
UNIT 13 THE GANDHIAN APPROACH

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13.1 INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) has been acknowledged as one of the greatest figures of human history. An indefatigable fighter for India's independence, an outstanding mass leader, social reformer, pacifist and, above all, a prophet of **non-violence** and truth – **there**

are several facets of Gandhi's personality and contributions. He lived, fought and died for the ideals of non-violence, peace, brotherhood and tolerance. He employed the innovative techniques of non-cooperation, civil disobedience, fasting, strikes etc. against the British rulers in India and added new dimensions to the theory of political mobilization.

Although Gandhi's ideas on society and politics are well-known, his views on peace and other international issues are not known as widely. It is believed that he did not take much interest in world affairs, preoccupied as he was with the conduct of the Indian national movement and resolution of the problems of Indian society and villages. However, this is a mistaken view. Gandhi never ignored world affairs and reflected frequently on the contemporary international events and expressed his vision of the new world order clearly and keenly. Indeed, he conceived of and carried out India's struggle for freedom in the larger international context.

However, as he was not a theoretician or a systematic writer, he did not explain his thoughts on international relations at length or provide any specific theory of peace. His ideas on war and peace are scattered in his writings and in his comments made to various individuals. Due to the thematic inconsistency of these writings, it is difficult to structure an organised theory out of it. Nevertheless, the totality of his views on international relations does constitute a distinctive approach to the understanding and resolution of the problem of Inter-state violence. The Gandhian vision of peace is eclectic in nature, derived from multiple sources and traditions. It was influenced as much by the pacifist and anarchist writings, especially of the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy and the American anarchist Henry Thoreau, as by the philosophical traditions of Hinduism, Jainism and Christianity. The following sections explain the key ideas of the Gandhian approach to peace.

13.2 THE BASIS OF GANDHIAN APPROACH TO PEACE

In order to understand Gandhian approach to peace, we must comprehend the core of Gandhi's general social and political thought. He had an integral philosophy of life and society applicable to domestic and international situations alike. This philosophy stemmed from his actions as well as his thought. His conceptions about man, society and the state provide the basis for his approach to peace and world affairs.

Implicitly, Gandhi enunciates both the epistemology of peace as well as the sociology of peace. In the Gandhian thought, metaphysics and social principles, religious values and political strategy are woven together. The primacy of the moral over the political and of the spiritual over the temporal is fundamental to Gandhi's thinking. He considered absolute truth as the ultimate goal and non-violence as the best method of achieving it. Absolute truth is omnipotent and all encompassing. It is equivalent to divinity. There could be no beauty and no art apart from truth. Gandhi subtly altered the dictum "God is Truth" to "Truth is God. Purity of means to achieve any end is also fundamental to the Gandhian approach. Rejecting the Machiavellian approach that end justifies means, Gandhi said that ends and means are inseparable. Good begets good and evil begets evil. In fact, 'ends' grows out of the 'means'. In Gandhi's view, the way you fight and the goal for which you are fighting are the same. Thus, in the Gandhian scheme, the solution of any problem is incorporated into the way one struggles against it.

13.2.1 *Satyagraha*

Satyagraha is Gandhi's most original and significant contribution to social thought and movement. This policy of non-violent struggle to fight against injustice, exploitation and domination was conceived and implemented by **Gandhi** in the anti-racial struggle in South Africa as well as against the British colonial rule in India. The several satyagrahas led by Gandhi were mainly responsible for mobilisation of the Indian masses for the country's independence and the weakening of the British imperial rule. Satyagraha is applicable to all situations: from inter-personal to the group relationships, from the national to international conflicts, from the micro- to macro-level problems. It can also be used to fight against the problems of injustice, exploitation and war at the global level. Hence, the **Gandhian** approach to peace relies heavily on satyagraha. In fact, Gandhi considers satyagraha as a moral substitute of war, and as a superior means of redressing the grievances of a state. It relies on persuasion and moral pressure rather than on physical force or other coercive techniques to achieve the goal of peace and justice at the international level.

Satyagraha is a compound Sanskrit word that means insistence on truth. Satyagraha means resisting evil and injustice through peaceful and pure means, without causing violence of any kind and generating ill feelings against the evil-doer. Satyagraha is not just as a technique of non-violent resistance but a moral and social philosophy of life. Satyagraha is carried out through several non-violent means: reasoning, persuasion, moral appeal through self-suffering, non co-operation, civil disobedience, strikes, fasting etc. It is based on the belief that the opponent is open to reason and has a conscience that responds to the suffering and problems of other persons, and to any noble and friendly gesture. The objective of Satyagraha is to convert, not to coerce, the wrongdoer. Conversion of the opponent is made possible by the *satyagrahi's* sincerity and willingness to make sacrifices for the cause. Self-suffering and positive psychological attitudes of a *satyagrahi* may lead to changes in attitudes of the opponent in the long run. This might lead to the opponent changing inwardly and reconciling with the non-violent activist, leaving no aftermath of resentment or revenge.

Satyagraha aims at liquidating the antagonisms but not the antagonists themselves. In satyagraha, the negative actions of the other party will have to be opposed persistently and resolutely, at the same time maintaining the feeling of amity for the opponent. Gandhi believed that we must not consider our opponents as our enemies. He wrote: "While we may attack measures and systems...we must not attack men. Imperfect ourselves, we must be tender towards others and slow to impute motives."

13.2.2 *Ahimsa or Non-violence*

The basis of Gandhi's pacifism is the supreme value of *Ahimsa* or non-violence. The reinterpretation of non-violence is a major contribution of Gandhi. Non-violence is the means to achieve truth. Just as violence is the distinctive character of animals, non-violence is the nature of man. For Gandhi, non-violence is infinitely superior to violence. Non-violence as a strategy of change was developed by Gandhi in South Africa and later during India's struggle for independence. Derived from the early influences of Jainism and other religious texts on his mind, Gandhi's Ahimsa is not a negative value of non-injury but a positive attitude of love, sacrifice and forgiveness for the humanity. Forgiveness requires

more courage than revenge. Thus, *Ahimsa* is not passive but dynamic. It does not represent the denial of power but renunciation of all forms of coercion and compulsion. Indeed, the moral power generated by non-violence is infinitely greater than the force of violence and armaments.

Non-violence does not mean mere abstention from physical injury or a negative state of harmlessness. Gandhi rejected the passive interpretations of the concept found in some religious scriptures and pacifist literature. He insisted that non-violence is dynamic and active. The true meaning of non-violence, according to Gandhi, is love and charity in their most positive forms. It means not hurting anybody in thoughts, words and deeds. It means doing well even to the wrongdoer. It is a weapon of the strong and the brave rather than of the weak. Gandhi advocated violence rather than non-violence borne out of cowardice. Indeed, he said that "I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should, in a cowardly manner, become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour." That was why he led the freedom struggle with conviction and confidence.

13.3 GANDHI'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WAR

Gandhi considered war as an unmitigated evil. It is immoral and repugnant because it violates the principles of truth and non-violence. Gandhi opposed all forms of aggression, whether backed by military force or not. Gandhi said that war "demoralizes those who are trained for it. It brutalises men of naturally gentle nature." War can achieve no good since what is gained by the sword is also lost by the sword. He regarded war and democracy as inconsistent. The basis of democracy is human and associative whereas war disturbs human relationships. War will create conditions of instability for democracy. Causes of war are many and diverse. However, in general, Gandhi regarded racialism, imperialism and fascism as chief causes of war in our times. He also cited communism as a threat to world peace. Economic inequality and exploitation are other causes of war and tension in the international system.

Even as Gandhi generally rejected war and denied any righteousness to it, his specific attitude towards different forms of war was not uniform or consistent. He adopted divergent and often contradictory positions about the utility and moral basis of war. Though he prohibited all kinds of war in principle, he did not completely abjure it under special circumstances. He himself participated as a volunteer in the Zulu war in South Africa and in World War I. Also, he countenanced India's war with Pakistan immediately after independence over the Kashmir problem and suggested that war in those circumstances was a preferable and moral option than the non-violent satyagraha.

Gandhi's views on war can be categorised into three kinds. First, as an unqualified pacifist, he rejected all war and believed that nothing of value comes out of military action. Violence, even for vindication of justice or defensive purpose, was of no use. His total denunciation of World War II and of the nuclear arms is an illustration of this form of pacifism advocated by him. He also suggested non-participation in all war efforts by truth-seeking and non-violent persons. Secondly, as a conditional pacifist he argued that despite its wrong means, good can come out of some wars. He also felt that individuals and states can take sides in such wars on behalf of the parties that represent justice and goodness. His attitude

towards the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 falls into this category. Thirdly, as a pragmatic nationalist, Gandhi tried to adjust the claims of nationalism with pacifism. War as a defensive response to external attack on an innocent nation and war as an unprovoked aggression on others can be considered as qualitatively different. While the aggressive wars have no moral justification, the defensive military response can be justified under special situations and circumstance. He tried to explain his support for the British during World War I and approval of India-Pakistan war of 1947-48 over the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir on the basis of such a distinction. Gandhi also recognised that it is impossible to eliminate violence completely from the world. Hence, a non-violent person must try to end war. However, if he does not succeed in doing so, "he may take part in war and yet wholeheartedly try to free himself, his nation and the world from war."

13.4 GANDHI'S VISION OF PEACE

Peace, as Gandhi envisaged it, is far more than the absence of war and violence. It implies a state of positive and constructive world order, where individuals, groups and nations do not dominate or exploit one another and live in cooperation and mutual aid. Peace is thus a cementing force for the society and the world. It is a state of affairs in which men can resolve their differences by talking to each other rather than by using violence.

Peace and truth cannot be separated. "The way of peace", Gandhi said, "is the way of truth. Truthfulness is even more important than peacefulness." Hence, peace achieved through untruth and deceit is not to be encouraged. Such peace cannot last long. Peace based on truth is stable and also promotes internal spiritual growth in man and social progress. Peace and justice are also integrally related. They were like two sides of the same coin.

Gandhi did not treat war and peace as isolated problems. Instead, he offered an integrated vision of peace which is based on his philosophy of life. The concern for peace in the Gandhian approach leads to the realisation of the oneness of humanity and the interdependent character of nations. Gandhi saw the entire humanity as one and argued for universal brotherhood. Transcending the differences of nationality, culture and race, a spiritual unity binds all mankind and pervades human consciousness. Mutual goodwill and friendship among all the peoples are a necessary condition for peace. As the humanity was indivisible, no man could degrade or brutalize another man without also degrading or brutalizing himself.

The realist approach looks at conflict as a clash of interests between two parties which can be resolved either by the victory of one side or by some compromise agreement between the two parties. The Gandhian approach does not accept conflict as clash of interests. It regards them as products of mental illusions, misperceptions and prejudices. Gandhi believes that conflicts are temporary irregularities in the normal flow of life. Conflict in the international system is never between the two groups of individuals but between two systemic actors. Hence, personal antagonisms have no place in any conflict situation. Creative dialogue and negotiations have the potential to resolve the differences between these two actors. Such a method does not demand any party to sacrifice his position or interest. Instead, the mental transformation during the conflict resolution process results into a win-win situation.

The Gandhian approach to peace is essentially different from pacifism practiced in the West. Gandhi's non-violence shares with pacifism a general rejection of violence. The distinction is that, while pacifism may take the form of opposition to violence and **refraining** from military service, Gandhian non-violence involves advocacy of social action for peace and justice. Too often, the western pacifism becomes passive rather than taking the form of active resistance against the evil and the injustice that result into violence and warfare. Those suffering from exploitation consider it as complacent and ineffective. Gandhi's *satyagraha* is a new and 'aggressive' form of pacifism, even as it shares the high moral ground and belief in non-violence with western pacifism.

13.5 MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE GANDHIAN APPROACH TO PEACE

According to Gandhi, war is not a natural phenomenon but a social and a cultural one. It is not the nature of man to kill others and commit violence. Since individuals can be pacific, so the states that are composed of individuals can also be pacific. It is possible to avoid war if we eliminate the root causes of war and create the right environment through moral techniques. Gandhi had deep faith in the possibility of establishing peace through non-violent action. He wrote: "Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature."

13.5.1 Focus on the Individual and his Psychology

How a thinker regards human nature and man's ability to control himself shapes his vision about society and world. The crucial factor and first step in Gandhi's design for a peaceful and just world order is the individual. He was a humanist who put man at the centre of all social and political activities. An individual is an integral part of the whole. There is an unbreakable link between an individual and the family, a family and the neighbourhood, a neighbourhood and the society, a society and the nation, a nation and the world. Each level is as strong as the ties it has with the other. Hence, for the strengthening of the probability of peace at the global level, the beginning has to be made at the level of the individual psychology.

Gandhi believed that the sources of peace and war lie in the minds of men. The question of world peace is ultimately about achieving conquest of the self. Even while recognising that human mind has the tendency towards degradation and corruption, he never gave up his deep conviction in the essential goodness of man and his innate sense of discrimination between good and evil. Man can appreciate and live by the principles of truth and non-violence. Ultimately, the moral and spiritual forces would triumph over the material and physical forces because the spiritual force and desire for non-violence lies in every man's heart. This spiritual force might be dormant, but it can be **awakened** by right stimulus and training.

Mere denunciation of violence will not result into a peaceful world order. It is necessary to reform the individual for this. Peace cannot be imposed from above but must grow from within. As both conflict and peace begin in the minds of men, a non-violent peacemaker must first establish peace within himself before attempting to establish peace elsewhere. Purging

the man of his impurities and infirmities, of anger, selfishness and ill-will, are of fundamental importance in the Gandhian strategy. Continuous self-introspection, self-analysis and self-purification are essential for the satyagrahis to achieve their goals.

13.5.2 Need for a New Life Style and Culture

The Gandhian model presupposes that as the roots of violence lie in our infinite greed, consumerism and materialism, a new life-style and a new culture are required for making the world peaceful. The modern civilization that glorifies and venerates self-interest debases the moral basis of society. Restriction on human needs and inculcation of other-regarding rather than self-regarding attitudes are vital components of the larger Gandhian vision of peace.

13.5.3 Search for the Moral Solution

The problems of war and peace have been misconceived by the conventional approaches and theories. The efforts for peace so far have failed because of the wrong methods used and because of the lack of sincerity on the part of their practitioners. In the Gandhian approach, peace is not primarily a result of the activities of an international organisation or of balance of power in the international system. War is primarily a moral problem and requires moral solutions. The threat of war can be tackled successfully if we can solve the fundamental moral problem involved. The moral problem stems from the norms that guide nations in their behaviour with each other and the legitimacy that violence enjoys in international politics. These norms are diametrically opposite to the morality that men in society observe. What is good in individual and social conduct is seen as bad and undesirable in international relations. Moral man cannot live in an immoral or non-moral international order, without impairing his higher nature.

Unless the collective mind of nations is civilised, there would be no peace in the world. Gandhi believed that every action - whether performed for self, family, group or nation - produces its own appropriate result. Evil actions create evil results while the good actions lead to good results. In international politics, evil seems to have overtaken the good. Every war becomes the cause of a subsequent conflict. Hence, in consonance with the spirit of the sages and prophets of olden times, Gandhi prescribed moral means for the settlement of international disputes. If humanity wants to avoid the possibility of an all-out destructive war fought by nuclear weapons, the states must regulate their behaviour towards other states by observing the rules of the morality laid down through centuries. As many reformers had to suffer in the cause of establishing the moral law in civil society, some nations must be prepared to suffer for the establishment of the moral law among nations. War is 'mutual violence' which breeds hatred, revenge and bitterness. Hatred cannot be a foundation for future peace.

13.5.4 Combine Humanism with Nationalism

Gandhi was a staunch nationalist who articulated a powerful conception of the Indian nation and stood up for the social and political rights of the Indian people. Even though he was one of the tallest nationalist leaders, Gandhi's nationalism was not of the usual type. It was not exclusive or narrow. He believed that without a feeling of cosmopolitanism and

international brotherhood, nationalism can be as dangerous as colonialism. Nationalism that is not animated by humanism and internationalism is not true nationalism. He saw Indian nationalism not as a threat to other nations but as beneficial to the liberation of all the oppressed countries. He observed: "Through realisation of freedom of India I hope to realise and carry on the mission of the brotherhood of man." A free India would carry out a pacifying mission in the world and project the country's spiritual heritage and non-violent struggle in its foreign policy.

Gandhi believed that it is not necessary to abolish nation-state system to achieve world peace. "It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is an evil.. our nationalism cannot be peril to other nations in as much as we will exploit none just as we allow none to exploit us." Nationalism and internationalism can be complementary and compatible. It is not necessary to damage other countries in order to serve one's own national interests.

13.5.5 Six Point Agenda for Non-violent States

In Gandhi's vision of peace, a peace-loving and non-violent country should be committed to the following six actions: First, it should adopt complete and universal disarmament. The money saved and the army rendered free as a result of such disarmament should be used for constructive activities. Secondly, a non-violent country should abandon its colonial territories and help the liberated peoples develop themselves. Thirdly, a non-violent country should withdraw from all the alliances and security arrangements that involve it in military activities or impose military obligations on it. Fourthly, such a state should give up completely the traditional game of intelligence and counter-intelligence regarding other countries. Fifthly, such a country should minimize the military significance of its trade with other states. Sixthly, such a country, if it has sufficient resources of its own, should share them with other underdeveloped nations of the world.

13.5.6 Promotion of Disarmament

Gandhi rejected the argument that armaments give security to the state and deter other states from aggression. The desire of a state to acquire armaments indicates a disorder, a sickness in the international system. Arms do not deter the enemy from attacking. The real source of strength for a state is the desire of its citizens to fight and make a sacrifice for the nation. He wrote: "If the mad pace for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in history. If there is a victor left the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious."

Gandhi believed that for a less armed world some nations would have to disarm unilaterally and take risks. He appealed to the great powers of his time to disarm unilaterally. All good things, Gandhi believed, begin with one small step. Such unilateral action will reduce tensions. If one side makes a small unilateral gesture of disarmament to reduce tension and the other side reciprocates, a further move should be made - thus starting a process of disarmament. If the opponent does not reciprocate after the first move, the side making the initial gesture should wait and then make second move. The other side cannot remain unresponsive for long if a state persists with its sincere approach towards disarmament.

13.5.7 Fight Against Nuclear Weapons

Gandhi ridiculed the idea that destructive power of the atomic weapons would prevent future wars. He wrote: "It has been suggested by American friends that the atom bomb will bring in **ahimsa** (non-violence) as nothing else can.... (However) the world will return to violence with renewed zeal after the effect of disgust is worn out.... So far as I can see, the atomic bomb has deadened the finest feeling that has sustained mankind for ages. There used to be the so-called laws of war which made it tolerable. Now we know the naked truth. War knows no law except that of might... The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that counter-bombs will not destroy it even as violence cannot be by counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence."

Gandhi's faith in the power of non-violent moral action against the might of weapons remained unshaken even after the use of atomic bombs at the end of the World War II by America against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. He said on one occasion: "Atom bomb is nothing before my truth and non-violence. Atom bomb may kill my son, myself and my family members and even forty crore of Indians. But what does it matter? There is no power in atom bomb to kill our soul." When asked about how he would face nuclear weapons through non-violence, Gandhi replied: "I would come out in the open and let the pilot see that I had not the face of evil against him. The pilot would not see my face at such a height...but the longing in our heart that we will not come to harm will reach up to him and his eyes would be opened."

13.5.8 International Organisation and World Federation

Gandhi was not much of a believer in the effectiveness of international organisations like the League of Nations and the United Nations. He believed that the League and the UN were products of war rather than manifestation of the genuine urges of the victorious powers for peace. He criticised the League for abandoning the moral ground and for having failed to keep peace. He also suggested that if the League was genuinely interested in peace, it should adopt the method of *satyagraha*. Without the change of heart on the part of the leaders and without the acceptance of the unity of the mankind, establishment of international organisations will not lead to peaceful relations among states.

At the time of the origin of the United Nations, Gandhi supported the establishment of such a general international organisation. However, he expected that it should support the movement of freedom of all the colonized states, including India. He urged the architects of the UN to end colonialism and war, impose generous peace treaties, create international police force and establish economic justice and world federation. Seeing many of his ideas not finding an echo in the UN charter and activities, Gandhi later developed pessimism about its capacity to inspire world peace. He wrote about the great powers which created the UN: "If they are so arrogant as to think that they can have lasting peace while the exploitation of the coloured and the so-called backward races goes on, they are living in fool's paradise."

In the Gandhian approach, an international organisation must conform to the following principles in order to become an effective instrument of peace and security:

(1) The individuals and the states composing it should follow non-violence (2) All the nations should be made independent and the world should be freed from the evils of racialism, colonialism and imperialism. (3) Such an international organisation must represent all the states (4) It should be based on general disarmament (5) The international society should be based on common good in which each state is willing to make a sacrifice for others (5) All disputes among states should be settled peacefully through negotiations, arbitration or mediation. (6) A small international police force may be constituted to keep peace in the world if some states abandon the path of non-violence.

Though Gandhi did not reject the idea of a centralised world government, his inherent preference lay with the world federation. He conceived of a federation of friendly, independent states based on self-determination by all the peoples and justice. Such a federation would promote the ideals of justice, peace and non-violence in the international order. He recognised that the prospect of this happening might be distant, but not impossible. The states can be persuaded to part with a segment of their sovereignty to create such a federation. The structure of such a world federation can be raised only on the foundation of truth and non-violence.

13.5.9 The Non-violent Army and 'the *Shanti Sena*

One important condition of a peaceful world, according to Gandhi, is the raising of a non-violent army. Even as this idea might sound impractical and its prospect appear distant, Gandhi felt that it should be possible to raise it if we are sincere about its purpose. Such a non-violent army could resist armed invasion without recourse to arms. A non-violent army acts unlike armed men in times of peace and war. It brings warring communities together, carries out peace propaganda, engages in activities that bring and keep them in touch with other persons. Such an army should be ready to cope with any emergency. The non-violent force must be small if it is to become efficient.

Gandhi concretised and expanded his idea of a non-violent army in the concept of *Shanti Sena*. Gandhi first conceived of a non-violent peace brigade, *Shanti Sena*, during the large-scale communal riots in 1922. However, it was only around India's independence in 1947 that Gandhi seriously considered organising the *Shanti Sena*. Unfortunately, due to his assassination, his proposal could not materialise. The *Shanti Sena* is a civilian defence force and peace brigade struggling to establish and maintain peace through *satyagraha* and non-violent techniques. Units of *Shanti Sena* can be organised in every village and every block of buildings in the cities. Civilian defence, unlike conventional warfare, does not aim to defend particular objects such as borders and buildings, but it is concerned with the defence of the whole body of society. A country with peace brigades is less likely to be invaded because it would not be seen as a threat. The chief qualities of the members of this peace brigades should be a living faith in God, discipline, truthfulness and devotion to duty. During peacetime, *Shanti Sena* can work for social welfare and constructive programmes. If the *Shanti Sena* is able to attract a large number, it may even substitute the police and the army.

The trained *satyagrahis* of the *Shanti Sena* would be willing to make any sacrifice, including of their own lives, for the sake of truth, peace and non-violence. The band of

satyagrahis in the Shanti Sena confronts the aggressors and tells them of wrongness of their action. They are even willing to lay down their lives in the process of non-violent resistance. The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery, Gandhi claimed that "men can slaughter one another for years in the heat of battle, for them it seems a case of kill or be killed. But if there is no danger of being killed yourself by those you slay, you cannot go on killing defenceless and unprotesting people endlessly. You must put down your gun in self-disgust."

13.5.10 Non-Cooperation with the Aggressor

In the event of a war, Gandhi emphasised the value of non-cooperation in the fight against the aggressor state. He advised that rather than fighting the conquering army with violence an occupied country should first practice non-violent resistance and then non-cooperation. Even as they do not threaten the lives of the conquering army, the satyagrahis should stop offering any cooperation to it. He believed that when a whole population stops cooperation, it would be impossible for a conquering force to occupy the conquered territory for long. After sometime, the conquering power will leave the occupied territory out of disgust, frustration and confusion. For this he wanted people to train themselves in individual civil resistance. Peace achieved through non-violent resistance is stable as it brings out the issues into the open and leaves behind no rancour or frustration.

13.5.11 Address Ecological Concerns

The Gandhian approach to peace not only concerns human beings and states but also includes the ecology and the cosmos. Gandhi anticipated and articulated the concerns for environment. The compulsion for war arises not just due to urge for territories or power, but also by the pattern of development based on disregard for nature and life forms. In his famous book, *Hind Swaraj*, he dismissed the western civilization as exploitative of nature as well as of human beings, based on an over-use of earth's resources, over-production and over-consumption. Such a civilization resting on the selfish nature of the individual promotes amoral economics and amoral politics. A peaceful world will arise when man learns to live in harmony with nature and when all men and women identify themselves with all other living beings.

13.5.12 Reform the Development Model

Likewise, our development models too will have to be reformed to make them people-oriented rather than machine-centred. Big technology aligned with big business could create disastrous consequences for the world. Appropriate technology is the need of the hour to encourage the movement towards a non-violent society. Gandhi also felt that militarism and centralized economy are inseparable. Centralised economy and big factories require strong armies and big armaments and vice-versa. We cannot have a non-violent and peaceful world as long as factory civilization persists. Decentralised production that generates employment and does not marginalise and exploit men at the lowest rung of the society alone can be conducive to peace and non-violence.

13.5.13 Settle Internal Differences

Gandhi also believed that without settling the differences within one's own society, it is not possible to work for or establish peace at the global level. A nation which has achieved internal harmony will not need armed forces for its security. Hence, satyagraha and constructive programmes should be applied for mending social relations. Religious tolerance and understanding, reconciliation of ethnic and racial differences etc. are of fundamental importance in the quest for establishing global peace.

13.5.14 End Economic Exploitation

As acquisition of armaments and wars are often fuelled by economic factors and exploitation, Gandhi believed that real peace cannot emerge unless the nations of the world cease to exploit one another. A peaceful nation would aim at resolving international conflicts by helping its neighbours alleviate their economic problems and try to remain friendly with them.

13.5.15 Peoples' Participation in Peace Process

Gandhi was convinced that peace is possible not through diplomatic activities alone but mainly through the participation of people and groups at all levels of the society. Peace from below rather than above is the cornerstone of the **Gandhian** thinking. Thus involvement of all the sections of the society – ordinary men and women, children, youth, civil society organisations, educational institutions etc. in the peace process are imperative.

13.6 A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF THE GANDHIAN APPROACH TO PEACE

Gandhi's views and vision of peace have been criticised as utopian, idealistic, inconsistent and contradictory. Since he changed his positions and views regarding war many times, critics regard his ideas as incoherent and unreliable. His qualified pacifism, especially the justification of his participation in **World War I** in support of the British and his approval of the war with Pakistan immediately after independence fail to meet the standards of absolute pacifism laid down by some Western thinkers.

Critics question the ethical and practical basis of **Gandhi's** non-violent philosophy. According to them even a violent act can acquire moral character under certain circumstance. The relationship between means and ends is more complex than what Gandhi recognised. Means and ends have to be understood in their wider contexts. The Gandhian approach also relies greatly upon the potential for converting ruling elites to justice and peace. It minimises the importance of state interests, beyond the interests of the individuals who manage the state, that determine a state's political **behaviour** and force them to initiate war against other states. According to some scholars, Gandhi did not comprehend all the complexities of international politics or give an effective practical plan for global peace. The critics also doubt the validity of civilian defence and non-violent resistance against dictatorships and in countries where basic civil freedoms are not available to the people.

However, as noted earlier, Gandhi was a practical idealist. His contributions should, therefore, be judged on the basis of what he did rather than on the basis of what he wrote about world peace. He was also not a dogmatic thinker and open to revising his ideas according to new realities and developments. His shifting stand about war is also something that was known to Gandhi himself. He believed that his aim was not so much to be consistent with his previous statements but with truth as it evolved before him from time to time.

Gandhi's approach to non-violence places him as a far-sighted, sensitive and perceptive man of peace. He gave a dynamic and flexible meaning of peace in which peace is the best, but not the only way, to achieve good. 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.

Despite the inconsistencies of his position and the unsystematic character of his ideas on world affairs, no one can deny the fact before him few had given such a powerful moral thrust in international relations and argued for justice at global level. In satyagraha, Gandhi gave a morally superior alternative to war as a means of achieving one's goals. His idea that responsible nationalism can be helpful to peace added a new dimension to conventional pacifism which rejected nationalism. Gandhi demonstrated, in South Africa as well as in India, that active pacifism can be an effective force, whether within a society or at the international level.

13.7 SUMMARY

In Gandhian thought, metaphysics and social principles, religious values and political strategy are woven together. The primacy of the moral over the political and of the spiritual over the temporal is fundamental to Gandhi's thinking. He considered absolute truth as the ultimate goal and non-violence as the best method of achieving it. Believing that ends and means are inseparable; Gandhi conceived and implemented Satyagraha, a policy of non-violent struggle to fight against injustice, exploitation and domination. As we observed, satyagraha is applicable to all situations: from interpersonal to the group relationships, from the national to international conflicts, from the micro to the macro level problems.

Gandhi claimed that his life was like a laboratory of truth and non-violence. Hence, this can be reinterpreted and applied fresh to the emerging realities of the 21st century international relations. His teachings and personal examples do provide several practical tools and techniques that are relevant for addressing the challenges of the contemporary international society. Mankind today is suffering from multidimensional crises such as terrorism, denial of human rights, economic inequality, racial discrimination, ethnic violence, religious intolerance, poverty, environmental degradation and so on. The Gandhian principles of truth, love, non-violence and world order based on justice and goodness are of great relevance in this context.

In different ways and in different fields, a growing number of initiatives to search for non-materialistic, non-violent alternatives to present modes of living are being taken in the world today. Whether or not these initiatives use the name of Gandhi, they are nevertheless

promoting the values and principles he stood for In the most unexpected places and ways, the Gandhian concept and practice of non-violence has spread in the world. Failure of non-violent initiatives and ideas does not invalidate Gandhian approach to peace, but only points to the need of greater persistence of non-violence in the face of violence.

13.8 EXERCISES

- 1) Critically examine Gandhi's views on War.
- 2) Examine the features and objectives of **Satyagraha**.
- 3) How does Gandhi's approach to non-violence **differ from** pacifism?
- 4) What **are** the main elements of action suggested by Gandhi for non-violent states?
- 5) Critically examine Gandhi's views on nuclear weapons.
- 6) What are Gandhi's views on international organisations?