

GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION: RELEVANCE AND APPLICATION IN INDIA'S MODERN CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Gandhian philosophy, based on the values of truth, nonviolence, self-reliance, and social justice, has been a universal framework for India to address its growing concerns. This research examines the contemporary relevance and application of Gandhian thought in addressing key issues of poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and social unrest. Through qualitative case studies and secondary data, this research demonstrates how Gandhi's vision has influenced initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, organic farming movements, and grassroots activism. The work emphasizes that Gandhian values have transformative power to make India economically self-reliant, ecologically sound, and socially cosmopolitan. In fact, the research addresses the challenges of assimilating these ideals in an increasingly modernized and globalizing India. This research, bridging the gap between tradition and modernity, offers community-driven strategies and policy recommendations to revive Gandhian thought in modern contexts. The findings underscore that Gandhi's philosophy is not a historical relic but an approach to dynamic development grounded in equity, ethical governance, and sustainable living. This research is a challenge for policymakers, educators, and civil society to realize the Gandhian model by adapting its principles, hence building a resilient, harmonious India in the challenging climate of the 21st century.

Keywords: Gandhian Philosophy, Relevance and Application, India

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi was reverently referred to as the "Father of the Nation," laying down an enduring legacy with the effect that his visions of truth, non-violence, self-reliance, and the welfare of all were not just tools for India's freedom struggle but also a perfect vision for societal change (Kakati, 2023). Gandhism addressed inherent individual dignity, life in consonance with nature's laws and ethics, living simply, and fair governance (Pande, 2023). His visionary ideas went beyond just solving the immediate problems of a newly independent India. They also offered possible answers to global issues like poverty, inequality, and the destruction of nature. (Vikram & Tiwari, 2024). He promoted grassroots power in community-based approaches to development for society's future quest. Although Gandhi's ideals were born of a unique historical moment, they had transcending relevance to human society at other times (Mulia, 2023).

The 21st century presents an unprecedented set of challenges for modernizing India in the context of globalization. Challenges such as consumerism, climate change, widening socio-economic disparities, and ethical dilemmas in governance necessitate novel responses (Behera & Nayak, 2022). Gandhi offers a counter-narrative to these issues: examples include the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*, which promotes cleanliness and civic responsibility, and organic farming, a crusade for sustainable agriculture (Nagarwal, 2023). However, the transposition of such ideals into modern-day policymaking and societal practices remains a challenge posed by global economic integration and technological revolution (Bonadio et al., 2023). This research critically examines the potential of Gandhian thought to address these challenges and contributes to the study of the practical application of the philosophy in contemporary India. The ideals of Gandhi bridge the traditional wisdom of the past with the needs of today, inspiring a vision of inclusive development and resilience, which is indispensable to India's pursuit of equity and sustainability.

This research is organized into major sections to provide an exhaustive study of the Gandhian philosophy in modern India. Section 2 presents a literature review of recent works on Gandhian principles and their applicability to contemporary contexts. Section 3 provides an overview of the study objectives, with particular emphasis on the exploration of Gandhian ideals in contemporary contexts. Section 4 describes key terms, including Gandhian philosophy and modern challenges, thereby providing a conceptual framework. Section 5 deals with the scope of the research: geographical, thematic, and time factors, focusing on the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* and *Atmanirbhar Bharat* type of initiatives. Section 6 deals with the methodology adopted by using qualitative analysis of secondary data supported by case studies. Section 7 presents findings on the economic, social, and environmental impacts of Gandhian principles. Section 8 explains why these values are useful for fostering greater community participation, reducing inequalities, and promoting sustainability. Section 9 concludes by reemphasizing Gandhi's continued relevance today. Section 10 challenges the

Gandhian concepts in the era of modernization and globalization. Section 11 presents recommendations on policy interventions, local practices, and advocacy. In its closing section, 12 references will be provided to ensure it remains properly cited and sourced.

Literature Review

The selected works underscore the enduring relevance of Gandhian philosophy in addressing contemporary challenges across various domains. (Rather, 2022) emphasizes the application of Gandhi's principles to foster social responsibility and sustainable practices in contemporary contexts. (Sharma, 2023) explores Gandhi's paradigm for public policy, particularly its role in sustainable development. (Gieg, 2023) highlights the influence of Gandhian thought in shaping India-Africa relations, emphasizing the shared historical and normative underpinnings. (Panda, 2022) examines the 21st-century significance of Gandhi's philosophy in shaping ethical and inclusive societies. (Sahu & Behera, 2022) analyze the relevance of Gandhian educational principles in addressing current educational needs and fostering holistic development. (Garai, 2023) delves into Gandhi's views on truth, cleanliness, and community service, showcasing their practical implications for community well-being. (Karam, 2023) discusses Gandhian ideals that redefine Indian modernism and their impact on contemporary literary anthologies. (Gandhi, 2022) Revisited the Gandhian approach to education to identify this as a tool for the achievement of sustainable development goals. Taken as a whole, these studies illustrate how Gandhi's vision continues to inspire policies, education, and social change, once again demonstrating its relevance to the 21st century.

The reviewed works show that this remains an ongoing challenge in applying Gandhian philosophy to contemporary societal issues; each addresses different aspects of modern life. Rather (2022) emphasizes the difficulties of adapting Gandhian ideals of social responsibility and sustainability to today's consumer-driven, globalized world. Sharma (2023) discusses the possible integration of Gandhian values into public policy for sustainable development, emphasizing that Gandhi's ideals face practical difficulties when adapted to real political and economic systems. (Gieg, 2023) questions how Gandhian non-violence and ethical diplomacy can be practically applied in international relations in the case of India-Africa relations, given that economic and power politics often seem to dominate the relationship. Panda (2022) highlights the tension between Gandhian ethics and the complexities of the modern political dispensation. It thus calls for pragmatic adaptation in the face of 21st-century challenges. Sahu & Behera (2022) discuss integrating Gandhian aspects of learning into modern technology-based schooling to achieve a more effective system. Garai (2023) discusses how Gandhi's ideas of truth, cleanliness, and community service can be translated into practical actions in contemporary communities. (Karam, 2023) examines how to reconcile Gandhian value systems with the changing literary landscape: a rethinking of Gandhi's influence on contemporary Indian poetry. Finally, Gandhi (2022) explores how his educational philosophy aligns with the

Sustainable Development Goals and argues for innovation in its application to modern education.

This work will be instrumental, as it connects Gandhian philosophy across eras to the present day, offering the world more practical solutions by linking it to ethical, sustainable, and comprehensive frameworks. From education to public policy, this piece is informative and equips policymakers and educators with techniques that support holistic development and coexistence. It elucidates how to use nonviolence, truth, and self-reliance to address contemporary challenges such as environmental degradation, social inequality, and the erosion of ethical values. The work also emphasizes the integration of Gandhian ideals into international diplomacy and grassroots activism, thereby advancing the symbiotic responsibility that binds us together. Finally, it offers a blueprint for individuals and institutions to pursue personal and societal transformation, ensuring a more equitable, just, and sustainable future.

Objectives

1. To examine the relevance of Gandhian philosophy in addressing contemporary challenges in India.
2. To analyze key case studies and initiatives inspired by Gandhian ideals, such as *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*

Definitions of Terms

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission): The government significantly improved sanitation systems nationwide, reduced open defecation, and promoted a culture of cleanliness and hygiene among the populace.

Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-reliant India Mission): This initiative aims to promote self-reliance and reduce dependence on imports by promoting domestic manufacturing and production.

Swadeshi (Self-Reliance): A principle promoted by Gandhi, emphasizing local production and consumption to reduce dependence on external resources. It advocates for fostering indigenous industries and promoting economic independence at the individual, community, and national levels.

Ahimsa (Non-Violence): A fundamental concept in Gandhian philosophy, advocating for peace and the rejection of harm towards others in thought, word, or action. Ahimsa extends to all living beings and encourages resolving conflicts through dialogue and understanding.

Sarvodaya (Welfare of all): A term coined by Gandhi, referring to the universal welfare of all individuals, particularly the marginalized. It promotes social justice, equality, and the well-being of every person, regardless of their social or economic status.

Namami Gange Program: The objective of this program was effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.

Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana: This scheme was launched under which, each Member of Parliament will take the responsibility of developing physical and institutional infrastructure in villages.

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana: This scheme aims to support and promote organic farming, thereby improving soil health.

Jan Dhan Yojana: The scheme aims to bring the country's unbanked population into the mainstream financial system and enable them to access the benefits of various government schemes.

Ujjwala Yojana: This scheme focuses on promoting clean cooking fuels and reducing the use of traditional fuels such as wood and coal, which contribute to indoor air pollution and health problems.

Scope of the Research

1. Geographical Scope

This research examines the urban and rural settings of India, analyzing how Gandhian philosophy operates across various projects. Programs like *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* give importance to Gandhian views on cleanliness and dignity of labor, while *Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana* upholds his importance on rural self-reliance and community participation. The study also examines how policies such as *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and the Namami Gange Program are part of Modi's agenda, highlighting the general applicability of Gandhian values in addressing contemporary challenges and advancing sustainability across diverse regions.

2. Thematic Scope

The research examines critical themes at which Gandhian thought intersects with contemporary governance under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Economic self-reliance in the programmes of *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, inspired by *Swadeshi*, as well as in programmes such as Namami Gange and environmental conservation, is presented within this framework. The study also deals with Gandhian principles applied in organic farming, renewable energy, and waste management, and the concept of *Sarvodaya*, or welfare for all, which calls for social equity and justice. Such an exposition attests to the relevance of Gandhian thought to development in modern India.

3. Timeframe

The research traces the development of Gandhian philosophy from post-independence India to the present, with early national policies centred on rural development, self-reliance, and non-violence. Although these ideologies were marginalized during the era of industrialization and globalization, the paper underscores their resurgence during the Modi years. Modern programs such as *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* and *Atmanirbhar*

Bharat reflect a strategic adaptation of Gandhian principles, demonstrating that these principles remain relevant to addressing 21st-century challenges and to formulating India's future amid rapid socio-political change.

Research Methodology

1. Approach

This research will rely mainly on secondary data. Given the comprehensive nature of the information required, the researcher will review books, journals, policy documents, and media articles to understand the genesis of Gandhian philosophy in post-independence India, its current application, and its contributions to contemporary social issues. Books and scholarly journals will be used to examine theoretical perspectives on Gandhian thought, its relevance in the contemporary context, and how these principles have been critiqued or modified in the modern Indian context. Policy documents, government reports, and speeches will be analyzed to examine how Gandhian principles have been incorporated into policies on economic self-reliance, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Media articles, news reports and opinion pieces will be a current source of the engagement that the public and the government have with Gandhian ideals.

Case studies will explain how Gandhian philosophy works in practice. The example is the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, in which cleanliness and sanitation have been promoted nationwide. These case studies and others like them, which promote Gandhian philosophy regarding cleanliness and the welfare of society, will be carefully analyzed. Organic farming and development projects, aiming at sustainability and self-reliance with direct empowerment at grassroots levels, constitute movements which in their forms constitute Gandhian thought in today's action and will be subjects of case study to show whether the Gandhian philosophy did indeed hold merit in helping today's problems around the world through concrete evidence given by the existence of these schemes.

2. Case Studies

2.1 *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is a flagship initiative launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, inspired by Gandhian principles of cleanliness and dignity of labor. Gandhi's emphasis on sanitation as essential for human dignity and social welfare is mirrored in this nationwide campaign, which aims to eradicate open defecation, improve waste management, and promote hygiene. The program not only seeks to transform public health but also encourages a cultural shift towards cleanliness at the grassroots level. Engaging local communities aligns with Gandhi's advocacy for decentralized, people-driven solutions to societal issues. The program's success is evident in the widespread construction of toilets, the promotion of sanitation practices, and the cleanup of public spaces, all rooted in Gandhian values of community participation and moral responsibility.

2.2 Organic Farming Movements

Organic farming is a contemporary issue in which Gandhian philosophy resonates, particularly in its principles of self-help, simplicity, and harmony with the environment. It was Gandhi who suggested moving back to nature and to self-sufficient agriculture that used natural resources less. Organic farming follows this approach and rejects the chemical-intensive use of agricultural inputs in favor of sustainable, more environmentally friendly systems that improve and maintain soil and biodiversity health in the long term, thereby enhancing agricultural productivity. *Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana*, which emphasizes the promotion of organic farming in rural India, represents Gandhian thought: farmers are motivated to adopt natural farming techniques by reducing dependence on external inputs, increasing self-reliance, and preserving local agricultural heritage.

2.3 Connection to Gandhian Principles

Both *the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and organic farming exemplify Gandhian principles in practice, demonstrating how his vision can be adapted to address contemporary challenges*. Gandhi's emphasis on self-reliance, decentralized power, and environmental sustainability is well reflected in these initiatives. *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* is community-led in cleanliness, consistent with Gandhi's belief in local participation. Organic farming encourages a more ecologically friendly approach to livelihoods that reflects Gandhian thinking of living in concert with nature, and both, taken together, indicate how case studies continue to convey a Gandhian message regarding modern policy and societal practice that transform India into a more sustainable and egalitarian society.

Research Findings

Economic

The Make in India initiative shares strong similarities with Gandhian economic thought, particularly the principles of self-reliance, or "*Atmanirbhar Bharat*." He sought to strengthen local industries so that the national economy would become less dependent on imported goods and more decentralized, with goods produced at the grassroots level. The Make in India initiative has sought to accelerate domestic production, employment, and exports, consistent with Gandhi's emphasis on local empowerment in economic sectors. The initiative not only fosters innovation but also seeks to revive traditional industries, thereby empowering rural communities and small enterprises, which were central to Gandhi's notion of economic decentralization.

Gandhi's ideals also emphasize sustainable and inclusive growth, with a focus on rural industries and the promotion of artisanal practices. Make in India seeks to bridge this by creating an ecosystem in which small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in rural areas, can thrive and contribute to the nation's economic development. It aligns with the principle of a self-sustaining economy by focusing on both traditional and modern

manufacturing sectors, so that everyone and every community in the nation can participate in the economic process. Thus, while it pushes modernization through Make in India, the Gandhian principle at the back is a basis of economic growth, not for its people alone, but in line with their own self-reliance.

Social

The Modi government's social welfare programs, such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and the *Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana*, draw direct inspiration from the Gandhian ideals of *Sarvodaya*. According to Gandhi, his theory of welfare for all centered on ensuring that society's poor and disenfranchised people had easy access to essential amenities and opportunities in life so they could live with dignity. Programmes such as *Jan Dhan Yojana* and *Ujjwala Yojana*, the former focusing on financial inclusion to make banking access available to the marginalized population, while the latter ensures clean cooking gas reaches the households of the most economically deprived population, reflect the Gandhian vision of betterment of the downtrodden strata of society. *The Jan Dhan Yojana has contributed to the country's increased financial inclusion and has given millions of people who were previously unable to access the formal banking system access to a range of financial services.* (Singh Shiva, Thakur, Soumya, Shiwani Pandey, Soumi Manna, Ruby Jaal, and Shilpa Sharma, 2022). In short, they fill the gaps that Gandhi sought to erase through an emphasis on social justice.

These welfare schemes further resonate with the Gandhian philosophy of nonviolence and self-reliance, in that they address basic needs that empower individuals and communities. The schemes echo the Gandhian principle that true progress is not merely economic but also moral, with the welfare of the community taking precedence. It also highlights that such schemes work to elevate people while furthering the country's progress by establishing a society based on equality, justice, and mutual care, a tenet of Gandhian philosophy.

Environmental

Ahimsa and Sarvodaya are, in fact, the two founding principles of Gandhi, deeply embedded in contemporary efforts toward environmental sustainability, as they underscore respect for all manifestations of life and the ecosystem. Gandhi regarded the degradation of nature as a violent act, and his environmental conservation strategy was fundamentally grounded in the principles of non-harm to humans and the Earth. In modern India, his philosophical principles have motivated numerous initiatives focused on environmental preservation, including afforestation programs, water conservation efforts, and anti-pollution campaigns. Gandhi's emphasis on minimalistic living and sustainability is also aligned with the growing support for reducing consumption and adopting more environmentally sustainable lifestyles, which echoes his concept of voluntary simplicity. These initiatives aim

to balance human development with environmental conservation, fostering harmony with nature.

The application of *Swadeshi* thinking, as propounded by Gandhi, constitutes an environmental sustainability ideal within modern movements that benefit from internal resources and sustainable means. For instance, India is at the forefront of organic farming as a beneficiary activity of Gandhian thought, reducing the reliance on synthetic chemicals and fostering soil health and biodiversity. This strategy encourages farming in harmony with nature. It employs traditional, conventional, and sustainable farming methods. At the same time, it reduces the carbon footprint associated with large-scale industrial agriculture and promotes an economy based on sustainable, ecological principles. These initiatives promote and strengthen local and sustainable agricultural practices; hence, they assist in preserving the environment and empower communities to stand on their own, which resonates with Gandhian economic and environmental philosophies. Sustainable living is not a burden but an opportunity to create a better future for ourselves and future generations. It requires individual and collective efforts, as well as policies and initiatives that promote sustainable practices at all levels of society (Skanavis, Sardi, and Zapanti, 2022).

A better illustration in this respect is the Gandhian ideal of the Clean India Mission, *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*, which takes a strong stance on sanitation and waste disposal. Gandhism integrated spiritual and social concerns for cleanliness into a coherent framework for urban and rural waste management, encouraging communities to keep their living and working spaces clean and to adopt sustainable practices, such as recycling. By focusing on waste-free cities and clean rivers, the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* advocates grassroots environmental stewardship to encourage citizens to adopt eco-friendly practices. It is not only a programme of physical cleanliness but is also an attempt to instil a sense of responsibility towards the environment, much like Gandhi believed that each individual was responsible for the collective welfare. These examples demonstrate how Gandhian principles influence contemporary environmental efforts, fostering a culture of care for both people and the planet.

Benefits

Enhanced community engagement

Gandhian principles, especially self-reliance and participatory democracy, have considerably increased community involvement in the modern Indian context. According to Gandhi, grassroots development should be undertaken so that local communities are involved at every step of decision-making and resource management. This approach encourages local communities to develop and take responsibility for themselves and to act collectively. There were initiatives inspired by the concept of Gandhian philosophy, such as the functioning of village self-governance and SHGs, which empowered people to organize with common goals in solving similar difficulties, from educational to access in health

services or adding economic opportunities. They foster a more inclusive democratic society, giving people a say in their development.

Moreover, community involvement within Gandhian thought fosters social cohesion and facilitates cooperation among diverse groups. Gandhi's emphasis on nonviolence and truth cultivates understanding and dialogue. It reduces social divisions and fosters solidarity. Contemporary programs such as *the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan have demonstrated that community involvement leads to tangible improvements in public spaces and environmental cleanliness through citizens' sense of responsibility for their surroundings*. These efforts foster a sense of community and shared ownership, thereby reinforcing the values of working together for everyone's welfare, a basic tenet of Gandhian philosophy.

Reduction in social disparities

An emphasis on social justice, equality, and Sarvodaya is a core principle of Gandhian philosophy. It has played an essential role in tackling and decreasing social inequality in contemporary India. Numerous policies and movements have been inspired by Gandhi's call to uplift the underprivileged, particularly Dalits, women, and rural populations. His ideas and philosophy of promoting the abolition of untouchability, empowering women, and focusing on equality of opportunity for all castes and classes and genders have culminated in the focus on rural development and economic self-reliance, which further led to the bridging of urban and rural gaps, helping disadvantaged communities improve their living conditions through access to basic services, education, and job opportunities.

In contemporary India, movements inspired by Gandhian thought continue to focus on the root causes of social inequality. For instance, programs such as MGNREGA aim to reduce poverty and potentially improve rural income distribution by providing guaranteed employment to rural households. The same applies to *the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the education for all initiative, which align with the Gandhian conception of equal opportunities and access to resources*. Such actions assist societies in reducing social disparities by providing marginalized communities with necessities that improve their socioeconomic positions, ensuring that benefits reach those in need.

Sustainable development practices

Sustainable development practices have been encouraged in Gandhian philosophy since antiquity, emphasizing human harmony with nature. This idea of simple living and high thinking, proposed by Gandhi, promotes a lifestyle with priorities on sustainability rather than unconstrained consumerism, urging society to prioritize basic needs while minimizing ecological harm. His belief in self-reliance is accompanied by economic practices that do not exploit natural resources; communities are encouraged to adopt local, eco-friendly methods of production and consumption. This has inspired movements such as organic farming, in which small-scale, environmentally friendly farming practices replace chemical-intensive

agriculture, and renewable energy sources in rural areas help reduce reliance on non-renewable resources and foster local sustainability.

In modern India, Gandhian principles are incorporated into sustainable development programs addressing the country's environmental challenges, particularly in rural areas. As with the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, waste segregation and waste-to-compost initiatives reflect Gandhian principles in practice, as does the focus on water conservation and the perpetuation of traditional methods such as rainwater harvesting. Furthermore, Gandhian values inspire local ecosystem movements and biodiversity through community involvement in conservation; through the incorporation of the Gandhian philosophy in India's policies of sustainable development, there will be proper balancing between the growth and stewardship for the environment, and thereby fulfilling needs without compromising others' abetment so that human resources will flourish for time immemorial. India has emerged as a global leader in renewable energy, ranking third in renewable power, fourth in wind power, and fifth in solar power. To further promote climate action and disaster resilience, India has launched the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and the International Solar Alliance, leveraging global partnerships to address these critical issues (Sood Chinmay, Vansh Mittal, Sarthak Bansal, and Navya Achan, 2022).

Conclusion

Gandhian values provide essential input for shaping solutions to the present challenges facing India, in an age when its socio-political climate continues to shift rapidly. Truth, nonviolence, self-reliance, and welfare at all costs define a society; his contributions are time immemorial yet highly relevant to modern times, demanding further development toward greater welfare in economic and environmental spheres, with justice for every member of that society. The Gandhian principles were revived under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at least through initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the Atmanirbhar Bharat, demonstrating their continued relevance for policymakers.

Gandhi's philosophy is highly action-oriented, particularly for addressing modern problems through decentralized, community-driven approaches to issues such as poverty, sanitation, and economic inequality. His focus on self-reliance and local empowerment is a guiding principle for initiatives that foster sustainable development. Organic farming and public space cleaning through *the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan exemplify how Gandhian values have been adapted to contemporary* conditions, including environmental conservation and public health concerns. These efforts vindicate the vitality of his ideals and demonstrate the relevance of his thought in addressing pressing issues.

Ultimately, what keeps Gandhian philosophy contemporary is its capacity to balance values transmitted through traditions with the pressures of modernization. By integrating Gandhian ideals into mainstream policies and practices, India could become a more inclusive

and sustainable, as well as a more harmonious, society. Gandhi's vision remains a beacon of hope, guiding the nation toward ethical governance, social equity, and environmental stewardship, ensuring that his legacy endures and continues to inspire future generations.

Discussions

1. Discussions on Gandhian Thoughts on *Ahimsa* in Modern India

Ahimsa, or the philosophy of nonviolence as propounded by Gandhi, is one of the important tools for addressing the complex issues of modern India. Non-violence, in the Gandhian sense, means not only the absence of physical harm but also a principle that embodies peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and social justice. In a country such as India, where social unrest, communal violence, and political conflicts persist, Gandhian nonviolence offers a potent antidote. The philosophy of Gandhi inspires the peaceful resolution of disputes, respect for all communities, and mutual understanding. Today in India, such an approach to resolving internal strife, such as caste violence, ethnic conflicts, and political polarization, is a crucial issue. Gandhi's vision promotes the peaceful resolution of conflict through dialogue and empathy rather than violence. Such a vision of Gandhi is peaceful and toward national unity and social harmony. In a world increasingly marked by violence, the application of Gandhi's *Ahimsa* could help address divisions within Indian society, reducing the social unrest that often manifests as protests and riots.

The non-violent philosophy of Gandhi extends into the domain of war and militarization, issues of extreme significance to present-day India, particularly against the backdrop of political tensions across borders. According to Gandhi, peace could not be achieved through military power but rather through understanding and peaceful coexistence among nations. This philosophy, therefore, opposes the present trend of war and militarism in international politics. Regarding the Gandhian implications for defence policies, India shows the most pronounced effects. Although India maintains a robust military to ensure its security, Gandhi's principles continue to govern India's foreign policy, emphasizing peaceful resolution and diplomatic rather than aggressive engagement. India's no-first-use policy on nuclear weapons and its stance for global disarmament initiatives symbolize Gandhian ideals about using peaceful methods for resolving conflicts, rather than a threat of war. India, as a nation that prioritizes diplomacy over militarization, exemplifies nonviolence and peacebuilding, demonstrating that a country can assert sovereignty without violence.

Modern India continues to grapple with unemployment and economic inequality. The challenges can be linked with Gandhian ideals of *Ahimsa* and social justice. Gandhi's nonviolence also translated into the social realm: economic equality, dignity for labourers, and the eradication of poverty. India today is dealing with a significant youth unemployment crisis; in some way, this too could be defined as social violence since millions of youth are denied access to earning dignified means of livelihood. Current economic policies inspired by

Gandhian thought, such as Atmanirbhar Bharat, are intended to reduce dependence on foreign nations and promote local industries by providing employment opportunities for marginalized groups. It is through these measures that social inequality can be reduced. Gandhi's emphasis on self-reliance and sustainable development provides a framework for addressing contemporary challenges, such as unemployment, in a way that is consistent with his broader vision of social equity and justice.

2. India's Global Leadership for Peace: Inspired by Gandhian Thoughts

India's leadership in the international arena in promoting peace, diplomacy, and nonviolence has deep roots in Gandhian philosophy. Gandhi's approach to nonviolence not only shaped the Indian freedom struggle but also continues to influence India's foreign policy, which has become a beacon amid turbulence for peace. India has remained a constant champion of global disarmament, non-aggression, and dialogue to resolve international conflicts since the post-independence era. Support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the International Day of Non-Violence is directly derived from the Gandhian influence on India's diplomatic strategy. Perhaps the most incredible display of such principles is its stand on No-First Use for nuclear weapons, with a policy going back into the 1990s. This policy is a concrete example of India's commitment to peaceful coexistence and its belief that global tensions can be resolved without resorting to nuclear warfare or military aggression.

Furthermore, India has been a strong voice for peacekeeping and humanitarian causes worldwide. The country's involvement in United Nations peacekeeping operations and its initiative to demand reforms in the UN to make it more responsive to global imbalances are Gandhian concepts in action. Beyond these aspects, India's leadership in global forums such as the NAM underscores Gandhian diplomacy, dialogue, and coexistence rather than conflict. Gandhi's vision of Ahimsa for a world not only calls for an end to violence but also advocates the sustainable construction of peace. It testifies to the enduring influence of Gandhian principles that in today's global scenario, India is playing an important role as a champion for peace, disarmament, and multilateralism- a leader that can lead in advocating for a war-free and violence-free world.

Overall, Gandhian thoughts on *Ahimsa* seem to be more than relevant toward solving the existing problems of present-day India, for providing ways leading to peace as a country embroiled by social unrest, violence, and economic disparities. So, Gandhi's philosophy forms the guideline for India and its leadership before the world, while taking the image of a peacemaker that offers the world scope to resolve disagreements without war or bloodshed. The continued importance of *Ahimsa* in both national policy and international relations gives evidence to Gandhi's vision, a timeless view of a just, peaceful world.

Recommendations

1. Policy Recommendations

The integration of Gandhian principles into a policy framework can make contemporary issues more sustainable and more ethically accountable. For educational purposes, the implementation of ideas such as moral development, self-reliance, and community service would foster a responsible, socially and environmentally conscious generation of citizens. Governance, by integrating concepts such as decentralization and more participatory approaches to decision-making at the local level, ensures that policies better meet the needs and aspirations of local communities. Thus, in the case of environmental policy, non-exploitation and sustainability principles advocated by Gandhi may influence a regime to encourage a culture of environmentally friendly behaviors that include organic farming, use of renewable energy sources, and conservation practices at the state level, and thus facilitate the building of a sustainable, people-friendly, more inclusive nation.

2. Community Initiatives

Community initiatives along Gandhian lines may serve as a primary catalyst for addressing local issues related to sustainable development. Self-reliance initiatives, such as local-level cooperatives, organic farming, and village-level handicrafts, can provide rural communities with economic independence and preserve their traditional skills. *Swadeshi* movements that support local industries, reduce imports, and develop regional economies without compromising cultural identity will help them regain vibrancy. Furthermore, the Gandhian values of Ahimsa (nonviolence) and Satya (truth) can serve as a foundation for conflict resolution, fostering peacebuilding and social harmony in communities. Local adaptations can become grassroots movements that focus on issues such as poverty, environmental unsustainability, and social inequality, leading to community involvement in one another's rights and wrongs, ethical functioning, and the long-term development of communities. Implementing Gandhian approaches at the local level will enable communities to experience a transformation that aligns with both traditional wisdom and current needs.

3. Awareness Programs

Awareness programs that disseminate Gandhian philosophy will go a long way toward reviving and extending the dissemination of his principles in the present digital era. Digital platforms such as social media, online courses, and webinars can reach a wide audience, making them effective for communicating with a younger generation that is less familiar with Gandhian ideals. The strong relationship and action should be developed at the grassroots level through community outreach, local workshops, and educational programs. Such programs may focus on core values, such as Gandhi's truth, nonviolence, sustainability, and self-reliance, and demonstrate how they can be applied in contemporary contexts to social problems and environmental challenges. It will help create a culture of peace, ethical

governance, and sustainable living through the key message of Gandhian philosophy, which can now be made easier and more contemporary for individuals' and communities' lives.

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