

**GANDHIJI'S PRINCIPLES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ORGANISATIONS****DR.T. MOSES CHRISTOPHER**

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*The world today is witnessing bewildering changes posing various challenges and threats to the people in every walk of life. While the business world looks at the problem in its own perspective, the society at large is groaning under the pressure to find a viable solution. As new trends emerge with the old order giving way to the new one, it is the survival of the fittest which can adapt to the change being proactive rather than being reactive. Independent India has turned seventy and the contribution of this country to the world in every sphere of life is very significant since ages. Though the present trends are of more concern to the managers and the administrators, we should never forget that the solution to every problem lies within our reach. And history has ample evidence in the freedom movement led by the Father of our nation Mahatma Gandhi who was adjudged the "Man of the previous millennium". His avowed eleven principles namely **Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Bhramhacharya, Aparigraha, Sharirshrama, Sarvatra bhayavarjana, Sarva dharma samantva, Swadeshi, Sparshbhavna** continues to inspire us even today. They have never lost relevance, stood the test of time and can be the guiding force to the organizations in this third millennium too.*

PRINCIPLES

It is a matter of great pride to every citizen of this great country when the United Nations declared October the 2nd about a decade back as the "International day of non-violence."

The nation went on to celebrate this day, the birthday of the Father of our nation in many ways. The media had no shortage of news to be covered and almost every medium tried to capture and cover the celebrations in its own unique style. In one column in a daily that caught our attention, a theatre and movie celebrity went on to make an observation, which we the authors feel should make every responsible citizen of this nation think about it. The observation was, when all good and great things are happening to this country because of privatization and globalization, where did our inherent Indian-ness disappear? Can we today recognize the "Mahatma" who was a household name and about whom a generation ago many stories were told? Is he only a picture on a postage stamp, a figurehead on a currency note, a garlanded statue, or a man who used non-violence as a weapon only to be remembered in terms of another government holiday? If it is a proud moment to be considered as an International day of Non-violence, is it not something to be ashamed of for not realizing its importance by us before being reminded by an International forum? Does this man who was voted as the "Man of the millennium" for the last millennium not continue to inspire us through his thought even in this third millennium too? Here are few thoughts to share on his avowed eleven principles known as "Gandhian vows" in the present day organizational perspective.

AHIMSA (Non-violence): It is a powerful weapon in perfect control. It reflects the state of emotional balance of an individual who wields this weapon. No doubt, technology has become the primary tool in every organization but to use it rationally people with not just ordinary intelligence but Emotional Intelligence is the need of the hour, i.e., people with high EQ. It is believed that effective inter-personal relations and teamwork are a must for an organization's success.

SATYA (Truth): It is the state of complete freedom where people experience the joy of one's realization. It is the discovery of the spirit within them, which is the ultimate goal and the attainment of a much higher level i.e., SQ (spiritual quotient). Today many successful leaders advocate this for their organizations. Unless the mind travels from ordinary intelligence to emotional intelligence and transcends the human barriers to a much elevated plane, it only has to be contended with mediocrity.

ASTEYA (Non-Stealing): To want something, which we do not actually need, is also stealing. An old adage says "Bread for all before cake for some". Therefore if we are unconsciously craving for a cake, we may be knocking off somebody's bread. Let us know what our needs exactly are. This is how managements can effectively design strategies, which justify the needs of people at all levels. If only the learning on a purpose-driven life is imbibed at a much early stage, every individual would then start thinking of the society before he starts thinking of himself.

BRAMHACHARYA (Self Discipline): Discipline is that important principle of management, which ensures orderly functioning of an organisation. It is the most essential and fundamental quality of a leader who is responsible for maintenance of an order. It is this principle that voluntarily led many to join the freedom struggle and strive for it selflessly and fearlessly. As the saying goes "Charity begins at home", the leader in order to maintain discipline should himself be disciplined first. It needs an inside-out approach.

APARIGRAHA (Non-Possession): The desire to possess something deprives others of it, which may be wanted by you but needed by them. This is not only unethical but also inhuman and sin. Therefore even organisations, which effectively put to use their resources while continuing to contribute to their companies' 'bottom line' i.e. profit, serve the society in a better manner and become visionary organizations. In the context of globalization, many domestic and foreign multi-national companies have learnt the very important principle of "interdependence" to leverage the strengths and opportunities found in the market.

SHARIRSHRAMA (Bread labour): Pareto's principle says 80% of a nation's economy is the contribution of only 20% of its population who have a clear goal and vision. Suppose if another 20% realize its importance and work hard for earning individual livelihood, the effect would be tremendous and unimaginable. This is how organisations can be truly global and achieve the state of universal brotherhood.

ASWADA (Control Palate): "Live not to eat, but eat to live" has been the philosophy of many successful people who envisioned successful organisations. A healthy body nurtures a healthy mind, which is a source of healthy thoughts essential for a healthy society and living. Therefore a strict diet (intake) ensures a balanced growth of an individual or an organization; as it is also believed that the quality of output of any process cannot be better than that of the input.

SARVATRA BHAYAVARJANA (Fearlessness): This can be related to an earlier principle i.e. truth. Truth when discovered sets a man free in all respects. This also includes freedom from fear. When a person is true to himself, he need not or does not fear anything. As success is a journey, this journey set out on the principle of fearlessness can take the organization to unimaginable heights where sky is only the limit.

SARVA DHARMA SAMANTVA (Equality of all religions): If religion by definition is a way of life, individuals professing different religions seek to reach their destinations through a particular way. Then by the very nature, individuals possess the same human spirit, which in the management jargon refers to the principle of equity. This implies that dealings with the employees should be so fair and open that they reinforce their commitment to the organization.

SWADESHI (Use locally made goods): “Think global but act local” is another principle of success in the context of globalisation. According to Gandhiji’s philosophy, the development of the country’s economy should start at the grass root level i.e. village level and go up the ladder. While ordinary people only see the problem, successful people see an opportunity in every problem. Instead of lamenting on scarcity or mediocrity of resources, identification of strength in the uniqueness of these resources and mastering the art can enable us compete at the global level. Focus on skill development is a step in the right direction to address problem of unemployment and its maladies.

SPARSHBHAVANA (Remove untouchability): We are living in an era where no boundaries exist whether region, religion, language, culture, etc. Unless we overcome these barriers of physical and psychological nature, progress cannot be achieved on the desired lines. Management by walking around (MBWA), open-door policy, collective bargaining, workers participation in management, flat organizational structures, etc. are few approaches in the right direction to ensure the spirit of belongingness and oneness where human resources are valued more than any other.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we the authors opine that as today’s world is in search of a “tool”/weapon to counter “global terrorism” undoubtedly we can zero in on “Non-violence” as a true solution. Even after 70 years of attainment of freedom for this country, the designer of this tool continues to inspire us, so also the principles which make this tool even more powerful and relevant as reasonably valid for any organization of this day, whatever be its purpose, whether for short-term or long-term.