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Nonviolent Interventions to deal with Violent Behaviour and Conflicts

In the light of Jainism and Gandhian Philosophy

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Abstract

In this era of modern science and technology, Selfishness and temptation have eroded our spiritual and moral values of self-sacrifice and service to the needy with the mad scramble for competition and success, vis-à-vis, name and fame. The limitless desires for power and wealth, development, superiority, hatred, Jealousy, Enmity etc. has given rise to the conflicts at each level of the society. Society, where cooperation is seen on the one hand, on the other hand there is situation of conflict. This is an eternal process as Human life and nature is surrounded by various dimensions of needs and desires and the efforts to fulfil these needs and desires force man in the state of conflicts. [1] So, there is a need to resolve such conflicts to live a peaceful and harmonious life. Conflict Resolution does not mean to end the conflict completely but it means to pave the right way for resolving it, mainly concerned with nonviolent and peaceful resolution of conflicts. In the present work, various means of Conflict resolution are elaborated which will definitely provide solutions to the present struggling society and encourage the society towards peace and harmony.

Keywords: *Nonviolence, Relativity, Co-ordination, Co-existence, Contemplation, Mahavrat, Anuvrat, Tolerance*

Introduction

Today's life is such where a person is not happy even though he has everything; and in search of this happiness, He keeps roaming here & there. Sometimes He fights with himself, sometimes with others. Sometimes He humiliates others and sometimes takes pride in his own existence. Sometimes envious of others and sometimes accumulating infinitely. And all these measures make him more unhappy and take the person closer to violence. But, to attain happiness in true sense, we have to be peace loving and if we want to find peace, we have to follow the path of Nonviolence and that Nonviolence brings our thoughts, feelings and emotions in a harmonious balance which helps in creating peaceful environment. So, to make the Society, a peaceful place to live, we just need to believe in the power of ahimsa, to promote it and make people aware about its power and to practice it. But the training on non-violence is not an easy task as Rabindranath Tagore has said: "It is easy to train an army of violence, even a year's drill may be good enough for that. But it takes a lot more time to train and prepare men to attain enough maturity andstrength for a nonviolent struggle".

'Existence of others', the main cause of unhappiness for an individual which in turn creates an atmosphere of fear. The instinct of possession or limitless needs, also a key factor for men's unhappiness; which in turn cause turbulence, emotional disturbance and aggression[2]. Now a day, Stress is also the main cause of Violence, due to which conflicts are increasing in the Society and not only this, crimes like Murder & Suicide are at extent level. All these factors i.e., Fear, Greed and non-fulfilment of minimal needs and Stress; are responsible for Violent behaviour and Conflicts in human life. So, conflicts occur naturally and most

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of the times conflicts are beneficial as it helps to trace out the prevailing problems and many efforts can be made to solve them for their solution. Two measures can be taken to end our conflicts. Firstly, we can end conflicts by violence which is a temporary solution to the conflict and there is a high possibility of loss of life. Second way to resolve conflicts is Ahimsa (Non-violence), which has proved to be the most efficient weapon to resolve such conflicts at each level of the society and maintains not only a balanced state of mind but also resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner by assuring that no one will be harmed in any way by any means.[3] India's freedom which we have attained through non-violence & The United Nations declaration to celebrate 2nd October as International Day of Non-Violence proves itself the need, importance & power of Non-violence (Ahimsa) in present time.

Here, we will discuss about some nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution which are based on Jainism and Gandhian Philosophy integrated with actual facts: -

1. **Change of thoughts: from negative towards positive**

"Positive thinking will let you do everything better than negative thinking will." – Zig Ziggler

There are two types of Thoughts found in every individual: Negative & Positive. Negative thoughts like Hatred, Jealousy, Enmity, Fear and Positive thoughts like Tolerance, Love and Friendliness; they both influence men. But these negative thoughts, that trigger negative emotions, produce bio-chemicals that make humans violent which needs to refine.[4] But it's not so easy to eliminate the negative thoughts or to push them out all of a sudden or to supplant the negative thoughts with positive thoughts. It's a long run process where we can incorporate positive thoughts while removing negative.

If we want to change the World, we have to change ourselves. We have to change our thinking, our thoughts and accordingly we have to change our behaviour and deeds too. So, if we want to eradicate conflicts and remove the prevailing violence all around, first we have to be nonviolent and harmonious, only then can we bring any kind of change in the World. If we think positively, we're likely to enjoy positive results. Negative thinking, on the other hand, can lead to outcomes we don't want.

In the below tables, we can see that Negative thinking can contribute to problems such as social anxiety, depression, stress, and low self-esteem. The key to change your negative thoughts is to understand how you think now (and the problems that result), then use strategies to change these thoughts or make them have less of an effect.

Day-to-day Emotional Spin Cycle

If our Thoughts are negative/positive about others:

	If our thoughts are Negative about others, our behaviour is	If our thoughts are Positive about the others, our behaviour is
Feeling →	Rage or Arrogance	Resolve with Compassion
Thinking →	Emotionally Impaired thinking	Emotionally Intelligent Thinking
Acting out →	Aggressive or Destructive Behaviour	Supportive and Constructive Behaviour

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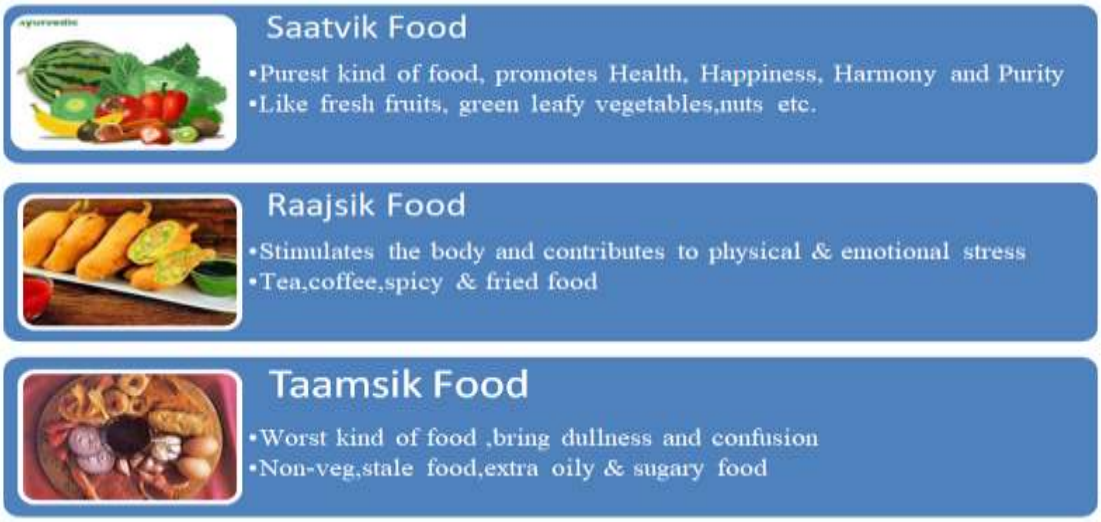
If our Thoughts are negative/positive about others:

	If our thoughts are Negative about Self, our behaviour is	If our thoughts are Positive about Self, our behaviour is
Feeling →	Depression or Inadequacy	Enthusiasm and Self-Confidence
Thinking →	Pessimistic or Cynical Thinking	Optimistic and Realistic Thinking
Acting out →	Self-Destructive Behaviour	Self-Enhancing Behaviour

The first way to stop negative thinking is the Practice of Preksha Meditation and Auto-suggestion.[5] In Preksha Meditation, suggestions are given to the whole body with relaxing the mind and at the same time Green-coloured contemplative meditation is also being carried out. As a result of which the chronic habits and unwanted thoughts can be eradicated & the path for the creation of new habits can be paved which in turn develops positive thinking. In Auto-suggestion process (Anupreksha), we repeat the same thing over and over which we have to change within us, so that they can constantly remain in mind. Through which chemicals responsible for emotional imbalance in our body can be balanced, which in turn leads to change in attitude and behaviour. Contemplation of Impermanence (Anitya Anupreksha) is an efficient way to develop positive thoughts and to eliminate negative thoughts.

It is said that, Healthy mind lives in Healthy body, that in turn leads to Healthy Life. Here the meaning of healthy body is from Physical, Mental as well as Emotional Health. If the person is physically fit but not mentally & emotionally than He will not escalate to Violence. On the other hand, physically as well as mentally & emotionally fit person practice non-violence. So, the training of Health Science is needed in which it is told that which type of food produces what type of chemicals, eating of which food or lack of which food make a person thought more violent and cruel. As it is said that,"Jaisa Aahar Waisa Vyavahaar" (You are What You Eat); Food, being a basis of our life, can't be given up completely but food which are responsible to produce poison & toxins in our body, must be avoided. Foods can be classified in three categories based on their nature:- Saatvik, Raajsik & Taamsik.

2. Diet



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Saatvik food is known as the best quality of food which balances our body and mind therefore, we should always consume this kind of food. Raajsik food should be avoided as far as possible and the consumption of Taamsik food should be avoided completely. As per the Ayurveda, Taamsik food leads to the destruction of mind and body as a whole. In this way we should eat food knowing the nature of that food, so that We can be emotionally & mentally fit along with Physical wellness. Along with this, Fasting is interwoven in Jainism, as a proven way to cleanse one's body, including one's bad Karmas, due to which our mind remains calm and in peaceful state and inspire one's to thought and act in peaceful manner.

With the theoretical training of Food and Diet, practical training is also needed. One of the efficient parts of Training in Non-Violence is the Practisation of Yoga & Prananyam.[6] Yogasnas like Adamantine pose (Vajrasana), Rabbit pose (Shashankasana), Lotus posture (Padmasana), are the way to remove the toxins and foreign matters that accumulates in the body; so that physical component of Violence is attenuated. Pranayam like Left- Nostril breathing (Chandrabhedi Pranayam), Anulom- Vilom (balancing the Tridoshas: Vat, Pitta, Kapha), Cooling breath (Sheetali Pranayam), on the other side purifies the seeds of violence present in the body.

3. Doctrine of Relativity, Coordination and Co-existence

Every being living in the society, has its own identity (including religion, caste, colour, physique) that are differ from person-to-person. Accordingly, the differences in their thoughts and beliefs are also natural. And where there is difference of thoughts and beliefs there will be conflict.[7] The biggest reason for Social Conflicts is that every person considers himself Supreme while consuming more & more and the result of which we see in the form of inhumane act towards the Environment, considers his own views to be true and is engaged in constant struggles & Conflicts considering the view of others as wrong. Due to this one-sided approach or absolute thinking, the person has become the enemy of another person, which results in Violence everywhere. Therefore, to overcome these conflicts, it is necessary to put into practice the theory of Relativity, Coordination & Co-existence and treat other beings equal as ourselves.

Relativity means understanding and accepting the importance & existence of others thoughts like yourself. Whatever the statement made by our opposition, if we look at it only from an absolute point of view means if we assume that only I am right, then there will be the chances of discord & conflict. On the contrary, a person having relative vision makes a conclusion by relating the words of his, opposite with the Time, Purpose, Objective and so on. In this way, a person having relative vision also does justice to his opponent and also keep himself away from conflicts. As a result, violence can be prevented in practice by following the principle of Relativity.

Coordination means to accept the truth present in the views of others and to integrate them with your views. Remembering about the short story of blindfolded men, each of whom observes an elephant with different views and vision. Touching at the leg one of them described it as a pillar, another touching to the tail described it as a rope, someone by touching to the stomach area defined it as a wall, by touching the tusk one of them called him as a branch and in this way they all fight for their statements. This is the reality of human nature where everyone narrates their own truth, no one tries to know the ultimate truth. And till the ultimate truth is not known, there will be tensions and conflicts. Therefore, to resolve conflicts it is necessary to seek the real truth and always speak the truth. That is, keeping a balance between the views of both, assuming that neither what I am saying is the absolute truth nor what the opponent is saying is absolute truth. Rather both are part of the truth.

Co-existence means to live in peace with each other while respecting their differences; like, if there is happiness there is sorrow also, if there is life then there is death also, if there is knowledge

then there is ignorance also. So, if we live our life by understanding the co-existence of opposing elements than many Personal as well as social problems can be given solutions. Just like when a birthday is celebrated, one person is sad that one year of his life has been reduced, second person is happy that he has passed another level of life and the third one is equanimous that this life cycle has to go on like this. In this way, all three of them looks the same thing with different perspectives and all of them are right in their respective places. Therefore, if we are equanimous by accepting the situation as it is and accept the existence of others along with self, problems like Familial disputes, casteism, Racism, Communalism and many other can be solved.

4. The path of Truth: Resolving Conflicts

Gandhiji has talked about Truth in a broader sense as Satya or Truth is the foremost ethical principle of the Ekadash Vrat (Eleven vows) prescribed by Gandhi. According to him "there should be Truth in thought, Truth in speech and Truth in action". Truth resides in the heart of every man and that is what man should seek it for, but no one has the right to follow the truth as he sees it. And to give it a practical form, Gandhiji coined the term 'Satyagraha', which every person can use against his opponent and can also use against his loved ones.[8] Therefore, in practical life, if We follows the path of Satyagraha or Truth-seeking attitude, we can change our opponent's heart while bearing the pain ourselves without giving him (opponent) any sort of trouble and also inspires him to follow the path of Truth, so that the situation of conflict and tension doesn't arise.

In Jainism also, considering the importance of Truth, it has been included in the Five Mahavratas which every Jaina Saint has to persuade while performing their duties. The principle of twelve austerities of Self-restraint has also been set for the householders, among which it has been said that a person who obeys Satya Anuvrata will neither speak false statement by mind, words and deeds nor will He approve of one who speaks untruth.

In the present time, morality is becoming extinct and the person, in every sphere of life, is running his life's boat with the help of lies. As a result of which, we see bitterness and distrust in the relations and the person's faith in the person, in the Truth, is getting lost. And to hide that one lie or to prove it to be true, we tell a hundred kinds of lies and because of this the person keeps fighting every moment with Himself, sometimes with the Family and sometimes with the Society; which in turn gives rise to conflicts and violence within us and society as a whole. That's why if only lying is abandoned, many troubles within the society can be solved and violence in the form of conflict and fighting can be avoided. Truth not only prevents conflicts and promotes nonviolence but also it is beneficial for our physical as well as emotional health because whenever we lie, we can be forced into a nerve-wracking cycle of lies and this Stress can lead to serious health problems due to which the person loses his mental balance and becomes aggressive and violent at times. In this way, to end the conflicts prevailing in the Families & Societies, to prevent violent behaviour and also to take care of our physical as well as our emotional health, it is necessary that we follow the truth in our mind, words and deeds.

5. Forgiveness, an invisible force

It's obvious to have conflicts while living in a Society and its equally true; if the conflicts are not resolved in time, it would give rise to disharmony which results in social separation. The way to resolve conflicts is not to resist it. But if we do not retaliate of fear of defeat, it is called Cowardice. On the contrary, if we do not retaliate as considering Love and Harmony to be the basis of life, it is called Forgiveness. On the whole it is very difficult to forgive someone with heart but still efforts can be done in this way like: -

Our first effort would be that we do not allow the situation of conflict to arise or resolve the misunderstandings and disputes right away. If any conflict situation occurs, we should try to resolve it as soon as possible, this would be our second effort. And if conflicts and disputes increase, it

would be our effort not to harm the opponent either physically, mentally or emotionally but to humble and friendly towards the opponent. This is the biggest act of forgiveness through which we can change the thoughts of our rival party and can motivate the opponent for being humble and nonviolent. The significance and relevance of this act can be known from the fact that in Jainism, we celebrate Forgiveness as a way to live a nonviolent and peaceful life. The effectiveness is expressed in following stanza:

Khamemi Savva Jive,
Savve Jiva Khamantu Me,
Mitti Me Savva Bhuesu,
Veram Maijham Na Kenai.[9]

Means I forgive all living beings, may all living beings grant me forgiveness, my friendship is with all Souls, I have no animosity towards any Soul.[10] Confession of one's sins, asking pardon, and pardoning others, i.e. Forgiveness is one of the unique features of Jainism and has relevance for all. Such a confession and plea for forgiveness and forgiving others can be done as part of one's daily prayers bringing great success in resolving conflicts.

Gandhiji stated, "An eye for an eye makes the whole World blind". Violence only encourages violence, on the contrary, if one admires and practise non-violent attitude towards violence, then violence and conflicts, in our behaviour as well as in practice; can be cured.[11] It's very obvious and easy task to punish someone for his mistake, but is equally difficult to forgive someone for his mistake as it need a lot of courage and soulful qualities.

"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of strong" – Mahatma Gandhi

"Forgiveness means reconciliation", a coming together again. Without this no man can love his enemies. If we tie the knot of the opponent's words, conflict arise but if we treat the opponent with full respect and do not think bad for him then our violent arrogant behaviour and conflicting situations shall be avoided.

6. Tolerance: a way towards Peace

In the present era of Competition and growing more and more, reasons for most of conflicts is that we tend our thoughts superior and justifiable and look others thought as inferior and false, what we call Intolerance. We arrogate to ourselves the privilege that whatever we think is correct and whatever other think is incorrect. This is what, which gives rise to conflicts in society and works to break our Ties. To solve these, Jainism has given the principle of Tolerance; which means to accept other people's opinions and preferences even if they are not in the form we admire; which emphasizes the truth that all approaches to reality give partial but true pictures of reality, and because of their truth value from a certain angle, we should have regard for others ideologies and faiths. This in turn enriches us for the peaceful co-existence of humanity.[12]

Mahatma Gandhi admires "Decency and Tolerance, to be of any value, must be capable of withstanding the severest strain." Gandhiji favoured of being tolerant towards other, which he practiced all through his life. Gandhiji does not mean that we should tolerate the encroachment and exploitation of others but we should respect thoughts and actions of others and analyse them from their point of view also, so that familial discords can be avoided and social harmony can be attained. So, to conclude, if we want to live in a peaceful society, there is no alternative to Tolerance, which is the basis for a fair society in which everyone can lead their lives as they wish.

Conclusion

Today' World needs more and more faith wise and tolerant people in families and societies where violence is committed for the sake of name and fame. Hence to develop and work for social and ecological harmony one must recognize others as equals and not as partly true. To reform this attitude is the need of the hour which is supported by Jain philosophy and Gandhian principles.

Jainism prescribes various effective ways to cover all aspect and entire gamut of life to ensure harmony in multitudinous inter-relations within

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human beings and society as a whole. Mr. Michael Tobias, writes in his book "Life Force: The World of Jainism"- "Jainism is a momentous example to all of us that there can, and does exist a successful, ecologically responsible way of life which is abundantly nonviolent in thought, word and deed". The Gandhian view of Conflict is not to view it as problems. Instead, conflicts should be seen as opportunities for moral growth and transformation, vis-à-vis, Gandhian conflict process goes well beyond conflict resolution to integration at deeper level.

From the above discussed solutions for conflicts and violent behaviour, where Jainism and Gandhian philosophy are integrated together, we can say that it is possible to solve the problems associated with the current conflicts which ensure the survival of Humanity.

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