# UNIT 4 TOWARDS PEACE AND HARMONY

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#### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

Gandhian thought and technique acquired universal appeal. Having forged the new weapon of non-violent non-cooperation he chalked out a new path not only for India but for the world as a whole. He always attempted a synthesis between theory and practice, between thought and work. For him a thought or theory had no meaning unless it was translated into practice.

The world has reached the cross-roads of history. Innumerable issues have cropped up posing a grave challenge to humankind. These issues are global in their dimensions and nature. Hardly any of them is amenable to violent means. They need to be faced on a long term basis with international cooperation. No nation, howsoever powerful, is in a position to grapple with them. Nations are tied together in an inter-dependent framework. We have to band together otherwise each one will have to hang separately. There is no escape from the relentless logic of our commonality. This will be in tune with the humanistic and holistic approach that Gandhi so well espoused. Ever active, Gandhi believed that silence and inactivity in the face of injustice amounted to cowardice and escapism. All instances of injustice have to be opposed. His technique of Satyagraha singled him out as a great fighter. Freedom, justice and equality were the ends he had in mind. He wanted to recreate a peaceful society as a just social order. But Satyagraha was to be carried out with non-violence. It was a technique of nonviolent resolution of conflict. The Unit attempts to capture his vision of a nonviolent peaceful and harmonious world.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have an understanding of Gandhian vision of peaceful world;
- to appreciate the moral dimension he brings forth in resolving conflicts.

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Gandhi approach to non-violence places him as a farsighted, sensitive and perceptive man of peace. Modern peace researchers who have contributed to the idea of direct and indirect violence and particularly structural violence find Gandhi as an equally original contributor to the thinking of peace research. The concept of structural violence is a product of social relationships of exploitation. Viewed

from this angle, the control exercised by an imperial power is a classic case of structural violence, the British domination over India being one of them. The fight that Gandhi carried on against it was a non-violent fight against violence.

He shares with many others the goal of a decent, just and equitable society. He wants to see an end to injustice, tyranny, corruption, and the exploitation of men by their fellows. With others he is deeply concerned to establish peace in the world, but not a peace purchased at any price. He knows that the only peace that can endure and be worthy of the name is based on justice.

A believer in peace is not content with the *status quo*. He is sensitive to the poverty, the distress, and the abject misery in which millions of his fellowmen live, not only in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. He realizes that, although overt violence comes vividly to the fore when desperate people take a situation into their own hands and blood runs in the streets, violence is in fact the daily lot of a staggering number of people.

All over the world most people think that only two reactions are possible in the face of tyranny, aggression or injustice. Men and women can either use violent methods, can kill, torture, or engage in sabotage, or they can be cowardly and surrender. When it is suggested that without recourse to violence strong and forthright resistance may be offered, many people simply fail to see this as a third alternative. Instead they equate it with the second, still thinking of nonviolent resistance as the equivalent of surrender.

The pacifist, however, strives to be closer in spirit to the soldier than to the coward, and sees far more of courage than of cowardice in the lives of such practitioners of nonviolence as Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Martin Luther King and Abbe Pierre. Such men reject violence because of a deeply held conviction that the employment of violence leads men and nations away from the decent society which is their goal. Wars fought to end war, though calling forth tremendous courage and immeasurable sacrifice, have led to more rather than to less war, nor have they made the world safe for freedom and democracy.

The task is to ensure harmony and peace in this strife-torn world. The ball is in the court of the Gandhians and all social groups which stand for peace and harmony and above all — responsible leaders of different streams of society. Both, leaders from polity and civil society, have a tremendous responsibility in setting up an agenda for peace and harmony. This agenda should take its cue from Gandhi's doctrines of Truth and Nonviolence.

# 4.2 GANDHI AND WORLD PEACE

Gandhi in all his undertakings proved himself to be one of the greatest messengers of peace the world has witnessed and peace becomes the quintessence of his political philosophy. It is Gandhi's contributions to world peace that the world at large has aptly recognized in him. Gandhi showed the world not only the goal of peace but the supreme method of achieving world peace. George C. Mashall writes, "In his devotion to peace and tolerance of the brotherhood man, the Mahatma was one those rare spokesman for the conscience of all mankind". Peace and tolerance, for Gandhi, were the supreme means for the realisation of Truth and Love which were identical to the Ultimate End of man. Gandhi's

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spiritual, political, and economic tenets were permeated by the principle of peace. In the light of peace alone could the human being witness truth.

Gandhi developed his world-view against the background of a world of violence. Violence by the foreign rule, economic violence against the poor, political violence against the down-trodden and underprivileged, educational violence against the illiterate and the backward and above all the violence of war and crime. Gandhi's message of peace took all its sharpness and sensitivity against this background of violence. He says, "What you gain by violence will be lost by greater violence". Gandhi recognized violence as the root-cause of all evils and all evils are thus reducible to violence against the spirit of truth. Hence for him non-violence or *ahimsa* becomes the only path to truth and only solution to the problems of life-individual, social and national. Hence the great role of *ahimsa* in the framework of Gandhian thoughts. Thus non-violence becomes the identified with peace. Peace becomes the true and positive way to the realization of truth.

Peace is an active and dynamic state in which one gets the opportunity to move forward towards development without confusion, fear or worry. On the other hand conflicts, disputes, dissensions, fights or struggles are illustrative of the absence of peace. Undoubtedly, harmony, cooperation and love emerge as chief characteristics of the state of peace. Despite several negative human tendencies, efforts for progress are desired by all since advancement at all levels and in all walks of life is a prime necessity of human life. In other words, it is a part and parcel of human endeavours. Hence, through the ages man has made constant efforts to gain peace either by individual or by collective means. This state remains intact today and will be so in the times to come.

Before proceeding further one more thing should be clarified. Peace is a dynamic state and not a situation of the status quo. Furthermore, it has nothing to do with inactiveness. In a state of peace, man accepting the reality of *Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam*, and freeing himself from the state of confusion, fear, tension, conflict, struggle or war, through harmony and cooperation of others in society continuously work to ensure welfare of humanity. Peace is also the best means to progress. Hence, it can be asserted that through the ages efforts for peace have been made individually or collectively and for this the method of non-cooperation has also been adopted from time-to-time. Today, because of the unprecedented scale of globalization, the importance and the need for such an effort multiplies many folds, more than in the past.

As we know, the Gandhian view in general pertains to the welfare of the human world. Moreover, Mahatma Gandhi carried out his practices accordingly. Whatever he preached he practiced them to clearly illustrate to the world that his life itself was his message. Therefore, it is necessary to take his ideas and practices together while discussing or analyzing his views. We can categorically say that Gandhian approach or view can be comprehended in real sense only if his ideas and practices are both put together in perspective.

Firstly, the basis or the centre of Gandhian view is *Ahimsa* [non-violence] as the highest human value. *Ahimsa* is a natural and eternal value. Besides being the essential condition for the existence *Ahimsa* is the means of development and achieving the goal of life. All high human values, including morality, at the centre of this discussion, originate from *Ahimsa*. Furthermore, *Ahimsa* itself is also the

protector of all human values and the basis of ethics. Therefore, thousands of years ago, *Ahimsa* was declared as the *Parmodharma* by the Vedic-Hindu philosophy and it was also accepted as the *Parmabrahaman* by Jainism. Hence, *Ahimsa* is interpreted as the basis of the supreme moral law. It is the foundation of universal principles and also its leading force. It is an eternal law or the rule. To repeat, *Ahimsa* is the essential condition for existence and continuity. This fact is emphasized by Martin Luther King Junior who underlined the non-violent philosophy of the Mahatma many a time. For example he said, "I found in the non-violent resistance philosophy of Gandhi... the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom."

Secondly, Gandhian view admits the reality of differences, disputes, conflicts and struggles, and their impact on various walks of human life. It accepts cooperation and struggle both as the necessities of society. But, at the same time it is determined to settle or resolve all states of violence by adopting *Ahimsa* in its refined form as per the demand of time and space. Thus, admitting the reality of the law of change Gandhism calls for resolution and solution of each and every struggle and dispute through the value of *Ahimsa*. In comparison to other available methods of conflict resolution Gandhism has a certain distinct and striking sense of justice. That is why; for almost a century the people of the world have looked at this method with high hopes and expectations. Not only this, some of the non-violent actions launched per the Gandhian way in different parts of the world achieved unprecedented successes.

Gandhian peace is an individual value. Just as truth and *ahimsa* begins with the individual and get realized in the individual, peace is a great value that should begin with the individual and become the basis for the development of other social and psychological attitudes. Edmond Taylor remarks, "This has produced the great Gandhian personality a combination of inner peace arising from a more total integration of all the elements in the personality than most men achieve." The development of the spiritual personality takes place in total integration with the psychological attitudes. We find this integration revealed in the Gandhian personality. Peace become only a goal but also a condition for self-realization. Peace becomes the necessary condition for the spiritual development of the individual. For this reason the sages and *rishis* of ancient times desired total isolation in their encounter with God. Peace in the individual is identified with divine presence in the religions. For Gandhi peace becomes an individual value of great significance.

Peace becomes a great national goal in the Gandhian context. Gandhi said, "As long as India is not independent she is not in a position to contribute her share to world peace". What Gandhi strived for was to establish the real peace in India, the kind of peace that will spread to the entire world. Gandhi's conception independent India meant an India solidly rooted on the principle of peace where truth and *ahimsa* reign supreme. Gandhi's world-wide acceptance and recognition are rooted on his peaceful and non-violent revolution that he exercised in this country. Martin Luther King says, "With a small group of devoted followers, Gandhi galvanized the whole of India, and through a magnificent feat of non-violence challenged the might of the British Empire and won freedom for his people". The non-violent revolution Gandhi galvanized set forever the light of peace that could guide the country in the right direction. It is this peace that Gandhi wanted Indians to enforce and develop because the very survival of the

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country depended on it. Gandhi wanted India be symbol of peace for the world because the great heritage of the country always symbolized peace. Gandhi wrote, "If India becomes free during my lifetime, and if I have the strength for it, I shall remain outside the official world and fulfill my duty of building a nation fully based on non-violence". A nation based completely on non-violence only can enjoy the privilege of allowing the people to live of peace, truth and love.

Peace becomes an international goal in the framework of Gandhism. Today peace is the catch-world in international relations because the world has come to realize more than ever the vital role of peace in the very survival of mankind. At the time of Gandhi's assassination Earl Warren wrote, "The Assassination of Gandhi removes from the world by a cowardly act a powerful force for world peace. Gandhi was essentially a man of peace". The world recognised Gandhi's contribution to world peace in ways more than one. Gandhi professed his love of the British, the American and Europeans as a whole at the same time he deplored the violent sophistication and advancement of the West. Gandhi loved the British but hated their ways. He writes recalling his role in the Boer War of 1899: "I felt that I demanded the rights as a British citizen it was also my duty to participate in the defence of the British empire". Based on this conviction Gandhi formed the Peace Corpse which consisted of 1100 members to provide relief work. Gandhi's love of the British was part of the great and universal drive he had for peace. Gandhi always set his eyes on world peace as the foundation on which to build a world of truth and love. He says, "Once we accept truth and love as the foundations of our existence, then we have discovered the foundation of the unity of humanity". The unity of humanity can be based only on the principle of peace as the necessary condition for the development of truth and love in the hearts of men. Gandhi saw the message of Christ as a unique expression of peace in the world: "I want the help of especially Christians to strength my conviction in non-violence because thousands of them believe that the message of Christ is the message of World Peace and good will". Gandhism stands for international peace. It is only through peace that the world can move in the path of truth towards God.

Peace and national integration are inherently correlated. So far as India is concerned national integration bears supreme importance because India's unity is a unity in diversity. Diversity in this country is indeed a great phenomenon. True peace in this country is possible only through the integration of these diverse political, social, cultural, religious and geographical elements that divide the country far and wide. Peace through national integration was one Gandhi's foremost aims. Edgar P. Snow writes, "Gandhi never ceased to try to unite his countrymen and indeed with the whole world under the homely injunctions common to all faiths: individual perfection, tolerance, humility, love of nature (God), equality, brotherhood and cooperation". Gandhi had the great foresightedness of envisaging an India united under one National flag not merely on the basis of political unity but an integration that would supersede all the differences under the supreme directive of truth and ahimsa. Keeping his eyes fixed on the ideal of peace and integration Gandhi said, "Hinduism must purge itself of untouchability, remove all distinctions of inferiority and superiority, and shed a host of other evils and shams that have become rampant in it."

Gandhian spirituality is founded on peace. Gandhi says, "In violence we exhibit not the spirit but the brute in us". The spirit can be realized and nurtured only in

a state of non-violence that is peace. All aspects of spirituality that can be practiced by the individual and can lead to God are based on peace in the individual as a condition for divine light. God's light in truth and love will shine on the individual only in a state of peace. Spirituality is the realization of truth and the vision of God through prayer, sacrifices and spiritual exercises that were so dear to Gandhi. He says, "Ahimsa is the only means to the realization of truth.... A perfect vision of truth can only follow a complete realization of ahimsa". Peace is a state of complete non-violence in the individual, society and nation. Gandhian spirituality can be realized and developed only within the framework of peace that should reign in the individual. Where there is no truth there cannot be peace and where there is no love, again, there cannot be peace. Peace in the genuine sense would thus become the co-principle of truth and love.

Check Your Progress I						
Not	<b>Note:</b> Use the space provided for your answers.					
1)	How important is the principle of non-violence in resolving conflicts?					
2)	Can a peace seeker be a status quoist?					

## 4.3 TOLERANCE AND HARMONY IN GANDHISM

Man's tolerance of one another's wrongs, tolerance and forbearance of social differences is fundamental to Gandhian thoughts. Tolerance is basic to the survival and progress of individuals, society and the nation. Dwight Macdonald says, "He practiced tolerance and love to such an extent that he seem to have regarded the capitalist and the garbage man as his social equal". Tolerance is a fundamental Gandhian virtue that makes the Gandhian *ahimsa* a most potent thing. Tolerance becomes a refinement of the most powerful principle of *ahimsa*. In a country like India more than anywhere else tolerance becomes central value for different reasons. India is a divided country with fundamental religio-philosophical and cultural separatism. This separatism is reflected most in our Hindu-Muslim and other communal rivalries and parochial tendencies. Gandhi saw that these communal rivalries would be a death–knell to the survival of this country. Gandhi's experiences after the partition immensely proved how malicious and terrible communalism in India could turn out to be. The Hindu–Muslim massacres

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after the partition compelled Gandhi to undertake a fast unto death, which he stopped on assurance from rivalries would be stopped at once.

Against this background tolerance is felt to be a very fundamental value in this country. Today tolerance is a constitutional value as an attitude fundamental to the democratic practices in this country. Tolerance and the fundamental rights are absolutely correlated. It requires tolerance on the part of one individual to recognize the democratic rights of another. It requires tolerance similar to recognize the constitutional rights of communities. This recognition require forbearance which we call tolerance in this context. The rights of individuals and communities call for tolerance on the part of other individuals and communities. Here tolerance becomes a positive virtue and enters into the very realm of ahimsa or love. Martin Luther King writes, "We will return good for evil. We will love our enemies. Christ showed us the way, and Gandhi showed us how it could work". Tolerance becomes love in its positive directions and Gandhi carries it to the logical extreme of loving one's enemies in line with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Tolerance as a constitutional value with reference to the fundamental rights takes the direction also of justice. It is merely allowing the other the necessary justice that he naturally deserves. Gandhi says, "My experience has shown me that we win justice quickest by rendering justice to the other party". Tolerance becomes justice paid in equal measure to those who owe it under given social setup.

Just like peace, tolerance becomes an individual value aimed at the development of the human individual. Relationship between individuals based on tolerance becomes fundamental to a spiritual society Gandhi envisaged. Differences in personal attitudes, aptitudes and endowments are basic to human life. These differences and the socio-economic status that becomes attached to these are part of socio-communal life. Individual tolerance becomes important when Gandhi wants these differences and the ups and downs to be forgotten in building a society based on truth and *ahimsa*. Dwight Macdonald writes, "It is true that Gandhi compromised with the rich, those untouchables of the class struggle, living at their villas. But he also compromised with the poor spending as much time with them". Gandhi showed the world that tolerance was the key principle in mutual help and self-less service. This would mean accepting the enemy or the stranger with all the pitfalls that he usually has.

Tolerance becomes a social goal in Gandhian frame of social set up. Social development at all levels of interaction comes to be based on tolerance from this view point. If the tolerance of individual differences is significant in individual development, in the same token, tolerance is the fundamental in social development. Social development is impossible without different communities interacting with each other. Conflict and rivalries arise when it comes to the benefit of one community, perhaps, at the cost of another's inconvenience or loss. Tolerance plays a major role here in effecting a clear balance between such differences. Tolerance coupled with a sense of justice would prompt one community to accept the other and work for its development.

Gandhi attached such a great importance to communal tolerance with reference to Hindu-Muslim rivalries and problems of interaction. Gandhi always went out of the way to convince the two communities of the great necessary of mutual tolerance, even at the cost of his own life. Gandhi kept on reminding Indians at

large that the two communities are part and parcel of the very same nation. Whenever the question of separatism arose, Mahatma Gandhi and others, and the leading News Papers never hesitated to remind the Muslims that they belonged to the same race and nationality as the Hindus. Ethnic tolerance was the unique solution for the communal problems and Gandhi gave the highest priority to the value of tolerance within the framework of *ahimsa*. If the truth is the aim at the individual, social and national level of life, then tolerance remains to be a concurrent value along with peace for development at these different levels.

#### 4.4 PEACE EDUCATION

Peace and tolerance are fundamental goals of education. Education considered from whatever viewpoint ends up in a rediscovery of peace at the very root of all formations and developments. Education aims primarily at helping the individual achieve a state of physical, psychological, social and spiritual balance or equilibrium. In other words, the individual discovers, in the process of education, a self balance in the right attitude towards himself, society and God. This constitutes the state of peace in the individual. It is a process of developing the self in these attitudes. The individual becomes capable of comparing and contrasting his own potentials and achievements with those of others not in a spirit of negative and unhealthy competition but in truth and love. This amounts to the development of peace within oneself. Peace in the right sense is not a negative state of lack of conflicts and problems within oneself. Peace is a positive and dynamic state of integrating in the right manner the diverse elements, conflicts and problems in the personality and obtaining a holistic state of serenity. In Gandhi's own words this becomes a successful search for truth: "A successful search for truth means a complete deliverance from the dual throng such as love and hate, happiness and misery". It is not the cancellation of diverse elements but the harmony and integration of these elements that constitute peace in the individual as part of the development of his personality.

Education aims at promoting peace in the nation. Development of attitudes of peace in the individual leads to collective of attitudes of the peace in the individual leads to collective endeavors for peace in the nation. This has dimensions. On the hand education ensures that the individual grows up in full awareness of the significance of peace at the national level, and on the other hand education attempts to direct this individual awareness to actual peace at the national level. Through the right orientations of educational content and methods and through the provision of learning experience the awareness and a feeling of urgency for peace at the national level can be developed. Peace and tolerance go hand in hand. Peace and tolerance go hand in hand. Peace can be regarded as the end and tolerance as the means and the method. Education should help students to price the value of peace and tolerance more than anything else.

Once Gandhi was asked by a student: "What can students do to create Hindu-Muslim unity? Gandhi answered, "The way is simple. Even if all the Hindus turn out to be hooligans and begin insulting you, you should not stop considering them your brothers in blood". Gandhi had no excuses and compromises for his principles and his admonitions took an absolute nature. That shows the level of greatness and the depth of sincerity he attached to these principles. Gandhi made it clear that education has vital role to play in developing peace and tolerance in

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all the affairs of the country, especially at the level of decision- making. The process of developing an intense awareness of peace permeates all levels and all aspects of education. It is not possible for education to have separate stream of 'peace education' along with other subjects and disciplines. But education should be in clear position to integrate peace values with all other aspects of the curriculum.

Gandhi saw the evil practice of untouchability as major obstacle to the practice and realization of peace and tolerance in the real sense of the word in several parts of India. Untouchability reigned supreme even in the days of Gandhi and he remained conscious of its evil effects. He emphasized the role of education in creating the necessary wave against these evil practices. He felt national schools should be capable of spreading the message of *charka*, unite the Hindus and the Muslims, educate the untouchables and thus remove from schools the curse of untouchability. The practice of untouchability grieved Gandhi to the depth of his personality. Education is the only solution to curb this practice if it is still persisting is any from in any part of the country. Ways in which one community considers another as inferior is another form of untouchability and this practice comes directly opposed to the ideal of peace and tolerance. Obstacles to the ideal of peace and tolerance crop up in different ways. Very often people fail to recognize that such ways have anything to do with the maintenance of peace and tolerance. Education has sacred duty to safeguard the values of peace and tolerance from all such lapses that may occur in the individual, society or nation.

Education aims further at international peace, and tolerance at the level of nations. The Gandhian message of peace has gathered significance more than ever on the face of the growing arms race between world powers. The modern world has the ever growing feeling that humanity is moving towards a nuclear end. The nuclear holocaust has to be averted. Gandhi's efforts for peace in the world can be regarded as the only solution to divert such a holocaust. Norman Thomas says, if ever men achieve a world peace, to no single man will it owe a greater debt than to Mohandas K. Gandhi''.

Peace becomes part of personality development from all perspectives. Peace-attitudes are part of the individual's spiritual personality in his attempts to move towards Truth as the ultimate Goal. Education for Gandhi is "the all round drawing out of the best in the child and man-body, mind and spirit". This best for Gandhi is in fact the inner voice of truth. The strengthening of this inner voice of truth, as all Gandhi's personal experiments consisted of, is actually the strengthening of peace in all its different perspectives. Gandhi says, "one person who can express *ahimsa* in life exercise a force superior to all forces of brutality". Peace in the individual becomes the expression of *ahimsa* as peace and *ahimsa* are inseparable. A character well-founded on peace will exercise the attitude of truth and *ahimsa* to others. Peace and tolerance provide a link between personalities of individuals within a given social set up. Peace at the individual level would thus become the blossoming of the personality. The odour of peace in the individual cannot help permeating to outside the individual and exercise the right influence.

The East as a whole and India in particular stood for peace. It was the reflection of peace that the East has produced the World Religions. There is no religion in the world that does not stand for peace in the individual and peace in humanity. Peace is a treasured value for every religion. The contribution of India towards

world peace is not sheer contemporary phenomenon but a traditional one. Being the motherland of three major world religions, it is most apparent that India stands foremost for this treasured value of peace. Indian culture thus embodies peace and tolerance as two great principles. Education which aims at the transmission of culture in fact transmits the value of peace and tolerance in the context of India. The right teaching of Indian culture will not be providing a puffed up concept of account of wars but of the great value of peace embodied in our culture. Education at the school level already spends considerable time providing students and experience in Indian culture. This effort can be easily reoriented to focus on peace so that the work will form a basis for the development of the right attitude of peace in students.

Education for peace and tolerance receive high priority in a world that is facing serious nuclear threat. Educational goals in all their diversities have a dimension of peace with reference of the individual, society and nation at large. These goals require a coordination to bring home the full importance of peace and tolerance. Peace is value that should achieve integration with other values in education. Peace is an attitude that requires development along with other important attitude to produce holistic personality. Peace becomes in the individual's attitudes towards himself, society and the nation. Education and Gandhism becomes a harmonious whole at the level of peace.

Check Your Progress II						
<b>Note:</b> Use the space provided for your answers.						
1)	How important is communal harmony in the way to peace and harmony in India?					
2)	Reflect on the role of education in creating a peaceful world.					

### 4.5 LET US SUM UP

The attraction and curiosity of people all over the world towards the distinctive Gandhian view seems to increase day-by-day to revitalize high hopes in the hearts of people more than in the past. With on-going globalization, the genesis of new problems, disputes and conflicts seems inevitable. That is why the Gandhian view in resolving these problems emerges as one of the best and noble alternatives

available to the world. It can show the people the pathway to prosperity and peace opening the doors to both prosperity and peace through mass awakening, cooperation and participation of people.

### 4.6 KEY WORDS

**Harmony** : coming together of seemingly conflicting positions/

values.

**Peace-education**: seeks to build a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

# 4.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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