

GANDHI AND PEACE JOURNALISM

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ABSTRACT

Journalism was the factor that transformed ordinary Gandhi into Mahatma Gandhi. He was not only a political leader, but he was also a journalist to the core. He was the editor of three English weeklies. Many facets of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the great personalities and leaders ever have been brought out through his very honest writing. Gandhi showed the path of developing and strengthening the communication system in society by the media, the intelligentsia and the conscience-keepers of society. Gandhi was clear in his mind that war or peace would have its roots basically in the heart and head before they manifest outwardly. As for the word “PEACE” Gandhi used it in a normal sense as “mental peace” on one side and as “absence of conflicts and wars or warlike situation on the other. Going deep into the problem of conflicts and wars Gandhi realized that the individuals as individuals or as groups, should pay attention to their inner-calling that benefit them to be human and humane. Gandhi’s journal carried articles on a variety of subjects written by him and others ranging from the spinning-wheel to the most important political problem of the day. Gandhi’s work in journalism had a strong influence not only on every newspaper in but also on the entire literary world of every language in India. Gandhi’s resistance campaign in South Africa was conceptualized, introduced and mobilized through the efficacy and eloquence of the press. The functional worth of his use of journalism as an instrument of protest and identity construction is well exhibited in the formation of homogenous reality for South African Indians and awakening and consolidating them to firmly stand for their rights. He said “Truth alone is God” and nothing else is. Gandhian Journalism has relevance even today and journalists in the media establishments must bear them in mind when they are working. He also said that courage of conviction and truth telling are the bedrock of the journalism profession.

Key Words: Journalism, Communication, literary, influence and resistance

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Introduction: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, was born on 2nd October 1869 at Porbandar in Gujarat state of India. He stands for many things and recognised as “Father of the Nation” of India. He experienced several hardship in his life, gradually overcame them and involve himself in the movements of social reconstruction. His ideas and practice of nonviolence can be the best contents for the discipline of peace education. One of the greatest attributes of Mahatma Gandhi was the simplicity with which he spoke, wrote and communicated. One of his wonderful quote is "Each one has to find his peace from within. And peace to be real must be unaffected by outside circumstances."

Definition for Peace Journalism: when editors and reporters make choices that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict. Peace journalism uses the insights of conflict analysis.....to update the concepts of balance, fairness and accuracy in reporting; provides a new route map tracing the connections between journalists, their sources, the stories they cover and the consequences of their journalism– the ethics of journalistic intervention; builds an awareness of non-violence.....” Definition of peace journalism (in Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005) If readers and audiences are furnished with such opportunities, but still decide they prefer war to peace, there is nothing more journalism can do about it, while remaining journalism. On the other hand, there is no matching commitment to ensuring a fair hearing for violent responses, if only because they seldom struggle for a place on the news agenda. So peace journalism is in favour of truth, as any must be. Of course reporters should report, as truthfully as they can, the facts they encounter; only ask, as well, how they have come to meet these particular facts, and how the facts have come to meet them. Peace journalism aims to shed light on structural and cultural causes

of violence, as they impact upon the lives of people in a conflict arena as part of the explanation for violence. The sole aim of the journalism should be service (M.K.Gandhi Mind of Mahatma Gandhi (MOMG) Page 479). Hence, peace journalism is anchored in Conflict Analysis and Peace Research “to map out solid ground beneath our feet; to declare, in advance, that we intend to use it, to assign meanings and draw distinctions.

Gandhi and Peace Journalism: Gandhi was clear in his mind that war or peace would have its roots basically in the heart and head before they manifest outwardly. As for the word “PEACE” Gandhi used it in a normal sense as “mental peace” on one side and as “absence of conflicts and wars or warlike situation” on the other. Journalism was the factor that transformed ordinary Gandhi into Mahatma Gandhi. He was not only a political leader, but he was also a journalist to the core. In understanding Gandhi, one has to come across a sense of ambivalence for his words (And deeds too) cannot easily be understood. Mahatma’s expression is elegant, simple, lucid and crystal clear, but at the same time abstruse. As for the word “Peace” Gandhi used it in a normal sense, i.e as ‘mental peace’ on one side and as ‘absence of conflicts and war or war like situation’ on the other. He was clear in his mind that war or peace would have its roots basically in the heart and head before they manifest outwardly.

As for the use and importance of the word ‘Peace’, Gandhi was keen in using words/phrases appropriately. He was therefore in the habit of rephrasing the words or phrases so as to make the meaning explicit and to be specific. ‘Peace seeking’ did not appeal to him as ‘Truth seeking’ did. ‘Peaceful or democratic means’ did not reflect the real sense he wanted to convey and hence his phrases, “Non-violence” and “Satyagraha”. Gandhian technique of nonviolence alone can save the nation and the present world threatened by communal and racial disharmony, nuclear warfare, corruption, inequality, exploitation and poverty. Gandhi’s thoughts will always be remembered in the

history of peace movement. His ideas and practice of nonviolence can be the best contents for the discipline of peace education. Mahatma Gandhi is an idea of non-violence. He is a concept of peace. He denotes the term non-exploitation. He symbolizes the word non-oppression. Gandhi is the name of liberation. It is very interesting to mention that Gandhi realized that what is gained through the means should not be lost by it again. He grasped the point from the saying that “What is gained by the sword will also be lost by the Sword”. The means employed/adopted should have a lasting use. “Non-violence” seemed to Gandhi to be such mean that helps mankind throughout. If temporary set-backs are not taken into consideration and if one sticks on to it, the result would be sure to be positive, as Gandhi convinced. He therefore insisted on the commitment to the application of the principle of non-violence. This he realized while he made experiments in South Africa. Despite several hardships and set-backs, Gandhi could succeed to the most extent because of the means he adopted. The method of non-violence was first called “Passive Resistance” and then he termed it “SATYAGRAHA”.

Gandhi suggested the following qualifications for the Satyagraha in India:

1. He must be a teetotaler
2. He must love a living faith in God, for He is his only lock.
3. He must live in truth and non-violence
4. He must follow all rules framed from time to time.
5. He must lead a chaste life and be ready to give up his possessions.
6. Protecting one’s self respect, he must follow the jail rules and
7. He must be a habitual Khadi-wearer and spinner. Ibid P-90

All the qualifications and rules and regulation set or prescribed by Gandhi to the Satyagrahis would suggest ultimately that the resisters to violent force and suppression or injustice should be able to use moral for maintaining

certain values of self-respect, dignity and honour of all the individuals or parties involved in the struggle. Non-violence signifies social, economic and political non-exploitation of sentient creatures, especially human beings, for the benefit of others. Mahatma Gandhi says that nonviolent activity involves no exploitation. Justice is the mother of peace. Nonviolence leads to peace. The way of nonviolence is the way of liberation. “Sarvodaya” (Mahatma Gandhi’s nonviolent movement) emphasizes social change by teaching individuals to change themselves. Gandhi himself felt that Ahimsa (Nonviolence) meant Sarvodaya – awakening of all, welfare of all.

He was not only a political leader, but he was also a journalist to the core. He was the editor of three English weeklies. Many facets of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the great personality and leaders ever have been brought out through his very honest writing. Gandhi showed the path of developing and strengthening the communication system in society by the media, the intelligentsia and the conscience-keepers of society. Gandhi’s journal carried articles on a variety of subjects written by him and others ranging from the spinning-wheel to the most important political problem of the day. Gandhi’s work in journalism had a strong influence not only on every newspaper in but also on the entire literary world of every language in India. Gandhi’s resistance campaign in South Africa was conceptualized, introduced and mobilized through the efficacy and eloquence of the press. Gandhi was well aware of the power of Media. In his days it was mostly print media and he himself made use of the media very effectively. We all know about his own forays in print media. Gandhi wrote on all subjects. Communication experts inform us that he wrote simply and clearly but forcefully, with passion and burning indignation.

One does not know how much of Gandhi's concern as a journalist are shared today by the persons in the profession. How many practice self-restraint? How many write without conscious exaggeration? One may tend to argue that Gandhi was a very great individual and most are others are lesser

mortals, but what Gandhi has said and practiced for journalists should easily be the professional and ethical values for journalism. The problem arises these days because the very objective of publishing newspaper and magazines is not seriously set and examined. Here again Gandhi had the following to say: 'In the very first month of Indian Opinion, I realized that the sole aim of journalism should be service. The newspaper press is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole countryside's and devastate crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised within. Gandhi as a journalist, as a columnist, as an editor, and as a publisher. Gandhi published Navajivan, Young India, Harijan, Harijansevak and Harijanbandhu during the freedom struggle in India.

As a columnist too, Gandhi paid proper attention to the style and the language. Gandhi's readers were farmers and weavers. He wrote for common masses. It may be recalled that most Indians in South Africa were not highly literate. Gandhi's writings in Indian Opinion were simple, plain and idiomatic with which common people were familiar. In Navajivan too the language was not literary and heavy, but simple and thought rendering. It did not imply that since he wrote for masses, the elite were not addressed and attracted. Gandhi's writings appealed to all. Gandhi has written profusely on all issues ranging from politics, religion, economic, social, and cultural to education. One hardly had notices any major corrections and erasing of text in the manuscript.

In the context of the debate on news values, peace as a component of news must require a serious attention by the press as practiced by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi practiced peace journalism even before the term was coined by Johan Galtung. Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung first proposed peace journalism in 1970s as a self-conscious, working concept of journalists covering war and conflicts (McGoldrick and Lynch 2000). Peace journalism identifies itself socially responsible journalism and interprets the events to

resolve the conflicts. Thus, peace journalism is defined as a programme or a frame of journalistic news coverage which contributes to the process of making and keeping peace respectively to the peaceful settlement of conflicts (Hanitzch 2004). Peace or conflict journalism aims at exploring the background of a conflict with an intention to ascertain the reasons for the conflict. In the process, peace journalism focuses on the solutions to the conflict by giving an equal representation to the views of all the conflict parties as well as other points of view. The philosophy of peace journalism is to prevent violence and war. Thereby, peace journalism exposes lies, cover-up attempts and culprits on all sides.

Peace journalism also deals with peace initiatives and reports on the post-conflict situation arising out of amicable solution. In contrast, war or violence journalism reports on the conflicting parties while examining the background of the conflict or war. However, this journalism is keen on reporting on the winning chances of one party in the conflict. On many occasions Gandhi used non-violent methods to resolve a crisis. In 1922, Gandhi proposed the establishment of Shanti sena or peace brigade made up trained volunteers who would intervene non-violently to prevent communal bloodshed throughout India. This shanti sena was later setup after his death and spread from India to other parts of Asia where they continued to this day, although focused more on rural development than on civilian peace keeping as such (Walls & Samayoa 2007). Gandhi advised the practice of nonviolence with confidence and in an article in Harijan (6th July 1940), he said: "I have been practicing with scientific precision non-violence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life, domestic, institutional, economic and political. I know of no single case in which it has failed. Where it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfections. I claim no perfection for myself. But I do claim to be a passionate seeker after truth, which is but another name for God. In the course of that search, the discovery

of non-violence came to me. It spread is my life mission. I have no interest in living except for the prosecution of the mission”.

Indicators of War & Peace Journalism

Type of Journalism	Approach	Language
War Journalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reactive ➤ Visible Effects of War ➤ Elite-oriented ➤ Difference Oriented ➤ Focuses on here and now ➤ Dichotomizes the good and bad. ➤ Two party Orientation ➤ Partisan ➤ Zero sum orientation ➤ Stops reporting and leaves after the war. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Avoid Language Victimising ✚ Avoid Language Demonizing ✚ Avoid language Emotive
Peace Journalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proactive ➤ Invisible Effects of War ➤ People Oriented ➤ Agreement Oriented ➤ Causes and Consequences of War ➤ Avoid labelling of good and bad ➤ Multiparty Orientation ➤ Nonpartisan ➤ Win-Win Orientation ➤ Stays on to report aftermath of war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Avoid Language Victimising ✚ Avoid Language Demonizing ✚ Avoid language Emotive

Gandhi always kept updated. Looking to the readers' responses and critics it appeared that Gandhi believed in in-depth knowledge about the subject on which he wrote and expected the same from others who contributed to his news journals. Gandhi did not have any fancy for diverse subjects, but he insisted on originality, research, and care in marshalling facts. It was found that while publishing Indian Opinion Gandhi glanced through about 200 news journals and provided summary of many news and views published in them. Gandhi spent 21 years in South Africa where his political skills were honed. He suffered discrimination in its full force. He extended his stay in South Africa, and worked with Indians facing discrimination there. He founded the Natal Indian Congress in 1894 and continued his work there experimenting with Satyagraha till he returned to India in 1915. Upon his return home, Gandhi slowly and carefully transformed the movement for the freedom of India into a people's movement by applying the principles of Satyagraha and taking it out of the drawing rooms and courtrooms and on to the streets.

Peace journalism seeks involvement of people to reduce tensions between warring factions. In the Gandhian approach Gandhi understood the involvement of the people would be useful to solve communal riots. Thus he suggested a formation of a peace brigade to reduce frequent conflicts by prescribing a code of conduct to the members of the peace brigade. In Harijan (18th June 1936), he wrote, "Sometime ago I suggested the formation of a peace brigade whose members would risk their lives in dealing with riots, especially communal. The idea was that this brigade should substitute the police and even the military. This reads ambitious. The achievement may prove impossible. Yet, if the congress is to succeed in its non-violent struggle, it must develop the power to deal peacefully with such situations". One of the nine point codes was that the members of the peace brigade "must have a living faith in non-violence. This is impossible without living faith in God. A non-violent man can do nothing save by the power and grace of God. Without it, he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear, and without

retaliation... the knowledge of the omnipresence of god also means respect for the lives of even those who may be called opponents or goondas”. Moreover he appealed to the people that suffering is inevitable to solve some of the problems. Gandhi’s philosophy has much relevance to the world as a whole today. Gandhi’s philosophy and technique are important for the world as a whole and not for India alone. The most significant contribution of Gandhi was creating awareness in people that war could be avoided as means to the resolution of conflicts. Gandhi himself felt that Ahimsa (nonviolence) meant Sarvodaya – awakening of all, welfare of all. Paul Power in his book: Gandhi on World Affairs has attempted to discern the principles of nonviolence applicable to international affairs. His main purpose is to bring together Gandhi’s main ideas on world affairs and to evaluate their present relevance.

Our Late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi in her broadcast over All India Radio on October 1, 1968 confirmed, “The weapon of nonviolent resistance which he (Gandhi) has given mankind, is today used in other lands and climes. Also our Late Prime Minister Shri. Rajiv Gandhi has also said that Mahatma Gandhi’s message of nonviolence has increasing relevance in world held in thrall by nuclear terror. Our Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi on the social network site said: “The past and the present proves the fact that Non-violence is in the DNA of Indians. For many of us who didn't witness the Independence struggle, anti-corruption movement reinforces confidence in the strength of Non-Violence. Those who've taken the path of Naxalism and Terrorism must recognize the power of non-violence. It (Non-Violence) will make India stronger and serve humanity.”

Conclusion: Peace journalism as a concept is controversial and, like development journalism, particular movement for journalistic (and social) change. It is a set of procedures that attempt to question the current crisis-driven, conflict, one-sided, win-lose portrayal of wars by the media. Peace journalism is useful also in its attempts to urge more critical thinking of journalism activity and reporting of war and conflict throughout the world, at a moment in time when economic and political pressures are growing and contributing to the wider distortion and manipulation of news. Gandhi remains an immortal symbol of love and understanding all over the world. The two aspects of Gandhi as a human being and Gandhi as a political leader were summed up by him in 1922, "The only virtue I want to claim is truth and non-violence. I lay no claim to superhuman powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow beings wears and is, therefore, as liable to err as any. My services have many limitations, but God has up to now blessed them in spite of the imperfections." Therefore we should never forget Mahatma Gandhi, and his teaching and practice of truth and nonviolence for individual, national and world peace. I would like to end the paper with the advice of Mahatma Gandhi who himself said, "I cannot teach you violence, as I do not myself believe in it. I can only teach you not to bow your heads before any one even at the cost of your life."

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