

# M.K.Gandhi and Non-Violent Management



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## Abstract

With Gandhi, the notion of nonviolence attained a special status. He not only theorized on it, he adopted nonviolence as a philosophy and an ideal way of life. He made us understand that the philosophy of nonviolence is not a weapon of the weak; it is a weapon, which can be tried by all. Gandhi was the first in Human history to extend the principle of nonviolence from the individual to social and political plane. Nonviolence is the personal practice of being harmless to self and others under every condition. It comes from the belief that hurting people, animals or the environment is unnecessary to achieve an outcome and refers to a general philosophy of abstention from violence. This may be based on moral, religious or spiritual principles, or it may be for purely strategic or pragmatic reasons. Gandhi saw violence pejoratively and also identified two forms of violence; Passive and Physical. The practice of passive violence is a daily affair, consciously and unconsciously. It is again the fuel that ignites the fire of physical violence.

**Keywords:** Non- violence, Management, Trusteeship, Leadership Style.

## Introduction

The spirit of Gandhian viewpoint is shaped by his firm faith in and commitment to truth and non-violence. For him, the substance of truth is morality, and non-violence is its essential part. Ahimsa or non-violence is a positive principle, which includes compassion and care. Truth finds expression through ahimsa; both are meant to be practiced. He said, 'it is not enough for thought to be based on truth, the life must express it'. And that is what he did. After Jesus Christ, there are scarcely those like him who lived what they preached, and lived to such rightness, in spite of being engrossed so much in politics. This is what lends reliability and respect for Gandhi and his beliefs. Though he saw in non-violence a powerful weapon for the empowerment of the weak and destitute, he refused to call it as a weapon of the weak. On the contrary, non-violence was the weapon of the ethically strong and brave, according to him. He strove to get justice to the underprivileged and make them stand on their own feet with solemnity. He believed that journalism can be the effective tool to bring about the change that is needed for the upliftment of the society but on the other hand it can act negatively when we don't understand its importance and value. The idea of truth and non-violence is at the core Mahatma Gandhi's political thought. But he himself confesses that non-violence or 'ahimsa' was not his inborn virtue. He simply states: "In the journey searching for truth I find ahimsa. I have only retrieved it, never discovered a new." Actually truth and ahimsa are closely integrated with his philosophy of life. He used to believe that ahimsa lies within the truth and similarly truth is in ahimsa. Once he thought that God is truth but later he observed that truth is God. So, he named his struggle 'Satyagraha'. The Satyagrahis will be the worshipper of non-violence which will be his life and duty. Mahatma Gandhi **came** on this earth with his message of truth and non-violence (ahimsa) at a time when the forces of aggression and violence reigned supreme on earth. Mahatma Gandhi taught us what Christ and Buddha had longed to teach long ago. He became an immortal spirit who guides us through the path of peace and non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi was the exponent of the cult of Ahimsa or Non-violence. Like the Buddha, Christ and Chaitanya he too believed in the ultimate victory of Non-violence over violence. Force or violence, according to him, is madness which cannot sustain. 'So ultimately force or violence will bow down before non-violence'.

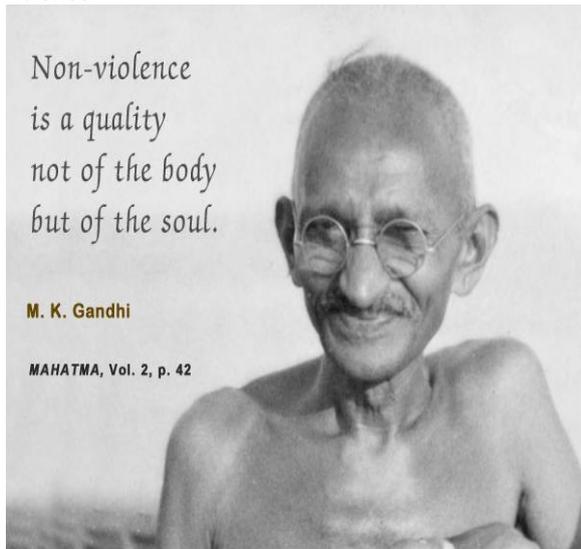
As we know that Gandhi ji is the best example of an effective manager and an extraordinary leader. It is high time; we analyzed his principles and qualities to understand his management style. The new-found faith in Gandhian principles means good for the country and businesses, only if interpreted correctly. The Gandhi's concept of non-

violence and his high moral standards are what today a leader must emulate in order for organizations to have the advantage in the global markets only. And his concept of a self-ruled society can be compared to a project orientated organization, where individual teams are self governed and highly efficient.

### Non violence Management

According to Mahatma Gandhi, ahimsa implies uttermost selflessness. It means, if anyone wants to realize himself, i.e., if he wants to search for the truth, he has to behave in such a way that others will think him entirely safe. He did not consider non-killing along to be non-violence. To him, non-violence is not a negative concept but a positive sense of love. He talked of loving the wrong-doers, but not the wrong. He had strongly opposed any sort of submission to wrongs and injustice in an indifferent manner. He thought that the wrong-doers can be resisted only through the severance of all relations with them.

According to Gandhi, non-violence never evades violence. On the contrary, it carries on a constant struggle against arrogance and violence. This is why he did not regard the pacifist a non-violence.



He considered non-violence to be a very powerful active force. The followers of non-violence would never retreat at the sight of violence. They would rather devote themselves to the task of changing the hearts of perpetrators of violence through self-torture for establishing truth.

Non-violence out of cowardice is not real non-violence; he would even prefer violence to cowardice. He asserted, 'That which looks for mercy from an opponent is not non-violence' (Gandhi, 1982: P-450). He instilled the courage to die among his followers participating in *satyagraha* movements. There was no question of fearing the opponent. He said, 'The root cause of most of our misunderstandings lies in distrust, and the root cause of this distrust lies mostly in fear' (Gandhi, 1981: P-436). It is violence which is rooted in fear not non-violence, in Gandhian view. The courage for non-violence as a weapon against injustice comes from

*satya* or moral strength. Based on *satya*, a nonviolent struggle believes in frankness of mind, eagerness to understand opponents' stand point, and in a spirit of adjustment and even cooperation. Such cooperation should not be out of fear, but based on the conviction that in certain respects the opponents' view may be right and has to be accommodated. This was the Gandhian approach to conflict resolution. But even non-violence is not to be used to achieve personal ends or for narrow selfish purposes. For example, Gandhi may not have approved of an indefinite fast on the part of a person as a protest over failure to get promotion in one's service or in getting selected for a particular post, even if there may have been injustice.

### Social Orientation – Collectivism in Management

Gandhi's principle of social service is useful both in reducing economic inequality and helping environment. It is not enough to share one's wealth with the poor and for collective causes, it is equally necessary to give one's time and labor too. Voluntary service or *Shram-daan* is also useful for economic development in creating rural, and economic assets and for protecting them such as in constructing and renovating tanks, wells, canals, bunds, soil, and water conservation measures, afforestation, and regenerating *gumals* or village pastures. His idea of social service even extended towards *satyagrahis* supporting the victims of social or economic injustice when the latter wanted to resist oppression and exploitation. However, unlike some self-styled revolutionaries, Gandhi's emphasis on constructive activities on the part of *satyagrahis* was a conspicuous feature of his teaching, and was not confined to merely offering resistance.

### Constructive Management Programmes

Gandhi's constructive programmes had a holistic view of economic development. Besides having livelihood concerns, particularly about the weak, the constructive programmes valued the principle of economic equality, and the governing principle of decentralization. They aimed at benefiting the producers and consumers most, in contrast to the ways of modern economy which allow and encourage a huge disparity between the producers' price and consumers' price. By catering to local needs as much as possible, the economic activities minimized unnecessary transport costs, thus saving on fuel too. The constructive programmes also had the moral aims of human development, including schooling and eradication of illiteracy, character building, promoting communal harmony, providing health services, teaching cleanliness, encouraging mutual cooperation, improving the status of women, avoiding alcohol, and so on.

### Time – long-term outlook and Management

The Gandhi believed that economic growth should proceed in harmony with nature and between people, even if that growth was slower and more gradual than growth brought on by heavy industry and high technology also. (Prabhu, 2001)

The Gandhi was always more concerned with the means than about the ends. (Alexander, 1984) and Building a learning organization takes time and efforts.



The leader responsible with incorporating change within an organization must have a complete view of the big pictures. And promoting any type of change can be difficult, but the leader must always keep site of the final destination particularly. And building trust in an organization takes time only. The Team members must trust the leader and believe what s/he says in order for them to willingly follow. The Gandhi believed that the rule of community behavior must be found through long practices. And this was the best for all involved. (Alexander, 1984)

#### **Power Tolerant and Non –Violence Management**

Mahatma Gandhi believed that decentralization of power in the village was the fundamental unit of politics only. He has felt that Indian independence must begin at the bottom and that each village should be a republic having complete and full power. And every village would be self-sustained and capable of managing its own affairs. (Ishii, 2001) As Alexander (1984) states, “decentralization of authority accords best with the dignity of man in the society”. And the most important feature of Gandhi’s leadership style is not mind or rationality, but rather the heart and the soul. Gandhi belief was that people should rule not by coercion but by caring solicitation only. He is believed that home-rule was self-rule and the way to accomplish this was by passive resistance, which he called soul-force or love-force also. He is believed that national self-reliance needed to be supported and sustained by moral practice in order to prevent its deterioration into a dysfunctional state of nationalism. (Dallmayr, 2001). The Leaders in today’s volatile environment must also possess these characteristics for which Gandhi believed in. A leader today must be honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent only.

#### **Trusteeship Management**

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

other words, production of the masses was the solutions (Ishii, 2001). Particularly, the purpose of trusteeship was to construct self-contained villages based on self-rule and cooperation system. And you can compare this to leadership in a team environment. And in a purely project based corporation, each team governs themselves. Then the team leader is responsible and accountable for each team members’ work and whether the work is completed on time only.

#### **Gandhiji’s principle of Trusteeship**

- In case of industrialist what they produce should be determine by social necessity with optimal utilization of scarce resources and not by personal whims
- Though wealth legally belongs of owners of business, morally belongs to society and community.

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

#### **Gandhian Values in Participatory Management**

We know that Gandhian values and his principles are ever applicable in participatory management. On the whole Gandhiji’s contribution was much more than leading the non-violent struggle to achieve India’s freedom system. And he was a great visionary with a universal idiom who recognized syncretism of Indian society that transcends differences of religion, caste, language and ethnic differences as its strength. He has used it with great success to rally the masses in the freedom struggles. Hence he reinforced India’s national identity and enabled the people to regain not only their freedom but their pride and dignity, eroded by two centuries of colonial rule also. The Gandhiji’s greatest achievement was in motivating and mobilizing the masses of India across the states, regardless of their differences in language, religion, caste, creed and sex, to come together and fight for the cause of freedom under the banner of Indian National Congress. There cannot be a greater example of participatory management than this in the system. This is actually a real truth in the real life.

**Conclusion**

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

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

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