa* begins with the individual and get realized in the individual, peace is a great value that should begin with the individual and become the basis for the development of other social and psychological attitudes. Edmond Taylor remarks, “This has produced the great Gandhian personality a combination of inner peace arising from a more total integration of all the elements in the personality than most men achieve.” The development of the spiritual personality takes place in total integration with the psychological attitudes. We find this integration revealed in the Gandhian personality. Peace become only a goal but also a condition for self-realization. Peace becomes the necessary condition for the spiritual development of the individual. For this reason the sages and *rishis* of ancient times desired total isolation in their encounter with God. Peace in the individual is identified with divine presence in the religions. For Gandhi peace becomes an individual value of great significance.

Peace becomes a great national goal in the Gandhian context. Gandhi said, “As long as India is not independent she is not in a position to contribute her share to world peace”. What Gandhi strived for was to establish the real peace in India, the kind of peace that will spread to the entire world. Gandhi’s conception independent India meant an India solidly rooted on the principle of peace where truth and *ahimsa* reign supreme. Gandhi’s world-wide acceptance and recognition are rooted on his peaceful and non-violent revolution that he exercised in this country. Martin Luther King says, “With a small group of devoted followers, Gandhi galvanized the whole of India, and through a magnificent feat of non-violence

challenged the might of the British Empire and won freedom for his people". The non-violent revolution Gandhi galvanized set forever the light of peace that could guide the country in the right direction. It is this peace that Gandhi wanted Indians to enforce and develop because the very survival of the country depended on it. Gandhi wanted India be symbol of peace for the world because the great heritage of the country always symbolized peace. Gandhi wrote, "If India becomes free during my lifetime, and if I have the strength for it, I shall remain outside the official world and fulfill my duty of building a nation fully based on non-violence". A nation based completely on non-violence only can enjoy the privilege of allowing the people to live of peace, truth and love.

Peace becomes an international goal in the framework of Gandhism. Today peace is the catch-world in international relations because the world has come to realize more than ever the vital role of peace in the very survival of mankind. At the time of Gandhi's assassination Earl Warren wrote, "The Assassination of Gandhi removes from the world by a cowardly act a powerful force for world peace. Gandhi was essentially a man of peace". The world recognised Gandhi's contribution to world peace in ways more than one. Gandhi professed his love of the British, the American and Europeans as a whole at the same time he deplored the violent sophistication and advancement of the West. Gandhi loved the British but hated their ways. He writes recalling his role in the Boer War of 1899: "I felt that I demanded the rights as a British citizen it was also my duty to participate in the defence of the British empire". Based on this conviction Gandhi formed the Peace Corpse which consisted of 1100 members to provide relief work. Gandhi's love of the British was part of the great and universal drive he had for peace. Gandhi always set his eyes on world peace as the foundation on which to build a world of truth and love. He says, "Once we accept truth and love as the foundations of our existence, then we have discovered the foundation of the unity of humanity". The unity of humanity can be based only on the principle of peace as the necessary condition for the development of truth and love in the hearts of men. Gandhi saw the message of Christ as a unique expression of peace in the world: "I want the help of especially Christians to strength my conviction in non-violence because thousands of them believe that the message of Christ is the message of World Peace and good will". Gandhism stands for international peace. It is only through peace that the world can move in the path of truth towards God.

Peace and national integration are inherently correlated. So far as India is concerned national integration bears supreme importance because India's unity is a unity in diversity. Diversity in this country is indeed a great phenomenon. True peace in this country is possible only through the integration of these diverse political, social, cultural, religious and geographical elements that divide the country far and wide. Peace through national integration was one Gandhi's foremost aims. Edgar P. Snow writes, "Gandhi never ceased to try to unite his countrymen and indeed with the whole world under the homely injunctions common to all faiths: individual perfection, tolerance, humility, love of nature (God), equality, brotherhood and cooperation". Gandhi had the great foresightedness of envisaging an India united under one National flag not merely on the basis of political unity but an integration that would supersede all the differences under the supreme directive of truth and *ahimsa*. Keeping his eyes fixed on the ideal of peace and integration Gandhi said, "Hinduism must purge itself of untouchability, remove all distinctions of inferiority and superiority, and shed a host of other evils and shams that have become rampant in it."

Gandhian spirituality is founded on peace. Gandhi says, “In violence we exhibit not the spirit but the brute in us”. The spirit can be realized and nurtured only in a state of non-violence that is peace. All aspects of spirituality that can be practiced by the individual and can lead to God are based on peace in the individual as a condition for divine light. God’s light in truth and love will shine on the individual only in a state of peace. Spirituality is the realization of truth and the vision of God through prayer, sacrifices and spiritual exercises that were so dear to Gandhi. He says, "*Ahimsa* is the only means to the realization of truth.... A perfect vision of truth can only follow a complete realization of *ahimsa*". Peace is a state of complete non-violence in the individual, society and nation. Gandhian spirituality can be realized and developed only within the framework of peace that should reign in the individual. Where there is no truth there cannot be peace and where there is no love, again, there cannot be peace. Peace in the genuine sense would thus become the co-principle of truth and love.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) How important is the principle of non-violence in resolving conflicts?

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2) Can a peace seeker be a *status quoist*?

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4.3 TOLERANCE AND HARMONY IN GANDHISM

Man’s tolerance of one another’s wrongs, tolerance and forbearance of social differences is fundamental to Gandhian thoughts. Tolerance is basic to the survival and progress of individuals, society and the nation. Dwight Macdonald says, “He practiced tolerance and love

to such an extent that he seem to have regarded the capitalist and the garbage man as his social equal". Tolerance is a fundamental Gandhian virtue that makes the Gandhian *ahimsa* a most potent thing. Tolerance becomes a refinement of the most powerful principle of *ahimsa*. In a country like India more than anywhere else tolerance becomes central value for different reasons. India is a divided country with fundamental religio-philosophical and cultural separatism. This separatism is reflected most in our Hindu-Muslim and other communal rivalries and parochial tendencies. Gandhi saw that these communal rivalries would be a death-knell to the survival of this country. Gandhi's experiences after the partition immensely proved how malicious and terrible communalism in India could turn out to be. The Hindu-Muslim massacres after the partition compelled Gandhi to undertake a fast unto death, which he stopped on assurance from rivalries would be stopped at once.

Against this background tolerance is felt to be a very fundamental value in this country. Today tolerance is a constitutional value as an attitude fundamental to the democratic practices in this country. Tolerance and the fundamental rights are absolutely correlated. It requires tolerance on the part of one individual to recognize the democratic rights of another. It requires tolerance similar to recognize the constitutional rights of communities. This recognition require forbearance which we call tolerance in this context. The rights of individuals and communities call for tolerance on the part of other individuals and communities. Here tolerance becomes a positive virtue and enters into the very realm of *ahimsa* or love. Martin Luther King writes, "We will return good for evil. We will love our enemies. Christ showed us the way, and Gandhi showed us how it could work". Tolerance becomes love in its positive directions and Gandhi carries it to the logical extreme of loving one's enemies in line with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Tolerance as a constitutional value with reference to the fundamental rights takes the direction also of justice. It is merely allowing the other the necessary justice that he naturally deserves. Gandhi says, "My experience has shown me that we win justice quickest by rendering justice to the other party". Tolerance becomes justice paid in equal measure to those who owe it under given social setup.

Just like peace, tolerance becomes an individual value aimed at the development of the human individual. Relationship between individuals based on tolerance becomes fundamental to a spiritual society Gandhi envisaged. Differences in personal attitudes, aptitudes and endowments are basic to human life. These differences and the socio-economic status that becomes attached to these are part of socio-communal life. Individual tolerance becomes important when Gandhi wants these differences and the ups and downs to be forgotten in building a society based on truth and *ahimsa*. Dwight Macdonald writes, "It is true that Gandhi compromised with the rich, those untouchables of the class struggle, living at their villas. But he also compromised with the poor spending as much time with them". Gandhi showed the world that tolerance was the key principle in mutual help and self-less service. This would mean accepting the enemy or the stranger with all the pitfalls that he usually has.

Tolerance becomes a social goal in Gandhian frame of social set up. Social development at all levels of interaction comes to be based on tolerance from this view point. If the tolerance of individual differences is significant in individual development, in the same token, tolerance is the fundamental in social development. Social development is impossible without different communities interacting with each other. Conflict and rivalries arise when it comes

to the benefit of one community, perhaps, at the cost of another's inconvenience or loss. Tolerance plays a major role here in effecting a clear balance between such differences. Tolerance coupled with a sense of justice would prompt one community to accept the other and work for its development.

Gandhi attached such a great importance to communal tolerance with reference to Hindu-Muslim rivalries and problems of interaction. Gandhi always went out of the way to convince the two communities of the great necessity of mutual tolerance, even at the cost of his own life. Gandhi kept on reminding Indians at large that the two communities are part and parcel of the very same nation. Whenever the question of separatism arose, Mahatma Gandhi and others, and the leading News Papers never hesitated to remind the Muslims that they belonged to the same race and nationality as the Hindus. Ethnic tolerance was the unique solution for the communal problems and Gandhi gave the highest priority to the value of tolerance within the framework of *ahimsa*. If the truth is the aim at the individual, social and national level of life, then tolerance remains to be a concurrent value along with peace for development at these different levels.

4.4 PEACE EDUCATION

Peace and tolerance are fundamental goals of education. Education considered from whatever viewpoint ends up in a rediscovery of peace at the very root of all formations and developments. Education aims primarily at helping the individual achieve a state of physical, psychological, social and spiritual balance or equilibrium. In other words, the individual discovers, in the process of education, a self balance in the right attitude towards himself, society and God. This constitutes the state of peace in the individual. It is a process of developing the self in these attitudes. The individual becomes capable of comparing and contrasting his own potentials and achievements with those of others not in a spirit of negative and unhealthy competition but in truth and love. This amounts to the development of peace within oneself. Peace in the right sense is not a negative state of lack of conflicts and problems within oneself. Peace is a positive and dynamic state of integrating in the right manner the diverse elements, conflicts and problems in the personality and obtaining a holistic state of serenity. In Gandhi's own words this becomes a successful search for truth: "A successful search for truth means a complete deliverance from the dual throng such as love and hate, happiness and misery". It is not the cancellation of diverse elements but the harmony and integration of these elements that constitute peace in the individual as part of the development of his personality.

Education aims at promoting peace in the nation. Development of attitudes of peace in the individual leads to collective of attitudes of the peace in the individual leads to collective endeavors for peace in the nation. This has dimensions. On the hand education ensures that the individual grows up in full awareness of the significance of peace at the national level, and on the other hand education attempts to direct this individual awareness to actual peace at the national level. Through the right orientations of educational content and methods and through the provision of learning experience the awareness and a feeling of urgency for peace at the national level can be developed. Peace and tolerance go hand in hand. Peace and tolerance go hand in hand. Peace can be regarded as the end and tolerance as the means and the method. Education should help students to prize the value of peace and tolerance more than anything else.

Once Gandhi was asked by a student: “What can students do to create Hindu-Muslim unity? Gandhi answered, “The way is simple. Even if all the Hindus turn out to be hooligans and begin insulting you, you should not stop considering them your brothers in blood”. Gandhi had no excuses and compromises for his principles and his admonitions took an absolute nature. That shows the level of greatness and the depth of sincerity he attached to these principles. Gandhi made it clear that education has vital role to play in developing peace and tolerance in all the affairs of the country, especially at the level of decision- making. The process of developing an intense awareness of peace permeates all levels and all aspects of education. It is not possible for education to have separate stream of 'peace education' along with other subjects and disciplines. But education should be in clear position to integrate peace values with all other aspects of the curriculum.

Gandhi saw the evil practice of untouchability as major obstacle to the practice and realization of peace and tolerance in the real sense of the word in several parts of India. Untouchability reigned supreme even in the days of Gandhi and he remained conscious of its evil effects. He emphasized the role of education in creating the necessary wave against these evil practices. He felt national schools should be capable of spreading the message of *charka*, unite the Hindus and the Muslims, educate the untouchables and thus remove from schools the curse of untouchability. The practice of untouchability grieved Gandhi to the depth of his personality. Education is the only solution to curb this practice if it is still persisting in any form in any part of the country. Ways in which one community considers another as inferior is another form of untouchability and this practice comes directly opposed to the ideal of peace and tolerance. Obstacles to the ideal of peace and tolerance crop up in different ways. Very often people fail to recognize that such ways have anything to do with the maintenance of peace and tolerance. Education has sacred duty to safeguard the values of peace and tolerance from all such lapses that may occur in the individual, society or nation.

Education aims further at international peace, and tolerance at the level of nations. The Gandhian message of peace has gathered significance more than ever on the face of the growing arms race between world powers. The modern world has the ever growing feeling that humanity is moving towards a nuclear end. The nuclear holocaust has to be averted. Gandhi's efforts for peace in the world can be regarded as the only solution to divert such a holocaust. Norman Thomas says, if ever men achieve a world peace, to no single man will it owe a greater debt than to Mohandas K. Gandhi”.

Peace becomes part of personality development from all perspectives. Peace-attitudes are part of the individual's spiritual personality in his attempts to move towards Truth as the ultimate Goal. Education for Gandhi is “the all round drawing out of the best in the child and man- body, mind and spirit”. This best for Gandhi is in fact the inner voice of truth. The strengthening of this inner voice of truth, as all Gandhi's personal experiments consisted of, is actually the strengthening of peace in all its different perspectives. Gandhi says, “one person who can express *ahimsa* in life exercise a force superior to all forces of brutality”. Peace in the individual becomes the expression of *ahimsa* as peace and *ahimsa* are inseparable. A character well-founded on peace will exercise the attitude of truth and *ahimsa* to others. Peace and tolerance provide a link between personalities of individuals within a given social set up. Peace at the individual level would thus become the blossoming of the

personality. The odour of peace in the individual cannot help permeating to outside the individual and exercise the right influence.

The East as a whole and India in particular stood for peace. It was the reflection of peace that the East has produced the World Religions. There is no religion in the world that does not stand for peace in the individual and peace in humanity. Peace is a treasured value for every religion. The contribution of India towards world peace is not sheer contemporary phenomenon but a traditional one. Being the motherland of three major world religions, it is most apparent that India stands foremost for this treasured value of peace. Indian culture thus embodies peace and tolerance as two great principles. Education which aims at the transmission of culture in fact transmits the value of peace and tolerance in the context of India. The right teaching of Indian culture will not be providing a puffed up concept of account of wars but of the great value of peace embodied in our culture. Education at the school level already spends considerable time providing students and experience in Indian culture. This effort can be easily re-oriented to focus on peace so that the work will form a basis for the development of the right attitude of peace in students.

Education for peace and tolerance receive high priority in a world that is facing serious nuclear threat. Educational goals in all their diversities have a dimension of peace with reference of the individual, society and nation at large. These goals require a coordination to bring home the full importance of peace and tolerance. Peace is value that should achieve integration with other values in education. Peace is an attitude that requires development along with other important attitude to produce holistic personality. Peace becomes in the individual's attitudes towards himself, society and the nation. Education and Gandhism becomes a harmonious whole at the level of peace.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) How important is communal harmony in way of peace and harmony in India?

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2) Reflect on the role of education in creating a peaceful world.

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4.5 LET US SUM UP

The attraction and curiosity of people all over the world towards the distinctive Gandhian view seems to increase day-by-day to revitalize high hopes in the hearts of people more than in the past. With on-going globalization, the genesis of new problems, disputes and conflicts seems inevitable. That is why the Gandhian view in resolving these problems emerges as one of the best and noble alternatives available to the world. It can show the people the pathway to prosperity and peace opening the doors to both prosperity and peace through mass awakening, cooperation and participation of people.

4.6 KEY WORDS

Harmony: coming together of seemingly conflicting positions/ values.

Peace-education: seeks to build a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

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