

Conflict Resolution: A Gandhian Way

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Abstract

Today, peaceful environment is necessary for the human life, development and human modernization. But on the other hand some thinkers view is that competition is also necessary for the development, enjoyment, modernization of human being. So, that is controversial if competition is necessary for human life. How peace is possible in human life and when competition starts than so many conflicts open in individual, family, society, and international level? The various thinkers had written about the conflict resolution such as Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hegel, Karl Marx, and so on. But they had written about power, property, violence etc. are the means of conflict resolution, but their way of conflict resolution was so destructive. Then a question rise, how we solve the conflict, how we make a conflict constrictive than destructive? Then we found the answer of the question in the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. My research paper tries to understand about the Gandhi's view on conflict resolution. How we could use Gandhi's nonviolence, Satyagraha, Saryodaya, etc. for resolve any conflict without any loss.

Keywords: Gandhi, Conflict, Peace, Religion. India.

Introduction

The word conflict is so broad sense; the word conflict is basically derived from *conflucyus* of Latin. In fact it appeared in the English vocabulary at the end of the Fourteenth Century or in the early years of the fifteenth Century AD. The basic idea in the root of this world is disharmony, generally between two individual and groups of individuals who indulge in violence-based activities to serve their interest; for this, they continuously try to establish their superiority on others by different ways¹. Conflict happens between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings. Because of the wide range of potential differences among people, the absence of conflict usually signals the absence of meaningful interaction. Conflict by itself is neither good nor bad. However, the manner in which conflict is handled determines whether it is constructive or destructive. Conflict is defined as an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship, combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings toward each other. The incompatibility or difference may exist in reality or may only be perceived by the parties involved. Nonetheless, the opposing actions and the hostile emotions are very real hallmarks of human conflict. Conflict has the potential for either a great deal of destruction or much creativity and positive social change. Therefore, it is essential to understand the basic processes of conflict. So, that we can work to

¹Ravinder Kumar (2012), "The Gandhian Way: A Universal Method of Resolving Conflicts", *Global Peace (An International Journal of Philosophy, peace, Education, Culture and Civilization)*, Special Issue, Meerut: 2.

maximize productive outcomes and minimize destructive ones.² Larger part of Gandhi's life was spent in leading India's struggle for freedom and in attending to diverse socio-economic problems. This preoccupation of Gandhi was not a matter of choice or preference but was logical and inevitable. At the first instance, there for one wonders whether Gandhi was able to spare enough time and attention to the larger problems of conflict and peace. He has left behind him a rich legacy of innumerable writings containing ideas that are surprising striking in their freshness, permanent relevance and world wide appeal³.

Gandhi had clearly seen this predicament, the oncoming disaster as early as 1909 in his Hind Swaraj. And throughout his life he continued to warn against it showed the way to avert or steer clear of it through his ideas and experiments with truth and non-violence. In Hind Swaraj Gandhi had characterized modern civilization as a 'disease' and a 'nine days' wonder. Earlier in 1927 he had forewarned the 'civilized' west that "a time is coming when those who are in the mad rush today of multiplying their wants....will retrace their steps and say 'what have we done?'" Barely two week before his death in January 1948, had Gandhi made the rather prophetic statement, "this (modern) civilization is such that one has only to be patient, and it will be self-destroyed?"⁴ So, Mahatma Gandhi had once observed:

"Perhaps never before has there been so much speculation about the future as there is today. Will our world always be one of violence? Will there always be poverty, starvation and misery? Will we have a firmer and wider belief in religion, or will the world be godless? If there is to be a great change in society, how will that change be wrought? By war or revolution? Or will it come peacefully? Different men give different answers to these questions, each man drawing the plan of tomorrow's world as he hope and wishes it to be. I answer not out of belief but out of communication, the world of tomorrow will be, must be, a society based on non-violence."⁵

So, conflict is necessary for society because the society is full of differences and different people have different interests, so due to different interests many time conflict turns danger for human beings. Such as the human predicament is precariously balanced against the odds of continuing violence. The letter takes into its embrace the world divided by class, caste, gender and ethnicity.⁶

Sources of Conflict:

Early reviews in the field of conflict resolution identified a large number of schemes for describing sources or types of conflict. One of the early theorists on conflict, Daniel Katz (1965), created a typology that distinguishes three main sources of conflict: economic, value, power and ineffective communication. But conflict has so many reasons such as personality, behavior, hobbies, power, culture, history, and legacy and so on.

1. Economic conflict involves competing motives to attain scarce resources. Each party wants to get the most that it can, and the behavior and emotions of each party are directed toward maximizing its gain. Union and management conflict often has as one of its sources the incompatible goals of how to slice up the "economic pie".⁷
2. Value conflict involves incompatibility in ways of life, ideologies – the preferences, principles and practices that people believe in. International conflict (e.g., the Cold War) often has a

² Ron Fisher (2000), "Sources of Conflict and Methods of Conflict Resolution", *International Peace and Conflict Resolution School of International Service*, The American University: 1.

³ Biraja Shankar Rath, "Concept of Conflict: A Gandhian Perspective", *Journal of Gandhian Studies*, 2 (1&2): 165.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Parmeshwari Dayal (2013), *Gandhian Theory of Social Reconstruction*, New Delhi: Atlantic: xix.

⁶ G.N. Trivedi (2013), "Gandhian Perspective on Conflict Resolution", in Anil Dutt Mishra and Sadhana Thakur (eds) *Re-Exploring Gandhi*, New Delhi: Regal: 103.

⁷ Ron Fisher (2000), "Sources of Conflict and Methods of Conflict Resolution", *International Peace and Conflict Resolution School of International Service*, The American University: 1-2.

strong value component, wherein each side asserts the rightness and superiority of its way of life and its political-economic system⁸.

3. Power conflict occurs when each party wishes to maintain or maximize the amount of influence that it exerts in the relationship and the social setting. It is impossible for one party to be stronger without the other being weaker, at least in terms of direct influence over each other. Thus, a power struggle ensues which usually ends in a victory and defeat, or in a "stand-off" with a continuing state of tension. Power conflicts can occur between individuals, between groups or between nations, whenever one or both parties choose to take a power approach to the relationship. Power also enters into all conflict since the parties are attempting to control each other. It must be noted that most conflicts are not of a pure type, but involve a mixture of sources. For example, union-management conflict typically involves economic competition, but may also take the form of a power struggle and often involves different ideologies or political values.⁹
4. Another important source of conflict is ineffective communication. Miscommunication and misunderstanding can create conflict even where there are no basic incompatibilities. In addition, parties may have different perceptions as to what are the facts in a situation, and until they share information and clarify their perceptions, resolution is impossible. Self-centeredness, selective perception, emotional bias, prejudices, etc., are all forces that lead us to perceive situations very differently from the other party. Lack of skill in communicating what we really mean in a clear and respectful fashion often results in confusion, hurt and anger, all of which simply feed the conflict process. Whether the conflict has objective sources or is due only to Perceptual or communication problems, it is experienced as very real by the parties involved¹⁰.

After accepting the reality of conflicts in men's life, their source of emergence and continuous efforts, which human beings have been making through the ages for their resolution, now, we shall come to the subject in hand the Gandhian way to resolve conflicts. The Gandhian method as a way of conflict resolution has existed for over a century. It has only been a subject of people's attraction, but, it has affected so many fundamental changes, particularly in political sphere all over the world. Due to, its uniqueness, it is shall the nucleus among all the method available for the purpose. It establishes superiority, particularly over those, whose fundamental way itself is based on violence.¹¹

Because all the major problems in the world today are due to the violence accepting culture that pervades across the spectrum of nationality, religion race, caste, and gender. If fact, all the above disputes among mankind is more or less united on the acceptance of violence, if not as the best method, but at least as a fait accomplissement, a serious analysis of the major problems that confront us will lead to violence in both thought and action as major initiator and exacerbator.¹²

Himsa and Ahimsa

Gandhi said that all the problems come in society due to violence (Himsa) and only one solution of these problems peace. He discuss about violence and non- violence.

There are acts, like being abusive or lynching, which are hurt or death-causing by their very nature. Likewise, there are acts, like being loving or affectionate or providing nourishment, which are comfort-causing or life-promoting by their very nature. Further, there are acts, like being quiet, which are not hurt- or death- causing by their very nature. Now, Gandhi define a violent act as one, which is

⁸ ibid.

⁹ ibid.

¹⁰ Ron Fisher (2000), "Sources of Conflict and Methods of Conflict Resolution", *International Peace and Conflict Resolution School of International Service*, The American University: 1-2.

¹¹ Ibid:5

¹² Biraja Shankar Rath, "Concept of Conflict: A Gandhian Perspective", *Journal of Gandhian Studies*, 2 (1&2): 167.

hurt –or death- causing by its very nature; or as one, which is not hurt – or death –causing by its very nature, but which is performed with the intention of causing hurt of death. And Gandhi defines a non-violent act as one which is comfort- causing or life – Promoting by its very nature, but which is performed with the intention of causing comfort or promoting life¹³.

The definitions of violent and non-violent acts which I have given above are definitions of these acts in the positive sense. In the negative sense, a violent act consists in not performing or refraining from performing an act, which is not comfort-causing or life-promoting by its very nature, with the intention of causing comfort or promoting life. Again, in the negative sense, a non-violent act consist in not performing or refraining from performing an act, which is hurt-or death causing by its very nature, with the intention of causing hurt or death. This means to say that, in the negative sense: a violent act is the contradictory of a non-violent act in positive sense: and a non-violent act is the contradictory of a violent act the positive sense¹⁴.

Those of the former kind would include, besides being abusive or lynching, scolding, beating, slapping, assaulting, harassing, molesting, raping, torturing, insulting, thinking, ill of somebody with that person's knowledge, withdrawing help when that help is still needed and not doing what one is required to do to help somebody. Those of the latter kind would include, besides being loving or affectionate or providing nourishment, being respectful, being accommodating, showing appreciation for somebody's work or attainments, showing appreciation for somebody's work or attainments, showing humility, exercising tolerance, giving a patient hearing, making efforts to understand somebody, saving somebody from danger, helping somebody in need and taking an interest in and working for somebody's welfare.¹⁵

Gandhi distinguished various forms of himsa, in the sense of causing pain to, or killing, a living being.

1. Himsa which is not immoral or, as one may possibly say, which morally pardonable or excusable. This includes:
2. Himsa which is in self-interest, but which is unavoidable; and
3. Himsa which is resorted to as an alternative to cowardice, and which Gandhi calls the himsa of the brave, or defensive himsa, or himsa which is almost ahimsa¹⁶.

"We do destroy as much life as we think is necessary for sustaining the body. Thus for food we take life, vegetable and other, and for health we destroy mosquitoes, and the like by disinfectants etc. and we do not think that we are guilty of irreligion in doing so."

I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. Thus when my eldest son asked me what he should have done, had he could and wanted to use, and defended me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by using violence. If a man fights with his sword single handed against a horde of dacoits, armed to the teeth, I should say that he is fighting almost non-violently. Have I not said to our women that if, in defense of their honor, they used their nails and teeth and even a dagger, I should regard their conduct non-violent. She does not know the distinction between himsa and Ahimsa. She acts spontaneously. Supposing, a mouse, in fighting a cat, tried to resist the cat with his sharp beak, would you call that mouse violent? In the same way, for the poles to stand violently against the German hordes, vastly superior in numbers and military equipment and strength, was almost non-violence.¹⁷

¹³ R.K. Gupta, *A Gandhi Note Book*, New Delhi: Apple Books: 105-107.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ R.K. Gupta, *A Gandhi Note Book*, New Delhi: Apple Books: 105-108.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Himsa which is Ahimsa, or which is morally justifiable. This includes himsa which is resorted to in the interest of others, but again, which is unavoidable. For the sake of others, that is for the benefit of the species we kill carnivorous beasts. When lions and tigers pester their villages, the village regard it a duty to kill them or have them killed. Even manslaughter may be necessary in certain cases. Suppose a man runs amuck and goes furiously about sword in hand, killing any one that comes his way, and no one dares to capture him alive. Anyone who dispatches this lunatic will earn the gratitude of the community and be regarded as kind man¹⁸.

Non-violence sometimes calls upon us to put an end to the life of a living being. For instance a calf in the Ashram dairy was lame and had developed terrible sores; it could not eat and breather with difficulty. After three days' argument with myself and co-workers, I had poison injected into its body and thus put an end to its life. That action was non-violent, because it was wholly unselfish in as much as the sole surgical operation and I should do exactly the same thing with my child, if he were in the same predicament. Himsa which is immoral. This includes himsa which is resorted to in self-interest, or not in self-interest, but which is avoidable; and himsa which is resorted to against the weak, which Gandhi calls the himsa of the coward. If I save the food I eat or the clothes which I wear or the space I occupy, it is obvious that these can be utilized by someone else whose need is greater than mine. As my selfishness prevents him from using these things, my physical enjoyment involves violence to my poorer neighbor¹⁹.

But what about our being angry with one another. A teacher inflicting corporal punishment on his pupils, a mother taking her children to task, a man losing his temper in his intercourse with equals all these are guilty of violence, and violence of a bad type. The violence we see today is the violence of the cowards. There is also such a thing as violence of the brave. If four or five men enter into a fight and die by the sword, there is violence in it but it is the violence of the brave. But when ten thousand armed men attack a village of unarmed people and slaughter them along with their wives and children it is the violence of cowards. Gandhi includes under above another form of himsa. This consists in refraining from causing injury to, or killing, a living being in its interest, but which is unavoidable; that is, which consists in refraining from resorting to himsa which is ahimsa, or which is normally justifiable²⁰.

The physician who prescribes bitter medicines causes you pain but do no himsa. If he fails to prescribe bitter medicines when it is necessary to do so, he fails in his duty of ahimsa. The surgeon who, from fear of causing pain to his patient, hesitates to amputate a rotten limb is guilty of himsa. He who refrains from killing a murderer who is about to kill his ward (when he cannot prevent him otherwise) earns no merit, but commits a sin, he practices no ahimsa but himsa out of a fatuous sense of ahimsa²¹.

Gandhi defines ahimsa (non-violence) both negatively and positively. Negatively, he defines it as not causing pain to or not killing a living being in thought, word or deed directly, as distinguished from indirectly. Positively, he defines it as acting out of live (or benevolence or compassion or charity or good will) towards a living being. This would include: even causing pain to, or killing, a living being, but not out of anger, or fear or selfishness, or with the intention of doing so, but out of love; and being prepared to suffer in one's won person, rather than causing pain to or killing, another living being, out of love. In connection with here I have mentioned above Gandhi's statement about the physician, who prescribes bitter medicines; the surgeon, who amputates a rotten limb; and the person who kills a murderer; all of them doing what they do out of love. Gandhi has suggested in these columns that woman is the incarnation of Ahimsa. Ahimsa means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity

¹⁸ R.K.Gupta, *A Gandhi Note Book*, New Delhi: Apple Books: 109-116

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

for suffering. Who, but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure? She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved. What can beat the suffering caused by the pain of labour? But she forgets them in the joy of creation. Who again suffers daily so that her babe may wax from day to day?²²

My good nurse in the Sassoon Hospital, Poona, as I was lying on sick-bed years ago, told me the story of a woman who refused to take chloroform because she would not risk the life of the babe she was carrying. She had to undergo a painful operation. The only anesthetic she had was her love for the babe, to save whom no suffering was too great. Gandhi distinguishes two forms of Ahimsa, Ahimsa of weak and of the strong. In the former case, one adopts ahimsa as a matter of policy or expedience, because one is not properly equipped to use himsa. In this case, one would be non-violent in deed and possibly also in word, but not in thought. In the latter case, one adopts ahimsa, in the sense of ahimsa in thought, word and deed, as a matter of principle or creed, so that one would be non-violent in this sense under all circumstances, even under the circumstance of being properly equipped to use himsa.²³

Distinction should be made between the nature of violence and non-violence and that of their moral characterization. Gandhi himself makes that distinction in his classification of different forms of violence. There he clearly has before his mind his conception of violence as causing pain to, or killing, a living being; and then he mentions the conditions of its moral characterization: the conditions under which it is not immoral, those under which it is moral and those under which it is immoral. Gandhi also makes that distinction in his definition of non-violence in the negative sense and non-violence in the positive sense, where he leaves out the question of their moral characterization altogether. However when he defines violence as causing pain to, or killing, a living being out of anger, or fear or selfishness, or with the intention of doing so, he clearly puts into his definition of violence also the conditions of its moral characterization. Here he clearly identifies violence with violence which he would consider immoral. But the two things can be easily detached from one another: his conception of violence as causing pain to, or killing, a living being, and the conditions of its moral characterization²⁴.

Let me state here in one place Gandhi's define of violence and non-violence without their moral characterization. Violence, in the positive sense, is causing pain to, or killing, a living being. Non-violence, in the positive sense, is acting out of love towards a living being. Non-violence, in the negative sense, is not causing pain to, or not killing, a living being in thought, word or deed directly, ad distinguished from indirectly. We can easily construct his definition of violence, in the negative sense, as not acting out of love towards a living being. It may be pointed out that the words "in thought, word or deed directly, ads distinguished from indirectly", which are incorporated here in the definition of non-violence, the negative sense, Gandhi would indeed approve of their incorporation in all other definitions as well.²⁵

After this brief discussion of the conflict, now there is a need to discuss about the Gandhian way of conflict resolution. Gandhian is a word associated undoubtedly with Gandhi, the Mahatma. Besides illuminating what Gandhi did and thought in the larger interest and welfare of humanity, the world Gandhian simultaneously inspires other also to do and think for the sake of humanity.²⁶

Gandhi did not set out to elaborate on the theory of conflict and peace. But one can infer his ideas on this topic from the rich collection of his writings. This inference is easier than otherwise implied

²²R.K.Gupta, *A Gandhi Note Book*, New Delhi: Apple Books: 105-116.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴R.K.Gupta, *A Gandhi Note Book*, New Delhi: Apple Books: 115.

²⁵ Ibid: 105-116.

²⁶Ravinderkumar(Feb.2012), "*The Gandhian Way: A Universal Method of Resolving Conflicts*", *Global Peace(An International Journal of Philosophy, peace, Education, Culture and Civilization)*, Special Issue, Meerut:5.

because his approach towards all problems individual, national or international was integral and interrelated. His entire philosophy forms a coherent whole and is based on a simple value system comprising of the truth and non-violence. Gandhi defies any classification so far any exclusive school of thought is concerned. Any search for an internally consistent and systematized body of Gandhian thought would prove elusive. He had no time and little patience with theoretical formulations.²⁷

What Makes Gandhi An Ambassador Of Peace?

Gandhi did not claim to be a prophet or even philosophy. Gandhi's philosophy is actually effected by surrounded environment. Gandhi influenced by his family, society, religions, secularism, freedom, equality, justice, trusteeship, different thinkers of the world and welfare state can be seen in the constitution of India and can be seen in the methods of the Gandhi.

Impact of Family Members on Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi was greatly influenced by his family members. His father Karam Chand Gandhi was truthful, brave and honest as well as a patriot person. He did not care to accumulate wealth. In his old days, he started reading the Bhagavat Gita every day. The divine message of Gita wielded remarkable influence of the life of Mahatma Gandhi. His mother Putlibai who was highly religious and was the very symbol of saintliness had left an indelible impression on the memory of Gandhi who advocated for women a unique position in society. Gandhi was influenced more by the spirit and principles of religion.²⁸

The family background of Mahatma Gandhi influenced his religious thought to a great extent his family adhered to Vaishnavism. The members of his family observed periodic fasts and believed that salvation can be achieved through devotion to God and good works.²⁹ So Gandhi was so believe in truth and honesty and cooperation. Gandhi's mother was a simple and worshiped lady. Due to her nature Gandhi also effected and achieves his goal. When Gandhi was going to England for studies, his mother was sorely perplexed. Someone had told her that young men got lost in England. Someone had said that they took to meat, and yet another that they could not alive there without liquor.³⁰ But Gandhi said his mother that if you do not trust me. So, I swear that I shall not touch any of those things which hurt you. If there were any such danger; I will come back. After that his mother gave him permission for went in England. And Gandhi's survived in England without use of meat, wine and other bad habits.³¹

Impact of South Africa's Experience

The South Africa days need close study by anyone who seeks to understand what made Gandhi what he was. The case for which he had been engaged involved going into the accounts of his client Seth Abdulla in order to get the fact of the case Gandhi advised that the dispute with \Abdulla's fellow. Moslem merchant could be settled amicably, and indeed he succeeded in bringing about a peaceful agreement. The habit of careful investigation of the facts and an attempt to settle disputes peaceably remained with Gandhi throughout his life.³²

The conditions of Indians in South Africa were constantly being brought to his notice. The indentured laboures who were brought to South Africa in order to work on European Plantations were subjected

²⁷Biraja Shankar Rath, "Concept of Conflict: A Gandhian Perspective", *Journal of Gandhian Studies*, 2 (1&2): 165-66.

²⁸AtulRastogi(2011), *Great political Thinker: Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi : Sinali Publication:6.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Krishna Kriplani (1958), *"All Men are Brothers: life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi as Told in his Own Words"*, Switzerland UNESCO:10.

³¹Krishna Kriplani (1958), *"All Men are Brothers: life and Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi as Told in his Own Words"*, Switzerland: UNESCO: 10-11

³², Margarettchatterjee(1982), *"Mahatma Gandhi"*, in Donald H.Bishop, (ed.) *Thinkers of the Indian Renaissance* New Delhi: Willey Esatern limited. 208.

to may indignities and had no civil rights. "Coloured" people could not occupy the same berths and compartments as white men. While travelling to Johannesburg by stagecoach Gandhi was made to sit with the coachman outside, and an attempt was made even to push him from the box on to the footboard. But Gandhi refused to move, and clung to the rails while he was beaten, refusing to hit back. The white passengers protested against such violence against a person who refused to retaliate and Gandhi was remain where he was.³³ The method of non-violence resistance was born. So non-violence method was born in the median of conflict. That was the conflict between two person on the basis of race, but it was not destructive on the other hand it was constructive and give a way of fight with white people and against of crime and winder pendent. In Pretoria, Gandhi addressed a meeting of the Indian community, High lighting not only injustice to which they were lighting not only injustice to which they were all subject, but the duties of Indian living in South Africa, ³⁴ So in his personal experience, he saw that South Africa was no country for a self-respecting Indian and my mind became more and more occupied with the question as to how this state things might be improved.

Impact of Harishchandra on Gandhi

The Indian classical, especially the stories of Shravana and Maharaja Harishchandra from the Indian epics, had a great impact on Gandhi in his childhood. The story of harishchandra, a well-known tale of an ancient Indian King and a trustful Hero, haunted Gandhi as a boy. Gandhi in his autobiography admits that it left an indelible impression on his mind. He writes: "it haunted me and I must have acted Harishchandra to myself times without number." Gandhi early self-identification with Truth and love as supreme values is traceable to his identification with these epic characters.³⁵ Gandhi insistence that truth should be upheld under any circumstance illustrates best his radical Stance towards particularistic religious claim.³⁶ But Gandhi was aware about that when a person go on the way of truth, he or she would face so many problems.

Impact of Tolstoy on Gandhi

When Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi started to practice law in South Africa as a young barrister in the 1890s, he was confronted with glaring racial discrimination as well as various other injustices. It was then that he began to develop his Satyagraha philosophy of nonviolence, through which he would later lead India to independence. Perhaps the most profound influence on Gandhi at this time were the ideas and living example of the Russian author Leo Tolstoy who, in the last year of his life, became Gandhi's mentor on nonviolence³⁷. The book which was written by Tolstoy *War and Peace* more influence on Gandhi's life and his personality. Adding that "Tolstoy I had read much earlier. He affected the inner being." Gandhi's chief biographer and secretary in later life, Pyarelal, claims that so deeply was Gandhi's thinking "impregnated with Tolstoy's that the changes that took place in his way of life and thinking in the years that followed [his reading of Tolstoy] can be correctly understood and appreciated only in the context of the master's life and philosophy. "When, late in his life, his inner conflicts became unbearable, Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, the great Russian novelist, gave his estate to his family, disposed of much of his personal belongings and attempted to live the life of a poor and celibate peasant. In this attempt to put his personal philosophy into practice, he denounced

³³ Margareta Chatterjee (1982), "Mahatma Gandhi", in Donald H. Bishop, (ed.) Thinkers of the Indian Renaissance New Delhi: Wiley Eastern limited. 208.

³⁴ Margareta Chatterjee (1982), "Mahatma Gandhi", in Donald H. Bishop, ed., Thinkers of the Indian Renaissance New Delhi: Wiley Eastern limited. 208.

³⁵ Atul Rastogi (2011), *Great political Thinker: Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi : Sinali Publication: 8.

³⁶ Atul Rastogi (2011), *Great political Thinker: Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi : Sinali Publication: 8.

³⁷ Thomas Weber, "Tolstoy and Gandhi's Law of Love", [Online: web] Accessed 14 Sept. 2014 URL: <http://www.sgiquarterly.org/feature2010jan-9.html>.

authority and all violence, and became a vegetarian. His Christian anarchist life and moral and religious writings were to influence many people--not least of whom was the young Gandhi.³⁸

Impact of Ruskin on Gandhi

Gandhi was a bibliophile by his nature in his life he was inspired from many thinkers and Ruskin was one of them. During the period of his satyagraha movement in Africa, Gandhi's friend Henry Polak gave him Ruskin's *Unto This Last* to read. Later Gandhi translated the book into Gujarati and called it *sarvodaya* (The welfare of All). This was how the Gandhian path of social reconstruction came to acquire this name. Gandhi's thinking took a step forward at this time. He decided to start a model settlement where the members would work with their hands and an austere life by led by all. The Phoenix settlement was established fourteen miles away from Durban in November-December of 1904 on a rather unpromising piece of land, and the office of Indian opinion was also shifted to this site. Men of different faiths joined the settlement and this was the fact on Gandhi's important experiments with truth" be built up in community fashion.³⁹ During an interview in London with Evelyn Wrench, the editor of the *Spectator*, Gandhi was asked, "Did any book ever affect you supremely and was there any turning point in your life?" Gandhi replied that he changed the whole plan of his life after reading Ruskin's *Unto This Last*.⁴⁰

Impact of Gita on Gandhi

Gandhi was born a Hindu and practiced Hinduism all his life.⁴¹ Hinduism as I know it entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being. When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the Gita, and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. Myself has been full of tragedies and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. Gandhi believed that at the core of every religion was truth and love. He also questioned what he saw as hypocrisy, malpractices, and dogma in all religions, including his own and he was the fewer advocates for social reforms in religion. Some of his comments on various religions on: This if a could not accept Christianity either as a perfect or the greatest religion, neither was I then convinced of Hinduism being such. Hindu defects were pressingly visible to me. If untouchability could be a part of Hinduism, it could but be a rotten part or an excrescence. I could not understand the reason of multitude of sects and castes. What was the meaning of saying that the Vedas were the inspired word of God. If they were inspired, why not also the Bible and the Koran? As Christian friends were endeavoring to convert me, so were Muslim friends. Abdullah Seth had kept on inducing me to study Islam, and of course he had always something to say regarding its beauty.⁴²

The Bhagavad-Gita or the sacred song, is a Hindu poem with deep philosophy, spirituality and divinity embodied in it. It primarily is a wartime counsel between Krishna and his disciple/relative warrior Arjuna. Gandhi has often acknowledged its profound effect on his life.

It is strange but interesting that Gandhi's first introduction to Gita was in England and through two English brothers. Gandhi at that time was studying law. The brothers read Gita regularly and asked Gandhi to join in. Perhaps they thought that they may get to know the text in Sanskrit better. But Gandhi felt sad, because of his lack of Sanskrit knowledge. He read English version by Sir Edwin

³⁸Thomas Weber (1993), "*Tolstoy and Gandhi's Law of Love*", [Online: web] Accessed 14 Sept.2014URL: <http://www.sgiquarterly.org/feature>.

³⁹Margaret Chatterjee (1982), "*Mahatma Gandhi*", in Donald H. Bishop, ed., *Thinkers of the Indian Renaissance* New Delhi: Wiley Eastern limited. 209.

⁴⁰Thomas Weber (1993), "*Tolstoy and Gandhi's Law of Love*", [Online: web] Accessed 14 Sept.2014URL: <http://www.sgiquarterly.org/feature>.

⁴¹AtulRastogi (2011), *Great Political Thinker: Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Sonali Publication: 42.

⁴²AtulRastogi (2011), *Great Political Thinker: Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Sonali Publication: 42.

Arnold as recommended by his English friends, and was captivated for life by Gita's message. He especially liked the last nineteen verses of the Chapter II. He felt, his concept of dharma was summarized in those verses. He took to reading Gita every day, later, in the original Sanskrit language. During his imprisonment years, he studied the book in detail. Due to insistence from his friends, he translated it into Gujarati, his mother-tongue. Later English translation appeared.

Many language versions and interpretations of Gita are in vogue. The three great *acharyas*, Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa, interpreted it to advocate their stand of monism, qualified dualism, respectively. Besides, upholding spiritual knowledge, devotion and renunciation seem to be the favorite stand of great many teachers. In modern times, LokamanyaTilak advocated that action (*Karmayoga*) was the real message. Gandhi however interpreted that action without expectation of fruit (*Anasaktiyoga*) was the essence or quintessence of the entire work. The Mahabharata war in this great book was only a pretext, he felt. In fact, it represented a battle going on, within every individual. Mahabharata war might not be historical as it exists today. Poet Vyasa, used it as background to preach real dharma. This dharma according to Bapu was self-less action. Even winning the war did not bring happiness. Along with tremendous losses, it brought only regret and remorse to all. It proved that mere material gains never brought peace within. Krishna of Bhagavad-Gita is wisdom personified, to Gandhi. He might or might not be an incarnation of God. That point was immaterial. A person who thinks or acts ahead of his times and who is a deeply religious person is considered '*avatarapurusha*'. Bapu, saw complete emancipation in Lord Krishna. Self-realization or liberation may be the goal of Hindu philosophy. But for Gandhi, Gita's stress is on attaining liberation through selfless action. Renunciation of all desire of action was ultimate message, he writes.

Gandhi said, "The Gita is the universal mother. She turns away nobody. Her door is wide open to anyone who knocks. A true votary of Gita does not know what disappointment is. He ever dwells in perennial joy and peace that passed understanding. But that peace and joy come not to skeptic or to him who is proud of his intellect or learning. It is reserved only for the humble in spirit who brings to her worship a fullness of faith and an undivided singleness of mind. There never was a man who worshipped her in that spirit and went disappointed. I find a solace in the Bhagavad-Gita that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad-Gita. I find a verse here and a verse there, and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies -- and my life has been full of external tragedies -- and if they have left no visible or indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teaching of Bhagavad-Gita".⁴³

Impact of Ramayana on Gandhi

At the age of Sixteenth I was at school, being taught all sorts of things except religion. I may say that I failed to get from the teachers what they could have given me without any effort on their part. And yet of kept on picking up things here and there from my surroundings. The term 'religion' I am using in its broadest sense, meaning thereby self-realization or knowledge of self. Being born in the Vaishnava faith, I had often to go to the Haveli.⁴⁴ But I heard that there rumors of immorality being practiced. Due to this information fear of ghosts and spirits was in my mind. I told my feeling Rumbha. That was name lady, who suggested, as a remedy for this fear, the repetition of Ramayana. I had more faith in her than her remedy, and so at a tender age of begun Ramayana to cure my fear of ghosts and spirits. This was of course short-lived, but the good seed sown in childhood was not sown in vain.⁴⁵

⁴³Jyotsna Kamat,(2014) "*Gandhi on Bhagavadgita*", [Online: web] Accessed 14 november.2014 URL: <http://www.kamat.com/mmgandhi/mkggita.htm>.

⁴⁴ M.K. Gandhi (1940), *An Autobiography or the story of my Experiments with Truth*, Translated by Mahadev Desai. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House: 23.

⁴⁵ Ibid.,

After that a cousin of mine who was advocate of the Ramayana arranged for me and learn Rama raksha. I got it by heart and made it a rule to recite it every morning of fear the both. What, however, left a deep impression on me was the reading of the Ramayana before my father. He listed Ramayana every evening. I was fielded that arents are valuable for me. So, during the illness of my father, I did so work for his health remedy.⁴⁶ I have seen, was bed, ridden suffering from a fistula. I had the duties of a nurse, which mainly consisted in dressing the wound, giving my father his medicine, and compounding drugs whenever they had to be made up at home.⁴⁷

Gandhi accepted that he was learned Ahimsa from his wife and after that all conflicts were easy to solve. Gandhi said one of the reasons of my differences with my wife was undoubtedly the company of his friend. I was both a devoted and a jealous husband, and this friend fanned the flame of my suspicions about my wife. I never could doubt his veracity and I have never forgiven myself the violence of which I have been guilty in often having pained my wife by acting on his information. Perhaps only a Hindu wife could tolerate these hardships, and that is why I have regarded woman as an incarnation of tolerance.⁴⁸

Impact of Jesus and Bible on Gandhi

Gandhi's thinking on the concepts of god, truth and non-violence, for in a real sense these concepts constitute the essence of his thought. The extent to which Gandhi found much of the New testament message echoed in his own experience is found in the following lines: "Love never claims, it ever gives, love never suffers, never resents, never revenges itself." He believed that "Ahimsa means. 'Care' in the Pipeline sense" and he confessed that "Though I cannot claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules all my actions worldly and temporal." But for all his admiration of the Sermon on the Mount there were many stumbling blocks. Some of these were theological. Why, for example, should Christ be spoken of as God's only son, since we are also his children. More serious than this, what effect had Christianity had on western civilization. Gandhi believed it had become "The religion of Kings". Western countries connived at war and there was a big gulf between their profession and practice. Belief in one's own religion, one's own Srvadharma, indicated the path on which one should go. So one should be better Hindu, a better Christian or a better Moslem. In spite of the occasional near evangelical language that Gandhi sometimes used, it would be a mistake to regard Gandhi as having been influenced by Christianity in any way which took him away from his own tradition. Gandhi was very much a Hindu, but he had broad enough sympathies to enable him to respond to whatever was echoed in his own experience.⁴⁹

Jesus' Example

An example of this flowering may be found in the figure and in the life of Jesus. I refuse to believe that there now exists or has ever existed a person that has not made use of his example to lessen his sins, even though he may have done so without realizing it. The lives of all have, in some greater or lesser degree, been changed by his presence, his actions, and the words spoken by his divine voice.

I believe that it is impossible to estimate the merits of the various religions of the world, and, moreover, I believe that it is unnecessary and harmful even to attempt it. But each one of them, in my judgment, embodies a common motivating force: the desire to uplift man's life and give it purpose.

And because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendence to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but to the entire world; to all races and people, it

⁴⁶ Ibid: 21.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ KrishanKriplani (1958), *All Men are Brothers*, UNESO, Paris:9.

⁴⁹ Margaret Chatterjee(1982), "Mahatma Gandhi", in DonalH.Bishop, *Thinkers of the Indian Renaissance*, New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Limited:213-214.

matters little under what flag, name or doctrine they may work, profess a faith, or worship a God inherited from their ancestors⁵⁰.

Why Gandhi Is A Best Option For Conflict Resolution?

The words 'conflict resolution' can mean very different things to different people. They are often used synonymously with 'dispute settlement' and 'conflict management'. Pioneering analyst of the position of needs in conflict situations, John Burton sees conflict resolution as a problem-solving exercise that aims at the elimination of the sources of the conflict, not merely the management of the conflict or the settlement (often through coercive power in a way that does not meet the needs of all parties) of the manifest dispute. In short, for Burton, conflicts may be managed and disputes may be settled without conflicts being solved without conflicts being resolved.⁵¹

"Who indeed can claim to know and understand the mind of the great, as pointed out by Bhavbhuti, is certainly a difficult task? It is further compounded by the fact that Gandhi has become a part of our national building. We respond to his name, achievements and memory rather emotionally. It may be explained in term of his too closeness to us, both in respect of time and space. Too much of proximity usually stands in the way of an objective understanding. Emotion is helpful and good in its own sphere. But when it overpowers our intellect we lose our perspective and fall victims to a sort of optical illusion. We get ourselves bogged in total confusion⁵².

Undoubtedly each and every person or we should say every citizen of the global family, ought to be committed to peace in today's human predicament, caused by conflicts due to Ideological Extremism, Religious Fundamentalism, Misguided Nationalism, Economic Injustice and Inequality. Violation of Human Rights, Suppression of Freedoms, Militarism of Power Politics, Population Explosion, Racial and Ethnic Discrimination, Egoism and uncontrolled human instincts etc. Gandhi recognized .the potentiality of these various kinds of conflict as occasions to contemplate over the confirmed problems and also as opportunity to search peaceful means to resolve them, because of his positive attitude .He knew very well that the process of conflict resolution involved painstaking task of restructuring the present world by liberating human mind from dogmatism of various kinds such as economic and political barbarism, religious bigotry etc.

To achieve simultaneously the negative aim of conflict - resolution and the positive aim of establishing peace, Gandhi propounded his philosophy of peace. The need of ours is to proclaim again and again the significance of Gandhian pacifism to solve crucial problems of conflicts and violence. To prevent structural violence, Gandhi proposed the theories with ideals of Satyagraha, Sarvodaya, Swaraj, Swedish, BuniyadiTalim, Decentralization of Power, and wealth, Trusteeship, social Harmony & communal unity, Economic equality, Sarva Dharma Sambhava, Democracy of Enlightened Majority etc. Gandhi's approach had always been Holistic as human life is a synthetic whole, which cannot be divided into watertight compartments of social, religious, political life etc. Following diagram exhibits the salient features of Gandhian pacifism.

⁵⁰What Jesus Means to Me by Mahatma Gandhi(2013), "What Jesus Means to Me by Mahatma Gandhi" , [Online: web] Accessed 5oct.2014 URL: <http://practicalspirituallife.com/jesus-means-mahatma-gandhi>.

⁵¹ Thomas Weber (July2001)," Gandhian Philosophy, Conflict Resolution Theory and Practical Approaches to Negotiation", *journal of peace Research*, 38 (4): 498.

⁵² Jai Narain Sharma (2011), "understanding Gandhi", in Anil Dutt Mishra and Praveen Kumar, atel, eds, *Rivisiting Gandhi, Delhi: Abhijeet Publications: 1*.

Gandhian Solutions

1. Moral Crisis
Solutions: Non-violence Ashram, Anasakta Karma.
2. Religious Fundamentalism
Solutions: Sarva Dharma Sambhava, Tolerance, Respect towards all Religions.
3. Educational Reform
Solutions: Nai-Talim Adult Education.
4. Social Disturbance
Solutions: Removal of Untouchability, Communal Unity, Sarvodaya, Upliftment of Women, Prohibition, Service of Backward Classes, Village Sanitation
5. Political Conflicts
Solutions: Swaraj, Decentralisation of Power. Democracy of Enlightened Majority.
6. Economic Problem
Solutions: Trusteeship, Swadeshi, Bread Labour, Khadi and Village Industries.

The most fundamental principle of his philosophy of peace is "Ahimsa" or non-violence which is law of love, life and creation as opposed to violence or Himsa, the cause of hatred, death and destruction. According to Gandhi the universal human value of Ahimsa ought to be cultivated not merely at personal level, but at social, national and international level too if we wish to avoid personal, social, national and international conflicts. It is a very powerful means to avoid conflict, since it springs from inner realization of the equality of all. Non-violence at interpersonal and International levels can be defined as Altruistic approach. As a peaceful technique to resist injustice, it includes a concrete programme and leads to self-suffering and sacrifice. So he recommends acquisition of moral value such as truthfulness, non-violence or love. Self-control, forgiveness, non-enmity or friendliness, compassion, mercy etc. In fact values are the best equipment discovered by human being to escape various types of conflict. Researches also show that root of all problems invariably lies in the infringement of values- moral, religious, spiritual, economic and political -and moral principles. Undoubtedly conflicts are nothing but the illustration of the violation of moral laws, non-performance of duties, negligence of human values, enjoyment of freedom without caring for responsibility etc. Hence Gandhi appreciates moral solution, which is inexpensive, and single person can initiate and undertake the task of conflict resolution by attracting worldwide attention. As we all know the successful conduct of war involves two things. On the one hand, suppression of the virtues of kindness, friendliness, forgiveness and consideration for the sufferings of fellow human beings, and on the other, encouragement of the feelings of unqualified hatred, anger and hostility towards so called enemies. Thus war leads to total violation of the liberal democratic principles of respect for persons and dignity of the individual. On the contrary, Satyagrahi while resisting injustice shows respect for his opponent by making moral appeals to him and expecting him to be responsive. Satyagrahi aims at conversion of the opponent's heart by making him aware of his ill will or inhuman behavior through self-suffering".

Satyagraha aims at winning over opponent by love and gentle persuading and by arousing in him a sense of justice rather than forcing him to surrender out of fear. Gandhi believed in the technique of Satyagraha, because he had faith in the goodness of human nature. The moral and humanistic grandeur of Satyagraha as method of resolving conflict and securing justice has been appreciated by several thinkers, politicians and social workers. We have to redefine the concept of Development and Progress as Human Welfare and well-being by replacing the prevalent misleading concept of development and progress in terms of Economic Development and material progress. If we want peace, we have to replace the humanity negating industrial consumerist culture by idealistic humanism. Belief in the spiritual constitution of man led Gandhi to affirm equality of all human beings and to declare innate goodness of men. Humanism as the philosophy of Globalism or Global philosophy implies non-discrimination with regard to race, sex language, region, religion, political

ideology, social and economic status, international status of the country etc. To prevent conflicts caused by religious bigotry, Gandhi suggested "Sarva Dharma Sambhav". According to him all religions are true and man cannot live without religion so he recommends attitude of respect and tolerance towards all religions. Since the scientific and technological researches aimed at material comforts are ruining human sensitivity and sentiments i. e. human feelings and relations, so scientists and technocrats must be reminded of their moral obligation to choose peaceful means and so to perform their first and prior duty towards humanity.

They should not invent biological, chemical, nuclear, laser and other kinds of sophisticated weapons, which verifies the assumption that science and technology one frequently used as instruments of exploitation, domination and destruction rather than as means in the service of mankind and peace. So, Gandhi's Philosophy of peace endorses the truism that Gandhi is one of the very relevant precursors of conflict-resolution movement with his comprehensible philosophy of peace based on the psychology of human nature, awareness of social realities and knowledge of economic and political systems and situations⁵³

⁵³ChhayaRai, "Gandhi Role and Relevance in Conflict Resolution" , (Online: web)Accessed 18 Sept.2014,URL: <http://www.mkgandhi.org/nonviolence/role%20in%20relevance.htm>