

Challenges to the development of non-violence

[Psychology](#), [Child Development](#)



“ Nonviolence is the weapon of the strong” – Gandhi. Is humankind not strong enough to use it? From the evolution of life till date, history is peppered with strong footprints of violence in one form or the other. From the life lived by the early man to the lifestyle of the 21st century humankind, the world has witnessed tremendous advancements, changes and development in almost all walks of life. Even the reasons for the most mysterious things got solved. But violence in the human society remained a mystery. On analyzing it was found that the major reason is the issues related to the thought processes of human beings who are biologically similar but socially different. Thus violence has become an inevitable part of the world and therefore the development of non-violence in this society can be regarded as a big challenge and probably how to achieve it, is a million-dollar question and its achievement is the need of the hour.

While referring to non-violence, we are certain to prefer Gandhian thoughts. His concept of non-violence is not restricted merely to the disavowal of violence, not hurting people in body and mind; instead it goes beyond and covers the essential values of love, forgiveness and compassion. According to Gandhi, people need strong will, patience, moral courage and truth which can yield proper transformation of mind to practise non-violence.

There are numerous factors that can be considered as challenges to the development of non-violence and are proven to trigger violence among individuals and social-groups. The term violence is not just about physical violence but also includes economic, social and psychological violence, which also need to be addressed.

One of the most influential factors behind violence is the socio-economic conditions of the people. This majorly includes the education system which moulds the initial stage of the individual's view of the society; unemployment i. e. when a person who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work; poverty – not having enough access to afford the basic, primary needs of life such as food, drinking water, shelter, clothing, etc. thus poverty, itself includes the social, political and economical elements; economic inequality – the unequal distribution of income and opportunity between different groups in the society (“ The rich get richer and the poor get poorer” – P. B. Shelley). All these can lead people to become violent towards the opposition and especially, the government. In some of the recent cases, media has played a vital role in inducing violence in the society. The new era video games, TV shows, negative impacts of social media and many such things increase the rate of aggression in the minds of viewers especially children.

Certain social norms including religion and culture-based norms affect the attitudes, beliefs and behavior related to violence and can lead people to behave in harmful ways. Gender based violence is another big issue to be discussed. It encompasses a large variety of crimes committed based on ones gender including rape, sexual harassment, stalking, human trafficking, domestic abuse, genital mutilation and forced prostitution. For example, as many as 39 crimes against women were reported every hour in India (up from 21 in 2007), according to Crime in India 2016 report by National Crime Records Bureau based on the reported crimes against women in 2016. It also reveals that ‘ cruelty by husband or his relatives’ against women contributes

33% of the total crimes committed against them (13 crimes every hour), then cases under ' assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty' at 25%, ' kidnapping and abduction of women' at 19% and ' rape' at 11% (4 crimes every hour). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people face violence motivated by hateful attitudes towards their sexuality or gender identity.

The next obvious challenge is the physical, mental and emotional instability of individuals. Stress and pressure from our surroundings affects our mental health badly leaving us mad or short-tempered. " Anger is the enemy of non-violence and pride is a monster that swallows it up" said Gandhiji. Youth violence (especially between the ages of 10-24) is another such aspect. It maybe as a result of bullying, ragging or harassment. People who are emotionally unstable have issues containing their feelings, have strained relationship, trouble in calming themselves down. They are generally inconsistent and impulsive. Their mood changes rapidly and reacts in unexpected ways (often violent). The living and working conditions and its surroundings can change the mindset of people and affect their attitude and views. For example, peer groups can influence an individual and thus it can have positive or negative impact on his/her lifestyle and behavior. One such negative impact is the addiction to drugs, alcohol, and smoking. Working conditions can affect individuals in all aspects like physical, mental and psychological well being. Especially adults are victims of domestic violence or workplace aggression.

The rise of Intolerance paves the way for violence among different groups. This is mainly due to the lack of sense of brotherhood and leads to a sense of mistrust and hatred. The lack of openness and secrecy has a role in it. It is also important that we have psychological aspects like issues related to acceptance in the society. This happens when an individual or group is unable to accept failure or defeat; they divert their mind and turn the situation violent rather than analyzing the actual facts. This is a matter of concern among both adults and children. People should be able to accept mistakes and failures as a part of learning. Failure is a part of success and not the opposite of success. In most cases, the result of unhealthy competition is the emergence of violence i. e. when the game is not played in the spirit of the game; it leads to unhealthy participation. This also includes the unhealthy or dirty politics in the state. Unfair competitions among individuals and groups can make people angry and have misconceptions about the society. Thus it can sometimes be related to the decision making skills of individuals. It is all about taking the right decision at the right time. Low IQ, EQ, SQ, ignorance and misperceptions can adversely affect one's decision making skills. Misperceptions are especially harmful when people alter their own beliefs and behavior based on false assumptions about others.

Improper parenting (including divorce of parents, broken homes) is a major factor with respect to violence in children. Parents, especially in growing cities and towns face challenges regarding financial and social dynamics, which allow them to spend very little time with their children and it is this self-centered unit that builds up the pressure on children. This is one of the

major reasons for the rise in juvenile crime. An analysis of the family background of juveniles arrested in 2016 based on the NCRB data illustrates that 38, 061 or 86% of the 44, 171 minors detained lived with their parents, another 4, 550 (10. 3%) lived with guardians and 1, 560 (3. 5%) of them were homeless.

It is mandatory to focus on self-directed violence i. e. suicide, particularly on the issue of student suicides in India (a developing nation with the highest youth population in the world). From 2014 – 2017, as many as 26, 476 students have killed themselves in India, according to the latest statistics sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs by all the Indian states and union territories. Issues at educational institutions, drugs, depression, broken families, fights with friends and breakups, contributes to the growing fatal trend.

At this instance, it is important to note the crime rate. A report claims that crimes in India saw a ‘ marginal increase’ in the first 45 days of 2018 when compared to the corresponding period of 2017. Referring to the official data, the TOI report points out the cases of murder, abduction, rape, dowry death and fatal accidents have seen a spike when compared to the previous year. In 2016, the total crimes were recorded to be 2. 97 million while the crime rate was found to be 379 crimes per lakh population (Source: NCRB). The global level of peace has declined by 0. 27% from 2017 to 2018 (Source: 2018 GPI).

Human beings must be able to treat all life equally with respect. Harming animals, plants and nature is also a form of violence. Earth is not just for

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humans but a home for many biotic and abiotic factors. ‘ Earth provides enough to satisfy everyman’s needs but not everyman’s greed” – Gandhiji. Thus over-exploitation of nature for greed should be checked. This leads to the absence of a sustainable environment.

The ever changing attitude of humans is the ultimate challenge. Human have always fought battles among themselves, with nature, machine, supernatural concepts. The money-minded attitude makes people greedy. It brings pride and anger in the minds of humans and that makes them choose violence at times. It includes the narrow selfish interest, struggles for power, worldwide competition for weapons of mass destruction, struggles for establishing hegemony. Above all, the advancements in technology made way for the easy availability and accessibility of weapons of mass destruction. This is more like adding fuel to fire. Globally, the biggest challenge for peace is the intentional unfair acts of countries over others due to enmity and global competitions. It is nearly impossible to change the mind-set of people involved in such violent acts like those in secret societies, terrorist groups, etc. They only aim at affecting the stability of their opposition at any cost. Even the problems that can be solved by negotiations or by other means of non-violence are redirected towards violence by perpetrators who want to accomplish their hidden agendas (Example: ISIS). While all other challenges load the gun, it is this particular challenge that pulls the trigger. Gandhi quoted, “ I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent” and this makes it clear that he was aware of the evilness of violence and its consequences. For examples: Iraq and Saddam Hussein, war in SriLanka, on the other hand

Africa and Nelson Mandela and obviously India and Gandhi. Consider, for instance, during the Indian Independence movement, Gandhi used Satyagraha as his weapon. Is it practically possible to use Satyagraha and succeed in it in the present world? We are in a dilemma that even any act of non-violence like Satyagraha, peaceful gathering would turn up into violence due to political and social reasons. This is one big thing that threatens the growth of non-violence.

All the above mentioned are some of the challenges to the development of non-violence in the violent world. While it is practically necessary to understand both the positive and negative aspects of everything in life, life is something basically to be lived positively. It is all about hating the sin and not the sinner. Man is a social animal but when he detaches himself from society and focuses only on his own interests over the truth, it is there the seeds of violence sprouts. ‘ Strength doesn’t come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will’ quoted by Gandhi. This ‘ will’ to live life determines the quality of life. He said “ Truth is my religion and Ahimsa is the only way of its realization”. When this becomes the notion of humankind, world becomes a place of peace. Remembering his golden words, “ You must be the change you wish to see in the world”. Yes, the major challenge to the emergence of non-violence is you and when everyone in this world is able to find peace in his/her own self and live non-violently without hurting others and letting no one and nothing harm them, the seed dies out. Truth is the ultimate and seeking it determines the standard of life. According to the Gandhian Philosophy of Ahimsa, it is not just about living non-violently but also about the courage to face death in a non-violent way.