

Nonviolence as a means of resistance:
Case study of Narmada Bachao Andolan and
Ekta Parishad

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BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "*Nonviolence as a means of resistance: Case study of Narmada Bachao Andolan and Ekta Parishad*" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.


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OPENING THE ISSUE

1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st and 22nd centuries have witnessed some of the most violent and ruthless conflicts in almost every nook and corner of the world. There are protracted conflicts waiting to find a solution, numerous examples of violence based on discrimination on various grounds longing for justice, areas living under the fear of war and civil unrest yearning for normalcy. Every place is patched with violence in one or the other form. The solution offered to this violent state of affairs so far has been mostly the use of counter-violence. But is this use of violence really solving the problem of violence? Many countries like Afghanistan involving various religious groups ranging from extreme radical, fundamentalist Muslim terrorist to the non-Muslim groups; India representing Hindu, Muslim & Sikh groups have become centres of conflicts mainly pertaining to religious differences.

It shows how religion is made to be an instrument of perpetuating violence in various regions of the world. This unfortunate reality shows that how different religions that all encapsulate the same message of sanity, peace, civility and respect for living being are moulded and manipulated. Due to such manipulations the core message gets veiled and twisted to serve the selfish interests pertaining to ascendancy over the territories, culture, resources and people of the world. In order to save these places from destruction in the name of religion, more violent solutions are being employed. This has entangled these regions in the vicious circle of violence and has deepened the discriminatory lines based on religion even further.

Consider the World Bank data on Military expenditure. It clearly highlights that United States spends 47% of the total world share on military.¹ Similarly, United Kingdom and France allocate 5% of total world's resources to military expenditure.²

¹<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS>, as accessed on 20 november,2015 at 10.30 a.m.

²<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS>

This data corroborates the above argument asserting that the solution to violence is counter-violence. The large amount of financial resources used up in maintaining military in different countries not only indicates towards the rising violence, but also towards escalating fear, distrust, loss of life, and dearth of peace. Military is considered to be the savior of all, the most effective instrument in assuring security but when analyzed closely it can be unearthed that instead of security it creates an environment of insecurity and suffocating fear.

The last argument can be seen manifesting in reality through the different internal conflicts like those between Indonesia and Aceh separatists(1976-2005), Sudan vs. Sudanese People's Liberation Army(1983–2004), Solomon Islands vs. Malaitan Eagle Force and Isatabul Freedom Movement (1998–2003)³, that have been suspended. Although these conflicts have been suspended, despite that, the negative consequences and the wounds remain fresh in these regions. One of the grave consequences that these regions face is with respect to the movement of people from these regions seeking refuge and asylum in other countries. The movement of large sections of people from their own land in order to escape the dire consequences of violence clearly form a strong evidence of how violence is dejected and undesired in the living world. According to the World Refugee data 2005, the number of refugees in Former Palestine is 2,985,500, in Afghanistan it has been 2,088,200, Sudan has 703,500 refugees.⁴This data not only represents the population that seeks to evade, escape or could not simply bear the negative consequences of violence, but also the extent of dependence, helplessness and fear that these people have internalized in them.

It can be observed from the above data that the entire world is infested with violence in the present era. The present strategy of counter violence used as deterrence needs to be critically discussed, debated and pondered over. It needs to be realized that though violence is understood in terms of power but this power culminates into further violence. Therefore, it becomes imperative to look for an alternative strategic

³Project Ploughshares, www.ploughshares.ca as accessed on 20 november,2015 at 10.30 a.m.

⁴World Refugee Survey, 2005, U.S. Committee on Refugees on <http://www.refworld.org/publisher,USCRI,,IRN,,0.html> as accessed on Friday, 22 July 2016, 13:43 GMT

tool which is equally powerful and effective if not less. This research work delves into exploring one such alternative, which is nonviolence. It tries to study the various layers of nonviolence so as to test its effectiveness and power as a counter to problematic and destructive violence.

Nonviolence as a term is made up of two words having a negative connotation, these words are: 'no' and 'violence'. But, when put together they give a positive message, which is: 'no violence'. The pertinent question that lies here is that: is nonviolence capable of fulfilling the message that lay within it? Will nonviolence be able to be the first choice of people in conflict? And the most significant question is that: is nonviolence a powerful concept, in philosophy and practice?

To explain nonviolence as a term is a difficult task but it gets simpler when another term is attached to it, because that indicates the form in which nonviolence is being used. Nonviolent action, nonviolent philosophy, nonviolent defence, nonviolent communications are some of the forms that we often hear and come across. These specify the significance as well as the utility of nonviolence in different contexts and make it to be a multi-dimensional concept.

Similarly, throughout this research work terms like nonviolent struggle, nonviolent resistance, and nonviolent movement will be seen frequently. All these concepts are primarily based on the nonviolent principles. The aim is to study the nonviolent basis of these various concepts. In other words, even though, different terminologies and concepts are introduced in the entire research work, the main focus remains on the intensity of nonviolence as a means of resistance that they represent.

Following this, **the research question that will get reflected in this entire work will be: is nonviolence an effective strategy in carrying out a resistance for political change?** Often the misconception regarding nonviolence is believed to be just a philosophy better to be taken individually or else be limited. Nonviolence is often equated with being absolutely silent and inactive to oppression, it is considered to be a safe haven of the weak. In the three chapters the thrust will be on reflecting how nonviolent strategies are useful enough for empowering people in raising their voices against unjust, in challenging the violent regime and in bringing about a constructive change in the society as well in the policies.

1. REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE AND ITS LIMITS:RE-CONSIDERING VIOLENCE

In some forms of violence, especially revolutionary violence, it is considered that violence can break the structures of domination. But, in this dissertation argument emphasising on reconsideration of this strategy will be placed on the discussion table. In the discussion on nonviolence, it becomes pertinent to mention about why violence, that is mostly considered to be the first preference, is actually not as effective and even contains many loopholes when observed from multiple perspectives. Violence has most often been used as a means of resistance and change. This kind of violence that is employed for a constructive change is usually in the form of revolutionary violence. According to Manoranjan Mohanty, “Revolutionary violence, by definition is a response to ruling class or state violence. It is a part of a wider strategy of people's democratic revolution that has many political, economic and cultural programmes of action”.⁵ Just like nonviolent movements, this violent movement also fights for the rights of the marginalised, questions the selfish capitalist inclination and brutality of state and it also envisages a future of equality and justice. But, in the recent times, the violent strategy that it uses has become a matter of debate.

Such debates are significant for understanding the ground realities that are adversely affected by violence. But, the call of the hour is to move a step further and delve deeper into those realms that can offer alternatives to the mass scale destruction caused by the violent struggles. Often, the discussions stop at seeing one side of the picture depicting dark, gruesome and irreversible losses of violent strategies. The other side of the picture that highlights other paths to wage struggle also has to be focussed upon. This attention on both the sides will allow prioritising the substantive questions regarding justice, equality and liberty of the oppressed and enable the activists to find meaningful answers.

The use of revolutionary violence as a means of resistance is most reflected in the armed resistance led by Naxal movement. Although this movement fights for the rights of the marginalised and the poor but the immense costs involved has made the

⁵ Manoranjan Mohanty, 'Challenges of Revolutionary Violence: The Naxalite Movement in Perspective' in *Economic & Political Weekly*, vol.41.no.29,July 2006,pp.3163-3168.

scholars to re-think about its strategy .The fatal costs that are primarily rooted in violence as a means of resistance, has many aspects to it.

In a social and political movement it becomes necessary that there is an organisation and cohesion among its various wings so that internal harmony provides a smooth track to achieve the major goals. The Naxal movement though concentrates on fighting with the external enemy but due to the internal fragmentation; most of the energies are wasted on settling the disputes among different factions. The enormous hostility within, tarnish the movements image when it turns into a nasty war among different groups for ascendancy. One of the reasons for such an internal belligerence is the difference over the strategies that the movement should be using. This reduces the legitimacy of violent strategy as it is not accepted even by the other organisations associated with it. The discrepancies hamper substantive internal discussions and debates for achieving goals in an efficient way. In addition to this, the animosity serves as an excuse for some of the mischievous elements within the group for their brutal killings and operations. Here, Manoranjan Mohanty's observation proves to be of much significance, he calls such a dispersed organisational structure as 'pre-organisational' structure. Stating the weakness of the pre-organisational structure, he says that,

The weakness lay in the fact that it could not be effective in implementing centrally formulated policies, as an organised party could. Units in different parts of the country did not support each another in the face of state repression. The movement could not expand systematically to different parts of the country.⁶

It amounts to argue that one of the weaknesses of violent strategy is that it does not develop a coherent relationship. This lack of internal autonomy, discussions and debates forms to be the cause long term for pre-organisational structure. In this dissertation, the readers will notice that an argument has been made for nonviolent movements giving great importance to relation-building. Nonviolent strategy emphasise on increasing the number of supporters and audiences as much as possible. Such a task becomes plausible only because of the room for democratic debates and discussions that allow free and fearless expression of opinions, ideas and criticisms from the different partners are welcome. Moreover, nonviolent movements do not buy any particular ideological framework due to which inputs from different ideological

⁶ Ibid, p. 3166.

backgrounds escalate the chances of getting support and legitimacy from wide range of audiences that follow different ideologies. Internal autonomy and democratic organisational structure in the nonviolent movements enable it to deliberate on the relevant aspects of the struggle.

The movement is considered to be a part of people's democratic revolution but the gender inequalities within the movement unearth its undemocratic make-up. Patriarchy is a form of structural violence that has plagued all areas of life including economic, political and social. The Naxal movements aim to change the unjust state system and eradicate the structural inequalities that have emerged from capitalism and imperialist tendencies of the developed countries. In fact, it has gone beyond these issues and has included various other issues that impact globally in its agenda. But, the inadequate attention on gender inequalities has made their future vision doubtful and questionable in the eyes of the observers. If the movement at present displays such inequalities then what is the guarantee that it would be able to erase other structural problems in the future? Moreover, by not recognising the significance of women's liberation and undermining the role of women in the struggle it is simply losing on the much needed support of those that consider gender equality and justice to be necessary and indispensable.⁷

In this case too, violent means of resistance comes into picture. The movement trains its women cadres in guerrilla warfare strategies and consider the holding of weapons by them to be a symbol of empowerment. But, this empowerment is illusory and even if real; it is short lived and not universal. As soon as these women exit the circles of violence, they are again pushed to the corners and made to perform their stereotypical roles. Real empowerment for women can be achieved only when they are included in the decision-making stages. Perhaps, the absence of women leaders and decision-makers in the upper echelons of the organisation clearly highlight the limited freedom to women. The mirage of empowering women by training them in violent strategies blinds the focus on this relevant aspect of gender equality.

⁷ For more details one can refer to Manoranjan Mohanty, *Revolutionary Violence*, (New Delhi: Sterling, 1977); Sarbani Bandhyopadhyay, 'The Revolutionary Patriarchs', Sumantra Banerjee, *India's Simmering Revolution: the Naxalite Uprising* (New Delhi: Zed Books, 1984).

In nonviolent movement, gender equality is indispensable. It is because of the various nonviolent strategies that have to be adopted by both men and women without any hierarchy coming into picture. The role of women also becomes important because in everyday life situations they are mostly at the receiving ends. Therefore, in order to achieve the goal of liberty, equality and empowerment, it is significant that women are allowed to ventilate their grievances. Nonviolent movement not only acts as a platform for putting forth the issues but it goes beyond it. Nonviolent movements position both men and women as decision-makers.

Nonviolent tools like march, dialogue, slogans, fasting and so on demand courage, training and patience. When women activists adopt these tools they not only depict the power of women but also spread the message of equality between both men and women. In fact, nonviolent movements symbolise and materialise change in the form of empowerment of women as well as youth in the course of its struggle.

One of the most visible points in armed struggles is the vicious circle of violence that the party get immersed into. Agreeing with Manoranjan Mohanty, it can be found that “In earlier years the Naxalites used local weapons to target landlords, now they use sophisticated guns such as AK-47, rocket launchers, grenades and land mines to wage a full-scale battle with armed police, and para-military forces such as the CRPF and the IRB”.⁸ In this mad race to match up with the state army and in this era of advancement being made every single day in the field of arms and ammunitions, there is no running away from the corridors of violence once entered. But, it has to be taken into account that these paraphernalia of violence cannot solve the core issues and contradictions. The war of weapons, silence the words that need to be conveyed in order to reach a conclusion.

A nonviolent struggle too focuses on raising its resources. But, the only difference is that the resources that it employs further the constructive works than hampering it. They act as bricks in building a path that would ultimately lead to the goal. When nonviolence is used as a means of resistance multiple developments happen simultaneously. Constructive changes like empowerment of people, innovative ideas, strong alliances, and greater awareness of social, political and economic rights take place as the struggle moves. Therefore, the resources that are often employed have

⁸ Ibid. p.3166.

more to do with building positive infrastructure than destructive ones. Moreover, nonviolent resistance does not even aim to equate with the violent strategies and weapons that the violent oppressors possess. Nonviolence as a strategy comprises of an element of surprise for the opponent. The opponent loses its balance when confronted with the nonviolent action. The only option left for the opponent is either to use his arms or have a deliberative and participatory approach towards the nonviolent resisters.⁹

Often, the reason for taking up armed struggle is that the unjust party do not listen to the words of the oppressed. But, when the sound of weapons overtakes, then, even those on the sides of the oppressed become deaf. This is what is happening within the fragmented structure of the Naxal movement. The violent acts of the activists justify the oppression of the state further in the eyes of the audiences, even when actually it is absolutely unjustifiable and contrary to any law of the land. The observation made by Manoranjan Mohanty corroborates the last statement, he argues that, “the state agencies have given up all procedures under the rule of law on the pretext that forces of violence do not deserve it”.¹⁰

In nonviolent resistance the situation turns upside down. It is in this context that Erica Chenoweth talks about “backfire”, explained in the first chapter.¹¹ The concept of ‘manageable conflict’ that is explained in the third chapter also highlights the advantage of adopting this method. Nonviolent resistance when tried to be suppressed by violent reaction gains further legitimacy in the eyes of the audiences, it delegitimises the violence used by the opponent. This is because nonviolent strategies might go against a legal provision that is considered unjust but it does not cause physical destruction or disturbance that may shake the democratic structures and institutions leading to chaos and anarchy. Nonviolent resistance tries its best to

⁹ Richard Gregg, *The Power of Non-violence*, London, 1936

¹⁰ For more details one can refer to Manoranjan Mohanty, *Revolutionary Violence*, (New Delhi: Sterling, 1977); Sarbani Bandhyopadhyay, ‘The Revolutionary Patriarchs’, Sumantra Banerjee, *India’s Simmering Revolution: the Naxalite Uprising* (New Delhi: Zed Books, 1984).
. p.3167.

¹¹ Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, ‘Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict’ in *The MIT Press*, vol.33, no.1, 2008, pp.7-44

maintain a certain degree of order so that not only the third parties, uninvolved citizens remain protected but also losses incurred in the movement itself become less.

The blinding effect of violence gets to the fore through the example of 'salwa judum', an army of innocent tribals that got fed up with the violence and atrocities from both the sides.¹² The State agencies took advantage of their innocence and desperate desire to free their land from the violence of Naxalism. The state used them as bait in order to fulfil their goal of killing the Naxals. This "vicious example of escalatory violence"¹³ not only claimed the lives of many innocent tribals but also made killing a usual affair. It also elucidates the mentality of 'us' and 'them'. No space for negotiation remains in this process due to which even those that do not really want to get attached to violent strategies have to adhere to them and come under one of the category of either 'us' or 'them'.

In nonviolent resistance the prime focus is on achieving goals rather than getting involved in identifying 'friends' and 'foe'. Nonviolent resisters concentrate on blurring these lines of discrimination and always remain open to negotiations, dialogue and deliberation with those that belong to the side of the oppressors. This participatory approach helps in finding alternative and constructive solutions, providing a platform of expression without any intimidation. In addition to this, nonviolent resistance while dealing with the larger issues and striving to achieve larger goals also attempts to introduce such infrastructures that help in capacity building of the local people. Due to its potential to materialize constructive ideas into reality, those associated with nonviolent struggle and those outside of it both remain faithful and do not become disillusioned. Therefore, shifting loyalties is mostly not an issue that nonviolent resistance has to deal with.

Violent strategy often restricts a better understanding of the core issues and problems due to which armed resistance take the shape of a protracted war. Although, the then Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, called Naxal movement as the biggest internal

¹² For details see <http://thewire.in/20794/darkness-at-noon-in-the-liberated-zone-of-bastar/>

¹³ For more details one can refer to Manoranjan Mohanty, *Revolutionary Violence*, (New Delhi: Sterling, 1977); Sarbani Bandhyopadhyay, 'The Revolutionary Patriarchs', Sumantra Banerjee, *India's Simmering Revolution: the Naxalite Uprising*, New Delhi: Zed Books, 1984, p.3167.

Ibid.

security threat, in the year 2006, but, in the same breath, he also reiterated the fact that socio-economic issues are responsible for such an uprising¹⁴. It is time that both the State as well as the activists involved in the armed resistance focus on how to solve these socio-economic problems rather than on how to defeat or eliminate one another.

Even though revolutionary violence is a response to the State violence, it has more to it. Revolutionary violence is the last resort and it is adopted to realize the vision of building a society without violence so that liberation of human beings from all chains is ensured and an environment of peace, equality and freedom is guaranteed. Revolutionary violence places human beings and their liberation at the centre but today what we see is totally opposite of it. Instead of moving towards a constructive beginning, armed struggles are marching towards destructive ends. It is time to contemplate over the dire situation and delve into finding other, preferably, nonviolent ways of addressing relevant issues¹⁵. This research contributes to such contemplation over expanding the scope for nonviolent means of resistance through examining its effectiveness.

2. THE ARGUMENT

The research contributes primarily in two ways. Firstly, it focuses on studying and analysing the dimension of nonviolence that pertains to its utility in resistance and secondly, the research also puts on table important issues and requirements related to nonviolent socio-political movements.

Overall the three chapters develop a link between the theoretical framework and the practice of nonviolent means. These chapters exclusively focus on the nitty-gritties of nonviolence that makes it an effective strategy. The last two chapters focus on social and political movements. These movements are termed so because they not only fight for their social rights but also for substantive political rights of the marginalised, oppressed groups. Even though they are citizens of India but their rights remain only

¹⁴ www.thehindu.com/news/national/naxalism-biggest-threat-to-internal-security-manmohan/article436781.ece, accessed on June27,2016

¹⁵ Manorajan Mohanty, 'Challenges of Revolutionary Violence: The Naxalite Movement in Perspective' in *Economic & Political Weekly*, vol.41.no.29,July 2006,pp.3163-3168.

on paper, these nonviolent struggles raise political questions and aim to make political as well as social changes.

It should be mentioned here, that the movements today cannot really be sectioned under clear tags of political, economic or social. Each of these realms impinges on the rights of the marginalised and poor. To put it in other words, it can be argued that these struggles are to turn the definitions of the people involved in the struggle upside down. The activists are mostly from tribal sections, they are economically poor and are considered socially backwards, politically they are regarded as dependents and simply an encumbrance on the state. The nonviolent movements presented in the two chapters shows that their economic status does not mean that they are 'backwards', they have their own unique treasure of knowledge. Them, being poor does not indicate that they a burden on the state.

Indian state, firstly, is a welfare state and like any other citizens they too have full rights to enjoy constitutional safeguards. It is the responsibility and duty of the state to deliver appropriate services to protect their uniqueness. In fact, these movements go beyond claiming social and political rights and uncover the grim realities of constructed poverty. They question the market-supporting, capitalist state about the unjust and selfish profit seeking mentality and highlight intentional actions of the selfish capitalists that widen the gap between the rich and poor pushing them further towards the margins.

The research work also makes it clear that nonviolence , not only is a philosophical concept, a way of life targeting good values and morality but it is also a strategy that is applied to achieve results, gains, victory and goals. It requires planned approach, innovative thinking, spontaneous decision making, dynamism and the ability to envisage a future of constructive changes as its weapons. Although the researcher agrees that nonviolence as a means of resistance has not yet developed fully due to which there exists many nuances that still go unnoticed and unanalysed. But, multiplicity of research works like this one have the potential of uncovering the hidden layers so that the significance as well as limitations presented with respect to use of nonviolence for resistance can be analysed.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The hypothesis on which the research builds itself is that: nonviolent resistance can be an effective tool in achieving goals and in bringing about constructive change. The approach in testing this hypothesis is primarily based on analysing the literature produced by the movements. In the first chapter, the researcher has tried to study the original writings of the advocates of nonviolence. This has been supplemented with some sources that have also analysed the same issues.

A large part of this chapter is devoted to sketching out those instances in the lives of nonviolent leaders like Gandhi and Martin Luther King that has helped in laying the base for nonviolent ideas in philosophy and practice. In other words, these instances are analysed from the view point of finding the roots of nonviolence in the lives of the respective leaders and philosophers.

The chapter also focuses on the writings of the scholars and researchers on nonviolence. This section of the chapter concentrates on those aspects that make nonviolence as a means or a strategy for waging struggles. It presents arguments, observations and researches that prove it to be a powerful tool. With this exercise, a direction is made to have formed in the chapter for taking it further into the practical realm of actual struggles. This chapter borrows from historical writings, biographical accounts and advocacy research studies.

The second and third chapter are based on nonviolent socio-political movements in India. In these chapters, attempts are made to bring forth nonviolent strategies and innovations made in the sphere of nonviolent resistance. These chapters use such literature that primarily emphasises on the course of the movement. But, in the chapters, the researcher tries to pinpoint the various nonviolent tools, strategies that helped in making the movement efficient and effective enough to keep the movements moving in the right direction. In these chapters comparative method is applied as some kind of comparison is made between the movements in order to examine the similarities as well as the differences with respect to the course, strategies and tactics employed by the two movements under study.

It should be noted that when nonviolence is used as a means, it is not always tangible proofs that enable one to decipher the nonviolent strategies. The one well observed

and well established observation that can be made in a nonviolent struggle is that it does not employ weapons of violence. But, the other aspects require a closer and careful attention to be given to the nonviolent strategies that are most often not dissected in order to understand its nuances and affects. These often missed nuances and affects are unearthed in the last two chapters.

5. BRIEF OUTLAY OF THE CHAPTERS

The first chapter aims to produce a theoretical framework on nonviolence as a means of resistance. It elucidates the various schools of thought that support use of nonviolence in waging resistance. It discusses two schools of thought on non-violence. One considers non-violence as a value to be followed and the other suggest that is also the best and the most effective policy or strategy to follow. This chapter helps in understanding the nuances of nonviolence that make it an effective tool.

The second chapter introduces a social and political movement that adopted nonviolence as a means of resistance. In this chapter, it is explained that how this movement called ‘Narmada Bachao Andolan/Save the Narmada’ uses nonviolent strategies, tools and tactics so as to achieve its goals. The chapter presents the course of the movement and observes the mechanism of nonviolent strategies playing in the backdrop.

The third chapter provides a deeper insight into the nonviolent strategies on ground. This chapter enunciates those various pertinent factors that help and will keep strengthening nonviolent struggles. It is true that even the previous chapter is about a social and political movement but this is the essence of nonviolent means. They do not work in the manner of straight jacket approach. Each nonviolent resistance has its own innovative inputs to add. Moreover, these chapters also highlight that nonviolence as a means of resistance is in the stage of development.

The thesis attempts to answer the contemporary dilemma about the potentials of non-violence to emerge at a vibrant and effective mode for political resistance. It has argued that non-violence can simultaneously be treated as a value and as a political strategy. It has analysed two movements which have adopted non-violence as a means of resistance and they have innovated good number of tools and techniques based on larger principles of non-violence. For today’s violent world probably we have no

other option except to popularize non-violence if we are interested in saving the humanity from the instruments of mass killing.

CHAPTER 1

THE TWO TRADITIONS OF NONVIOLENCE

PACIFISTS AND PRAGMATISTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Theoretical understanding of a concept like nonviolence becomes significant at the outset because it helps providing clarity with respect to engaging with nonviolent ideas. It acts as an impetus for observing how these theories and ideas play out in the real world. Continuing this argument it can be said that theoretical understanding forms the first step into analysing and researching about the concept of nonviolent resistance in depth as it shows itself in reality.

Therefore, it can be said that this chapter lays the base for a lucid understanding of nonviolence as a means of resistance. It investigates the genesis of nonviolence in the realm of struggles. Further, it seeks to answer the research question by developing intelligible arguments and teasing out relevant instances and examples from the lives of nonviolent leaders espousing effectiveness of nonviolence and its role in waging a struggle. In tandem with this, the chapter attempts to clear the general misconceptions attached to the understanding of nonviolence.

The present chapter aims to fulfil the objective of probing into the research question by highlighting some of the major personalities that made nonviolence to be their primary means of resistance. The chapter is divided into two main sections. These sections are concerned with putting forth the two overlapping traditions: the Pacifist Tradition and the Pragmatic Tradition. In these sections apart from explicating the philosophy behind the mentioned traditions, light is thrown upon the lives of people that are considered to be the pillars of their respective traditions.

2. THE PACIFIST TRADITION: NONVIOLENCE AS A VALUE

As already introduced the chapter is divided into two sections that broadly encapsulate the theoretical understanding of nonviolence as a means of resistance. The present section deals with highlighting the pacifist tradition. Although the term

'pacifist' gives an impression of passivity and complacency, the study of this tradition given below unravels a different picture. This particular part of the chapter begins with explicating the real emphasis of the said tradition. This is followed by a detailed study of those leaders that took the concept of nonviolence to a higher level. In course of this study various arguments were put forth with the objective of finding answer to the research question.

In this tradition, the religious texts, traditions, gurus, scriptures, priests, Gods and leading persons from different religions form the inspiration. The main thrust of this tradition lay upon denunciation of violence as morally offensive and going against the unity of means and ends principle. For the pacifists, the most indispensable understanding of nonviolence is the rejection of killing human beings. In fact, some even expand it to the protection of not only human beings but all sorts of living creatures.

In this section, two examples will be taken with the aim of explaining the meaning of non-violence from the perspective. The first example is of Gandhi, who is considered to be one of the greatest philosophers and activist in the area of nonviolence and nonviolent struggles. The second example is of Martin Luther King Jr. who made a mark in the American war of independence due to his commendable contribution to nonviolent resistance to racial differences.

In each case, an endeavour is made to discuss the background of the personalities in order to bring home the point that the socialisation in nonviolence starts happening right from early ages. This takes place because of the influences of culture, tradition, experiences and overall surroundings or contexts in which nonviolence in its different forms gets significance and manifests in everyday life. After understanding this, the next task emphasises on formulating the core principles of nonviolence that associate with Gandhi's and King's political and social life. These principles have become their teachings to the entire world.

Nonviolence as a philosophy has been alive since ages. Every religious text contains in it the nonviolent aspect of life. But, one can observe that only a few have interpreted, understood and explained these messages of nonviolence. Amongst the pacifists, it was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who first took the step of applying these teachings on nonviolence and brought them into practice.

Gandhi had no army and no position in the government. He used no means that in conventional terms would give him enough authority and power to begin with a movement for the independence of an entire nation. It was his commitment to the principle of Ahimsa or nonviolence that made him the 'Father of the nation'. His relentless dedication to nonviolent struggle against the exploitative British rule inspired millions of Indians in the past and still inspires the whole world. Gandhi converted nonviolent philosophy into nonviolent action, making nonviolence to be socially and politically relevant. In addition to this, he tried to clear many myths related to the application of nonviolence.

2.1. GANDHI AND NONVIOLENCE: FOUNDATIONS OF GANDHI'S IDEA OF NONVIOLENCE

In the previous section the main arguments put forth by the pacifist tradition has been along with the introduction of one of the most important pacifist, M.K. Gandhi. This segment of the chapter carries forward the discussion on Gandhi and is primarily concerned with unravelling those instances and influences in the life of Gandhi that prove to be the source of sowing the seeds of nonviolent ideas and lessons.

The roots of nonviolence can be seen right from Gandhi's childhood. Various instances in his own life and in the life of his family and friends influenced his conception of nonviolence. His acquaintance with different religions was one of the major sources of Gandhi's statement that, "From my sixth or seventh year up to my sixteenth I was at school, being taught all sorts of things except religion,"¹⁶This statement also indicates that Gandhi had no formal education in religious studies. Probably this is what made his meaning of religion more practical. He also explains that "the term 'religion' I[Gandhi] am using in its broadest sense, meaning thereby self-realization or knowledge of self"¹⁷. Gandhi was exposed religious thoughts, scriptures and its different forms from his surroundings and from his family. Be it his learning of the Ramanama, the Bhagavat, or the Ramayana, his sources has been people like his father, mother, nurse and cousin.

¹⁶M.K.Gandhi,*Glimpses Of Religion* in M.K.Gandhi, *An Autobiography or The Story of my experiments with truth*, Ahmedabad, 1927, p.29.

¹⁷ Ibid,p.29.

Gandhi's toleration towards the other religions had also begun in his childhood as he mentions,

Jain monks also would pay frequent visits to my father, and would even go out of their way to accept food from us-non-Jains. He had, besides, Musalman and Parsi friends, who would talk to him about their own faiths, and he would listen to them with respect, and often with interest.¹⁸

The conviction that morality is the basis of things, and truth is the substance of all morality had taken deep roots in Gandhi right from the early age when he came across. A Gujarati didactic stanza that gripped his mind and heart was :

For a bowl of water give a goodly me; For a kindly greeting bow thou down with zeal; For a simple penny pay thou back with gold; If thy life be rescued, life do not withhold. Thus the words and actions of the wise regard; Every little service tenfold they reward.¹⁹

In fact, Gandhi's mother had a profound influence over Gandhi with respect to his acquaintance with religions. "The outstanding impression my mother has left on my memory is that of saintliness. She was deeply religious. She would not think of taking her meals without her daily prayers."²⁰ His mother belonged to sect that combined Hindu and Muslim beliefs and she welcomed Christians and Jains in too. Her irresistible and consistent will power to fast even in odd situations proved to be an example of strength instead of suffering for Gandhi. "She would take the hardest vow and keep them without flinching .Illness was no excuse for relaxing them."²¹

In the later years, he explained the meaning of fasting as "one of the means to the end of self-restraint, but it is not all, and if physical fasting is not accompanied by mental fasting, it is bound to end in hypocrisy and disaster."²² Gandhi cites a famous verse from Bhagavadgita in support of his understanding about fasting:

¹⁸ Ibid, p.31.

¹⁹ Ibid,p.31.

²⁰ M.K.Gandhi, *Birth And Parentage* in M.K.Gandhi, *An Autobiography or The Story of my experiments with truth*, Ahmedabad, 1927, p.4.

²¹ Ibid,p.4.

²² M.K.Gandhi, *Fasting* in M.K.Gandhi, *An Autobiography or The Story of my experiments with truth*, Ahmedabad, 1927, p.303.

For a man who is fasting his senses, Outwardly, the sense-objects disappear, Leaving the yearning behind; but when, He has seen the Highest, Even the yearning disappears.²³

Jainism also had a great influence over Gandhi. It is one of the religions that values nonviolence explicitly. The five doctrines of Jainism are: 1.do not commit violence, 2.do not speak a lie, 3.do not steal, 4.do not acquire property, and 5.observe continence (brahmcharya). One can notice that Gandhi observed all the five doctrines in formulating his principles of nonviolence. One of the great Jain saints of modern India, Shrimad Rajchandra, settled many of Gandhi's spiritual doubts and was an inspiration for him.

Gandhi admired Gita. In his own words, "The Gita has become for me the key to the scriptures of the world. It unravels for me the deepest mysteries to be found in them."²⁴ He made an effort to live its message every moment of his life. He translated Gita from Sanskrit to Gujarati language with commentary. He believed that Gita conveys the message of selflessness and detachment. Not only did Gandhi apply the teachings of Gita in his own life but also cited them in his arguments.

Krishna's teachings in Gita like 'be not moved by the fruits of works', the one who 'casts off all desires....comes unto peace', equanimity in the face of pleasure or pain, success or failure, proves to be the surest path to wisdom and spiritual attainment and other such valuable lessons formed the basis of Gandhian nonviolent principles. Sacred ideals like freedom from pride and pretentiousness, forgiveness, nonviolence, service, uprightness have been encapsulated under the definition of being completely selfless. These ideals formed the guiding principles for Gandhi.

Although Gandhi loved Gita, but he did not blindly follow the already given interpretations: "I exercise my judgement about every scripture, including Gita. I cannot let a scriptural text supersede my reason."²⁵ Although his adherence to reason does not mean that he did not believe in God if reason does not support His existence.

²³ Ibid. p.305.

²⁴ M.K. Gandhi, *For Christian Friends* in M.K.Gandhi, *What Jesus Means To Me*, Ahmedabad, 1959,p.30

²⁵ M.K.Gandhi, *Value Of Scriptural Texts* in M.K.Gandhi, *What Jesus Means To Me*, Ahmedabad, 1959,p.31.

Christianity also had an impact over Gandhi. Though, in his childhood he did not respect this religion. Talking about Christianity Gandhi says “Surely, thought I, a religion that compelled one to eat beef, drink, liquor, and change one’s own clothes did not deserve the name.”²⁶ Conversion of people by the Christian missionaries made Gandhi dislike the religion more than anything else. But later when he came across the Sermon on the Mount, he began to change his position. He gained various insights from this sermon and developed them further.

For Gandhi Jesus was one of the greatest teachers humanity ever had. Although, he denied that Jesus was the most perfect man ever born, because he “believed in the *perfectibility* (not *perfection*) of human nature, Jesus came as near to perfection as possible. To say that he was perfect is to deny God’s superiority to man.”²⁷ He considered Jesus to be as divine as Krishna or Rama or Mahomed or Zoroaster.

Gandhi drew great inspiration from Christianity and gave explicit recognition to Jesus as an inspiration, he said,

[t]hough I cannot claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus’s suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules all my actions, worldly and temporal.²⁸

He considered Christ to be a supreme artist as “ he saw and expressed truth”²⁹. He understood the teachings of Christianity to be that of non-retaliation, or non-resistance to evil. He considered Jesus to be creator of a new law, “not an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but to be ready to receive two blows when only one was given, and to go two miles when you were asked to go one.”³⁰

²⁶ M.K.Gandhi, *Glimpses Of Religion* in M.K.Gandhi, *An Autobiography or The Story of my experiments with truth*, Ahmedabad, p. 31.

²⁷ M.K. Gandhi, *Only Begotten Son Of God?* in M.K.Gandhi, *What Jesus Means To Me*, Ahmedabad, 1959, p.6-7.

²⁸ M.K. Gandhi, *Why I Am Not A Convert To Christianity* in M.K.Gandhi, *What Jesus Means To Me*, Ahmedabad, 1959, p.6.

²⁹ M.K. Gandhi, *The Sermon On The Mount* in M.K.Gandhi, *What Jesus Means To Me*, Ahmedabad, 1959, p.6.

³⁰ M.K. Gandhi, *The Jesus I Love* in M.K.Gandhi, *What Jesus Means To Me*, Ahmedabad, 1959, p.13.

These teachings of Christ are often misunderstood as being a mere submission to the oppression. But actually Gandhi illustrates how to defeat and resist the opponent while walking on the path of human dignity and the spirit of love. Christ did not mean acceptance of blows without resistance. His instructions to turn the other cheek, give the other garment, or walk an extra mile are not to be taken literally, according to Wink, but are “examples to spark an infinite variety of creative responses.”³¹

Turning the other cheek subtly indicates that the first try of the opponent failed in humiliating and overpowering the other person. Such a response morally disarms the opponent and this turns the tables. This strong challenge to injustice remains within the confines of nonviolence. Gandhi understood the transformative power returning love for hatred, good for evil and used this understanding for social change.

Gandhi had great respect for Islam as well. C. F. Andrews states in his *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, that following the example of Prophet of Islam, Mahatma Gandhi never separated the political from the spiritual, or failed to deal directly with social evil. He also mentions that Gandhi was deeply inspired by the early days of the Prophets mission. Initially Prophet Muhammad was rejected by his own people as he decided to choose a different path and preach this different belief. He bore every form of humiliation in silence and in this Gandhi found a streak of compatibility with his principle of nonviolence or Ahimsa.

The above section shows that the idea of nonviolence that was formulated by Gandhi was largely influenced by different factors like that of culture, social context, family background. This demonstrates that nonviolence as an idea has its roots in the context and culture of Gandhi.

So far the chapter makes it clear that Gandhi largely borrowed his understanding of nonviolence from various religions and from the value that were instilled by the family he belonged to. The aforementioned section shows that Gandhi grasped the essence of religions he was exposed to, which made him respect these diverse religions. The section also implicitly highlights the roots of nonviolence can be traced only when it searched for beyond the formal layers of religion. Substantive teachings

³¹ Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*, Minneapolis, 1992, p. 185.

or gospels of diverse religions together point out to the significance of human life along with a nonviolent path of resistance, gets reflected in the lines of the earlier section.

The present portion continues with unearthing the various types of influence of Leo Tolstoy that contributed largely to a meaningful articulation of nonviolence as a tool to resist by Gandhi. Tolstoy, a Russian author, made a mark on Gandhi through the writings that Gandhi referred to and most significantly through the letters that they exchanged pertaining primarily to nonviolent resolution of conflicts.

Leo Tolstoy, a former czarist military officer advised soldiers to reject military services and advocated civil disobedience. He suggested, “Do not resist evil, but also do not yourselves participate in evil: in collection of taxes, and in violent deeds of law courts and (what is more important) the soldiers. Then, no one in the world will enslave you.”³²

He insisted on resistance to the state authorities through nonviolence. Both Gandhi and Tolstoy were believers of religion. Both supported a kind of religion that was rid of lust for power of a state, a religious sect, a ruling class, a racial majority. They believed in a religion that opposes the tendency towards self-expansion that forms the roots of most of the civilization and culture. Theirs was a religion that values simplicity, self-limitation, peace, reason, and suffering.

Similarly, Gandhi and Tolstoy considered that all religions teach these same values. Tolstoy called it “Christianity as a New Concept of Life.” This new concept of life, according to him, is found not only within Christianity but also in Islam and Buddhism and other religions of the world. Gandhi was overwhelmed by Tolstoy’s *The Kingdom of God is within You*. This writing of Tolstoy gradually made him read other works of Tolstoy. In 1909 he read Tolstoy’s *Letter to a Hindu*, which impacted Gandhi to great extent. In this letter, Tolstoy introduced the ‘law of love’ that can conquer the evil. In his letter he stated the reason for India’s subjection to British rule and also put forth the ways of fighting against the oppression.

³² Leo Tolstoy, *A Letter to a Hindu : The Subjection Of India:Its Cause and Cure* , London,1963, p.1.

Tolstoy strongly condemned the use of violence and asserted that “the truth that is to be realized is love, which is an attribute of the soul that has an irresistible power over the body, and over the brute or body force generated by the stirring up of evil passions in us.”³³ He considered the law of love and the belief in resisting violence by violence to be diametrically opposites.

He highlights that “though common sense indicated that if some men claim to decide who is to be subjected to violence of all kinds for the benefit of others, these men to whom violence is applied may, in turn, arrive at a similar conclusion with regard to those who have employed violence to them”.³⁴ Thus, he clearly points out that violence leads to counter-violence. This argument of Tolstoy impacted Gandhi to a great extent. Tolstoy further suggested that the one very important condition of love is to endure the injuries, insults, and violence of all kinds without resisting evil by evil.

Gandhi formulates his principles of satyagraha on these lines only. In fact, he and his friend Kallenbach had set up a ‘Tolstoy Farm’, near Johannesburg. In this place, Gandhi along with the families of satyagrahis experimented with simple life—they practiced vegetarianism, fasting, reformed dress, nature cure, physical labour and so on. One of the most indispensable facts that Tolstoy conveyed and which made an ever-lasting impression on Gandhi was about India’s subjection to the British.

He pointed out that the British rule exists in India because Indians have allowed them to rule; otherwise it is impossible, according to him, to enslave two million people. Tolstoy opined that it is Indians who have enslaved themselves and they can be free only when they discover the law of love. Indian subjects have mistaken to take force to be the supreme means of resisting against the violence by the British. He stated that “If the people of India are enslaved by violence, it is only because they themselves live and have lived by violence and do not recognise the eternal law of love inherent in humanity.”³⁵

Therefore, it can be observed that the arguments made by Tolstoy acted as a mirror reflecting the harsh reality of colonialism and the role of Indians perpetuating it.

³³ Ibid, p.2.

³⁴ Ibid, p.5.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 8

Along with this, the details also out forth the relevance and rationale behind nonviolence as a means of resistance.

The present section thus explicates how one of the pacifists, M.K.Gandhi evolved as a thinker of nonviolence. The two most significant determinants that formed the core of Gandhi as a pioneer of the pacifists were the culture in which he grew which acted as a base of his interest in nonviolent principles and his interaction with Leo Tolstoy that helped in engaging with the idea of nonviolence critically. Therefore, it can be said that the principles of nonviolence by Gandhi (as elucidated in the next section) were very much culturally and intellectually rooted.

2.2. PACIFIST PRINCIPLES OF NONVIOLENCE:READING THROUGH GANDHIAN PRACTICES

From the previous sections it can be deciphered that Gandhi's ideas on nonviolence were a vibrant mix of his own perceptions with the events, people, institutions and ideas floating around him throughout his early life. This kind of knowledge about nonviolence enabled him to give a coherent shape to the subject of nonviolence in the form of principles of nonviolence he not only preached but also practiced.

The principles of nonviolence or Ahimsa put forth by Gandhi had their genesis in the experiences of Gandhi throughout his life. His was a dynamic approach to such principles as he preferred to change his stand whenever he deemed it to be necessary. Some of the indispensable and central principles that can be evinced after reading about Gandhi are as follows:

The first principle highlights Gandhi's famous principle relating means and ends. This principle forms the core of the pacifist tradition. Gandhi saw an inseparable relationship between means and ends. For Gandhi truth was the end which has to be achieved through the means of nonviolence. Gandhi laid emphasis on just mean as he was of the view that "if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself."³⁶ Gandhi insisted on the conversion of the opponent to the cause of reform. Due to this reason he advocated the means of nonviolence as it does not prove to be

³⁶ M.K.Gandhi, *Working of Nonviolence* in M.K.Gandhi, *The Life and Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1938, p.47-48.

counterproductive when compared to violence as means. While the latter engender the logic of escalation the former aims at solving the problem permanently. It can be said that Gandhi's thrust over nonviolence as means also considered the 'subjective-or moral-psychological dimension'. The conversion process does not only affect the outer physical being of the opponent but also his inner moral self.

The second principle pertains to the understanding of the bond or relationship between Truth and God. Gandhi opined that human beings are fallible creatures and cannot know the ultimate truth and therefore, they are not competent to punish. When one uses violence against another person considering him to be worthy of punishment that signals a problem of pride and, at the same time, of weakness and cowardice. Use of violence as a means makes a person egoistical as he starts taking himself to be infallible. This blinds him to the irreversibility of the consequences of violence. Such irreversibility compels the user of violence to justify his choice of means, which he cannot and often avoids, thus indicating his feeble position. According to Gandhi, when we confront that truth is incomplete, we become humble and open-minded.

He asserted that no one should impose his version of truth on anybody else and should be prepared to re-examine his own situation when he comes across different interpretation of truth. If he disagrees with the different interpretations of truth then he must try to put forth his version. While doing so, he must be persuasive and convincing, but should not be violent or coercive in his approach.

Gandhi argued that it is more apt to say that 'Truth is God' than the traditional 'God is Truth'.³⁷ According to David Cortright, this twist in the statement proves to be liberating as "When pastors or religious teachers assert "God is Truth", we stumble over the meaning of the first part of the sentence, "Who or what is God?"³⁸ According to him, reversing the order makes it easier for people to relate, as truth is something familiar to them. Focussing on the search for truth offers a way of reaching God, of grasping the imponderable.

³⁷ M.K. Gandhi, *History of the Satyagraha Ashram* in M.K.Gandhi, *The Life and Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Ahmedabad,1932, p. 157,158.

³⁸ David Cortright, *Grasping Gandhi* in M.K.Gandhi, *Gandhi and Beyond, Nonviolence for an Age of Terrorism* ,Brookline,2007,p. 16.

The third principle makes action to be central. Gandhi wrote “Action is my domain”.³⁹ He always said that his life is his message to the world. He always believed in doing than thinking. This is where he is different from earlier writings on nonviolence. It was not that the idea of nonviolence came only with Gandhi. This idea was present years before Gandhi pursued it, but remained enclosed within the scriptures or within the small community of priests and religious leaders. Gandhi practiced this idea and disseminated it amongst the masses through his deeds. His practical application of nonviolence manifested in the form of Satyagraha.

Gandhi claimed that “if the story of the universe had commenced with wars, not a man would have been found alive today.”⁴⁰ For him nonviolence is the root of existence of the universe. Gandhi advocated Passive Resistance or Satyagraha for resolving conflicts. According to him, “[p]assive Resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms”⁴¹.

When observed closely, Satyagraha means the persistence for truth. The term ‘persistence’ implies here ‘force’. Satyagraha also involves force but not the kind of force or energy that goes into making a violent resistance. This force is truth-force, love-force. A satyagrahi, according to Gandhi, is a law-abiding citizen who does not aim to harm the law-givers if he finds the law to be going against his conscience. Instead, he suffers and do not submit to the law.

Gandhi considered the technique of Satyagraha to be superior to any techniques that involves the use of violence. It is because a passive resister or Satyagrahi has to observe perfect chastity, adopt poverty, follow truth, and cultivate fearlessness. Gandhi does not deny that physical-force also requires many qualities. In his view, these qualities are useless when compared to the core qualities demanded for being a Satyagrahi. Other than Satyagraha, Gandhi emphasised on the use of non-cooperation, civil disobedience, fasting, and such other nonviolent ways to fight against oppression.

³⁹ Cited in Johan Galtung , *The Way Is the Goal: Gandhi Today* ,Ahmedabad,1992, p. 42.

⁴⁰ M.K.Gandhi, *Passive Resistance* in M.K.Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* ,Ahmedabad,1938, p.67.

⁴¹ Ibid,p.69.

The fourth principle focus on how Gandhi understands politics. Gandhi believed that politics should aim at social betterment. Political power should not be treated as an end in itself but as a means of making people capable enough to better their conditions. For Gandhi, plunging into the realm of politics was one of the ways of rendering service to the needy and to fight oppression. In his political campaign, there were three stages-persuasion, sacrifice, and noncooperation.

Before taking any direct action, the resister tries to persuade the opponent through rational arguments. If this does not work, then, he attempts self-sacrifice. This brings the issue in the eyes of the masses as well. If through this method, the opponent's moral concern is not aroused, then, he takes the next step. In this step, the resister tries to gain support for the cause so that he can begin with mass non-cooperation. Through boycotts and other forms of nonviolent direct action, the movement forces the adversary to change or withdraw the abusive policies.

Gandhi formed the bedrock for nonviolence not only in the philosophical realm but also in the practical political and social sphere. He proved that nonviolence can be used as an effective political tool to resist. His moral principles did not act as a hindrance in his application of nonviolent techniques but complemented them.

Thus it can be said that Gandhi evolved an idea of nonviolence not only through his immediate experiences but also by going deeper into the realms of culture, religion, education, political and social. I will now show as to how another exponent of pacifist theory of non-violence, who was also a follower of Gandhi, worked out the strategy for himself.

2.3. MARTIN LUTHER KING Jr.: FOLLOWING GANDHI

From the above sections the contribution of Gandhi to the realm of nonviolence as a means of resistance becomes explicit. His unrelenting spirit and undying faith in the possibility of using nonviolence as a tool to resist and gather the people of India to foment a mass based struggle for independence corroborates the effectiveness of nonviolence.

After Gandhi, nonviolent resistance did not meet its grave but a new breath of life was infused. The success of Civil Rights Movement led by Martin Luther King Jr. was

another historic moment that proved the strength of nonviolence. Behind the making of this leader too, many people, incidents and experiences were involved.

King's first intellectual encounter with the theory of nonviolent resistance was during his student days when he came across Thoreau's *Essay on Civil Disobedience*. Prior to being introduced to writings about Gandhi, King held the belief that the ethics of Jesus are meant only for individual relationship." The "turn the other cheek" philosophy and the "love your enemies" philosophy were only valid, I felt, when individuals were in conflict with other individuals"⁴² remarks King. But, after having read Gandhi, he understood that nonviolence has the potential to face and struggle against collective oppression and injustice.

King first got acquainted with Gandhian nonviolent resistance through academics. Although, he already had heard much about Gandhi but he was sceptical of his pacifist methods. It was his professor at Crozer Seminary, Prof. George W. Davis, an ardent admirer of Gandhi who encouraged King to have an in-depth study about Gandhi. King engaged himself in an intensive study about Gandhi after he attended a lecture by Mordecai Johnson, the president of Howard University who had just returned from India. He gave an elaborated account of Gandhi's teachings and his methods of nonviolent struggle. King's reading about Gandhi got him closer to the concept of love espoused by Christianity. He wrote," Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force on a large scale."⁴³

King employed this concept of love during the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955. Although he was initially an ardent follower of Nietzsche's views but after getting familiar to Gandhian nonviolence, he realized the former's limitations. In fact, he considered Gandhian nonviolence as "one of the most potent weapons available to an oppressed people in their struggle for freedom"⁴⁴. Gandhi's method of nonviolence and the independence achieved through it strengthened King's belief in this method

⁴² Martin Luther King Jr., *Stride Towards Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, New York, 1957, p.97

⁴³ Sudarshan Kapur, *Prelude to Martin Luther King Jr.: The Images of Gandhi and the Indian Independence Movement, 1921-1934*, 1992, p.427-29.

⁴⁴ Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love*, New York, 1963, p.138.

with respect to reconciliation of the twin objectives of that of love and resistance to evil.

Apart from Gandhi, King was also inspired by the philosophy of personalism. According to King, personalism is “the theory that clue to the meaning of ultimate reality is found in personality”. Thus, this theory makes God more understandable and accessible through the personal experience than through any kind of metaphysical abstraction. Such a personalist philosophy made King believe in the dignity and value of each person. In addition to this, King also made a case for fair treatment of all people and for equal opportunity to all in order to enable them to realize their God-given potential.

Another person, whose writings on *Christianity and Social Crisis* left “indelible imprint” on King’s thinking, was Walter Rauschenbusch⁴⁵. Rauschenbusch was the founder of the social gospel movement, whose objective was to promote the Christian duty of supporting social justice. He gave King a theological basis or the social concerns apart from just concentrating on personal growth and personal morality. The social gospel movement made him realise that religion does not only cater to personal or the individual self but also to the social and economic justice. Not only does religion concern itself with only the soul of the human, but also with his body and material well-being along with spiritual well-being. This encouraged King to work for the rights of the oppressed and the downtrodden.

Not only did King emphasise on religion but also the religious institutions. He considered that church should be responsible for addressing social justice and if it fails to do so then it is “spiritually moribund”⁴⁶, short of meaning and purpose. Although, in reality, King believed that the church does not fulfil its true purpose. It is too timid to face injustice. King wrote “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” to the Alabama clergymen in which he decried the complacent and irresolute response of the church to the racial abuse. Nevertheless, he did recognise that some of the clergy

⁴⁵ Martin Luther King Jr., *Stride Towards Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, New York, 1957, p.91.

⁴⁶ Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, in James M. Washington ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.*, San Francisco, 1991, p. 299.

actively participated and faced real danger while raising their voice against the unjustified segregation.

Although King believed in humanity but he never accepted the “superficial optimism” about human nature⁴⁷. He agreed with Neibuhr’s emphasis on the reality of evil. Although, he emphasised that Neibhur was too much involved in looking at the negative or sinful side of human nature and so overlooked the cure. As a witness to and victim of racial abuse, King was well aware of the human capacity for evil. After having a close encounter with the Gospels of Bible and the reading of Neiburh, King had a very balanced view of the human nature. He was inclined towards what he called “realist pacifism”. By which he meant that he came to view the pacifist position not as sinless but as the lesser evil in circumstances.

King recognised that ethical appeal does not suffice and that coercive power is required to achieve the objectives. He realized that social power needs to be applied along with moral reasoning in order to bring about a political change. Here, King’s thrust on power should not be misunderstood as something which is violent and harmful. King cornered “constructive” power build through nonviolent social action .King’s commitment to the principles of freedom, social and economic justice and to God can also be deciphered from his response to Marxism. He carefully scrutinised *Das Kapital* and *The Communist Manifesto*. He objected to the communist writings on the grounds that it emphasised too much on the materialistic aspect and had no place for God.

He did not concede with the relativism espoused by the Marxist in the sense that it considered any means justified so far as it is able to meet the “millennial” ends. According to King “Constructive ends can never give absolute moral justification to destructive means, because in the final analysis the end is pre-existent in the mean.”⁴⁸ King was against the political totalitarianism advocated by the communists. He opined that though for Marx the state was an “interim” reality, but the state remains as an end till it exists and man just a means. King objected to this “deprecation of individual freedom”⁴⁹ and had a firm belief that man is an end as he is the child of

⁴⁷Martin Luther King Jr., *Stride Towards Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, New York,1957,p. 91.

⁴⁸ Ibid,p.92.

⁴⁹ Ibid,p.93.

God. Hampering the freedom of man amounts to reducing him to the status of a thing, rather than, elevating him to the status of a person.

His disagreements with Marx did not mean that he was polemic in his approach as he appreciated few of his points. King appreciated Marx for highlighting the abject poverty and chronic economic inequality which was being faced by a large chunk of the society living under the yoke of capitalism. He acceded to the gulf existing between superfluous wealth and abject poverty and the perilous reality created by the obsession with trying to find opportunities for profit earning. King argues that such a grim reality make us “prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or size of automobiles, rather than by the quality of our service and relationship to humanity”.⁵⁰

The understanding of nonviolence in the eyes of King produced more such elements that enriched the sphere of nonviolence as a means of resistance to a great extent. He questioned the settled and conventional along with bringing into the forefront those aspects and roles of power, religious institutions that so far remained behind the veil. For instance, his emphasis on constructive power is one of the features that form the backbone of a nonviolent struggle. King took clue from different scholars in constructing his own idea of nonviolence. The next section focuses on explicating the same.

2.3.1. KING’S IDEA OF NONVIOLENCE: INTELLECTUAL INNOVATIONS

Having an in-depth intellectual encounter with nonviolent resistance, King laid down some of the basic tenets about the philosophy of nonviolence. In the process of unearthing these lessons he largely drew points from Gandhian teachings.

Following Gandhi, King believed that nonviolent resistance does not endorse cowardice. It is very different from ‘passive resistance’ which gives a false impression of being stagnant, inactive and sort of “do-nothing” method. He, very aptly, argues that “it is not passive non-resistance to evil, it is active non-resistance to evil.”⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.94.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.102.

King differentiates nonviolence from violence in terms of the society it creates. Violence leads to the spread of bitterness in the society while nonviolence aims at creating a beloved community. Nonviolence fights against the forces of evil, against the injustice rather than targeting people who happen to be propagating the evil. King concurs with the view that a nonviolent resister should be ready to accept suffering than to inflict it on others.

Nonviolent resistance seeks to cut the chains of hate by keeping the ethics of love at the centre. Here, by love, King refers to *Agape*. *Agape* is a word for love in the Greek New Testament. *Agape* is disinterested love. A kind of love that demands nothing in return and puts no conditions, that intends to bind the community together. This sort of love sees no difference between enemy and friend; it pushes to view a person as human in the need of love. It is not passive but active in the sense that it insists to restore the broken community by accepting sacrifices on one own self.

According to King, nonviolent resister has faith in the possibility of fair future. He believes that the universe is on the side of justice and this creative power gives him strength to stand without wavering in the face of atrocities, oppression and injustice.

The pacifist tradition laid a strong foundation for further studies and practice in the sphere of nonviolent resistance. Although, with the passage of time many changes have been introduced and many new aspects have been unearthed, yet, the pacifist school have still been a great inspiration for everyone that has shown an interest in the sphere of nonviolent resistance.

It can be deciphered from this section that King and Gandhi treated nonviolence as a value, as a way of life that encapsulates in itself the huge potential of solving individual as well as societal problems. This shows that somewhere the conception of nonviolence by the pacifist tradition percolates to the strategic or pragmatic understanding of nonviolence.

3. THE PRAGMATIC TRADITION: NONVIOLENCE AS A STRATEGY

The journey of nonviolent struggle does not stop with activists belonging to pacifist tradition only. These epitomes of nonviolent resistance have been joined by numerous

scholars, believers and users of nonviolence in fighting against oppression, present in every corner of the world in the contemporary times. Although the lens through which they understand nonviolence is different from the pacifist tradition. Due to such a variation, these contemporary thinkers are placed under the 'pragmatic tradition' of nonviolence. It should be noted that the pragmatic school does not represent a complete disconnection from the earlier school. This tradition does not repudiate the existence and the accomplishments made by the pacifist tradition. The scholars belonging to this school respect and even take inspiration from the pacifists.

The pragmatic tradition is a representation of how far the journey of nonviolent resistance has reached, how it has been understood and explained in the present times, it stands for the change in the mindset, needs, realities and areas of possibilities. The pragmatists consider nonviolence to be a means of resistance that can help in winning a conflict situation, just like the pacifists. The difference being that, the latter emphatically emphasised on the closer relationship between means and ends, the former does not take this link to be a necessity. The pragmatists do not focus too much on the question if a nonviolent means will lead to the establishment of a nonviolent society in the long run.

The prime concern of these scholars is whether the means of nonviolence will result in victory in any conflict situation. The moral underpinnings of pacifists have been overshadowed by the pragmatic approach of the present tradition. Although it does not mean that this school aims at using nonviolence for a shrewd and selfish victory with no larger concerns. The scholars that advocate the pragmatic use of nonviolence in a conflict are concerned with attainment or continuance of liberal values like freedom, respect for human rights and democracy.

Nonviolent techniques are employed by the pragmatists in order to avoid killing any human, more than this, nonviolence is used because they believe that it can create a wider support base for their cause, or it can lead to fulfilment of the goals, or it can help in preventing the opponent in achieving his goals. Many eminent scholars, thinkers and peace practitioners have been associated with this school.

The researcher has tried to understand two of the important contributions made to the pragmatic tradition of nonviolence. The first remarkable contribution is made by Gene Sharp. His understanding of nonviolence as a pragmatic tool to resist gave a new life

to the idea of nonviolence that was gradually fading away due to its philosophical inclinations. The next part concentrates on the path-breaking research conducted by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan. The findings of their research added immense strength to the strategic understanding of nonviolence as their arguments firmly corroborates the role of nonviolence in the sphere of resistance.

3.1. GENE SHARP: NONVIOLENCE AS STRATEGIC TOOL

Gene Sharp, is one of the main advocates of this school. He is the founder of the Albert Einstein Institution, a non-profit organization that dedicates its efforts to advancing the study of nonviolent action, and is a retired professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. With the infusion of paraphernalia supporting and perpetuating violence, the significance of nonviolence as a means of resistance seemed to be fading. Scholars like Gene Sharp have supplied reasonable and systematic arguments in order to illustrate the power of nonviolence. He defines nonviolent resistance as “ a civilian-based method used to wage conflict through social, psychological, economic, and political means without the threat or use of violence. It includes acts of omission, acts of commission, or a combination of both.”⁵²

Like most of the contemporary scholars on nonviolent resistance, Gene Sharp concentrates more on nonviolent techniques of resistance rather than on the philosophy of nonviolence. Due to inadequate knowledge about the technique of nonviolence, numerous misconceptions have been attached with it. Gene Sharp throws light on some of such false conceptions that breed in the minds of people reducing its true potential as a means of resistance.

He refutes the assumption that violent resistance works quickly and nonviolent resistance does not. He opines that both violent and nonviolent resistance have nothing to do with rigid time limits. He further states that nonviolent resistance is not weak as often considered to be true, instead it has immense potential to face different types of conflict situations. He mentions that “Although it is widely believed that this technique can only succeed against humanitarian and democratic opponents, it has at

⁵² . Gene Sharp, ed., *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential*, pp. 41, 547.

times been successful against brutal regimes and dictatorships, including Nazi and Communist ones.”⁵³He mentions that nonviolent struggle incorporates coercion and has even destroyed extreme dictatorships apart from melting the hearts of the oppressors.

He clears that nonviolent resistance is a tool that even common people can use; it does not necessarily require a charismatic leader. Highlighting the vast reach of nonviolent techniques, he adds that it is a cross-cultural phenomenon. Differentiating pragmatic use of nonviolence from the pacifist use, Sharp argues that it is not necessary to have religious motives behind waging a nonviolent struggle. According to Sharp, “Nonviolent struggle is not the same as religious or ethical principled nonviolence, but a very different phenomenon. This distinction must be made clear and not downplayed.”⁵⁴

3.1.2. POWER IN NONVIOLENCE: GENE SHARP EXPLAINING STRENGTHS OF NONVIOLENCE

Gene sharp underscores the centrality of power in nonviolent struggle. What infuses power in any means of struggle is, according to Gene Sharp, the totality of all the influences and pressures, including sanctions, at the disposal of a society or group for use in maintaining itself, implementing policies, and conducting internal as well as external conflicts. He emphasises on the political power residing with State institutions, governments, interest groups, opposition movements and other groups, and asserts that this kind of political power emerges from the interaction of all or few of the following sources:

1. Authority of the ruler and its legitimacy among the subjects,
2. Human resources in the form of people who are obedient, loyal, cooperative and are ready to provide a special assistance.
3. The competency of such people, their skills, knowledge, abilities and capabilities in fulfilling the needs of the rulers.

⁵³ Gene Sharp, There Are Realistic Alternatives, ‘*Developing a Realistic Alternative to War and Other Violence*’ p.15.

⁵⁴ Ibid,p.15.

4. Existence of intangible factors, like commitment to ideology, attitudes and habits towards obedience and submission, Presence or absence of a common faith and sense of a mission.

5. Material resources in the form of property, financial resources, natural resources, economic system, means of communication, and transportation.

6. The types and extent of pressures and punishments at the disposal of the rulers in order to control his own members and those of the opponents.

Sharp suggests that the degree to which the ruler can use these sources determine the increase or decrease in his power.

In a nonviolent struggle from the side of the resister, an asymmetrical conflict situation is created, as he does not use the same violent weapons to which the opponent resorts. The nonviolent resister aims to reduce the capacity of the opponent to continue the struggle by weakening the pillars of his source of power. Sharp cautions that there will definitely be risks involved in the struggle and this should be accepted by the resisters. Moreover, they should be confident of the power that exudes from nonviolent techniques so that they can remove any trace of fear well before they challenge the opponent.

The nonviolent resisters have to realize that there remains a variation in power that both the parties possess. They need to shift this difference in relative powers in their favour. In order to achieve this aim, they have to resort to third parties. These third parties or say power changers are from within the group of the oppressors like those involved in the bureaucratic control, the general population, the national and international groups or communities. These power changers play a major role in highlighting the process of 'political jiu-jitsu' that begins when the oppressors impose heavy penalties and repressive measures over the nonviolent resisters which leads to arousal of sympathy, a sense of recognition of the just cause for which the resisters are fighting and bearing the brutalities of the opponents.

When observed closely, it can be pointed that the ruler largely depends on the obedience, cooperation and support of the people towards his rule. Therefore, according to Sharp, if these pillars of support weaken, the power of the ruler to oppress the opponent also weakens. Following this line of thought, Sharp puts forth

the following three major nonviolent techniques to face the repressor. These three nonviolent techniques have been discussed in the succeeding section.

3.1.3. NONVIOLENT TECHNIQUES: GENE SHARP DELINEATING NONVIOLENT METHODS IN PRACTICE

Nonviolent protests and persuasion- It indicates to all methods that are mainly of a peaceful nature attempting to persuade by going beyond mere verbal expressions but it stops short of noncooperation or nonviolent intervention. The purpose of this technique is to show that resisters are for or against something. The message implicit or explicit while using such a technique basically intends to influence the oppressor, the grievance group⁵⁵ or the public at large or all the three simultaneously. Through this technique, the nonviolent resisters try to convince the oppressors to redress, stop or do what the grievance groups expect. Gene Sharp has provided a list of fifty-four methods of nonviolent protests and persuasion under ten sub heads. These methods include parades, vigils, picketing, posters, teach-ins, mourning, and protest meetings.

The second method focuses on the classes of noncooperation. Noncooperation includes deliberate discontinuance, defiance, or withholding of certain existing relationship between grievance group and the oppressor. Such noncooperation may be spontaneous, well-planned, legitimate or illegitimate. These are social, economic and political noncooperation. This weapon is of significance with respect to measuring the dynamism of a particular nonviolent struggle. Gene Sharp lists fifteen methods in three subgroups under this broad category. Social noncooperation includes methods like ostracism, noncooperation with social events, customs and institutions, withdrawal from social systems and so on.

Under economic noncooperation methods twenty-five techniques divided into six sub-headings are placed. These include actions by consumers like consumer's boycott of certain goods and services, actions by workers and producers, by middlemen, by management and owners, governments, holders of financial resources and so on. Another type of noncooperation is that of political noncooperation which aims to

⁵⁵ By 'grievance group' Gene Sharp indicates towards that section of population which feel itself to be negatively affected by the policies or actions of the oppressor. This the worst hit part of the population subjected under the rule of the opponent.

express protest, to disrupt the functioning of the political unit or to participate in the disintegration of the government. It includes thirty-eight methods divided into six categories. Some of the examples are rejection of authority, citizen's noncooperation with the government, reluctant and slow compliance.

Nonviolent intervention is the third category of nonviolent action. This method involves deliberate and direct intervention with the aim of changing the situation. Negative interventions lead to disruption, disturbance, and destruction of established behaviour pattern, policies, institutions or relationships. Positive interventions, on the other hand, focus on the establishment of new and better behaviour patterns, policies, relationships or institutions.

According to Gene sharp, this method has a great potential, it is difficult to sustain and to withstand. It may cause speedier and more severe repression. It includes forty techniques divided into five sub-headings. Some of the techniques are psychological intervention like fast, physical intervention which includes sit-in, stand-in and so on.

The plethora of techniques⁵⁶ that Gene Sharp offers not only depict his keen interest and in-depth research in the realm of nonviolent struggle but also reflect the possibilities of using this technique in almost all kinds of conflict situations, all that is required is will to do so. In order to make use of these techniques in an organised and efficient manner, he asserts the significance of planning.

3.1.4. PLANNING NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE: LAYING THE GROUND WORK

Gene Sharp emphasises on laying down a proper groundwork for confronting the opponent. Preparation for carrying out nonviolent resistance requires a thorough investigation of the cause of injustice, of grievances and losses faced by people due to such injustice, calibrating the situation and the rationality of going with the option of an open conflict, so as to get assured that all other ways of addressing the conflict either are not feasible or have exhausted. Following this, the resisters should try to negotiate or reach a settlement, if possible, before launching a direct attack.

⁵⁶ Although in the paper 'technique' and 'method' are used interchangeably, but it should be noted that Gene Sharp makes distinction between the two terms. According to him 'method' is a part of 'technique'. It refers to the specific means within the technique in order to fulfil the objectives.

The next step should be to study the conflict situation in a detailed manner so that the exact areas for attack could be recognised. This would help in formulating an organised and step-by-step strategy in order to fulfil multiple objectives. Following this point, it becomes important to reiterate that the resisters should not just focus on achieving the one ultimate goal of destroying the oppressive regime at the first strike as it would be very difficult to do. They should rather be focussing on achieving multiple goals in a phase-by-phase manner. Such limited but consistent success is not a sign of weakness or moderate power but it helps in concentrating all the energies , resources and strengths on one single point at a time thus, accentuating a chance of success and also acting as a boost to the self-confidence of the actors.

Gene Sharp believes that generating “cause-consciousness”⁵⁷ is very important prerequisite. By this, he basically means that the resisters should keep the actors and the population at large well-informed about its cause, techniques to be used, the costs and benefits of using such techniques, the advantages of engaging or not engaging in the struggle. For this purpose, they can use pamphlets, songs, public meetings, books, leaflets, articles, radio, television and other means.

He lays stress on the quality of the struggle which can be maintained and even improved by keeping a careful observation and ensuring a balance among the number of participants, support groups, the methods, tactics and techniques used at different points of time. Such a balance between quantity and quality would help in strengthening the movement. The role of different organizations involved becomes central in the struggle as it is these organizations that build up a connection with the public, the volunteers, and leaders of the struggle .Thus, maintain a coherent structure of the struggle. They publicize the information about their struggle, provide proper training to the volunteers , arrange a replacement of the leaders are arrested and maintain regular communication with all the organs or parts of nonviolent movement.

3.1.5.NONVIOLENT STRATEGY: UNDERSTANDING NONVIOLENCE AS A STRATEGIC TOOL

As already stated, nonviolent struggle demands a planned approach, an organised and well-thought strategy before carrying out any nonviolent struggle. Therefore, it can be

⁵⁷ Gene Sharp, *How Nonviolent Struggle Works*, 2013,Boston, p.80.

argued that Gene Sharp considers nonviolence to be a strategic tool. Sharp considered having a strategy to be very important as its absence would result in misappropriation and ineffective use of the energy and resources of the resisters towards minor issues, underutilization or no utilization of opportunities that may have helped in advancing the cause, lack of control over the course of events, this would lead to a weakened movement and thus, all these factors together may hamper the goal of attaining success.

According to Gene Sharp, “Strategy pertains to charting the course of action that makes it most likely to get from the present to a desired situation in future.”⁵⁸ He also recommends the use of ‘tactics’ which is a part of the overall strategy as it aims to achieve the limited objectives by using the available means.

In order to formulate a wise strategy, Sharp asks the resisters to have a holistic knowledge of the context, have an idea about their present position and the future which they have envisaged for themselves, conduct a thorough investigation of all the parties involved i.e. the opponent, themselves and relevant third parties that may act as catalyst in advancing or obstructing the achievement of their aims. Further, he suggests that in a struggle there are multiple objectives to be achieved, each of these objectives can be attained through different courses of action. A resister, according to Sharp, should carefully tease out only those courses of actions that are comparatively better than the other offered paths.

Moreover, an overall plan should be charted out in order to put in place the diverse range of strategies, methods and tactics that are to be used, attempts should be made to specify at what time of the struggle and for the attainment of which sub-goal are the specific strategies, methods and tactics need to be applied. In this context, Gene Sharp talks about having a ‘grand strategy’ which basically comprises of an overall comprehensive framework looking into the nitty-gritties of the struggle regarding use of strategies, appropriation of roles and tasks to different members of the group and setting long term goals.

⁵⁸ Gene Sharp, *The Importance of Strategic Planning* in Gene Sharp, *There are Realistic Alternatives*, 2003, Boston, p. 23.

3.1.6. LEADING DIFFERENTLY: LEADERSHIP STYLE IN NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE

Although Gene Sharp contends that nonviolent struggle does not necessarily require any leader. Even if a leader exists, the leadership style that is followed in this type of struggle is very different from the one displayed in the violent conflict. In nonviolent resistance the leader is expected to spread the knowledge about nonviolent techniques and the cause of their struggle to as many people as possible. The leadership duties and responsibilities should be shared and decentralised. It should be the leadership of a group, communities, individuals or a combination of all the three. Monopoly over the position of a leader is not desired in the nonviolent resistance. This is because in this type of resistance game of numbers is indispensable, the more the support, the more will be the chances of winning.

3.1.7. MEASURING PROGRESS OF NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE: EXPLICATING NONVIOLENT MECHANISMS

In order to be focussed on the goal and avoid losing faith, Gene Sharp provides four mechanisms through which it can be seen if the methods used to wage the struggle are bearing results or not. Such a measurement helps not only in knowing if the resisters are moving in the right direction or not but also acts as a great source of self-confidence. The first mechanism is that of “conversion”. This process is considered to be rare, it basically points to the conversion in the attitude of the opponent towards the resisters and the grievance groups.

The second is “accommodation” which can be observed often. The opponent becomes accommodative when he finds the pillars on which his power rests are crumbling down, his political and economic support is weakening due to withdrawal of cooperation in these realms. A radical form of such kind of noncooperation and defiance of oppressive rules and regulations laid down by the regime leaves no option for the opponent but to surrender to the demands of the resisters. Such a step is called nonviolent coercion. It might happen that the opponent undermines the power nonviolent coercion by not capitulating, in such a scenario, the resisters adopt severe

form of noncooperation which ultimately leads to the falling down of the entire edifice of power structure of the regime. This is termed as ‘disintegration’.

Gene Sharp is one among many scholars that offers a nuance understanding of nonviolence as a means of resistance. He covers all the possible aspects that are to be understood before carrying out a nonviolent struggle. Most of the aspects that he has covered in his different writings have already been put forth in this paper. His work show that nonviolent resistance has a long way to go. It is in its nascent stage and there are many areas within it that demand more attention and development. Gene Sharp tries to address those needs in his theoretical framework. His serious attention to this issue has tried to bring forth the hidden potential and power of nonviolence in practice.

3.2. ERICA CHENOWETH & MARIA STEPHAN: EXAMINING RESEARCH ON NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE

As already shown, Gene Sharp provides a comprehensive theory regarding pragmatic nonviolence as a means of resistance. Erica Chenoweth’s and Maria Stephan’s research compliments his theoretical framework and bring out interesting and worthwhile conclusions in the field of nonviolent resistance. In their paper titled ‘*Why Civil Resistance Works, The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*’ they challenge the effectiveness of violent means of resistance by systematically investigating the instances of nonviolent resistances. Maria J. Stephan is Director of Educational Initiatives at the International Centre on Nonviolent Conflict. Erica Chenoweth is Assistant Professor of Government at Wesleyan University and a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Belfer Centre for Science and International Affairs in the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

They consider that there is a gap between the practice of nonviolent struggles and the literature studying such struggles. Thus, they mention in their paper that their “ study aims to fill this gap by systematically exploring the strategic effectiveness of violent and nonviolent campaigns in conflicts between non-state and state actors using aggregate data on major nonviolent and violent resistance campaigns from

1900 to 2006.”⁵⁹In order to study the causal relationship between nonviolent resistance and level of effectiveness they studied three cases: two anti -regime campaigns (Philippines,1986 and Burma,1988-90) and a resistance against foreign occupation (East Timor,1988-89).

The hypothesis that they tested in their research:

1. The more violent a regime, the more are the chances for success of a nonviolent resistance and less are the chances of victory for a violent regime.
2. A shift in the loyalty of security forces has a relative advantage for nonviolent resistance campaigns than for violent campaigns.
3. Nonviolent campaigns benefit from direct international support and international sanctions.
4. The support to the target regime from external sources will disadvantage both the violent as well as nonviolent resistance.

The outcomes were measured on three parameters: ‘success’, which meant that campaign had significant effect on the outcome, ‘limited success’, indicated that the nonviolent resistance was able to get a large amount of concessions, although the stated objectives were not wholly fulfilled and a ‘failure’ campaign referred to a campaign that neither met its objectives nor was able to corner any kind of concessions.

The results of their research showed that in some quarters what Gene Sharp has written is right. For instance, their hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 were approved, which means that repression by the regime acts in favour of the nonviolent campaigns and the chances of winning increase with a shift in loyalty of parties towards the nonviolent resisters. To be precise, it can be quoted from their research that, “In the face of regime crack- downs, nonviolent campaigns are more than six times likelier to achieve full success than violent campaigns that also faced regime repression. Repressive regimes are also about twelve times likelier to grant limited concessions to

⁵⁹Maria J.Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, ‘Why Civil Resistance Works:The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict’ in *The MIT Press*, vol.33,no.1,2008,p.3.

nonviolent campaigns than to violent campaigns.”⁶⁰ In addition to this, “Defections more than quadruple the chances of campaign success, justifying further examination of hypothesis.”⁶¹

In this context, they emphasise on the concept of ‘backfire’. When a violent opponent tries to suppress the nonviolent resistance by using repressive, violent methods, then, of course, for a little while they think that they have tamed the resisters. But, actually, in reality, such a method of suppression backfire them in the long run which costs a shilling to them. In the words of Stephan and Chenoweth “ In backfire, an unjust act - often violent repression - recoils against its originators, often resulting in the breakdown of obedience among regime supporters, mobilization of the population against the regime, and international condemnation of the regime.”⁶²

As Gene Sharp suggests, Chenoweth and Stephan also highlight the shift in the power quotients that take place between both the parties. The apparent conception of immense power in the hands of the violent opponent tends to shift towards the nonviolent resisters. This is largely because of the dynamics of backfire that starts processing due to a violent reaction of the opponent. Backfire underscores the repercussions that the opponent has to face in the form of gradual loss of from all spheres of support, be it internal or external. Such a loss is incurred by the violent party because the violent means used against nonviolent resisters renders it short of justification for its violent reaction. The supporters from the domestic (civil servants, judiciary and security forces) and international (International Nongovernmental Organisations, government of other countries, International finance institutions and so on) realm start losing faith in the regime and corner the nonviolent resister’s cause.

Stephan and Chenoweth also argue emphatically that the use of nonviolence as a means of resistance open the door for negotiation and bargain. The erstwhile regime supporters are comfortable in listening to the nonviolent resisters as the latter do not, implicitly as well as explicitly, aim to threaten them physically. This causes a shift in loyalty in their favour.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 15.

⁶¹ Ibid, p.15.

⁶² Ibid, p. 6.

Although, they highlight in their research that external support does help in advancing the resistance proving to be advantageous for the nonviolent campaign but the international sanctions bear no effect on the consequences of the campaign. Thus, the third hypothesis receives partial support. The reasons likely to justify the proposition that international sanctions prove to be disadvantageous for the nonviolent campaign need to be given serious attention.

These reasons are: firstly, international sanction to the domestic regime would make the resisters rely directly on foreign support base which might lead to the emergence of a disconnection with the local support base. This situation may affect the campaign adversely because it can undermine the power of the campaign to mobilize people in the domestic sphere. Secondly, heavy reliance on foreign support might lead to delegitimization of the campaigns in the eyes of the local supporters and audiences. Thirdly, foreign sanctions can create shortage of resources in the domestic population as well as for the activists. This might result in forcing the resisters to change their tactics and a disbelief in their nonviolent methods from the side of the suffering groups.

It is true that the research conducted by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan does not speak for a universal trend. It may happen that international sanctions might help nonviolent campaigns in some instances but still, their research hold much value. This is because the work done in the area of nonviolence is not organised. More researches, like the one undertaken by Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, are conducted. An in-depth research work in the field and the theoretical contribution in the area of nonviolent resistance both can help in each-other's growth and development.

4. CONCLUSION

When observed closely it can be noticed that both the pacifist and the pragmatic thoughts are enmeshed in one another, although, the pragmatists deny accepting it to an extent. Pacifists like Gandhi, Tolstoy, King all seem to have had a strong inclination towards spiritual as well as moral aspect of nonviolence. But this was not all, as these people also believed and argued for using nonviolence as a political tool. Although Gandhi relied on scriptures for understanding nonviolent values but simultaneously he also learned his lessons in nonviolence from live examples around

him. Similarly, Tolstoy who espoused the power of nonviolence gave his reasons for his choice and Martin Luther King though propounded the *Agape*, did not stop critically analysing this power of love. The point that is intended to be made here is that the way in which they interpreted nonviolence had spiritual, experiential as well as rational basis.

Even the strategic or pragmatic tradition relies on the moral quotient of nonviolence though it is not stated explicitly. The power of nonviolence to shift loyalties and increase support can be harnessed only when the strategies do not attempt to match the immoral methods of the violent party. Morality remains intact with nonviolent strategies when adopted and put to practice. Therefore, these categories of pacifist and pragmatic tradition provide a coherent understanding of the progress of nonviolence resistance with time and it does not aim to create a division between the various advocates of nonviolent resistance.

It can be seen that nonviolence as an idea and as a means of resistance is a comprehensive concept. The multi-dimensionality gives power and lends effectiveness to the idea of nonviolence. As observed from the understanding of Gandhi and King, the cultural and intellectual dimensions play an indispensable role in the evolution of nonviolence as a means of resistance. These influences basically provide numerous arguments for justifying nonviolence at the pragmatic level. The other two studies of Gene Sharp and Erica Chenoweth take the argument further and prove the mettle of nonviolence as a strategy. Their arguments lay down a meticulous and comprehensive framework for taking nonviolence from the philosophical level to the practical level. The next chapter brings out the interaction between the two traditions in the course of nonviolent resistance exemplified by Narmada Bachao Andolan.

Whether nonviolence is effective or not? Whether it is a tool that can be used in cases where violence is being adopted for resistance? These questions can be answered only when an in-depth study of more such cases of nonviolent action is undertaken. In the next few chapters, as already stated, an attempt will be made to understand the nuances of nonviolent resistance by analysing two significant social movements, which might help in answering some of the difficult questions related to nonviolence as a tool to resist.

CHAPTER 2

NONVIOLENCE IN PRACTICE: CASE STUDY OF NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of nonviolence as a means of resistance cannot be justified and complete if the theoretical understanding of it is not complemented with the practical aspect. The first chapter primarily laid down a theoretical framework on the schools of nonviolence as a means of resistance. In addition to this, it also pointed to the relevance of practical angle of nonviolence. In the earlier chapter it can also be observed that the hypothesis that nonviolence is an effective tool to resist was supported largely with the theoretical arguments and also with a range of factors or ways that added to its effectiveness.

The main focus of this chapter remains on examining the effectiveness of nonviolence as a means of resistance. In order to bring forth the use of nonviolence as a means of resistance in the twentieth century and probe into its effectiveness, one of the most known nonviolent resistances is made to be the centre of study in this chapter. 'Save The Narmada' or 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' is one of the well-known nonviolent resistances that made its mark in the contemporary times. It is credited for the mammoth contribution it made to the use of nonviolence as a means of resistance.

It is a part of the new social movements that have been playing a chief role in resisting against the exploitative development endorsed by self-interested actors and agencies. The first section of this chapter explicates the various dimensions of 'new social movements', the second section focuses on introducing NBA, its phases and costs of the Narmada Valley Project. The next part provides with examples of nonviolent resistances carried out under the fold of NBA. Then, the factors making

NBA a nonviolent resistance are listed and explained. This is followed by the laying down the results and final evaluation of the resistance to examines its effectiveness.

1.1.NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND NBA: A SHIFT FROM THE TRADITIONAL PATH

The section purports to highlight that the features of new social movements complement the strategy of nonviolence. Increasing numbers of new social movements worldwide has shown an inclination towards opting nonviolent strategy instead of violent strategy. These movements, thus, have contributed in opening avenues for finding a tool to resist that goes with their goals of conservation of natural resources, claiming the rights of the marginalised and introducing constructive changes. Following the same lines, NBA is said to be a new social movement as it encapsulated within itself multiple dimensions which made it to come under this category. These movements have made a shift from the traditional definition of social movements not only with respect to the approach with which it deals with the issues but it plunges into an entirely new realm of causes, perspectives and problem areas. In the words of Sanjay Sangvai,

The new movements' development paradigm is very contemporary and forward looking. It is not a philosophy of poverty as alleged by their opponents and even sympathisers, but espouses a politics of the poor and marginalised in an endeavour to make life more efficient, elegant, and contented for everybody - as against the injustice, disparity and vulgarity inherent in the prevalent capitalist and consumerist development politics.⁶³

These lines highlight that the new social movements emphasise more on the empowering the subject population and making them independent to fight their own struggle.

In addition to this, it can be observed that these social movements have a wider impact when change is concerned not only in social, but also in the political realm. In this context, Rajni Kothari aptly asserts that the resistance raised by various social movements are “really to be seen as part of an attempt at redefining politics at a time of massive attempts to narrow its range, different from electoral and legislative politics which has relegated large sections of the people outside the process of

⁶³ Sanjay Sangvai, 'The New People's Movement' in *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol.42.no.50,2007,p.111-117.

power.”⁶⁴ As already mentioned the resistance against the imposed development scheme are not visible in India only but also present in the west as well. Green movements, encapsulating broad range of issues like nuclear disarmament, peace, feminism, and the environment, have largely been introduced in Europe and have taken roots in India too.

Although, these movements, at the face value, seem to be stuck on a particular issue but with an in-depth analysis one unearths a whole range of relations with different factors. Therefore, it can be said that these movements encompass economic landscape too apart from political and social. Here, Ramachandra Guha rightly asserts that,

the material structure of society serves as the ‘landscape of resistance’ for people fighting against exploitation. While social relations and forces of production limit the forms a culture (and within it, resistance) may take, our analysis has to include not only the economic landscape but also the natural setting in which the economy is embedded. For, while production relations sharply define the boundaries of political structures and cultural systems, they are in turn limited by the ecological characteristics-the biota, topography, and climate-of the society in which they are placed.⁶⁵

These movements digress from the traditional approaches that generally are constrained by a particular ideology or image of opposition parties. To further this argument, Sanjay Sangvai also argues that “the people's movements since the 1980s have been converging diverse approaches and arriving at a common minimum in this melting pot. It is increasingly felt that conventional straitjackets in perceptions, conceptions, ideologies and strategies fall short of interpreting the complex contemporary reality and envisaging appropriate responses to it.”⁶⁶

Therefore, while studying the development projects that take away the land and encroach upon other natural resources, the multi-dimensional impacts on the lives of the oppressed need to be taken into account. New social movements fight for redressing some of these negative effects on the people that are suffering. Their aim is

⁶⁴ Amita Baviskar, *National Development, Poverty And Environment*, in Amita Baviskar, *The Belly of The river*, New Delhi, p. 38.

⁶⁵ Amita Baviskar, *National Development, Poverty And Environment* in Amita Baviskar, *In The Belly of The river*, New Delhi, p. 41-42.

⁶⁶ Sanjay Sangvai, ‘The New People’s Movement’ in *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol.42.no.50,2007,p.111-117.

to retrieve the lost rights in midst of violence, mayhem and misery created due to the repression of the marginalised sections in the name of serving the larger interest.

The New Social Movements delve deeper into the problem areas and research enough to save the identity of the marginalised and oppressed by putting tools of resistance at their disposal. These movements constantly fight against the present exploitative and repressive steps taken in the name of development and progress. The following lines support this argument,

For the poor, the lower castes, the adivasis, it was neither development nor progress. It is an erasure of difference, through homogenising technologies and cultures of development; an erasure of resources, through exploitation for corporate profits; and an erasure of life worlds through displacement. It is erasure without end. Since their consent to be erased has not been sought, the victims of erasure have but one path open to them. They must resist.⁶⁷

Thus, it is clear that these movements aim to save the marginalised from selfish assimilating tendencies.

The above traits are all present in the Narmada Bachao Andolan. This gives a sense of the nature of NBA as a new social movement, aiming to empower the marginalised, fighting for their social, political and economic rights, making strides in the direction of establishing the effectiveness of nonviolence as a means of resistance, following unconventional paths and adopting democratic approaches and constructive thinking to make a constructive change that is long lasting. Before unfolding these features, it is important to lay down a brief history of the NBA drawing a picture of its origin, phases and costs it was fighting against.

2.NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN:NONVIOLENT FIGHT AGAINST EXPLOITATION

It has been aforementioned that NBA encapsulates the features of a nonviolent movement. The seeds of its origin laid in the Narmada Valley Development Project, a plan of building large dams in order to contribute to the construction of 'Modern India'. It was envisaged that this project would lead to the production of 1450 MW of electricity and pure drinking water to 40 million people. The project incorporated the establishment of 30 large dams, 135 medium dams and 3000 small dams. NBA was

⁶⁷Amita Baviskar, *National Development, Poverty And Environment* in Amita Baviskar, *In The Belly of The river* ', New Delhi,p. 41-42.

MAP 1: Location of various dams along Narmada river.



Source: www.sierraclub.org/human%2Drights/india/index.asp

MAP 1 shows the course of river Narmada and the location of various dams along the river. It can be observed from the map that the river Narmada originates at a place called Amarkantak in the Maikal ranges situated in the Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh (MP). From MP, it flows down mostly westwards and meets 41 major tributaries in its course. The total catchment area of the river is 98,796.8 square km. It is surrounded by the Maikal ranges in the east, Vindhya ranges to the north and Satpura ranges to the south. The Narmada river forms the boundary between the Jabua district (MP), Dhulia district in Maharashtra and Baroda-Bharuch districts in Gujarat. After passing through Bharuch district the river culminates in the Gulf of Cambay. The total area that it covers from Amarkantak to the Gulf of Cambay is 1,312 km. It enters the state of Gujarat at Surpaneshwar. Before its entry in Gujarat, it forms roughly a 35km boundary between Maharashtra and Gujarat.

not the sole resistance against large dam projects. There have been many protests against the exploitative dam projects earlier to NBA as well.

The beginnings of anti-dam people's movement can be seen as early as in 1921 by the peasants in Maharashtra against the hydro-power dam that was to be built by the Tata Company. They challenged the 'public purpose', the cost-benefit analysis and forced to keep the cultural rights and social goods of the larger community as priority. Self-sacrifice was committed by an activist, Bapat, in 1924 just to oppose the dam.

After independence, on one hand, supporters of the 'modern development' and 'temples of modernity' i.e. dams were rising, but on the other hand, a general critique to development was also cropping up through the Sarvodayis, Lohiaite-Socialists and Neo-Marxists. It was in the 1980s, that environmental movements started appearing in the forefront of the anti-development struggles. The Narmada Bachao Andolan was marked the highest point of the struggles during this period. The long march of NBA towards establishing a nonviolent path of resistance was one of another novel feature of this period.

2.1. TRACING NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN: UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND OF NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN

This section aims to highlight a brief history of NBA and an analysis of the costs of constructing dams that this movement aims to fight against. It should be noted that laying a proper foundation of the costs, facts and findings through a systematic research work in the affected areas is an important part of building a strong and effective nonviolent strategy for resistance. Therefore, this section holds importance in terms of not only mapping a brief history of the movement but also in terms of lending effectiveness to the nonviolent strategy used by NBA.

The resistance to save the Narmada and to lay strong foundations for nonviolence as a means of resistance was set in motion with the opposition of the Sardar Sarovar Project in the Nimad region, Madhya Pradesh by the prominent social activists, legislators, and local leaders. The 'Narmada Bachao Samiti' and the Nimad Bachao Andolan galvanized the Narmada issue by raising pertinent questions regarding the

submergence of fertile land and displacement, loss of cultural heritage and natural resources.

The trajectory followed by NBA can be roughly divided into four steps. The first step pertains to knowing the opposition and consolidating those parties that are on the side of the resisters, the second step concerned itself with digging deep into the issue in order to get correct, real information about the project. The next step focussed on finding out the costs of Narmada Valley development project and the final step was to carry out strong nonviolent resistance in order to achieve the goal of stopping the construction and reduce the costs as far as possible.

The journey of truth-searching and uncovering the callous face of the Indian State began as the first step. Many NGOs like 'Kalpavriksha' and MARG in Delhi, SETU in Ahmedabad got involved in the process. Social activists like Bhanubhai Adhvaryu, Vasudha Dhagamwar, Medha Patkar rose to the support and defended the rights of the tribal people. There were NGOs like ARCH-Vahini that initially were opposing the dam construction but ultimately got on the side of the government. So, it can be noticed that right from the beginning it was not only the Indian State alone that this people's movement had to challenge but other parties like NGOs supporting the government, World Bank helping the project and other such actors were also to be faced by the activists of the NBA.

The initial steps of the struggle were led by local village leaders along with Medha Patkar like Noorji Padvi of Danel, Ranyabhai, Sesarya Dahya of Mukhadi and so on. The major impediment in seeking justice was the absence or lack of information about the project. The State agents were not bothered or were simply trying to hide the facts about the costs of the dam. Here began the second phase. It was on February 16, 1986, that 'Narmada Dharangrasta Samiti'(NDS) was formed in order to raise the issues regarding the right to know and participate in the decision-making process. It fought for the greater independence of the people with respect to deciding the question of their own displacement, the evaluation of their lives and resources, deciding the government's ability to guarantee the restoration of their lives and property.

The rationale behind unearthing the costs of the project is not just to put forth another phase of the NBA but also to present the gravity of challenges that were to be tackled

by this nonviolent resistance. The section shows that nonviolent resistance need to be multidimensional as it has to deal with not only physical, tangible oppositions but also has to correct the non-physical, psychological costs or wrongs that come with the development projects. The Narmada Valley Project seemed to be a very beneficial project but behind the veil of 'collective good', promised by the plan, laid a bunch of intentionally overlooked factors. One of the most controversial dams in the entire project was the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam. The Sardar Sarovar Project claimed displacement of approximately 85,000 families as confirmed by the NBA. According to another data, the SSP, when completed, was to cause the displacement of 4,00,000 people and seriously impact a further 6,00,000 livelihoods.⁶⁸

This massive project did not limit itself at the construction of SSP. There were a series of other associated developments like an immense canal network (to channel the Narmada's waters to Gujarat), other dams such as Garudeshwar Weir, compensatory afforestation, catchment area treatment schemes, power substations, construction worker colonies, a wildlife sanctuary at Shoolpaneeshwar, and secondary displacement for the rehabilitation of the Narmada outsees.

Although these other developments were considered to be highly in favour of the larger interest, but it is very surprising and ironical, that the local population that were be adversely affected by these developments were not taken as PAPs (Project Affected Peoples) by the government. The double-crossing that State was playing in the name of 'National Interest' got clearly visible. In fact, the MP government admitted that it did not have the available land to resettle the numbers of people that will be displaced by the SSP. If the government was incapable of arranging proper facilities for the persons displaced then, why and for whom was the project being continued? Even the compensation promised by the government was only for the landed families that excluded those 7000-8000 families engaged in other occupations like fishing, sand quarrying and ferrying.

According to the findings of the World Bank's Independent Review, even those who had been resettled due to the SSP tended to face a multitude of hardships which included (i) lack of grazing lands, firewood, drinking water and cremation

⁶⁸Pablo Kala, 'In The Spaces Of Erasure: Globalisation, Resistance and Narmada River' in *Economic & political Weekly*, Vol.36.no.22.2001,pp.1994..

facilities; (ii) poor quality, flood-prone and non-irrigable cropland, and less than the two hectares plots; (iii) the displaced people have been left alone in disputes over ownership of resettlement plots and conflicts with host communities; and (iv) the displacement has resulted in separation of villages, hamlets and even families among many different resettlement sites.

It was noticed that the pipeline projects like the Maheshwar dam was not based on adequate and correct data. According to an independent review, the construction of the Maheshwar dam was carried on in absence of even the most preliminary demographic and socioeconomic data. In addition to this, sensitive and serious issues like that of resettlement and rehabilitation were taken lightly as indicated by gross inadequacy in the relevant data. Even discrepancies were found in the official data and the ground reality. A member of Urgewald, a German NGO found that the numbers of houses to be submerged in reality was 400 as opposed to the official data of just 196 houses.

Moreover, the Maheshwar dam was to result in submergence of the most fertile agricultural land in India, consisting of black cotton soils. Such soils enable farmers to grow three crops a year, including various grains, soya, pulses, peanuts, chillies, spices, bananas, guavas, citrus fruits, sugar cane, cotton, and various vegetables. This had rendered the farmers of the sites completely devoid of their means of livelihood. Pablo Kala aptly states that “Resettlement replaces dependence on subsistence economies and the commons by dependence on the cash economy, increasing people's vulnerability to debt.”⁶⁹ The pain and fear of indebtedness can be realized from the words of a bhil adivasi village in MP, Luharia “Here we get things without money - fodder, fuel, wood for housing. In resettlement everything needs money therefore we must take loans and we are trapped in the cash economy. We have never had to migrate for work - everything we need is here.”⁷⁰

It was noted that this herculean project engulfed or simply blinded the State to the possibilities of alternatives like small scale and traditional systems of water harvest, that water more land than large dam and canal schemes that could be more productive

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.1994-1995.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.1995.

and sustainable. For example, it was calculated that small-scale water harvesting schemes such as small check dams and 'bunds', and the regeneration of watershed vegetation, could potentially collect a fifth of the rain which falls in Gujarat, an amount 50 per cent more than the water supposedly to be delivered by the SSP ⁷¹. This intentional inability of the government in utilizing the productive alternatives also highlights that the funds are being diverted to the less productive projects in the name of 'National Interest'. "85 per cent of Gujarat's irrigation budget has been invested in the SSP". ⁷²

In addition to this, the process of dam construction and dam operation negatively impacts the ecology of the surroundings resulting in changes in the hydrology, water quality and also elimination of floodplain habitat diversity. These ecological changes do not affect the environment alone but the wound of depreciation of the ecological assets can be seen on the local people as well. This can be calibrated by the receding trust of the people in their own traditional knowledge about the river:

When the Narmada would swell we would know rains were coming - the river and the rain were related. Now everything depends on the dam and the dam gates. The upper dams have affected the system of nature. Earlier we would know the four months when the monsoon would be here. In the third and fourth months, on full moon days, the river would swell. During the rains the river would behave just like a 'nala' - from all its catchments it would swell and be a torrent and after a few days it would return to normal. Now because of the dam nothing is predictable, because the water is not flowing anymore and it depends on water released from the upper dams. Therefore it brings changes to traditional knowledge of how the river behaves - the knowledge system of the river. ⁷³

The studies also found that the construction of dams multiplies the incidence of health hazards like due to waterlogging. ⁷⁴

The foundation of the project on which it was being supported and favoured lay in the dichotomy between a western, modern, capitalist culture and a traditional, indigenous, and irrational culture. The division between modern and non-modern becomes clear with the following line:

"The Indian State favours a (Westernised) culture of progress and modernity - what Viswanathan (1985) terms a 'vision of conquest' ⁷⁵, over 'non - modern', traditional

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

and indigenous systems of knowledge which are portrayed as 'unscientific' and 'irrational'. It is assumed that the latter acts as an impediment in the path to modern development and hence is against the 'National Interest'. Therefore, by this logic the 'friends of modern development' should "shed no tears at their displacement."⁷⁶ In such a scenario where there is no one to defend and speak for the rights of the local tribal, submergence by the dams also mean annihilation of culture as well as strangulation of the rights of the local tribal people.

The significance of the river to local culture and the sheer apathy of the State can be measured by these lines said by Cheema, a resident in the adivasi village of Pimpalchop, Maharashtra:

Narmada is life for us. Our drinking water is from the river. The water for our crops comes from the river, and when we are ill we do puja by the river to get well. All the small temples by the side of the river have been covered by the submergence. In Manibeli, the important temple of Shoolpaneshwar was submerged. Many festivals were held there, centuries old, and people from all over would go there for festivals. The government has built another temple near the site, but it has no meaning for the people - you can't replace centuries of faith.⁷⁷

The strong faith along with spiritual and cultural significance of river Narmada can be inferred from here. Submergence of temples in the name of development amounts to drowning of age old faith and spirituality.

The question that needs to be asked here is: instead of such glaring injustice inflicted in the name of 'National Interest' were there no steps undertaken in order to mirror the harsh realities? There have been studies reflecting the truth but so far, they have been erased or simply suppressed by the wide network of those supporting the violence of modern development. For example, a study by the Expert Committee on River Valley projects in India found that 89 per cent of them violated the guidelines laid down by the ministry of the environment. Or, the fact that despite India's 3,600 large dams there are more flood-prone and drought-prone areas in the country than in 1947 and 200 million people in India do not have access to safe drinking water.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Ibid, p.1997.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid, Interview, Pinpalcho 1999.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

There had been a minority judgment, (overlooked by the State) given by Justice Barucha, which called for the complete stoppage of work at the dam and the establishment of renewed environmental clearance based on social and environmental impact studies and action plans. But, the government did not want to confront the reality and wished to shoo away any kind of oppositions. Such an attitude clearly signalled towards the mistake that the State was knowingly committing.

In order to evade from being accountable the government established such institutions that were packed with the pawns of the Indian State. One such institution was the 'independent' Narmada Control Authority (NCA) that supervised the Tribunal Award. Its chairman was the secretary of the ministry of Water Resources.⁷⁹ The coercive, undemocratic, authoritarian and violent face of the Indian State outshined as it tried to ruthlessly suffocate any kind of dissent and murder the human rights of the local people.

Jashbhai Patel uncovers another angle to expose the extent to which the 'National Interest' was being served. He explains how the division of water of Narmada was based on greed and faulty assumptions. He stated that Gujarat, which took the maximum of the share, not only was encroaching on the rights of the other two major states, i.e. Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh but it was also damaging its own interests as well. He opines that "with just 70 km of the river, Gujarat has master-minded the entire Narmada River Project. Although essentially a MP river, Narmada has been converted into a Gujarati river. Gujarat has claimed Narmada as its lifeline but in essence made it a death-line for Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra."⁸⁰

According to Jashbhai Patel, the claim that Gujarat was a drought-prone area was because of the own deeds of Gujarat and not because of natural reasons. He emphasises that large scale deforestation and damage to the 500 km hilly track from the north to the south of eastern Gujarat is the reason for dry pockets in these areas. In addition to this, the areas like the hilly regions of Saurashtra, that receives heavy rainfall too come under drought-prone areas because of thin forest cover due to which

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Jashbhai Patel, 'Is National Interest Being Served By Narmada Project?' in Economic & Political Weekly, Vol.29.no.30,1994,pp.1957-1964.

water runs off the rocks. The remaining drought prone region is a desert area itself or is closer to the desert, as a result of which, irrigation, for the purpose of which the dams are being built, is naturally impossible.

According to the report of the principal of the Forest Rangers College at Rajpipla:

Rajendra Sharma stated that between 1970 and 1990, the forests which extended west of Rajpipla had been decimated systematically not only with the full knowledge but with the active participation of the member of the legislative assembly from Rajpipla and the series of ministers in charge of the forest department of the government of Gujarat. He added that this systematic and organised forest felling had led to a recession of the forest area by about 60 km to the east of Rajpipla! The people of Rajpipla openly stated that Chandubhai Deshmukh, Amarsingh Choudhari, Shri Patel... and Virji Munia who had all been ministers of forests of the government of Gujarat had all been responsible for the politicisation of tribals in the Rajpipla area which had eventually led to the commercialisation of forest resources and the large-scale illicit removal of timber. Further, Mr Sharma added that in the Rajpipla division the efforts made by the social forestry department had not made any dent in the rate of forest depletion. He stated that Karaya white gum extracted from *Sterculia urens* was being systematically pilfered. In such circumstances, he said, "it was no surprise that in the forest areas there was a physical battle between the forest department on the one hand and the local leaders enjoying political patronage, on the other."⁸¹

Patel also highlights that the drought was posed as just a myth invented in order to favour the industrial belt between Baroda and Ahmedabad and the benefits of irrigation would simply be enjoyed the rich farmers. Patel suggests that instead of going for an option of building dams which is very costly, the regions would have been restored by enhancing the forest cover.

In this section it can be observed that there were many costs imposed on the population of the affected areas which could either have been avoided by adopting other alternatives available or simply had been reduced by providing proper compensation, resettlement and rehabilitation facilities to the subject population. The sheer apathy, nonchalant attitude of the state towards the marginalised people had to be challenged and here began the fourth step of NBA. At this stage, nonviolence as a means of resistance came into picture, it was through this means that NBA aimed to shake off the state from its slumber.

The fourth stage has been explained in two parts. This is because the NBA carried out the resistance on a large scale in almost all the affected areas making it difficult to

⁸¹ Cited in Jashbhai Patel, 'Is National Interest Being Served By Narmada Project?' in Economic & Political Weekly, Vol.29.no.30,1994,pp.1957-1964.

elucidate each struggle in detail. Therefore, the approach taken to proceed here is to undertake a detailed study of two nonviolent struggles as examples in the first subsection. In the next subsection the analyses NBA in entirety in order to tease out those factors that make it a nonviolent resistance. Thus, an attempt is made to study the nonviolent resistance as a whole through these two approaches.

The chapter through different sections primarily demonstrates that NBA has merged the two conceptions of nonviolence as a value and as a strategy in its course. With the help of such a merger, the movement has been able to penetrate deep into the grassroots and has simultaneously successfully interacted with the actors at the upper echelons as well. NBA has also contributed to nonviolent strategy by introducing innovative nonviolent tools to resist, making it suitable and flexible to different situations.

3. MODES OF NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE: STUDYING EXAMPLES

As already stated NBA made nonviolence to be the first choice to resist breaking from the conventional path of violent resistance. This section throws light on the variety of nonviolent techniques used by the NBA in its struggles. It explicates the ways in which the struggles led by NBA have enriched the field of nonviolence as a means of resistance.

3.1. SANGHARSHA YATRA: CALL FOR A PEOPLE-CENTRIC DEVELOPMENT

Before beginning with the analysis of the movement from the lens of nonviolence as a means of resistance, the researcher presented one of the many nonviolent struggles undertaken by the NBA. The motive behind this is that it will give a clear picture of how the movement applied different nonviolent strategies and contributed to the philosophy and practice.

The *Sangharsha Yatra* began on December 25, 1990. Over 6000 men, women, tribals, peasants and their comrades-in-arms from all over the country participated in this walk towards the dam site from Rajghat, on the Banks of the Narmada near Badwani. This resistance, also known as the Long March of the valley, or the *Jan Vikas*

Sangharsh Yatra (People's Struggle for Development) shows a glimpse of how and in what ways the movement used different tools for waging a nonviolent struggle despite facing many violent blows from the side of the State. As already stated in the first chapter that there are multiple nonviolent tools the movement has innovated. Here it becomes very important that attention is paid to what tactic, technique or strategy is to be incorporated at what time of the course of struggle. The benefit of such an exercise is that it allows the activists to reap maximum positive results with the help of the right tool.

Nonviolence when used as a means of resistance plays with symbolism, spirituality as well as different means of communication. During the *Sangharsh yatra*, activists of NBA displayed a glimpse of this relationship of different sub-tools to nonviolence. They sang *bhajans* of Mother Narmada, camped in the open during the winter nights of December, many walked along with the *Samarpit Dal* (the sacrificial squad), whose members were ready to give up their lives to save the valley. The holy songs and symbolization of river Narmada as Goddess make the activists feel more connected, committed and devoted to the cause. It acts as a source of motivation in the cold winter night. It is not that violent struggles don't play use symbolism for strengthening their resistance. These struggles also use symbolism but it directs the members to the path of violence and destruction. These symbols accentuate their anger and negative feelings for the opponent more than the cause to which they need to be committed. What happens as a result of this is that as soon as the anger dissipates, most of the violent activists become disillusioned. Perhaps, that is one of the reasons that slowly and gradually activists surrender.

The March was tried to be suppressed and delegitimized by portraying it as an 'aggression against Gujarat' and calling for opposing the March in order to 'protect the interests of the state'. The supporters of the State restricted the movement of the March by creating a boundary between M.P. and Gujarat. Sanjay Sangvai explains the picture as follows, "Thousands of police were deployed on the border and the Chambers of Commerce in chartered and state transport buses to create a scene of 'people *versus* people'. The border between M.P. and Gujarat resembled an international border. It was a veritable barricade between the state power and vested

interests on the one side and the tribals and peasants confronting displacement, on the other.”⁸²

Although nonviolent resistance aims to dilute the boundary created by highlighting ‘us’ and ‘them’, the opponents try their best to suppress the activists. But, because of nonviolence adopted by the activists, the other party tries to use milder methods of suppression as its first option. The reason behind this is that the latter is not confronted by violence that could have legitimated their harsh and brutal violent suppression. In addition, the concept of ‘backfire’ as mentioned in the previous chapter also comes into play here. Gene Sharp, as also explained in the first chapter, states how the violent reaction the opponent gradually leads to shifting of loyalty from within.

The participants had to spend days in the border village between M.P. and Gujarat. This forced stoppage did not mellow down the spirit of the people and they resisted even while being in the middle of cold, chilly nights. They called this border village as *Sangharsha Gaon* (Village of Struggle). They demanded time-bound review of the dam to be conducted by a team of independent experts. But after it was realized that the Government was acting dormant, the leaders of the movement launched an indefinite fast on January 7. The unyielding spirit of the activists made the government to increase its violent repression. Non-violent Satyagrahis including Baba Amte were cornered, some were even beaten and arrested.

This part of the struggle clearly shows the force that nonviolent struggle contains. Even though the activists did not physically retaliate, they coerced the oppressors by taking stern measures in a nonviolent way. Fasting is a method that is mostly applied as a last resort. It is often said that nonviolent resistance also includes violence and fasting is mostly taken as an example to this. I think that fasting is a weapon of nonviolent resistance that is used to achieve goals. Instead of being a form of violence, it is a form of a weapon that is of course against the law. It needs to be understood that in a nonviolent resistance, people or individual is the primary tool.

⁸² Sanjay Sangvai, *The Mass Movement in Sanjay Sangvai, The River And The Life: People’s Struggle in the Narmada Valley*, Mumbai, 2002, p.58.

All the nonviolent sub tools are to be executed either by these individuals or on these individuals. This is why it is argued that nonviolence is not a tool for the weak, as it demands enough power to adopt harsh measures on oneself. Fasting is an active tool of nonviolent struggle. It keeps up the nonviolent principles of not harming others. It should also be noticed that fasting is a strategy in itself. It does not necessarily aims at killing oneself. It is the display of power to go against the law. It is the display of the spirit of resistance and will to sacrifice one won self for the cause and it is the call to the opponents to take substantive action relating with the issue. I agree that it is radical and coercive, but calling it violent dissolves the entire purpose of waging a struggle on nonviolent lines. The obsession of equating power with violence blurred the line with the two. Nonviolent method of fasting is powerful which does not mean violence.⁸³

The non-violent, yet strong and loud voices of activists were echoing throughout the nation. The Narmada issue was being supported by hundreds of activists, peasant and adivasis from other parts of the country. Paying heed to the demands of the leaders who decided to fast, the World Bank announced an Independent Review of the project. This was a remarkable step in the course of the movement. It would be apt here to say that , *“It was for the first time in the Bank’s history that it agreed for a review of any Bank-funded ongoing project.”*⁸⁴ The fast was called off after 22 days, on January 28 and on January 30, 1991, the activists returned to the valley with the resolve *‘sashanwalon sun lo aaj, hamare gaon mein hamara raj’*(rulers must listen now-it’s our rule in our villages).

As aforementioned, fasting is a step that is used strategically in order to reap substantive results. It was due to the power of fasting that World Bank agreed to investigate the matter. In addition, it can be seen that the nonviolent movement employ the tool of slogans as well. Slogans act as a medium for conveying the demands of the movement not only to the concerned parties but also to the audiences at large. These one or two liners are framed carefully with the intention of reflecting

⁸³Violence, here, is basically defined as causing intentional physical harm to the other party and also to its property.

⁸⁴ Sanjay Sangvai, *The Mass Movement in Sanjay Sangvai, The River And The Life: People’s Struggle in the Narmada Valley*, Mumbai, 2002, p.58.

the radical element of the struggle, sometimes, these slogans act as eye-openers and attention seekers from the side of the audiences which help in strengthening the movement.

The review by the Morse Committee brought forth the stark reality and stunned everybody. The report suggested the impossibility of resettlement according to the laws and regulation, it concluded that there had been violation of environmental stipulations and the promised benefits would not be delivered. It recommended the Bank to 'step back' from the project and also advised for undertaking a comprehensive review of the project with proper data and analysis. Although the Bank tried to white wash this report by playing various tactics but ultimately the government, in order to evade from confronting any reality, withdrew the loan agreement. This victory pertaining to the withdrawal of the World Bank explains the real meaning of the term 'larger interest'. As the Bank withdrew from the Narmada Valley, it announced a review of other Bank funded projects not only in India but also abroad too. The resistance of NBA proved beneficial to the people in India as well as to those people that were being adversely affected by the Bank-funded 'development' projects.

One of the reasons that made the review possible was nonviolence that movement adopted. It can be observed that most often when dealing with violent struggles the opponents demand for giving up violence. Ceasefire is the only time when such interventions are made. But, in a nonviolent resistance the opponents get no such excuse for delaying their intervention to unearth the reality. In addition, such participation of other parties also acts as an evidence of how nonviolent resistance blur the boundaries of 'us' and 'them'.

3.2. BARGI DAM RESISTANCE: PROTECTING RESOURCES NONVIOLENTLY

The nonviolent struggle proved to be an inspiration for the people affected by other dams in the Narmada Valley. They too began with assertion of their rights by confronting the government that was suppressing the matters relating to cost-benefit, social and environmental destruction. The outsees of the Bargi Dam began their nonviolent resistance from 1991. These people fought for their rights to have just and

full resettlement with the facilities pertaining to water, land, forest and employment. In addition, the right over the reservoir was also one of the demands.

The struggle adopted a unique kind of Satyagraha in which a boat rally of hundreds of fishing boats was organised. Through this boat rally, it aimed to proclaim the fishing rights of outsees over the reservoir. This unique rally shows the flexibility with respect to using of nonviolent tools. It gives room for enough innovation and adaptation in a certain context and environment. The paraphernalia required for a nonviolent resistance comes from the day to day lives of the people. This makes them independent from undue influence of any other party with respect to supplying weapons. Such an independence and flexibility also allows the activists to get more connected with the roots. The boat rally is an example of how even simple fishermen and fisherwomen wage a resistance against the state.

The rallies, marches, and confrontations with police and politicians made the Madhya Pradesh government to concede to demand of granting exclusive rights over reservoir fishing to the resisters. “This was a trend-setter.”⁸⁵ A *Bargi Bandh Vishapit evam Prabhavit Sangh* (Organization of the Outsees and People Affected by Bargi Dam) was established and it organised 54 primary fishing cooperatives.” The Bargi fishermen got the highest wages for fishing in Madhya Pradesh; the Fisheries Federation also paid Rs.90.75 lakhs as royalty to the state government during the four years till 1998.”⁸⁶

One of the striking lessons that can be learned here is that the demand for conserving resources begins with conservation process undertaken by those that made the demand. It is not by destroying them in the name of fiercely protecting them. In a violent resistance, even those the activists aim to conserve their resources but in the circle of violent attacks the condition of these resources get further aggravated.

In a nonviolent resistance, the focus remains on conserving resources and furthering constructive changes. The dedication towards conservation and also towards bringing about positive change is clearly getting reflected through this achievement of Bargi

⁸⁵ Sanjay Sangvai, *The Valley Rises*, in Sanjay Sangvai, *The River And The Life: People's Struggle in the Narmada Valley*, Mumbai, 2002, p.95.

⁸⁶ Sanjay Sangvai, *The human cost of Bargi Dam*, *Bargi Bandh Vishapit Evam Prabhavit Sangh*, in Sanjay Sangvai, *The River And The Life: People's Struggle in the Narmada Valley*, Mumbai, 2002, p.95.

people. The constructive change not only benefitted the fishermen in the form of higher wages but also contributed to the economic resources of the government.

The other significant point that this struggle highlights is that nonviolent tools mostly serve multiple purposes simultaneously. The fishermen Satyagraha not only acts as a political tool for proclaiming political rights, it helps in enhancing social solidarity of the local people and also helps to gain economic benefits as a result of resistance. Therefore, a nonviolent resistance and the nonviolent tools used by it need to be studied from different dimensions.

Activists did not stop at one achievement only. They resorted to another Satyagraha at the dam in order to resist the authorities to fill the dam beyond 418m. Both men and women participated and they did not budge from their places even when they got submerged in high water level. It was only after 36 hours that the water level was made to recede. The efforts of the activists made the government concur to the demands of maintaining lower water level, expediting other resettlement tasks and granting them the rights over forest land. This kind of nonviolent action by men as well as women is a display of the willpower, resilience and commitment of the activists towards the cause. In addition to this, it also shows the strength demanded for waging a nonviolent resistance. Sacrifice in a nonviolent struggle does not mean surrender. It is a tool to prove one's might without harming any other individual.

When the assurances of the government did not materialise in reality, the activists launched an indefinite fast and *dharna*. It should be noted here that the methods in nonviolent resistance though flexible, have a certain nature due to which they cannot all be used in any random order. Different nonviolent means impact the outcomes in different intensities. Thus, an indefinite fast cannot bring the desired outcomes when launched right at the first stage of the resistance.

At such an initial stage, nonviolent means like dialogue, marching, raising slogan and so on would be much more suitable. This because at this stage the movement needs to put forth the real issue in front of the opponent as well as the audiences at large. Deliberation, participation and gaining legitimacy are the most important factors at this stage. Moreover, this stage lays the foundation of the struggle. The activists have to be motivated, strengthened and involved in the planning as well as decision-making process. Tools like marching and raising slogans boost the morale of the activists as

they come before the large audiences for the first time. It also accentuates their understanding and commitment towards the cause.

Tools like indefinite fasting and indefinite *dharna* demand great sacrifice, strength and courage. They are resorted to in the later part of the resistance because till that time the movement has already made all the efforts in reaching its goals. When their demands are not paid heed to even after using different tools, then these nonviolent means are adopted to build pressure on the opponent and show the righteousness of the cause to the national and international public at large. A caution should be made here that in nonviolent resistance the significance of human life is extreme, therefore, these high intensity tools should be used very carefully and after much of deliberation. These tools should be taken as a strategy that can effectively and efficiently help the struggle to move towards its goals.

Many a lives have been lost due to indefinite fasting which is primarily because of many reasons, one of them being the lack of faith in nonviolence as a means of resistance. If a strong solidarity is created around this issue then, the greater support system in different areas can definitely be of much help in reducing the loss of lives. The other point that I think is relevant is that fasting should be seen more as a strategy, and if it is proving to be fatal for the life of the activists, then a new tool should be switched on to. The essence of nonviolent resistance is that it opens many doors simultaneously. Quitting to fast should not be taken as the death of the movement. More life should be infused in the struggle by increasing the support, intensity and legitimacy by moving on to wider level of audience and support groups. In the next chapter, it will be shown that how Ekta Parishad has succeeded in building a wide network of support structure. Inspiration should be taken from such examples.

In case of this struggle of Bargi Dam, the government agreed to the demands of the activists in a time bound manner. Although the efforts of the government with respect to the fulfilment of rehabilitation promises were half-hearted, yet the resistance undertaken by the people of Bargi inspired the people of Tawa to wage a struggle. These activists of Twa provided a model of people's management that was inspiring. So here it can be seen that there is sort of a chain effect that undergoes due to nonviolent resistance. The nonviolent struggle against Sardar Sarovar Dam inspired many other local outsees to raise their voice against injustice that in turn, affected

other people to stand up for their rights. I think that it is a positive trend provided that more awareness and organisation is introduced in the future nonviolent struggles.

4. FEATURES CONTRIBUTING TO THE MAKING OF A NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE

The previous section delineated the nonviolent means on ground in the context of the two resistances aforementioned. The present section aims to focus on the factors that contributed to the emergence of a cohesive, coherent and strong nonviolent resistance. Through this approach, this part highlights the practical aspects of the nonviolent resistance.

4.1. ROLE OF LOCAL PEOPLE

One of the most remarkable features of this movement is the active role of the people themselves. They have never played the role of helpless, weak victim but have been active, fearless agents taking charge of their own lives and identifying their respective part in the entire struggle. It is a sign of true nonviolent resister –fearless, courageous and ready to endure the violence without retaliating in the same violent manner.

The people did not rush in making any decision due to which they saved themselves from falling in the traps of the government. They measured their present lifestyle against the one offered by the Indian State. They formulated their own strategies and programmes in order to deal with the State agents. They wanted that the issue of displacement should be analysed from the bottom to the top. “Ranyabhau asked whether the government had enough land for all the villages on the banks of the Narmada, including its *keeda-mungi* (ants and insects) and *deve-daani* (Gods and demons)...People would often ask: Can the Government manufacture land in the *karkhana*(factory)?”⁸⁷ “For what are we being ousted?... what are these benefits, what is this ‘larger’ and also what is this ‘national’?”⁸⁸ These lines show that people were not going to get duped by the glittering promises of the government and justification of dam construction in the name of ‘Larger National Interest’.

⁸⁷ Sanjay Sangvai, *The Issue Crystallises*, in Sanjay Sangvai, *The River And The Life: People’s Struggle in the Narmada Valley*, Mumbai, 2002, p.41.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p.41.

As already stated the people of the affected areas formed their own strategies and programs. They articulated and presented their concerns by adhering to the nonviolent path of resistance. This did not mean that they were mild in approaching the State. When they found out that the government is not responding to their questions, they strengthened their resistance by holding *padayatras*, village level meetings, and *magni parishad* (Demand Conference) in Dhadgaon in November 1986.

One may underestimate the significant role played by the local people in a movement by arguing that a strong leadership is the major reason behind taking forth any resistance to success. The centrality of local participants can be displayed by citing the case of Tehri Dam here. Instead of unrelenting leadership of Sunderlal Bahuguna and his wife Vimla Bahuguna in the anti-Tehri Dam movement which was also termed as ‘Himalaya Bachao Andolan’ (Save the Himalaya), the resistance failed to stop the construction of dam or to ensure a decent rehabilitation. Although it is true that any resistance does not find support from all corners but the support that is present should be strong and committed to the cause. Shekhar Pathak observes that “The people of Uttarakhand were always sympathetic towards the environmental victims of Tehri. Most of them were passive supporters.”⁸⁹

In addition to this, the attraction of the residents towards the bling of more developed areas and the constant out- migration for the last 100 years made the local people less attached and insensitive about their roots. In place of protecting their home place and culture fervently, they chose to leave their mountain home, land, pasture, forest and culture for just a house in Tarai- Bhabhar and Dun areas or in the plains anywhere. Shekhar Pathak comments that “Such is not the case with the Narmada Bachao Andolan. There the tribals and peasants know the meaning of being compelled to leave their land and houses.”⁹⁰

4.2. GAME OF NUMBERS

One of the pillars of the nonviolent resistance is ‘numbers’. It is important for nonviolent struggle to extend its reach and gather support. Although in the beginning, the resistance was being carried out in separate pockets in the affected areas of

⁸⁹Shekhar Pathak, ‘Submersion of a Town, Not of an Idea’ in *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol.40.no.33,2005,pp. 3637-3639.

⁹⁰ Ibid,p.3639.

Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat but gradually these struggles realized the common link between them. For instance, the 'Khedut Mazdoor Chetna Sangath' operating in the Alirajpur tehsil (Dist Jhabua) in M.P., fighting for the rights of the tribal people regarding land, livelihood and self-respect slowly synchronized its goals with the NDS in Maharashtra. It understood that the stand for the rights of the adivasi ultimately leads to the critique of modern development and dam construction. Similarly, the 'Narmada Ghati Navnirman Samiti'(NGNS)in 1986 took the stand of total opposition to the dam and carried out the 'Narmada Jan-Jagaran Yatra' from Omkareshwar to Koteshwar. It also emphasised on the inculcation of values like equality, cooperation, self-help and organization.

Resistance in the Narmada valley did not start with mere assumptions but real life examples like the Tawa Project was referred in order to highlight the failures of large projects, impossibility of a proper displacement and resettlement plan. In addition to this, opposition to the dam was also based on scientific and political analysis undertaken by senior Gandhians and socialists like Omprakash Rawal, Anupam Mishra, Dayashankar Joshi and Arun Kumar Singh. This basically shows the systematic approach with which the struggle has been carried out till today.

4.3. ROLE OF LEADERS

The role of leaders like Medha Patkar , Shobharamkaka, Bhagwanbhai, Manoharbai and others was significant in launching a campaign to organize, mobilize and link up people of the entire Nimad region. It was important to make such an effort because of the slow pace of the people in this region, given the failure of the 'Nimad Bachao Andolan'.These leaders succeeded in their endeavours as from 1989, this region matched the pace with the struggles going on in the other regions of Narmada Valley and there was no looking back.

In a nonviolent struggle, leader has a very prominent position, not only because she or he is leading the movement but also because they have to demolish the hierarchy that comes with this position. They have to be at par with the local people and other actors involved. The reason behind this is that when nonviolence as a means of resistance is used, many situation-based, context-based and culture-based decisions are needed to be taken, as a tailor made approach cannot work in the long run.

Another function that the leaders have to perform is to make the movement a broad-based one. Baba Amte, another prominent leader of the movement played a significant role by consolidating different aspects of various projects and the underlying policy in a 'Meeting Against Large Dams' in 1987. This meeting not only brought to limelight the ill effects of large dam projects but also acted as a platform for various experts and social organizations.

With the formation of the 'Narmada Asargrasta Sangharsha Samiti (NASS)' in Gujarat and organization of a major rally in Kevadia colony on January 30, 1988, signals of a united struggle were becoming stronger. The Narmada struggle formed a platform for providing an alternative politics of development. It influenced different ideologies and organizations like the environmental organizations, neo-Gandhians, Socialists, neo-Marxists and organizations of different classes and castes. This great ensemble of activists, geographical places, ideologies and organizations was recognised as 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' (NBA) from 1988-89. The Narmada Bachao Andolan became "a mass-based movement that integrated the people of the valley, their experiences and understanding and all the issues raised by them with various activists, academic and ideological support from outside the valley, and with several international movements."⁹¹

4.4. UNITED WE STAND

With strengthening its roots, the NBA activists also supported the larger issues and struggles prevailing in other parts of the country. They joined and argued for the cause and rights of local people struggling in Chilika, Baliapal (Orissa), Chattisgarh Mukti Morcha, Tehri Dam and so on.

It should be noted here that the NBA was not only able to work in collaboration with non-state actors but it also succeeded in influencing those representing state. The then Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, B.D. Sharma, enumerated in his unique report of 1986-88, about the violation of legal, constitutional and natural rights of tribals displaced by development projects like Narmada valley development project. The, then, Chief Justice of India, Savyasachi Mukherjea admitted this report *suo moto* as public interest litigation in the Supreme Court. Many other government

⁹¹Ibid,p.50.

officials were seen to be supporting the cause of the tribal displaced by the development project.

Similarly the movement also gained support from abroad in protesting against the involvement of World Bank. Environmental groups in U.S., U.K., Japan, Canada, Germany, Australia, France and the Scandinavian countries stood with the activists of NBA in opposing the imposition of agenda endorsed by the multilateral agencies like the World Bank on the people of the Third World. For a movement, that does not depend on financial support from abroad, such evolution of a new Internationalism for Third World people is a great and commendable achievement.

4.5. NONVIOLENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

The mass movement represented by the NBA came up with a plethora of new strategies and programs on the lines of nonviolence. Village-level *samitis*, tehsil-level coordination committees, *Samvad Yatra* (Dialogue March), Narmada fair, *padyatras*, village level protest actions, collective fasts in all the villages (*chulha bandh*), vehicle rally around the Narmada, *dharnas* (sit-ins), demonstrations, formation of a youth wing of the organization, *Jal Samarpan* (sacrifice in the waters), establishment of a *Sankalp-stambh* (Pillar of Resolve) proclaiming the people's right over land, water and forest, *Nyaya Yatra* (Justice March), *Satyagraha* in June 20, 1999 in Domkhedi (Maharashtra) and in Jalsindhi (Madhya Pradesh), *Manav Adhikar Yatra* (Human Rights March), '*Narmada Sangharsha Parikrama*' and so on. Non-cooperation with all the dam related work in the affected areas and determined efforts to not to budge from the land and villages were also undertaken in a nonviolent manner.

In order to put forth a strong nonviolent resistance, the activists of NBA collaborated with different actors and formed the '*Narmada Yojana Vichar Samiti*' (Narmada Project Deliberation Committee) which argued that the Sardar Sarovar Project, which was considered to be the 'Lifeline of Gujarat' was a sham, as the proper groundwork done by different concerned organizations depict that there are various alternatives and sustainable solutions available to the water problem in the state.

The NBA inspired the people by taking up the responsibility of organizing a 'Convention Against Destructive Development' at Harsud, on September 28,

1989. This step mobilised over 50,000 people from 300 organizations throughout India. It was a significant effort as it displayed the want for politics of the alternative in India and also the strength of the people in saying 'No' to the prevalent trend of development.

4.6. POWER OF WORDS

The movement communicated through different slogans that reflected its ideas, demands and determination. Slogans like '*koi nahi hatega-baandh nahi banega*'(no one will move out-the dam will not be built), '*doobenge par nahi hatenge*'(We will drown but won't move out), '*vikas chahiye, vinash nahin*'(we want development, not destruction), '*Sardar Sarovar kya karega,sabka satyanash karega*' (What will the Sardar sarovar do? Destroy everyone), '*Nahi hatenge, nahin doobenge, hum karenge navnirman*'(We will not move out, nor be drowned- we will recreate our lives), '*shaasanwalon sun lo aaj, hamare gaon mein humara raj*'(rulers must listen now-it's our rule in our villages). These slogans play a significant role in waging a symbolic, nonviolent struggle against the apathetic, violent State.

Although the fourth stage of NBA formed the core of nonviolent resistance as it is here that nonviolence exclusively becomes the centre of attention but it should be understood that even the other three sections are relevant while studying this nonviolent struggle. Any nonviolent resistance is ensemble of multiple steps. Every step from planning to the actual execution on field contributes to the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance.

5. NARMADA BACHAO ANADOLAN: THE GAINS OF NONVIOLENCE AS A MEANS OF RESISTANCE

One of the major ways of testing nonviolent means of resistance is by evaluating its success and failures. One of the indispensable points to be noted at this juncture is that the approach to evaluating a nonviolent resistance is different from conventional method that merely focuses on the cost-benefit analysis in tangible terms. In the course of a nonviolent resistance there are many changes that are implicit. Hence, it is necessary that in order to mark the successes of a nonviolent movement, the struggle is analysed layer by layer. Following the same lines, a few points making NBA to be a

success are explained here. Although, NBA could not stop the construction of dams, but the larger contributions it made in making overall changes in the social and political realm (explicated in the next subsections) make it to be a successful movement.

5.1. UNMASKING THE TRUTH BEHIND ‘NATIONAL INTEREST’: EXAMINING STATE-LED DEVELOPMENT

The above findings point out to the multitude of problem areas that the resistance needed to be covered by the NBA. The approach being nonviolent, studying the nuances of the situation becomes extremely indispensable. A significant issue that NBA studied was the matter of ‘national Interest’. The massive costs clearly depicted that the interest was not really ‘National’. It was merely a fabricated term in this case to deceive the people.

Pablo Kala rightly states that,

abstract space as Lefebvre (1991) argues, is the objectified space of the state, which empties places of differential subjectivity, lived experience and local meaning in the interests of economic, political, and cultural domination. The dominating discourses of the state and its institutions are shot through with state-centred and, under the sign of globalisation, corporate-biased - abstractions like 'national interest', 'administrative requirements', and 'development'. Through such abstractions it seeks to erase the rights of particular communities, and erase difference and diversity in the interests and propagation of the same. These abstractions are encoded with hegemonic geopolitics and geoeconomics - perpetrated by the agents of the state and globalisation - for which the people and the environment of the Narmada valley are simply dispensable.⁹²

The NBA can be considered a part of those struggles, going on worldwide today, that challenges the repressive, violent state-led, capitalist development. Interestingly, even when this kind of development is exploitative, anti-people and anti-nature, it is still legitimised as a step in the larger interest of the nation. ‘National Development’ as the Indian State puts it, forgets about those sections of the nation that are adversely affected by this kind of development. It is these people that are forced to sacrifice their culture, habitat, property, and sometimes even lives for the sake of ‘National Development’.

⁹² Cited in Pablo Kala, ‘In The Spaces Of Erasure: Globalisation, Resistance and Narmada River’ in *Economic & political Weekly*, Vol.36.no.22.2001, pp.1991-2002

Here a few sentences spoken by, Dev Ram Kanera, a farmer and an activist in Narmada Valley from Khaparkheda village in Dhar district, Madhya Pradesh, are of much significance, he says” We are not against development. We are only opposing the way in which development is being imposed on people. Our houses and fields are being submerged in the name of generating electricity, but the electricity does not reach us. We don’t want as much electricity as a five-star hotel demands, we ask for only the minimum that we need. But even that eludes us. In short, the very people who sacrifice the most for development are the ones who are ignored the most in the process. This cannot go on.”⁹³

The project of legitimizing the ploy of ‘National Development’ is not a recent one. Even before independence, the makers of the nation displayed their inclination towards such an exploitative version of development by keeping aside the Gandhian model of development which made villages to be the centre. Disagreeing with the Gandhian idea of development, Jawaharlal Nehru mentions in his letter to Gandhi, “A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment.”⁹⁴

The scheme of India’s reconstruction on the lines of the West was considered to be necessary by most Indian nationalists. They asserted that development of India can take place ‘intellectually through the infusion of modern science, and materially through the adoption of large-scale industrialisation.’⁹⁵ After independence, this model of development, which can also be termed as capitalist development was pursued with full vigour and enthusiasm. The Congress leadership endorsed it as ‘Industrialize or Perish’ model⁹⁶of economic development in the Second Five Year Plan. This strategy supported application of ‘modern’ technologies on indiscriminate basis without any regard for social or ecological consequences.

The assumption of reaping benefits from this framework of development was not baseless, though. Countries like Germany under Bismarck, Stalinist Russia and Meiji

⁹³ From an interview to Vikas Bahuguna, ‘We Are Not Against Development’, *Tehelka*, Issue 46, Volume 9, Nov.14, 2012.

⁹⁴ Amita Baviskar, *National Development, Poverty And The Environment*, in Amita Baviskar, *In The Belly Of The River*, New Delhi, 2011, p. 21.

⁹⁵ Cited in Amita Baviskar, *National Development, Poverty And Environment*, in Amita Baviskar, *In The Belly of The river*, New Delhi, 2011, p. 22.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p.22.

Japan were standing as examples of economic growth through such framework of development.

But then, it is also a reality that it is the same paradigm of development which is a basket oozing out with unfulfilled promises. The assumed 'trickle-down' effect on the premises of which it was undertaken in the first place, has failed. The phenomena of 'jobless growth' by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reflect the truth of such a belied hope. Here, it is significant to quote the observation made by Amita Baviskar in the context of how the associated problems of urban air, water and noise pollution were belittled by different sections of society. She states "While planners shrugged their shoulders and said 'one cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs', economists simply called these problems 'externalities' and banished them outside the realm of the rational."⁹⁷ The rising concern for climate change and global warming by the entire world clearly depict how rational and serious these issues are today.

5.1.1. DEBATE ON ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF DEVELOPMENT

A pertinent question that needs to be asked here is as follows: Was India really out of options for choosing a suitable development model besides the Western, Capitalist, model? Gadgil and Guha answer this question. According to them, "In theory there were of course, many options available to the Indian state. The technologies adopted could be capital or labour intensive. They could be oriented towards satisfying the demand for luxury goods or fulfilling the basic needs of the masses; they could degrade the environment or be non-polluting. They could also use energy intensively or sparingly; and they could use the country's endowment of natural resources in a sustainable fashion or liquidate them; and so on."⁹⁸ It is because of such a neglect of the Gandhian model and other sustainable models earlier that today we see different streams taking the forefront. According to Guha, the values of development that movements like NBA endorse are built upon three ideological bases.

⁹⁷ Ibid,p.24.

⁹⁸ Cited in Amita Baviskar,*National Development, Poverty And Environment*, in Amita Baviskar, *In The Belly of The river*, New Delhi, 2011,p. 22.

The first ideology is of 'Crusading Gandhian'. It supports the pre- capitalist and pre-colonial village community as perfect for establishing a harmonious relationship between social and ecological settings. They stand against the dominant philosophies represented by modernisation like rationalism and economism. They endorse alternatives that have their roots in the Indian Tradition.

The second point talks about the ideology of 'Appropriate Technology'. This stream encapsulates the socialistic principles on one hand, and on the other, it seeks to make an adjustment of these principles with the industrial society. It asserts development based on resource-conserving, labour- intensive technologies.

The third ideological base is that of 'Ecological Marxism'. The ecological Marxists suggest a change in the political and economic realm along with adoption of collective action aimed at systematic transformation. It believes in the emancipatory potential of modern science and technology.

Apart from these streams, there is one more critique to the present exploitative capitalist development in the form of 'preservation'. It focuses on saving biodiversity and different forms of it. The Silent Valley in South India is one of the examples of this stream. It should be noted here that these streams do not sit in separate moulds, there are interactions and influences over each-other and can be studied together.

Instead of the ever-rising cost of the development process, there is no stopping. The State still continues and favours such an open-exploitation. In order to fight this injustice and to surface the voices that have so far being stifled behind the banner of 'National Interest', New Social Movements have been observed to hold the fort. The blueprint of alternative development offered by these movements is not based on any kind of rigid, hierarchical and dominating lines but one that emphasises on equality, democratic and participative decision-making, and is ecologically sound.

5.2. CREATING SPACE FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGES IN NONVIOLENT RESISITANCE

Not only did this fight for justice waged a nonviolent resistance against the unjust State but it also focussed on bringing about constructive change in the areas concerned. I think that constructive changes have many possibilities to take place and

exist in the long run only in a nonviolent resistance because it helps in concentrating on building new rather than just destroying the already existing. Moreover, a nonviolent struggle demands a peaceful mind that can think beyond the present.

The strategies, tactics and methods that are employed in the journey of a nonviolent struggle need an innovative mind. The reason for such a need is that nonviolent resisters are surrounded by those that have adopted violence as a means of struggle which is a rather conventional method. This convention of using violence since many years has made open many options to be used in a struggle. On the other hand, nonviolence as a means of resistance is still being studied and understood, the new strategies are to be invented or innovated as there are less references available to apply the same methods in any struggle, at any situation.

I joined these dots just to pinpoint the direction in which the mind is required to be developed. The thinking process develops the mind of a resister not only with respect to creating different strategies but also with respect to bringing about innovative, constructive changes in the context in which the resister is placed. Therefore, nonviolence as a means of struggle is not unidirectional concentrating just on defeating the enemy but is multidirectional and future-oriented.

The process of constructive changes began right from the initial stages of the resistance. The 'Narmada Dharangrasta Samiti' (NDS) worked to improve local issues like employment, education, health, water resources, the public distribution shops and state welfare schemes, and also handled the rampant corruption among officials of the forest, resettlement and police departments.

5.3. THE IDEA OF NAVNIRMAN: CREATION VERSUS DEMOLITION

The NBA in 1999 resolved to start a *Satyagraha* against the injustice going on in Domkhedi (Maharashtra) and in Jalsindhi (Madhya Pradesh). This step gave a strong impetus to the work of *Nav Nirman*-“constructive work in the fields of water supply and conservation, education, agriculture and tree planting.”⁹⁹ In this endeavour, 2000 people in Domkhedi, with the help of young engineers from Kerala provided a model

⁹⁹ Sanjay Sangvai, *The Trial*, Page in Sanjay Sangvai, *The River And The Life: People's Struggle in the Narmada Valley*, Mumbai, 2002, p. 77.

of alternative to the mega projects. They challenged the destruction of the mega projects by constructing micro-hydel power station on a small stream that provided electricity to eight houses and pedal- power generators were also installed in some villages.

In Manibeli, Danel and other villages people asserted that, '*Nahi Hatenge, nahin doobenge, hum karenge navnirman*' (We will not move out, not be drowned –we will recreate our lives).The partially submerged villages of Manibeli have been recreated in opposition to displacement and rehabilitation. Alternative health system programs and training for Panchayati Raj have been introduced. In 1991, two *Reva Jeevan Shalas* (School for Life) were launched at Chimalkhedhi (Akkalkadu) and Nimgavhan (Akrani) in Maharashtra. These parallel schools emphasised on such an education that would bring the children closer to their own society, heritage, knowledge systems, issues and struggle along with the new horizons of knowledge.

In 1996, four more *Jeevan shalas* were established in Maharashtra, M.P. and Gujarat. The sole motive of these is not just imparting education based on textbooks and rote learning. These are institutions focussed on making the children know about their context, their past, culture and to make them understand their present so that they become capable enough to envisage their own future which is safe not only for themselves but also for their community. Following these lines attempts have been made to restructure and reorganise the curriculum of the schools for an alternative education movement.

It is because of such *Jeevan shalas* that the youth of the affected villages participate in their own liberation from the chains of 'destructive development'. The 'March for Life' from August 16 to 28, 2001 towards Delhi, through the various villages and cities in North India was started by over 70 children from the Jeevanshala of Nimgavhan which was under the threat of getting submerged due to a 90 meter high dam. These children stood for their right to a normal life and their right to education just like every single child. They made a strong appeal to stop the dam and rescue their schools and future.

Not only children but the NBA has also inspired women to come out of their houses and protect the rights of their land along with men. The leadership by Medha Patkar

and the other women activists “inspire women with a vision of what they can politically accomplish outside the home; their presence reassures men that women are ‘safe’. The sensitivity of the Andolan to the gendered nature of its constituency is one of its greatest achievements.”¹⁰⁰The movement has empowered women in taking active steps in order to challenge the repressive authorities by demonstrating, raising slogans and participating in articulating and carrying out various strategies and programs of NBA.

In fact, the NBA has also led to dissolving of the caste rigidities to a certain extent. The Patidars in the Nirmar village are the dominant landowners but instead of this, they have been the strength of the Andolan in Nirmar and have been the most active participants. “Despite taboos about untouchability and food, adivasis and Patidars lived together amicably during month-long Sangharsh Yatra.”¹⁰¹The involvement of the Patidars in the Andolan has helped in maintaining the material base. For instance, during the Manibeli Satyagraha they provided money by collecting donations of grains and selling them, and they also made suitable provisions for people camping in Manibeli including their transportation.

5.4. OPENING THE DEBATE ON DAMS

It was in the Nehru era that dams were considered to be the ‘Temples of Modern India’. Narmada Bachao Andolan became the harbinger of the need to have debates over dams. Just buying what the government has to say in favour of building big dams in the name of ‘national Interest’ is not enough. Local, national, international, intellectual levels have to penetrate in the context and raise relevant debates in order to unearth the grim realities. The Andolan indeed is a milestone for people's movements in India. Although, NBA was not successful as the dam could not be stopped from construction, but the NBA has created an anti-big dam opinion in India and outside. It questioned the paradigm of development.

As already mentioned, it is not that the activists and the local people are against development, but the story of current development is being written with the blood of the tribal people, which is questionable. Ms.Arundhati Roy who is closely connected

¹⁰⁰ Amita Baviskar, *The Politics Of Andolan* in Amita Baviskar, *In The Belly of The river*, New Delhi, 2011, p.217.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p.220.

with the movement makes the situation clearer with her statements, she states, "I am not saying all big dams are bad... but she was sure that big dams were used as "political instruments where you take all the resources from the river and you decide who to make the beneficiaries." ¹⁰²This statement clearly reflects the dictatorship attitude of the government where it aims to regulate everything as its own wishes.

Narmada Bachao Andolan gave the strength to the tribal people to mobilise against the unjust state and raise their voices for getting their rights. It supported these people in challenging the unjust nation state and the lopsided development paradigm that it endorses. It became a symbol of all marginal struggles of the displaced, landless and tribals. Even though the dam has been built, NBA still fights for getting proper rehabilitation of the displaced tribals. It does still endeavours to make the marginalised stand for their rights and do not fall into the trap of victimhood or helpless dependents on the tyrannical state. Proper and thoughtful rehabilitation is the right of these tribals. Indian state is constitutionally a democratic and socialist state, by snatching away homes, lands and numerous memories attached to these resources, the state is faltering its expected roles. These unfulfilled promises of the state actors have severely impacted the lives of tribal people. A dam is more important in the eyes of the capitalist state than the homes of its citizens and environment of its country. NBA has uncovered this reality of 'national development'.

As a democratic movement, it followed the Gandhian way 100 per cent. Democratic movements have been suppressed by State violence and the counter-violence has been taken over by Maoists. The Andolan mobilised people's strengths and gave a strong leadership. Any democratic movement depends upon sincere and dedicated leadership. People have become more organised. Fundamental rights of the displaced have been put forth.¹⁰³

The path of nonviolence that Narmada Bachao Andolan took had not been easy in the face of constant violent repressions coming in the way. But, slowly and gradually as the movement began achieving many of its goals, many doubts relating with nonviolent strategy began to vanish. Nonviolence when seen as a strategy focuses more on rewards or goals. It calibrates the effectiveness with respect to the extent to which goals are achieved. More than normative parameters here, empirical realities matter. It is true that NBA was not able to stop the dam from coming into existence

¹⁰² www.narmada.org/gcg/gcg.html accessed on November 26, 2015..

¹⁰³ Ibid.

but in the course of the struggle it achieved such goals that are beneficial in the long run, one of them being the withdrawal of World Bank. In a nonviolent resistance emphasis is laid on sustainable, irreversible constructive changes so that such changes act as an impetus for a resistance to move ahead.

The other thing that makes this movement to be a success is that it inspired others to take nonviolent path. It established the strength and legitimacy of nonviolent resistance. The innovative nonviolent techniques like jal satyagraha, sangharsha yatra and so on that it introduced have spread in other areas as well. This has motivated the marginalised sections in other regions to begin with their own nonviolent resistance.

6. CONCLUSION

From all the above sections it can be seen that the nonviolence as a means of resistance adopted by the NBA proved to be much effective in terms of bringing about a positive change by introducing constructive changes, giving impetus to much needed debate over equating dams with development, it opened the doors of discussion over the meaning of real, substantive definition of 'national interest'. Its major achievement in the form of persuading the World Bank to stop financially assisting the project not only benefitted this particular area but also bore positive results for other such areas as the World Bank became more vigilant and strict with respect to giving aid to other development projects in future. This very achievement plus the comprehensive study NBA made of the consequences of the construction projects saved the local people involved from bearing very high intensity costs. The NBA as already brought to the limelight the significance of nonviolence as a means of resistance. It expanded the definition of nonviolent resistance by practically proving its utility and significance.

This chapter encapsulated a lot of lessons in the realm of nonviolence that could be learned only by studying the ground situation. It presented scope for numerous innovations that could be made in the immediate environment. Although there was an interaction between the theoretical and practical realm but it is clear that in Narmada Bachao Andolan a straightjacket approach was not seen. It is also true that theories pertaining to nonviolence as a means of resistance does not recommend any kind of a rule bound scheme to be followed. But, as this chapter shows that the resistance goes

beyond the boundaries of theory and takes such steps that are still not comprehensively captured in theories.

In addition to this, in the course of writing this chapter it was also noticed that work done on NBA exclusively can be further enriched by providing an impetus to more such researches that primarily focus on nonviolence as a means of resistance. Putting this point on the discussion table becomes pertinent also because the use of nonviolence as a means of resistance is still in the making. In order to develop it as a more effective, goal-oriented and the first option for resistance, it is the need of the hour to study this aspect of any ongoing nonviolent resistance. The point that needs to be put across the table is also that the perspective of looking at and studying nonviolent means of resistance is different from the one adopted in studying violent resistances. In the next chapter, this point is taken into consideration and some more angles to the study nonviolence as a means of resistance are unearthed.

CHAPTER3

UNDERSTANDING NONVIOLENCE CASE STUDY OF EKTA PARISHAD

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter carries forward the examination of the hypothesis that considers nonviolence as an effective means of resistance. From the last two chapters, it can be noticed that parameters on which nonviolence as a means of resistance is evaluated focus not only on conventional categories of final costs and analysis but also emphasises on the subtle, implicit yet significant changes it causes in the course of the resistance. In addition to this, in the previous two chapters it was also seen that there is an interaction between theoretical framework and practical use of nonviolence as a means of resistance. Still a lot needs to be done to capture both the nuances reflected in these two realms separately. The present chapter moves in the direction of introducing some other aspects of nonviolence as a means of resistance along with probing into the effectiveness of the same.

In order to fulfil these objectives, the chapter presents an analysis of Ekta Parishad and the resistances led by it. The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section aims to put forth an introduction of Ekta Parishad. This section primarily dissects the actions of Ekta Parishad in the area of nonviolent resistance. It also focuses on the nature of subject population that Ekta Parishad is leading and also on how the constitution and the judiciary have attempted to safeguard the rights of the tribal people. This very part throws light on the fact that actually it is the government's responsibility to ensure equality, liberty and justice to the tribal communities. It also asserts that the sheer lack of political will of the government agencies has not gone unnoticed from the eyes of the judiciary. The third point that it highlights is that there is a need to delve deeper into the issue so as to understand the nuances of issues concerning marginalised tribal population.

The second section focuses on analysing the resistances led by Ekta Parishad, delineates the marches that Ekta Parishad led. The second and the third section lay down many features of nonviolent resistance that make it effective.

The third section discusses the future vision of Ekta Parishad which is to build a worldwide alliance for supporting the path of nonviolence and the fourth section concludes the chapter. . The conclusion aims to pick up points from the entire chapter that contribute towards weaving of a new approach, a new perspective towards creating an effective nonviolence as a means of resistance.

2. EKTA PARISHAD: SHAPING NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE IN 21ST CENTURY

Ekta Parishad began as loose grouping of NGO training institutes for creating a large base of community development work. Right from its initial days it emphasised on making people independent and empowered for being able to raise their voice against the injustices towards them. It asserted people's right over livelihood resources. It helped in the making of a large social formation around the issue of rightful control over land, water and forest resources.

It was in 1991 that Ekta Parishad finally evolved as a federation for mobilizing people by nonviolent resistance. It began with foot-march, as one of the tools to resist first in 1999-2000, from western to eastern Madhya Pradesh (prior to the partition of Chhattisgarh). Once gaining momentum, Ekta Parishad organised about a dozen marches like 'Bhu Adhikar Satyagraha Padyatra,1999', 'rebuild Bihar March,2001', 'Chambal Peace March,2002', 'Madhya Pradesh Bhu Adhikar(Land Right's) Sanvad March,2002', 'Chattisgarh Sambad Yatra,2003', 'Chattisgarh Bachao March,2005' and it attained a breakthrough with the historic Janadesh. These marches reflect the vision of Ekta Parishad that is laid down in the next subsection.

2.1. THE VISION: EMPOWER AND MOBILIZE PEOPLE ON NONVIOLENT PRINCIPLES

From the above section it can be observed that Ekta Parishad concentrates on empowering and mobilizing people for raising nonviolent resistance. Ekta Parishad stands for its literal translation 'unity forum' as it visualizes a unified world on the

lines of nonviolent resistance. It is a federation that emphatically emphasise on nonviolence as a means of resistance or application of Gandhian principles of nonviolence as it believes that it would ensure respect for fundamental rights of the marginalized and vulnerable sections.

By taking nonviolent resistance as the main pillar it also envisions a land reform policy and a development model that is inclusive, democratic so that the rights of every citizen are protected including the poorest communities. Ekta Parishad has raised the struggle for ensuring that every community and every individual in the world gets the opportunity of living with dignity. In order to reach the goal of a dignified life for all, it considers important that each individual benefit from equal and guaranteed access to land, forest and water.

Ekta Parishad carries out its struggle for introducing and strengthening three concrete models: community-based governance (gram swaraj), local self- reliance (gram swawlamban) and responsible government (jawabdeh sarkar).Doubts may arise with respect to its role and position in the struggle to which it is committed. It may be thought of as an NGO or a welfare association, but the major factor that separates it from such organisations is that it is not merely delivering its services but it aims to change the status quo by empowering the deprived communities through nonviolent resistance.

2.2. EMPOWERING TRIBALS: NONVIOLENT TOOLS TO STRENGTHEN THE VOICES OF TRIBALS

In the earlier section it has been made clear that Ekta Parishad aims to empower deprived communities that form core of their nonviolent resistance. In the second chapter also it was underlined that the role of local people is central to nonviolent resistance. Similarly, Ekta Parishad seeks to enable them with weapons of nonviolence so that they can raise their own voices and lead their struggles through Satyagraha and Ahimsa.

Like the Narmada Bachao Andolan, Ekta Parishad also highlight the significance of the tribal people of the society in conserving the natural resources, it aims to break the stereotypes surrounding the tribal communities. One of the most common stereotype is that tribal communities are ; ‘backwards’, ‘primitive’ and ‘need to be pulled into

the mainstream'. Ekta Parishad tries to break this stereotype by giving them skills, tools and training in upholding nonviolent forms of resistance with the objective of protecting their unique identity.

It demolishes the myth that these sections are against development by arguing that the tribals or the marginalised, play an indispensable role in bringing about truly democratic, inclusive development based on Gandhian principles of self-reliance. In the process, it unmasks the ugly face of today's crony capitalism, materialistic society, rabid industrialisation all encapsulated in faulty and unjust industrial policy, tourism policy, energy policy, mining and forest policy and land policy.

Tribals have been a neglected chunk of the Indian society ever since the times of the colonial period. Their exploitation was supposed to have disappeared with the independence and the constitutional safeguards. But, this has not been the case. They are still being suppressed and marginalised.

The broken promises and the continued inclination of the government towards the market have worsened the condition of the tribal section. Criminalisation of the tribal communities, perpetual harassment, forced evictions, and atrocities have added to the misery of the tribals. Such continued repression has not succeeded in making them dormant, as the tribal people have always tried to confront injustice against them and questioned the unjust disposition of the state with strong resistance. Today, the struggle to get their rights over their natural resources has intensified because of the frequent false promises of the government.

During the freedom struggle every section of Indian society hoped for an independent India that would guarantee them not only autonomy of self-expression with dignity but also equality and unity. The tribal and the peasant community participated in the struggle with the very same hope. It is true that they got political freedom as they became the citizens of free India but the social and economic freedom was still to be achieved. As B.R. Ambedkar pointed out that if the contradiction between political equality and social and economic equality are not set right, then it won't be long that even our political democracy would be in peril. The failure to assure socio-economic development to the people along with political development has made the prediction of B.R. Ambedkar true.

It has already been explained in the previous chapter that how the Indian Government initially made a commitment towards democratic socialism and welfarism, gradually shifted its direction to serve capitalism. It does not mean that moving towards capitalism was a wrong step but sacrificing the democratic values, trampling over the rights of some sections in order to cater to some other sections, and delivering injustice instead of justice in the name of 'National Interest' is something that needs to be given serious attention.

The other thing that has to be taken into account is that under the tag of 'National Interest' and 'development' the government is justifying its acts of repression and tyranny over the marginalised and poor sections of the society. It is not to deny that every country desires to walk on the path of progress and development. But, the point is that every country has its own story; own context and accordingly, a blueprint of development should be formulated. India is a country with diverse sections and diverse ways of life. Even the constitution makers of the country kept this diversity in mind due to which they introduced a 'mixed economy' and a constitution that would balance the interests of all. Today, this concern for all seems to have been diverted to a few. The state is trying to replicate the western model of capitalism in every way possible. The blind faith in this kind of a move has made the state overlook its own people, their context, interests and stories.

The ideology of materialism has overshadowed the dark images of oppression over those that do not submit to such a 'Euro-centric' scheme of the government. The voices of those sections that deny adhering to the unquestioning obedience principle circulated by the state are stifled by calling them to be 'anti-development' and 'anti-nation'. Many voices remain passive due to such a lack of substantive freedom of speech and expression. Then what is the way ahead? Should the suppressed continue to suffer under the yoke of unjust state? Should the status quo remain unquestioned?

To consider the rights of the tribal communities becomes important also because even though the judiciary has extended a helping hand through its judgements and active interventions, there are certain nuances that have been missed. For instance, it is mostly the case with the tribal communities that the land is inherited by them from their ancestors, the inheritance goes on from generation to generation without any records. The absence of records and papers make them illegal holders of the land in

one go and that made them to evict the land. Therefore, the order of the Supreme Court though in good faith has created more problems for the tribal people as they have been held responsible for illegal encroachments and subjected to eviction. This has escalated the violent protests against the state structures instead of slowing them down.

Similarly, the complete ban of the felling of trees in the north-eastern regions has proved to be a reason for further discomfort for the local population. It has adversely affected the local forest owners, labourers and locally owned small forest based industries that used to earn their living by selling forest based products. At present, it can be observed that both the militants and the State are at loggerhead, it is the people belonging to different marginalised sections that have to bear the brunt. How to break this deadlock? is the main question to answered .

At this stage, it becomes the responsibility of the nonviolent movements like Jan Satyagraha, started by Ekta Parishad, that the ground realities are conveyed to the top-levels so that they take consideration of the nuances of the present realities of marginalized, tribal communities. The violent movements have not been able to succeed in communicating such problems to the policy makers as their words have been enfeebled by the noise of their own violence.

2.3. ISSUES COVERED BY EKTA PARISHAD: TARGETTING STRUCTURES OF INJUSTICE

From all the above sections, it can be observed that Ekta Parishad has a great responsibility of representing the marginalised, deprived, tribal population and put forth their important issues on various levels of hierarchies. Ekta Parishad concentrates on a range of issues that questioned such laws that are being distorted and abused and provides an alternative framework, especially in case of the land reform policies. It questions the present system of governance that in the garb of welfare is letting the penetration of market forces into every nook and corner. It further pointed out how the government's policy of providing 100 days employment under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is making the poor tribal sections build roads of their own destruction.

The shift from a welfare approach to a market – oriented approach that clearly gets reflected from the ‘make in India’ project depicts the grim reality of how the government is leaving no stone unturned in calling the domestic as well as the foreign companies to exploit, in fact, over-exploit the already short availability of resources for making profits. This exploitation is not only of the natural resources, but also of the tribal people, of their cultural values, their rights and even of the laws that are made and implemented by the same government. Further, the Parishad recognised the immense thrust on the ‘top-down’ approach of governance rather than the ‘bottom-up’ approach due to which the main purpose of important legislations like the Panchayati Raj , PESA and Forest Rights Act remains on paper only.

With rising globalisation, inflow of foreign capital, the government has been giving greater emphasis to corporatisation. To fulfil its requirements, the Indian State has overlooked large scale opposition and has used violence to suppress the marginalized. The government continues acquiring large tracts of land for commercial purposes in agriculture, mining, integrated township, Special Economic Zones and so on. These activities have further widened the gap between the rich and the poor, increased indebtedness and dependence on the moneylenders, illegal and desperate measures undertaken by the helpless villagers, and acute despair. Ekta Parishad also looks into the lopsided implementation of these policies.

2.4. MAJOR ISSUE: FOREST RIGHTS ACT, 2006, FAULTY IMPLEMENTATION

Amidst the tyranny of the state, a ray of hope and a sign of existence of liberal state was seen in the form of the Forest Rights Act. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 gave recognition to the customary rights and acted as a step towards correcting historical injustice faced by the tribal communities. This act aimed to recognise the community rights over individual rights, rights of displaced communities, rights over development activities and also rights over community forest resources. Instead of such a pro-tribal step, the hardships faced by this section do not seem to have taken a halt. Why is that so? The problem that lies is in the implementation stage. The half-hearted implementation has rendered this act next to nothing.

Madhusudan Bandi in his paper¹⁰⁴ highlights the major loopholes in the implementation in two states Chhattisgarh and Gujarat. He points out that the awareness level in Chhattisgarh was minimal about the act. According to the review committee¹⁰⁵, the ploy of the government from keeping away any kind of obstacles in its agenda of making land available for the private players gets fulfilled from such a gap. The Forest Department easily bypasses the rights of the forest dwellers. In fact the Review Committee¹⁰⁶ highlighted that the Forest Department and the Rural Development Department have taken over the implementation process leaving no scope for the participation of people.¹⁰⁷

One of the factors that blocked the path of implementation in an efficient manner is the excessive control of the bureaucracy that it is reluctant to forgo. The bureaucrats have used FRA to emphasis on giving importance to individual claims. The central role in the implementation of this act was to be played by the Gram Sabha but the ascendancy of the Forest Department seems to be pervasive. In Chhattisgarh, the Forest Rights Committees have been formed by converting the Joint Forest Management committees instead of them have been formed by the Gram Sabha.

The purpose of the enactment of such an act has gone in vain as serious cases of exploitation have been noticed in Chhattisgarh. The review Committee has pointed out the cases of 'wrongful rejections and blatant irregularities' at the Gram Sabha.¹⁰⁸

It has also been noted that the Forest Rights Committee is of no use as the dominance of the Forest Department seems to have overridden its authority. This has resulted in forced acceptance of claim over that land only which the Forest Department offers. In addition to this, the villagers have been rendered helpless as they do not have any one to listen the screams of injustices .The claimants whose claims have been rejected have lost their right to appeal.

¹⁰⁴ Madhusudan Bandi, 'Forest Rights Act: Towards the End of Struggle of Tribals?' in *Social Scientist*, Vol.42.no.1/2,2014,pp.63-81.

¹⁰⁵ www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/content/321536/report-by-national-committee-on-forest-rights-act/ accessed on November 26 ,2015.

¹⁰⁶ Government of India (2010) *Manthan*, Report by National Committee on Forest Rights Act, December.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Rajesh Sinha , 'No Welfare, No State' in *Tehelka*, Vol.7.no.26,July,2010.

Tribal people have been wronged as they have been allotted just 1-2.5 hectares of land as against their traditional holdings of land that were larger than the said figures.¹⁰⁹The rights of women have not been recognised as the names of wives are not included in the allotment order. It has also been observed that the Forest Department in Chhattisgarh has been following pre-1980 encroachment laws with respect to consideration of claims. Moreover, the Forest Department is responsible for limiting the number of areas that can claim their rights, thus, depriving the other unrecognised areas.¹¹⁰

In Gujarat too the reports present cases of dubious and irresponsible role of the Forest Department. There have been cases where the Forest Department has blocked the claims deliberately.¹¹¹There have been instances where attestations of evidence like caste certificates, court orders, *panchnamas*, and so on, have not been accepted on the basis that the land is in eco-fragile zone or the land being a plantation land. It has also been observed that the Forest Department has also rejected claims just in advance.¹¹²Amidst such a free-hand and unjust rejection of claims, it has also been noticed that the Gujarat Government has added to the miseries of the innocent tribals. In 2004 the Gujarat government had agreed to extend land rights to 60000 farmers on 45000 hectares of land, but after the FRA, the same villagers had been asked to produce fresh claims.¹¹³

Another issue that has created discontent amongst the tribal communities is over the use of satellite imagery for verification of claims. On the one hand, Forest Department supports this proposition but on the other hand, the tribal communities contest that

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Nitin Sethi (2008), 'Government Data on Forest Land Encroachment Rattles Pro-FRA Lobby', *Times Of India*.

¹¹¹ Council of Social Development(2010), 'Summary Report on the Implementation of the Forest Rights Act', *National/Current Situation*, September.

¹¹² Ashish Kothari and R.L.Meena , 'Status of Implementation' MoEF/MoTA Committee on Forest Rights Act,2010.

¹¹³ Developing Initiatives for Social and Human Action(DISHA)(2012)'Land Right Struggle,Gujarat,India'.

such verification would be full of loopholes as satellite imageries would miss records of small land and land lying in tree-covered areas.¹¹⁴

“FRA implementation in Gujarat is also marked by physical excesses against the tribals. The case of Hanubat Pada in Dangs is one such incidence where the tribes cultivating their land for the past eight years were beaten up and asked to vacate the land even without giving them a mandatory notice under FRA Section 70 CA.”¹¹⁵The extent of harassment recorded in Dangs includes the Forest Department digging pits in people’s fields and indulging in evictions, besides threatening to frame the tribals under naxal activities.¹¹⁶

The atrocities are not limited to Gujarat and Chattisgarh only but to most of the places where forest dependents are large in number. Rakesh Agrawal states the same story happening in the Rajaji National Park of Utrakhanda. He presents a sad picture of the struggle that the Van Gujjars, a tribe that resides in the park, have to face in order to gain their rights under the Forest Rights Act. Even though the High Court ordered the forest department to accept their petitions and rehabilitate them if needed. The Department has put half-hearted efforts in fulfilling the orders. The following lines corroborate this reality:

Over the last few years, approximately 1,390 families have been relocated, though not rehabilitated, in squalid one-room makeshift huts – far removed from their social, cultural and environmental milieu – in Pathri and Gaidikhata in Haridwar district. However, the families remaining in the forest are continuously being harassed and beaten by the RNP officials and police and their *deras* are being destroyed.¹¹⁷

Similarly, Ekta Parishad in its assessment of Forest Rights Act (2006) during the Jansamvad Yatra, found that there are loopholes in the implementation due to which there exist ever escalating inequalities and injustices being meted out to the marginalized, poor and tribal people. In order to set things right they made certain

¹¹⁴ Writ petition (2011), *Action Research in Community Health and Development (ARCH), Rajpipla Social Service Society (RSSS) and Paryavaran Suraksha Samitee (PSS) vs State of Gujarat*, C/WPIL/100/2011, Gujarat High Court, Ahmedabad.

¹¹⁵ Sambhav Kumar Shrivastava (2010), 'Tribals Beaten Out of Forestland' in *Down to Earth*, 2010, p. 15.

¹¹⁶ Council of Social Development, 'Summary Report on the Implementation of the Forest Rights Act', in *National/Current Situation*, 2010.

¹¹⁷ Rakesh Agarwal, 'No Rights to Live in the Forests' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 49, 2014.

recommendations to direct the government to take steps for implementation. It has often been noticed that the claimants from tribal sections are often neglected as they are considered to be powerless and backward before the power of the State.

Ekta Parishad recommends that such claimants should be given the much deserved opportunity to express their grievances and accordingly reviews of all the rejected claims should be made. As Gram Sabha plays a major role in the development of the grassroots, due to which Ekta Parishad insists on strengthening the Gram Sabha by providing them training for ensuring better implementation of the Forest Rights Act. It further emphasises that so as to have a sustainable model the tribals should be handed over the responsibility of managing their natural resources. Following this, it directs that the government should lessen the displacement and eviction of the tribal people from forest land.

Ekta Parishad asserts that participatory development is a way to ensure equitable development and thus, it recommends encouragement of people's participation in countering deforestation and creating plantation program. Penalising even those that are apart of government for violation of Forest Rights is as important as penalizing other people, therefore, Ekta Parishad has made a recommendation for constitution of a 'Forest Rights Watch committee' that should include people from grassroots and appropriate government officials.

Some of the main points that it highlights in its manifesto for land rights framed on behalf of Land Rights Movements depict the absence of necessary institutions and acts. Such a situation reflects the sheer underrated status given to the welfare of the marginalised. In the manifesto, demands are made for enacting National Land Reform Policy, National Homestead Rights Act and Act for 'Distribution of Agricultural Land to Rural Landless and Homeless Poor'. It further suggests establishment of Land Reforms Commission, legal support systems, common property land and resources conservation board, forest rights commission and so on.

The Ministry of Rural Development (GOI) and Jan Satyagraha reached an agreement with respect to the demands made in the manifesto. Although the matter of land reforms is a state subject but the Ministry Of Rural Development assured that it will establish a dialogue process from time to time with states. It will ensure that appropriate steps are being taken in the direction if land reform, providing agricultural

land and homestead land, land to the poor, marginalized and deprived, to women, nomads and tribal people. The Ministry also guaranteed that it would propose the establishment of important institutions like Fast Track Land Tribunals, Task Force on Land Reforms. On the basis of these promises made by the Ministry, Jan Satyagraha discontinued its march and agreed to work with Ministry to proceed with the agenda.

This does not mean that Ekta Parishad stopped its struggle entirely. It undertook a march of more than five thousand landless people on 14th and 15th March 2016. This march was for persuading and pressurizing the government to ensure land for homestead. Although in 2013, the government enacted National Homestead Land Rights Bill but it failed to present it before the Parliament. This was not the only instance of failure from the side of the government. In 2015, on the demands of more than eight thousand homeless people that participated in a sit-in demonstration, promised the implementation of the bill but this also remained an unfulfilled promise.

P.V.Rajagopal¹¹⁸ strongly argue that nonviolent resistance should be continued till the goals are achieved and it should not be in isolation. With this march he not only concentrated on the demand for homestead land rights but also made a call for the need to review and improve the culture of protest and culture of governance. Only when the latter demand is fulfilled, resisters would be able to meet their goals and the government would fulfil the promises that they make. The firm resolve to make a change is clear from the will of landless resisters to give their resistance a new form in case their demands are not met till their right to shelter is not safe. This strong faith and firm resolve to stand for the tribals and adhere to nonviolent path of resistance can be noted in the different resistances it led.

3. NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE LED BY EKTA PARISHAD

As already mentioned, Ekta Parishad is committed to a nonviolent form of resistance. Its contribution to the development of nonviolence as a means of resistance can be calibrated from analysis given below of different significant nonviolent resistances it organised.

¹¹⁸Rajagopal P. V., a Gandhian activist, is former Vice Chairman of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, and the president and founding member of Ekta Parishad.

3.1. JANADESH:ROAD TO JAN SATYAGRAHA

Nonviolent resistance does not simply assume that it is being waged to resolve the conflict but it is largely carried out with the aim of plunging in the middle of the conflict situation with full force and power. Jan Satyagraha is an example of such a nonviolent resistance. The journey to Jan Satyagraha began with Janadesh in 2007. It was a march from Gwalior to Delhi (340 km) in which 25000 villagers participated. It commenced on 2nd October and culminated on 27th October, 2007. This effort led to substantive results that include enforcement of Forest Rights Act 2006 on 30th September 2013, distribution of 1.4 million land titles, constitution of Land Reforms Committee and also establishment of a National Council for Land Reforms. It was to ensure assessment of the status of land reforms, suggest recommendations to resolve conflicts over land and for providing broad guidelines and policy recommendations of the Committee.

The Janadesh i.e. 'people's order' acted as a stepping stone towards the long journey that was to be taken under the Jan Satyagraha. Its success in delivering significant outcomes infused a breath of energy, encouragement and courage. In a nonviolent resistance, taking small steps and learning from them so as to devise a more organised planned and efficient strategy in the near future is central. In a nonviolent resistance, a step-wise approach works the best because of the numerous sub-tools that need to be used and adjusted at every single step. Due to this reasons, decision-making, leadership, farsightedness and innovative thinking gains much relevance.

The Janadesh as a precursor to the Jan Satyagraha encapsulated all these elements. Janadesh reflected the power of common people and in order to continue harnessing this power it was central to instil a faith in the people and to show that their fight and hard work has not gone waste or has simply faded away. Although the government agreed for introducing major changes due to Janadesh but the commitment to the implementation of these changes remain on paper only. Instead of bringing the necessary legislations in the land policy on ground, the government diverted its energies on suppressing the movement by questioning its legitimacy.

3.2. ANALYSING JAN SATYAGRAHA

The participants and leaders of Janadesh did not succumb to the suppression of the government, instead came forth with greater strength in the form Jan Satyagraha. The 350km long March from Gwalior to Agra called Jan Satyagraha began on the UN International Non Violence Day and also the day of Gandhi Jayanti, 2nd October 2012. Through Jan Satyagraha the poor and the marginalised raised the most fundamental and pertinent questions. This march impinged on the significance of agriculture, of food production, farmer's suicide and welfare measures, government's preference for industrialists over farmers, land reforms and reduction of poverty. It also uncurtained the basic flaw in the governance structure that in name of 'national development' is catering the interests of the elite minority and ignoring the majority. It can be seen that these issues touch the foundations, relate to the basics of the concepts of development, national interest and governance. One of its major objectives was to persuade the government to reconstruct the land reform policies.

3.3. MAJOR OBJECTIVE: REVAMP LAND REFORMS POLICIES

Amidst the rampant atrocities that peasants belonging to marginalised, poor background suffered under the British rule, the freedom struggle came as light of hope for these peasants. They participated in both the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1921 and Non-cooperation Movement of 1931 in the hope that political freedom would guarantee their emancipation from the repression of the taluqdars and zamindars.

During post-independence period, in favour of tribal farmers and other peasant classes, radical land reforms were supported by a section of Congress that described them as the 'Congress Socialists Group'. Accordingly an Agrarian Reform Committee, commonly known as the Kumarappa Committee was set up. This committee proposed a fairly radical ceiling on land. With this recommendation being incorporated in the five-year plan, the matter of land reform has remained an item in the five year plans.

As rightly noted by D.Bandyopadhyay, it was in the Seventh Five -Year Plan that the indispensability of land reform in the whole process of rural development and poverty alleviation programs was recognised. It stated that:

Land reform have been recognised to constitute a vital element both in terms of anti-poverty strategy and modernisation and increased productivity in agriculture. Redistribution of land could provide a permanent asset base for a large number of rural landless poor for taking up land-based and other supplementary activities. Similarly, consolidation of holding, tenancy regulation and updating of land records would widen the access of small and marginal landholders to improved technology and inputs and thereby directly leading to increase in agricultural production.¹¹⁹

In the present days of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, land reforms have been given a backseat by the government. The half-hearted implementation is a sign of the state trying to undermine the significance of land reforms. It was the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85) i.e. even before liberalization that observation was made regarding faulty implementation: “If progress of land reforms has been less than satisfactory, it has not been due to a flaw in policy but to indifferent implementation. Often the necessary determination has been lacking to effectively undertake action, particularly, in the matter of implementation of ceiling laws, consolidation of holdings and in not vigorously pursuing concealed tenancies and having them vested with tenancy/occupancy rights as enjoined under the law.”¹²⁰

Such an observation depicts only half reality. It is like shifting of responsibilities. D. Bandyopadhyay’s comments reflect the reality of the faulty governance, he questions that “Is not the bureaucracy an integral part of the system of governance which formulated the policy? If the bureaucracy failed, the policymakers were no less responsible. In this failure lies in the seeds of further rural unrest which we are witnessing today.”¹²¹

Today, the land reforms that were supposed to be an instrument of socio-economic development are used to promote the capitalist development, neglecting the value that they possess in improving the conditions of poor, marginalized peasants and tribals. They have become irrelevant. With this, the pro poor measures and rights of the tribal people have been pushed to the corner.

Thus, the objectives put forth strong demands for establishment of comprehensive National Land reforms Act, its effective implementation by the concerned authorities. The implementation also encapsulates the meeting the need of proper monitoring

¹¹⁹ Cited in D.Bandyopadhyay, 'Does Land Still Matter?' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 43, no.10, 2008,p 38.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

institutions that will help in checking if the benefits are reaching to the poor and the marginalised sections in a time-bound manner. The movement is for introducing dynamism and proactive attitude of the government with respect to land reform policies. Its objective is to persuade the government for appointing such committees from time to time that can make progressive recommendation after serious review of the status of land reforms on ground from time to time.

Apart from being concerned with the poor, marginalised, so far oppressed tribal population, the Jan Satyagraha incorporated and gave special attention to the deprivation and difficulties faced by the women in this realm of land reform policies. Mostly they are the neglected section in these policies and their rightful benefits are pushed to the corner. In order to redress such injustices, this march moved with the aim of upholding the rights of women. It made the condition of laying down such suitable provisions for delivering the rightful ownership titles of land to women and special priority should be accorded to the single-women.

Although many provisions and legislations are present in the form of Panchayati Raj Institutions Act, PESA Act and so on that allows the control of local people over the natural resources available in their vicinity. But, with the mad rush towards industrial development and crony capitalism, there are frequent cases of intrusion and wrongful, unjustified ascendancy of the supporters of market economy and logic of profit earning. Jan Satyagraha directs itself towards ensuring that the government gives enough weightage to the consent of the local individuals and the community and not takes them as a weak party to the negotiation.

One of the objectives of Jan Satyagraha is to assure transparency in working of the government and making provisions for undertaking punitive measures for the concerned officials and authorities in case of violation and non-implementation of pro-poor laws, rules and regulations made with respect to conservation and rightful use of local natural resources.

3.4. JAN SATYAGRAHA CONTRIBUTING TO NONVIOLENCE AS A MEANS OF RESISTANCE

Many aspects incorporated in Jan Satyagraha contribute to strengthening of nonviolence as an effective means of resistance. It has a widespread support base

nationally as well as internationally. Ekta Europe which is an open network of independent organisations and individuals belonging to Europe, Gandhi International that is a French N.G.O., Sarvodaya USA which emphasizes on self-development, Ekta Canda is a group of organisations, groups and individuals in Canada helps Ekta Parishad in spreading awareness about nonviolence to be used as a means for social change.

With respect to training the activists, SAID India provides training facilities of the people in nonviolent resistance and also offers placements and internships for study and work experience in nonviolent action and social movements in India, South Asia Peace Alliance is an alliance that highlights different forms of structural and other types of violence and teaches how to counter them through nonviolent action in order to establish sustainable peace, and South-South Solidarity seeks to build a support network within the developing countries and interchange expertise. It can be seen from this brief description of Ekta Parishad's partners that nonviolence as a means of resistance is made to be central by this organisation and it has prioritised all the requirements of a nonviolent resistance from training to awareness and from awareness to implementation of the knowledge.

Apart from its international partners, Ekta Parishad has its connections with different regional organisations in India. Pragati Grameen Vikas Samiti in Bihar, Prayog Samaj Sevi Sanstha located in Chandigarh, National Youth Project in Delhi, Naya Savera Vikas Kendra in Jharkhand, Kerela Gram Nirman Samiti in Kerela are some of the examples of national connections of Ekta Parishad.

Indeed it is important to have support of the international organisations but it is equally necessary to maintain connections with institutions within the country. This helps in understanding the cause from multiple lenses by looking deep into the different experiences of the marginalized populations located in different regions. It becomes important to have partners from all walks of life because nonviolent resistance is infused with battle of ideas and battle of words, be it over a pure dichotomy between nonviolence and violence, over diversity of issues, multiplicity and management of concerned parties and so on. Waging a nonviolent conflict is not a spontaneous task, it requires a collective effort to get deep down into the conflict situation, mapping different perceptions and expectations of the both the oppressor

and the oppressed. There is a greater demand on developing relations with those that are different along with those who possess the similar ideas, beliefs and perceptions.

Another very significant aspect of nonviolent resistance is its organisation. Jan Satyagraha was a movement that mobilised one lakh people in India. In order to assure a proper management of this large peace army, the movement right from the beginning focussed on dividing the activists into small groups and wings. Ekta Parishad contains three wings that contribute to not only organisation of people but also organisation of issues and activities related to these people. These three wings are as follows:

Ekta Mahila Manch- Ekta Parishad is a group where the values for which it is fighting are first adopted and lived by each individual of the group. One of such values is gender equality. It was established on 21st June, 2001 at the CESCO Centre, Madurai, Tamil Nadu and now, spreads in 11 states in India. Women constitute a large part of the society until and unless they are not given their fair share, no struggle can reach its substantive goals. Gender equality is one of the most important and yet the most neglected issues so far. It is high time that women and men both are treated equally as humans. Both are given fair and equal opportunity to contribute to the change and construct a new, just an equitable future for the coming generations.

Ekta Parishad incorporates this significant issue within itself and has given it a shape by forming Ekta Mahila Manch(EMM). This wing gives serious attention to the attainment of women's right of equality, sovereignty and justice through non-violent means. The vision of this wing is the establishment of an equal, just and nonviolent society through women's leadership and participation. It walks with the objectives of ensuring equitable rights over land and livelihood resources to women, helping women to be self-dependent economically, advocating and implementing such rules and regulations that are in favour of women, fighting against all forms of oppression, taking such steps that would guarantee social, political, and economic empowerment of society.

The seriousness that Ekta Parishad devotes to this issue gets reflected in the strategies which it employs to accomplish its objectives. It seeks empowerment of women by making them stand at the equal front with men, not only women but men are also sensitized about the rights of both of them. Women are made to be the participants as

well as hold leadership positions in at least half the numbers of the total participants. The women youth are encouraged to be member cadres for fighting the nonviolent struggle for women's rights. EMM makes efforts in establishing Mutual Help Groups, networks, platform for dialogues and constructive activities to promote independence and role of women.

Ekta Kala Manch -Ekta Parishad uses the tool of performance in its struggle. In a nonviolent resistance many options remain at the disposal of the activists, but to put them to use requires a serious and planned approach. This is because not all the sub-tools can fulfil each and every purpose. They are to be strategically used in accordance with the context, situation and purpose at stake.

Ekta Kala Manch represents the cultural wing of Ekta Parishad and plays a significant role in the nonviolent struggle. It came into existence with the first Theatre Workshop Festival in CESC Centre, 1998. It acts as a way off connecting with people belonging to different villages, languages, castes, literacy levels. It also acts as a mediator between the movement carried out by the Ekta Parishad and other movements going on in other parts of India.

This platform helps in bringing forth the miseries of the oppressed from different regions of the villages through performances including dance, songs and drama. With the help of such performances the activists identify themselves with others who have experienced the same fate by the hands of the oppressors. One of the remarkable steps that Ekta Parishad takes in enhancing the significance of this nonviolent sub-tool is to use it as a motivator and as a source of energy-giver to the activists during the marches. They have played a great role in Chetawany March 2006, Janadesh 2007 and Jan Satyagraha 2012.

Ekta Arthik Manch-The Ekta Arthik Manch is the economic wing of Ekta Parishad. This wing looks into the betterment of livelihood and income opportunities of the poor, tribal village dwellers. Such a wing shows the organised approach with which Ekta Parishad is carrying its nonviolent resistance.

Ekta Parishad puts forth a forward looking as well as a far sighted plan for achieving its goal. It does not limit itself with the attainment of rights over land only but moves beyond it. This means that it also looks into the question of sustainable use of land.

Such a concern not only helps in conserving natural resources, helping the individual owners of the land but also the entire society at large gets benefited. Land, water and forest are those precious natural resources that cater to the entire humanity, mindful use of these resources on individual basis, when added up, can make a substantive difference in their conservation as well as in meeting the needs of those sections that are deprived of these resources.

Economically too, it has an impact. The problems of unemployment, underemployment and disguised employment in the agricultural sector can easily be tackled if these resources are exploited cautiously. India is a land of acute poverty and also a land of diverse natural resources, the imbalance that occurs need to be corrected as soon as possible. The method that Ekta Parishad suggests is to establish 'people's economy' by using nonviolence. By 'people's economy', the Parishad aims at developing a model in which economic self-sufficiency or independence of the villages is guaranteed. This can happen only when people are given their rights over their resources which need to be used sustainably. Such an economic framework will also help in reducing migration and it will also enfeeble the exploitative tendencies of the moneylenders.

The Ekta Arthik Manch supports community or group based production, helps in the sale of handicrafts and village industries products like khadi, honey, rice, oil, wool and so on, establishment of small and medium-sized community enterprises . It strives for sustainable development and thus, introduces such work practices that add to the ecology and minimise the negative effects on the environment. Following these lines, it emphasises on organic farming and organic products.

Specifically for the 2012 Jan Satyagraha March an organising committee was created that was said to be the 'brain' of the movement. The committee is composed of several teams each consisting of thousand members divided into groups of fifty to hundred for efficient management. These teams separately provide the facilities for backup, transportation, accommodation, toilets and showers, food supply, water supply, medical requirements, cooking, program organization, media and documentation, and a team to decide the structure and organization of temporary camps also called advance team. Such different sections meant for management of the entire March clearly reflect the seriousness with which Jan Satyagraha was carried

out. When nonviolence is used as a means of resistance then it is considered as more of a strategic tool than just a principle of life.

Waging a nonviolent resistance with one lakh participants is a task of great responsibility. It has already been mentioned that nonviolent resistance demands greater discipline and homework. There is a greater risk of losing life when only one party is using nonviolence as against the other. If the skills in employing the tool of nonviolence are not honed enough then the cost borne by the nonviolent activists escalates. Keeping these factors in mind Jan Satyagraha spends tremendous amounts of energy in mobilizing people in a very systematic manner.

The meticulous division of people involved in undertaking direct nonviolent action emphasises not only participation but also on leadership. The relationship among the various levels may seem to be hierarchical on the outside but with a closer look a relationship of mutual responsibility of looking after each level for better management can be established.

There were 1 lakh padyatris or foot-marchers that participated in Jan Satyagraha, out of them ten thousand were positioned as village leaders or dustan nayaks that looked after ten padyatris and had the responsibility of making them aware about the reasons for Satyagraha and warning them against the hardships they might face during the course of the struggle. They conducted village meetings for this purpose. These leaders had to convey the exact number of people coming from their respective villages (at least ten), and also their grievances to the section leader.

Section leaders or Jathan Nayaks were two thousand in number and were next to the village leaders. A section leader was responsible for leading five village leaders or five villages, about fifty foot-marchers. He assisted the village leaders in taking care of the problems, in village meetings and for his own village he worked in the same manner as the village leader. From the village leaders he collected the grievances and passed them on to the group leaders or Dal Nayaks.

The two hundred Group leaders or the Dal Nayak had ten section leaders or fifty villages under himself or herself. He/ She acted as a section leader and village leader for his/ her own village. Like the section leader, he/ she assisted the section leader in

his functions and also collected grievances from them which he / she conveyed it to the next level of leaders.

The next group of leaders were the Camp leaders or Shivir Nayak. The movement had 20 camp leaders with each responsible for twenty group leaders or five hundred villages. The camp leaders had the biggest responsibility as he had to assist the group leaders and collect all the grievances from them in order to direct them towards concerned government authorities.

The senior leaders, Rajagopal and Rajendra Singh Parmar ¹²²were the linchpin of Jan Satyagraha. They occupied the top position in the structure and were vested with the responsibility of providing training in using non-violent tools like sit-ins, blockades, leadership and capacity building ,conducting village level meetings and so on. Ran Singh looked into the logistics of Jan Satyagraha and P.V.Rajagopal walked from village to village in 12 states covering more than 6000 kilometres, gathered their grievances, involved media attention, and he also made the effort of encouraging people to join Jan Satyagraha.

Analysis of the entire structure clearly reflects that the attention is given to multiple factors like people, their grievances, their function, training and leadership. Nonviolent resistance demands acquiring and internalizing suitable skills that may help in making the best use of nonviolent tools and techniques and even allow innovations according to the situation.

Ekta Parishad and Jan Satyagraha aim at bringing change in the status quo. Their approach towards achieving this aim is nonviolent and inclusive. They are determined to question the unjust system and put forth their demands for ensuring a sustainable and just society. The resolute and firm devotion of this movement by walking on the principles of nonviolent resistance and making all possible efforts and sacrifices for achieving the envisaged goals can be seen through the step of advocacy for change. A conflict arises only to transform the status quo, the difference that can be seen here is

¹²²Rajendra Singh is a well-known water conservationist from Alwar district, Rajasthan in India. Also known as "waterman of India", he won the Stockholm Water Prize, an award known as "the Nobel Prize for water", in 2015.

with respect to a violent and a nonviolent conflict. When violence is adopted for the struggle, one can observe mostly a clear line of demarcation among the involved parties under the categories of 'supporter' and 'enemy'. On the other hand, when nonviolence is used as a means of resistance attempts are made to blur this line of division.

Ekta Parishad undertook advocacy for change by reaching three levels-People's advocacy, State and National advocacy and International advocacy. Under People's advocacy efforts are made to influence public opinion by using direct action at the grassroots and support of media is taken to cover that grassroots action. Some of the advocacy techniques included grievance collection so as to show the rampant landlessness and other such problems, using media so as to spread appropriate messages especially in rallies, sit-in and other such social actions, ensuring that concerned politicians at the state and national level are communicated with the help of letters, creating awareness about the gravity of landlessness and other such significant issues by sponsoring and publicizing studies.

Being a nonviolent resistance, the Ekta Parishad tries to include the state as well as other national institutions within its struggle. This shows that more than animosity, anger, revenge and brute force, it is courage and love-force¹²³ that becomes important. At this level of advocacy, Ekta Parishad directly communicates the needed policy initiatives to political leaders, engaging in dialogue with State-level and National-level policy makers, intellectuals and government officials, Ekta Parishad looked into the matter of fair distribution and accordingly monitored Forest Rights Acts, pushing for pro-poor legislations and policies.

Crossing the borders, Ekta Parishad took up international advocacy through which it persuaded the international institutions, agencies, leaders to write letters to the Prime Minister of India for supporting land reform and non-violent social actions, for supporting volunteers and joining Jan Satyagraha.

¹²³ In Hind Swaraj, M.K.Gandhi (page 65) explains love-force as a force that is opposite of brute-force. It dwells upon the indestructible force that acts as an impetus for the activists to remove themselves from participating and consenting to unjust actions of the opponent, without adhering to any violence.

3.5. MARCH AND DIALOGUE: TWO PRIMARY NONVIOLENT TOOLS

After analysing Janadesh and Jan Satyagraha, it is clear that Ekta Parishad emphasises on two main tools: foot-march or yatra and dialogue or samvad. Gandhi forms the inspiration behind using March as a tool of resistance. It was under his leadership during the Salt March that people challenged the colonial rule for their rights over salt. This March filled the colonized oppressed people with strength and courage that ultimately led to the independence of India. Inspired by the success of Salt March and the nonviolent struggle for independence, Ekta Parishad has adopted March as one of its assets in carrying on with the struggle. Marching enable the activists to realize their own physical and mental strength.

Long marches further the support for the cause and give it legitimacy in the eyes of the audiences. March is a manifestation of the sacrifice and resilience that the activists possess .It establishes that instead of escalating violence that also require courage and immense sacrifice, the activists have made a conscious choice of bearing the pain and not inflicting violence so as to achieve goals through nonviolence as a means of resistance.

Marching is also a symbol of unity and independence at the same time. Just like Gandhi began as an individual to March for demolishing the British monopoly over Salt, the fight for the rights of the marginalised and poor began with a few, it grew into a movement when the marginalised unified and gave this unity a real form through March. But, at same time, every single activist had his/her story of oppression that made him/her to stand up and walk against injustice. Every activist is independent in making the decision to join the March till the struggle reaches its goals. It lends them dignity and instils enough faith in their own abilities.

Another major tool of resistance that the struggle of Ekta Parishad has employed is dialogue. Dialogue seems to be a mild tool at first but it contains immense power to fulfil goals. Nonviolent resistance insists on the fact that not every change requires a complete turn-around in a single day. Through dialogue, well informed, mutually consented, constructive change is made possible. Dialogue provides an opportunity to bring different parties to the struggle at one table. Though it is not necessary that

every party agrees with one another but it does build a sense of confidence for each other, it helps in communicating the ideas and concerns of all the parties in a firm and nonviolent way.

The process of dialogue does not mean only talking, it refers to presentation of arguments, central concerns, grievances, messages of people, deliberation over finding the solutions and agreements and disagreements over various issues. It requires skills, knowledge, wisdom and serious commitment towards the cause. Ekta Parishad understands the power of dialogue and considers it be an important part of the struggle as it acts as a tool in the hands of those at the grassroots to fight for their rights by applying the right to speech at the top level. Those at the top level also get a chance to stand with the grassroots after having a dialogue with them. The top level actors make way for the activists and their concerns by extending the boundaries of their role by establishing dialogue with other top level actors in a democratic way.

3.6. JANSAMVAD YATRA: CONNECTING DIALOGUE AND MARCH IN PRACTICE

As explained in the previous section, Dialogue and March are two of the most indispensable techniques of successfully and forcefully carrying out a nonviolent struggle. Rajagopal along with some of the members of Ekta Parishad planned to march from the southernmost tip of India to the north of India. In the course of journey, the weapon of dialogue was employed for relating with the local people and local leaders in order to understand the exact condition and situation of the people at grassroots. This was also to serve as a grievance-collecting mechanism and as a platform or encouraging people to speak for your rights peacefully and in nonviolent manner.

Through this yatra, Ekta Parishad unearthed the reality of broken promises made to the tribal and poor sections of the society in the constitution. While covering regions in states like Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Jharkhand, it was noticed that even when many laws have been passed by the government in favour of tribal people's rights over their forests, land and produce still because of poor implementation, unawareness among the tribal people about the laws, greater inclination of the government towards market, tribal are not able to realize these rights in reality. There

are frequent instances of illegal encroachments, displaced people living on the edges, tribal people losing their land, property, life, feeling duped by the government agencies, disgruntled and neglected with the government especially tribes in the north-east. Such a rigorous yatra helped in highlighting the sacred position of land and forest resources in the lives of the tribal poor people.

The dialogue process also helped in elucidating the objectives as well as erasing the doubts that people had with respect to the nonviolent struggle. Mostly it was being misunderstood as a Maoist struggle, but Rajagopal made it clear that their resistance is nonviolent resistance adopting the Gandhian techniques of Ahimsa. On the other hand, Maoists follow the path of violent resistance. This yatra enabled the activists and leaders of Ekta Parishad in giving a sense of confidence to the people for taking up the weapon of nonviolence against the unjust state institutions and laws. It also constructed bridges amongst people of different villages, activists of Ekta Parishad and local decision-making authorities which gave way to charting out the blueprint of a strong, holistic vision of a sustainable future.

3.7. JAI JAGAT: MAKING NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE GLOBAL

In his address P.V.Rajagopal briefly explains about Jai Jagat in the following words:

A country like India where problems are so many will demand larger mobilization to bring about basic change. We are trying to address change at the social and economic level. We are also interested in strengthening a process of participatory democracy and responsible governance. Though the action is in India, we want the world at large to join this process. We believe in Jai Jagat and Sarvodaya - Jai Jagat means Victory to the World, Sarvodaya means Well-being of all through the well-being of the last.¹²⁴

This address by the President of Ekta Parishad reflects that change can happen only when basic questions are asked, when the foundation is made stronger, when the development begins from the grassroots, when governance adopts a bottom-up approach and when the collective consciousness gets enlightened and motivated enough to fight for their rights. It is clear that a movement like Jan Satyagraha, Jai Jagat does not envisage a constructive change only within the India but for the entire world. It is not limited to immediate benefits for a small section of Indian society but wants a long lasting, sustainable change even for the last individual in the world. It seeks fundamental transformation of not only the civil society which is also

¹²⁴ www.ektaparishad.com (Ekta Parishad, address)

indispensable but it also targets at the achievement of participatory democracy that also calls for establishment of deliberative democracy and responsible government. The Jai Jagat is a movement that seeks change from multiple dimensions and areas of life.

We witness nonviolent struggles dispersed incoherently everywhere, but nonviolence as a means of resistance can take the forefront and achieve its full potential only when the message of nonviolence as an efficient means of resistance can be spread in the entire world in a more structured manner. Human life throughout the world is considered to be precious, in order to build a greater consensus over the relevance of nonviolence especially with respect to saving human lives, greater efforts have to be made in a direction that builds suitable conditions for propelling nonviolent resistance as the most preferred form of resistance. Ekta Parishad through 'Jai Jagat 2020' plans to work at a global as well as at the grassroots level for bringing about constructive changes for the poor, marginalised, oppressed sections of the society with nonviolent resistance.

Due to globalization, ruthless competition, profit-making mindset over welfare orientation of the society, excessive hold of market and capitalist elites, the marginalized sections are further pushed towards the corners all over the world. It is high time that the suppressed no more remain voiceless, that they wield the weapon of nonviolence to give strength to their stifled voices. 'Jai Jagat', which actually mean 'victory of the world' is considered to be a concept closer to the Gandhian concept 'Sarvodaya' that concentrates on the wellbeing of all. Through 'Jai Jagat', Ekta Parishad strives to demolish the selfish interests that lie in raising more boundaries among nations, gender, and so on.

The bone of contention that mostly causes an upsurge in the form of people's movement is the artificial and forceful dichotomy created between human and nature. The efforts made towards establishing ascendancy over nature and its resources is proving to be fatal for the entire humanity yet the greed for immediate profits has made the minority to overlook this fatality. Jai Jagat aims re-establishing the fractured relation of humanity with nature. It is launched with the idea of victory for everyone. This idea implicitly conveys that genuine change cannot be achieved in isolation, it cannot be a work of one country or one group.

With this assumption Ekta Parishad sought to build a global campaign under 'Jai Jagat' that would help in taking nonviolent, co-ordinated action in order to challenge and sensitize the global players. This does not mean that Ekta Parishad has lost touch with the local struggle and local issues, which is most often the case with many of the movements going global. The reason for continuity between the local and global struggle is that it tries to see the local issues in the light of global issues, understands the issues at hand with respect to their impact at the global level and also establishes a connection not only with the local leadership but also with the global leaders through national as well as international advocacy.

'Jai Jagat 2020' is a long term endeavour for change. Some of the action plans were put forth for implementation that reflected its vision of building a nonviolent world. It proposed youth training camps for youth in nonviolent action, collaboration with civil society groups in other countries and continents like Brazil, France, Belgium, England, Sri Lanka and so, organizing an international youth program for offering a platform to young social leaders, arrangement for international women activists that can help in the growth of local women leaders, conducting an international conference on nonviolent economy also termed as 'social economy' and 'solidarity economy' for encouraging a development model based on self-reliance, reciprocity and equitable and fair exchange, also for challenging and countering the present violent economy.

'Jai Jagat 2020' plans to construct a larger nonviolent community by undertaking a global march from Delhi Rajghat (the resting place of Gandhi) to Geneva or United Nations. These places are symbols of nonviolence and humanity. United Nations, as the name signifies is meant for unity, dignity and human rights of every individual in this world. If it is not able to listen the voices of the marginalized due to the noise of the powerful sections, then, it is time for the marginalised to make their voice through active nonviolence. Ekta Parishad introduced the campaign, 'Jai Jagat 2020' around the notion of making a difference by challenging indifference and to introduce and firmly establish the culture of active nonviolence by confronting silence and violence.

4. BUILDING WAY FOR WORLDWIDE NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE

Rampant inequalities, displaced, helpless communities and unjust institutions are not exclusive to India only. They are widespread and dispersed in the entire world. Therefore, it is necessary to build alliance and form networks so as to uproot these problems. It should be kept in mind that the force to retain the status quo is equally strong as the force to change it. It is time to break this balance.

4.1. BUILDING ALLIANCE AND FOLLOWING STRUCTURED APPROACH

Ekta Parishad understands that the call of the hour is to challenge the violent, oppressive, conservative institutions with nonviolent and democratic resistance. It resolves to fight burgeoning inequalities that further oppress the marginalised sections, by joining hands with different movements, strengthening them and reorganising them so as to make them realize their full potential. In this daunting task it makes sure to use nonviolence as the common tool to face injustice and ensure constructive change in the process.

Although it questions the ascendancy of the State, it seeks to do so within the bounds of the constitutional provisions based on the principles of equality and justice. It directs all the movements that are members of this larger people's movement to walk on the lines of equality and justice. It suggests repudiation of being stuck in the little circles of the ideologies hampering their reach towards the larger goals.

In order to put forth a strong struggle, Ekta Parishad highlights the need for the movements to work collectively which would require them to re-strategize and restructure. It visualizes the poor, the deprived, the youth and women to be the flag-bearers of their struggles. Such a vision clearly indicates the will of the movement of empowering the subjugated masses so that they can speak for themselves. The list of resolutions of Ekta Parishad mentions that “non-violence should just not remain an ideology but should reflect in non-violent direct action on ground leading to a change in the way of life (non-violence as a way of life).”¹²⁵The strong thrust on nonviolence

¹²⁵ www.ektaparishad.com (See for the list of resolution, Ekta Parishad,)

in its active form constitutes the essence of the struggles undertaken by the Ekta Parishad.

The structure of Ekta Parishad is highly decentralised and democratic but it is also a complex set of interrelationships because of its ties with civil society organisation, international and national groups and partners. The international groups spread awareness about its agendas all over, provide financial resources and offer assistance in training activists in the national institutions. Such training helps the leaders at the national level to engage in capacity building of the marginalised and poor grass root level activists.

The activists devote themselves at three levels:-a) economic programs (b) advocacy and (c) mobilisation of people. Through their struggles the grassroots convey their messages not only to the top-levels but also help in spreading awareness at the international level also. Therefore, the struggle is structured such that it flows from one level to another. The international institutions connect with the local activists who establish a relationship with the grassroots leaders and people that in turn demonstrate their power through nonviolent resistance and also help in communicating at the international level through international institutions.

4.2. ATTRACTING AUDIENCES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

According to the 'Onion Theory of Nonviolent Protest' given by Bruce Hartford, the actual impacts of nonviolent resistance can be seen as the layers of onion, with each layer representing a different audience. When studied from the core to the outer layer, the impact on each level of audience is different with respect to the number of people influence, the intensity on people, and the control of the actual activists over the content of the message they receive.

The four layers that form to be the basis of the nonviolent protest is: 1.Participants: The resistors that are directly involve in the protest.2. Observers: The parties that are targeted and those that are uninvolved bystanders encountering or observing the protest.3. Grapevine: It refers to those who get to hear about the protest from some other source be it individual whom they know or social media, they are a part of.4.Media: It includes those that learn about the protest through impersonal mass media.

The core layer is represented by the participants. They are very closely connected to the resistance than anyone else and they have the greatest control over the content of the experience. They can to an extent manipulate the reactions of those presenting the other three layers by choosing their course of actions.

Ekta Parishad uses this kind of knowledge and in the process of its nonviolent struggle, it tries to touch the lives of every participant involved. With its training and democratic deliberation, it makes the marginalised and so far oppressed capable enough to fight for their rights, it reminds them of their self-worth, dignity, courage. It makes them internalize that they don't have to be suppressed and live in conformity with the societal norms that make them subjects of humiliation and injustice. This spirit of non-confirmation gets reflected in their nonviolent protests.

The second layer is formed by the observers. They are mostly large in number but the effect of resistance is lesser on them when compared to the participants. The participants possess less control over how they experience and perceive their message. Ekta Parishad attempts to create awareness at every level with the help of its partners. In a nonviolent struggle, the observers play an important role in strengthening it. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the resisters to take observers in confidence by gaining their faith in their cause. This can happen only when any kind of discomfort related to resistance are eliminated.

The participants have to make sure that their actions are not threatening to the observers, that they do not cause a major disruption or disturbance in their normal environment. The activists also need to take care of the fact that their messages though provocative are not insulting and do not sound as if they are blaming the observers for the disappointing plight of the resisters. The messages should be engaging, encouraging the observers to know more about the real situation and contribute to the cause. Therefore, the actions in this direction should be designed to elicit from the observers sympathy, empathy and support rather than fear and opposition.

Grapevine forms the third layer. In this age of social media it becomes easy to connect with any issue in a matter of seconds. With the same speed opinions are formed. It becomes the responsibility of the protestors that even though their issues and concerns are being communicated through second or third hand, the information that gets

circulated propels a positive reaction. This can happen only if first hand actions of the resistors are such that they do not violate the faith of people. For instance, if they start taking lives, creating nuisance every then and now, or create any kind of threat to the safety of innocents then even the word-of-mouth that others will hear would be negative, which will make such people connected through grapevine incline more towards the oppressors that term the resistors as ‘anti-development,’ anti-national’ and so on.

Two of the ways that Bruce Hartford suggests for gathering a positive reaction are audacity and humour. Bruce states that audacity refers to non-violently doing something that is unexpected, it is breaking the cultural taboos, demolishing stereotypes in ways that can provoke a response without alienating the potential supporters. Ekta Parishad attempts to break the commonly held beliefs that are adverse to the marginalised and the poor sections of the society but it does it in a manner that keeps the supporters and space for gaining more support at all the other levels along with the grassroots level.

According to Bruce Hartford, commercial media is not a very effective tool in nonviolent resistance. It is the least impactful and its content cannot be controlled by the movement activists. He suggests that it is the least reliable layer in achieving goals. In order to avoid being fabricated according to the whims and fancies of the commercial media, Ekta Parishad depends much on its own resources for coverage. These include articles, case studies, videos and photographs mostly produced by its organizations and partners.

5. CONCLUSION: A CONTINUOUS MARCH IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Ekta Parishad stands as an example for an organised resistance. The nonviolent resistance, that it led, plunged into the middle of those areas that are being handled with violence so far. I think that much needs to be learned from these struggles. Jan Satyagraha, for instance reflects the power of nonviolence in the people. It shows how people’s power can be harnessed more when nonviolence is used as a means of resistance. It encapsulates within itself many important lessons.

One of the lessons that should be taken from Jan Satyagraha is the relevance of a structured approach with which a nonviolent resistance should be carried out. The other thing that made this resistance shine out is the way in which it empowered, mobilised people in the form of activists, leaders and change makers. It is often noted that the advocates of nonviolence endeavour to support it as a way of life. Ekta Parishad also asserts that nonviolence should be treated as a way of life but along with this idea it also emphasises that the nonviolent struggles should be solution-seeker resistances.

P.V.Rajagopal, the President of Ekta Parishad, advocates a movement of nonviolence from being used as resistance towards being a part of life. I think that this metamorphosis makes more sense as it sets a logical connection between the strategic and the moral aspect of nonviolence. Nonviolence does not cause a total and sudden digression from the day to day life. Due to this, some of its aspects like resolving matters through dialogue, focussing on constructive change, and such other values and methods can gradually seep into personal, individual lives as well.

I think this is where the myth of nonviolence being an easy and a weak tool also emerges. The silence and passivity that people adopt in their daily lives is often misconstrued as nonviolence, but actually the nonviolence is not such an explicit part of our day to day lives. Nonviolence is a practice; it requires devotion and courage in both its strategic as well as in its moral form. Incorporating nonviolence, though, does not cause a complete rupture from the daily routines but it does demand a change in the fabric of life. Inculcation of values of patience, fearlessness and commitment to follow a nonviolent lifestyle can come only when one is trained in being consistently retaining these values. So the misconceptions associated with nonviolence being for the weak are clearly wrong as both nonviolent resistance and nonviolence as a way of life takes immense strength.

Another point that Jan Satyagraha highlights is that there needs to be a balance between the knowledge about nonviolent resistance in the books and the practical knowledge that is gathered through experiences. It can be seen that prior to Jan Satyagraha, Ekta Parishad carried out Jan Samwad yatra that acted as a grievance collecting mechanism. By undertaking such an exercise, the struggle got its major issues which directed it further to formulate its course accordingly. Even though the

activists were trained by the experts also, but these experts were made aware of the context as well by encouraging them to be activists first.

Similarly the activists that came from the practical contexts were made to lead after they understood the nuances of leadership skills. This important and unique technique helped in erasing the mismatch between the trainers, experts, scholars in nonviolent resistance and those that are at the ground or are situated in the problem area. Therefore, there is an urgent need to remove the isolated moulds in which both of these areas remain by ensuring a constant close interaction between them.

Jan Satyagraha and other struggles by Ekta Parishad reflect the importance of having a wide base of alliances from different walks of life. Building such a large network is not a one-day task, it requires recognising the points which overlap, points that can be compromised with and points that can be brought closer to the concerned issues. It takes a lot of effort in the form of dialogue, persuasion, offering assistance and resources. The other thing that remains implicit in these lines yet is one of the significant factors to be taken into account is the elimination of boundaries. By this I mean the demolishing the meaning of 'us' and 'them'. In a nonviolent resistance there is no particular enemy that is targeted at the gunpoint. It is more issue-based than enemy-based. Due to this reason, P.V.Rajagopal asserts that even those from the government that can help should be made to involve in the resistance.

One of the significant points that P.V.Rajagopal highlight is the nonviolent struggle which it leads are 'manageable' conflicts. By this he means that when nonviolence is used as a means of resistance, the costs of it are mostly minimum, sometimes even reversible and mostly in control. Nonviolent resistance offers enough scope to find out alternative ways to deal with difficult situations and thus, switching over to plan B becomes more convenient and with least losses. This is forms one of the core and often unnoticeable elements of nonviolent resistance. In fact, the concept of 'backfire' by Erica Chenoweth¹²⁶ mentioned in the first chapter is also a concept closer to explaining about this aspect of 'manageable conflict'.The concept of backfire indicates how when the violent opponent tries to suppress the nonviolent resistors, the

¹²⁶ Maria J.Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, 'Why Civil Resistance Works:The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict' in *The MIT Press*, vol.33,no.1,2008,p.6.

violence adversely affects or backfires the originator. Such costs are not borne by the nonviolent party. Due to the manageability of the nonviolent strategies, the nonviolent resisters mostly bear lesser costs.

To culminate, it can be said that the nonviolence as a means of resistance need to be understood in more depth in order to see its real power. More layers of it need to be unearthed by studying and analysing both the literature related to it, delving deep into the research work done on this issue, and the real struggles that use this tool. In addition to this, I think the understanding of the effectiveness of nonviolence as a means can be enriched when the studies on nonviolent resistances are seen from the lenses of different disciplines.

By analysing the contemporary struggles and understanding the psychology that needs to be developed in order to be an assertive activist, leader or a trainer; dissecting the social make-up of different sections that participate in the struggle; understanding the political rights and institutions that can act in favour of the struggle and expand the scope for nonviolent struggles; analysing the economic aspect of the initiating the struggle and also trying to understand different and innovative mechanisms that can help in seeking solutions. For instance, the entire field of conflict transformation and peace-building is all about explaining diverse ways of tracing conflicts and finding solutions from different angles. But, the first step is to erase the plethora of misconceptions and enhance the limited understanding about nonviolence as a means of resistance. This is what Ekta Parishad also attempts to do and if it proceeds in the right direction then, the time is not far when the potential of nonviolence as a tool to resist and bring about political change is realized.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation attempted to demonstrate the importance of nonviolence as an effective means of resistance; powerful tool for political movements. It also provides a strong foundation of arguments and evidences along with theories in favour of nonviolence as a means of resistance. The research work also conveys that the approach to understand nonviolence as a means of resistance and carrying out a nonviolent struggle in practice is very different from the any conventional violent resistance.

The first chapter lays down a theoretical framework of nonviolence as a means of resistance. It focuses on examining whether nonviolence is an effective strategy or not by highlighting two main categories. These two sections representing the pacifist and the pragmatist tradition of nonviolence explicate the nuances involved in the evolution of nonviolence as an organised, coherent tool of resistance. The two traditions also delineate the differences of approach that the advocates of these traditions had towards employing nonviolence as a means of resistance. One of the prominent points that the chapter makes after analysing these central traditions is that both of these contain a glimpse of each other's elements. This interaction, though implicit, shows a continuous movement and improvement in the course of nonviolent resistance.

The chapter, thus, informs that the advocates of nonviolence, in the 20th and 21st century, have contributed to taking the lessons on nonviolent resistance of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Gene Sharp and Tolstoy. In addition to this their efforts in introducing nonviolence as a strategy and not just a philosophy have made a sea change in not only in the study but also with respect to the practical aspect of nonviolence. This can be easily deciphered from the three chapters that nonviolence as means of resistance is as complex and as layered a concept as violence. It is not something that can be adopted spontaneously or in the moment. There is a huge amount of studies, research works and training required in making a nonviolent resistance effective.

The chapter also makes an effort to erase the misunderstandings, misconceptions as well as myths related to nonviolence as a means of resistance. Often, the discussion of nonviolence is considered to be limited to Gandhi and his conception of nonviolence. Though it is true that Gandhian nonviolence formed the base of the nonviolent studies but as shown in the research work, the studies on nonviolence go beyond Gandhi. This chapter thus, lays down a foundation for plunging safely into the practical realm where nonviolent resistance are undertaken.

The second and the third chapters delve into the practical aspect of nonviolence as a means of resistance. These chapters test the hypothesis and study the research question by analysing two social movements: the Narmada Bachao Andolan and the Ekta Parishad, respectively. The Narmada Bachao Andolan(NBA) led by Medha Patkar marked a new phase of nonviolent resistance in India. This movement provided a strong base for the coming nonviolent social movements by constructing a path for nonviolence in the arena of struggles that have so far been adopting violence.

NBA's fight against exploitation rang an alarm bell for the powerful state institutions also that have been considering nonviolence as a meek form of resistance. Its successful endeavours ranging from making the suppressed rise for justice and rights to thwarting the World Bank from providing financial aid to India for constructing dams acted as a blow to the misunderstood notions about nonviolent resistance. In addition to this, the courage with which it was able to present to the entire world the gross injustices and the higher costs due the dam construction proved to be commendable. It should be noted here, that a nonviolent resistance is capable of reaching to more people or audiences and also to a variety of partners at different levels. This is because of the flexibility, the room that nonviolence as a means of resistance provides for dialogue, debates and discussion without any kind of intimidation.

Another significant lesson that this chapter puts across is that in a nonviolent resistance, the calibration of success is more in terms of the continuous chain of constructive changes than just the attainment of end goals. Though the NBA was not able to stop the construction of dams but still it can be said to be a successful movement. This is because of the remarkable changes it made in the favour of the local people and the society at large.

In the third chapter also the scope for constructive changes encapsulated in nonviolent resistances comes out clearly. This subject opens up the avenues for digging deeper into the practical cases of nonviolence. Such an interrogation uncurtains the multifarious avenues that nonviolent struggle provide for making innovations, creative solutions and context-based modifications of various nonviolent strategies. Nonviolence as a means of resistance encompasses a wide range of changes not only at the end of it but also in when in process. The gender equality, conservation of natural resources, creating space for new ideas and dialogues for the benefit of the community, removing lines of discrimination on various fronts are few of the positive changes that take place at different junctures of nonviolent struggle.

The third chapter that studies Ekta Parishad argues that the various movements under its leadership have largely contributed to the organising nonviolent struggles into a coherent structure. Nonviolence as a means of resistance can be effective only if the all the components required to wage a nonviolent resistance are so in tandem with each other and with the purpose of the movement. Such a co-ordinated approach to organise the alliances, strategies, those sections resisting, the target audience, the target institutions and the overall leadership helps in instilling faith for nonviolent strategy and also reduces the time of the struggle for achieving its goals. Ekta Parishad provides a great example of such an organised approach.

Therefore, it can be said that the research question that if nonviolence could be considered as an effective strategy in carrying out any resistance for political change can be answered in positive terms. One would like to emphasize on the point that nonviolence as a means of resistance is able to achieve justice, claim rights, liberty and also erase many discriminatory fault-lines thus, enabling equality to manifest in different forms in reality. The research work would like claim that the hypothesis that nonviolent resistance can be an effective tool in achieving goals and bringing about constructive change, is sustainable. However it would be pertinent to acknowledge that both of these inferences are only partially sustainable. This means that though nonviolence as a means of resistance is effective on many levels but still it has a long way to go before it can be called a completely effective strategy. This argument can be culled out from the second chapter where the NBA was not able to achieve its final goal of stopping dam construction. With respect to the legitimacy and consent as well as acceptance of this means of resistance is concerned, it can be observed that it is

largely connected to its effectiveness. The effectiveness being partial, the legitimacy, consent to the use of such a means and acceptance in the eyes of the audiences in all the cases is still doubtful. It is also doubted that whether nonviolence as a means of resistance will be useful in countering extreme cases as terrorism. Such doubts depict the dearth of research work, literature, workshops and training sessions that can help remove such superficial doubts and also strengthen the realm of nonviolent resistance.

I would like to assert that nonviolence as a means of resistance has untapped potentials in providing a better and effective tool for resistance and conflict-resolution. In this century of violence it is important that such an alternative is made use of its full potential. Otherwise, the day is not far when there would be a stalemate among the violent parties with nowhere to go. Avoiding such a deadlock is possible only when a more comprehensive, coherent and co-ordinated approach is followed in understanding, applying and employing nonviolence as a means of resistance is followed. This research work contributes to the possibility of making nonviolence as a means of resistance as the first choice of people so that the problems at multiple levels can be solved effectively and with lesser costs to human life, human property and to the natural world.

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