

The global power imbalance among nations, structural violence, economic exploitation, technological determinism, denial of human rights by those who are controlling the military machines of the nations and so on will have to be tackled by the peace movements as a single issue. Also, without a proper organisational pattern, peace movement will always lack coherence and without masses of people participating in it, the movement can be constrained by interests of one or the other section of the people.

Aims and Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should be able to understand

- The leadership and organisational patterns of peace movements in India
- The Gandhian Agenda for peace movements
- The Gandhian Lieutenants engaged in peace movements

2.2 PEACE MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

Peace movements in India are still in their infancy; they must travel a long way before they become the part of the political life of the country. They lack organisational structure because of their intellectual fragmentation and isolated functioning. However, what strikes one most is that a new vision is nevertheless being articulated by a few groups in response to the present crisis in India, both political and socio-economic.

The peace movements in India arise from an entirely different perspective from what obtains elsewhere, particularly in the West. The problems that confront the Indian people are quite far away from those (the fear of a nuclear war) that gave rise to peace movements in the Northern hemisphere. Peace for the common people of India includes far more than the absence of war. To be meaningful in their everyday life, peace must mean a decent livelihood, freedom from oppression, access to resources for survival, cultural autonomy, and freedom from violence by the State as well as the powerful. Security for them is not so much national security but people's security. Of course, none of the movements focuses on all these issues at once. But they are gradually realising that these issues are interlinked.

2.3 GANDHIAN AGENDA FOR PEACE MOVEMENTS

Gandhi, with his full faith and extraordinary practical commitment to non-violence and truth, could not but be a votary of peace everywhere. That is why he said, "Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace amounts to disbelief in the Godliness of human nature"(Collected Works, vol. 62, p.175). But that was an essential philosophic hypothesis and not a political strategy. Peace is at once a political, an ontological and an existentialist issue. But he was not to be easily taken in by slogans and mere faith flashing sideshows. "The attainment of real peace," he wrote, "is impossible except for greater scientific precision, greater travail of the soul, greater patience and greater resources than required for the invention and consolidation of means of slaughter". Again, he added, "It cannot be attained by a mere muster roll signed by millions of mankind during peace"(ibid, vol.66, p.73). The existing peace movements in the light of Gandhian approach cannot be considered a very big success. The Gandhian agenda requires non-violent and non-cooperative movement both spontaneous and institutionalised and by all those who are concerned with issues of peace, poverty, ecology, human rights etc.

2.4 GANDHIAN LIEUTENANTS: VARIETY OF FOLLOWERSHIP

The analysis of leaders cannot rest content with enumerating their attributes and capabilities, nor can these attributes be understood by regarding the leader as an isolate. Relations to others constitute his meaning. To grasp those relations requires a “follower-oriented” approach, which attends to the qualities and interests of a leader’s constituents and the articulation of those qualities with the leader’s style and appeal. But there is never one following. There are many, at graded degrees of intimacy and relation to the leader, and bringing to the relationship with him the requirements of various psyches, roles, and social and political interests.

While a follower-oriented approach to the analysis and understanding of leadership may be fruitful in any study of leadership, it is of special interest in relation to Gandhi. Unlike a more rigorously ideological leader, who might expect the human material with which he deals to adapt itself rather precisely to his movement’s normative and behavioural requirements, Gandhi was strongly attuned to the varying inner states and potentialities of his followers. While remaining a movement leader, and thus committed to shaping men, he suited the shaping to the character and logical contours of followers, sensitive to the limits of their adaptability. This was not invariably true. His sensitivity failed him with his sons and wife, whom he sought to mould beyond their tolerance, and with some significant public figures, such as Jinnah and Ambedkar. Yet it was sufficiently true to represent a distinguishing mark of his leadership.

His capacity to serve the variety of strengths and needs of those close to him and his skill and versatility in shaping his response to each had less relevance for Gandhi’s mass following than it did for his religious followers and political lieutenants. His capacity and skill were especially important in connection with dwellers in the ashrams, which represent the institutionalisation of his spiritual teaching and leadership. And they assume considerable importance in connection with the co-leaders who joined the nationalist movement in response to Gandhi’s revitalisation of it. Much of his success in amplifying himself to wider audiences in India lay in the psychological and stylistic versatility of which he was capable, i.e., his ability to be the Mahatma, Bapu, and Gandhi. What follows is an exploration of this versatility with reference to two types of followers, his mass following and the ashramites.

The “mass following” constitutes an amorphous category which can be given precision by a number of approaches. One can reach the mass following by situational analysis, asking who became involved, in what capacities at “movement moments.” Gandhi’s relationship to his mass followers represents one type of followership and a form of communication appropriate to it. It is a relationship in which Gandhi appears as a generalised sacred presence, the belief in sacredness resting on his specific reputation for saintly conduct. Its intense impersonality establishes no specific two-way bond between Gandhi and his constituents, except the abstract bond which the follower may conjure up out of psychic and symbolic materials within himself.

Gandhi communicated quite differently, much less abstractly with the ashramites who sought the discipline, order and authority that a quasi-monastic setting provides. The ashramites were the community of men and women who had come to him because they had some religious vocation, and sought in the ashram an occasion to realise a version of traditional aesthetic discipline.

2.5 POST-GANDHIAN LEADERSHIP

The important thinkers of this school are Vinoba Bhave, Kishorilal Ghanshyam Mashruwala, J.C. Kumarappa, Kaka Kalelkar, Dada Dharmadhikari, Shankarrao Deo, Dharendra Mazumdar, Jayaprakash Narayan and J. B. Kripalani. All of them, except Jayaprakash Narayan, had been closely associated with Gandhi in his constructive work. Most of them had acquired during the life-time of Gandhi some prominence both as original thinkers and as interpreters of his thought, and as such their ideas cannot all be strictly considered post-Gandhian. What rather happened after the death of Gandhi is that their thoughts came into greater prominence due to the peace movements and the growth of the movements led to their further elucidation and development. Jayaprakash Narayan, of course, came late into the field and while Gandhi lived, he was a Marxian. Besides these prominent persons, there are several others who deserve study as they led some peace movements.

Of the prominent thinkers, Vinoba Bhave is regarded as the moral and spiritual heir of Gandhi, who had a very high opinion of him. He told C. F. Andrews in 1917, "He (Vinoba) is one of the few pearls in the Ashram. They do not come like others to be blessed by the Ashram, but to bless it, not to receive but to give" (Gandhi Marg, 1958). He also once wrote to Vinoba's father, "Your son has acquired at so tender an age such high spiritedness and asceticism as took of me years of patient labour to attain." (Ram, 1958, p.15). He expected Vinoba to be an instrument of great service, and deemed him capable of writing on 'the science of Satyagraha'. He chose him as the first satyagrahi for the Individual Satyagraha of 1940, and thus brought him into limelight as the 'ideal Satyagrahi'.

Vinoba's authority to represent Gandhi has been recognised by other close associates of Gandhi. K.G.Mashruwala observed in March, 1948, "We hold that Vinoba has understood best the principles of peace movements. Therefore, our faith in him is the highest." Kaka Kalelkar was of the opinion that "Vinoba Bhave represents the high-water mark of the Gandhian way of life and the Gandhian technique of rebuilding society" (Gandhi Marg, January, 1958, p.27).

But Vinoba was no mere interpreter of Gandhi. He was an original thinker with a simple and lucid style tinged with subtle humour. According to his own admission, Gandhi was not the only person to influence him, and he does not claim to represent him. He rarely speaks of Gandhi in public and has his own dignity, emphasis and method. In the words of Hallam Tennyson, "Like a candle lit at a neighbouring flame, he now burns with a steady and separate light" (Tandon, 1958, p.98). Such was Vinoba Bhave, the undisputed leader of the Sarvodaya workers and thinkers.

K. G. Mashruwala had been associated with Gandhi since the latter's return from South Africa. He worked first as Secretary and then as President of Gandhi Seva Sangh, an organisation dedicated to the ideals of Gandhi. He had come to be looked upon as an important interpreter of Gandhi's ideas during the latter's own life-time. Dr. Rajendra Prasad considered him as "one of the acutest students of Gandhian philosophy and whose close association with Gandhi gives his words an authority which may not be disregarded" (Diwakar, 1946, p.VI). That was why, in spite of his poor health, he had to shoulder the task of editing the Harijan Weeklies after the death of Gandhi. He was an independent thinker, who did not hesitate to express his differences with Gandhi, and he valued his opinions highly.

J. C. Kumarappa had taught at Gujarat Vidyapith (1929-31), and had been the Secretary of All India Village Industries Association from 1934 to 1948, and then its President after the death of Gandhi. He was a very stimulating thinker. Kaka Kalelkar writes of him, "Upon Kumarappa fell the mantle of the interpreter and, organizer of Gandhian economics of non-violence. Kumarappa's books and writings on economics have considerably moulded the minds of young India and specially of constructive workers. Gandhi gave his ideas on economics to young India. It was Kumarappa, however, who gave scientific interpretation in a manner acceptable to the educated community" (George & Ramachandran, 1952, p.348). However, Kumarappa was an extremist, and many came to regard him as an unpractical theorist. But he had a living faith in non-violence and the Gandhian way of life.

Kaka Kalelkar also had been a close associate of Gandhi. Before joining him, he was at Shantiniketan. Later on he joined Gandhi and subsequently became the Principal of Gujarat Vidyapith. He moved to Wardha later on and edited Sarvodaya- a Hindi monthly. He engaged himself in constructive work and led several peace movements.

Dada Dharmadhikari was a prominent Sarvodaya thinker. He was first the publisher and then the co-editor of the Sarvodaya monthly. Later on, when a monthly of the same name was started in August 1949, he became its co-editor with Vinoba as editor and devoted his life for Sarvodaya movement.

Shankarrao Deo had been both a constructive worker and a political leader. He had been the General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee for a long time. He had completely devoted himself to Sarvodaya activities and was reckoned as one of the leading thinkers of the school.

Dhirendra Mazumdar was an important leader of the Sarvodaya movement. He devoted himself to constructive work since 1921 when he left his studies at the call of the Non-Cooperation movement. He became the President of All-India Spinners' Association after Gandhi's death. He was both an astute thinker and a great constructive worker. As such, he supplemented Vinoba both in the field of practical movement and that of thought.

Jayaprakash Narayan was the most prominent Sarvodaya leader after Vinoba. He was one of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934, and since independence, has been reckoned as the most important political leader after Jawaharlal Nehru. He joined the Sarvodaya movement in 1954 after travelling a long way from Marxian to Gandhian thought. But it did not mean that he ceased to be a socialist. He himself observed, "The same old beacon-lights of freedom, equality and brotherhood that had guided the course of my life and brought me to democratic socialism, drew me onwards around this turning of the road. My regret is that I did not reach this point in my life's journey while Gandhi was still in our midst" (Narayan, 1959, p.26). This evolution of his thought made him an effective interpreter of Sarvodaya from a different angle.

Another very prominent political figure, who had, in several respects a Sarvodaya outlook, was Acharya J. B. Kripalani, a former president of the Indian National Congress. He had been associated with Gandhi since 1917. He also distinguished himself as a constructive worker, who founded the Gandhi Ashram in Uttar Pradesh and who inspired many young men to dedicate themselves to the cause of constructive work. Kripalani began his career as a teacher in the higher seats of learning and later on became the Principal of Gujarat Vidyapith. Gandhi's high regard for him is shown by the fact that at times he consulted him on matters which might be considered as purely personal.

2.6 POST-GANDHIAN ORGANISATIONAL PATTERNS

From the point of view of organisational patterns there are two broad categories into which the peace movement in India may be classified. The first is the nonviolent approach towards an alternative notion of peace and development belonging to the Gandhian school of thought and action. A clear example of this structure can be seen in the Gandhian Ashrams that are spread widely throughout the country. They remain not only the main sources of inspiration for the nonviolent movements but also are themselves engaged in confronting the basic problems of security and survival of the people. This nonviolent movement, having its bases at various Gandhian Ashrams, consists of people (functioning as both conscientious intellectuals and grassroot activists) determined to contribute their lives to the most fundamental issues of peace and survival.

The Gandhians are quietly acquiring greater involvement and dynamism through excellent task forces which are at work in several places. Bhoodan Movement, the Chambal Experience, the Shanti Sena, the Swadhyaya Ashram in Vedchi near Surat, the Gandhigram near Madurai, the Institute for Total Revolution in Vedchi, among others, are very active. It was in the Swadhyaya Ashram in Vedchi that the War Resisters' Triennial Conference was held from 29 December 1985 to 4 January 1986. Around the same time, the Institute for Total Revolution organised a Consultation on 'Non-violent Peackeeeping' which was sponsored by Peace Brigades International. Participants with long experience in nonviolent action and training came from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Israel, the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the United States.

Scholarly support for the Gandhian peace movement comes from the Gandhian academies spread all over the country. The Indian Society of Gandhian Studies founded by Acharya J.B. Kripalani and Jayaprakash Narayan in 1972 with nearly 800 strong membership from India and abroad, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, New Delhi, The Departments of Gandhian Studies in Panjab University, Chandigarh; Nagpur University, Nagpur; Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad; Jain Vishwa Bharati University, Ladnun; Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi are the most prominent among them.

The second category comprises a whole range of autonomous peace initiatives. Although by no means entirely new, their somewhat rapid growth reflects a growing concern on the part of various disparate groups about the threats to peace. The roots of these movements lie in several different but often overlapping areas: student groups, women's organisations, religious bodies, environmental activists, artists, educationists and civil rights workers and concerned journalists. Working in their own areas, they gradually came to realise that most negative developments in India were linked not only to each other but also to the problems of militarisation and misguided development. Single-issue groups, in dialogue with each other, discovered the link between national, defence policy and underdevelopment, nuclear weapons and nuclear power, industrialisation and crime, the green revolution and ecological destruction, development and the loss of cultural autonomy and so forth. But they seem to have had very little or no impact on the actual policies and actions (defence budgets, human rights, ecology and social and economic policies) of the government.

Such lack of effectiveness can be attributed to a number of factors. The movements in India presently continue to be isolated entities. They have not established organisational or

working links with one another. It is necessary for them to identify a common base and work out common strategies for bringing about fundamental social and political transformation for achieving a life free of violence, deprivation, political oppression, and war.

Another problem is that many groups are primarily centred in metropolitan cities. This can be seen more particularly in the case of anti-nuclear movements. The recent growth in size and number of the anti-nuclear movements is, in fact, a response to the success and influence of the European peace movements. Having mobilised remarkable global attention on the nuclear threat to the human survival, their influence has now spread to India, although it is still limited to the few segments of the population. Their role in India will acquire importance only if they proceed to establish creative connection with other movements.

Nevertheless, the anti-nuclear groups have succeeded in creating a wide awareness about the threats posed by nuclear weapons and nuclear energy through a considerable amount of information on nuclear issues which has been made available through the groups' own publications, debates and through popular demonstrations. They insist that the Indian nuclear energy programme should be made accountable and the government's policy on nuclear weapons must be debated by the people. For instance, not just the nuclear weapons but the opportunity costs of military expenditure.

These groups are opposed to the building of nuclear power stations in India and demand a moratorium on all nuclear power projects. They are in favour of alternative energy technologies that are efficient, renewable, and safe and appropriate, for the Indian needs.

2.7 CRITICAL APPRECIATION

The future of the peace movements in India rests upon the capacity of its leadership and organisational pattern for vision and mobilisation of the social forces within a broad process and framework of the conflicting dialogue that has already set in between the social power (which is more often inactive) and the static political power. This is no utopian programme. The developments in the recent years definitely indicate a positive turn towards this direction. Can we deny the role played by the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad and the people of Kothamangalam in successfully resisting the nuclear reactor plant in their territory? Where else to identify the people's determination to resist the political structure in other than the resistance of the people for peace and justice? The determined resolve of the people of Baliapal has finally forced the government to postpone its entire operation for the establishment of a national missile testing range for an indefinite period.

We cannot deny the rightful place to the developments mentioned below in the country. More than four thousand people have shown their concern with and involvement in and around Kakrapar against the establishment of nuclear reactor plant at Kakrapar; the villagers living in areas adjoining the Narora atomic power plant (NAPP), the mobilisation of students, teachers, anti-nuclear groups, and peace activists, farmers and Bharatiya Kisan Union of the Bulandshahr District against the establishment of NAPP have all demonstrated a tremendous capacity to protest.

Kalpavriksh, a Delhi-based students group, is engaged in research and action on ecological, human rights, and peace issues. Kalpavriksh has been carrying out an awareness programme on issues of nuclear energy and weapons at selected educational institutions, mostly high schools. Network to Oust Nuclear Energy (NONE), a Delhi-

based activist group, mostly consisting of students, has been carrying out an awareness campaign on problems of nuclear energy with a special focus on Narora Atomic Power Plant. The Group for Nuclear Disarmament (GROUND), a Bombay-based group has been educating the people about nuclear weapons and warfare through audio-visual slide shows, exhibitions, lectures and panel discussions. The Bombay Sarvodaya Mandal has effectively been conducting its campaign against nuclear energy and weapons through poster exhibitions and lectures. The National Association of Indian Doctors for the Prevention of Nuclear War has been carrying out an awareness programme on the effects of nuclear warfare. Another positive trend in the country is the growth of the people's science movement in a big way in recent years.

The anti-nuclear groups and peace activists working in a particular region (CANE- Kaiga, Ratnahalli, in fact in the entire state of Karnataka; CONSUP and NON- Narora; Sampoorna Kranti Vidyalaya and Anu Urja Jagriti- Kakrapar; the Media Group- the IRE plant at Alwaye, Kerala) have been actively engaged in creating mass awareness through their own publications and popular demonstrations. Besides these groups' role in educating the masses on issues of nuclear energy and weapons, their experiments of nonviolent resistance in the above said sites themselves constitute an important active campaign of the students, academicians, lawyers and journalists.

2.8 SUMMARY

These developments undoubtedly help us build up a perspective of the Indian peace movement itself. But this perspective still lacks clarity because of its incohesiveness and scattered functioning. In recognition of the size and diversity of this country, the happenings concerned with issues of peace and survival are to be taking place in isolation. There are new signs of drawing together of the anti-nuclear development from various parts of the country. The activist groups functioning in one place are now willing to know the experiences of other groups working in different parts of the country. The new conscientiousness includes an extension of interest and identification with the developments that are taking place in far-away locations. This identification of problems of the activists and the sufferings of the people in different parts of the country is increasingly made possible by greater interaction amongst the anti-nuclear activists and the interested citizens. This is made easy by the activists- academic seminars, student group-discussions, publications, video films and other exchanges.

The issues that give rise to peace movements in India are quite far away from the experience of the developed North (the fear of survival in the face of nuclear threat-nuclear war and accidents). If there are any positive indications of the developments here, they in fact point towards people's movement. The leadership of the Indian peace movement has taken itself away from the web of a single-issue movement (anti-nuclear) in its early phase itself. The integrated perspective ensures that it is concerned with an analysis of a range of issues that are interrelated, such as nuclear energy/weapons, environment, displacement and human rights. This is a new beginning indeed.

2.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Examine the organisational patterns of peace movements in India.
2. Discuss the role of leadership in peace movements in India.
3. Discuss the Gandhian Agenda for peace movements.

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