



# **NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY**

**Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)  
Under Graduate Degree Programme**

## **SELF LEARNING MATERIAL**

**POLITICAL SCIENCE  
[HPS]**

**GE-PS- 31**

## PREFACE

In a bid to standardize higher education in the country, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) based on five types of courses viz. *core, generic, discipline specific, elective, ability and skill enhancement* for graduate students of all programmes at Honours level. This brings in the semester pattern which finds efficacy in sync with credit system, credit transfer, comprehensive continuous assessments and a graded pattern of evaluation. The objective is to offer learners ample flexibility to choose from a wide gamut of courses, as also to provide them lateral mobility between various educational institutions in the country where they can carry their acquired credits. I am happy to note that the University has been recently accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India (NAAC) with grade “A”.

UGC (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Programmes) Regulations, 2020 have mandated compliance with CBCS for U.G. programmes for all the HEIs in this mode. Welcoming this paradigm shift in higher education, Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) has resolved to adopt CBCS from the academic session 2021-22 at the Under Graduate Degree Programme level. The present syllabus, framed in the spirit of syllabi recommended by UGC, lays due stress on all aspects envisaged in the curricular framework of the apex body on higher education. It will be imparted to learners over the six semesters of the Programme.

Self-Learning Materials (SLMs) are the mainstay of Student Support Services (SSS) of an Open University. From a logistic point of view, NSOU has embarked upon CBCS presently with SLMs in English / Bengali. Eventually, the English version SLMs will be translated into Bengali too, for the benefit of learners. As always, all of our teaching faculties contributed in this process. In addition to this, we have also requisitioned the services of best academics in each domain in preparation of the new SLMs. I am sure they will be of commendable academic support. We look forward to proactive feedback from all stakeholders who will participate in the teaching-learning based on these study materials. It has been a very challenging task well executed by the teaches, officers & staff of the University, and I heartily congratulate all concerned in the preparation of these SLMs.

I wish you all a grand success.

**Professor (Dr.) Ranjan Chakrabarti**  
Vice-Chancellor

**Netaji Subhas Open University**  
**Undergraduate Degree Programme**  
**Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)**  
**Subject : Generic Elective**  
**Course : Gandhi and the Contemporary World**  
**Course Code : GE - PS - 31**

First Print : December, 2022

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Printed in accordance with the regulations of the  
Distance Education Bureau of the University Grants Commission.

# **Netaji Subhas Open University**

**Undergraduate Degree Programme**

**Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)**

**Subject : Generic Elective**

**Course : Gandhi and the Contemporary World**

**Course Code : GE - PS - 31**

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**Netaji Subhas  
Open University**

**UG : Political Science  
(Generic Elective)**

**Course : Gandhi and the Contemporary World  
Course Code : GE - PS - 31**

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**Module – I**  
**Gandhi and the Contemporary World**





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## **Unit-1 □ Gandhi-A Brief Biography**

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### **Structure**

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- 1.11 Gandhi's Death**
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### **1.0 Objective**

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This unit aims at:

- 1 describing the defining moments and incidents in Gandhi's early life in shaping his character
- 1 outlining the influence of Gandhi's family and persons during his school days in instilling noble qualities and outlook in him
- 1 presenting the varied experiences of Gandhi as a law student in England
- 1 explaining the strategy adopted by Gandhi in forging the Hindu-Muslim unity in India

- 
- 1 analysing Gandhi's peasant Satyagraha in India
  - 1 delineating his concept of Satyagraha and Non-violence in South Africa in fighting out racial discrimination
  - 1 pointing out circumstances and events leading to Gandhi's Rowlatt Satyagraha and Non-cooperation Movement in freedom struggle
  - 1 discussing the Civil Disobedience Movement and Gandhi's Dandi March
  - 1 understanding the Quit India Movement and Gandhi
  - 1 explaining partition and independence and Noakhali Riot.

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## 1.1 Introduction

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A discussion of Gandhi's biography may not be complete without a bit of reference to his Autobiography, a crucial source used invariably by all biographers. Gandhi's Autobiography which he titled 'The Story of My Experiments with Truth' calls for a different understanding of life as it contains a spiritual voyage and moral treatise which guides humanity to the path of righteousness. It was written at a time when the writing of autobiography was not known to have existed in pre-modern India. It was, in fact, prevailing in the west, hence a western practice characterized as self-praise or self-glorification aimed at deifying a personality. It took the self as its central theme replete with self-centeredness and egoism as its features. It seeks to criticize the opponents and boosts its image in the people's eyes.

Gandhi's Autobiography, unlike the western practices, projected his personality not to deliberately tell the story of self-praise or self-assertion; rather it represented him as the bearer/agent of experiments of the truth and non-violence that he had experimented in the laboratory of life with his soul to attain 'Moksha' (liberation).

Gandhi started writing his autobiography in jail mainly at the behest of his two co-workers. It appeared serially in his paper 'Navajivan' which was later translated into English from Gujarati by Mahadev Desai and published in book form in 1927.

Gandhi's intention was to depict his humility, truthfulness and exceptional frankness virtually hiding nothing. Whatever he narrated about his life was his spiritual itinerary written from memory ignoring the worldly aspects. Gandhi selected a few episodes of his life which he deemed worth mentioning. So, his autobiography is regarded as authentic and uncritical by his many biographers as the main source of information regarding Gandhi's life before the 1920s.

Gandhi excluded from his autobiography all personal details except having bearing upon his experiments with truth. Bhikhu Parekh remarks: ... ‘‘he wrote it in order to share with others his moral and spiritual aspirations, struggles, lapses and discoveries and thereby to offer them some useful material for their journey’’.

His autobiography attempts to convey the redeeming values of Indian civilization in a language which is simple, lucid and measured, instead of an ornamental one. It is the story of how he evolved into a Mahatma. It is basically a biography of Gandhi written by Mahatma. Parekh calls it ‘‘an autobiographical biography’’ This biography is introspective in nature reflecting ‘‘Indian orientation and flavour’’, having great therapeutic and inspirational value. So, his autobiography is a soul-stirring story told with a view to drawing out and emphasizing important moral lessons. His autobiography wants to illuminate the light of similar experiments in others in their journey of life.

Gandhi’s autobiography is considered as strategies of nation-construction. In India, Mahatma Gandhi is the icon representing and portraying him as the ‘Father of the Nation’ as it forms an instrumental role of Gandhi’s designation in building a pan-Indian identity among diverse groups at the time of nationalist movement against the colonial ruler. Thus, Gandhi’s biography becomes a ‘modern India’s biography’.

Mahatma Gandhi was truly a child of his time. His biography had a powerful impact and inspiration to the millions of Indian people and the world. His entire life represented a quest for truth to truth. His was a multi-faceted personality made it fascinating to the students and ordinary men alike. To bring them all together in illustrating his kaleidoscopic biography or a profile of biography would reveal alive one of the most revered figures in modern Indian history. The study of his biography involves an intimate analysis of demonstrating the evolution of a mischievous, fun-loving boy into Mahatma—a continuous process of self-discipline which shaped his environment as much as he was shaped by it.

Gandhi was a simple, straight-forward and saintly man. His life-style was so simple that he dressed like ordinary man. In his use of vocabulary, there was a fine blend of both indigenous and Western traditions. Although he was deeply inspired by ideas of stalwarts like Tolstoy, Emerson and Ruskin, but he creatively indigenized the ideas by redefining them in the Indian context. His ideas and deeds such as Ahimsa, Satyagraha, and Sarvodaya and so on were organically linked with Indian civilization. His language in politics had a magical effect so much so that he could touch the hearts of men and women living in the peripheral areas. The contrast between his remarkable ordinary physical appearance and the aura surrounding him attracted the attention of the Indian masses virtually leading him to the centre-stage of Indian socio-cultural and political arena as the great leader. Such greatness of Gandhi lay in his ability and

capacity to mobilize millions on the social and political plane due to his magnetism and charisma of his personality with which he steered the nation against colonial rule and radically altered the complexion of the nationalist struggle.

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## 1.2 Early Life of Gandhi

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Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, respectfully addressed as the ‘Father of the Nation’ and the ‘Architect of Modern India’, was born at Porbandar, a tiny princely city in Kathiawar, presently part of the Indian state of Gujarat, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1869. His father, Karamchand Uttamchand Gandhi (1882-1885) served as *diwan* (chief minister) of Porbandar State. Uttamchand was a capable Chief Minister although he had only an elementary education. Prior to becoming the Chief Minister, he had been a clerk in the State administration. Gandhi’s father, Uttamchand, had married four times. His first two wives passed away young, each had given birth to a daughter, and his third marriage was childless. For being childless in third time, his father planned and intended to marry in fourth time. At this time, he married Putlibai(1844-1891) who came from Junagadh of pranami Vaishnava family. Putlibai had three children: a son, Laxmidas, a daughter, Raliat behn and another son, karsondas. On October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1889, Putlibai gave birth to her last child, Mohandas in family residence in Porbandar city.

Gandhi grew up in an eclectic religious background. His parents were followers of the devotional Hindu cult of Vishnu or Vaishnavites. His mother belonged to the Pranami sect which combined Hindu and Muslim religious beliefs, giving equal honour to the sacred books of the Vaishnavites and the Koran and preached religious harmony. His mother’s ancestral tradition was based on medieval Krishna Bhakti Pranami sect, whose religious texts include the Bhagavad Gita, and the Bhagavata Purana. This religious tradition is believed to have included the essence of the Vedas, the Quran and the Bible.

Gandhi, the last son of Karamchand, was known by various names such as Manu, Monia, Mohan and Mohania. All these were his nicknames. This last child of Kaba Gandhi as he was also nicknamed, had developed himself day by day well known to many as an important person—from simple Mohan to Mahatma. This change of life evolved over a period of time was not an easy thing. Gandhi says: “childhood shows the man as morning shows the day”. This was a real story in the case of Gandhi indeed. Gandhi in his Autobiography records: “The Gandhis belong to the Bania caste——Bania means grocers. But for three generations, from my grandfather they have been the Prime Ministers in several Kathiwar States”.

Writing about Gandhi's birthday, Louis Fisher observes: "The year in which he was born at Porbandar on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1869 was significant as that year the the Suez Canal was opened. Thomas A. Edison patented his first invention. France celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Napoleon Bonaparte and Charles W. Eliot became President of Harvard University. Karl Marx had just published *Das Capital*, Bismark about to launch the Franco-Prussian war, and Queen Victoria ruled over England and India". Gandhi's birthday, 2 October, is commemorated in India as Gandhi Jayanti, a national holiday, and worldwide as the International Day of Nonviolence. The great events which took place on the birthday of Gandhi were a testimony of the auspicious and eventful moments of his birthday.

Although Gandhis were involved in petty trade being bania by caste, Uttamchand occupied the high position undergoing a hectic life in both his occupation and in family. Despite such burden of responsibilities, his father took ample care for giving his children the comforts of an established home and the education. His father used to say that "My children are my wealth". Gandhi was deeply influenced by his mother, an extremely pious lady who "would not think of taking her meals without her daily prayers...she would take the hardest vows and keep them without flinching. To keep two or three consecutive fasts were nothing to her" At home, his mother, Putlibai, drew Mohandas to the rich civilization traditions of India. Not only he was introduced to the religious and mythological texts, he was also influenced by his mother's 'saintliness' and deeply religious nature. Gandhi with his inquisitive mind kept asking questions to mother who would patiently respond. These narratives had a deep impression on the young mind. Some scholars mention that instead of being catholic in his religious preferences, the early influences made him realize the importance of 'an open mind' or a rational mind with regard to different religions that made India's civilization so rich and complex. Religious orthodoxy had no place in Gandhi's family. This is why Gandhi was sensitive to different and even contradictory faiths and practices helped Gandhi become the Mahatma.

Similarly, Gandhi had a great devotion for his father as he heard about his father's shrewdness of judgments and practical knowledge acquired through experience despite his little education. Gandhi often used to have a chance to be present at the discussion room of his father about the state problems with Parsi and Muslim friends and jain monks. Gandhi had the occasion to hear discussions about religious matters. This created in him religious liberalism. On many occasions, he would visit the Haveli Vaishnava Temple. He developed a natural faith in Ramanama. In his later life such as at the time of the leader of the masses, he practised the mantra 'Ramanama', and repeated it at the time of crisis and adversity. This mantra was the last word he had

uttered before he died. In this way, religion, from the very beginning, played a pivotal role in shaping his career. The Gita was also a source of inspiration for him.

Apart from his those family influences, Gandhi's heart was inflamed when he was told not to touch Uka, a scavenger by name employed by his family to clean the latrine and sweep the floor. Uka belonged to an untouchable community. Gandhi was then twelve years old. If he brushed against him by chance he had to go and bathe so that he became clean again. Gandhi could not understand this and told his mother that such an act did not have a religious sanction. Gandhi wrote in *Young India* (issue of 6-8-1925): "My personal religion forbids me to hate anybody. I learnt this simple, yet grand doctrine when I was twelve years old". By saying to his mother, he raised the banner of revolt against his mother why one should treat an untouchable the way he was treated. In this event, we can discover in the little boy a hint of passion for reforming others which later became a dominant trait of the Mahatma.

In addition to this, the plays *Shravan Pitribhakti* and *Harishchandra* had left a deep impact on the mind of young Gandhi. These plays moved him in such a way that he wanted to be like *Shravankumar* and started obeying and serving his father and mother as *Shravankumar* did for his old parents. Likewise, he resolved to be like *Harishchandra* following his truthfulness the king had done. Henceforth, he became a lover of truth and did everything in the cause of truth. So Gandhi states: "That all our activities should be guided by truth. Truth should be the breath of our life. When the virtue of truthfulness is seen to have reached the pinnacles, all other difficult tasks and living will regenerate without effort and an instinctiveness of obedience will grow. But without truth it is impossible to observe any principles or rules in life" As a student also, he adhered to truth which later became the cardinal principle of his life. His school record revealed that right from the start, Gandhi strove hard to be honest and this helped him build a strong moral character.

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### **1.3 Childhood and School Days**

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At age 7, Gandhi attended the Primary school at Porbandar. Due to his family moving to Rajkot, Gandhi entered the local school at Rajkot near his home at the age of 9. Here he studied the rudiments of Arithmetic, History, the Gujrati language and Geography. Thereafter, at age 11, he joined the High School in Rajkot. He was a mediocre student, very shy and tongue-tied in conversation and avoided any company. His only companies were books and school lessons. He had no love for outdoor games. But he was truthful, honest, sensitive and alert about his character.

While he was studying at High school in Rajkot, he made a friend with Sheikh Mehtab, a bad natured boy who clouded Gandhi's life badly somewhat. Gandhi's

elder brother introduced him to this Muslim friend. Mehtab was older in age, used to encourage the vegetarian Gandhi to eat meat and gain height. Gandhi started smoking at the instigation of Mehtab. Gandhi maintained friendship with Mehtab despite warning from his family. One day Mehtab took Gandhi to a brothel, though Gandhi there became “struck blind and dumb in the den of vice”, rebuffed the prostitute’s advance and left the place immediately. This experience caused Gandhi mental anguish and ultimately abandoned the company of Mehtab. All these secret activities done in companion with his friend Mehtab were communicated and confessed to his father in a letter who was then sick. Karamchand read the letter of confession without saying a word. He tore the letter with a deep sigh, eyes filled with tears. Seeing this, Gandhi’s eyes too were filled with tears. From this onwards, out of pangs of conscience, he began speaking truth only. The power of truth was revealed to him. He knew that he could not be good unless he loved truth. Hereafter, Gandhi would return from school and would massage his father’s feet. These incidents show the fact that how the family discipline worked and acted upon him. At the age of 16, Gandhi lost his 63 year old father forever.

After completing matriculation, Gandhi was admitted to Samaldas college in 1888 in Bhavnagar state. It was at this time the sole degree college. But he dropped out and returned to his family in Porbandar. The reason for dropping out of this college was mainly the fact that he could not follow the lectures delivered by the professors; hence he did not find any interest in his studies there. He came back to home. At home, Mavji Dave Joshiji, a Brahmin priest and family friend advised Gandhi and his family that he should rather pursue Law studies in London.

Before being admitted to college, in May 1883, the 13 year-old Gandhi was married to 14 year-old Kasturbai Makhanji Kapadia ( her first name later shortened to Kasturbai) in an arranged marriage maintaining the custom of the region at that time. In this process, he lost a year in studies but he later was allowed to make it up. Gandhi recalled: “As we did not know much about marriage, for us it meant not only wearing new clothes, eating sweets and playing with relatives.” *It needs reiteration that Gandhi’s marriage was held jointly along with his brother and cousin for the sake of economy and convenience.*

*Kasturbai, wife of Gandhi, a daughter of Gokaldas Makani, a merchant of Porbandar, was illiterate but strong willed. Due to immaturity in terms of marriage year, sometimes a quarrel between them occurred. Though the little couple gradually came to know one another, developed intimacy and a sense of husband in Gandhi, he then soon felt the fondness for his wife. But again, Sheikh Mehtab, his friend, befooled him by fanning suspicion in him against his wife, giving rise to the differences. But it was a transient phenomenon. The Gandhis had a baby-son to them, but the baby died within three or four days of its birth.*



Gandhi's marriage became a turning point in his life. This was because of two reasons: First, marriage made him realize the importance of earning for sustenance. It appeared in his mind that it was now humiliating to depend on his father's money. Secondly, he was disturbed with the shackles of lust which, he thought, was responsible for diverting his attention away from other noble goals of life. He was in a dilemma, torn between his lust and the concern for making life different and useful for society.

He at times thought and expressed doubt as to whether his love for Kasturba only a physical lust as he himself narrated that his passionate love for Kasturba did not allow him to even visit his father before his death. In this connection, Gandhi's recounting is worth mentioning: "While my hands were busy massaging my father's legs, my mind was hovering about (my wife's) bedroom and that too at a time when religion, medical science and common sense alike forbade sexual intercourse (at this time, Kasturbai had become pregnant at fifteen and she was now in an advanced stage). One evening, between ten and eleven, Gandhi's uncle relieved him at massaging Karamchand. Gandhi went quickly to his wife's bedroom and woke her. A few minutes later, the servant knocked at the door and urgently summoned Gandhi. He jumped out of bed, but when he reached the sick room, his father was dead."

This anguished Gandhi mentally throughout his life, 'the pain of irresponsibility' that he could not serve his dying father at his critical moment of departure of life. Gandhi murmured in melancholy that his carnal urge snatched from him the baby only three days after birth as well as his father. Gandhi attributed all these incidents as God's curse creating in him the sense of guilt and shame.

After the death of his first baby, the Gandhi couple had four more sons. They were Harilal, Manilal, Ramdas and Devdas.

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## **1.4 Gandhi in England for law studies**

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Leaving his study at Bhavnagar College incomplete, Gandhi, on the advice of Joshiji, family priest and friend, started preparation for going to London to qualify for law degree. His desire was fulfilled as his brother Laxmidas managed to find the means to send his brother abroad. But his mother, Putlibai, stood as a barrier to going to England. She feared that a young boy in a foreign country was likely to be led astray with temptations of meat, wine and women. Gandhi with his persistent vow to his mother "not to touch wine, women and meat" won the heart and consent. Gandhi left for England in 1888 to train as a lawyer after giving that pledge to his mother. Overcoming the initial barrier, he faced the wrath of the caste groups that opposed his going to England. Gandhi ignored their restraint. They, therefore, excommunicated him from the caste.

The ship on which he was sailing almost all passengers were English people. Due to his lack of fluency in English, he did not mix with them nor used to dine at the table. He then used to dine in his cabin eating only fruits and sweets

One day, a kindhearted Englishman drew him into conversation by persuading him to dine together. Gandhi told him that he was a vegetarian pledged to his mother to avoid meat and wine. He then replied to Gandhi that climate in England was very cool and one could not sustain the weather without eating meat. Gandhi riposted that he would rather return to India than break his promise to his mother.

On reaching England, for the first few days he felt uneasy. Everything appeared to him different there. The people, their ways and manners, food, their residences were all different. Naturally, loneliness and home sickness gripped him. He used to weep during the night. Friends persuaded him to break the pledge of vegetarianism but he struck to it. Then he was searching vegetarian restaurant and found one ultimately in Farringdon Street where he had hearty meal to his satisfaction and relish. Henceforth, he continued taking vegetarian meal there daily. In England, Gandhi purchased Salt's book 'Plea for Vegetarianism' and read it repeatedly. He joined the Vegetarian Society. He even started a Vegetarian Club and became its Secretary. Thus, he maintained his passion for vegetarianism as a diet. But this style was short-lived. He was ashamed of spending money on such things. He began leading a more simple life. Gandhi realized that he came here not for spending his whole life; he should rather concentrate on his studies and not to waste his brother's money.

In England, Gandhi came across two theosophist brothers who introduced him to Sir Arnold's English translation of the Gita—The Song Celestial. By studying it, he was impressed pricelessly as it resulted in Gandhi's mind his regard for the book as the knowledge of truth par excellence. He also read Edwin Arnold's 'The Light of Asia', Blavatsky's 'Key to Theosophy' and The Bible, The New Testament all made a deep influence on him. The principles of renunciation and non-violence appealed to him so much so that it pervaded his entire life. He also studied there Carlyle's 'Hero and Hero Warship' in which he understood and learned the greatness, courage and unblemished practices of Mohammed, the propounder of Islam. All these books created in him the attitude of respect for all religions, planting a secular mind in his early life.

Gandhi's desire to qualify as a barrister in England saw the light of the day after he successfully passed his law examination on June 10, 1891. He then sailed for India. This was the Mahatma in the making during his stay in England. But on reaching Bombay he met his elder brother from whom he heard very sad news—the death of

his beloved mother. Gandhi regretfully wrote: "I was pining to see my mother. I did not know that she was no more in the flesh to receive me back into her bosom.....The news, however, nonetheless a sever shock to me." At the age of twenty two, he was indeed an orphan, having lost both his parents.

Gandhi's legal career in India was disappointing. He was too shy to open his mouth in court and had to give away his first brief to a colleague. He turned to draft applications to maintain his family. Sometimes the court intrigues became to him tiresome. He was in search of a job desperately to make ends meet. In the meantime, the luck came to his rescue. A Muslim firm in south Africa sought his services as a lawyer and a correspondence clerk. Gandhi readily accepted the offer. He sailed for South Africa in 1893 intending to spend a year there but instead stayed on for 21 years.

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## **1.5 Gandhi in South Africa**

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In April 1893, Gandhi aged 23, set sail for South Africa to act as a lawyer for Abdullah's firm. His visit to South Africa turned out as an important episode and it brought about a complete transition in his life.

Upon arrival in South Africa, Gandhi faced the pinch of racial discrimination. The Indian community living there was helpless as they were ignorant and divided, unable to fight it. Even Gandhi was not spared from this discrimination. In connection with his case, Gandhi had to travel to Pretoria by train with the first class ticket. A White passenger and railway officers asked him to leave the first class compartment. Gandhi refused. He then was kicked and thrown off a train at Pietermaritzburg railway station where he had to sit for all night in a condition of shivering cold night. The episodes made him furious and he was pondering if he should return to India or lead a fight. He ultimately decided to stay and fight. It was his historic decision. It transformed Gandhi later from a 'loyalist to a rebel'.

In an incident, the Magistrate of Durban Court ordered Gandhi to remove his turban which he refused to oblige. Similar humiliation he confronted in Charles Town when he was not allowed to sit with the Europeans in a coach. These serial and many other incidents of racially discriminatory practices in South Africa (from Pretoria to Johannesburg) suffered by him strengthened his will power to fight against it. In Pretoria, he organized the Indians to resist this racial snobbery. But at this time, Gandhi could settle the case of Abdullah through arbitration for which he had come. He then decided to return home. But, at the farewell party, he came to know about

a bill to restrict the Indian franchise. Seeing the grave implications and the people's pressure to stay some time, he agreed.

Gandhi fought against the proposed bill known as the Indian Franchise Bill. The bill seeks to take away Indians' voting rights. He settled at Natal as a barrister and founded the Natal Indian Congress. Along with the political protest, he also started regular legal practice. In the political protest, the illiterate indentured labourers joined the struggle. Here, Gandhi soon became a successful and leading lawyer. Gandhi in this struggle succeeded partially to reduce the harshness of the bill.

### **The boer war**

Gandhi started a similar protest by campaigning against immigration restrictions and discriminatory licensing laws. Despite Gandhi's support to the British during the Boer war with the Dutch colony and the assurance by General Smuts of withdrawing compulsory registration, the condition of Boers, a group of stretcher-bearer of the Natal Indian Ambulance Corps, had remained unimproved. The Transvaal passed the law in 1907 empowering the White police officers the authority to enter the house of Indians to check up their permits and registration. Gandhi felt that the measure would injure the Indians residing there and he hit upon his well known method of Satyagraha—a form of non-violent resistance involving peaceful picketing of registration centers, burning registration cards, courting arrests etc. As a punishment, many were deported and Gandhi was imprisoned. In the face of the hard-hitting policy of repression, the movement lost its force. Though some concessions resulted it fell short of his original demands. It was followed by another Satyagraha against 3 pound poll tax, derecognition of Indian marriages. This time, Gandhi had greater success and led to the passage of the Indian Relief Act in 1914.

All these results were possible due to Gandhi's active role against the racist Government of South Africa through a unique means of political action—a philosophy of non-violent resistance known as Satyagraha. His success in South Africa earned him a reputation of a leader who mobilized the religiously fractured Indians uniting them for fighting against a racist regime in South Africa. Gandhi's struggle against the derecognized marriages especially brought him a colossal success in gender equality in South Africa.

### **Tolstoy farm/Phoenix Experiment**

When Gandhi realized that fight against injustice would be a long one, he desired to set up a centre where the Satyagrahis could lead a simple life and get training for the struggle. At about 30 hours of distance from Johannesburg to Phoenix, Gandhi

established the Tolstoy farm on 1100 acres of land donated by his German friend, Kallenbach, in the name of Tolstoy who was the great Russian writer. His book 'The Kingdom of God within You' had a great influence making him a believer in non-violence. The Tolstoy Farm was actually a training camp for the Satyagrahis. Gandhi himself undertook the responsibility of educating the children. Drinking, smoking and meat-eating were prohibited there. The life was simple, hard and joyful. Experiments at Tolstoy Farm proved to be a source of purification and penance for Gandhi and his co-workers.

Gandhi's Satyagraha was an epic march giving a jolt to the racist South African government. All in all, it was South Africa that made and transformed Gandhi preparing him for a protracted struggle against the British rule in India. The Boer War was also illustrative of his effort in bringing the deeply divided Indians together. The unity of the disparate groups was firmly established in the Phoenix Settlement in Natal and later Tolstoy Farm in Johannesburg.

During his 21 years of stay in South Africa, Gandhi's ways of life and thought underwent important changes. Every time he came across a new idea which he integrated it into his way of life, experimented with its truth and explored its moral logic virtually germinating it from truth to truth. Gandhi obtained his moral and religious literature reading from Plato's 'Apology' and William Salter's 'Ethical Religion', the first of which he translated and second summarized into his native Gujarati. The books that influenced him greatly during his stay in South Africa were: Henry Thoreau's 'On the Duty of Civil Disobedience' (1849), a masterly treatise; Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of God is Within You' (1893) which overwhelmed him in discovering the doctrine of non-violence and love, and John Ruskin's 'Unto this Last' (1862). It produced in him a magical influence engendering a turning point in his life.

Ruskin's book, in particular, inspired him tremendously making Gandhi decide to live an austere life on a commune at first on the Phoenix Farm and then on the Tolstoy Farm. Gandhi had gone to South Africa as an insecure, timid and unsuccessful lawyer. He left for India in 1914 as a self-confident, proud, deeply religious and well known political leader. Thus, he rendered remarkable service in South Africa.

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## **1.6 Gandhi in Indian National Movement and Politics**

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Gandhi returned to India in January 1915. The intellectual growth in London and the long-standing experience of successful non-violent anti-racial struggle in South Africa brought him an international reputation as a popular leader. In India, he was welcomed and honoured as a hero. At the instance of his Guru, Gopal Krishna

Gokhale, Gandhi started an extensive tour of India to get down-to-earth conditions in the country. While he was touring India, Gandhi saw the ruthless oppression and large scale economic exploitation of the Indians at the hands of the British. The people of India became thoroughly demoralized. The Indians had become caste-ridden, fragmented, selfish and lacking in a social conscience and civic virtues. Unless the country was revitalized and reborn, it could neither win nor sustain independence. Gandhi realized the need for India's regeneration instilling in the masses the consciousness and struggle against the British tyranny and injustice using his experimented ideas and principles he developed in Hind Swaraj which "teaches the gospel of love in place of that hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul-force against brute force"

Gandhi returned to India at a time when the Indian political scenario was undergoing through infighting between the 'Moderates' and the 'Extremists'. The Moderates had no appeal to the people; the Extremists were in disarray since the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Gandhi instead of showing interest in this fray remained aloof for one year. At this time, he founded the Satyagraha Ashram at Ahmedabad, later it was shifted to Sabarmati Ashram.

Without lending support to neither the moderate means nor to the extremist methods, Gandhi worked out a comprehensive plan of national regeneration for achieving political independence. In this task, Gandhi rebuilt the Indian National Congress from its bottom upwards evolving praxis in mobilizing the masses. Within four years of his return to India, Gandhi became an influential leader.

### **Champan Satyagraha**

The Champan Satyagraha was his successful leadership as a major struggle. The lot of indigo tenants of Champan in Bihar was first to attract the attention of Gandhi. At Champan, the peasants raised their voice of protest against the European planters for forcing them to cultivate indigo under the 'tinkathia' system (a system under which the tenants had to cultivate indigo in the 3/20<sup>th</sup> part of the land). Gandhi was invited to visit Champan by Raj Kumar Shikla, a peasant from the area, in December 1916. At first, Gandhi was reluctant. Thereafter, he went there in April 1917. Gandhi's presence in Champan resurrected hope for the ryots of the plantation. Pursuing his strategy of non-violent protest, Gandhi took the administration by surprise and won concessions from the European authorities. In 1918, Champan Agriculture Act was passed which gave the peasants some reliefs of forced indigo cultivation and forced selling. Thus, at Champan Gandhi emerged as the supreme leader and his non-violence strategy gained salience. The struggle led by Gandhi

represented a battle in which a unique multi-class political platform combining within it the antagonistic classes were formed. The struggle ultimately culminated in the challenge against colonialism. The Champaran movement was significant in Gandhi's political life for realizing not only his concept of Satyagraha device but also its application helped Gandhi build the Congress a political platform irrespective of class and other differences. The Champaran Satyagraha was the first Satyagraha on the Indian soil carried out strictly in accordance with the principles of Saatyagraha.

### **Kheda Satyagraha**

Like the Champaran Satyagraha, in 1918, Kheda Satyagraha was a Gandhi-led no revenue campaign. Kheda was a district in Gujarat. In 1917, the failure of crops caused distress to the peasants there. A feminine-like situation arose and peasants were unable to pay land revenue. The Patidar peasants rose in revolts against the Government's decision to not waive the land revenue. They demanded total remission of revenue. Gandhi as the head of the Gujarat Sabha under the aegis of the Congress extended full support. Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel encouraged the peasantry to launch Satyagraha. It began with the non-payment of revenue in the face of threats of confiscation of land and other property. Finally, the government declared that the revenue should be charged only if peasants in a position to pay. In consequence, Gandhi withdrew the campaign. The Kheda satyagraha not only resulted in awakening the peasants, it also educated them politically. Besides, it was the first non-violent civil disobedience campaign by Gandhi in India.

### **Ahmedabad Satyagraha**

A dispute relating to the bonus issue in the Textile Industry in Ahmedabad between the mill-owners and the labourers arose in 1918. The labourers demanded the grant of bonus and dearness allowance due to a steep rise in prices. The mill owners agreed to give 20 per cent increase but the labourers demanded a 50 per cent increase in allowance. Gandhi was approached to find out a solution. He persuaded both parties to agree to arbitration. Gandhi went on fast to rally the workers. After an amicable settlement and the decision of the arbitration went in favour of labourers increasing 35 per cent in dearness allowance. It allayed the discontent of the labourers. It was also a significant Satyagraha by the industrial workers.

These three movements are the milestone in India's nationalist politics. These movements appeared to have set the tone and tenor of the future struggles which Gandhi was to lead. Gandhi had a significant role in organizing the peasants and workers in the localities at a critical time when the local organizers were reeling under frustration due to the absence of leadership.

### **Khilafat Movement**

Gandhi's influence on the Muslim population was remarkable. This was evident in his involvement in the Khilafat Movement. After World War 1, several humiliating allegations were placed on the Caliph and the Ottoman Empire. The Muslims became fearful for the safety of their Caliph and launched khilafat movement under the guidance of Gandhi to fight against the British government to restore the collapsing status of the Caliph in Turkey. Gandhi understood that Muslim support and united fight against the colonial ruler would help India achieve Swaraj and political independence. The increasing Muslim support for Gandhi stopped the Hindu-Muslim communal violence. It offered Gandhi the evidence of inter-communal harmony in joint Rowlatt Satyagraha demonstration raising Gandhi's status as a political leader to the British. His support for the Khilafat movement also helped him sideline Jinnah who opposed the Satyagraha Non-cooperation Movement approach of Gandhi.

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## **1.7 The Rowlatt Act and Non-Cooperation Movement**

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Gandhi had helped the British in World War 1 in expectation of getting substantial political rights. Instead, he received the Black Rowlatt Bill, passed in 1919. The Act was designed to curb the rising revolutionary and terrorist activities in Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab. The Act recommended the amendment of the Indian Penal Code in order to enable the government to check activities harmful to the security of the state and to deal with the revolutionary crimes in a ruthless manner. The Act curtailed the civil liberties of the people also.

Gandhi initiated Satyagraha to make the government withdraw the Act. In an open letter, he addressed the people of India urging them to join the Satyagraha, launched on 6 April 1919. This time witnessed the Hindu-Muslim friendship to an extent that was never existed before, altering the political complexion of the freedom struggle and making it the movement of the masses. It also paved the way for Gandhi's emergence as a dominant figure in Indian politics.

The movement began with nationwide hartal (strike) in a non-violent way, but as violence broke out as a result of Gandhi's arrest, it was withdrawn. In the already tense situation, on April 13, Brigadier General Michael O'Dyer carried out the brutalities on a peaceful unarmed crowd of mainly villagers at Jallianwala Bagh in Punjab killing 400 persons and 1200 injured. Gandhi demanded the recall of Dyer and the establishment of a responsible government. After the incident at Jallianwala Bagh, Gandhi decided to take the Programme of Non-cooperation with the British government as the Hunter Committee report on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre could not satisfy



the Indians. Both the Hindus and Muslims came forward in preparing the stage for a fresh national movement.

Gandhi launched the non-violent Non-Cooperation Movement on the 1st of August 1920. The redressal of injustice of Punjab and the attainment of Swaraj became the key issue. Beginning with the resignation from government services, refusal to use institutions of government schools, non-compliance towards taxes, burning of foreign clothes etc. were adopted as the program of action including the boycott of British goods. By the end of 1921, the number of prisoners had risen to 30,000. The masses were getting impatient. The clarion call for Civil Disobedience on the 5<sup>th</sup> February before initiating the Bardoli civil disobedience, a mob including the Congressmen set fire to a police station in UP killing 22 policemen at Chaurichaura shocked Gandhi. He realized that people had not fully accepted non-violence. He persuaded the Congress to suspend the agitation. Gandhi was arrested on charges of sedition and was sentenced to six years' jail.

In jail, Gandhi felt isolation having no contact with the outside events. At this moment, the Indian National Congress split into two factions in matters with the election to the Legislature under the act of 1919. The Hindu-Muslim unity which had proved its vitality collapsed with the rise of Ataturk in Turkey. Muslim leaders left congress and began forming a Muslim organization. Gandhi was released in February 1924. After 1924, the country was witnessing a wave of communal riots. Gandhi fasted for 21 days in October 1924. He toured the entire country. He laid stress on Charka and the removal of untouchability. The political atmosphere was beginning to change in the country. At this time, Gandhi remained aloof for some time.

The non-cooperation movement, despite some miscalculations of Gandhi, was undoubtedly a break with the past. Gandhi's arrival changed the political dimension with a new dimension to nationalist politics. Right from this time, India's freedom movement no longer was confined to the educated elites only, but it was expanded to incorporate the peripheral social groups. The new slogans appealed to the masses to spontaneously participate in the anti-British struggle abandoning the so-called mendicant politics. Gandhi's decision to champion the Khilafat cause broadened the social basis of the national movement. By according priority to village reconstruction through self-help articulating swadeshi such as spinning wheel and hand-woven clothes (khadi), panchayats or arbitration courts, national schools, propagation of evils of liquor and untouchability etc. Gandhi was able to forge unique strategies for political mobilization. The British violence was defeated to some extent by this movement.

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## **1.8 The Civil Disobedience Movement, 1930-32/ Dandi March**

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The Non- Cooperation Movement indeed catapulted Gandhi as the undisputed leader of the Congress. Congress too had gained popularity among the masses. After the lull of five years, the Congress at the Lahore session in 1929 radically changed its stance and became vocal for purna swaraj. This agenda presaged the preparation for another civil disobedience. Gandhi initially was hesitant in launching another movement. Overcoming his hesitation, Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement by sending a charter of demands to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, on 2 march 1930. Gandhi climbing down from the agenda of purna swaraj, launched against the tax on salt. By choosing salt as the central issue, Gandhi tried to organize an anti-British campaign in which the participation of a majority of the people ensured as the people felt that salt was essential for everyday survival. Hence, the Civil Disobedience Movement, among other demands, veered round the attacks on the government's salt monopoly and the boycott of foreign cloth. Gandhi, in *Young India*, 11 march, 1930 remarked: "The call of 1920 was a call for preparation. The call in 1930 is for engaging in the final conflict".

On 12 March 1930, the Salt Satyagraha began with a month-long march covering 240 miles undertaken from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to Dandi, Gujarat to make salt himself, with the declared intention of breaking the Salt Laws. Thousands of Indians joined him on the march to the sea. Subhas Chandra Bose, seeing the huge crowd along the road in welcoming Gandhi, remarked it s a 'serious campaign'. At Dandi, Gandhi broke openly the unlawful Salt Act. The government finally arrested Gandhi. The arrest sparked off wide spread resistance against the government. The campaign was successful in upsetting the tight hold on India by the British.

Finally, the government, represented by Lord Irwin, decided to negotiate with Gandhi. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed in March 1931. According to the Pact; Gandhi was invited to attend the Round Table Conference in London for discussion. Gandhi expected to discuss India's independence, but the government proposed constitutional reforms on a British Dominion model with the separate electorate on religious and social divisions. This scheme of the rights of representation on communal divisions was vehemently opposed by Gandhi. Gandhi could understand the design of the government to perpetuate their rule though 'divide and rule' policy.

The two Round Table Conferences could not satisfy Gandhi's demands. He again started Satyagraha against the British Government. He then arrested and jailed. While in jail, the British government headed by Ramsay McDonald enacted a new law known as Communal Award. The striking fact at this time was that with regard to

separate representation of untouchables and minorities, there was a growth of parallel leadership representing various social groups within the national movement that undermined Gandhi's claim as a national leader. Jinnah and Ambedkar began playing their respective role in representing group interests. Consequently, the Indian political scenario assumed a very complex nature as the distance between the two communities was widening. Gandhi's nationalist democratic ideology was hard hit causing gradual eclipse of Gandhi as the undisputed nationalist leader. Hindu-Muslim rift reappeared to have been consolidated in the wake of the Civil Disobedience Movement. So, Gandhi's heightened popularity during the Non-Cooperation days was seriously diminished with the failure to muster the Muslim support for the Salt Satyagraha despite the association of the eminent Muslim leaders in the campaign. The communal dispensation by the British Government in the 1930s continued till 1947 leading eventually to the partition of the sub-continent. Yet, despite the rising factions in Indian politics since the Civil Disobedience Movement and growing significance of the Muslims, Gandhi was still having a 'magical power' in mobilization and nationalist negotiation as evident in the Quit India Movement in 1942.

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## **1.9 Quit India Movement and Gandhi**

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The Second World War began in 1939. The British Government dragged India into the war without consulting Indian leaders. The Congress ministries formed under the Government of India Act, 1935 resigned in protest. Gandhi too was against any cooperation in war efforts on the ground of non-violence. The Cripps proposal was found disappointing as it did not promise any immediate change. Complete independence was far distant. Then, Congress passed the historic resolution on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1942 for mass movement signalling the ultimatum to the British Government for final withdrawal from India. Non-violence initially being a guiding force was undermined in the wake of the 1942 Movement, turned violent. Gandhi at this time was in a belligerent mood due to the ruthless British repression. He justified any means for fighting the British declaring his passionate speech 'do or die'. The people displayed unprecedented courage and heroism. Gandhi's contribution was immense at this movement. But he was blamed for the disturbance. He was arrested and jailed. During his jail, he had suffered personal loss in the death of Mahadev Desai whom he described as his 'son, secretary and lover'. So also Kasturba, his devoted wife, died at this time. It was a great blow to him. His health was deteriorating. At last, in May 1944, Gandhi was released from jail on health grounds.

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## 1.10 Partition and Independence

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In response to Gandhi's quit India call, the Muslim League demanded 'Divide and Quit' India. Gandhi opposed this partition plan. Gandhi rather suggested an agreement which required the Congress and the Muslim League to fight for independence and the question of partition could be discussed later.

Jinnah turned down Gandhi's proposal and called for 'Direct Action Day' on 16 August 1946 pressing the Muslims to support his partition plan and a separate state of Pakistan. The Direct Action day triggered massive killings of Calcutta. Thousands of Hindus and Muslims were murdered and tens of thousands were injured in the cycle of violence.

Gandhi fought against this wave of communal riots with all his might. But failed to the machination of Jinnah's 'two nation theory'. Gandhi visited the riot-affected areas. In the Noakhali area of East Bengal, a reign of terror let loose in October 1946. Such communal riots shocked Gandhi deeply. Gandhi along with Pyarelal and Sushila Nayyar walked down the road. Mahatma had gone to the riot-torn villages, went from house to house, talked to the Hindus and the Muslims. But it produced no tangible results. The Noakhali riot spread to Bihar also. But Gandhi brought it under control. The situation of the country was explosive. Despite Gandhi's relentless efforts, partition was followed by riots. Gandhi's efforts to quell the violence were ridiculed by Lord Mountbatten as 'one man peace army'.

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## 1.11 Gandhi's Death

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On 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1948, Gandhi was shot dead by Nathuram Godse when Gandhi was on his way to prayer meeting. The bullets injured him severely and he fell to the ground with the words 'Hey Ram'. Gandhi had become a martyr for communal unity. Gandhi who dreamt to see united India had to watch a new-born country torn by one of the great human calamities of the century.

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## 1.12 Conclusion

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Mahatma Gandhi came into the World on October 2, 1869, and went out on January 30, 1948. In 78 years, this man took stands, had such courage and determination to accomplish whatever he set his mind to. The obstacles he faced did

not stop him in any way. He fulfilled his life-long goal of India becoming an independent country. He proved that it was possible to change the World with just one voice through courage and determination.

Gandhi was able to bring down the mighty British Empire by simply preaching brotherhood and non-violence. To the Indian people, Gandhi gave a nation. To the World he gave Satyagraha, the most revolutionary idea, showing the way that how political change could be effected by renouncing violence; and unjust laws could be defied peacefully and with a readiness to accept punishment with soul-force. This was Gandhi who had ignited the millions of people in both India and the World with his ideology of Satyagraha and Ahimsa. He is above criticism. His philosophy was relevant because without these principles it was not possible to fight with the powerful ruler. Such was simple living and high thinking Gandhi whose life is truly an inspiration for others till day. While living, he played a hero, and after death, he played an inspiration.

Gandhi's life itself is a textbook. He inspires because his life still shows the most beautiful picture of love, peace, honesty, and truth. His life and its experiments with truth were the stories of a nation-builder.

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### 1.13 Summing Up

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- (i) Gandhi's Autobiography, unlike the western practices, projected his personality not to deliberately tell the story of self-praise or self-assertion; rather it represented him as the bearer\agent of experiments of the truth and non-violence that he had experimented in the laboratory of life with his soul to attain 'Moksha'.
- (ii) Gandhi excluded from his autobiography all personal details except having bearing upon his experiments with truth.
- (iii) Gandhi's autobiography is considered as strategies of nation-construction.
- (iv) Gandhi was a simple, straight-forward and saintly man. His life-style was so simple that he dressed like ordinary man.
- (v) The obstacles he faced did not stop him in any way. He fulfilled his life-long goal of India becoming an independent country.
- (vi) He is above criticism. His philosophy was relevant because without these principles it was not possible to fight with the powerful ruler.

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## 1.14 Glossary

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1. Moksha- Liberation
2. Ahimsa- Non-violence
3. Satyagraha- Adherence to Truth
4. Sarvodaya- Welfare of all
5. Diwan- Chief Minister
6. Vishnu- Hindu God
7. Vaishnava- Hindu religious scripture
8. Ramanama- Mantra of Ram in Ramayana
9. Thinkathia- 3/20<sup>th</sup> part of the land
10. Hey Ram- The utterance of the name of Ram

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## 1.15 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions

1. Describe the defining moments and incidents in Gandhi's early life that played an important impact in shaping his character.
2. Outline the role played by Gandhi's parents, his family and persons in instilling noble qualities in him.
3. Write a note on Gandhi's rise to politics. What was unique in Gandhi's techniques in protesting British colonialism?
4. Describe the varied experiences of Gandhi as a law student in London.
5. Enumerate the techniques used by Gandhi in South Africa in fighting against the racial Government.
6. Explain the circumstances and events leading to the so-called Rowlatt Satyagraha and Non-cooperation Movement undertaken by Gandhi in India.

### Short Questions

1. Point out briefly Gandhi's mobilisation strategy in the Civil Disobedience Movement in India.
2. Describe the essence of John Ruskin's 'Unto This Last' and the nature of its influence on Gandhi.

3. Write a short note on Tolstoy Farm.
4. Explain how Gandhi forge the Hindu-Muslim unity in India in the 1920s.

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. At which place was Gandhi born?  
(a) Probandar (b) Rajkot (c) Ahmedabad (d) Delhi

Ans. : a

2. Who amongst the following has inspired Gandhi?  
(a) Tolstoy (b) Emerson (c) Ruskin (d) All the above

Ans. : d

3. Devdas was Gandhi's—  
(a) Only child (b) Second child (c) Eldest child (d) Youngest child

Ans. : d

4. Identify the leaders who has met Gandhi for about an hour and left him just few minutes before he was shot dead on Jan 30, 1948 while on his way to the prayer meeting  
(a) Vallabhbhai Patel (b) Sarojini Naidu  
(c) Jawaharlal Nehru (d) Vinoba Bhave

Ans. : a

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## 1.16 Further Reading

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## **Unit-2 □ Ahimsa (Non-Violence)**

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### **Structure**

#### **2.0 Objective**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

#### **2.2 Gandhi's Concept of Ahimsa or Non-violence**

#### **2.3 Concept of Ends and Means**

#### **2.4 Defining Features of Gandhian Non-violence**

#### **2.5 Gandhi's Concept of Satyagraha as a Technique of Non-violence**

#### **2.6 Influence on Gandhi and the Evolution of the Concept of Ahimsa**

#### **2.7 Influence of Different Religions on Gandhi**

#### **2.8 Influence of Hinduism**

#### **2.9 Influence of Eminent Personalities on Gandhi**

#### **2.10 Conclusion**

#### **2.11 Summing Up**

#### **2.12 Glossary**

#### **2.13 Probable Questions**

#### **2.14 Further Reading**

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### **2.0 Objective**

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- 1 Explaining the Concept of Ahimsa as a Guiding Philosophy throughout Gandhi's Life.
- 1 Discussing Gandhi's Concept of Ends and Means as a Methodology for the realization of Truth.
- 1 Analyzing the defining features of Gandhian Non-violence showing the correlation between Truth and Non-violence.

- 1 Demonstrating Gandhi's technique of Satyagraha in implementing his concept of Ahimsa in practice.
- 1 Describing influences on Gandhi in the evolution of his concept of Ahimsa.
- 1 Depicting the impact of his family during his childhood in infusing Spirituality embedded in the concept of Ahimsa.
- 1 Describing the influences of different Religions on Gandhi in evolving his concept of Ahimsa or Non-violence.
- 1 Discussing the impact of Hinduism on Gandhi in formulating his doctrine of Ahimsa.
- 1 Introducing the influence of eminent personalities in providing intellectual background and sustenance in his Thoughts and Actions in Ahimsa.

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## 2.1 Introduction

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Ahimsa is the key concept or heart of the Gandhian philosophy as well as his political movement. Ahimsa is treated as a way of life. It advocates that Truth is God and Non-violence is the means of attaining it. Gandhi expounded his doctrine of Ahimsa providing a unique correlation between the Truth and Non-violence. He observed that Truth could be realized only through Non-violence. The philosophy of Ahimsa or Non-violence acted as a beacon-light and weapon to him during his fight against racial injustice and discrimination in South Africa, thereby germinating the seed of creed of Non-violence throughout his life. For Gandhi, Non-violence was not a negative concept denoting non-injury or non-killing but a positive one which meant love for the selfless service of one's fellow beings including the entire creation. The essence of his arguments is that one must try to organize all life-activities on its basis that would bring in unprecedented and radical changes in human life. Gandhi inspired and mobilized the mass through this principle of non-violence. In course of time, it became a powerful political tool used against the British ruler in India and won the light of the day.

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## 2.2 Gandhi'S Concept of Ahimsa or Non-Violence

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To start with, the two basic principles or ideals that guided Gandhi's life were Truth and Non-violence. Gandhi was of the view that the prevalence of violence both personal and structural was the outcome or manifestation of modern civilization disease as he witnessed it all around especially in the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was

a mad search of material progress and physical/ sensual enjoyment resulting in the indiscriminate pursuit of power and sensual pleasure along with forces of violence both at the individual level and systemic level. What transpired beneath the level of this civilization was the erosion of ethics and normative values in humanity. It gave rise to cut-throat competition, greed and avarice, legitimizing the use of any means of bringing in success. It was an unrestrained hedonism generating negative tendencies in the mind. It was the distinguishing feature of the modern western materialistic culture embedded in it the reign of violence. So, Gandhi rejected this violence-prone civilization, instead he projected and identified Ahimsa or Non-violence as a panacea or force capable of confronting violence and urged the humanity to consciously embrace the principle of non-violence into the very centre of our being and existence.

The horrible experiences in South Africa taught him the lesson of active non-violence. The bitter experience in train journey to Pretoria in which he was meted out violence by the Whites began his thinking of alternative way of struggle against injustice and oppression. This was the philosophy of non-violence which started journey from there with the determination of establishing a just and equal society based on non-violence and peace.

He discarded violence not only because an unarmed people had very little chance of winning in an armed rebellion but because he considered violence as an evil weapon which leads to destruction and creates more ill-will and problems instead of solving it. It procreates hatred and malice. For Gandhi, there was no other God on earth than truth and the only means for realization of truth was Ahimsa. According to Mark Sheppard, Mahatma Gandhi was a versatile genius who was considered as the Father of Non-violence. Krishna Kriplani in his book asserted that "Gandhi was the first in human history to extend the principle of non-violence from the individual to social and political plane". Gandhi adopted it as a way of life. It made people understand that it can be applied by any person practising ahimsa. But the condition was that he had to be strong because according to Gandhi, non-violence was not the weapon of the weak. For achieving strength, there was no clear-cut way out, as it requires great discipline like that of a soldier needing to cross the arduous course of training to acquire mental strength and state of mind of non-violence. According to Gandhi, "Non-violence does not mean weak submission to the will of the evil-doer. It means putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant". Unless there was a cooperation of heart and mind, the outward ahimsa would be a chimera, harmful not only for the man himself but also for the other people. So, to reach the perfect state of ahimsa it was necessary that the mind, body and deeds were in proper coordination. In response to the criticisms made against his non-violence, he firmly asserted that

nothing enduring can be built upon violence. The results achieved through non-violence though slow it would be durable and lasting long.

Gandhi opined that the feeling of non-violence meant loving without possessiveness or desire to influence the other person forcefully because non-violence teaches to compromise with the opponent. One should not be obstinate; rather he should be accessible with open mind. Besides, imposing one's idea upon others, he should be easy to accept other man's viewpoints. This attitude makes a satyagrahi to achieve the goal. It is love coupled with detachment.

According to Gandhi, Truth and Non-violence constitute the foundation of Gandhi's philosophy. He said that truth stands for reality. By truth, to Gandhi, we do not mean the proposition which is either true or false. Gandhi described truth as existence, consciousness and bliss. At first, Gandhi used to say that God is Truth. But later he converted as Truth is God. According to Gandhi, as Ahimsa means 'the largest love, the greatest charity', so, satya is word emanating from 'sat' which means 'to exist'. By the term 'satya', Gandhi means that it is not only existent but also true. He said that truth and non-violence are the two sides of a same coin. Ahimsa is the means; Truth is the end.

Satyagraha, Gandhi explained, as truth is God, Satyagraha is 'agraha' and it leads to mean holding fast to truth. Hence, Satyagraha as a moral concept is essentially based on love—a religious pursuit resting on the belief that there is one God behind everything and being and as such the same God resides in every one of us. Satyagraha is a weapon of the morally vigilant and the actively committed to a resistance of evil by its opposite i.e., by good. Satyagraha is a product of three elements, Truth, Ahimsa and Self-suffering. Gandhi propagated the theory of Relative Truth as the logical foundation of Satyagraha. He refused to accept that a man has full knowledge of truth. He himself admitted that "I am a seeker after truth.....I have not yet found it". Man cannot claim the knowledge of absolute truth, therefore, in the case of conflicts he should never resort to violence. He should rather be tolerant enough to acknowledge his opponent's view with rationality and if he finds himself wrong he must admit and make amendments. For Gandhi, use of violence in its worse state could be justified only and until one is fully confident that he is completely right and his opponent is completely wrong. In the absence of absolute truth, it is illogical and dreadful to use violence and damage others as the injury once inflicted cannot be re-bridged. Gandhi institutionalized the use of force through ahimsa. It works silently and changes the heart of the worst adversary. While defining his philosophy of love and non-violence he gives the theory of 'good ends and good means' in complete contrast to the logic of 'ends justify the means'.

The term 'Non-violence' inherits the meanings of the Sanskrit word 'Ahimsa', made famous by Gandhi. He was a fervent follower of the principle of Ahimsa in both theory and practice. He devoted his whole life to spread the message: truth and non-violence.

According to Gandhi, non-violence is not simply abstaining from physical injury or killing, but for him, non-violence means not harming anyone in thought, words or deeds out of ill-will or selfishness. For him, non-violence was not merely negative; it was eminently positive. He said, "It is positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil-doer." He further said, "For me non-violence is not a mere philosophical principle, it is the rule and breathes". Thus, he equates non-violence with patience, tolerance, self-restraint, self-sacrifice and moral duty in action but also in thought and speech. For Gandhi, non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind and it was mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by man. He applied such principle with strong moral conviction in the social, political and economic fields to eradicate the evils and exploitation and to establish justice and peace.

Some scholars raised questions about the applicability of non-violence in practice. Only relative non-violence can be realized. In this respect, Gandhi stated that just as the perfect straight line as understood by Euclid cannot be drawn. Similarly, perfect non-violence cannot be attained. For this, the Satyagrahis with their self-suffering would be ready for sacrifice to the end of achieving non-violence. Self-suffering in Satyagraha is an act of fearlessness and courage to reject unjust without resorting to violence. Non-violence is a critique of violence. It denounces its misdeeds and contradiction. In this way, Gandhi was able to defy the whole might of an unjust empire resorting to non-violence.

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### **2.3 Gandhi'S Concept of Ends and Means**

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Gandhi's concept of non-violence is connected to his concept of the means and ends. According to him, non-violence is the means and truth is the end. Both are so intertwined with each other that it is practically impossible to detach one from another. They are two sides of the same coin. The practice of Ahimsa/non-violence inevitably leads to truth and the practice of himsa/violence can never lead to truth. Gandhi discussed about it in his book 'Hind swaraj'. According to various schools of thought, there is a dichotomy between means and ends. In the Western tradition, there is a tendency among many of claiming that the end justifies the means. Moral

considerations cannot be applied to the means except in relation the ends. Gandhi rejects this dichotomy and accepts his proposition that it is means rather than ends that provide the standard of morality. According to D.G. Tendulkar, he did not believe in the maxim that the end justifies the means. It is a recognized fact that impure means must result in an impure end. One cannot attain truth through untruthful means or justice through unjust means. This is because of the fact that Gandhi emphasized the purity of means in every sphere of life. Gandhi during his struggle for India's freedom, employed non-violent means to attain the end—the liberation of India. Pattabhi Sitaramaya pointed out that “the means may be linked to a seed, the seed to a tree; and there are same inviolable connections between the means and the ends as there is between the seed and the tree”. So, it is evident that like the seeds and the tree, means and ends are interrelated. It shows his belief in the moral law of Karma i.e. we reap exactly what we sow. One cannot expect flower from a cactus. According to J.K. Mehta, Gandhi paid much attention to the means over the end mainly because he made a distinction between the objective of life and the objective of living. Here it might be called that simplicity of life and non-violence symbolize the objective of living and the realization of self is the objective of life. To Gandhi, politics was just means to acquire non-violence and the truth as ends.

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## **2.4 The Defining Features of Gandhian Non-Violence**

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Some of the defining features of Gandhi's non-violence are as follows:

The first defining feature of Gandhi's non-violence is the correlation between truth and non-violence. According to Gandhi's admission, the Ahimsa was discovered in the search for and contemplation of truth. Hence, ahimsa was the justifiable way to truth, to progress towards truth and to vindicate truth. This is why he gave the dictum: “Truth is the end and Ahimsa the means thereto”.

The second feature of Gandhi's ahimsa suggests negative meanings of non-hurting, non-injuring, non-killing etc. Side by side, there is a positive meaning of ahimsa—that is, “a state of love, of doing good even to the wrong-doer. Doing good to the evil-doer is not to mean helping the evil-doer to continue the wrong or tolerating it by passive acquiescence. On the contrary, love — the active state of ahimsa requires one to resist the wrong-doer by disassociating oneself from him”.

The third feature is that ahimsa is considered as ‘soul force’—the power of the Godhead within us. This soul-force is mightier than sword. It is possible for a single individual to defy unjust and injustice working under the law of non-violence.

From those features, it is interesting to note that how Gandhi developed a well-knit theory of non-violence. Gandhi's penetrating mind discovered the subtle levels and ways through which violence operated and conquered human mind. So, he took endeavour to confront violence both at the theoretical and practical levels in order to have its destined goal of divine perfection. Gandhi draws a conclusion by saying that 'Non-violence or love is the law of our being'. It is the cohesive law of love that binds humanity together and makes collective life possible and meaningful. Gandhi demonstrated the potentiality of the power of non-violence when he calmed the mad fury of the violent mobs in Bengal and Delhi who were engaging themselves in a killing spree in the communal riots that followed the partition of India in 1947.

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## **2.5 Gandhi's Concept of Satyagraha as a Technique of Implementing Non-Violence**

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Gandhi's theory of ahimsa/non-violence is a theoretical construct involving in it the ideals and principles as well as a way of imbibing these principles to resist violence. The term was first coined by Gandhi in South Africa as he felt that the term passive resistance would not be the appropriate tool for describing the method he was pursuing. Then, he used the term Satyagraha instead of passive resistance. It helped him offer a method of solution in resolving conflicts without using any physical force or violent method. The word Satyagraha is a combination of two Sanskrit words i.e. 'satya' (truth) and 'agraha' (firm grasping). To Gandhi, it meant 'Truth Force'. Gandhi further explains that 'its root meaning was holding on to truth; hence he called it love-force or soul-force'. With this technique of Satyagraha, Gandhi was successful in resisting the Rowlatt Act. Realizing the growing mass discontent in the anti-British struggle, he applied his technique of Satyagraha for political mobilization. Satyagraha as a technique of non-violent protest gave more attention to means i.e. the non-violence than the end i.e. the attainment of truth.

The Gandhian concept of Satyagraha is founded on three fundamental pillars namely, truth, non-violence and self-suffering. These three pillars tied together make his Satyagraha. In his Satyagraha, a Satyagrahi should be committed to resolving conflicts with rationality. In the case of non-violence, he should be guided by the power of love. The self-suffering is the strong determination to learn the art of dying in the training for non-violence. The compound of three forces—the truth, ahimsa and self-suffering, was used by Gandhi successfully to achieve independence for India. As a technique, it includes various methods such as non-cooperation movement, civil disobedience, fasting, volunteer imprisonment, decline to pay taxes etc. All these methods, Gandhi considered, would touch the conscience of the enemy, change his

heart and the conflict would cease to exist. Gandhi feels that a true Satyagrahi who has been able to fulfill the requirements of Satyagraha can work wonder. He alone can face the might of an enemy or even of an empire.

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## **2.6 Influences on Gandhi in the evolution of the concept of Ahimsa**

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Gandhi's journey of life beginning from childhood was of great interest as there were many incidents which worked in shaping his character and outlook. The two stories which enlightened his sense of truth and non-violence happened to occur at school life. One was his attitude for not copying from another and second was his confession to his father for fault of stealing.

The moral behind the story reflected the fact that adherence to truth helps one to be free and non-violent. His father's forgiveness to Gandhi was for his truthful character as he openly admitted to what he did and apologized for it.

Gandhi's family had a great influence in moulding his behaviour and outlook. His father's simplicity, reputation, truthfulness, generosity and strict impartiality exerted tremendous influence on him. He learnt a lot from his father's qualities which helped him to become a practical idealist and taught him to deal with many intricate problems in social and political life on a practical basis.

Moreover, his mother's saintly and serene temperament gave him lessons of fastings in later days for India's freedom struggle. Gandhi got from his mother the spiritual influence. Apart from those influences, Kasturba, his wife, played an important role in his life. Her many sided qualities like patience, tireless service, unconditional love and immense prudence helped in bringing out the potentialities latent in Gandhi's personality.

Besides this, during his childhood, there were different stories from the Puranas which had a great influence on Gandhi in building his character. The stories of a famous figure 'Shravana' and that of Raja Harish Chandra, gave him a sense of loyalty and sacrifice. The inspiration he received from the two stories endured in his mind life-long.

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## **2.7 Influence of different religions on Gandhi**

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Gandhi learned much about Jainism and Buddhism from his family which had an impact on his thoughts and actions. At childhood, he was anti-religious, later he was found to have affirmed that 'man without religion is a man without roots'.



Among all the major religions of the world, Jainism had laid the greatest emphasis on non-violence preaching the principles of ahimsa as a part of teaching. The path of deliverance lies through right knowledge, right faith and right conduct. According to Jainism, the right knowledge is the knowledge of reality. The right faith is in controlling the passions, the senses, the thoughts, the speech and action so as to cultivate an attitude of neutrality without desire towards the objects of external world. It was non-violence that led the Jains to the philosophy of 'Anekantavad' (manyness, non-absolutism) which is, in essence, a persistent search after truth and dispassionate evolution of conflicting metaphysical theories. Further, Jain philosophy accepts and advocates Ahimsa as the highest ideal of life and as the means of attaining 'Moksha' (liberation). This is why Jainism is considered as the oldest philosophy based on Ahimsa. The philosophy of Jainism made a profound impact on Gandhi's thought and action in formulating the concept of Ahimsa.

Another religion that influenced Gandhi was Buddhism. When Gandhi was in England, he read the book 'The Light of Asia' written by Edwin Arnold, and it was the first time that he was introduced to Buddhism. By reading this book, he was attracted by the teachings of Buddha and he re-read the same book when he was in South Africa.

Buddhism strongly supported peace, non-violence and good for all human beings. Gandhi followed his teachings of achieving 'Moksha' (salvation). Gandhi's concept of 'Sarvodaya' also had its roots in the blending of the teaching of good of all living beings. Gandhi went on to the extent of saying that influence of Buddha's teachings opened his eyes to limitless possibilities of non-violence.

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## **2.8 Influence of Hinduism**

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Gandhi acknowledged his debt to Hindu Scriptures. His concept of non-violence is a continuation of the Hindu philosophical tradition, especially from the Vedas. The Vedic prayers are full of feelings of loving kindness, non-hatred, truth, righteousness and good-will towards all. These ingredients are the various constituents of Ahimsa. Vedic people also prayed to God to give them strength that might enable them to protect each other, to eat and dine together. Such is the behaviour that served as the foundation for harmonious society. But despite being Hindu, Gandhi was not a blind follower of Hinduism. He was not hesitant to criticize it due to its some unreasonable practices like caste system and untouchability which were the root cause of all differences describing it as the cancer of Hindu society. But the distinctive and the largest contribution of Hinduism was its doctrine of Ahimsa which helped to influence Gandhi's mind. At the same way, The Gita gave Gandhi the light he needed, virtually

acting as a practical man in every sphere of life. Gandhi further added that it demonstrated to him the futility of war and violence. The stories, fables and maxims scattered throughout the Gita captured the mind of Gandhi in formulating his doctrine of Ahimsa. In Manusmriti, 'Ahimsa Paramo Dharma' which means non-violence had a deep impression in reviving the principle of ahimsa as a dynamic soul-force in modern India.

In addition to Hinduism, Christianity, the Holy Bible, its emphasis on love contributed enormously to occupy a unique place in building ethical virtue i.e. love for humanity. Moreover, the entire teaching of Christ particularly the law of love impacted on Gandhi's character and faith to non-violence. He characterized and called Jesus Christ as 'the Father of Satyagrahis'. 'The New Testament' and 'The Sermon of the Mount' also influenced him to a great extent in renouncing violence and converting foes into friends by the technique of love.

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## **2.9 Influence of eminent personalities on Gandhi**

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Gandhi himself had mentioned in his Autobiography that the personalities like Tolstoy, by his book, 'The Kingdom of God is Within You'; Ruskin by his 'Unto This Last'; Gopal Krishna Gokhale influenced him throughout his life and works.

Gandhi was highly influenced by Tolstoy's book when he was in South Africa. He developed his Satyagraha and the philosophy of non-violence to fight racial discrimination after coming into contact with the ideas and writings of Tolstoy. Gandhi acknowledged that 'it was Tolstoy's personality and influence of his ideas made a sea-change in my life turning towards non-violence'. His 'ideas and convictions remained firm till the end of my life'. In remembrance to Tolstoy, Gandhi established Tolstoy Farm in South Africa conducted in line with Tolstoy's principles.

Besides Tolstoy, John Ruskin with his book 'Unto This Last' also influenced Gandhi a lot. Gandhi had a chance to get the book from his dear friend, Mr. Pollak and read it during his journey to Natal. The book had a decisive influence on him in changing his life so much so that he translated it into Gujarati and gave a title as 'Sarvodaya' (The welfare of all). After reading the book, Gandhi saw in it the 'magic spell'. He devoted his life to service of the poor and downtrodden whom Swami Vivekananda called 'Daridranarayan' i.e. 'the poor as God'. Gandhi popularized the concept by calling the poor as 'Harijans' or 'the beloved people of God'.

John Ruskin's approach to every problem of life was religious and humanistic. His thoughts were immersed with the concept of charity, simplicity and love. Although the teaching of Ruskin does not include non-violence as such, his teachings still are

based on the unconscious presumption of it. Consequently, Ruskin's approach was in consistence with truth and non-violence. Gandhi accepted him as one of his teachers.

Apart from Ruskin, Henry David Thoreau, a well-known American, who refused to pay taxes as a protest against slavery in America had an influence on Gandhi. Thoreau not only provided intellectual sustenance to Gandhi's life but also model of boycott and non-cooperation. Thoreau approved violence as a way to achieve his goal if peaceful and non-violent means failed, but Gandhi never did that. Whatever may be Thoreau's idea of civil disobedience revealed to Gandhi the use of non-violence as a technique for solving major problems of social and political life.

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## **2.10 Conclusion**

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The foregoing discussion of Gandhi's Ahimsa/non-violence unfolds the fact that the concept of ahimsa is multi-dimensional. The time during which Gandhi discovered ahimsa is realistic as the philosophical significance and meaning are related to the then human life through a multi-dimensional ways against the colonial ruler. Gandhi's credit lies in extending the principle of non-violence to diverse levels, social and political, suggesting a solution for all types of evils. In this venture, his development of non-violent method called Satyagraha for attending social, political and economic justice is unique. He applied it in all fields of life for establishing justice, equality, morality and peace, for correcting wrongs, for eradicating exploitation, enmity and hatred and exterminating sin not the sinner, for destroying the corrupt exploitative system as well as for unifying the whole mankind as a single family free from moral and material vices.

Thus, Gandhi lived his whole life in the perpetual quest of truth. In this task, he was influenced and inspired by different sources. These sources had a serious impact on him in acquiring non-violence. His life was rooted in India's religious traditions with its emphasis on a passionate search for truth.

Some scholars are of the opinion that biologically men are prone to violence. But Gandhi proved it wrong. Even a violent mind can be corrected through education and training or disciplining the mind. Gandhi showed this proposition throughout his life by experimenting with truth. It is an established fact that wars in the past solved many problems, but those solutions are temporary not everlasting. Because, it is a reality that violence has never resolved a conflict, rather aggravated. The net result is that use of violence procreates more violence and it becomes a situation of law unto itself. Human history is replete with numerous instances of the chain of violent activities

following the initial violence. While the conquerors in war develop a greater appetite for violence and domination, the vanquished, humiliated and hateful lie in wait for vengeance—a situation of *quid pro quo*.

Violence is not at all justified even if it is sanctified. The separation of the means from the end is a tricky thought meant only to deceive people. The means and the ends do in fact run into each other, although seemingly may appear same. Gandhi, one of the greatest apostles of non-violence since Buddha and Christ, saw this point deeply as against Marx, and emphasized the purity of means for noble ends.

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## 2.11 Summing Up

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- (i) Gandhi's non-violence as truth, both as means and an end is a moral force par excellence. His faith in non-violence never flagged throughout his life.
- (ii) On the eve of the partition of India, he was a sad man searching for the flaws of his techniques of non-violence but never losing his deep faith in it. On the contrary, that faith is strengthened by the discovery of a possible flaw in the technique. Gandhi never claimed that his technique had finality about non-violence in India, since he was only experimenting with truth. And if he partly failed in his mission, let it be not forgotten that his thoughts and actions were surely most worthy of the great theme and do hold a bright promise for humanity.
- (iii) Non-violence or love as the ultimate principle of life is even relevant today for the crisis-ridden society in India in particular and the world in general in reconstruction of humanity and to make the world safe for peace.
- (iv) In reality, the twenty-first century, most desperately needs reformers and spiritual legends like prophet Muhammad, Jesus Christ, Buddha, Gandhi and the like personalities for removal of injustice and hatred and for the establishment of human rights, good-will and world peace.

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## 2.12 Glossary

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1. Sarvodaya—Welfare of All
2. Moksha—Liberation
3. Daridranarayan—The poor as God
4. Ahimsa—Non-violence

5. Harijan—Beloved people of God
6. Satya—Existent and truth
7. Sat—To exist
8. Agraaha—Firm grasping, seeking truth
9. Anekantavad—Manyness, Non-absolutism

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## 2.13 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions

1. Describe Gandhi's concept of Ahimsa.
2. Explain Gandhi's views of Truth and Non-violence and their significance
3. Analyse Gandhi's views on the relationship between 'Ends and Means' and their relevance in today's politics and our day to day life.
4. Write an essay on the evolution of Gandhi's Non-violence
5. Evaluate Gandhi's Ahimsa as a technique of political mobilization
6. Discuss Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha as a part of political training.

### Short Questions

1. Explain briefly how Hinduism influences Gandhi in formulating the principles of Ahimsa.
2. Mention the defining features of Gandhi's Ahimsa.
3. Describe the impact of the different personalities on Gandhi in evolving the concept of Ahimsa or Non-violence.

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. What according to Gandhi is equivalent to God?  
(a) Ahimsa (b) Love (c) Truth (d) Morality

Ans. : (c)

2. Who is the author of Hind Swaraj?  
(a) M. K. Gandhi (b) B. G. Tilak (c) Rammanohar Lohia (d) Jayprakash Narayan

Ans. : (a)

3. Which of the following according to Gandhi, is an essential principle of satyagraha?

- (a) Self Suffering (b) Non violence (c) Truth (d) All the above

Ans. : (d)

4. Which of the following did Gandhi describes as his lungs?

- (a) Ahimsa and Peace (b) Ahimsa and Truth  
(c) Truth and Peace (d) Brahamchaya and Aparigraha

Ans. : (b)

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## 2.14 Further Reading

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## **Unit-3 □ Gram Swaraj and Social Reconstruction**

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### **Structure**

#### **3.0 Objective**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

#### **3.2 The Idea of Swaraj: The Historical Perspective**

#### **3.3 Hind Swaraj: A critique of Civilization/Modernity**

#### **3.4 Swaraj, Swadesi and Satya: Interrelationship**

#### **3.5 Gram Swaraj: Concept and Meaning: Different Dimensions of Gram Swaraj**

#### **3.6 Social and Rural Reconstruction**

#### **3.7 Gandhi's 18-Point Programme of Social and Rural Reconstruction.**

#### **3.8 Conclusion**

#### **3.9 Summing Up**

#### **3.10 Glossary**

#### **3.11 Probable Questions**

#### **3.12 Further Reading**

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### **3.0 Objective**

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This unit will enable us to know:

- 1 The concept of Swaraj and the means of attaining Political independence within the womb of colonial rule.
- 1 Gandhi's Hind Swaraj as a critique of Western Civilisation and his idea of State, Society and Nation.
- 1 Gandhi's Principle of Swaraj, Swadeshi and Satya as techniques of governing the good society and its realization.



- 1 The concept and meaning of Gram Swaraj as a philosophy of village-centered life or village republic.
- 1 Gandhi's 18-point rural social reconstruction programme at the grassroots level in implementing his vision and model of village republic in India.

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### 3.1 Introduction

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Gram Swaraj or village self rule was a pivotal concept in Gandhi's thinking. The village reconstruction was at the centre of Gandhi's thought as a new type of social and political organization that he wanted to opt for India. Gandhi's Gram Swaraj should be understood and viewed in the context of twin principles of truth and non-violence as a scheme of building Gram Swaraj. The fundamental concept of Gram Swaraj is that every village should be its own republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants and yet to be interdependent but for many others in which dependence is necessary. According to Gandhi, each village should be basically self-reliant, making provision for all necessities of life – food, clothing, clean water, sanitation, housing, education and so on, including self government and self-defense and all socially useful amenities required by a community. India's full independence would mean that every village would be a republic with autonomous powers.

For Gandhi, true independence for India meant a redesigning of the comprehensive transformation of Indian society and polity. Unlike Nehru, Gandhi's view was that political and industrial life should be focused on villages or village-centered organized as countless oceanic circles as he called them, not as a Pyramid with the millions of villages at the bottom supporting the elite at the apex.

Gandhi made his reference of Gram Swaraj in 'Hind Swaraj' or the 'Indian Home Rule' in which he evoked critical interest the world over even now, literally means 'self-rule in India'. Gandhi believed that swaraj or democracy which served the welfare of all would be marked by minimum state intervention in social life. He criticized the parliamentary system as this system was certainly an advance over monarchy and oligarchy but a rule by a few representatives would establish elite rule. It would be a top-down rather than bottom up. Consequently, Parliamentary system though a democratic government would not enable its representatives to ensure the voice of the entire people living at the bottom level. This is why Gandhi provided a philosophy of a village-centered life which he described as the Gram Swaraj. In Hind Swaraj, Gandhi wrote to classify his views about his ideas of state, society and nation, even his fundamental tenets of politics. So, Hind Swaraj in fact, laid the theoretical foundation of his entire strategy of winning Swaraj for India.

Gandhi is often quoted, “Real India lives in its villages”. The majority of people live in villages, leading a pitiable life. As he argued, “If the village perishes India will perish too”. The alleviation of the decay and disaster of these majority people was Gandhi’s concern by putting the idea of Gram Swaraj at the very centre of his social, political and economic philosophy. Gram Swaraj represents a blue print by which, the face of rural India would drastically be changed for the better. The cities, remarked Gandhi, do not represent India. The British have exploited India through its cities. On the blood of the villages the edifice of the cities is built. It is the cities that have cooperated with the British to perpetuate their rule over India for 200 years. He further said, “To serve our villages is to establish Swaraj. Everything else is but an ideal dream. In this task, according to Gandhi, it would involve total transformation of the outlook of the people living in villages. He believed in preparing the mindset of the villages to be changed to work for achieving the goal of Gram Swaraj. It was Gandhi’s aspiration for creating an ideal society – a Ramraj and Swaraj indicating his concepts of an ideal society and state. By Ramraj Gandhi however, meant Divine Raj, the kingdom of God, symbolizing justice, equality, truth and charter. The word swaraj is a sacred word derived from Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, not freedom from all restraints which independence often means. Gandhian thinking of Swaraj underlines the need of people’s Swaraj. It means a disciplined rule from within the peasants, workers, the disabled and the incapacitated would not be excluded rather it would be inclusive of all. To Gandhi, Swaraj is a state of social existence where each individual irrespective of his religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or parentage will enjoy equal status. It will be an integrated community devoid of any artificial and man-made distinctions. It shall be a society inspired by the spirit of social equality, equality of status and identical dignity of all. There must be democratization in the matter of possession of wealth and exercise of power and the purpose of such exercise would be in line with the language of Abraham Lincoln that, the government should be one of the people, by the people and for the people.

But Gandhi was unhappy with the vicious influence of Western Civilization. The Western Civilization had promoted man’s greed and worldliness instead of Godliness and under their weight India and Indians sank deeper and deeper. The materialistic civilization of the West was founded on machinery, implying the mechanization or fetishism of technology tied up with the larger phenomenon of industrialism with no other purpose than to produce cheap consumer goods and maximize profit. It depicts a new form of slavery. Gandhi’s Gram Swaraj is a complete reversal for this craze for machinery and materialism. His supreme consideration was village and its men and women. The real Gram Swaraj of Gandhi was freedom from the baneful effects of machinery or craze for machinery as it dehumanizes the human being.

Gandhi stressed in his Gram Swaraj on rural or social reconstruction with the adoption of technique of political and economic decentralization for the sake of its realization. For Gandhi, centralization of power lead to tyranny having grave casualties of individual freedom resulting from the concentration of political and economic powers in the hands of the state. Gandhi witnessed it in the capitalistic world where Swaraj in the social and moral sense was absent.

To Gandhi, Gram Swaraj and its governing system—the Panchayats are the real democratic political apparatus that can guarantee freedom and equality of each and every individual as well as promote certain values at the lower levels. The Gandhian idea of Gram Swaraj and decentralized system of governance like Panchayats can become the vehicles for ushering in the much needed social, political and economic reconstruction programme through a process of participation in the decision making and public policy formulation. The Panchayats through its social construction programme are to make the village republics into a vibrant forum for promoting planned economic and social development—the welfare of all in a sustainable and equitable way. Gram Swaraj then is to be the basic institution of participatory democracy.

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### **3.2 The Idea of Swaraj : The Historical Perspective**

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The context of swaraj both as an ideal and a principle set the tenor of India's freedom struggle. It was an ideological struggle against the British providing a blueprint for an independent India. Swaraj was not conceptualized as a meaning of political independence in the narrow sense. It was qualitatively different vocabulary for the nationalists as an easier way of mobilizing the masses in an adverse condition, mainly to bring together disparate communities politically. It acted as a worldview to the Indian masses—with the moral overtone linked to the vernacular language with which the nationalist protest was articulated. As a socio-politically rejuvenating and engineering concept, Swaraj was a unique philosophical experiment with a clear practical application.

The Gandhian conceptualization of Swaraj thus, denotes not merely a system of governance but also it epitomizes a quest for human freedom in its wider sense. The idea of swaraj gained ground when colonial sovereignty was denying India as a nation. As a reaction the idea of swaraj claimed nationhood and provided the nationalists a clearly defined socio-political and economic vocabulary, meaningful concept for a subject nation. The colonial milieu was an important dimension of the processes that led to the concept of swaraj as a way of imagining a nation in a multi-ethnic context like India.

Gandhi expressed his views in terms of swaraj as the process of democratization whereby attempts were made to avoid the possible reasons for communal tension and rivalry. So, the conceptualization of swaraj was an attempt to form and create the democratic ferment—so as to bring in hitherto socio-politically marginalized sections of society. As a political strategy, swaraj was defined as (i) national independence (ii) political freedom of the individual (iii) economic freedom of the individual and (iv) spiritual freedom of the individual or self-rule. The first three are negative in character while the fourth one is positive. The first three involve discontinuity of alien rule, absence of both exploitation by individuals and poverty. Spiritual freedom is positive in character in the sense that it is a state of being which everyone aspires to actualize once the first three conditions are met.

During the freedom movement, the Moderates preferred absolutely constitutional means in the form of petition, prayer and protest to attain swaraj when the political base of the nationalist struggle was narrow. As opposed to the Moderates, the Extremists preferred terror and violence to replace the British rule and used the swaraj as means to fulfill their ends. Gandhi was opposed to those views. For him swaraj was not just a replacement of one form of coercive rule by another.

Gandhi urged that Swaraj for him was not “English rule without the Englishmen. You want the tiger’s nature, but not the tiger, that is to say, you would make India English and when it becomes English, it will be called not Hindustan but Englishtan. This is not the swaraj that I want”. In 1930, at the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress, he insisted that both the Moderates and the Extremists identified swaraj as the attainment of political freedom glossing over its wider connotation that Gandhi always highlighted. Gandhi said that independence was the basic requirement that a nation need in its own distinctive way that was halted due to colonialism. The British rule resulted in decay and disaster ruining India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. Yet, Gandhi was strongly opposed to the use of violence as violence was against swaraj.

It leads to the fact that Gandhi’s Swaraj was not merely political liberation; it broadly meant human emancipation in all its aspects. In his words, “mere withdrawal of the English is not independence. It means the consciousness in the average villager that he is the maker of his own destiny, that he is his own legislator through its own representatives”. Gandhi’s swaraj added emphasis on duty or dharma. Dharma is an instinctive code of conduct what Gandhi called ‘soul force’ would be the moving spirit of self-rule or swaraj.

The term swaraj or independence was not a term of Gandhian coinage. The term swaraj had already gained considerable currency in the political vocabulary of India before Gandhi gave serious thought to it. It was Bal Gangadhar Tilak who gave the war-cry of “swaraj is our birth right”. The term was also used by Swami Dayananda earlier. Lala Lajpat Rai, who was in America during the partition of Bengal in 1905, advocated the slogan ‘Swaraj’ that India for Indians. The Calcutta sessions of the congress at which the extremists within the congress announced swaraj as the goal of the congress. The term swaraj appeared in Gandhi’s writings for the first time on Nov.3, 1905 while exhorting the Indian students to convert themselves to the doctrine of swaraj. Gandhi’s series of writings appearing in the Indian opinion were subsequently compiled in book with the title ‘Hind Swaraj’– known as blue-print of swaraj.

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### **3.3 Hind Swaraj: A Critique on Modernity**

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Gandhi’s Hind Swaraj is one of the most significant and seminal treaties in which he revealed his ideas of state, society and nation. The aim of Hind Swaraj was to confront the anarchist and violence-prone Indian nationalists with an alternative to violence derived from Gandhi’s earlier experiments with Satyagraha. The book contained an elaborate discussion of swaraj or freedom from Gandhi’s point of view. In Hind Swaraj, Gandhi made his criticism of contemporary western civilization—from the stand point of values. Gandhi drew the attention to the spiritual and moral fabric of Indian society as against the western culture, western system of value and western political system of which Britain stood for as the living symbol. He even was against the violent and politically corrupt nature of European state condemning it as the brute force. Gandhi found two unacceptable and unethical principles at its core: ‘might is right’ and the ‘survival of the fittest’. The first legitimized the politics of power as expounded by Machiavelli, the second idealized the economics of self-interest as proposed by Adam Smith.

The three recurrent themes in Hind Swaraj such as colonial imperialism, industrial capitalism and the rationalist materialism were indicated by Gandhi as antithetical to ideals and principles of swaraj. According to Gandhi, colonialism triumphed in India not because of its strength but because of our moral weakness that allowed this ‘intimate enemy’ to strike roots in India. He attributed the British rule in India to ‘moral decline’ that affected the entire nation. For Gandhi, the aim of his project was to recover ‘the self under colonialism’. In this context, Gandhi argued that “the English have not taken India, we have given to them. They are not in India because

of their strength but because we keep them.....” What Gandhi wanted to tell the story was that the British conquest of India was solely due to our moral failure. Imperialism struck roots in India because of the cooperation of the Indians with the British Government. There was no restraint because of a moral decadence of the race, known as Indians. Gandhi was aware of the fact that British colonialism was first justified by a Christianizing (civilizing) mission, but very soon it was realized that there could be no colonialism without a civilizing mission. In the garb of civilizing mission, it was based on brute force. So, in Gandhi’s perception, the British mission was narrow and perverted. By providing legitimacy to colonialism, the so-called modern civilization subverted the natural evolution of societies clinging to the traditional ways of life.

As regards his views to industrial capitalism, Gandhi saw capitalism as the dynamic behind colonial imperialism. Lenin too had said as much, and like Marx. “Machinery”, Gandhi characterized, “is the chief symbol of modern civilization; it represents sin. If the machine craze grows in our country, it will become an unhappy land”. Gandhi’s rejection of capitalism is based on a profound repugnance to a system” where profit is allowed to degrade labour, where machines are valued more than humans, where automation is preferred to humanism”. He further added that the role of machine is dehumanizing as the profit gained in the factory in which the toiling workers had no share. Despite some positive aspects of machinery like time and labour saving, Gandhi warned against the negative ones of concentrating wealth and displacing workers. He was acutely sensitive to how machinery can dehumanize and technology alienate. Unlike his colleagues, Gandhi had no doubt that “the source of modern imperialism lies specifically in the system of social production in which there is the limitless desire for ever-increased production and ever-greater consumption and the spirit of ruthless competitiveness that not only sustained the system but also impelled these countries to establish colonies that could be exploited for economic gains”. Industrialism was an evil simply because the purpose of production was not to create an ‘egalitarian but a capitalist society’. So, to Gandhi, industrial capitalism was inherently harmful to human civilization.

### **Rationalist materialism**

In modern civilization, money and desire are totally divorced from dharma as it attaches superiority of rational materialism. For Gandhi, value stands for religion and morality. Gandhian man is not essentially a rational man. He is basically a value seeker. He is not just a lump of flesh and blood. Man is distinguished from an animal

by possession of values. An individual is not a man if he lacks values. The defining characteristics of man are values. In this, Gandhi differed from Aristotle who defined man in terms of animality and rationality. It is reason that differentiates a man from animals. This rationality ultimately manifests itself in the development of science and technology leading to accumulate power. Reason leads to more and more power over nature, paving the way for manipulation of it in the interest of mankind. In the western society which is an offspring of reason and knowledge has placed individuals and nations at disadvantageous position over others. Man can manipulate others by means of this power. A nation can manipulate, exploit, suppress and ultimately vanquish another nation – by means of this power. Gandhi would treat all these, immoral. For Gandhi, reason is not reason worth the name if it is not tempered with values. It is reason coupled with value that becomes good reason. Reason without value is useless and devilish in character.

Gandhi further argued that ‘to observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. ‘Religion is the template for morality. He never compromised with religious superstition which according to him, ‘‘were cruelties practised in the name of religion’’. While criticising rationalist materialism of the west, Gandhi was observed to have drawn heavily on the Hindu tradition in which dharma in the sense of morality and religion remained crucial. He, therefore, condemned the modern civilization because it ‘‘takes note neither of morality nor of religion. This civilization seeks to increase bodily comfort by pursuing rationalist materialism and it fails miserably in doing so’’.

Thus, Gandhi condemned western civilization as pseudo-civilization. Gandhi’s own conception of true civilization ‘‘is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. In Gujrati equivalent for civilization means good conduct’’.

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### **3.4 Swaraj, Swadeshi and Satya : Interrelationship**

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Being deeply unhappy with the basic theme of modern civilization, Gandhi spent most of his adult life in exploring an alternative idealized version of Indian culture that is a counter-production to the modern west. In Hind Swaraj apart from those three versions of critiques, the three important themes that recur in his writings and deeds were swaraj, swadeshi and satya. Though the three principles look to be separate, but they are intimately related with each other in governing the good society to be realized in its own unique way.

#### **The concept of Swaraj**

The concept of swaraj has received a very prominent place in Gandhi's spiritual, political, social and economic ideas and has been expressed in his writings and speeches. He tried to re-interpret age-old meaning of swaraj in accordance with the requirement of his times and used the word, swaraj, to revive the sleeping spirit of Indian people. Swaraj in common parlance is meant freedom, a political concept. This means independence from all restraints and constraints. But in the hands of Gandhi, these concepts have under-gone a metamorphosis – a sea change. Gandhi used swaraj in a very wide sense.

According to Gandhi, the word Swaraj was a Vedic word which meant self-rule or the rule which the self exercises over itself. To Gandhi, "The word Swaraj is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint". It was the right ordering of the various powers of the self and embodied the quest for self-improvement. Explaining the meaning of Swaraj, Gandhi said, "The root meaning of swaraj is self-rule. "Swaraj" may, therefore, be rendered as disciplined rule from within". So, the core meaning of swaraj is moral. In this context, Gandhi said that man could not rule over himself without conquering the lust within him. Rule over all without rule over oneself was deceptive and disappointing. The great mission in life could not be fulfilled without the rule over the self.

Gandhi regarded individual as the centre of power. Swaraj in the individual combined the 'Cosmic' principles with one's individual actions. So, it is learning to rule over oneself or attaining the ability of self-rule. One who had attained such ability was regarded to be free or to have attained freedom, synonymous with 'Moksha' or Salvation.

Gandhi would go a step further to argue that politics is impossible without morality. Politics and morality are complementary to each other. The idea behind it was to purify politics through religious values or spiritualism. In fact, religion meant a spiritual commitment which was total but intensely personal. He believed in the fundamental unity of life, and rejected the distinction between public and private, secular and sacred.

Gandhian swaraj will be democratic through and through, not only in forms, but also in spirit and content. Western civilization is basically immoral, exploitative and valueless. It preaches immorality, disvalue and exploitation of men by men. It is based on brute force. A civilization based on immorality cannot survive. A civilization based on brute force will ultimately result in mutual hatred and killing. Gandhi says, "..... The force of love and pity is infinitely greater than the forces of arms....." This is why Gandhi was of the opinion that "Attainment of mere political



freedom is no freedom at all. Attainment of mere Home Rule is no Home Rule at all. Genuine Home Rule is to be based on moral principles”.

Gandhi's views on political freedom can be compared with those of Marx and others. For Marx and Lenin, the rule by the proletariat is the genuine rule. The proletariat obtains genuine freedom, when they get the occasion to rule themselves. But for Gandhi, mere transfer of power from one hand to another is no freedom at all. If the proletarian rule is not based on morals, it is no freedom at all.

Similarly, Gandhi's views can be compared with those of Locke and Hobbes. According to them, real freedom is obtained only when the ultimate power lies in the hands of the people. When it occurs, democracy can be defined as a rule by the people, for the people and of the people. For Gandhi, mere investment of political power in the hands of people is no democracy at all unless there is morality. This is why Gandhi would define democracy as a form of Government, by the moralists, for moralists and of the moralists. This type of democracy Gandhi termed as 'Ram Rajya'.

According to Gandhi, Rama Raj does not stand for a sectarian rule. It does not stand for rules by the Hindus in the narrow sense of the term. Gandhi says, "By Rama Raj, I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by Rama Raj Divine Raj, the kingdom of God".

Ram is an impersonal figure for Gandhi. 'Rama' stands for a principle – the principle of justice, equality and morality. "Rama symbolized justice and equity. Rama symbolized truth and charity".

Rama Raj, therefore, for Gandhi means the rule of morals. The ruler for Gandhi has to be an embodiment of self-sacrifice. This is an Indian wisdom. The ruler is the custodian of dharma – the moral law. To protect everybody is the dharma of king. Love for all and hatred to none is the watch-word. Gandhi wanted swaraj for the countrymen only in this sense.

While thinking of a type of people's swaraj, Gandhi had in mind a state of social existence where each individual irrespective of his religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, residence or parentage will enjoy equal social status. This society shall be an integrated community devoid of any artificial and man-made distinctions. It shall be a society inspired by the spirit of social equality of status and identical dignity of all of its members.

Similarly, investment of economic power in the hands of the people will not be treated as 'swaraj' by Gandhi. Marx argues that societies are based on economic exploitation. Economic factors lie at the root of social conflict and tension. Marx points out that the social contradiction can be eliminated only by shifting the

economic power from the hands of the capitalists to that of the proletariats. Marx thinks that social ills are economic in nature. To eliminate social evil is to divert economic power from the hands of capitalists to the hands of the proletariat. Cessation of economic exploitation will result in cessation of misery. But, this is not acceptable to Gandhi. Human problems are not merely economic nor even its solutions. In other words, remedy for human problems are not solely economic in nature rather its solution is a moral issue. Gandhi's solution in this respect is to ensure equality through his concept of 'sarvodaya' and trusteeship to bring to an end to economic exploitation.

Gandhi was deeply uneasy with the modern state. It was abstracted from society, centralized, bureaucratic, and obsessed with homogeneity and suffused with the spirit of violence. For Gandhi, the vital task today was to explore alternatives not just to the contemporary forms of Government but to the very institution of the state. For Gandhi, a society based on swaraj, 'a true democracy' as he called was the only morally acceptable alternative to the modern state. It was 'sasanmukta' or free of domination and coercion and institutionalized and nurtured 'Lokshakti' or people's power. People here were and knew themselves to be, the sole source of political power.

### **Swaraj and Swadeshi**

While elaborating swaraj, Gandhi linked it with swadeshi in which his theory of swaraj was articulated. In other words, if swaraj was a foundational theory of Gandhi's social and political thought, swadeshi was the empirical demonstration of those relevant social, political and economic steps towards creating a society different from the existing one. Swadeshi literally means 'Home-spun'. Gandhi was preaching 'swadeshi' in order to paralyze the market for the British commodities. If nobody buys British things, then the British economy thriving at the cost of India will fall and they will be bound to leave India. But closer look or understanding of Gandhi's swadeshi would reveal the fact that swadeshi like swaraj is a moral concept. Gandhi's advocacy of swadeshi was a master blow at the root of the so-called modern civilization which was heavily rested on the use of machinery. The huge quantity of surplus goods produced by machinery in factory in the West found their way to India. Instead of India's economic progress it enslaved India. Gandhi writes: "It is machinery that has impoverished India". So, real swaraj meant to him freedom from the baneful effects of machinery or craze for machinery. For Gandhi, "the use of machinery has not only pulverized society, but has dehumanized man". To Gandhi, swadeshi is designed to re-humanize man from the bond of materialistic civilization of the West.

The idea of 'swadeshi' is also related to the idea of 'bread-labour'. It bears the meaning that a person who does not earn his food is a thief. A thief has no moral right to feed his belly at the expense of others. By telling this, Gandhi wanted to rescue man by swaraj and swadeshi. Swaraj is an ideology. Swadeshi is operationalisation of this ideology. Swaraj operates through swadeshi. Therefore, it can be said that 'swaraj' and 'swadeshi' go together. Thus, Gandhi's swadeshi was an attempt to address the complex dialectic of swaraj on an ethical rather than a political foundation.

### **Satya/Non-violence**

Gandhi rejected violent technique an appropriate answer to eradicate the ills of India. For the attainment of swaraj he emphasized on truth or non-violent method in conformity with Indian cultural heritage. His idealistic emphasis on the indivisible bond between the end and the means and practical, pragmatic and utilitarian outlook necessitated to adopt non-violence as the most appropriate technique for attainment of swaraj. Gandhi was convinced that if the end was good and noble, it could not be attained by evil means. For the attainment of swaraj Gandhi further advised a militant sort of non-violent technique that he differently styled as passive resistance, civil resistance and satyagraha with non-cooperation and civil disobedience as the modus-operandi. Non-violence for him was not the non-violence of the weak and the coward but the strong and the brave. His was a fight with principles and not with persons. This is why Gandhi used to say that he did not hate the British people, but the British rule. Thus, his swaraj was only for the virtues, the moralists who could take resort to non-violent means. Hatred begets hatred and love begets love. This is a universal principle. Any society based on hatred is bound to collapse. This is why Gandhi did not recommend the principle of violence or hatred to bring about social change and revolution.

A comparison between Marx and Gandhi can be drawn out in terms of their social change and revolution. Like Marx, he too wanted to change the world. Philosophers through the ages tried to understand the world. It is Gandhi and Marx who tried to change the world. Whether they succeeded or not is very difficult to determine. But their sincere and noble faith to the change of the world can never be in question.

But Marx wanted to change the society through revolution. He treated violence as the mid-wife of revolution. On the other hand, Gandhi wanted to change the society through change in heart. According to Gandhi, 'non-violence is the only means for social change'. But Marx believed in the dictatorship of the proletariat at least for the transition period. Marx believed in the class-character of the society. Human society is always divided into two opposing classes i.e. haves and have nots

or the owner of the means of production and the working class. The working class is always exploited by the economically dominant class. For Marx, evil in the society lies in economy. Therefore, any attempt to change must begin with the change in economy. Whereas, Gandhi considered economy as a small factor only in the vast edifice of civilization. For Gandhi, there was something fundamentally wrong with modern civilization; especially with the modern Western civilization. Therefore, any attempt to bring about any desirable social change must be preceded by the clear understanding of the ills of modern society. He was never in favour of violence in bringing about social change.

In order to effect social change or revolution, Gandhi's swaraj is a positive concept signifying development of the nations in a definite direction. This positive aspect is *purna swaraj* which contains in it four dimensions i.e. political, social, economic and moral dimensions. Political dimension of Swaraj concerned with the freedom from the British imperialistic domination and transfer of political power from the British into the hands of Indian. Such transfer of political power into the hands of the Indians, Gandhi understood, as people's swaraj.

Social dimension of swaraj meant a state of social existence where each individual irrespective of his religion, race, caste, and sex, place of birth or parentage will enjoy equal social status. It would be a plural society maintaining plurality of existence.

Economic swaraj of Gandhi has an economic bias. Swaraj to Gandhi was a means to the economic emancipation of the masses. Gandhi was aware of the conditions of the destitute masses. Hence, when Gandhi thought of swaraj as poor man's swaraj as it signified removal of poverty, hunger, destitution, deprivation and exploitation.

Gandhi warned that without the moral dimension of swaraj, the political, social and economic dimensions of swaraj will lose their real significance. By moral dimension of swaraj, Gandhi symbolized it as justice, equality, truth and charity. Gandhi visualized the social system as an undivided whole in which all the departments of social life – political, economic and religion are inseparably related.

The technique of its realization will always be on the basis of Ahimsa. Thus, Gandhi discovered this novel concept of swaraj during the freedom movement as an appropriate ideology to galvanize the masses into action in adverse circumstances.

Gandhi's swaraj as a corporate activity devoted to the attainment of parliamentary swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people of India. Gandhi's parliamentary swaraj was not to be based on the rule of majority in each and every detail of life. Criticizing tyranny of majority he stressed on the rule of collective social will. It is

to be a participatory democracy. Regarding democratic structure Gandhi sought to build up it from below, the self Government (the real swaraj) by awakening into the masses a sense of their power and dignity. In this case, according to Gandhi, decentralization could provide individuals the opportunity to participate in the management of their own affairs and a feeling of self-government. It was to be a traditional peasant society using elementary technology based in subsistence economy and a minimalist state.

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### **3.5 Gram-Swaraj: Concept and Meaning**

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In the modern political discourse, the contrast between the urbanized West and the poverty-stricken villages of India had been a constant discussion that both Western imperialism and its exploitative nature has kept multitudes of Indian people living in the Indian villages in total servitude and destitution. Famine was a recurring feature during the British colonial rule and in this situation, the utmost necessity of rural or social reconstruction became an important of the nationalist discourse. Though Swadeshi movement projected self-supportive, educational, industrial and cooperative enterprises to alleviate the miseries of the rural poor, but none of these attempts had a comprehensive plan of an alternative development strategy for rural re-construction and to reduce the widening gulf between the cities and the villages. Gandhi provided a philosophy of a village-centered life which he described as the Gram-Swaraj and decentralization of power is the proper functioning of Gram Swaraj.

Gram meant a village and swaraj meant freedom, independence and self-rule. Thus, it would mean freedom, liberty, independence, self-rule of villages. Gram swaraj literally meant village self-government, but its real meaning was far deeper. Gram swaraj meant a total transformation of villages from the dung-heaps as there were in Gandhi's time into vibrant communities not only in economics but also in social and cultural senses. It also meant developing human personality marked with self-reliance, self-control and self-esteem. It meant self-governance and self-management of village communities wherein the dignity of the individuals is ensured.

Gram swaraj aims at ending the individual ownership of means of production, other resources and property. Every village is to be built in such a way as to make them self-sufficient, self-reliant and self-governing entity – involving a simplicity of life. It also involved the organization of society on the basis of small, manageable autonomous village units in which rural communities would meet their basic needs and wield effective power. Gandhi never believed in the isolated or narrow conception

of gram-swaraj rather he believed in harmonious relationship and dignified interdependence with neighbours. To quote Gandhi, “My idea of village swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity”. Gandhi further said, “Indian independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or panchayats having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs, even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world.... But this does not exclude dependence on the willing help from neighbours or from the world”.

The basic principles of Gram Swaraj as advocated by Gandhi, were the supremacy of man, the best utilization of the whole manpower of India, bread labour, equality, trusteeship, decentralization, swadeshi, self-sufficiency, cooperation, satyagraha, equality of all religions and village governance by panchayats.

Gandhi was concerned about villages not only because majority of people lived in villages and they led a pitiable life. As he argued, “If the village perishes India will perish too. It will be no more India. Her own mission in the world will get lost”. He further added, “To serve our village is to establish swaraj. Everything else is but an idle dream”. This is why he persuaded a large number of congress men to go to the villages and devote themselves to the silent and invisible inert mass. He thought of them as his ‘army for Swaraj’, quietly working behind the back and corroding the basis of the colonial state and preparing for its eventual replacement by a distinctively Indian polity under their leadership.

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### **3.6 Social and Rural Reconstruction**

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Gandhi, as a visionary of India, had a very clear perception of its villages and made an emphatic assertion that “India lives in her seven and half lakhs of villages”. He also believed that “India will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts not in palaces”. Social development as outlined by Gandhi contained self-sufficiency, interdependence for other wants and development of village industries. Through his 18-point constructive programme, Gandhi successfully implemented his social or rural reconstruction activities in Sevagram Centre near Wardha in 1935. The 18 – point programme included items such as the use of Khadi, promotion of village industries, Basic and Adult Education, Rural Sanitation, Upliftment of Backward Classes, the welfare of Women, Education in Health and Hygiene, Prohibition and Propagation of the Mother Tongue etc. This constructive programme was considered as the truthful and non-violent way of winning ‘Poorna Swaraj’. It is an attempt to develop society

at the grass roots level with the resources that are available locally. The successful fulfillment of these programmes would usher in an ideal social order – his vision of Gram Swaraj as the complete republic.

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### **3.7 Gandhi's 18-point programme as the social/rural reconstruction**

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The following items were incorporated in his 18- point programme as the social/rural reconstruction agenda.

(1) Communal Unity (2) Removal of Untouchability (3) Prohibition (4) Khadi (5) Village Industries (6) Village Sanitation (7) New or Basic Education (8) Adult Education (9) Women (10) Education in health and hygiene (11) Provincial Languages (12) National Language (13) Economic Equality (14) Kisans (15) Labour (16) Adivasies (17) Lepers (18) Students

#### **1. Communal Unity**

Gandhi rightly pointed out that there should be a harmony between the religions, very particularly between Hindu and Muslim. It signifies that communal unity is considered as an unbreakable heart unity. To attain communal unity, every social worker should aim at developing and encouraging the bond of love and regard among the Hindu, Muslim, Christian and other communities and cultivate a unity based on such mutual love and regard.

Gandhi found that social stability of the country cannot be achieved without the social unity between these communities. For this reason, Gandhi said that there would be no separate rooms or pots for Hindus and non-Hindus in School and Colleges, no communal schools, colleges and hospitals. Gandhi pleaded for the following steps to consolidate Hindu – Muslim unity in India: (a) The Hindu – Muslim unity can be achieved by educating the people in a sense of common citizenship..

#### **(2) Removal of Untouchability**

The practice of untouchability is a social evil. The socio-economic evils associated with this system must be abolished. According to Gandhi, the Harijans and non-Harijans are the children of the same God. Its practice is a sin against God. Gandhi fought against social superiority on the ground of birth or knowledge or religion or any other consideration, It is the duty of the represented communities to provide representation to those communities which are under- represented or inadequately represented. In Gandhian Swaraj, none should be high or low but all are equal. Swaraj society is free from any social exploitation and domination.

### **(3) Prohibition**

Gandhi considered hot drinks, intoxicating drugs and gambling as the social evil because it harms the very vital of the social system and its values. He recommended the various measures to curb those social evils. Gandhi felt that the Government should completely ban the use of liquor without bothering its income. The income should be adjusted from some other sources. Gandhi realized that the drinks and drugs as the social evil endanger not only the body of a man but the moral character of man. The moral loss is greater than the financial loss. Alongside the initiative of the Government, the social workers have a great role in fulfilling the idea of prohibition by visiting the homes of the addicts and dissuading them from drinking habit. The social workers should carry on picketing before the liquor shops to persuade the addicts and shop owners. Public opinion should be cultivated against liquor or business and drinking habits. Besides the social workers, Doctors, women especially house wives and students should also join hands to save the country from this evil effect.

### **(4) Khadi**

Khadi can play an important role in the village economy of India. It can give the poor at least three things: cloth, work and self-sufficiency. Gandhi considered Khadi as an inevitable means for the all-round development of the nation. It helps to attain economic independence by reviving home-spinning in every household. No other scheme that can be devised will ever solve the problem of the deepening poverty of the people.

Under Khadi economy, the capital is under the control of the labour and the supremacy of man over machinery can be established. Khadi can absorb largest number of people and can provide employment at any time of the year without much difficulty. The Khadi establishment requires no outlay of capital. The farmers can easily learn and operate the spinning wheel and can spin during their leisure hour to supplement their meager resources. With the popularization of spinning wheel, women need not go out of their houses for earning their bread. So, Khadi alone can give encouragement to village industries.

### **(5) Other Village Industries**

According to Gandhi, village economy cannot be sustained without the village industries such a hand-grinding, hand-pounding, soap making, paper making tanning, oil-pressing etc. The village industries give employment to millions of people and provide an outlet for the creative skill and resourcefulness of the people.



### **(6) Village Sanitation**

The ideal village envisaged by Gandhi could be constructed on the basis of the principles of public hygiene and sanitation. The houses are to be built with locally available material with sufficient light and ventilation. In each house or cottage, there should be a courtyard to grow vegetables for domestic consumption and to house cattle. The village streets and lanes will be kept clean and to ensure clean water supply.

The constructive workers shall instill the villagers to maintain cleanliness in and around the village, including public wells, tanks and rivers. Gandhi's idea was not only confined to the removal of garbage from the lanes and streets of the villages but also to put the same to the productive use by scientifically converting into manure. The manure so converted has to be used to grow more food and it will keep the villages clean from dust, dirt and bad smell.

### **(7) New Basic Education**

Gandhi called this idea as 'Nai Talim' (New training) for rural reconstruction. Nai Talim implies the 'all round drawing of the best in child and man, body, mind and spirit. His philosophy of education was based on his experiments with physical, literal and moral training as Gandhi experimented and gained at the Tolstoy Farm in South Africa. Thus, the Gandhian scheme of education is meant to bring about a silent socio-economic and political revolution through the medium of village handicrafts. It removes unemployment through vocational training and provides economic and social security to the people. Gandhi realized that the spirit of the children could not be trained through books alone, the life and character are imperative. The new education through Nai Talim checks the gradual decline of village economy and reconstructs village industries with new perspectives. The new education ensures smooth transformation of the present village economy without imported machinery and technical skills. The economic destiny of the country will not be placed in the hands of specialized talents but in the hands of skilled masses. The education which encourages sense of dignity of labour, self-reliance, useful literary knowledge, moral uprightness, social awareness and responsibility stimulates– healthy political awakening among the students. Such students will give new meaning and purpose to the political system.

### **(8) Adult Education**

According to Gandhi, adult education should not end with bare acquaintance with the alphabet. The literary education of illiterate adults should go hand in hand with

the spread of knowledge which is useful to the villagers in their daily life. The social workers shall engage themselves in adult education of the illiterate people in eradicating illiteracy from the country. This adult education is to be a village need-based education.

### **(9) Women**

Gandhi believed that the same soul resides in both man and woman and both of them have equal opportunities to develop their personality. They are inseparable pair and one cannot live without the other. According to Gandhi, “In a plan of village based non-violence, woman has as much right to shape her destiny as man has to shape his..... Men have not realized this truth in its fullness in their behavior towards women. They have considered themselves to be Lords and masters of women instead of considering them as their friends and co-workers”.

Women possess greater degree of non-violence than man. As a mother, she exhibits greater degree of suffering, sacrifice and love. She is the mistress of the house, keeper and distributor of the bread in the house and takes greater interest in the management of the house. After completing her house work, she can take up some constructive activities.

As the future of the country is to be shaped by her children, the women should teach her children simplicity, faithfulness, non-violence, truth, fearlessness, dignity of labour and self-reliance. Such children will shape the destiny of the country on sound moral basis.

### **(10) Education in Health and Hygiene**

According to Gandhi it is the duty of the social workers to explain the simple rules of health and hygiene to the villagers. The social workers should be themselves as a living message to others in health and hygiene. By education in health and hygiene Gandhi understood to “establish a balance between mind and body”. If the social workers engage themselves in public cleanliness as self-appointed sweepers, the villagers will voluntarily join the movement for cleanliness in their villages and will definitely learn the lessons in public hygiene.

### **(11) Provincial Language**

Gandhi was in favour of regional/provincial languages as media of instruction at all stages of education. The social workers have to carry on the fight for establishing supremacy of regional languages as it is the language of the rural masses. Gandhi recognized English as the language of international commerce and diplomacy and appreciated English literature but he recommended it would be taught as one of the subjects and gave importance to the regional language of the rural masses.

Gandhi further said that mother tongue is a natural means to develop the mind of the child. Russia and Japan achieved all their scientific progress without English as their medium. So, in our country, the useful English books should be translated into regional languages for the sake of majority of the Nation.

### **(12) National Language**

Along with the provincial languages, the national language according to Gandhi should be Hindi.

### **(13) Economic Equality**

Economic equality means that everyone shall have sufficient and nutritious food to eat and proper shelter to live in, adequate Khadi to wear, medical relief and necessary facilities for education. It also means abolition of conflict between the capital and labour and concentration of national wealth in a few hands. The constructive workers shall strive to reduce the rich and the poor gap and level up the semi-starved millions through trusteeship system.

### **(14) Kisans**

Kisans form the bulk of India's population and are backbone of the rural economy. India's population depends on agriculture and allied occupations such as cattle farming, dairying, poultry etc. The social workers should render the Kisans both theoretical and practical knowledge about agriculture with a view to having self-sufficient village.

Gandhi was in favor of farmer's organizations which are to be directed to redress the grievances of the peasants. But it should not be used for political gains.

### **(15) Labour and Adivasies**

According to Gandhi, "He who tills the land should own the land. The land-owners should not think that the possession of land gives them any superiority over the tenants and the landless laborers. They should recognize that the tenants and the landless laborers possess the same soul which they possess. The land owners whose agricultural income is surplus should act as trustees for the benefit of the agricultural laborers and others".

The land owners should lead a simple life and they should engage in the upliftment of the poorer sections of the village becoming a partner in the peaceful evolution of socio-economic change.

The social workers should build model unions for the labourers and organize them on non-violent basis but should be kept away from politics. Gandhi also gave instructions to the constructive workers for the upliftment of Adivasies also.

### **(17) Lepers**

Gandhi gave importance to the lepers the suffering humanity. He said, “India is perhaps a home of lepers next only to Central Africa”. He visualized in swaraj state, no suffering man should go uncared. For this, the social workers with a missionary zeal should take up the projects for their welfare.

### **(18) Students**

Gandhi expected that the students should possess the following qualities:

1. The students must have initiative, they must not be imitators.
2. They must possess freedom. However, they must exercise freedom with restraint and humility.
3. They should have purity of heart which ensures the purity in personal life.
4. They must maintain self-control in thought, word and action and should preserve the vital energy
5. They should cultivate the sense of service to the community.
6. They must develop sense of dignity of labour.

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## **3.8 Conclusion**

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The 18-point rural social reconstruction programme as envisaged by Gandhi is an integrated effort of social reconstructions in India. The Gandhian vision of rural development refers to “the upliftment of the last man in the row”. It has the principle of raising the standard of living of the downtrodden in the rural areas.

Gandhi was critical of economic plan. He was not interested in planning as a system of development. His social reconstruction programme and vision was altogether different from the planned development. This reconstruction programme or ideals can be materialized only outside the framework of the National or Central plans as the centralized planning and organization is inherently incapable of implementing his ideals. The proponents of the Gandhian model of development argue that under the prevailing socio-cultural and economic conditions in India, the social reconstruction model of Gandhi is still relevant as the alternative for bringing about equitable and sustainable rural development. He wanted diversified economic activities in the

villages and thus stood for all-round development of rural India. “Gandhi belongs to the future and not the past. He is not dead; his message is eternal and shall live as long as sun shines in the vast open skies”.

To many thinkers, Gandhi’s concept of ‘Gram Swaraj’ and ‘Ramrajya’ appears to be utopian – a hollow idealism. But it is an undeniable fact that all the philosophies are primarily utopian since they are distant dreams to be achieved. Thomas More, a social thinker of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, coined the term utopia. In his book entitled ‘Utopia’ he remarked that all the philosophers dream of utopia till it is not practically applied. (The Statesman, 5 Sep. Kolkata, 2019)

More than seven decades after independence, poverty and disparity are endemic. Economic growth without social justice is the hallmark of a violent and unsustainable social order. We need to revisit Gandhi’s concept of swaraj and set the cause of India’s economic development. The methods prescribed by him cannot be executed on the basis of a short-cut programmatic blueprint. The programmatic character of his recommendation for rural social reconstruction is equitable and sustainable.

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### 3.9 Summing Up

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- (i) The Gandhian vision of rural development refer to the upliftment of the last man in the row.
- (ii) Gandhi was not interested in planning as a system of development.
- (iii) The proponents to the Gandhian model of development argue that under the prevailing socio-cultural and economic conditions in India his philosophy becomes even more relevant.
- (iv) Gandhi wanted diversified economic activities in the villages and thus stood for all-round development of rural India.

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### 3.10 Glossary

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1. Swaraj	—	Self-rule
2. Ramrajya	—	Divine Rule/Kingdom of God
3. Dharna	—	Disciplined Protest
4. Swadeshi	—	Home-made
5. Moksha	—	Salvation

6. Shasanmukta — Free from domination and Coercion.
7. Loksakti — People's Power
8. Khadi — Indian Cotton

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### 3.11 Probable Questions

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#### Essay Type Questions

1. Discuss the meaning, concept and nature of Gandhian Gram Swaraj.
2. Explain how did Gandhi criticize the Western Civilization in his 'Hind Swaraj'.
3. Describe Gandhi's notion of rural/social reconstruction with reference to his 18-point programme.
4. Explain Gandhi's idea of self-sufficient village. Do you think it is possible to realize this idea in India today?
5. Analyse Gandhi's concept of Ramrajya. In what sense was it different from the Ancient Scriptures?
6. What does Gandhi mean by self-rule? Why does Gandhi insist on the need to bridge the gap between the elite and the masses to bring about self-rule?

#### Short Questions:

1. Write in brief, Gandhi's techniques of establishing Gram Swaraj.
2. Describe the meaning of Khadi as an essential part of his philosophy of Gram Swaraj.
3. How did Gandhi operationalise his own concept of decentralization as a solution to the ills of democracy at the grass-roots – Explain.

#### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. Gandhi's Hind Swaraj is a critique of—  
(a) Post Modernism (b) Western Civilization  
(c) Anarhism (d) None of the above

Ans. : (b)

2. Which amongst the following term implies Gandhi's Ramrajya?  
(a) Hindu Raj (b) British Raj (c) People's Raj (d) Divine Raj

Ans. : (d)

3. Who amongst the following coined the term 'Utopia?'  
(a) Thomas More (b) M. K. Gnadhi (c) Karl Marx (d) V. I. Lenin

Ans. : (a)

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### 3.12 Further Reading

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## **Unit-4 □ Sarvodaya**

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### **Structure**

- 4.0 Objective**
- 4.1 Introduction**
- 4.2 Concept of Sarvodaya**
- 4.3 Gandhi's Worldview**
- 4.4 Sources of the Idea of Sarvodaya**
- 4.5 Objectives of Sarvodaya**
- 4.6 Salient components of Sarvodaya**
- 4.7 Economic order of Sarvodaya**
- 4.8 Politico-social Implications of Sarvodaya**
- 4.9 Sarvodaya in practice**
- 4.10 Conclusion**
- 4.11 Summing Up**
- 4.12 Glossary**
- 4.13 Probable Questions**
- 4.14 Further Reading**

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### **4.0 Objective**

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This unit will enable us to know:

- 1 To focus on the descriptive analysis of Gandhi's Sarvodaya ideal based on the commitment to the care and uplift of humanity.
- 1 To understand Gandhi's world view of his life as the liberative praxis of Sarvodaya.
- 1 To look into the sources impacting upon Gandhi to conceptualize Sarvodaya as the principle of the welfare of all.

- 1 To highlight the goals of Sarvodaya in the transformation of society through the application of non-violence and Satyagraha.
- 1 To discuss the basic components of Gandhian Sarvodaya in the context of his ideal of socio-economic and political order.
- 1 To trace Gandhi's economic thinking and strategy leading to the establishment of Sarvodaya cooperative society – people oriented economy free from exploitation.
- 1 To analyse Gandhi's vision of Swaraj as a step to Ramrajya – an ideal democracy.
- 1 To let us know the application of Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha in the reconstruction of his village as his praxis of village-ashramic life.
- 1 To explain the effectiveness and feasibility of the Gandhian utopian in Sarvodaya.

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## 4.1 Introduction

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The concept of Sarvodaya is a significant contribution of Gandhi to the socio-political philosophy. The Sarvodaya of Gandhi as ideal, vision and movement, is a realistic ideal or a vision for the future having implications for effecting socio-economic change and theological-ecological meaning as well. Gandhi's vision of Sarvodaya is based on the religions he came across, the persons with whom he came into contact and the movements he had acquainted with. These diverse sources and his experiences helped him develop the ideal of Sarvodaya as a creative imagination founded on experimenting and explorative basis. It is an undying hope in the future.

Gandhi's philosophy of Sarvodaya aims at welfare of all or universal welfare to be achieved by unceasing service to humanity. It was a challenging ideal of overcoming massive poverty and inequality perpetuated by the oppressive colonial politico-economic system and the reactionary social system. Gandhi's Sarvodaya basically aims at the establishment of an ideal politico-social and economic structure that would strive to achieve the welfare of all.

The Sarvodaya was conceived as people-centered economy, ashram-village experimentation, experiment with 'bhudhan' (Land Gift), total revolution and even Gandhian theology of liberation and ecological life style. It was really social order, based on simple living and high thinking.

Gandhi's vision of Sarvodaya is an all-comprehensive vision assuming the total good of every individual: religious, moral, social, political and economic. He used the word Sarvodaya to describe the principles that soul guides us in our efforts to build ourselves, our families, our communities and nations. He had arrived at these principles of a Sarvodaya society on the basis of his studies, his observations and his experiments of truth and non-violence throughout the freedom movement in India. Though Gandhi's entry into India's mainstream of political life was independence of India from foreign domination, his final goal was beyond political freedom. His dream was the uplift of all, the welfare of each and every human being, total liberation of all from all that make one not fully human i.e. Sarvodaya. So, Gandhi's Sarvodaya is a liberative praxis – his world view. Gandhi's comprehensive vision and holistic approach to life contains within it the ideals like constructive programme, swaraj, Ramrajya, swadeshi, trusteeship etc.

Gandhi's goal of Sarvodaya society is to establish the ideal of Ramrajya – a nation governed by the principle of Lord Ram, an incarnation of Vishnu or the ideal monarch. It is an ideal society based on all-embracing love. No individual or group is to be suppressed and exploited. All are to be equal members of this social order, all sharing in the produce of their labour, the strong protecting the weak and functioning as their trustees and protectors, each promoting in welfare of all, according to their abilities and through all means at their disposal. Sarvodaya is the peaceful and non-violent way of achieving justice – irrespective of caste, creed, sex or religion. Gandhi wanted to establish welfare state in India which he called Ramrajya. It was Gandhi's vision – a vision in the process of being realized.

Sarvodaya is founded on the assurance of meeting basic, essential needs and freedoms, physical and moral of the humblest. It is Antyodaya (individual last in the line). Sarvodaya reflects new economy and village-ashram dialectic or experimentation. In his 'meta-economics', Gandhi did soul-searching effort; and came up with the insight of 'people-oriented economy' as opposed to money-machine or competition-oriented economy. In this economy, the concepts of simplicity and limitation of wants, trusteeship, decentralization, village industries are alternative to big industries and mega projects. Gandhi's critique of economics and technology does not imply a rejection of technology, but a subordination of technology to human needs – a horizon of economics with a human face. The villagism of Sarvodaya may appear as a reaction against the modern industrial trends of civilization. Side by side, it has added the new radical gospels of the ownership of all land of the village by the village community itself and the function of a decentralized village common wealth.

The asram-village dynamics of Gandhi depicts in essence, his village-mindedness and village reconstruction and reorganization as the locus of his praxis. As Gandhi was of the view that social, political or structural change would start at the grass-roots and personal level. So, Gandhi's Sarvodaya is the 'science for villages'. It is a concrete strategy for realizing changes in the socio-economic and political status. This is a realistic strategy to ensure superior pattern of life in which Sarvodaya (upliftment of the poorest) would be the guiding principle. 'Satya and Swaraj' as the ultimate aim of one's self-realization was for Gandhi, an altruistic ethic. It can grow in an atmosphere of ahimsa. Such an atmosphere will prevail only in a society where equal share is given 'even unto this last'. These may be said to be the hallmark of the Sarvodaya society envisioned by Gandhi.

Sarvodaya as concretized and personified in Gandhi's ideal and lifestyle, suggests ecological way of living as feasible and morally attractive and can be seen as an appropriate response to the global ecological crisis.

Sarvodaya is therefore, an inclusive ideal with premises of truth and non-violence which Gandhi held was not conceivable under socialism or communism of the Marxist notion. Sarvodaya is the Gandhian socialism or non-violent socialism. It stands for the welfare of all, commitment to all kinds of sacrifices even unto death, for the welfare of others being the core of Sarvodaya. Such service and sacrifice implies absolute adherence to truth and non-violence, supremacy of renunciation, cultivation of absolute fearlessness and practice of bread labour. The whole activity of social service is to bring out the change of heart linking it to the method of persuasion.

Sarvodaya cannot be seen in isolation from other views of Gandhi, rather its significance becomes all the more clear when it is viewed in the whole spectrum of Gandhi's vision, his world view. Sarvodaya thus, occupies the central place in Gandhi's world view or philosophy of life. This philosophy that Gandhi practised in the asrams he had founded in South Africa and later in India, was known as 'Sarvodaya' – the wellbeing of all encompassing the dignity of labour, an equitable distribution of wealth, communal self-sufficiency and individual freedom. Sarvodaya is quest for equalitarian society. It is Sarvodaya democracy.

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## **4.2 Concept of Sarvodaya**

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The concept of Sarvodaya is a significant contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to the socio-political philosophy. Mahatma Gandhi first used the term 'Sarvodaya' in

modern times. It came into being when Gandhi was in South Africa, reading John Ruskin's book 'Unto This Last' in 1904. It gripped his mind so much so that it changed his entire life and outlook. Later he published Ruskin's book in Gujarati in which he titled it 'Sarvodaya'.

Sarvodaya was the extension and application of Gandhian ideology to the solution of social, political and economic problems facing the Indian society. More precisely, it is the art of mobilizing the physical, economic and spiritual resources for the service of mankind. Gandhi's dream of sarvodaya society is an ideal or vision towards which he worked and for which he made commitment until it is realized. Gandhi pinned his hope on Sarvodaya ideal in as much as the comprehensive way in envisioning a future society that he became a 'prisoner of hope'. Though Gandhi entered the Indian public life for attaining independence but his final dream was Sarvodaya – the rising of all-welfare of each and every human being, liberation from all that make one not fully human.

The ideal and objectives of Sarvodaya is implied in the word itself – Sarva (all) and Udaya (uplift) wellbeing of all – universal welfare. This ideal is to be achieved by relentless service to humanity as the welfare of all-embracing love, compassion and charity. So, Sarvodaya literally means 'the welfare of all' or 'the upliftment of all'. By 'welfare of all' Gandhi meant the sum total of conditions – religious, moral, political, social and economic – for the all-round growth of the individual and of every individual in the context of the overall development of society.

Sarvodaya society is a liberated society in which all are equal members in this society. No individual or group is to be suppressed, exploited and oppressed, all sharing in the produce of their labour, the strong protecting the weak and functioning as their trustees and protectors, each promoting the welfare of all according to their abilities and through all the means at their disposal. Gandhi utilized the word Sarvodaya to describe the principle that should guide us in our efforts to build ourselves, our families, our communities and nations. The guiding principle of Sarvodaya is the peaceful and non-violent way of achieving social justice. Sarvodaya for Gandhi was non-violent society.

Sarvodaya is founded on the commitment to meeting the basic essential needs and freedoms, physical and moral, of the Antyodaya i.e. the poorest in the society. The private property and other material resources of the society belong to God. The prescription is the simple living as it brings more contentment and happiness what human beings seek. There is no adequate supply of material goods in the world to satisfy the ever-increasing wants of human beings. This results in the exploitation of

the weak and helps a few people in accumulating wealth eventually leading to the concentration of economic power and all the evils that are attached to it. A satisfactory way of breaking the vicious circle is by reducing human wants so that the available material resources are distributed equitably to meet the basic human needs. In this way, Sarvodaya depended on the theory of detachment/non-possession. On this basis, the intellectual and spiritual spheres too should go together. Thus, the ideal behind Sarvodaya was to achieve a non-violent, non-exploitative and cooperative society. This cooperative society is the way of realizing fundamental changes to the socio-economic and political status. This is a strategy of conversion of heart and mind through persuasion which is an important part of the Gandhian constructive work. It aims at promoting economic equality in the village life through the weapon of Satyagraha and non-violence. The ideal of Sarvodaya incorporates both material and spiritual elevation implicit in the term 'social welfare'. Wealth earned without moral and spiritual consideration leads to animality. The constructive work is a process of social engineering in order to bring changes in the social, economic and political structure of society through the power of the people or Lok-shakti.

The concept of Sarvodaya for Gandhi was an altruistic ethic of self-realization. Satya (truth) and Swaraj (freedom) as the ultimate aim of one's self realization can only grow in an atmosphere of ahimsa (non-violence). Gandhi's dream of Sarvodaya will be fulfilled in a society where equal share is given 'even unto this last'.

Gandhi felt that ideal foundation on which Sarvodaya society should be built included the qualities of truth, love and compassion in both our personal and public lives. The theory of trusteeship, elimination of exploitation in every form or shape, a classless society, mutual cooperation as the driving force of motivation and behaviour and above all, securing the welfare of all without any distinction of race, religion, sex, political affiliation are the hallmarks of the Sarvodaya envisioned by Gandhi.

Sarvodaya is, therefore, inclusive, holistic approach infused with the spirit of optimism, participation and creativity. Gandhi presented the dynamic and flexible principles in Sarvodaya for designing a good place for human beings to live, a simpler and more egalitarian life where the welfare of all would have priority. The Indian economy is predominantly agricultural. So, the solution of the Indian economic problem is linked to the reorganization of her entire agrarian economy and village reconstruction. Gandhi wanted to make village life free from party politics and concentration of power. It is entirely a partyless democracy. In such a system, people would run their own administration through Panchayats. The Panchayats would look after their cultural, social and economic aspects of the people. The village economy would have small scale industries to meet their primary needs. This village-centered

economy would be the lifeline of the people – opposed to money-machine or competition-oriented economy.

Sarvodaya as a liberative society enjoins the building of a humane society in which every man and woman would have the opportunity of making them fully human. Thus, Sarvodaya is both an ideal-vision and a praxis-action programme for the welfare of all. Sarvodaya in fact, encompasses the whole spectrum of Gandhi's vision, his world-view. Sarvodaya occupies the central place in Gandhi's philosophy of life. The whole spectrum of Gandhi's vision of Sarvodaya cannot be seen in isolation of Gandhi's world-view.

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### 4.3 Gandhi's Worldview

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The worldview of Gandhi is deeply rooted in the realities which he had experienced throughout his life and works. The vast and comprehensive experience gave him inner direction in his search for and experiments with truth. The experiments of truth led him to reinvent three words: Satyagraha, Sarvodaya and anasakti (non-attachment). Sarvodaya made his life and goal, Satyagraha a means and anasakti – a method of training in self-discipline to gain power. Sarvodaya was his concern with justice and ethical behavior based on theology that created belief in him that all men and women are created equal. During his South Africa's struggle and in India's freedom movement Gandhi was basically concerned with justice—a just civilization and a just society. To find this, Gandhi emphasized on self-suffering in pursuit of truth.

This just society cannot be sustained without a just economic and political order and a just religious order where the oppressed and the oppressor both should participate. To bring about this order, Gandhi embraced a holistic approach to life. In order to bring about his vision he formulated varieties of constructive programmes. Gandhi's Sarvodaya is akin to Ramrajya (Kingdom of God). The Ramrajya is to be attached with the establishment of Sarvodaya in which all are to be held together in the network of love and equality among all people. Gandhi wanted to make Sarvodaya a way of life for all humanity.

The central place in Gandhi's world-view or philosophy of life is to ensure equality 'unto this last' (the poorest) moving towards the goal of achieving Ramrajya. So, Gandhi's Sarvodaya is a vision for the future Sarvodaya society. Sarvodaya may thus, be considered the goal he envisioned for humanity in general and for India in particular.

Through Sarvodaya, Gandhi endeavoured to resuscitate the village-India, thereby building the nation. In this venture Gandhi severely criticized western civilization not because it was corrupt but because it was contrary to the ethos of India. As Western civilization he saw in it, a mad craze for comfort, multiplication of wants and self-indulgence which could lead to greed, conflict and suppression of the weak by the strong and eventually it gives birth to social disparity. He preferred swaraj not merely independence from Britain, but an independence from everything that is oppressive in society. To remove those maladies, Gandhi stressed on 'live in order to help others live'. While "Western democracy pleads for the greatest good of the greatest member, Gandhi's Sarvodaya stood for the good of the lowest man in society". This can be achieved through the decentralization of power which would be the key to just and equitable society.

On a political plane, the decentralization of power meant taking power from the centre and bringing it to the village. On an economic level, it meant discouraging big industries and encouraging village cottage industry. On a social level, the Harijans, Girijans (tribals) and members of the lower castes would be given equal rights. Gandhi through his Sarvodaya took a life-long effort to achieve a just socio-political, economic and religious order for India. Though he could not see and implement his ideal and vision of Sarvodaya entirely, but it was future-orientedness of his vision. As he was experimenting with truth in his life, Gandhi was aware of the fact that "the ideal is never fully realized in life" but this was his 'undying hope' that the impossible can become possible.

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#### **4.4 Sources of the idea of Sarvodaya**

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Gandhi coined the term Sarvodaya in order to articulate his vision of Indian society and the way he wanted to transform and totally reconstruct it in accordance with his vision, imagination and prescription. Gandhi borrowed the concept of Sarvodaya from a Jain scripture written by Acharya Samantabhadra where the expression 'Sarvodayam' is used to mean the well-being of all. Apart from this, Buddha, Mahavira and other ancient seers had influence on him in preaching love or non-violence, self-control, self-sacrifice, cooperation and co-sharing etc. in the conceptualization of Sarvodaya.

Besides these, the major sources of Gandhi's idea of Sarvodaya were the messages of the Bhagavad-Gita, the New Testament, Ruskin's 'Unto This Last', Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience' and Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of God within You'



The Bhagavad-Gita was Gandhi's favourite text and 'spiritual dictionary'. Gandhi in his Autobiography wrote: "the book struck me as one of priceless worth, and I regard it today as the book par excellence for the knowledge of truth". He recognized the Gita a 'grammar of action'. The service of all created beings is the service of God and the same is sacrifice. 'Nishkama Karma' – as the way of self-realization had left a tremendous influence on him.

As with Gita, Gandhi's first acquaintance with the 'New Testament' inspired him immensely, particularly the 'Sermon on the Mount' which really awakened him to the rightness and value of Satyagraha. The particular contribution of Christianity was of active love – the basic foundation of Sarvodaya. Like Christianity, Hinduism and Islam too provided him the message in the concept of Sarvodaya.

According to Raghavan Iyer, "no Hindu since Ram Mohan Roy was as eager as Gandhi to respond to Koran". For Gandhi, the point of brotherhood is manifested in no other religion as clearly as in Islam. "My reading of Koran", Gandhi wrote, "had convinced me that the basis of Islam is not violence". He regarded Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism as religions of peace.

Ruskin's 'Unto This last', the appropriate rendering would be 'antyodaya' (uplift of the last and the least) rather than Sarvodaya (uplift of all) gave Gandhi the conception of the economic and ethical foundations of Sarvodaya social order. He understood its central teaching to be that "the good of the individual is contained in the good of all". Gandhi also derived from 'Unto This Last' the conclusion of the equal value of all work. Ruskin's critique of the classical political economy's stress on the debilitating and dehumanizing effects of modern economic and highly mechanized industrial systems, his principles of the dignity of manual labour, simplicity of life, worker's ownership of the means of production and ownership of property within limits etc. all influenced Gandhi in the evolution of the moral basis of politics and economics. As Ruskin borrowed the idea from Bible, so Gandhi admitted his source of inspiration from Ruskin in the formation of Sarvodaya, Sarvodaya implies Biblical origin.

Tolstoy's 'Kingdom of God is within you'—one of the dominant ideas of Tolstoy which influenced Gandhi in the condemnation of modern civilization as 'Mammon Worship'. According to Dr. K. M. Prasad, "Tolstoy and Gandhi considered the 'Sermon on the Mount' to be the core of Christianity and its central teaching to be non-violence, the negative aspect of love, which is the basis of Sarvodaya Philosophy". Following Tolstoy, Gandhi accepted love to be the law of life. Gandhi also shared with Tolstoy the vision of a new social order based on simplicity of life, love, peace

and equality. Apart from this, Tolstoy and Gandhi envisaged that there would be no state, no private property, no police, no military, no law courts and no organized religion. Both agreed to an ideal of a stateless, classless society marked by voluntary cooperation.

Like Tolstoy, Gandhi, by reading Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience' in South Africa, found in it ample support for his conviction. It confirmed his belief in the inherent goodness of human nature, the supremacy of the soul over the body and the essentially violent nature of the state. Gandhi was in agreement with Thoreau that the immoral institution of the state supported by coercive authority hampered the individual's moral and spiritual freedom. He, therefore, visualized a society in which government will disappear. Like Thoreau, Gandhi held the view that democracy can be realized only in a stateless society. Any individual can have full liberties and enjoy utmost freedom in such a society. Such a society can be organized on the basis of truth, love and non-violence.

From the foregoing sources of influence on Gandhi it exposes the fact that Gandhi was greatly influenced by the Indian cultural heritage, religious scriptures, leader of religions and authors like Ruskin, Tolstoy and Thoreau, in the formation of his vision, especially the Sarvodaya ideal and action programme.

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## **4.5 The Objectives of Sarvodaya**

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Sarvodaya was the extension and application of Gandhian ideology to the solution of social, political and economic problems facing the Indian society. More precisely, it is the art of mobilizing the physical, economic and spiritual resources for the service of mankind.

The fundamental objective of Sarvodaya is the greatest good of all living beings. Gandhi was against the doctrine of utilitarianism which aims at the greatest satisfaction to the greatest number. Gandhi wanted to change the social order in which everybody contributes as much or his/her maximum share for the peace and harmony of the world. He visualized an integral growth of human society which includes spiritual, moral, political, social and economic welfare of every individual. It also aims at all-round development of all without distinction of caste, creed, sex or religion. Gandhi wanted to establish a welfare state in India which he called 'Ramrajya' – guaranteeing welfare of all. Sarvodaya had been the very basic idea of Gandhian way of life from days he wrote 'Hind Swaraj'. Sarvodaya is a total view of life and human society comprising individual as well as collective life as much as social, economic, political, moral, religions and spiritual.

Gandhi's Sarvodaya vision is nothing but a liberated society, a 'Sarvodaya Samaj'. Since Sarvodaya Samaj's ultimate goal stood for the welfare of all, commitment to all kinds of sacrifices even unto death, for the welfare of others was at the core of Sarvodaya. It is called the spirituality of commitment to service based on the absolute adherence to truth and ahimsa, supremacy of renunciation and sacrifice, cultivation of fearlessness and recognition and practice of bread labour. It is on the basis of these moral values that Gandhi sought to evolve a social, economic and political order for the poor.

Sarvodaya for Gandhi is an altruistic ethic of self-realization. Satya (truth) and Swaraj (freedom or self-rule) are the cardinal principles of self-realization. It can be cultivated in an atmosphere of non-violence. Such an atmosphere can prevail only in a society where equal share is given 'Unto this Last'. Gandhi said that "all are created by God and therefore entitled to an equal share of food, clothing and housing" – a society of wantlessness. So, economic equality for Gandhi was a 'master key' to non-violent independence where all round real progress in material, intellectual and spiritual spheres should go together. Sarvodaya thus claims to be a harmonious combination of spiritualism and materialism paving the way for both material and moral progress simultaneously. Vinoba Bhave, an ardent disciple of Gandhi rightly says, "Sarvodaya stands for not only making all happy by eliminating suffering from all but also bringing a world state based on equality". It contains the content of equalitarianism. It rests on the principle of true equality and liberty. It stands opposed to exploitation of any kind. Gandhi admitted the differences of man in terms of his ability of earning because of the varieties of talents and capabilities existing in the nature of things. Therefore, he proposed equal distribution of national wealth.

Gandhi's Sarvodaya is non-violent socialism. In it, all members of the society are equal – none low, none high. The non-violent socialism is non-exploitative and equalitarian. It creates condition for self-realization in liberating both exploiter and exploited from the shackles of an exploitative structure.

Sarvodaya movement was based on Gandhian technique of conversion or change of heart which in turn was based on faith in the innate of goodness of man. As Jayprakash Narayan said, "Sarvodaya can be reached only through a change of heart on mass scale. Purity of means is as essential as the achievement of goal". Sarvodaya did not believe in the Marxian way of violence for bringing political and economic change in society.

Gandhi's Sarvodaya is a quest for Sarvodaya democracy. It is a democracy of the masses and for the masses. As India lived in villages, Sarvodaya democratic vision was the upliftment and regeneration of the villages in India. Sarvodaya democracy

would be organized in the form of a state with the decentralization of its functioning and activities. Such Sarvodaya democracy should work from the below by the people of every village and not by a few people at the top. According to Gandhi, Sarvodaya democracy 'is the poor man's swaraj' in which the sovereignty and supreme power must belong to the people. Gandhi gave to his ideal society the name Ramrajya in which Gandhi's dream of the perfectibility of man and society will be embodied. Gandhi equated it the village Panchayats with Ramrajya.

Gandhi's Sarvodaya would be stateless as he regarded the state as a 'soulless machine', a symbol of 'violence in a concentrated and organized form'. Gandhi preferred a society of 'enlightened anarchy' where everyone is his/her ruler, to a coercive state. Gandhi wanted to establish real democracy where liberty and equality are of top most priority and exploitation is minimized and replace the master-servant and the capital-labour relationship by a new cooperative order based on rural culture. So, Sarvodaya for Gandhi was a cooperative Sarvodaya. This cooperative order is based on the spirituality of Satyagraha instead of Marx's materialist conception.

Sarvodaya laid emphasis on social and village constructive programme to ensure the welfare of all. Gandhi, through his vision of constructive programme focused upon the rebuilding a 'demoralized society'. Gandhi further wrote, the strategy of constructive work "is the truthful and non-violent way of winning poorna swaraj..... and designed to build up the nation from the very bottom upward". By constructive programme Gandhi linked trusteeship based on the principle of non-possession of means of production to Sarvodaya.

So, trusteeship is 'Sarvodaya extended to the firm'. Trusteeship is based on the noble idea that "what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community". According to Joan Bondurant, the constructive programme is "a positive aspect of Satyagraha in action and is concomitant of resistance action". The constructive work aims at reinventing participant democracy by establishing living contact with the people. It is a model of 'Sevagram village', living among the poor and to 'show them how to live' by personal example and service. Sarvodaya, thus, is the development process meant for liberating for the people and for the nation. In this process, Gandhi reacting to a machine-oriented civilization or culture advocated in favour of charka and handlooms as the appropriate technology for self-sufficiency and reliance on our own strength. So, Sarvodaya is Gandhi's philosophy of Swadeshi economics. It is a people-centered economy.

Gandhi's Ashram-village experiment in the context of Sarvodaya discourse has an innate ecological dimension. His exemplary way of life in his ashrams consists of 'voluntary simplicity' or 'ecological living' that serves as a source of insight and inspiration. Gandhi's Chakra, Khadi, handlooms, village-agrarian system all natural medicine indicates his economics in the Sarvodaya project.

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## 4.6 The Salient Components of Gandhian Sarvodaya

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There are some foundational principles on which Gandhi's socio-economic order of Sarvodaya society is based. Romesh Diwan and Sushila Gidwani in their essay 'Elements in Gandhian Economics' are of the view that there are six principles that are essential to Gandhi's economics, they include: Swadeshi, bread labour, aparigraha or non-possession, trusteeship, non-exploitation and equality.

### (1) Swadeshi

In Gandhian economics, swadeshi, khadi and charka are interlinked, and these concepts together are called the philosophy of swadeshi. Gandhi started Swadeshi, campaign as the rejection of British goods and the imperial policy of creating a class enslaved by western technology and culture. Instead of confining his concept of swadeshi to this limited objective, Gandhi broadened the definition of swadeshi, meaning literally 'belonging to one's own country'. Gandhi used it as a politico-economic strategy against the British in India while he was in South Africa. Later in India, apart from boycott of British goods, Gandhi tied it to the values of simplicity and self-reliance, of limiting one's wants and of manual labour. It was in fact, 'reliance on our own strength'. The purpose of Swadeshi was to foster village industries, small-scale industries and self-reliance. In Gandhi's own words, swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. The spirituality of swadeshi lies in one's love for one's own country, culture and people and what they produce. For Gandhi, swadeshi is not a narrow concept of using indigenous goods and despising foreign materials, but is a way to display love and devotion for the nation and is a constant struggle to promote the economic interests of the fellow countrymen when it is threatened by alien competition.

### (2) Bread-Labour

Labour stands for both mental and physical labour. Gandhi's bread labour is closely linked to the vows of truth, non-violence, brahmacharya, non-stealing

and non-possession. Here bread denotes the basic necessities of life. The vow of bread-labour thus means that everybody especially the Satyagrahi must earn his bread and other primary needs of life by labouring with his hands. Gandhi believed that obedience to law of Bread Labour will bring about a silent revolution in the structure of society. An individual is entitled only to a 'living wage' that is enough for a decent living against the services that he/she renders to the society and nothing more.

### **(3) Aparigraha or Non-possession**

For Gandhi, the doctrine of aparigraha or non-possession means that everyone has to limit one's own possession to what is needed by one and spend the rest for the welfare of others. He considered this as a desirable, non-violent method of reducing inequality of income distribution and mal-distribution of wealth and in that sense; non-possession practice means 'possession by all'. The central point of non-possession, according to Gandhi, is simplifying our wants. Such simplifying wants is to reduce the desires and habit patterns that vitiate our altruistic impulse and dreams for others and to check the tendency of the aggressive self to acquire more at the expense of others. Non-possession is another form of non-violence, since possession involves and leads to violence for the sake of protection and promotion of one's own possession.

### **(4) Trusteeship**

Trusteeship is the non-violent and non-exploitative ownership of property relationships. Trusteeship is also closely related with the concept of Sarvodaya, because economic equality is an essential principle and indispensable condition of the Sarvodaya society. "It is Sarvodaya in extended form". Gandhi suggested that trusteeship is a means for correcting the inequalities of assets ownership, emanating from his conviction in non-violence to bring about a change of the unequal social relationship without violence. He had profound conviction in the goodness of mankind and so appealed to the higher sense of the landlords and the industrialists.

Gandhi's theory of trusteeship is characterized as the idea that the affluent individuals could consider their property as something of God trusted them to deal with the benefits of society and should behave as trustees for the profit of the poor. The concept of trusteeship is based on the principle of non-possession of means of production and economic equality. It is based on the noble idea that "what belongs to me is the right to an honourable

livelihood, no better than enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community”.

Gandhi's theory of trusteeship and swadeshi movement were associated and Gandhi was attempting to transfer peacefully the financial resources from the rich to the poor for the purpose benefitting the latter. The theory of trusteeship aimed at to eradicate the gap that exists between the haves and have-nots.

#### **(5) Non-exploitation**

Sarvodaya Samaj is constituted on the principle of non-exploitation. Exploitation lies at the root of all socio-economic problems and as such the removal of exploitation is the basic requisite of Sarvodaya. There can be no harmony between nations, race, communities, classes and castes unless the main cause—exploitation of the weak by the strong, is removed. Only a non-exploitative society can be Sarvodaya society.

#### **(6) Equality**

In Gandhi's vision of Sarvodaya society, socio-economic equality occupies a central place. He advocated equality not between the equals but equality between the prince and peasant, wealthy and poor, strong and weak, landlord and landless and illiterate and literate. It is not equality in physical sense which is natural and difficult to achieve, but in moral sense. For Gandhi, the equality means providing equal preference and opportunity. Equality or Sarvodaya will prevail in a society where equal share is given “even unto the last”. Gandhi's understanding of equality has its roots in his faith that “all are created by God and therefore entitled to an equal share of food, clothing and housing”.

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### **4.7 Economic Order of Sarvodaya**

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Gandhi's essential economic thinking was against automation. His main goal is to attain moral development and the possession of riches is a hindrance to moral growth. For him, material advancement and moral development cannot go together. He argued that due to the moral degradation of the western nations, they are groaning under the heels of the monster-God of materialism. Instead of aping the western culture of materialism, Gandhi stressed on an ideal economy where truth, love and charity will predominate. In such an ideal society, equality occupies a central place.

Gandhi's economic strategy was primarily a response to the challenge the poverty-ridden India and its solution. The strategy he adopted is ethical economics with which the key issues he dealt with are: village mindedness, Swadeshi, Khadi, self-sufficiency and small industry, decentralization, trusteeship and industrialization.

In this task of an ideal moral economic model, Gandhi also discounted the Marxist-Leninist conception that class struggle was the basic truth of human history and progress and that it must be accentuated more and more until the working class become the rulers of society and state. Gandhi strives for the revival of village industries and restoration of the traditional village institutions of self-government. To remove the exploitation of one class by another, he stressed on the theory of trusteeship and looked for the change of heart in the rich for using their wealth in the interest of the downtrodden. There should be a true partnership between the capital and the labour with the state functioning as the arbiter between the two with the least utilization of power.

Gandhi viewed that his Sarvodaya is the main route to salvation of the world. He picked the path of Karmayogi as a means to the ultimate goal of realization of truth and set as the ultimate goal in this life for the achievement of a Sarvodaya society wherein each individual will be free from want and exploitation.

Gandhi's condemnation of modern civilization based on capitalism led him to transcend the realm of matter and money in order to give his economic order a theological support. His moral economics eliminates all types of conflicts both intra-personal and interpersonal, political or economic, social or global on the basis of spiritual and ethical principles of truth and non-violence. Gandhi wanted to recreate a socio-economic order in which all humans should avail themselves of the equal opportunities in the economic, social and political development. It is a cooperative economic society.

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## **4.8 Politico-Social Implications of Sarvodaya**

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Gandhian concept of Sarvodaya is both social and political in nature. In political struggles, Gandhi was averse to ruthless competition for power and dominance as in this struggle the freedom of the masses especially the starving toiling millions is trampled. Gandhi's swaraj means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. By swaraj, he opined that mere form of political self-government cannot satisfy the democratic concept of swaraj. By swaraj he meant the government by the consent of the people and to resist authority when it is abused. The swaraj as envisioned by Gandhi is a comprehensive term and its goal is to empower the people to secure their



political and socio-economic rights. So, swaraj is Sarvodaya democracy of the masses ad for the masses. This Sarvodaya democracy functions dedicatedly from bottom up by the people of every village rather than imposed by few people from top down. Thus, it is opposed to the state machine which operates by methods of intimidation, coercion and organized violence. Gandhi's notion of swaraj is based on the moral sovereignty of the people. Consequently, Sarvodaya advocates partyless democracy, because people's sovereignty of exercising their will is suppressed by the domination of all-powerful parties. So, in Gandhian vision of Sarvodaya, swaraj is the poor man's swaraj, it is egalitarian and secular. In 'Hind Swaraj', Gandhi wrote, swaraj is the rule of justice.

The establishment of swaraj is a step to Ramrajya – a reign of righteousness and justice on earth, a true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without delay. Ramrajya, for Gandhi, is a dream land in which inequalities based on possession and non-possession, colour, race or creed or sex vanishes. In it, land and state belong to the people and justice is prompt, perfect and cheap. Such a state must be based on truth and non-violence and must consist of prosperous, happy and self-contained villages and village communities. The vision of Ramrajya can be attained on earth with Sarvodaya belief and practices. It would be the ideal polity for India.

In Sarvodaya, Gandhi envisaged a Sarvodaya Samaj – a total-social, economic, political, moral, religious and spiritual – view of life of human society which is a librated society, a Sarvodaya Samaj. Since Sarvodaya stood for the welfare of all, commitment to all kinds of sacrifices including one's own life for the welfare of all others, Sarvodaya is an altruistic philosophy for the humanity. Sarvodaya Samaj represents an ideal social order based on a non-violent, egalitarian, decentralized, people-oriented, and sustainable and a flourishing social order. Gandhi argued that if the Indian society is reformed, colonial rule would automatically cease to exist. The village reconstruction programme will result in the establishment of a society what Gandhi called the 'Swaraj Society'.

Gandhian philosophy of Sarvodaya does contain many socialist elements. Both Gandhi and Marx believed a stateless society from which exploitation and violence are eliminated. The difference between them is not in the ends but in the means. Gandhi himself once declared that he was a communist minus violence. He also claimed that he did not propagate Samyabad (the theory of communism) but samyadharm (the practice of equality). Gandhian Sarvodaya tried to achieve the changes in the social and economic order through non-violent methods which the communists wanted to

effect it through violence. Gandhi's Sarvodaya tried to achieve transformation of society through the persuasion and change of heart, whereas Marx's social transformation was wedded to the cult of regimentation, violence in overthrowing the capitalist society. Communists generally believed that evils of the capitalist system could not be abolished by wishing a change of heart and minds of the owners of property. Gandhian Sarvodaya on the other hand, believed not in the forcible 'seizure of land' but in transformation of relationship ending in the 'peaceful transfer of land'.

Sarvodaya is essentially a non-violent socialism in which all members of society are equal – none low, none high. Such a non-violent society of Gandhi's vision is non-exploitative and egalitarian, not only people enjoy equal rights and opportunities but also there is no exploiter and exploited. It is a liberated society where both exploiter and exploited are free from the shackles of an exploitative structure. It is a society of 'enlightened anarchy' where everyone is his/her ruler.

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## 4.9 Sarvodaya in Practice

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Sarvodaya based on the swadeshi strategy is closely associated with the economic reconstruction strategy aimed at ushering in village-oriented, people-centered economy. So, village regeneration became a key aspect of Gandhi's vision of India.

Gandhi found the soul and spirit of India in villages. "We are inheritors of a rural civilization"; Gandhi said. He believed that "if the village perishes, India will perish too. It will be no more India...." The village being the source of spiritual values, social order and material production.... The "future perfected India must build on her villages". It was Gandhi's vision of India. This vision comprises to make India economically viable, educationally self-sufficient and socially and culturally a well-knit which should be able to meet its day-to-day needs and wants independently. Such well-unity village India will work together in bonds of mutual cooperation and interdependence. Gandhi's Sarvodaya is an ashram-village experiment in India. Gandhi tried to achieve it through constructive programme at the village setting.

To achieve his Sarvodaya ideal and vision, Gandhi in 1920 introduced four-fold constructive programme through the process of decentralization establishing several ashrams in different parts of India, predominantly in rural areas. This time Gandhi shifted the emphasis of his work from Satyagraha (non-violent resistance) to constructive scheme, embodying his Sarvodaya – for the welfare of all. This programme initially included sharing resources, education, rural industry particularly weaving and improvement of the position of the untouchables as part of his philosophy of Sarvodaya.

In 1941 and 1945, a total eighteen-fold constructive programme Gandhi devised as well as a number of organizations to work it out. The constructive programme included: Communal Unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition of alcohol, promotion of Khadi and other rural industries, village sanitation, nai-talim (basic education), adult education, upliftment of women, education in health and hygiene, propagation of rastra bhasha (national language), swabhashaprem (love of one's language), uplift of labour, uplift of students, service of backward Tribes and treatment of lepers. The constructive programme was basically village-oriented and aimed at village upliftment. Gandhi believed that if carried out in the right direction and with sincerity, the constructive programme would result in the ideal Sarvodaya swamaj or village republic.

In Gandhi's village-centered constructive programme, priority was given to Khadi as the basic industry. Gandhi saw in it "the revival of the entire economic, social and cultural life of the villages which constitute our country". Apart from this, Gandhi wanted to link agriculture and industry by making village industries agro-based as an effective way for meaningful development of agrarian society. In addition to it, Gandhi realized that industrialization had been planned to destroy the villages and its crafts. Gandhi's solution to industrialization and its ill-effects is the reconstruction of rural economy with an emphasis on the primacy of agriculture and the complementary importance of cottage industries. By rejuvenating the village economy, Gandhi wanted to restore the simplicity of village life and to establish self-sufficient, self-reliant communities. In this village rejuvenation process, Gandhi advocated "the technology of production by the masses", which was named as "intermediate technology" as this technology is conducive to make use of the best of modern knowledge and experience and decentralization. It is compatible with the laws of ecology making the village into 'ecological living'. So, the basis of village Sarvodaya is the principle of sharing the natural resources and means of production among all the members of the community towards the welfare of all.

From March 11 to 14, a month and a half after Gandhi's assassination, his followers in Sevagram continued his unfinished vision in the spirit of his philosophy of Sarvodaya. His followers started constructive work from Sevagram asram by forming a group consisting of Lok sevaks (servants of people) known as the Sarvodaya samaj (Sarvodaya society). It was further strengthened by the founding of the Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangha (All India Association for the service of All) in 1949 to carry forward the Sarvodaya plan. Sevagram became a model for constructive work or a rural nerve centre for directing the nationalist campaign. Sevagram thus, was a post-Gandhian Laboratory of village constructive work. His followers took

initiative in chalking out a concrete programme of basic social revolution to bring about a new social order.

Gandhi's Sarvodaya legacy was undertaken by Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Jayprakash Narayan known as J. P. since 1951 to popularize Sarvodaya through Bhoodan and Gramdan movements. Bhave's Bhoodan-Gramdan (Land-gift, village gift) movement brought a new dimension to the earlier Gandhian constructive programme and brought the concept of Sarvodaya into focus. Through this work, Vinoba advocated the politics of lok-shakti. But no one looked upon him as a politician except as a 'spiritual leader/revolutionary'.

J. P., on the other hand, was often called as the intellectual exponent of the politics of Sarvodaya while Vinoba stood for mild experiment, J. P. believed in 'Sampurna Kranti' i.e. 'total revolution'. J. P.'s total revolution is a further extension of Gandhi's thought on socio-economic problems and technique of change in the context of the modern social reality. While Vinoba epitomized gram swarajya, a new polity, economy and society that would bring about rural communitarian society characterized by harmonious relationship between the individual and the group and participatory democracy, J. P., on the contrary, appealed to the youth to revolt against the existing system. Though he failed in this mission, but the mass movement he generated brought about a massive positive change in the systemic structure.

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## 4.10 Conclusion

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In the context of Gandhi's worldview, Sarvodaya has a special place. The Sarvodaya society envisioned and inaugurated by Gandhi is an ideal, a vision: scholars like Thomas Vettickal has termed it as a 'realistic utopia', meaning a process that is being realized in society. Sarvodaya is an 'undying hope' for building up a better human being, a better society and a better world. It is also a universal welfare worldwide. Gandhi's vision of Sarvodaya was the outcome of his fundamental premises about human perfectibility and the mature fruits of his repeated experiments with political action and social reforms. So, Gandhi's Sarvodaya is the dream of a just society based on ahimsa (non-violence), with Satya (truth) as the goal that enabled him to develop the doctrine of Sarvodaya or non-violent socialism.

Vettickal further mentioned that Gandhi's vision of the future – a model and ideal he proposed through his Sarvodaya longing for a new society, was very imaginative. Nonetheless, it was not a pure fantasy because, like a scientist, he experimented with the visions he proposed. Even more, such experiments are being carried out to this

day and it is likely to go for years though with adaptations to changing contexts of the Indian and of the global scenario. Vettickal also maintains that Gandhian Sarvodaya has the potential to be a utopian ideal and the factor that makes it a realistic utopia in the presence of provisionality, open-endedness and untiring hope in the future and creativity. In Gandhi's Sarvodaya, there is 'creative expectation', a hope which sets about criticizing and transforming the present because it opens towards the universal future of the kingdom of God or the 'Garden of Eden'. The Sarvodaya ideal of Gandhi stems from an undying hope in the better future of India: utopian economy that is people-centered promoting appropriate technology; social and communal life that is village-based, theology and spiritually that is indigenous and a sustainable eco-system—that is in harmony with nature. Gandhi initiated a process that can be realized and open to immense possibilities. Gandhi's utopia is exemplary of Richard G. Fax's notion of 'culture in the making', (Fax's book, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments With Culture*) because this utopia, more than fifty years after Gandhi is still in the making and continues to be invoked in experiments with culture and politics conducted in post-independence India. So, Gandhi's utopian vision is larger than life.

Gandhi's utopia portrays a cultural renaissance in Indian society that is based on spiritual power, an economic order that is based on small scale societies living in village republics, a political system without state, a completely liberated society – an idealized depiction of the imagined society of the future. The Indian independence struggle led by Gandhi was solidly based on Sarvodaya where total liberation of people from all that make it a vision in the process of being realized; whereas independence from colonial domination or political freedom achieved by India may be seen as a realized vision: ideology. Gandhi may have been 'prisoner of hope', but his Ramrajya, the goal of Sarvodaya, is full of hope, hope for better future. Gandhi correlated his 'dream' with his 'experiments with truth'. So, Gandhi's utopia is an experiment or his very 'life-philosophy' of experiments with truth. Gandhi's vision of Sarvodaya is thus, directed with the hope of attaining the cherished goal. Sarvodaya is a significant and revolutionary contribution of Gandhi as a socio-economic and political thought in India.

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## 4.11 Summing Up

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- (i) Sarvodaya has a special place in the context of Gandhi's world view.
- (ii) Gandhi's vision of Sarvodaya was the outcome of his fundamental premises about human perfectibility and the mature fruits of his repeated experiments with political action and reforms.

- (iii) In Gandhi's Sarvodaya, there is a creative expectation of a hope which sets about criticizing and transforming the present.
- (iv) The Sarvodaya ideal of Gandhi stems from an undying hope in the better future of India.

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## 4.12 Glossary

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1. Sarvodaya — Upliftment of the poorest or welfare of all.
2. Satya — Truth
3. Ahimsa — Non-violence
4. ntyodaya — The poorest in the society
5. waraj — Freedom
6. Anasakti — Non-attachment
7. Ramrajya — The kingdom of God
8. Sarvodayam — Wellbeing of all
9. Chakra — The spinning wheel
10. Khadi — Cotton made cloth
11. Swadeshi — Homemade
12. Brahmacharya — Purification/continence
13. Karmayogi — Devotion to work
14. Samyabad — The theory of communism
15. Satyagraha — Non-violent resistance
16. Nai-talim — Basic education
17. Swabhashaprem — Love of one's language
18. Loksevak — Servant of people
19. Bhoodan — Land gift
20. Gramdan — Village gift
21. Aparigraha — Non-possession

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## 4.13 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions

1. Describe the concept of Sarvodaya and bring out its political, socio-economic and spiritual dimensions.
2. What are the sources of Gandhi's Sarvodaya?
3. What are the essential components of Gandhian Sarvodaya?
4. Analyse the politico-social implications of Sarvodaya.
5. Explain Gandhi's village re-construction programme as part of Sarvodaya.
6. Analyse the contemporary relevance of Sarvodaya—Is it a realistic or an Utopia?

### Short Questions

1. Write a short note on Gandhi's economic order of Sarvodaya.
2. Discuss how Ruskin's 'Unto This Last' influence Gandhi on the concept of Sarvodaya?
3. Analyse the concept of Gandhi's Ramrajya?

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. What does the word 'bhoodan' imply?  
(a) Total Revolution (b) People centred Economy  
(c) Land Gift (d) Liberation

Ans. : (c)

2. Which ideal, according to Gandhi, is related to socialism?  
(a) Satya (b) Ahimsa (c) Swaraj (d) Sarvodaya

Ans. : (d)

3. Who used the expression 'Sarvodayam'?  
(a) Buddha (d) Gandhi (c) Acharya Samantabhadra (d) Mahavira

Ans. : (c)

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## 4.14 Further Reading

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## **Unit-5 □ Truth**

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### **Structure**

- 5.0 Objective**
- 5.1 Introduction**
- 5.2 The Meaning of Truth**
- 5.3 Gandhi's Truth and God**
- 5.4 Distinction between Absolute Truth and Relative Truth**
- 5.5 Development of the Concept of Truth**
- 5.6 Gandhi's Truth as Self-realization**
- 5.7 Self-liberation/Moksha**
- 5.8 Realization and attainment of Truth through Ahimsa and Satyagraha**
- 5.9 Conclusion**
- 5.10 Summing Up**
- 5.11 Glossary**
- 5.12 Probable Questions**
- 5.13 Suggested Reading**

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### **5.0 Objective**

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This Unit would acquaint the Learner with :

- 1 The conceptualization of truth and its basic principles that guided Gandhi's life.
- 1 The meaning of truth and its multi-dimensional aspects in seeking the concept of 'Truth is God'.
- 1 Gandhi's affirmation of Truth as the sovereign principle for the realization of God.

- 1 The elucidation of Gandhi's distinction of truth from two stand points – between the Absolute and Relative Truths, implying the relative truth as reality.
- 1 Understanding of the different sources of influences on Gandhi in the development of the doctrine of truth.
- 1 The way to the realization of self through faith in truth and service to humanity.
- 1 The identification of truth as self-liberation by way of the spirit of universal love and service.
- 1 The inseparability of Truth and Ahimsa constituting the kernel and method of attaining Gandhi's philosophy of truth.

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## 5.1 Introduction

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The contribution of Gandhi as a freedom fighter against the British Colonial rule is enormous as well as unique, for he invented a novel way to deal with the colonial rule and achieve independence for the nation.

The enormity and uniqueness is not only for his contribution as a freedom fighter, but also for conceptualizing in incomparable way to deal with injustice and oppression. He was an exponent of non-violence and provided a unique philosophy based on truth and non-violence as a guide to lead one's life.

According to Gandhi, Truth and Ahimsa are organically linked and are fundamental in his philosophy of life. Gandhi understood Truth as God rather than God as Truth, while Ahimsa as utterly selflessness. Ahimsa implies an active and positive sense of love, rather than the passive concept of non-violence. Non-violence is an important aspect of Ahimsa, though it is much more than just non-violence. Gandhi stated that Ahimsa means 'The largest love, the greatest charity'. In fact, according to Gandhi, Truth and non-violence are two sides of the same coin as Ahimsa connects a person to other humans as well as to God.

The two basic principles or ideals that guided Gandhi's life were truth and non-violence. For him truth was God and realizing this truth as God was the ultimate purpose of life. He expounded the proposition that truth could be realized only through non-violence: "Truth is the end and non-violence the means". So, truth to Gandhi was synonymous with God.

Gandhi used truth in various perspectives. So, it has the far-reaching implications in Gandhi's philosophy and practical life. He named in autobiography as "The story of my Experiments with Truth", containing in it some of his key concepts like non-violence, Satyagraha, God, morality etc. which are intimately connected with its notion of truth. The concept of truth however, is the mainspring of all his actions – religions, moral, social and political. His devotion to truth is so intense that he even titled his autobiography as 'My Experiments with Truth'. He considers all his achievements and failings as different steps in his progress towards this supreme goal – Truth realization. Devotion to truth at any cost is his maxim. In fact, it is his philosophy of life.

Gandhi stated the essential feature of the concept of truth thus, "Truth is not merely the truth we are expected to speak. It is that which alone constitutes the stuff by virtue of its own power, which is not supported by anything but supports everything that exists. Truth alone is eternal, while everything else is momentary. It need not assume any shape or form. It is pure intelligence as well as pure bliss". From this statement it is obvious that among all the moral ideals he takes truth as sovereign. He wrote, "For me truth is the sovereign principle which includes numerous other principles. This, truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the absolute truth, the eternal principle, that is God". Therefore, truth for him is an ontological reality, the primary principle of the world. Truth necessitates that we have to rule our life by the law of truth at any cost. That is, a man must be truthful in life. So, the practice of truth was not a policy with Gandhi but the principle guiding his life and thought.

Gandhi sometimes identified truth with inner voice. He also believed in the efficacy of conscience. Inner voice and conscience can be taken as synonymous. Gandhi has written, 'what is Truth? A difficult question, but I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the voice within tells you'.

Gandhi believed that without the practice of non-violence, truth can never be realized. According to Gandhi, "Ahimsa is nothing but love and love is that energy which cleans your inner life and uplifts you. Such love perpetuates noble feelings like benevolence, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, generosity, kindness, sympathy etc." So, in Gandhi's philosophy of Ahimsa, non-violence is the cementing bond of the universe and has its origin in Good or Truth.

Gandhi's truth realization rests with the Satyagraha which is essentially based on love. He described Satyagraha as a force against violence, tyranny and injustice. All

these evils arise on account of a neglect of the truth. Therefore, Gandhi says that if we start resisting evil with evil, violence with violence, anger with anger, then we are only adding fuel to fire. The most effective force against these evils can be the one which would force them to evaporate and that can be done only by Satyagraha. A Satyagrahi alone can face the might of an army or even an empire. Because, Satyagraha is soul-force born out of truth. Truth is the end and Satyagraha is the means.

It now transpires that truth; non-violence and Satyagraha are considered as allied concepts that have had an intense impact on Gandhi. To Gandhi, passion for truth was the dominating urge in his life and it gave him immense power over the minds and hearts. It was this passion that led to his insistence on purity of means and his freedom from attachment to predetermined ends. Gandhi was a worshipper of truth; his life was nothing but an experiment with truth.

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## 5.2 Meaning of Truth

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The concept of Truth is the pivot of Gandhi's thought. It is his philosophy of life. Truth is the cornerstone of the edifice of Gandhi's religious, moral, social; and political thinking. Every page of his Autobiography, through its 'calm simple language' testifies to the love of truthfulness ingrained in him ever since his boyhood to his entire course of life, remaining firm in his resolve to adhere to truth. Among all the moral ideals, Gandhi takes truth as sovereign. Gandhi wrote, "For me truth is the sovereign principle which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the absolute truth, the eternal principle, that is God".

To Gandhi, truth is clean and self-evident; it is the means, instrument and the ultimate goal, all encompassed in one. His understanding of the concept does not continue to a mere uttering of truth; it is but reality, which has to be experienced. And in reality, nothing exists except truth. It takes several forms and situations to understand the concept of truth. Gandhi understood by truth several different things. Sometimes, he speaks of truth as truthfulness or the attempt to achieve truth and in this case, his 'truth subsists by virtue of its own power not supported by anything but supports everything that exists. Truth alone is eternal, while everything else is momentary. It need not assume any shape or form. It is pure intelligence as well as pure bliss'.

Gandhi throughout his life remained a seeker of truth. He had a strong conviction that "morality is the basis of things, and that truth is the substance of all morality.

Truth is called as the sovereign principle for executing morality.” In this connection, his own words bear out the proposition that “I am but a seeker of Truth. I claim to have found a way to it. I claim to be making ceaseless effort to find it. But I admit that I have not yet found it. To find Truth completely is to realize oneself and one’s destiny i.e. to become perfect”.

Gandhi called that “Truth is Satya. Satya is derived from sat, which means being or that which exists. It is the truth that exists or pervades all. This is akin to the omnipresence of God. Truth, therefore, is the essence of what we call God or truth is perhaps the most important name of God. Where there is truth, there is also knowledge which is true. Where there is no truth, there is no knowledge. The word ‘chit’ or knowledge is also associated with God. Where there is true knowledge, there is always bliss (Ananda). Even as truth is eternal, so is the bliss derived from it. Hence, we know God as ‘Sat – Chit – Ananda’; one combines in Himself- Truth, knowledge and bliss”.

Gandhi’s perception of God through truth reveals a unique thing. If we are in search of God or its description, it is formless but omnipresent. The best way to realize Him is truth. God has many names and manifestations, yet he is nameless and formless. The best way is to realize Him through truth. In this way, Gandhi clarified his statement ‘God is Truth and Truth is God’. Gandhi used the words ‘Truth’ and ‘God’ as synonyms. He prescribed a strict preliminary discipline in the spiritual realm and listening to one’s inner voice to realize God. Such inner voice is love i.e. non-violence. Nearly fifty years ago, I found that the earnest approach to truth was through love, in the sense of Ahimsa. This, as Gandhi felt, would be ultimate way to realize God through truth. Gandhi further classified that while a non-atheist believes in the all-pervading form of God, an atheist by living truthfully accepts everything as one and universal without having an active faith in God. To an atheist ‘Truth is God’. Truth is held in esteem by all human beings.

Thus, to Gandhi, ‘Truth is God’, ‘the word Truth is not substituted for God’, but serves to elucidate what God means for Gandhi. Gandhi’s truth was a unique combination of a personal style of life and a technique for tackling injustices, truth that is, no doubt in a sense other than as philosophers commonly understand it. In Upanishadic terms, “Brahma is truth eternal, intelligence immeasurable. Untruth is to be conquered with truth, as light overcomes darkness”. Gandhi was influenced by these sayings is evident enough to show his reverence towards truth. One of the rules or vows of his Ashrams was a strict adherence to truth by their inmates. His constant reminder to them, wherever he went, was that ‘truth is a synonym for final beatitude’. Though at first Gandhi used to say God is truth, but later on he converted it as Truth is God.

Gandhi's Truth is the search for universal Absolute. Such definition of God has in it a belief about spiritual unity that Divine permeates everything in the universe. Gandhi's names and forms may vary, but same divinity resides in all. The oneness towards all creeds in all lands comes natural to Gandhi. His spiritual quest for the universal Absolute in this sense comes close to the vedantic notion of Brahman (Absolute) which points that everything in the universe originates from Brahman, exists in Brahman and unfolds through it and ultimately dissolves in Brahman.

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### **5.3 Gandhi's Truth and God**

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Gandhi's God conception unfolds the fact that there is mysterious, unseen and supreme power in the universe, this Supreme Power is God. According to Gandhi, God is a changeless, living power amidst multiplicity. Gandhi had made it clear that "I dimly perceive that while everything around me is ever changing, ever dying there is underlying all that change a living power that holds together, that create, dissolves and recreates. That informing Power and Spirit is God. And since nothing else I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is". He also elucidated that "To me God is Truth and love. God is ethics and morality. God is fearlessness. God is the source of light and life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience.....He is embodied to those who need His touch. He is the purest essence. He solves all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us....." Thus, we see that God, for Gandhi is a living power. He manifests Himself as Truth, Love, Life and pure knowledge. He resides 'in man as the conscience giving him the free will to choose between good and evil, eternal and non-eternal.'

God is one without a second. To quote his words, "God is certainly one. He has no second. He is fathomless, unknowable and unknown to the vast majority of mankind. He is everywhere.... He is nearest to us: if we could but know the fact. But He is farthest from us when we do not want to realize His omnipresence". The above account brings out the fact that the word 'Chit' (knowledge) is associated with the name of God. This is why Gandhi referred to truth as God meaning 'Sat – Chit – ananda', one who combines in Himself, Truth, knowledge and Bliss, Following the Upanisadic text, Gandhi called truth as 'Sacchidananda'.

God or Truth is a positive certainty existing beyond sense and reason. Gandhi observed, "Reason is a poor thing in the midst of temptation.... It follows the instinct". Here, Gandhi's conviction is that true faith in the existence of God alone can lead us to God realization. By true faith Gandhi meant "as the appropriation of the reasoned experience of people whom we believed to have lived, a life of prayer

and penance”. He added, True faith is nothing but a living wide-awake consciousness of God within”. It unveils to us that faith transcends reason. Faith does not contradict reason but transcends it. The existence of God is not a thing to be demonstrated but a matter to be experienced as a child cannot demonstrate his mother’s love but he feels mother’s love. Likewise, existence of God cannot be proven by reason, for God defies reason. It is only the faith that satisfies the inner most spiritual urge transcending reason.

The significant feature of Gandhi’s concept of truth is that truth or God for him is an inner reality. For him, Truth is “what the voice within tells you”. By ‘voice within’ Gandhi indicated the voice of the disciplined conscience. He called it different names such as “the still, small, voice within, inner voice and a little voice within”.

Another notable feature of his concept of truth is that it can be realized only through Ahimsa. Gandhi declared that “Truth is my God; Non-violence is the means of realizing Him”. For him truth or God is an unseen power residing within us which is to be awakened by constant struggle”. According to him, Ahimsa is the necessary means to attain Truth. In this connection, Gandhi in answering to truth in Sanskrit ‘Sat’ meant ‘being’. ‘God alone is ‘sat’. Everything else is illusion’. Whatever we understand by God is implied in truth. It alone sustains us. Thus for him, the all-sustaining principle is Truth and truth is God.

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## **5.4 Distinction between Absolute Truth and Relative Truth**

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Gandhi’s concept of truth is to be viewed from two standpoints – the absolute and the relative. Gandhi distinguished between Absolute and Relative truths. Truth as such is a supreme principle. It includes the Absolute and Relative dimensions. As Gandhi said, “Truth is not only Relative Truth of our conception but the Absolute Truth, the eternal principle that is God”. Thus, the Absolute truth is God and the Relative Truth is something what we perceive as truth. Absolute truth is eternal and infinite that “shines with its own light and is its own proof”. Man can find it through his ‘inner voice’ and ‘conscience’. Relative truth, on the other hand, is not the truth but one’s truth, as perceived by the individual. As Gandhi said, ‘truth is not so simple as it appears to you. We must therefore be content with believing the truth as it appears to us’. Gandhi further explained it thus

*‘I write the truth as I personally see it. Absolute truth alone is God. It is beyond reach. The truth that we see is relative, many-sided, and plural and is the whole truth for a given time. Pure and Absolute truth should be our ideal..... and reaching it is attaining moksha’’. Gandhi’s life was one constant pursuit of truth and*

*through it, of God. Taking reference from the Upanishad that describes God as Truth, knowledge and infinite, Gandhi explained it "Truth is God and therefore is nothing but an ultimate reality".*

Relative truth enables man to reach his goal. Through this he can realize God. Gandhi expressed that he experienced Absolute truth, in a fleeting glimpse. Till man realizes the Absolute truth, he should hold on to the relative truth as he perceives it. "But as long as I have not realized this Absolute truth, so long must I hold by relative truth as I have conceived it. That relative truth must, meanwhile, be my beacon, my shield and my buckler". Gandhi believed that we ourselves are relative truth: "We are all sparks of truth. The sum-total of these sparks is indescribable, as-yet unknown-truth, which is God". By clinging to the Relative truth man can reach Absolute truth.

Regarding the relative truth, Gandhi's view was that "we shall always see truth in fragments and from different angles of vision". Undue insistence on truth as he explains, one's truth may lead to self-deception, fanaticism and fundamentalism of different shades and forms with disastrous consequences. The Jain doctrine of 'Syadvada' may be taken as an example of Gandhi's conception of relative truth as he perceived it. 'Syadvada' is the doctrine of 'may be'; according to this doctrine, reality can be looked from other's views which is not only different but also exhaustive. Gandhi, who was thoroughly taken in by this doctrine, insisted 'on not forcing one's view of truth as the right one on another. The truth as it appears to you may be truth for you but not for others'. This subjective perception often runs into trap of confusion and as an answer to this, Gandhi prescribes the cultivation of pure conscience to reflect on the concept of truth in a more logical and meaningful manner. "Each man has to order his life in the light of the inner light which shines within. Hence, "relative truth is not valueless. It is the only truth that man has so long as he is bound to the phenomenal world. Gandhi does not consider the world as a mere illusion nor does he recommend flight from the world as the means to attain moksha, but rather responsible involvement and participation in the worldly affairs as the sure path to moral progress". Gandhi leaves the wisdom of judgment in the hands of an individual who, he feels, is capable of perceiving what is right and wrong, according to one's own norms of objectivity.

So, relative truth is the partial expressions of the absolute truth in the different arenas of life. Thus, at the religious level, the Absolute truth is expressed as 'Iswara' (personal God) and at the ethical level, it is expressed as Ahimsa (Truthfulness in thought, word and deed) or Dharma. In the social level, it is expressed as 'Sarvodaya' (welfare of all) and in the political level, it is expressed as 'Swaraj' (self-rule). Thus, we find that in his scheme of thought, concepts like 'Iswara', 'Ahimsa', 'Sarvodaya'



and 'Swaraj' are relative truths which are corollaries of the Absolute Truth. This is an expression of a significant stand point.

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## **5.5 Development of the Concept of Truth**

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In addition to the Bhagavad Gita, Gandhi mentioned a long list of books and mentors in his Autobiography starting with Leo Tolstoy by his book, "The kingdom of God is Within You" ; and John Ruskin's 'Unto This Last' and Edwin Arnold's 'Light of Asia' that had deep influence on him in developing an alternative vision of a society grounded in Ahimsa, truth and Sarvodaya. The spiritual quest of Gandhi was made by Tolstoy creating an abiding impression in gaining the great value, God. Apart from these mentors, the Upanishads also influenced Gandhi to describe God – Brahman – as Truth, knowledge and infinite. The cardinal virtue of Gandhi's philosophy i.e. Truth that had been practised by him for his entire life, was also based on the principle of Christianity. The intimate connection with truth would not have been a reality without a legitimate understanding of Christianity. Etymologically, Islam means peace and it is the religion of peace and brotherhood moved young Gandhi in seeking truth and non-violence as a higher value.

In addition to those influences, Gandhi from childhood got an appropriate milieu to become a man of truth. Everyone in his family contributed in shaping the tender mind of Gandhi. Truth, non-violence celibacy and tolerance, grasped by Gandhi from the Indian tradition were reinforced through a study of invaluable books like 'Song Celestial' and 'Light of Asia'. South Africa was the place which changed his life and under the influence of Ruskin, Tolstoy and Thoreau, performed his first Satyagraha there. Thus, from a variety of sources and experiences Gandhi was inspired to develop and practice the doctrine of truth – to him it was Brahmacharya. It meant to him 'an utter selflessness and Universal love'—life wedded to truth in thought, word and action.

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## **5.6 Gandhi's Truth as Self-realization**

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### **Gandhi's Truth and God:**

To Gandhi, a complete surrender to God was the ultimate self-realization and way to Moksha. The means of attaining it is a two step process. The first step is the realization of self and seconds the ultimate liberation (Moksha).

**Self-realization:**

The way to the realization of self is manifold like morality, humility and living faith. Self-knowledge is the key to the highest form of wisdom and the possible way to attaining this self-knowledge is to maintain a strict disciplined life of truth and non-violence. The truthful and non-violent life requires abstention from the pursuit of human desires, physical desires and comforts along with relentless efforts towards knowing oneself, one's purpose of life and one's service to mankind. The knowledge so derived makes one realize the significance of truth albeit to the realization of God. The seeker of the truth should be humble devoid of anger, arrogance and other vices. It is the humility that plays important role in providing the seeker an insight into truth. Collaterally, a living faith in God necessitates faith as without faith it is difficult to sustain the longing for God. To reach the spiritual heights, one needs to keep the immanent faith in God. Gandhi believed that God becomes visible 'not as person but in action which can only account for your deliverance in your darkest hour'. Gandhi accorded faith a primary place in his scheme because "Faith helps us to cultivate inner knowledge, self-knowledge, and thus leads to inner purity". It is this faith that steers us through stormy seas, moves mountains and jumps across the ocean. Faith, to Gandhi, is a 'living, wide-awake consciousness of God within'. Gandhi's perception is that all activities of man should be guided towards the realization of the Self or God. In this endeavour, service to mankind becomes imperative part which in turn, is an ultimate service towards truth and God.

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**5.7 Self-liberation/Moksha**

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Doing immeasurable service to humanity is the way to realize Him. This service to humanity with selflessness is to ensure or attain moksha/liberation. In Young India, Gandhi wrote that "I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth; I am striving for the kingdom of Heaven which is Moksha. To attain my end it is not necessary for me to seek the shelter of a cave. For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and there through humanity". To this end Gandhi relied on non-violence and truth endlessly to attain Moksha. They alone Gandhi believed can ensure a compassionate life on this earth and moksha. It is also necessary to shed the violent instinct to attain salvation: "I believe myself to be saturated with Ahimsa (non-violence). Ahimsa and truth are my two lungs. I cannot live without them. But I see every moment, the immense power of Ahimsa and the littleness of man ..... all the pleasure except the joy of Moksha, is imperfect". Self-purification, faith in God, self-realization and Ahimsa are the pre-conditions for realizing truth and

ultimately God. Gandhi gave precedence to truth and ultimately God. Gandhi gave precedence to truth over Moksha. As he said, "I cannot consider anything dearer to me than Moksha. Yet even that moksha I would renounce if it were to conflict with truth and non-violence."

What has emerged out of the above analysis it is clear to us that Gandhi's thought was in harmony with the classical Indian traditions, especially, the 'advaita' or monistic tradition. Gandhi gave it a new twist and argued that since the cosmic spirit (God) was manifested in all living human beings, identification with it consisted in identifying oneself with them in a spirit of universal love and service. Gandhi was not only an 'Advaitist' but also supported 'dvaitism' (dualism). Gandhi felt that change pervades all life, making this world an unreal place that has no permanent existence. At the same time, in spite all changes, something persists which he terms as 'real'. Consequently, Gandhi was labeling himself as 'Anekantavadi' or 'Syadvadi'. Owing to this stance, Gandhi was content to be objective in his approach and be tolerant of others' criticism of his views. In this context, he quoted the example of seven blind men who gave different descriptions of the elephant from their own view point. Gandhi attributed his 'anekantavadi' to the doctrines of 'Satyagraha' and 'ahimsa'.

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## **5.8 Realization and attainment of Truth through Ahimsa and Satyagraha**

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Truth and Ahimsa are inseparable in Gandhi's thought. In Gandhi's philosophy, truth and non-violence (Ahimsa) constitute the kernel concepts. Gandhi advocates that truth is God and non-violence is only means of attaining it. Gandhi stated, "They are two sides of the same coin or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say which the obverse is and which is the reverse? Nevertheless, Ahimsa is the means, Truth is the end. Means to be means must be always within our reach and so Ahimsa is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later". Sometimes, Gandhi used to say that "Ahimsa is my God; Truth is my God, when I look for Ahimsa, Truth says "Find it through me. When I look for Truth, Ahimsa says "find it through me".

In such a confusing situation, the solution lies in Gandhi's own statement regarding this confusion. Gandhi said, "Truth is self-evident. No-violence is its

maturess fruit. It is contained in Truth but as it is not self-evident a man may seek to interpret the Shastras without accepting it. But his acceptance of truth is sure to lead one to the acceptance of non-violence.....Ahimsa is the soul of Truth. Man is mere animal without it. A seeker after Truth will realize all this in his search for truth". To Gandhi, "Ahimsa is the only means that reveals Truth which is God".

Ahimsa as the inevitable means to attain truth stands for positive love to be expressed only in the form of self-less service. The practical application of Ahimsa is self-less service. It is the outward expression of the feeling of oneness, harbouring non-hatred but love for his opponents. It is the realization of identity of one's self with the selves of others. Gandhi made it clear in his own words. "True love consists in transferring itself from the body to the dweller within and then necessarily realizing his oneness of all life inhabiting numberless bodies". Thus, for Gandhi, Ahimsa implies positive love towards all living creatures which finds its expression in the self-less dedicated service to them. It is in this sense that Gandhi interprets Ahimsa as the search for truth and the search for truth as the "Summum Bonum" of his life.

Since Gandhi's Ahimsa is the means of attaining the end of truth, the technique of its attaining it practically depends on Satyagrahi who would be imbued with the desire of doing public duty. According to Gandhi, Truth is God and Satyagraha is 'agraha' of holding fast to truth. It is a weapon of the morally vigilant and the active volunteers. It is a resistance of evil by its opposite, i.e. by good.

A Satyagrahi's life is to be based on love. Satyagraha demands selfless and sincere pursuit of Truth without having any consideration of any advantage or gain. Gandhi described it as a 'soul-force' against violence, tyranny and injustice. All these evils arise due to the negligence of the truth. Therefore, Gandhi said, "If we start resisting evil with evil, violence with violence, anger with anger, then we are only adding fuel to fire. The most effective force against these evils can be the weapon of Satyagraha." The aim of Satyagraha, according to Gandhi, is a 'change of heart'. In this endeavour, Gandhi insisted a high moral character of his co-workers. They must be civil, non-conspiring and under no circumstance counter violence with violence. If the cause being fought is just and truthful, the method of truth-force would bring in change of heart in his opponents. In Satyagraha, violence is completely forbidden even in the face of very adverse situation. Gandhi felt that 'a true Satyagrahi with honest, sincere, disciplined mind, fearless, simple with truth force can work as a miracle facing the might of an army or even of an empire.

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## 5.9 Conclusion

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In conclusion, it can be said that Gandhi's quest for truth absorbed new ideas and discarded those he felt were outdated or irrelevant. The main purpose of Gandhi's progressive thinking was to grasp the true form of truth and God through his relentless quest. He had eternal faith on his path of truth and non-violence. The treading of the right path made him the greatest votary of truth and non-violence in the history of mankind. To him, truth was God and vice versa. Through this truth, Gandhi endeavoured to realize himself, God and unity with all beings on the earth.

On closer analysis, it can be seen that the conversion of the statement from 'God is Truth' to 'Truth is God' clearly establishes Gandhi's philosophical position as spiritual monism. The absolute and relative concept of truth delineates his views about reality integrating in it the personal and the impersonal. Reality to Gandhi was a unitary whole – Truth. There is no doubt that this transcendence in thought is the outcome of his deep study and assimilation of the Upanisadic teachings, Vedanta.

Any reading of Gandhi would be incomplete without a mention of the twin principles—Satya and Ahimsa (Truth and non-violence), especially the non-violence and Satyagraha as the method of realizing the philosophy of truth.

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## 5.10 Summing Up

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- (i) According to Gandhi, Truth and Ahimsa are organically linked and are fundamental in his philosophy of life.
- (ii) Gandhi expounded the proposition that truth could be realized only through non-violence.
- (iii) Gandhi sometimes identified truth with inner voice. He also believed in the efficacy of conscience.
- (iv) Gandhi believed that without the practice of non-violence, truth can never be realized.
- (v) Gandhi's truth realization rests the Satyagraha which is essentially based on love.
- (vi) Gandhi called that "Truth is Satya, Satya is derived from sat, which means being or that which exists.

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## 5.11 Glossary

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1. Advaita — Hindu Philosophy of Non-dualism.
2. Advaitist — A believer in non-dualism
3. Ahimsa — Non-violence
4. Ananda — Joy
5. Anekantavada — Belief in many doctrines, skepticism
6. Brahma — Hindu name of God, creator.
7. Brahmachari — A calibrate, continence, life self-restraint.
8. Chit — Knowledge
9. Dharma — Religion
10. Ishwara — Hindu name of God/personal God.
11. Islam — Religion founded by Prophet Muhammad.
12. Moksha — Liberation, freedom from birth and death.
13. Sarvodaya — Welfare of all
14. Sat — Truth
15. Sat-chit-Ananda — Truth-knowledge-Bliss
16. Satya — Truth
17. Shastra — Hindu scripture
18. Syadvada — Philosophy of probability in matters of perception by the senses.
19. Sachidananda — Truth, consciousness and bliss.
20. Upanishad — Ancient philosophical treatises Which are believed by Hindus to contain revealed truth.

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## 5.12 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions

1. Examine the significance attached to truth by Gandhi.
2. What is Absolute Truth? How is it different from Relative Truth?
3. Discuss the process according to Gandhi how the self can be realized through truth?
4. Describe the importance of Truth in human life as envisaged by Gandhi.
5. Analyse the liberating spirit contained in truth.
6. Explain Gandhi's tool of exploring truth in life through Ahimsa.

### Short Questions

1. How did Gandhi view the relationship between truth and non-violence?
2. Why did Gandhi insist on the need to anchor Power and authority in the supreme values of Satya?
3. Write a short note on truth.

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. Which concept according to Gandhi denotes 'the largest love, the greatest charity'?  
(a) Ahimsa (b) Satya (c) Sorvodaya (d) Swaraj

Ans. : (a)

2. Which principle according to Gandhi can attain 'moksha'?  
(a) Syadvada (b) Absolute Truth (c) Relative Truth (d) None of these

Ans. : (b)

3. Who is the author of *Unto this Last*?  
(a) Leo Tolstoy (b) John Ruskin (c) M. K. Gandhi (d) Edwin Arnold

Ans. : (b)

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## 5.13 Suggested Reading

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1. M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or The Story of my Experiments with Truth*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1927 (1993 edition).

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11. Aparna Ramchiary, ‘Gandhian concept of Truth and Non-violence’ in IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, vol. 18, issue – 4 (Nov-Dec. 2013) available at [www.iosrjournals.org](http://www.iosrjournals.org).



**Module – III**  
**Modern Civilization**



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## **Unit-11 □ Critique of Modern Civilization**

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### **Structure**

- 11.1 Objective**
- 11.2 Introduction**
- 11.3 Gandhi and the British imperialism**
- 11.4 Gandhi and his critique of modern civilisation**
- 11.5 Gandhi's critique on economic and moral front**
- 11.6 Gandhi and medical science**
- 11.7 Gandhi and the state**
- 11.8 Criticisms**
- 11.9 Conclusion**
- 11.10 Summing Up**
- 11.12 Probable Questions**
- 11.13 Further Reading**

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### **11.1 Objective**

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The objective of this unit are :

- 1 To throw light on the impact of industrialization and capitalism in India as introduced by British rulers
- 1 How it brought changes in Indian society and more particularly in the mind set and life of the Indian people.
- 1 How and why Gandhi made a critique of modern civilization.

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### **11.2 Introduction**

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In 1908, while in South Africa, Gandhi published a small book in Gujrati, which was later translated into English under the title Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule in

India. It contained a severe condemnation of what was termed 'modern civilization.' So, he levelled a general charge against machinery that it was a symbol of the enslavement of human beings and the cause of human degradation.

His argument was:

*"Machinery has begun to desolate Europe. Ruination is now knocking at the English gates. Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization a great sin."*  
(chapter XIX)

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### **11.3 Gandhi and the British imperialism**

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Gandhi started with a question why is India a dependent nation? Gandhi said it is due to British military might, deceit and attitude or because of moral lapse on our part to unable to resist the temptation of the glitters of modern civilization. Gandhi said we were suffering from the inferior complex and thought them superior so we adopted their model of development as for our development. Now the question arises that we are doing away with sovereignty, why we are dependent on them because we did not go chose the path of indigenous development.

The British had come to India not by accident; nor in the adventurous spirit of a political buccaneer; but in search of new markets for their goods. 'Many problems can be solved by remembering that money is their God.', which is the inner compulsions of modern civilization; their rule was not merely political but also moral and cultural in nature; and India had to respond to it not only at the political but primarily at the moral and cultural levels.

For Gandhi moral transformation always preceded the economic, and it was man's conception of himself that ultimately underpinned and sustained the economic system. Once capitalism came into existence, it had on obvious vested interest in propagating the underlying view of man and perpetuating a materialist civilization. Gandhi was convinced that imperialism in one form or another was inherent in materialist civilization.

In Gandhi's view, the British had been able to consolidate their rule in India because of two reasons. First, the Indians had long been in the habit of fighting among themselves, and some of them turned to the newly arrived East India Company for financial and military help.

Second, it went deeper and centred on the ideological role of the concept of civilization. The British were able to consolidate their rule because the Indians had

‘developed *moha* for their civilization’ which means something inherently illusory.

The Indians, of course, had their own civilization and distinct views on what constituted a civilized man and society. These had to be discredited and their self-confidence undermined if British civilization was to strike roots. British historians argued that pre-British India was a disorderly and chaotic society that had never known peace and stability and they alone stood as a shield against chaos in India. Gandhi observed, ‘The English .... have a habit of writing history; they pretend to know the customs and practices of every society.....’. In these and other ways the Indians were ‘brainwashed’ into doubting the value of their ancestral civilization and brought to the verge of ‘civil suicide’. Once the moral conquest of the Indian mind was complete, the way was cleared for its economic and political exploitation.

For Gandhi British imperialism dominated India at three different levels. At the political level, the arrogant colonial government oppressed the Indian people and denied their right to run their affairs themselves.

At the economic level, it exploited and impoverished them, destroyed their indigenous industries and subordinated their interests to those of the British economy.

At the moral and cultural level, British imperialism destroyed the identity and integrity of Indian civilization and turned the Indians into brown Englishmen.

At the cultural level the anti-imperialist struggle had to be fought on two fronts simultaneously. First, British civilization, which so infatuated and blinded the Indians to the moral enormity of foreign rule and legitimized their economic and political domination must be subjected to a thorough-going critique. Second, the basic structure of Indian civilization, which they largely saw through the biased British perspective, must be sensitively teased out and defended.

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## **11.4 Gandhi and his Critique of Modern Civilisation**

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Gandhi integrated and went beyond the three different types of critique advanced by his predecessors. Broadly speaking Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Gokhale and the so-called liberals had welcomed the political and cultural advantages of British rule but attacked it on the grounds that it had drained India’s wealth, ruined its industries, imposed unfair trading arrangements and subordinated its economic development to British colonial interests. The leaders of the terrorist movements in Bengal and Maharashtra attacked it on political grounds and were the first to develop a distinctive theory of political as distinct from cultural nationalism. They argued that the Indians had as much right to run their affairs as the British had to run theirs, that

colonialism was a form of slavery and an outrage to Indian dignity and self-respect, and that the 'honour' of 'mother India' demanded that she should be freed of the 'foreign yoke'. In a culture which conceptualizes energy in feminine terms and associates activity and restlessness with woman and passivity and detachment with man, it was not at all surprising that the votaries of violence should have idealized 'mother' India and drawn inspiration from the Goddess *Kali*. Finally Vivekananda, B. C. Pal, Tilak and the so-called conservative leaders concentrated on the need to preserve the integrity of traditional way of life and thought. They introduced the concept of Indian civilization.

Gandhi's critique of British rule encompassed all three. He was acutely aware of its economic motivation and highlighted the grave economic damage it had done and was doing to the country. Indeed he argued that most of them were more interested in the 'synthesis' of the two civilizations than in the integrity of their own. Gandhi's critique not only included but also related and integrated the three earlier critiques into a comprehensive theoretical framework. He argued that political independence was important not only as an expression of India's pride and a necessary means to stop its economic exploitation but also to preserve its civilization, without which political independence remained fragile.

Gandhi was able to provide a coherent theoretical platform on which Indians of different ideological persuasions could unite. His critique of modern civilization was far more complex than is generally imagined and quite different from that of such other writers as Rousseau, Carlyle, Ruskin, Tolstoy and Thoreau, but by the last three of whom he was deeply influenced. In his view modern civilization was grounded in a fatally flawed theory of man. Unlike ancient civilization which was soul-or spirit-centred, the modern was body-centred and in that sense 'materialistic'. Such civilization was suffered from several basic and interrelated limitations.

First, it lacked moral and spiritual depth.

Second, since it had no guiding principles to decide what desires deserved to be satisfied and within what limits, it led to a way of life devoid of meaning and purpose.

Third, it de-humanised man and had a profound anti-human bias.

Fourth, it perverted the human psyche and was suffused with the spirit of violence.

Finally, it reduced wisdom to knowledge and the latter to a form of power only useful as an instrument of control over nature and other men.

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## 11.5 Gandhi's critique on Economic and Moral front

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Gandhi ideas regarding economic problems seems to have taken more concrete and realistic shape during the Non-cooperation Movement of 1919-1920. He became more specific with regard to his ideals of production and distribution. He began to say:

*“Multiplication of mills cannot solve the problem. They can only cause concentration of money and labour and thus make confusion worse confounded”* (Y. I., 10.12.19).

*“We want to organize our national power not by adopting the best methods of production only but by the best methods of both the production and the distribution”* (Y.I., 28.7.20).

His utterance on Khadi also lay stress upon the distribution on an equal or equitable basis. Mills and machinery were bad because they tended to the concentration of wealth in the hands of few. He came to recognize that:

*“Machinery has its place: it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace hand-labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their home.”* (Y. I., 5.11.25)

**On 7.10.26, he wrote:**

*“The present distress is undoubtedly insufferable. Pauperism must go. But industrialism is no remedy. The evil does not lie in the use of bullock-carts. It lies in our selfishness and want of consideration for our neighbours. If we have no love for our neighbours, no change, however revolutionary, can do us any good.”*

For Gandhi, modern civilization was propelled by the two interrelated principles of greed and want. It was controlled by ‘a few capitalist owners’ who had only one aim, to make profit, and only one means to do so, to produce goods that satisfied people’s wants. Indeed, since self-discipline or restriction of desires, the very emblem of human dignity, threatened to cause mass unemployment, throw the economic system out of gear and cause human suffering, it was seen as anti-social and immoral.

For Gandhi, machines relieved drudgery, created leisure, increased efficiency and were indispensable when there was a shortage of labour. Machines were introduced even when there was no obvious need for them and were in fact likely to throw thousands out of work. Based on the belief that life was continuous motion and

movement, the faster the tempo of life the more alive one was, modern civilization was inherently restless and intolerant of stability. It aimed to conquer time and space and developed increasingly speedier modes of transport and communication. Cars were replaced by trains, and the latter by planes, but no one asked why one needed to travel so fast and what one intended to do with the time saved. Everyone was a stranger to everyone else and no one cared for or knew how to behave towards others. As a result people's moral life suffered a profound distortion.

First, it became as abstract as the men it was supposed to relate, and was reduced to a set of self-consciously followed and externally legislated and enforced impersonal rules.

Second, rather than an expression and fulfilment of man's nature, morality was seen as necessary but painful and widely resented restriction of freedom.

Third, a society of basically amoral and internally unrelated beings was characterized by a climate of suspicion, fear, hostility and tension.

Fourth, since in the absence of the nourishing soil of the sentiments of good will and mutual concern the moral life lacked roots and vitality, it had to depend on the non-moral motive of fear.

Finally, modern civilization denuded morality of its vital internal dimension or what he called the quality of the soul. Jealousy, hatred, meanness, ill-will, perverse pleasure of another's misfortunes and sordid thoughts and fantasies were moral impurities reflecting an ill-developed soul.

In Gandhi's view the exploitation of one's fellow men was built into the very structure of modern civilization. Consumers were constantly manipulated, workers were made to do boring jobs at subsistence wages under inhuman conditions and given little opportunity or encouragement to develop their intellectual and moral potential. The poor were ill-treated and held responsible for their own misfortunes and were treated like animals and sold and brutally exploited. The weaker nations were conquered, mercilessly oppressed and used as dumping grounds for surplus goods and as sources of cheap raw material.

It was therefore, hardly surprising that modern civilization rested on and was sustained by massive violence. It involved violence against oneself. It also involved violence against other men at both the personal and collective levels. Modern civilization also involved an egregious amount of violence against nature, which was largely seen as man's property to do with it what he liked. Its resources were ruthlessly exploited and the animals were freely killed or tortured for food, sport, fancy clothes and medical experiments.



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## 11.6 Gandhi and Medical Science

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For Gandhi a civilization properly so-called placed man at its centre and measured its greatness in terms of its ability to produce men and women possessing such distinctively human powers as self-determination, autonomy, self-knowledge, self-discipline and socio co-operation. Modern civilization did the opposite. Gandhi took the example of medical science, the pride and glory of modern civilization. Ideally, it should aim at two things. First, it should help people acquire a greater understanding and control of their bodies by explaining to them the causes and aetiology of their ailments, how to prevent them and how they were integrally related to their ways of life. Second, since the body was not an inert machine but a living organism with its own rhythm and built-in intelligence, medical science should mobilize its internal resources and wisely activate them where necessary by external help.

Medical science was a great human achievement but showed little respect for the integrity of the body and drained its indigenous resources, weakened self-discipline and treated the animals as mere means to human well-being and suffused with the spirit of violence characteristic of modern civilization. It did not see the ailment as the overworked and undisciplined body's plea for rest and discipline, but rather as an unacceptable interference with its hectic routine, requiring an immediate and effective response. Like the other form of violence, medical violence too was subject to an inflationary spiral. Machines had a place in life, but modern civilization had turned them into autonomous agents following their own will. Industries were desirable, but modern civilization had made them the very basis and centre of society. In short, modern civilization had become forces for evil and harmed rather than helped men.

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## 11.7 Gandhi and the State

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Gandhi argued that, although the state claimed to be a moral institution transcending narrow group interests and pursuing the well-being of the whole community, it was in fact little more than an arena of conflict between organized interests manipulated and controlled by the more powerful among them. The state dehumanized its citizens in more or less the same ways as the medical, legal and other institutions. It therefore denied them access to vital information and opportunities for political participation, and discouraged independent and vibrant local communities capable of challenging its decisions.

Gandhi thought that in these respects the democratic governments were no better than the undemocratic and belonged to the 'same species'. In its actual practice a democracy was basically a form of government in which a 'few men capture power in the name of the people and abuse it', a 'game of chess' between rival parties with the people as 'pawns'. Democracy thus veiled and conferred moral legitimacy on the reality of exploitation, and had only a marginal moral edge over fascism.

Gandhi contended that the British parliament, the mother of parliaments and the home of democracy, was not much better than its counterparts elsewhere. It was largely a 'talking shop' capable neither of exercising much control over the government nor of pursuing the national interest. To him, the much-vaunted independence of the press was largely a myth. The press was owned by the capitalists who saw it as yet another industry for manufacturing and selling opinions and who had little regard for their grave moral responsibility.

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## 11.8 Criticisms

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Gandhi's critique of modern civilisation, although bearing a strong resemblance to the criticisms of such writers as Rousseau, Ruskin, Carlyle, Tolstoy, Nietzsche and Marx, but it contained original and important insights derived from the two great advantages he enjoyed over them.

First, as a colonial native belonging to a despised race and an oppressed country, he experienced the darker side of modern civilization not directly accessible to them.

Second, as an heir to the rich and differently structured Indian civilization, he brought to his critique an intellectual perspective and moral sensitivity not available to its Western critics.

Third, Gandhi saw that despite all its egalitarian pretensions, modern civilization was deeply racist and placed non-whites more or less outside the pale of common humanity. It was inherently exploitative and had not the slightest hesitation in oppressing other countries and trading in human beings.

Fourth, its flawed theory of man profoundly distorted its interpretations of such moral values as human dignity, liberty and equality and prevented it from appreciating their true nature and realizing their full moral potential.

Fifth, Gandhi thought that for all practical purposes modern civilization had jettisoned Christianity and only used it to cover up and justify its aggressive pursuit of narrow self-interest.

But in spite, of all these, Gandhi's advantages were also his disadvantages. Since he largely concentrated on the darker side of modern civilization, he overlooked some of its great achievements and strengths.

First, he could not explain the rise of the scientific spirit and the development of what he called the organizational side of life.

Second, he failed to notice that they were vital of the very existence of the modern industrial society and could not be developed outside it.

Third, like other religious thinkers, he abstracted the spirit from the body and thought that the former could survive without the latter.

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## 11.9 Conclusion

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Gandhi equated modern civilization with the western one because the west was the principal site of all that one emerged with the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. A year before writing the *Hind Swaraj*, he had written, "Let it be remembered that western civilization is only a hundred years old, or to be more precise, fifty." Gandhi interpreted the industrial revolution as having brought about a radical transformation in people's lives and in people's attitudes to the world around them. Fundamental to this transformation was the premise that through reason and science human beings were capable of mastering nature and thus fulfilling their wants and desires. This Gandhi believed, led to greed, to competition and finally to violence. Therefore, violence was embedded in modern civilization and this made it satanic and immoral. It was not enough to reject industrialization; Gandhi made a critique in *Hind Swaraj* of the entire intellectual scaffolding modern civilization – science, history, political and social institutions and so on.

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## 11.10 Summing Up

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1. *Hind Swaraj* is a trenchant critique of modern civilization and was emphatic about the superiority of Indian civilization and its inherent ability to withstand the onslaughts of modernity. Throughout his life, in all his major writings, Gandhi returned again and again to these themes.
2. On the surface, Gandhi's position has similarities with the romantic criticism of the moral and social deprecations of advancing capitalism. Indeed, the two major influences on Gandhi, in the formulation of these ideas, were Edward

Carpenter's *Civilization: Its Cause and Cure* and John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. The former influenced Gandhi's ideas on science especially modern medicine. And Gandhi liked especially Carpenter's argument that the ever-increasing powers of production engendered by modern science and technology alienated man '(1) from nature (2) from his true self (3) from his fellows' and it worked 'in every way to disintegrate and corrupt man..... to break up the unity of the nature.'

3. He did not share this confidence in Reason and Science and asserted that the scientific mode of knowledge was applicable only to very limited areas of human living. Only one thing will save us from these and that is faith.
4. Similarly, he was not willing to accept arguments based on history. History records are aberrations; history is 'a record of an interruption of the course of nature.' Neither science nor history has any privileged access to Truth. Truth was in morality, in one's own conscience and in the performance of one's duty.
5. Reason, Science, History, the dominant themes of post-enlightenment thought met with his utter and complete disapproval and rejection.
6. The alternative to modern civilization that Gandhi posed had to be located outside the domain of civil society and the influences of modern civilization. And India was uniquely placed to provide this alternative since millions of Indians who lived in the villages had not been lured by the trappings of modern civilization.
7. Real civilization was to be found in the villages of India. The 'traditional' village world autonomous of modern civilization, was the complete opposite of the individualistic world of civil society. The hope of India lay in the peasantry.

This meant the challenge would have to be non-violent since, according to Gandhi, the Indian peasantry have never been violent. Gandhi's aim was exactly the opposite to British rule. He called this mode of resistance satyagraha. Complete non-co-operation would lead to the collapse of any government. According to Gandhi, Swaraj would only be possible with the disappearance of tyranny and exploitation.

8. This is Gandhi's political ideal where there was continual and complete reciprocity among and participation by every member of the polity. He called

this Utopia Ramarajya, a society where there was no gulf between the ruler and the ruled, where the former always expressed the collective morality.

9. Indian civilization had as its foundation this kind of a system: that is why it was more long lasting and superior to modern / Western civilization. 'Indian civilization,' Gandhi reiterated, 'is the best and the European is a nine days' wonder.'
10. Without gainsaying Gandhi's vision of an alternative society, which indeed *Hind Swaraj* sketches, it needs to be emphasized that alternative was also essentially Indian; it was embedded in what Gandhi thought to be the foundation and also the superiority of Indian civilization. Such a view of Indian civilization has a strong nationalist hue to it.

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## 11.11 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss critically Gandhi's view on machine and industrial development?
2. Discuss critically Gandhi's critique of modern civilization?
3. How far Gandhi's critique of modern civilization is viable today? Is it a stumbling block in the path of development? Argue your case.
4. How Gandhi has viewed British imperialism?
5. How Gandhi in the context of modern civilization has viewed the state?
6. Discuss Gandhi's economic and moral outlook as a critique of modern civilization?

### Short Questions :

1. How Gandhi has viewed British imperialism?
2. Point out Gandhi's critic on capitalism.
3. State Gandhi's view on medical science.

### Objective Question (MCQ)

1. In which language Hind Swaraj was first published?  
(a) Marathi (b) Gujrati (c) Hindi (d) English

Ans. : (b)

2. According to Gandhi modern civilization was—  
(a) Spiritualistic (b) Humanistic (c) Materialistic (d) Moralistic

Ans. : (c)

3. What according to Gandhi, was referred as a “talking shop”?  
(a) British Parliament (b) Indian Parliament (c) American Congress (d) None of these.

Ans. : (a)

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## 11.12 Further Reading

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## **Unit-12 □ Gandhi and Alternative Development**

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### **Structure**

- 12.1 Objective**
- 12.2 Introduction**
- 12.3 Meaning of Development—Social and Economic Elements**
- 12.4 Gandhi's principle of charka, swadeshi and human substance**
- 12.5 Gandhi's alternative development against industrialization and machinery**
- 12.6 Gandhiji against oppression and exploitation**
- 12.7 Morality and Spirituality as alternative path of development**
- 12.8 Strategy of Swadeshi spirit, Satyagraha and Constructive programme**
- 12.9 Trusteeship alternative path for development**
- 12.10 Conclusion**
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- 12.12 Probable Questions**
- 12.13 Further Reading**

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### **12.1 Objective**

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The objective of this unit are :

- 1 To analyse the general meaning of the term development
- 1 How Gandhi's development is different from western development.
- 1 How Gandhi's concept of alternative development unlike the western counterpart not only talked about social, political, economic development but also about moral development of the individual without which upliftment of the society and individual is not possible.

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### **12.2 Introduction**

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Gandhiji's Hind Swaraj (1909) has claimed to give us an 'alternate perspective'

on development, while explaining how the current mode of development is exploitative of man by man and of nature by man. Though this book eloquent denunciation of modern Western culture, but it has nothing to say about men's relationship with nature, still less does it offer in alternative perspective on development. The text also contains Gandhi's alternative to modern civilization and programme of action and behaviour that Indians must follow to make that alternative a reality.

His alternative development has located outside the domain of modern civilization and among people who were untouched and uninfluenced by the modern civilization. According to Gandhi, millions of Indians who lived in villages were not tainted by development and its pernicious features. Real or genuine civilization or development was found in the villages of India. In traditional village, world of India life was governed by a common morality by which each member performed his duty. This made it the exact opposite of modern society whose members chased their own self-interested and individualistic goals. He said to oppose modern civilization in India through violence would be to Europeanise India or to take it along the path of modernity. Gandhi's aim was exactly opposite and he name this struggle, satyagraha.

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### **12.3 Meaning of Development- Social and Economic Elements**

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There are many definitions and theories of development. By and large, development, is mainly concerned with the creation of necessary conditions for the realisation of human personality, including minimum income, needed to provide basic necessities, employment opportunities and lessening of inequality in the developing countries. It is increasingly realised that conceptual models of development should relate to socio-economic development as a whole and not to models for economic growth or for particular social service sectors.

Therefore, social and economic elements require equal attention in a country's development. Without economic growth no real social improvements are possible, but without strengthening and expanding the social infrastructure economic development is disproportionately costly and inefficient. To a large extent, the objectives of development in a country are determined by national ideologies and aspirations.

Development should progressively take into consideration fundamental urges of the people which express themselves in the demands for the right to work, the right to adequate income, the right to education and to measure of insurance against old age, sickness and other disabilities.



The national objectives of country like India are removal of poverty and attainment of economic self-reliance. Because the existence of poverty is, incompatible with the vision of an advanced prosperous, democratic egalitarian and, just society implied in the concept of a socialistic pattern of development. In fact it holds a potential threat to the unity, integrity and independence of the country.

Development indicators represent various aspects of development, namely industrialisation, urbanisation, health, housing, education, equality, participation, etc. They could be employed directly to measure an economic or social variable or indirectly to measure some non-measurable phenomenon. Social development could be conceived of as changes brought about in the structure and functions of the social system, value orientations and behavioural patterns. Besides, changes pertaining to health standards, nutrition status, educational development, occupational mobility and provision of other social services for the general masses, the weaker and maladjusted sections such as handicapped, destitute, delinquent etc. form part of the development planning in the social field. Indicators are therefore, necessary to measure progress in a specific direction.

Socio-economic changes required for building a new and prosperous society constitute the long term objectives of the planning process. The development process to improve the condition of the weaker sections touches three major areas. These are (1) basic amenities for a decent living such as provision of food, clothing and shelter, (2) basic infrastructure required for the development of local communities (3) other infra-structural requirements such as health, water supply, house sites, housing, elementary education, supplementary nutrition, rural roads, etc. Therefore, appropriate indicators on selective basis to measure the long-term and short-term objectives of the plan would have to be evolved.

Economic growth and Social development face speaks on (i) The right of adequate income (ii) The right of education (iii) The right of health & environment (iv) The right of work (v) The right of shelter (vi) The right of social security (vii) Meeting Millennium Goals (viii) Equal gender rights (ix) Eradication of poverty. Economic growth is still the dominant thinking for ruling an economy — who gets benefit of these growth? Unequal distribution of the products, high mal-nutrition, low health standards, low education standard, low occupational mobility, lack of provision of other social services, economic growth certainly be a necessary, but in no way sufficient condition of social development.

*“Gandhi is one of the great thinkers of our time who without ever intending it to be so, has become the man for all seasons, and all things to all men”.*

*Abu Abraham*

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## 12.4 Gandhi's principle of Charkha, Swadeshi and Human Substance

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In this backdrop, Gandhi came to see that it would be impossible for India to emulate Western patterns of industrial development. It must be acknowledged at once that he does not anywhere offer an alternative model of development for India. Gandhi was not a systematic thinker, moreover, he was preoccupied with the problems of independence, Hindu-Muslim unity, emancipation of women etc., so he hardly brings out systematically about alternative development. So in a scattered way in his writings of the 1920s and 1940s we get a clue to his such an alternative path.

The three most important principles that Gandhi propagated in the field of technology and development may be described as (a) the cult of the charkha, (b) the principle of swadeshi and (c) the primacy of human substance. Further, as far as management was concerned, he advocated panchayati raj.

Then, charkha becomes symbolic of a policy which emphasizes simple technology; the swadeshi principle would denote a preference for indigenous technology over imported ones; his objection to mechanization would indicate the danger of machines overruling the human spirit; and, panchayati raj would lay reliance on local initiative rather than on central control.

Gandhi said: "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not for every man's greed". On intermediate technology reminds us of Gandhi's charkha and khadi, when he asserts that "We need methods and equipment which are cheap enough so that they are accessible to virtually everyone; suitable for small scale application; and compatible with man's need for creativity" This again stems from Gandhi's belief that "the poor of the world cannot be helped by mass production, only by production by the masses" Technology should go back "to the actual size of man, his thesis, Man is small and therefore small is beautiful" comes exactly from this.

Gandhi's theory and practice of self reliance also seem to have their origin in Gandhi's thoughts on swadeshi. "While no system of economics existed that was compatible with spirituality," He had laid the foundation for a system of economics that would be compatible with Hinduism and Buddhism too. The series of ideas stemming from Gandhi have provided theoretical grounds for hundreds of thousands of grass-root developmental activities all over the world. They are basically going to the opposite end of the spectrum from large scale industrialization, centralized development, global free trade and unregulated market mechanisms, based on the behavioral model of 'economic man.' That is why these are alternative development

theories, different from any of those stemming from laissez-faire economics or Marxism. The alternative theories are qualitative and spiritual approaches to development which to borrow Amartya Sen's concept enable 'deprived' people to take part in the process of social development in order to restore their 'capability.' It can be questioned as to what extent Gandhian style of development could actually be achieved in our modern global materialist societies. Nonetheless, such examples as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and the sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka show that such a philosophy which is not totally impracticable in constructing human communities. It is indeed significant that since Gandhi's day, alternative theories and practices have persistently furnished a critique of 'modern' ways of thinking, such as laissez faire economics and Marxism, by detecting the contradictions in 'modern' societies and presenting 'post-modern' visions of socio-economic development.

The use of *khadi* was intended to provide a national uniform and create at least a measure of outward equality in a highly unequal society, to introduce simplicity in an ostentatious society, to generate a sense of solidarity with the poor, to bring economic pressure on the British government and to reduce foreign imports. The use of regional languages was intended to bridge the vast and widening chasm between the masses and the Westernised elite, to ensure cultural continuity, encourage authenticity of thought and action and to forge indigenous tools of collective self-expression. The development of village industries was intended to help the poor in the villages, to guarantee them not only a livelihood but also employment, to arrest migration to the cities and, above all, to sustain what Gandhi took to be the necessary social and geographical basis of Indian civilization.

For Gandhi then Indian civilization, although fundamentally sound, had become degenerate and needed urgent attention. The earlier writers he sometimes called this 'national regeneration'. More often he preferred to use the historically evocative term *atimashudhi*, a process of 'purging' the Indian soul of its limitations by means of a great national *tapasya* or *yajna*.

Economic life should be subordinated to and regulated by man's moral and spiritual needs. For reasons discussed earlier Gandhi thought that men could only gain their full moral stature in small, relaxed and interdependent communities. Since the latter lacked vitality without an autonomous economic basis of their own, he argued that production should be decentralized and each community become relatively self-sufficient in its basic needs. As Gandhi imagined it, the village land was to be owned in common farming done on a co-operative basis, the produce equitably divided, and only the surplus land used for cash crops. The villages were to encourage locally

based industries and crafts, to take pride in using local products and to import only what they could not themselves produce. Full employment or the right to work was the necessary requirement of man's spiritual nature, and Gandhi could not see how it could be ensured except in such self-sufficient communities.

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## **12.5 Gandhi's Alternative Development against Industrialization and Machinery:**

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Gandhi's reservations about the wholesale industrialization of India are usually ascribed to moral grounds—the selfishness and competitiveness of modern society—but they also had markedly ecological undertones. In 'Young India', dated 20<sup>th</sup> December 1928; "God forbid that India should even take to industrialization after the manner of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island kingdom (England) is today keeping the world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 million took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts".

"We are sitting in this fine pandal under a blaze of electric lights", he remarked, "but we do not know we are burning these lights at the expense of the poor." (Harijan, 11 May 1935)

By understanding the ills of industrialization, Gandhi's preferred solution, wherein economic development would be centered on in the village. He wished that the blood that is today inflating the arteries of the cities run once again in the blood vessels of the villages. Pre-eminent here was decentralization of political and economic power, so that villages could resume control over their own affairs. He also warned the proponents of the rapid mechanization of agriculture that trading in soil fertility for the sake of quick returns would prove to be disastrous, short-sighted policy.

It would result in virtual depletion of the soil (Harijan, 25 August 1946). He was an enthusiastic supporter of organic manure, which enriched the soil, improved village hygiene through effective disposal of waste, saved foreign exchange, and enhanced crop yields without the attendant pollution and resource exhaustion caused by modern chemical technique. Gandhi described approvingly and in great detail the methods developed by Howard and his associates to convert a mixture of cow dung, farm wastes, wood ash and urine into invaluable fertilizer. (Harijan; 17 August & 24 August 1935).

At the level of the individual, Gandhi's code of voluntary simplicity offers a sustainable alternative to modern life style. One of his best known aphorism, that the

‘world has enough for everybody’s need, but not enough for everybody’s greed. This was an ethic he himself practised, for resource recycling and the minimization of wants, were integral to his life.

The present unchecked use of machinery for selfish purposes has caused for a large proportion of the people, a life of monotony and drudgery. (M. K. Gandhi, theosophical Free Treat, No. 93, March.)

Gandhi challenged the foundation of modern secularistic, aggressive and lustful aspects of development and accepted the spiritual orientation to politics, sociology. He said that truth and Ahimsa must incarnate non violence but violence is all round in every department of western technology. He also visualized an alternate model which was more suited to the true development. Our development being largely of self-sufficient villages and underprivileged rural people stands as an alternate model in accordance to Gandhi. In other words, development from modern age in the current debate on globalisation', Gandhi visualized to revitalize the old Panchayat village economy through optimal utilization.

Gandhi also warns abundance of money in the hands of a few resulting in an elite class in the rural areas and developed into power structure. Thus, marginalised, poor hardly benefits of modernization and development and they remained poor at large. The modus operandi for their emancipation is their empowerment and facilitation by the state as well as non-state actors (policy makers, researchers, community leaders and NGOs etc.), which was dreamt by Gandhi.

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## **12.6 Gandhi against Oppression and Exploitation**

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Gandhi became intensely sensitive to all forms of oppression and exploitation and saw himself as the spokesman and champion of the poor and the oppressed everywhere. He reflected on the nature, causes, consequences and complex relations between different forms of oppression and developed a political theory from the perspective of the victims of the established social order. Unlike Marx, whose political philosophy had a similar orientation, Gandhi refused to think in terms of antagonistic class interests. He argued that no man could degrade or brutalise another without also degrading and brutalizing himself, that racism, economic exploitation and colonialism took their moral and psychological toll on both the masters and their victims and that no man could be human at the expense of another. He argued further that no system of oppression could come into being let alone last without the co-operation of its victims who were therefore never wholly innocent. As he repeatedly remarked, those who behaved like worms invited others to trample upon them and it was the coward

who created the bully. Gandhi therefore, preferred to concentrate his energies on building up the courage and organized strength of the victims in the firm belief that once they saw through the hidden mechanism of their oppression and gained a sense of power, the prevailing system of oppression based on and continuing only because of their ignorance and illusion of powerlessness would not last a day. He also thought that much of the violence and oppression of the modern age sprang from the dominant 'materialist' view of man and could only be ended by creating a civilization based on the spiritual conception of man. As we shall see later Gandhi's moral and political philosophy had severe limitations, but it also contained most valuable and original insights.

Gandhi was deeply puzzled by the British rule in India. He wondered why the British had been able to conquer India with relative ease, how their rule differed from the earlier ones and what it had done and was doing to it. Gandhi's answers to these and other related questions. He was convinced that India had fallen prey to the centuries of foreign rule because it had become degenerate and 'diseased', and that it had no hope of becoming or remaining a self-governing polity unless it radically revitalized itself.

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## 12.7 Morality and Spirituality as Alternative Path of Development

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Gandhi said that man was essentially a spiritual being. It was in his view the most important truth India had grasped. It has discovered many others as well, but this was the basis of them all. India was a 'truly spiritual nation', 'predominantly the land of religion'. That man's true happiness and fulfillment lay in overcoming his sense of individuality and opening himself up to the presence of others, and that non-violence to living beings was the highest moral principle. Unlike many earlier writers Gandhi did not think much of *yoga* and the traditional Hindu repertoire of spiritual exercises and hold them up as monuments to India's spiritual creativity.

For Gandhi, the ancient Indians knew that mind and body were seats of desires and threw up temptations that distracted man from his supreme goal of *moksha*. Hence, they condemned self-indulgence and argued that his fulfillment lay in restricting his wants and controlling his desires. Not that they ignored the legitimate demands of the human body, rather these were located within the larger framework of and regulated by his moral and spiritual natures. The theory of the four *purusharthas* sanctioned the pursuits of *artha* (wealth) and *kama* (pleasure) provided they were guided and regulated by

*dharma*. Unlike modern civilization Indian civilization developed a well-considered theory of man which enabled it to determine the objectives and limits of human activities and to assign them their legitimate place in life.

Gandhi argued that the ancient Indians, who knew how to invent machines and develop industries, decided 'after due deliberation' to impose limits on their growth. They knew too that happiness was 'largely a mental condition' in no way dependent on external conditions, and restricted the pursuit of wealth. Indian civilisation in his view knew nothing of the soul-destroying cities and was based on self-governing villages within whose warm and communal framework their members lived cultured and stable lives.

According to Gandhi Indian civilization was essentially plural and non-dogmatic. From the very beginning it had realized that the ultimate reality was infinite and inexhaustible and that different individuals grasped different aspects of it. None was wholly wrong and none wholly right. Everyone was therefore left free, even encouraged, to live out the truth as he saw it and discover for himself its limits and possibilities.

In Gandhi's view Indian civilization was not only plural but pluralist, that is, committed to pluralism as a desirable value, not just a collection of different ethnic, religious and cultural groups but a unity-in-diversity. It was an open civilization with permeable boundaries allowing new influences to flow in and vitalize the old, so that the new became part of the old, so that the old became part of the new, the old was discarded or vitalized, and the whole civilization renewed itself.

For Gandhi, courage was one of the highest human virtues and the Hindus had become woefully deficient in it. In Gandhi's view the Indians also lacked the intellectual courage to criticize and deviate from the established customs and conventions and to strike out on a lonely path of their own. Gandhi particularly lamented the absence of moral courage, by which he meant the courage to stand up for what one considered to be right, irrespective of the consequences. In his view the Indians were so frightened to die or suffer injury acquiesced in all manner of indignities and humiliations, including the violation of their self-respect and personal dignity. The Indian's lack of courage was one of the important sources of his several other failings.

Gandhi contended that, contrary to the general impression, there was deep streak of violence in Indian culture. To avoid misunderstanding, Gandhi did of course say the non-violence was central to Indian civilization in a way that was not true of any other.

By this he meant four things. First, Indian civilization cherished the ideal of non-violence and gave it pride of place in its hierarchy of moral virtues. Second, a small group of sages and seers had experimental with and successfully practised it in all its rigour and left behind examples of truly non-violent lives. Third, non-violence was widely practised in ancient India and formed the basis of its social structure. And fourth, although non-violence in the positive sense of active compassion was not much noticeable among the ordinary Indians of his time, it was present to some degree in the negative and passive sense of refraining from causing harm to living beings. For him non-violence consisted in refraining from exercising the power to hit back and was a virtue of the brave. Those lacking in courage and bravery could be no more non-violent than a mouse in its relation of the cat.

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## 12.8 Strategy of Swadeshi Spirit, Satyagraha and Constructive Programme

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In Gandhi's view national regeneration could not be brought about by adopting modern civilization either, not so much because the latter was inferior (although he thought it was), as because a civilization must fit a society and represent its truth. It was not enough for it to be good *in itself*; it must also be good for the society concerned. Indian civilization has grown up with the Indian people and reflected their unique and historically acquired *swabhava*. It was woven into the structure of their soul, and the alternative of rejecting it in favour of the modern was simply not available to them.

Gandhi argued that although India could not and should not adopt modern civilization, there was 'much' that it could 'profitably assimilate' from it.

He observed that "My resistance to Western civilization is really a resistance to its indiscriminate and thoughtless limitation based on the assumption that Asians are fit only to copy everything that comes from the West".

Gandhi's programme for Indian regeneration was highly complex and involved a cluster of interrelated strategies of which cultivating the *swadeshi* spirit, *satyagraha* and the Constructive Programme were the most important. Gandhi took it over and so redefined it as to offer an Indian alternative to the European doctrine of nationalism.

Gandhi used the term *Swadesh* to refer to this unity, *swa* meaning one's own and *desh* the total cultural and natural environment of which one was an inseparable part. *Desh* was both a cultural and ecological unit and signified the traditional way of life obtaining within a specific territorial unit.



The *swadeshi* spirit which Gandhi variously translated as the community, national or patriotic spirit or the spirit of nationality and sharply distinguished from nationalism, basically referred to the way an individual related and responded to his *desh*.

Gandhi insisted that since a man imbued with the *swadeshi* spirit loved his community and wanted it to flourish and realize its full potential, he could never be insensitive to its limitations; on the contrary, he was intensely alert to them lest they should cause its degeneration and decline. His was, however, not the criticism of an indifferent or hostile outsider only interested in denigrating or making fun of it, but of one who passionately cared for his community and intuitively understood and accepted responsibility for it.

For Gandhi the *swadeshi* spirit extended to all the elements composing the *desh* and implied a love of not only the traditional way of life but also the natural environment and especially the people sharing it. The integrity of a way of life was inextricably bound up with that of its ecological context and could not be preserved without preserving the latter. The *swadeshi* spirit also required that he should be passionately concerned with the way the other members of his community lived. To love his *desh* as to love them. He should therefore identify himself with them, especially the least privileged who most need his attention, eschew comforts and privileges unavailable to them, buy locally produced in preference to foreign goods likely to throw them out of work, and in general do all in his power to create and sustain a decent existence for them. For Gandhi the *swadeshi* spirit was not a sentimental attachment to an abstraction called India or Britain but an active love of the men and women sharing and sustaining a way of life, and had a moral, economic and political content.

As a moral being every individual had a duty to be deeply interested in the problems faced by people in other communities. And even as he cared for his *desh* he had a duty to do all he could to preserve the integrity of their ways of life.

The earth provided 'enough for everybody's needs but not enough for anybody's greed'. Unless a community demanded more than its legitimate share of the earth's resources, no conflict of interests need occur, Gandhi distinguished between self-interest and selfishness. The former referred to legitimate needs, that is, to those material and other opportunities all men needed in order to realize their human potential and to which they were entitled to make legitimate claims; the latter referred to illegitimate greed, that is to those opportunities that far exceeded the level of legitimate needs, could not be universalized and could only be secured at the expense of others. The *swadeshi* spirit sanctioned legitimate self interest but not selfishness.

Gandhi used the term *swaraj* to describe a society run in the *swadeshi* spirit. It meant self-rule or autonomy and implied not only formal independence but also cultural and moral autonomy. As Gandhi put it, under *swaraj* a community lived by its own truth. It conducted its affairs in the light of its traditions and values while remaining fully alert to their limitations and ready to learn from others.

The *satyagraha* was the second imported constituent of Gandhi's programme of national self-purification. Gandhi discovered that his countrymen there lacked personal and communal self-respect, courage and the willingness to organize themselves. In a memorable phrase he urged them to 'rebel' against themselves and warned them that, if they behaved like worms, they should not blame others for trampling on them. 'The purpose of *satyagraha* is to instill courage into people and make them independent in spirit'. Non-violence could not be practised by cowards lacking the courage to hit back. Gandhi wondered how courage, manliness, self-discipline and pride could be cultivated among Indians and toyed with the idea of military training. Even as 'you cannot make a dumb man appreciate the beauty and the merit of silence', you cannot 'teach *ahimsa* to a man who cannot kill'. He went on, 'It may look terrible but it is true that we must, by well-sustained conscious effort, regain this power [to kill] and then, if we can only do so, deliver the world from its travail of *himsa* by a continuous abdication of this power.' Gandhi even thought that war was not an unmitigated evil and had a vital role to play in the development of national character. He realized that his 'terrible discovery' involved him in a contradiction. As a votary of non-violence he wanted his countrymen to fight non-violently, yet he wanted them to undergo a training in violence in order to acquire the required virtues! He appreciated too that war and military training were fraught with dangerous consequences including the fact that once a man was taught to kill he did not fancy dying without a good fight. Not surprisingly Gandhi felt utterly confused and complained to a close friend that the 'hard thinking' he had been doing was wrecking his health.

In Gandhi's strategy of national regeneration was what he called the Constructive Programme. It was 'designed to build up the nation from the very bottom upward' and regenerate India's society and economy. It was a mixed bag of such 'absolutely essential' 18 items as Hindu-Muslim unity, the removal of untouchability, a ban on alcohol, the use of khadi, the development of village industries and craft-based education. It also included equality for women, health education, the use of indigenous languages, the adoption of a common national language, economic equality and trusteeship, building up peasants' and workers' organization, integration of the tribal people into mainstream political and economic life, a detailed code of conduct for students, helping lepers and beggars and cultivating respect for animals.

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## 12.9 Trusteeship : An Alternative Path for Development

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Concerning the form of ownership, Gandhi proposed his well-known theory of trusteeship, an economic extension of his philosophical concept of man as a trustee of all he had, including his powers, capacities, energy and time. The theory was intended to avoid the evils and combine the advantages of both capitalism and communism, and to socialize property without nationalizing it. As he imagined it, every industrialist employing more than a certain number of workers was to look upon his industry not as his property but as a social trust. He was to work along with his employees, take no more than what he needed for a moderately comfortable life, look on them as 'members of his family' and jointly responsible with him for the management of industry, and to provide healthy working conditions and welfare schemes for them and their families. Both he and the workers were to regard themselves as trustees of the consumers, and to take care not to produce shoddy goods or charge exorbitant prices. Part of the moderate profit they made was to be devoted to the welfare of the community, and the rest to the improvement of industry. The owner was free to bequeath his industry to his children or whoever he liked only if they agreed to run it in the spirit of trusteeship. Therefore,

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.
2. It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except in so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.
3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth
4. Thus under state-regulated trusteeship an individual will not be free to hold or use wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interests of society.
5. Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that would be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time, so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.
6. Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.

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## 12.10 Conclusion

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It is in this context that Gandhi becomes extremely important. He was one of the first non-Western thinkers of the modern age to develop a political theory grounded in the unique experiences and articulated in terms of the indigenous philosophical vocabulary of his country. He conceptualized political life in an original and stimulating manner, placing new questions on the political agenda and offering new ways of tackling the old. From a distinctly community-based Indian perspective, he highlighted some of the disturbing features of the modern state, detected its internal contradictions and explored an alternative to it. He more or less completely bypassed the dominant nationalist vocabulary and showed that it was possible to articulate and defend the case for independence in a very different language. He showed that not every movement for independence is national, not every national struggle is nationalist and that not every nationalist movement need articulate itself in the language of European rather than home-grown theories of nationalism. He drew upon the long and rich Indian tradition of non-violence and explored both the sources of and alternative to the dominant forms of violence in modern society. Reflecting the traditional Hindu understanding of moral life, he asked if morality could ever be adequately conceptualized in the language of rights and obligations, and wondered whether the dominant individualist theory of man could ever avoid reducing it to enlightened self-interest and thereby undermining its autonomy. Following the Indian philosophical anthropology he developed a fascinating theory of man which avoided the dubious concept of human nature, gave a wholly new meaning to the familiar idea of human unity and integrated the apparently contradictory demands of human sociality and uniqueness.

He was the first anti-imperialist leader of the modern age, the first man to mobilize millions for a political cause and fashion the necessary organizational and communicational tools, the first man to invent an unusual method of political struggle and one of the few in history to fight simultaneously on moral, religious, political, social, economic and cultural fronts.

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## 12.11 Summing Up

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1. Since the village communities were to form the basis of the Indian economy, the nature, pace and scale of industrialization was to be determined by and subordinated to their requirements. Gandhi argued that although large-scale industries were necessary, they should be restricted to the minimum, located in the cities and only allowed to produce what the self-sufficient communities themselves could not.

2. Since competition between them could easily lead to the present situation of unlimited production and consumerism, it was to be strictly regulated. As he was opposed to extensive state control of the economy, it is not clear how he proposed to do this.
3. He was also worried about the competition between the large urban based industries and the village industries, which he thought would necessarily result in the latter's destruction. A national plan was to be prepared based on a detailed survey of what could be produced locally, how it could be made efficient and helped by the large industries and what share of the market was to be reserved for each. This was the only way he thought urban exploitation of the villages could be avoided and the latter made the basis of a new economic order and a new civilization.
4. The means of production of the basic necessities of life should be collectively owned. They affected man's very survival and could easily become instruments of the most dangerous forms of exploitation.
5. Gandhi therefore proposed that industries of vital national importance should be owned by the state. It should either set them up itself or nationalize them 'without compensation' for 'if you want the government to pay compensation it will have to rob Peter to pay Paul and that would be impossible'.
6. Since all socially useful activities were equally important, their wage-differentials should be reduced to a minimum.
7. Since a healthy moral community was impossible in grossly unequal society, the state should embark on a programme of leveling up the poor and the oppressed and leveling down the rich. The resources needed to help the poor should be obtained by levying taxes on the rich amounting to a 'much higher figure' than the 70 per cent then obtaining in Britain.

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## 12.12 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions:

1. Explain Gandhi's perspective on alternative development?
2. State how Gandhi's concept of development argue the issue of man and nature and also man and village economy?
3. Does Gandhi's concept of development include moral development? Argue your case.

4. How the alternative model of development include the social, economic and political thoughts of Gandhi?
5. Discuss how decentralization according to Gandhi is important for development?
6. How Gandhi relate the alternative development with state and violence?

**Short Questions:**

7. What is meant by development?
8. What do you mean by alternative development ?
9. Does the alternative development of Gandhi includes environmental issues?

**Objective Questions (MCQ)**

1. Gandhi's critique of western civilization in a way questioned the concept of—  
(a) Economic Growth (b) Development (c) Self reliance (d) All of these

Ans. : (b)

2. What does charkha symbolises in accordance to Gandhian principles?  
(a) Simple technology (b) Danger of huge machines  
(c) Reliance on local initiative (d) All of these

Ans. : (d)

3. Who is the author of The Life of Mahatma Gandhi?  
(a) L. Fischer (b) Ramchandra Guha  
(c) Rajmohan Gandhi (d) Judith M. Brown

Ans. : (a)

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**12.13 Further Reading**

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## **Unit-13 □ Theory of State**

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### **Structure**

- 13.1 Objective**
- 13.2 Introduction**
- 13.3 Gandhi's concept of State**
- 13.4 Gandhi and Ram-Rajya**
- 13.5 Gandhi's economic functions of the State**
- 13.6 Gandhi and his political ideas of State**
- 13.7 Gandhi and decentralisation of State**
- 13.8 Gandhi and moral view of State**
- 13.9 Conclusion**
- 13.10 Summing Up**
- 13.11 Probable Questions**
- 13.12 Further Reading**

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### **13.1 Objective**

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The objective of this unit are :

- 1 To throw light on Gandhi's theory of state and the minimal state
- 1 How through establishing Ram –Rajya, an ideal society will be formed which is free from violence and coercion
- 1 How Ram Raya finally lead to the establishment of an egalitarian society.

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### **13.2 Introduction**

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Gandhi did not develop in true sense a concept of state in the lines of Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Green, Laski and host of others western political philosophers of the west. He did not even make any direct suggestion as to the nature of the state. Infact, what he preached as state was narrated in Ram Rajya – the ideal society, where there will be no compulsion nor there will be any coercive agency to dictate and control



the lives of the individuals. In 1925, he worked for the establishment of state in which the working classes would feel that they were masters of themselves, at least, through their chosen representatives. The real power was to be with the former. His chief concern of the state was to be the interest of the toiling millions.

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### 13.3 Gandhi's concept of state

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Gandhi was most critical of the modern state. It was impersonal, ruling by rules, functioning more or less like a 'machine' with no human beings apparently in charge of it or accepting responsibility for its action. Laws were collectively made by the legislature, and no individual member of it felt responsible for them. Civil servants claimed merely to administer them and did not feel responsible for their consequences either. Insofar as it destroyed or at least obscured all sense of personal responsibility and the concomitant feelings of remorse and guilt, the state demoralized and dehumanized man. Gandhi contended that even when it left room for personal responsibility, its structure and manner of operation allowed too many escape routes. Like almost all other Indian leaders Gandhi thought that the state was inherently inhospitable to personal responsibility and had an anti-human thrust. He was not opposed to rules and institutions whose vital importance he fully recognized, but thought that the modern state relied on them so heavily that it stifled human responsibility and even 'forgot' that it was an association of human beings.

For Gandhi, the state compromised man's moral nature in yet another way. The state was for him is a system of institutionalized co-operation sustained by the acts of its citizens. In Gandhi's view the state also fostered a statist manner of thinking and appropriated man's moral and social powers. For Gandhi, further, the state stood above and over society, and was neither in organic and daily contact with nor constantly accountable to it. Its primary concern was to reduce society to a pliable and homogeneous material amenable to uniform rules and bureaucratic management. It was therefore impatient of individual differences and diversity and hostile to strong and independent-minded citizens, groups and communities lest they should become centres of independent initiative and dissent. Gandhi contended that as vast and impersonal 'machine' only concerned with administering society, the state was uninterested in and incapable of activating and mobilizing the full range of its moral impulses and had no alternative but to rely on fear and force.

For these and other reasons Gandhi concluded that by its very nature the state was incompatible with man's moral and spiritual nature. Man was really *atman* or

soul; the modern state was a 'soul-less machine'. The two simply could not co-exist. If they really cherished and were genuinely concerned about their moral status, men had to find an alternative way of structuring their organized life.

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### **13.4 Gandhi and Ram-Rajya**

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Gandhi brought in the Hindu ideal of Ram-Rajya to fill up the ideal gap in his social model, where each one is what he ought to be. To Gandhi, it signified a social relationship that allowed 'purna swaraj' for each. He himself realized that in the absence of the level of consciousness Ram-Rajya was not possible of realization but what made it still relevant was the need for the becoming-orientation for man's being – and the Ram-Rajya served as the ideal of the becoming. Ram-Rajya was what a social relationship could become if the individual part of it has what an individual should be there did not exist a neutral self-determined authority such as there existed in actual life to limit the flaws of individual freedom.

Gandhi called Ram-Rajya a state of enlightened anarchy. But he made it very clear that the term anarchy meant only to stress of power. Infact, the ideas, of freedom , power and institution are co-equal, for the realization of freedom calls for power as, Gandhi himself recognized it by raising man's freedom to the dignity of sovereignty. Gandhi pleaded for the atomization of sovereignty, he did not ever call for its elimination. Gandhi conceived the Ram-Rajya as a social order of freedom.

Gandhi held that the difference between the Ram-Rajya and the actual society rests mainly on the nature of authority. In actual society, there is the existence of a neutral and self-determined symbol of power, But such a thing was conspicuous by its absence under Ram-Rajya.

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### **13.5 Gandhi's Economic Functions of the State**

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In 1924 and 1928 Gandhi regarded the economic functions of the state and he said that the control of the means of production should lie with the state rather than profiteering individuals. But he wanted the unavoidable heavy machinery to be either owned or controlled by the state.

In enunciating his economic ideal, he wrote, "According to me the economic constitution of India and for the matter of that the world should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words, everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable them to make the two ends meet. And

this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of elementary necessities of life remain in the control of masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others" (Y. I. 15,11.28)

The economic feature of the Ram-Rajya too would be such as to reflect individual sovereignty. In Ram-Rajya both individual and society would be social sense. While there will be no poor in the Ram-Rajya, there would be no rich either. Gandhi maintained that the satisfaction of the basic physical requirements was necessary for ensuring the un-inhibited flow of one's capacities. Under Ram-Rajya every one would have just enough to support his physical existence. Thus, Ram-Rajya would be different from the conventional society in two important respects. In the first place, each individual would meet the other as a total personality and in the second place, since men would meet each other as total personalities, there would be no problem of the institutional losses of freedom either.

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### **13.6 Gandhi and his Political Ideas of State**

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The year 1931 and its succeeding period seems to have been an active one so far as the development of Gandhi's political ideas are concerned. "To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore there is no political power because there is no state. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that government best which governs the least" (Y.I.,2.7.31)

It has often been made out that Gandhi's Ram-Rajya is same as Karl Marx's stateless society and the both alike are exercises in utopia building. Critics, however, do not accept this. An Utopia is different from an ideal because former is wishful proposition while the latter indicates the moral extremes of the practicable principles. Infact, an ideal in contrast to a Utopia is the concluding end of the principles supposedly informing life. Gandhi's Ram-Rajya is an ideal indicating the moral ends of life of spiritual freedom. Critics further point out Ram-Rajya was an end, the mere fact of our incapacity to leave it in practice was no valid argument for watering it down.

The distinguishing feature of Ramrajya was the absence in it of a self-determining institution of power such as the state was. In view of this fact, the actual social relationship fell much short of the Ramrajya a neutral institution such as the state was called for to manage in inter-action between men of varying label of consciousness. The very fact that the state existed was enough to suggest that violence existed. But the actual orientation of it would be determined by its rulers. Gandhi argued that if instead of a single person or a given interest-class controlling the state, the entire population controlled the state. There would emerge a predominantly non-violent society, to the end of making a reality of popular rule. Gandhi proposed that the Government of a state must consist of the representatives of those “who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters”. The elected representatives of the people would make the laws with an eye to raise the down-trodden the fallen, from the situation recondition in which they have been living. Gandhi envisaging a state in which the interest of the masses would occupy the supreme position. The state was not to serve the interest of both the classes as well the masses, but of the masses alone. The interest of the former was to exist to the extent they were compatible with the interests of the latter.

‘Look at the conditions, if you will, of the untouchables, if the law comes to their assistance and sets apart miles of territory. At the present moment they hold no land; they are absolutely living at the mercy of so-called higher castes, and also let me say, at the mercy of the state.’ They can be removed from one quarter to another without complaint and without being also to seek the assistance of law. Well the first act of legislature will be to see that in order somewhat to equalize conditions, these people are given grants freely.

“From whose pockets are those grants to come? Not from the pockets of Heaven. Heaven is not going to drop money for the sake of the state. They will naturally come from the monied classes, including the Europeans” (N. V., p 71)

Gandhi insisted that only a federally-constituted polity based on vigorous and self-governing local communities was truly democratic. Since the term democracy was generally used to refer to liberal democracy based on the centralization of power to be used by popularly elected and accountable representatives, Gandhi preferred the term *swaraj* to describe what he called ‘true democracy’. In Gandhi’s view liberal democracy remained imprisoned within the restrictive and centralized framework of the modern state and could never be truly democratic.

This was Gandhi’s way of saying that the democratic form of government was synonymous with the popular rule. A state according to Gandhi was what a man made of it and as such it could be used as an instrument of service.

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## 13.7 Gandhi and Decentralisation of State

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As Gandhi imagined it, the new polity consisted of small, cultured, thoroughly regenerated, well-organised and self-determining village communities. Their affairs were managed by *panchayats* consisting of five persons annually elected by every literate adult between the ages of 18 and 50, those above 50 being expected to have less interest in the human world and therefore being not qualified to vote. Gandhi insisted on literacy because the problems of the modern world were too complex to be understood by any one unable to read and write, and also as a way of ensuring that the citizens would put enough pressure on the government to eradicate illiteracy. The village *panchayat* had legislative, executive and judicial powers, and largely relied on its moral authority and the pressure of public opinion to ensure order and harmony. Gandhi thought that the village community would over time build up a 'strong sense of local strength and solidarity', provide 'meaningful' interpersonal relationships, encourage a sense of social responsibility and the spirit of co-operation, and act as a nursery of civic virtues.

Beyond the relatively self-sufficient villages the country was organized in terms of 'expanding circles'. The villages were grouped into *talukas*, the latter into districts, these into provinces, and so on, each governed by representatives elected by its constituent units. Gandhi was opposed to direct elections to the central assembly because they were divisive and encouraged corruption and also because the average voter knew little either about the candidates involved or the large issues of national policy. The polity so constructed was not a collection of isolated atoms but a community of communities, a unity of unities, a whole composed of wholes.

Gandhi held that the sheer size of the modern state may be an idea of popular rule but an impracticable proposition. It was inevitable for the nation state to assume a personality of its own. Gandhi, therefore, considered the decentralization of a nation state as a prerequisite to the realization of the popular rule for the emergence of the nation state, the Leviathan could otherwise be prevented. Thus he considered the village in India as a unit of the national life, and held that each individual in India would become the architect of his own government, only when each village became a complete republic would have their own police as also their own army, but those would be of a different nature.

Thus, Gandhi advocated a return to the system of rural communities composed of simple manageable units would be co-operatively knit together. They will be autonomous for all the purposes. The panchayat would do the village administration, the villages would be in their district administration, but the village would have its

own autonomy. The district administration would elect the provincial government and the parliament or President would serve as a chief executive at the national level. And all these would keep their respective autonomy within their jurisdiction. Gandhi was against direct election as he believed it would lead to many evils like corruption, bribery, impersonation etc.

The state for Gandhi is not an end in itself, but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Being one of the means it is like various other associations which promote human welfare. It cannot claim any superior status and the individual owes to the state only limited and relative loyalty. Gandhi would entrust to the state minimum functions. His maxim was the less of the authority of the state, the greater the moral freedom of the individual and that in the real swarajya for him.

Gandhi was rigid in prescribing qualification for the candidates seeking election. He prescribed that the candidate must be selfless, able and incorruptible. He should not hanker after office, avoid self - advertisement and must not indulge in rearing down his appointment and exploit the voters Gandhi would give to all citizens, men and women, the right to vote. The only qualification he would prescribe for a voter is the manual work.

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### **13.8 Gandhi and Moral view of the State**

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From about 1930 onwards Gandhi's views on the nature of the state and the functions of government underwent an important change. Although he still continued to plead for a loosely structured polity based on the institutionalized partnership between the people and the government, the latter now began to assume a more dominant rule. Hitherto he had thought of the state almost entirely as a 'soul-less machine' based on and sustained by violence and only necessary because the weak human will require the coercive discipline of the law.

Gandhi began to appreciate that the state had a vital role to play in promoting social and economic justice, social and economic inequalities and injustices could not be removed by moral persuasion alone. He realized too that independent India could not do without large industries and would have to nationalize many of them 'with or without compensation'. He saw that the state also had an important role to play in the national regeneration of India. In some areas its intervention was critical, for example, the preservation of village industries and the spread of basic education; in some others it could act as a facilitator and remove hindrances, for example, the prohibition of alcohol and the removal of untouchability; in yet others it could lend

its moral and material help and expedite voluntary efforts, for example, the development of regional languages.

These and other related functions Gandhi now assigned to the state implied that it was an instrument of social and economic justice, a protector and promoter of the public and some aspects of private morality, a custodian of Indian civilization, and the patron of the grand *yajna* of national regeneration. He now began to realize that the state was far more complex than he had hitherto imagined, and had a potential for both good and evil. It was not entirely a soul-less machine but also a *moral and spiritual* institution capable of playing a vital role in the moral development of its citizens.

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## 13.9 Conclusion

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Thus, Gandhi's conception of the State is neither completely like that of the anarchists nor of the communists. It approaches the former with regard to its aim of political and economic decentralization, and that of the latter in that the interest of the toiling millions will have a dictatorial position within the State.

The originality of Gandhi's idea is further enhanced by the fact that he suggests a means of non-violent, non-cooperation through which power to control the state will come, not to any party working on behalf of the toiling millions but to them directly. That is in a state where idea of the essential unity of human interest prevails.

The democratic state envisaged by Gandhi will have specific fundamental rights. He was egalitarian through and through. He did not believe that the ideal of non-violence could be realized in society so long as wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions remained. But by economic equality he did not mean absolute equality. His ideal was approximate equality. According to Gandhi a true society was the one in which everyone was free without any one being last in riches.

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## 13.10 Summing Up

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1. To Gandhi, state ownership was better than private ownership; but at the same time he emphasized the fact that the voluntary method of equalization was better than the process of equalization brought about by the arm of the state. The power of the state should be decentralized to the utmost possible extent; of course consistent with the welfare of the masses.

2. On machinery, Gandhi repeated how he wished that the unavoidable heavy machinery needed by a nation; should be held in common for the sake of the masses. This was done by the state; but more preferable, by small village communities, which would function largely like autonomous units within the state.
3. Gandhi's view on the state would have as little to do with it in human affairs as possible. He envisages an ideal condition when enlightened men would not need state made laws to keep them or right path. But as such a condition is humanly impossible of attainment at any point of time, we shall take to put up with a state to a more or less extent.
4. In that state, Gandhi would wish to see the interest of the toiling masses as its supreme concern. In fact, he would wish all men—except, of course, children and the aged and the sick to turn themselves voluntarily into manual labourers other may exist on sufferance, but only so long as their interest does not clash with the interest of the masses.
5. To Gandhi, a state would confiscate property if necessary, as well as hold, or be in control by the means of production on behalf of the masses.
6. Gandhi would prefer this control or ownership to lie with smaller, decentralized units. Where it is unavoidable, it should lie with the state. But whether the possession lies with the state or its decentralized, more or less autonomous units, it must always be run for the common benefit of labouring humanity, never for the sake of private gain, nor for that of one particular section of humanity, marked off from the rest by racial or religious considerations.
7. Gandhi believes that a state can only be established by awakening the labouring classes into a sense of their power and dignity. This can only be achieved through non-violent, non-cooperation and its corollary activities. Any other method may bring political power within the grasp of some party, but the masses will remain under the thumb of that party. Such a condition is not Swaraj or self-rule for the masses.

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## 13.11 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Question :

1. "Gandhi's conception of the State is neither completely like that of the anarchists nor of the communists"- Explain
2. Analyse Gandhi's theory of state?



3. Can Gandhi's theory of state be applicable in the modern world? Give your arguments in favour or against it.
4. Discuss Gandhi's moral view on the theory of state.
5. What are the economic and political features of Ram-Rajya.
6. Point out the differences between Marxian and Gandhian theory of State.

**Short Question :**

1. Point out Gandhi's general critique of the modern state.
2. Discuss the Gandhi's concept of Ram-Rajya.
3. Discuss the Gandhi's concept of decentralisation.

**Objective Questions (MCQ)**

1. What according to Gandhi was a 'soulless machine?'  
(a) Individual (b) Trust (c) Modern State (d) Society

Ans. : (c)

2. Gandhi's ideal state was called—  
(a) Ram Rajya (b) Khudai Raj (c) Satya Raj (d) Vedic Raj

Ans. : (a)

3. Who is the author of 'My Days with Gandhi?'  
(a) Bhikhu Parekh (b) Ramchandra Guha  
(c) Louis Fischer (d) Nirmal Kumar Bose

Ans. : (d)

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**13.12 Further Reading**

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## **Unit-14 □ Caste, Social Justice and Temple Entry Movement**

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### **Structure**

- 14.1 Objective**
- 14.2 Introduction**
- 14.3 History of Gandhi's Campaign against Untouchability**
- 14.4 Untouchability and Religious Scriptures**
- 14.5 Gandhi and Varna system**
- 14.6 Gandhi and Temple Entry Movement**
- 14.7 Conclusion**
- 14.8 Summing Up**
- 14.9 Probable Questions**
- 14.10 Further Reading**

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### **14.1 Objective**

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The objectives of this unit are :

- 1 To throw light on the practice of untouchability during pre-independence era where untouchables have no social, economic, political rights and equality.
- 1 To understand Gandhi's continuous effort to eradicate this taboo from the Indian society so that the unity and integrity of the country will not be destroyed.

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### **14.2 Introduction**

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The practice of untouchability is deeply embedded in the Hindu social structure, and has existed for several centuries. It has an obscure and controversial origin. It was enforced with varying degrees of rigidity in different areas and had reached the most degrading level in some parts of the South where the untouchables were even forbidden to walk along certain roads or required to make noises in order the caste

Hindus could move out of their shadow. Throughout India, they were confined to the outskirts of villages, denied access to commonly used wells, rivers, temples, markets and other public places, systematically exploited and brutally punished for giving the slightest offence to caste Hindus.

However, during its long history, the practice of untouchability was never without its critics. The dominant *advaita* tradition, which stressed the unity of all men and indeed of all existence, could have provided a powerful critique of it. The dominant *advaita* tradition, which stressed the unity of all man and indeed of all existence, could have provided a powerful critique of it. Ramanuja, one of the greatest philosophical critics of *advaita*, was also one of the first to condemn it. The Bhakti movement, too, attacked untouchability on similar grounds. The Tantric and other schools went further and they rejected the caste system itself

Since untouchability aroused strong feelings among the Hindus and many of them believed in it themselves, most early nineteenth century Hindu reformers took little interest in it and concentrated their energies on such largely high-caste practices as sati, child marriage, ban on widow remarriage and overseas travel. Though criticized by isolated writers and movements from about the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, untouchability did not become a subject of active national campaign until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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### **14.3 History of Gandhi's Campaign against Untouchability**

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When Gandhi appeared on the Indian political scene, the campaign against untouchability had been under way for about two decades. Though Gandhi had long disapproved of untouchability he first began to criticize it publicly in South Africa. During the course of his campaign against its racist policies, he was repeatedly told by the whites that men in glass houses were better advised not to throw stones on others. The fact that for centuries Hindus had been treating large masses of their own people as untouchables showed that equality was not a value for them. Accordingly Gandhi began to attack untouchability in South Africa. He continued the attack on his return to India and repeatedly reminded his countrymen that so long as they treated some of their own people as untouchables, they could not consistently blame the Canadian, South African and other foreign governments for treating them as 'pariahs of the empire.'

When Gandhi became leader of the independence movement, he discovered yet another and far more important reason for abolishing untouchability. He saw that the deeply divided Indians were an easy prey to the British policy of 'divide and rule' and

that their demands were never taken seriously. He began to explore ways of uniting the two major communities of Hindus and Muslims and saw a golden opportunity in the Khilafat agitation.

Gandhi clearly pointed out: “Non-cooperation against the government means cooperation among the governed, and if Hindu do not remove the sin of untouchability there will be no Swaraj whether in one year or in one hundred years..... Swaraj is an unattainable without the removal of the sins of untouchability as it is without the removal of the sins of untouchability as it is without Hindu-Muslim unity”.

The two important features of Gandhi’s attack on untouchability during this period were—First, he criticized it on the ground that its continued existence hindered national unity and harmed the cause of Indian Independence. Second, he repeatedly compared the untouchables to the Muslims and asked the Hindus to make common cause with them in the same way that they had done with the latter.

Though Gandhi continued to argue against untouchability on political grounds, he increasingly began to feel that this was not enough. The political argument made only a limited impression of the orthodox Hindus, who neither believed that the struggle for independence required the abolition of untouchability nor cared for one bought at such a ‘heavy’ price. It made an impression of the illiterate masses either. For these and other reasons, Gandhi wanted caste Hindus to agree to its abolition not for ‘ulterior’ political reasons but out of genuine conversion. He also felt that untouchability was not an integral part of Hinduism, and that he owed it to his religion to show that it possessed the resources to mount a successful critique of it. For these and other related reasons, Gandhi decided to debate with the orthodox on their grounds.

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## 14.4 Untouchability and Religious Scriptures

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The sanatanists had long argued that untouchability was enjoined by the scriptures. Gandhi asked for evidence. When they produced passages from different texts, including the *Manusmriti*, he rejoined that these were interpolations or open to different interpretations. They denied this and the resulting debate was either inconclusive or to his disadvantage. When challenged to a public debate by Shankaracharya and some Hindu pundits, Gandhi wisely declined saying he was prepared to explain to them his position on untouchability but not to enter into an exegesis on religious texts.

Gandhi went on to argue that religious texts were necessarily articulated at two levels. They propounded eternally valid values and principles and were intended to

guide all men everywhere. They were also, however, written in a specific society at a specific time, and recommended practices and institutions most likely to realize these values in the specific circumstances of that society and age. Religious texts thus both transcended and were conditioned by time. While their values were eternally valid, the practices they recommended had only a limited validity.

So Gandhi wrote:- “*Shastras* are ever growing.....Each grew out of the necessities of particular periods, and therefore they seem to conflict with one another. These books do not enunciate anew the eternal truths but show how those were practised at the time to which the books belong. A practice which was good enough in a particular period would, if blindly repeated in another, lead people into the ‘slough of despond’.

For Gandhi, the spirit of Hinduism consisted in its ‘three fundamental precepts’, namely *satyan nasti paro dharma* (there is no religion higher than truth), *ahimsa paramo dharma* (non-violence is the highest religion), and *brahma satyam jagat mithya* (Brahma alone is real, the world is trivial or inconsequential). Sometimes he added such others as the unity of man, of life and of all creation, *karuna* and *daya*. These and other related values which constituted the ‘spirit of Hinduism’ provide the hermeneutical canons of Hindu scriptures. Untouchability was clearly incompatible with them. Indeed it was grotesque to suggest that a religion which enjoined tender concern for animals and even plants could ever wish to subject human beings to such a degrading treatment. Untouchability was and had to be an excrescence, a corruption, a perversion of the true spirit of Hinduism.

Gandhi’s appeal to the spirit of Hinduism attracted a few followers but had little influence on the orthodox. And they also repeated the charge that a man who had lived abroad for so long and confessed profound reverence for Christianity was hardly equipped to understand the spirit of his own religion.

Gandhi’s increasing frustration with the sanatanists came to a head during his most exasperating three-hour debate with the Brahmins of Travancore on 10, March 1925. They had long barred untouchables from passing along a road adjacent to a temple and practised not only untouchability but also unapproachability. When the untouchables launched a *satyagraha* in 1924, they met fierce resistance lasting over a year. Gandhi decided to visit Vaikkam and ‘convert’ the Brahmins.

Gandhi was deeply disturbed by the debate. Realising that it was getting nowhere, he offered the Brahmins three compromises, namely a referendum among the caste Hindus of the area, arbitration by a committee of three of whom two were to be

Brahmins, and a critical examination of the canonical status of the text in question by the learned pundits of Benaras or even Madras. The Brahmins rejected all three.

The Vaikkam *satyagraha* and Gandhi's frustrating debate with the Brahmins there and elsewhere led him to reconsider his mode of discourse on untouchability. He saw that though they were wrong and confused, they felt strongly about their beliefs and sincerely held that these has a scriptural basis. Gandhi seems to have thought that if he was to win them over, he had to earn their confidence and reassure them that he was as much concerned to preserve Hinduism as the most orthodox among them. He also realized that his reputation as reformer and as a man 'in love with Christianity', mischievously exploited by the sanatanists, alienated him from many a caste Hindu, cast doubt on his loyalty to his religion and weakened his claim to speak in its name. Gandhi therefore, decided to reiterate his Hindu credentials, proclaim his allegiance to his religion and to underplay his reformist intentions. He began to insist far more than he had hitherto done that he was a 'Hindu of Hindus saturated with the spirit of Hinduism' and that he 'loved his religion more than his life'. His problem therefore was how to justify reform in the language of tradition and make change synonymous with continuity.

He solved the problem by interpreting religion in general and Hinduism in particular in scientific terms. Hinduism, he argued, was not so much a religion as a science of the spirit constantly making new discoveries and reinterpreting its central insights in the light of the new *yuga*. During its history, it had frequently suffered degeneration and decay and had been saved from extinction by the timely reforms of courageous individuals. Gandhi said that he was doing no more than follow in their footsteps. He was not interested in reform for its own sake. He sought reform only because and only when it was necessary to preserve the religion he dearly loved. He wished to reform some aspects of it not because he was in love with some other religion to which he was anxious to see it conform, but because he needed to prune the noxious undergrowth so that its essential valued could reassert themselves and bring forth historically appropriate forms. He said:

"I call myself a sanatanist Hindu because I believe in the *Vedas*, *Upanishad*, the *Puranas*, and the writings left by the holy reformers. This belief does not require me to accept as authentic everything that passes as *Shastras*. I am not required to accept the *ipse dixit* or the interpretation of Pundits".

Such extraordinary remarks beautifully capture Gandhi's polemical strategy of using his opponents' weapons against them. The term sanatanist had a conservative connotation in popular parlance and referred to someone who uncritically accepted

established beliefs and practices. On Gandhi's definition a sanatanist was necessarily a social critic! He went even further and turned reform into a religious activity. The anti-reform traditionalist was not only a traitor to but utterly ignorant of his religion. Gandhi's post-Vaikkam discourse on untouchability was at once more traditional and more reformist than before.

But the sanatanists were unimpressed by Gandhi's arguments. In their views, he played fast and loose with their tradition and wholly misinterpreted its nature and history. Gandhi remained unmoved.

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## 14.5 Gandhi and Varna system

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Like many other national leaders, for a long time Gandhi saw no internal connection between untouchability and the varna system. Although untouchability was evil, the varna system was based on 'scientific principle'. Gandhi defended the varna system on several grounds. First it ensured the continuity of hereditary occupation, for him 'the soul of the caste system'. Hereditary occupation eliminated 'corrosive' competition and class war, was easier to learn and thus saved energy and time, and built up a reservoir of traditional skills.

Second, varna was 'another name of control'. By requiring each individual to observe specific norms of conduct and follow a specific norms of conduct and follow a specific occupation, it encouraged self-restraint and developed powers of self-discipline.

Third, varna was a self-governing social unit performing legislative, executive, judicial and other quasi-governmental functions and catering to the educational, social, welfare and other needs of its members.

Fourth, as India's long history showed, the varna system had saved it from total disintegration during periods of oppressive foreign rule and political instability, and preserved intact its religious and cultural tradition.

Finally, varna ordered and structured human relationships, provided a ready and easily mobilisable network of emotional, moral and economic support and constituted an effective safeguard against atomization and anomie.

Increasingly Gandhi came to realize that although good in principle and its original conception, in its current form the caste derived from varna system left a good deal to be desired. It divided the Hindus, bred hostility and suspicion, and hindered concerted action. He seems to have taken this view for two reasons First, the caste system was based on moral inequality. Man's dignity varied with his caste



so that the lower his caste, the lower was his status as a human being. The most degrading treatment meted out to untouchables was but a concentrated expression of the spirit of inequality inherent in the system. Second, the idea of pollution lay at the heart of the caste system. Untouchability was the most acute manifestation of this pervasive ethos of pollution.

Gandhi began to advocate a reformed caste system, especially after his Vaikkam visit. He was still in favour of its basic principles of functional differentiation and hereditary occupation, but thought that the social groups involved need not be exclusive and hierarchical. He proposed that the countless castes into which Hindu society had become divided should be regrouped on the basis of their occupational similarity and 'the old system of four *varnas* should be reproduced'. All *varnas* were to be treated as equal; inter-dining and, in some cases, even intermarriage were to be permitted; and no *varna* was to be considered unclean.

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## 14.6 Gandhi and Temple Entry Movement

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From 1920 onwards, Gandhi launched a systematic campaign against untouchability. He denounced it on every available occasion and debated with the orthodox along the lines discussed earlier. He started a weekly paper which regularly exposed its evil. He challenged the distinction between political and social question and asked the Congress to take up socially controversial matters. Under his leadership, the 1920 Congress session passed a resolution demanding that the untouchables be admitted to Hindu temples. National schools and colleges set up during the Non-Cooperation Movement were required to admit them and to campaign actively against untouchability. Under Gandhi's guidance, the 1921 Congress session in Ahmedabad passed a resolution requiring among other things, that everyone participating in the pledge of untouchability.

As a way of emphasizing Hindu guilt and the helplessness and innocence of the untouchables, he started calling them Harijans. For several years Gandhi concentrated all his efforts on an educational campaign among the caste Hindus and welfare work among the Harijans. Although his efforts were sincere, they achieved little. In 1920, 21, 23 AICC session was in favour of removing untouchability. It demand for letting untouchables in temples. The resolution was taken in INC under Gandhi's initiative.

He was acutely aware of the fact that his educational campaign was making little impact. When some of his followers decided to force the issue and launched in 1924 satyagraha in Vaikkam, he gave it his approval. It lasted a year, provoked fierce resistance and caused considerable hardship to the satyagrahis.

In the meantime the untouchables were getting impatient. The Mahars of Maharashtra marched to Chowdar tank at Mahad in 1927 and drank water in defiance of the traditional social ban. This led to serious clashes between them and the caste Hindus. Later during the year, they ceremoniously burned a copy of Manusmriti in whose name untouchability was widely justified. They launched a temple entry satyagraha in Poona in 1929 which lasted for nearly four months and achieved little. Many local Congressmen disapproved of it and even attempted to defeat it. The Kalaram temple satyagraha in Nasik, in 1930 was even more bitter and subverted by a number of local Congressmen. In the same year Swami Satyananda led the Munshiganj Kali temple entry satyagraha in Bengal which also encountered hostility from local Congressmen, attracted little upper caste support and only succeeded after considerable hardship. These and other satyagrahas resulted in no more than about half a dozen out of several hundred temples being thrown open to Harijans. Confronted with the rash of satyagrahas, the national Congress leadership criticized Harijan militancy and urged patience. Some of the frustrated untouchable leaders pressed the old demand for a separate electorate only to be told by the Motilal Nehru Committee in 1928 that it was 'unsound and harmful'. Gandhi was acutely aware that the Harijans were getting restless and the caste Hindus remained opaque to his appeals.

When the British government decided in 1932 to grant the Harijans a separate electorate and raised the spectre of a major split within the Hindu community. He announced a 'fast unto death' on 20 September, 1932.

After the announcement of communal award the 'epic fast' which lasted for six days, had a considerable impact. It triggered off a public debate and forced the Hindus to concentrate on the issue they had hitherto taken very lightly. The day before the fast started, twelve temples in Allahabad were thrown open to the untouchables. On the day of the fast, the Kalighat Temple of Calcutta and the Ram Mandir of Benaras—the citadel of Hindu orthodoxy—were thrown open. In Bombay, where a nationalist women's organization conducted a poll of worshippers in front of seven big temples, 24,798 voted for and 445 against the admission of untouchables. Thousands of prominent Hindu women accepted food from the hands of the untouchables, and at the Benaras Hindu University the principal and scores of Brahmins dined publicly with them. Such scenes were repeated in almost every village and every city. During Gandhi's fast many Hindus avoided cinema, theatres, restaurants and other places of public entertainment, postponed weddings and pledged not to practise untouchability and allow it to be practised in their families. Although many of these gestures were largely symbolic, they did reflect a genuine spirit of reform and

a deep moral stirring within the Hindu psyche. Thanks to Gandhi's fast, untouchability was now placed at the top of the national agenda and its champions were thrown on the defensive.

Abolition Week was observed throughout India from 27 September until 2 October and help crystallize and consolidate the new level of awareness. In February 1933, he started *Harjan Weekly* to publicise the good work done in different parts of the country and to expose lapses. Gandhi thought the progress slow and uneven and embarked upon yet another fast of twenty-one days in April 1933. From November 1933 until July 1934 he undertook an all-India *Harijan* tour of 12,500 miles, travelling from village to village, mobilizing students, women and even children, and carrying the battle to the bastions of orthodoxy.

Gandhi's renewed campaign was conducted at two related by different levels. He continued to attack untouchability in moral and religious terms and to mobilize Hindu feelings of guilt and repentance as he had hitherto done. He also, however, began to stress its political dangers far more strongly than he had done during the Non-Cooperation Movement. The political argument injected a much-needed and long-overdue sense of urgency in the debate and made the Hindu realize that they could no longer treat untouchability as a marginal issue.

During this period, Gandhi helped set up the All-India Anti-Untouchability League as an integral part of his campaign. Its nine-member board of management had three Harijans and it was explicitly committed to fighting untouchability.

On August 17, 1932, MacDonald announced the Communal Award, giving separate electorates to different communities including the untouchables. Gandhi resisted this scheme and began his fast on September 20, while in jail. Other leaders like Rajen babu, Rajaji and other Congress leaders who were not in jail appealed to Hindus to open their temples to the untouchables and to work vigorously for the removal of this stigma from Hindu society. Hundreds of temples in Allahabad, Banaras, Calcutta and some other places in Indian states were thrown open to the untouchables.

Temple entry was the primary issue before Gandhi. Ambedkar and the socialists did not give temple entry the priority that Gandhi gave it. Without minimizing the importance of the removal of the other disabilities of the Harijan, he held that nothing would bring about the great psychological change in the Harijans as the right to enter temples. He said he had been striving for years to identify himself with the masses. He therefore, understood the mass feeling better. "I am thinking of the uncultured

dumb many. After all, temples play a most important part in the life of the masses and I, who have been eager to my life to identify myself with the illiterate and the downtrodden, cannot be satisfied until all the temples are open to the outcastes of Hindu humanity.”

The other problem faced by Gandhi was that of the opening of the Guruvayur temple in Malabar in Kerala. He undertook fast unto death to get the temple opened to the Harijans.

On November 7, 1933, when he started his famous tour of India for the upliftment of the Harijans, he said: “Temples are for sinners, not for saints; but who is to judge where no man is without sin?” He asked the Hindus to shed their prejudice against the Harijans and drew them into their fold.

The equality that Gandhi claimed for the untouchables in Hindu society included the right to enter Hindu temples. It did not matter to him if these temples were built or endowed by caste Hindu. This insistence of Gandhi on temple entry was misunderstood by some intellectuals due to the influence of Marxist thought, which explains every human activity and institution in economic terms. Untouchability in India, as the race and colour problems in the West, rests upon the idea of the superiority of one section of people over the other. The untouchables inspite of his being treated cruelly by the caste Hindu, yet continues to profess the Hindu religion. He worships the same gods and goddesses. But he is denied access to the Hindu temples. Once the untouchable is allowed to entry into Hindu temples, the stigma attached to his community will no more be there, being deprived of its so called religious sanction. About this Gandhi said:

“Temple entry is the one spiritual act that would constitute the message of freedom to the ‘untouchables’ and assure them that they are not outcastes before God.”

“.....It is not a question of Harijans asserting their right of temple entry or claiming it. They may or may not want to enter that temple even when it is declared open to them. But it is the bounden duty of every caste Hindu to secure that opening for Harijans.”

In consonance with his views about temple entry of Harijans, Gandhi made it a point not to enter a Hindu temple which was not open to Harijans.

Soon differences arose. Ambedkar, one of the three Harijan members, wanted it to launch a nationwide civil rights movement. He also demanded that the League

should attack not just untouchability but the caste system itself and vigorously campaign against the taboos on inter-caste dining and marriage. Then his proposals were turned down he resigned, followed by the other two Harijan members. It would seem that not just ideological differences but also personal pique, vanity and misunderstanding had influenced their decision.

Gandhi and his colleagues seem to have felt that they had made a mistake in setting up a joint Hindu-Harijan body explicitly devoted to a frontal attack on untouchability. They changed the League's character, objectives and name. They reconstituted it as Servants of Untouchables Society or Harijan Sevak Sangh and decided not to include Harijans in its management.

This Sangh concentrated on Harijan welfare and began to the Sangh, an 'organisation of penitent sinners' as Gandhi called it, gave scholarships to Harijan children, set up hostels, ran industrial schools, sank wells and provided clean water. Although it had a well-motivated staff, its severely limited resources made it extremely difficult for it to reach out to the villages.

Untouchability Abolition Bill introduced in the Legislative Assembly in March 1933. While the Bill was going through the various stages, the government announced elections. Fearing that it might lose them the votes of caste Hindus, Congress members withdrew their support. After the election, the bill was never taken up. Gandhi remained more or less silent throughout the election campaign and tended to blame Ranga Iyer for not fully taking the Congress into his confidence.

Overtaken by the Second World War and the Partition of the country, and desperately anxious not to divide and weaken the independence movement, Gandhi decided to leave untouchability alone. However, he was convinced that he had succeeded in creating the necessary moral consensus for its abolition and that the government of independent India should be able to enact appropriate legislation without fear of popular resistance.

Gandhi was keen that the Constitution of independent India should lay down the basic framework of such a programme. He took considerable interest in the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly and kept in close touch with its leaders. It would seem that it was Gandhi who had been largely instrumental in encouraging Nehru to appoint Ambedkar as Law Minister in his 1946 Cabinet. Ambedkar drafted large parts of the Constitution and successfully piloted it through the Constituent Assembly. However, in independent India prohibition of untouchability Act was finally passed.

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## 14.7 Conclusion

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Gandhi's contribution to the eradication of untouchability was considerable and greater than that of any other Indian leader. By skillful combination of moral, religious and political appeals and personal example, he shamed and mobilized the Hindu masses, stirred their consciences, awakened their sense of responsibility, and created a powerful body of public opinion demanding and willing to carry through an anti-untouchability programme.

Gandhi's contribution, however, had its limits. Though he discredited and undermined the intellectual and moral basis of untouchability, he failed to shake its social, economic and political roots. Untouchability continued during his lifetime and does so even now, seventy years after Indian independence.

As we know, Gandhi took a religious view of untouchability and made its eradication an exclusively Hindu responsibility. They were therefore never involved in the struggle for their liberation and failed to develop a collective organization, a corporate identity, an indigenous leadership, a tradition of struggle and memories of collective action.

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## 14.8 Summing Up

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1. Gandhi was taking a narrowly religious view of untouchability not only reinforced Harijan passivity but also betrayed his own profound political insight that no system of oppression could be ended without the active involvement and consequent political education and organization of its victims.
2. The lack of active Harijan involvement in the Congress and other organization had unfortunate consequences. Since Gandhi was surrounded by high-caste Hindus, his conscience remained his only protection against their constant and powerful pressure.
3. In addition to the absence of organised Harijan pressure, it would seem that Gandhi's own analysis of the situation led him to adopt a highly cautious approach. He seems to have been deeply worried about the growing Harijan militancy. Gandhi became even more disturbed when the three Harijan

members on the board of management of the All India Anti-Untouchability League resigned in protest against its conservative agenda and approach.

4. Gandhi had decided to proceed with extreme caution, beginning with temples, the places most likely to reconcile the two communities, and gradually moving towards the highly contentious social, economic and political issues. Once the question of temple-entry was more or less settled and Gandhi began to move towards the other issues, he ran into powerful political opposition. Guided by both the need to preserve the precarious unity of the independence movement and his own deep political and social fears, he adopted an extremely cautious approach.
5. He discouraged satyagrahas, urged the harijans not to press for a faster pace of change, and pinned his hopes on the cumulative impact of the new moral climate he had created, the policies of independent India and the social logic of industrialization. Had he actively mobilized the Harijans and involved them in his campaign, he would have changed the political equation in a manner that would have enabled him to take greater risks.
6. Untouchability was both a moral and a political problem: the former because its eradication involved undermining its moral legitimacy and changing, or at least softening, Hindu attitudes; the latter because it was deeply rooted in the highly unequal structure of power relationship between the upper castes and the Harijans and could not be removed without restructuring it. It had therefore to be fought at both levels.
7. Gandhi's campaign was conducted only at the moral and religious level. Hence, he concentrated on caste Hindus rather than the Harijans, appealed to their sense of duty and honour, mobilized their feeling of shame and guilt, and succeeded in achieving his initial objective of discrediting untouchability.
8. Gandhi's campaign was unable to go further because it gave the Harijans dignity but not power; moral and, to some extent, social but not political and economic equality; self-respect but not the self-confidence to organize and fight their own battles. Gandhi's campaign won the crucial first round against untouchability and permanently discredited it, but it did not and could not enter the equally crucial second round against the high-caste economic and political domination.

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## 14.9 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions:

1. Critically discuss the practice of untouchability?
2. Can it be argued that there is a contradiction between the critique of untouchability and his advocacy of a modified version. Give reasons.
3. What is temple entry movement? Discuss the role of Gandhi in it?
4. What were the important steps taken by Gandhi for the eradication of untouchability?
5. How Gandhi relates the three fundamental precepts of Hinduism for removal of the untouchability?
6. What led Gandhi to reconsider his mode of discourse of untouchability?

### Short Questions:

1. What do you mean by Untouchables?
2. What role Congress and Gandhi played for untouchables?
3. Point out the criticism levelled by different traditions on untouchability.

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. For Gandhi, the spirit of Hinduism consisted in—  
(a) Satya nasti paro dharma (b) Ahimsa paramo dharma  
(c) Brahma satyam Jagat mithya (d) All of these

Ans. : (d)

2. What was the common term used by Gandhi in his reference to the Untouchables?  
(a) Harijans (b) Caste Hindu (c) Scheduled Caste (d) Scheduled Tribes

Ans. : (a)

3. In which year Untouchability Abolition Bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly?  
(a) 1932 (b) 1933 (c) 1934 (d) 1935

Ans. : (b)



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## 14.10 Further Reading

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## **Unit-15** □ **Concept of Swadeshi**

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### **Structure**

- 15.1 Objective**
- 15.2 Introduction**
- 15.3 Gandhi's vision of Swadeshi**
- 15.4 Economic dimension of Swadeshi**
- 15.5 Political dimension of Swadeshi**
- 15.6 Social dimension of Swadeshi**
- 15.7 Swadeshi in Religion**
- 15.8 Swadeshi in Education**
- 15.9 Swadeshi in Health Care**
- 15.10 Conclusion**
- 15.11 Summing Up**
- 15.12 Probable Questions**
- 15.13 Further Reading**

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### **15.1 Objective**

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The objective of this unit are :

- 1 To throw light on the Gandhi's conception of Swadeshi.
- 1 Gandhi's visalisation of Swadeshi in all the spheres of our life like social, political, economic, culture, religion, health care and education which helps in the overall development of the Indian society.

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### **15.2 Introduction**

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Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century even before the term swaraj acquired common currency in the nationalist movement—the Congress sought to justify their

doctrine of boycott of British goods in the name of swadeshi or patriotism. When Gandhi entered the Indian scene, he was able to restore to the term swaraj its older meaning while retaining its newer sense, to reinterpret the term swadeshi and its application to point to the close connection between individual self-rule and individual self-reliance, between national self-government and national self-dependence. He derived the doctrine of swadeshi from his concept of ahimsa.

Gandhi's vision of swadeshi is a universal concept even though he propounded it in the context of India's struggle for freedom. He used swadeshi as a means to achieve India's swaraj. India's struggle for freedom was a source of inspiration for many non-violent struggles in different parts of the globe. Gandhi's concept of swadeshi and its manifestations are important facets of human life. Swadeshi as a generic concept covers almost every aspect of human life, all his ideas, concepts, methods and programmes.

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### **15.3 Gandhi's vision of Swadeshi**

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Gandhi described swadeshi as 'law of laws' ingrained in the basic nature of human being. It is a universal law. Like nature's law it needs no enacting. It is self-acting one. When one neglects or disobeys it due to ignorance or other reasons, the law takes its own course to restore to the original position like the laws of nature. The necessity for the inclusion of swadeshi as a vow is due to the fact that the people have forgotten this law; to use Gandhi's own words, the law is sunk into oblivion. A person by temperament following this law need not follow it as a vow, that is, a rare thing. According to Gandhi, swadeshi in its ultimate and spiritual sense stands for the final emancipation of the soul from her earthly bondage. Therefore, a votary of swadeshi has to identify oneself with the entire creation in the ultimate quest to emancipate the soul from the physical body, as it stands in the way of realising oneness with all life. This identification is possible only by performing the primary duty, that is, the service of one's immediate neighbour. In outward appearance, it may look as exclusion or disservice to others, i.e., the rest of humanity. Pure service can never result in disservice to the far away person. In swadeshi there is no distinction between one's own and other people. With the temptation of serving the whole world, if one fails to perform the duty towards the immediate neighbours, it is a clear violation of the very principle of swadeshi. The very first step of serving the world starts with the immediate neighbour. Service to the nearest individual is service to the Universe. According to Gandhi, swadharma in Gita interpreted in terms of one's physical environment gives us the Law of Swadeshi. Gandhi quotes Gita "It is best

to die performing one's own duty or Swadharma. Paradharna, or another's duty, is fraught with danger." Further Gandhi explains: "What the Gita says with regard to swadharma equally applies to swadeshi also, for swadeshi is swadharma applied to one's immediate environment." The law of swadeshi demands that one should not take more than required to discharge the legitimate obligations towards the family. In swadeshi there is no space for selfishness and hatred. It is the highest form of altruism and acme of universal service in the Gandhian scheme. In the light of the above understanding and after much thinking and reflection, Gandhi defined swadeshi as the "spirit in us which restricts us to the use and services of our immediate, to the exclusion of the more remote." This definition is perhaps the best explanation of his concept.

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## **15.4 Economic dimension of Swadeshi**

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Gandhi was convinced that the deep poverty prevailing among masses was mainly due to the ruinous departure from the path of swadeshi in the economic and industrial life. Gandhi advocated that one who follows the spirit of swadeshi should use only things that are produced by our immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient, and strengthen them in areas where they are found deficient. During the time of India's struggle for independence Gandhi realised that the economic salvation of India consists in encouraging and reviving indigenous industries. Gandhi found khadi as the necessary and most important corollary of the principle of swadeshi in its practical application to society. Khadi fulfils the kind of service envisaged in swadeshi. Gandhi himself asked the question: 'What is the kind of service... the teeming millions of India most need at the present time, that can be easily understood and appreciated by all, that is easy to perform and will at the same time enable the crores of our semi-starved countrymen to live?' He found the answer, that it was universalising khadi or spinning wheel which fulfil these conditions. For him, khadi is the Sun of the village solar system. The various industries are the planets which can support khadi. Khadi mentality means decentralisation of production and distribution of the necessities of life. Gandhi advocated the concept of swadeshi in the spirit of universal love and service. A votary of swadeshi will give preference to local products even if they are of inferior grade or dearer in price than things manufactured elsewhere and try to remedy the defects of local manufacturers. Gandhi warned the votary of swadeshi against making it a fetish. "To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign, and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited, would be

criminal folly, and a negation of the swadeshi spirit. A true votary of swadeshi will never harbour ill-will towards the foreigner: he will not be actuated by antagonism towards anybody on earth. Swadeshism is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest ahimsa, i.e. Love". In the swadeshi economic order there will be healthy exchange of products and not cut-throat competition through the play of market forces. Gandhi explains this ideal situation in the following words: "If we follow the swadeshi doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find out neighbours who can supply our wants and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to proceed, assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation. Then every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages where they are not locally producible." In such an economic system there will be an organic relationship between production, distribution and consumption.

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## **15.5 Political dimension of Swadeshi**

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The application of swadeshi in politics calls for the revival of the indigenous institutions and strengthening them to overcome some of its defects. Gandhi pleaded the need for internal governance (swaraj) as early as 1909 in his noted booklet *Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule*. He wanted to empower the people through political self governance. His vision of decentralized political system was Panchayati Raj by which the innumerable villages of India were governed. He succinctly describes it as follows: "The government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. Since there will be no system of punishment in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world." Gandhi further outlined his vision of village swaraj by introducing the concept of oceanic circle in opposition to pyramidal structure of society, placing individual at the centre of the society. "In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last

the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.”m

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## **15.6 Social dimension of Swadeshi**

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Applying the spirit of swadeshi in the context of Indian social structure, Gandhi initially accepted the institution of Varna associated with it. He welcomed the four-fold division of the society purely based on duties performed by different sections of people. Gandhi considered all professions as equally important. He made an earnest attempt to overcome the defects of the caste system by discarding certain obnoxious practices which he considered as historical accretion, which was not the integral part of original system. He vehemently opposed the prevailing caste system based on birth and the social status attached to it. That was the reason why he launched one of the most relentless battles against the curse of untouchability which was a part and parcel of the caste system in India. Gandhi looked at the scourge of untouchability as a blot on Hinduism. He was so much convinced that he did not even hesitate to take up cudgels on the behalf of untouchables against the upper caste Hindu orthodoxy. In the process so much animosity was created among orthodox upper caste and several attempts were made to eliminate him. Unmindful of the risks involved, he stuck to the position till the end of his life. He totally identified with the untouchables and their uplift became his primary concern. Similarly he was deeply concerned about the problems and plight of the vulnerable sections of the society viz., Dalits , women, tribals, lepers and so on. He believed that true swaraj can be attained only by uplifting these deprived sections of the society. Gandhi included the uplift of these sections in his 18 point Constructive Programme. It was primarily drawn taking into account the social realities of our country. Gandhi’s Constructive Programme aimed at reconstruction of society through voluntary and participatory social action. In a sense the constructive work plays the role of civil society/NGOs. Gandhi looked upon Constructive Programme as a ‘truthful and nonviolent way of winning Poorna Swaraj’.

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## **15.7 Swadeshi in Religion**

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To follow the spirit of Gandhi’s swadeshi in the field of religion one has to restrict to the ancestral religion. It calls for the use of one’s immediate religious surroundings. It is the duty of a person to serve one’s own religion by purging its defects, if necessary, in order to purify and keep it pure. There is no need to renounce

one's religion because of imperfections in it and embrace another. On the contrary one should try to enrich one's own religion by drawing the best from other religions. However, Gandhi was not against true conversion and he differentiated it from proselytization. According to Gandhi, conversion in the sense of self purification, self realisation is the crying need of the hour. His attitude was not of patronising toleration but developing the spirit of fellowship. His veneration for other faiths was the same as that of his own faith. He believed in the fundamental equality of all religions, what he called Sarvadharmā Samābhava. Gandhi's swadeshi approach to religion has great significance in the context of growing communal divide and religious fundamentalism in India and other parts of the globe. This approach is essential to promote harmony among the followers of various faiths and preserving the composite culture of a country like India.

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## 15.8 Swadeshi in Education

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One of the major areas in which Gandhi applied his swadeshi ideal was the field of education. For him, education was meant for all-round development of personality and not purely as a means for earning one's livelihood. In Hind Swaraj he rejected the British educational system prevailing in India. His primary objection against British educational system was that it was primarily meant for 'enslaving' the people of India. It was his firm conviction that the prevailing system of education does not serve the requirements of the country in any form or shape. He believed that education has to be rooted in the culture and traditions of the country. Education through a medium of foreign language put undue stress upon the nerves of the children and they become foreigners in their own country. They are completely cut off from the realities of life. He placed before the nation an alternative system of education called Nai Talim or Basic education. He defined education as follows: "By Education, I mean, an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training." In his scheme the craft was the pivot and centre of all educational activities. Through the medium of craft he correlated all other subjects to the central craft. It was a self sufficient and self supporting system of education meant for children above the age of seven which was meant to be free and compulsory. He placed before the nation alternative institutions like Gujarat Vidyapith, Kashi Vidyapith and others during the

struggle for independence. Later he broadened his concept of basic education and looked upon education as a lifelong process starting from cradle to grave.

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## 15.9 Swadeshi in Health Care

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Gandhi's prescription for health was an application of principle of swadeshi .i.e. to live according to the laws of nature. He strongly opposed the modern medical system in his seminal work Hind swaraj. He went even to the extent of describing hospitals as "institutions for propagating sin." He rejected the modern medical system primarily on the ground that it is purely curative and not preventive. He advocated a new system of medical care wherein one follows the laws of nature with regard to diet, physical exercise, hygiene and sanitation and a new life style based on self restraint. He advocated the system of nature cure to prevent the diseases rather than finding a purely drug based cure for them. In this he underlined the centrality of proper use of earth, water, air, sunlight and ether. He primarily emphasised a holistic approach to health care where it will primarily be governed by disciplined way of life. It is also notable that health care was one of his passions since his South African days. He experimented with different kinds of nature cure including the inexpensive and nutritious food which people could easily avail. Not only that, he was instrumental in establishing a nature cure centre at Urulikanchan near Pune and even started practising nature cure. In fact during the last years of life a new dimension to nature cure practice was added in the form of Ram nam. It must be made clear that for him Ram nam was not like an ordinary mantra to be chanted. It was a part of his spiritual sadhana based on his firm belief that a man with total internal purity would not fall sick or even he would require no medicine other than Ram nam. Here Ram stands for one of the names of God and one can freely choose any other name of God which appeals to him. That was the reason he refused to take medicine in the fag end of his life including the Noakhali mission. Ram nam was nothing but a spiritual means for self purification thereby eliminating all possibilities of illness by keeping the body pure.

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## 15.10 Conclusion

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It is obvious from the above analysis that swadeshi is key for basic understanding of the edifice of Gandhi's philosophy of life. He successfully demonstrated that the swadeshi spirit could be integrated in every walk of our national life. What is more, he did not stop only at conceptual level of swadeshi. He suggested concrete institutional set up in most of the areas of his concern. As stated earlier for Gandhi



life was holistic and indivisible and hence he presented an integrated plan covering virtually all aspects of human life. And that is the most distinctive nature of his thought which could really become a guiding principle for human resurgence. In fact he went beyond it and underlines the oneness of entire creations including the sentient and non-sentient beings. It is real pity that independent India failed to grasp the revolutionary nature of his thought and discarded them in the very initial years of freedom. Now it is more than clear that sooner or later, India, even the world, would have to take to Gandhian path to meet the challenges effectively. If not, it will be totally going against the law of universe which aeons ago our ancestors called *rita*.

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### 15.11 Summing Up

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1. Swadeshism is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest *ahimsa*, i.e. Love.
2. He believed in the fundamental equality of all religions, what he called *Sarvadharmā Samābhava*.
3. Gandhi defined *swadeshi* in 1947 as the “spirit which dictated man to serve his next door neighbour to the exclusion of any other.”
4. Gandhi through the thoughts and practices of *Swadeshi* advocated that, to reconstruct the internal economy as the “strongest bulwark, “against economic drain by Britain, India should first cease to be dependent upon foreign cloth.
5. Boycott of foreign goods means no more and no less than boycott of foreign cloth. Foreign cloth constitutes the largest drain voluntarily permitted by people.
6. Gandhi probably opposed any kind of trade based on the principle of comparative advantage, but obviously did not exclude importing things that India could not produce.
7. Gandhi ascribed three important aims to his *khadi* movement: economic, by aiding unemployed manual workers; moral, by *khadi* movement: economic, by aiding unemployed manual workers; moral, by eradicating idleness through labouring; and political, at the final stages of eradicating idleness through labouring; and political, at the final stages of *swadeshi*, by preconditioning civil disobedience that would eventually bring about the surrender of the Indian government.

8. The concept of Swadeshi, according to Mahatma Gandhi, was to attain self-sufficiency which included employment of unemployed people by encouraging village industries and towards building a non-violent society.
9. The negative element (This can be considered negative only with regard to the British) of the economic Swadeshi was the boycott and burning of foreign goods. Though Manchester cloth was the chief target of attack, the movement was extended to other British manufacturers also, such as salt and sugar as well as luxury goods in general.
10. The ideas of Swadeshi and economic boycott was kept alive and brought home to every door by articles in newspapers, processions, popular songs, enrollment of volunteers to keep vigilant watch and by occasion bonfires of foreign cloth, salt and sugar.
11. The Post-Independence “Swadeshi Movement” has developed forth differently than its pre-independence counterpart. While the pre-independence movement was essentially a response to colonial policies, the post-independence Swadeshi Movement sprung forth as an answer to increasingly oppressive imperialistic policies in the post-Second World War climate.

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## 15.12 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. How Gandhi visualised Swadeshi in religion?
2. Discuss Gandhi’s Swadeshi in education and health care?
3. Does swadeshi helps Indian in the freedom struggle against Britishers? How did it helps in the development process and upliftment of the masses in the society?
4. What were Gandhi’s views on economic and political dimensions of Swadeshi?
5. Discuss Gandhi’s social views on Swadeshi?
6. In what ways khadi is corollary to the principle of Swadeshi?

### Short Questions :

1. What do you mean by Swadeshi and Swaraj?
2. Discuss Gandhi’s vision of Swadeshi?
3. Discuss how Gandhi view education in the concept of Swadeshi?

**Objective Questions (MCQ)**

1. From which religious text Gandhi borrowed the concept of Swadharma?

- (a) Vedas (b) Upanishad (c) Gita (d) Puranas

Ans. : (c)

2. Which movement in India popularised the usage of Khadi?

- (a) Swadeshi Movement (b) Khilafat Movement  
(c) Non Cooperation Movement (d) Quit India Movement

Ans. : (a)

3. In which state Gandhi was instrumental in establishing a nature cure centre?

- (a) West Bengal (b) Maharastra (c) Gujrat (d) Tamil Nadu

Ans. : (b)

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**15.13 Further Reading**

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1. Gandhi, M. K., From Yervada Mandir, Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 2007.
2. Gandhi, M. K., Hind Swaraj Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 2004, p.51
3. Ramana Rao, M.V., A Short History of the Indian National Congress, New Delhi: 1982.
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6. Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar, From Plassey to Partition—A History of Modern India, New Delhi: 2004.

**Module – II**  
**Satyagraha and Trusteeship**



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## **Unit-6 □ Theory of Satyagraha**

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### **Structure**

#### **6.0 Objective**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

#### **6.2 Concept of the philosophy of Satyagraha**

#### **6.3 Genesis and Meaning of Satyagraha**

#### **6.4 Satyagraha vs. Passive Resistance**

#### **6.5 Gandhi and the concept of Truth, Ahimsa and Satyagraha: An intrinsic connection.**

#### **6.6 Distinction between Satyagraha and Duragraha**

#### **6.7 Means and Ends in Satyagraha**

#### **6.8 Principles of Satyagraha: Role of Satyagrahis**

#### **6.9 Fundamental Rules Governing Satyagraha Campaign**

#### **6.10 Code of Discipline for Staging Satyagraha Campaign**

#### **6.11 Methods/Steps in a Satyagraha Campaign**

#### **6.12 Satyagraha in Action in South Africa and India**

#### **6.13 Conclusion**

#### **6.14 Summing Up**

#### **6.15 Glossary**

#### **6.16 Probable Questions**

#### **6.17 Further Reading**

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### **6.0 Objective**

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The study seeks to explain

- <sup>1</sup> Gandhi's vision and philosophy of the radical transformation of social order and political system through his doctrine of Satyagraha.

- 1 The genesis of the concept and the meaning of Satyagraha.
- 1 The distinction between Satyagraha and passive resistance pointing out the dynamic and higher character of Satyagraha than passive resistance.
- 1 Gandhi's enunciation of Truth, Ahimsa and Self-suffering as the basics to Satyagraha and its intrinsic connection.
- 1 The Differentiation between Satyagraha and Duragraha showing the violent resistance as Duragraha.
- 1 The superiority of Satyagraha as a means for ensuring justice and dignified and moral way of life as ends to democratic participation through non-violence.
- 1 The role of Satyagrahis in large scale political struggle following the principles of Satyagraha.
- 1 The importance of the fundamental rules governing Satyagraha campaign as well as elaboration of the code of discipline.
- 1 The contribution of Gandhi's method of Satyagraha campaign as the practical application of his theory of Satyagraha.
- 1 The discussion of Satyagraha in action in South Africa and India in the form of non-cooperation and Civil disobedience movements making Satyagraha as rebellion without element of violence.

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## 6.1 Introduction

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Gandhi, whom we all refer to as Mahatma Gandhi or The Father of the Nation was the inventor of Satyagraha. The title Mahatma which literally means a high soul which was given to him for inspiring the nation for civil rights and freedom across the world using non-violence and civil disobedience movements. He was the heart and soul of the fight for independence and brought down the British Empire to its knees by his very own weapons of non-violence, brotherhood and Satyagraha. It is well known to the world that his ideas and actions based on human rights made him become a Mahatma. Einstein's description of him as "the greatest man of our times" is a testimony of this dimension of Gandhi's personality. The Indian society was his laboratory. His experiments with truth have been done in this laboratory working for the transformation of society.

Gandhi's divinely gift or talent inspires great popular allegiance. It is this special quality of leadership by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary man endowed

with super human power and qualities—a charisma which attracted people from all walks of life. Dr. Rajendra Prasad in his book ‘At the Feet of Mahatma Gandhi’ described him ‘a modern replica in human form of the sacred Ganga’. Besides this, as visionary, he had a farsighted and creative outlook which convinced him that political freedom couldn’t be achieved with the conventional weapons. It needed a new weapon. He fashioned a totally a new weapon—a weapon the world had never dreamed of, namely, ‘Satyagraha’. Someone who practises Satyagraha is a Satyagrahi.

The term satyagrahi was coined and developed by Gandhi. He deployed satyagrahi in the Indian independence movement and also during his earlier struggles in South Africa for Indian rights. John V. Bondurant has rightly observed that satyagraha is a word coined to describe the technique Gandhi first used in South Africa and continued to develop in India readily understood to mean the Gandhian method of conducting conflict without violence. According to R.R.Diwakar, the word ‘Satyagraha’ is completely a remarkable addition to the Indian vocabulary with a new connotation. It is not merely a new word but it is also a new way of life as well as a unique technique of using the soul-force in man.

Satyagraha is a compound of two Sanskrit words, ‘Satya’-truth and ‘Agraha’ – firm grasping. Thus, etymologically, the meaning of satyagraha becomes firm grasping of truth. A Gandhian scholar, R. R. Diwakar in his book ‘My Encounter With Gandhi’, recalls Gandhi’s role ‘not merely as the architect of India’s freedom but also can be called as the inventor of a new weapon of resistance – Satyagraha, which relies entirely for its sharpening and use on inner resources, our soul, the very spirit of all human beings. Thus, the compound word Satyagraha implies firmness in truth or adherence to truth or insistence on truth or holding on to truth. Gandhi considers truth equivalent with non-violence or love, soul or spirit or morality. In other words, Satyagraha is ‘Truth Force’ or non-violent force or love force or soul force or moral force. Thus, the moral weapon to fight untruth with truth and violence with non-violence is described by Gandhi as Satyagraha. The concept aims at furtherance of love and self-purification. A Satyagrahi with love-force can solve all problems and conflicts by winning the hearts of the opponents. It is a relentless search for truth and a determination to reach truth through non-violent means. It is a philosophy of life. It is also the religion where he wanted all men to live by it. The Satyagrahi becomes fearless person, mentally strong by enduring physical suffering. The Satyagrahi must not use any sort of violence against the exploiter because his aim is to convert the opponent and to make him realise his mistake.



Through the three non-violent forms of Satyagraha such as Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Fasting, a Satyagrahi should conduct his direct action. All these are antidote to coercion. Gandhi believed that Satyagraha enables elevations of spiritual and moral qualities of an individual. Gandhi advocated that the purer the suffering, the greater the material and spiritual progress. The theory of Satyagraha has three main purposes; firstly, it purities the sufferers;

Secondly, it intensifies favourable public opinion and thirdly, makes a direct appeal to the soul of oppressor.

Gandhi was sure that morally belittling strategies and techniques of the colonial rulers would not be able to sustain themselves in the face of moral courage or conviction shown by the Indian masses. Hence, in order to match the brute force of the British Colonialism, Gandhi did not suggest the strategy of taking up arms to his fellow countrymen. Rather, he evolved an alternative strategy of mobilising the masses through his novel philosophy of Satyagraha based on non-violence. This is why the march of national movement in India under the leadership of Gandhi turned out to be a war of nerves between the moral force and soul force driven non-violent methods of taking on the British rule on the one hand, and the naked display of brute force on the part of the British Colonial administration on the other.

Thus, it is seen that the concept of Satyagraha is the outcome of Gandhi's inherent and deep devotion to truth with non-violence amidst life's manifold situation. It is Gandhi's moral war against evils of exploitation, injustice, inequality, tyranny and violence. This moral war is simply a means to realisation of a higher ideal i.e. 'to see God face to face' and to realise absolute truth. The clarion call of Satyagraha movement and peoples' wonderful response to it gives Satyagraha a novel invention of the creative mind and moral genius of Gandhi and that it is India's original contribution to the world.

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## **6.2 Concept of the Philosophy of Satyagraha**

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Gandhi's concepts of Satya and ahimsa lie at the heart of his entire social and political philosophy. He nurtured his own vision of the radical transformation of the existing social order and political system by evolving a revolutionary approach to political action and social change within the limits of the prevailing conditions of politics and society. Resistance to injustice and coercion as well as socio-political reconstruction have become an immediate agenda to be achieved through truth and

non-violence. His concept of Satya—the end, and ahimsa as the means determined his doctrine of Satyagraha or active resistance to authority.

Gandhi was vehemently opposed to the values and the very structure of modern civilization as a system of untruth and coercion, injustice and mutual exploitation. Gandhi, in his 'Hind Swaraj' (1908, published in Gujarati in 1909) denounced all the instruments and institutions of the western civilization. Similarly, he defined the state as the most organized and concentrated form of violence—a soulless machine. In the name of moulding the state into a suitable instrument of serving people, the state would abrogate the rights of the citizens, arrogate to itself the role of group protector and also demand abject acquiescence from them. Under this paradoxical situation, the citizens would be alienated from the state and at the same time enslaved to it which according to Gandhi was demoralising and dangerous. Gandhi thought it is necessary to evolve a mechanism to achieve the twin objectives of empowering the people as well as the state. It was for this that he developed the two pronged strategy of resistance to the state and reconstruction through voluntary and participatory socio-political actions. In this task, his doctrine of Satyagraha was meant to show how the man of conscience could engage in heroic action in the vindication of truth and freedom against all tyranny, challenging the conventional notion of authority, law and obligation. Such heroic action is popularly known as Satyagraha – a 'technique of non-violent public action'.

The emerging fact now is that Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha is an exceptional and novel way to resist evil. This is the heart and soul of the entire Gandhian theory and philosophy as well his exclusive contribution to the modern Indian Political thought. Gandhi, through this mechanism, aimed at resisting any kind of unjust, impure and untruthful acts.

By denouncing the modern state, what Gandhi held is tantamount to an anarchist view of the state. Gandhi's state is characterised as the doctrine of minimal state intervention in public life instead of its monstrous figure. Gandhi's image of a state is an enlightened anarchy in which "everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no state. But the ideal is never fully realised in life. Hence, the classical statement of Thoreau that the Government is best which governs the least". Gandhi believed, "I look upon an increase in the power of the state with the greatest fear, because, although while apparently doing good by

minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individually which lies at the root of all progress”.

Thus, his view of the relation between the state and the citizen followed from his exultation of satya and ahimsa as the ultimate values on which individual and social morality must be based. The moral authority of the citizen derives from his consistent pursuit of satya. The satya is to be achieved by employing ahimsa – a moral position superior to that of the state. Gandhi’s state is based on a democratic state, not an authoritarian state. Citizens are to submit their obligation to the laws of the democratic state.

Gandhi’s democratic state is akin to ‘Swaraj’, meaning all-round awakening—social, educational, moral, economic and political. The real swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. Gandhi makes ‘swaraj’ for the welfare of the masses, fulfilment of their basic needs as the basis of economic freedom. It reflects the inspiration that he derived from Ruskin. The India of My Dreams, as Gandhi envisioned, is the swaraj of the poor person. It would be a non-violent state composed of self-governing and self-sufficient village republic in which the majority would rule with due consideration to the rights of the minorities. It would be a participatory democracy whereby citizens would participate in the process of politics. Satyagraha is the glue that cements his ideal of enlightened anarchy and common good on the one hand and his ideals of individual autonomy and moral self-determination on the other. Like Thoreau, Gandhi stresses on the supremacy of the individual conscience against all claims of the state.

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### **6.3 Genesis and Meaning of Satyagraha**

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The term ‘Satyagraha’ was coined by Gandhi in 1906 in the early phase of his South African campaign to secure the elementary human rights of Indian Immigrants most of whom were brought in as indentured labour. In an answer to a question of the meaning of satyagraha, Gandhi replied, “To a man in the street or to an unsophisticated villager in any part of India, satyagraha stood for Gandhi’s way of fighting the British Raj. It was another name for war with in alien government”. Satyagraha may better be understood as a technique for solving conflict and a method of fighting evil. Gandhi distinguished his Satyagraha from the movement then going on in the United Kingdom and South Africa under the name of Passive resistance.

According to John V. Bondurant, “Satyagraha is a word coined to describe the technique of Gandhi first used in South Africa and continued to develop in India readily understood to mean the Gandhian method of conducting conflict without violence”. Bondurant further pointed out that “Satyagraha became something more than a method of resistance to particular legal norms; it became an instrument of struggle for positive objectives and for fundamental change.....” Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose defines Satyagraha as “a way of conducting ‘war’ by means of non-violence”. Krishnalal Sridharani defined satyagraha as “non-violent direct action”. His study on Satyagraha is titled “war without violence”. Thus, the philosophy of Satyagraha is centred on the foundation of non-violent action and resistance different from customary phrase of passive resistance. It is not merely a new word but it is also a new way of life as well as effecting social change through moral coercion and persuasion applied in all forms of social and political conflict. Satyagraha is so intimately linked with Gandhi’s life and thought that the word ‘Satyagraha’ has practically become synonymous with Gandhi. It is Gandhi’s ‘supreme invention, discovery or creation’.

The moral ‘satyagraha’ has an interesting history of its evolution. Gandhi labelled his movement in early stages as ‘passive resistance’. But very soon he realised that the English phrase ‘passive resistance’ was an inadequate description of his movement which was generating a new force giving rise to confusion and it appeared shameful to permit the great struggle to be known by an English name. He then endeavoured to find a new Indian vocabulary in connoting his movement. He invited suggestions through his article in ‘Indian opinion’ for the most appropriate name and announced a reward for the same. He was very much inclined to one Shree Maganlal’s suggestion of the word ‘saagraha’, meaning firmness in a good cause. Through an intense thinking on the term, Gandhi found the appropriate term ‘Satyagraha’ from the word ‘Sadagraha’ inscribed it in his book ‘Satyagraha in South Africa’. The word ‘satyagraha’ thus evolved representing the power of truth or moral force generated by non-violent resistance of the Indians in South Africa. He gave up the use of the term ‘Passive resistance’ and classed his movement by a new Indian name of ‘satyagraha’. Satyagraha is, therefore, a relentless search for truth and a determination to reach truth. In his youth the story of Prahlad and the drama of Harischandra had a lifelong influence upon him showing the exemplary devotion to truth. The ‘New Treatment’ and especially the ‘Sermon of the Mount’ had a deep influence on Gandhi in developing the term ‘Satya’. The doctrine of satyagraha also was derived from many sources such as Bhagavad Gita, from Tolstoy and Thoreau.

The word ‘Satyagraha’ is a compound of two Sanskrit terms, ‘satya’ – truth and ‘Agraha’ meaning ‘Grasp’. Thus, according to Bondurant, the etymological meaning

of the word 'Satyagraha' becomes firm grasping truth. According to R.R. Diwakar the etymological meaning of the word 'Satyagraha' stands for 'firm adherence to truth'. According to Gandhi, 'Satyagraha' means 'truth force'. He mentions; "Satyagraha's root meaning is holding on truth; hence truth force, I have also called it love-force or soul-force". His exposition of the literal meaning of the compound word 'Satyagraha' runs as follows: "Truth (Satya) implies love and firmness engenders power and therefore serves as synonym for force ... that is to say, the force which is born of truth; hence truth-force, I have also called it love-force or soul-force". So, Gandhi's Satyagraha is the bedrock of truth and Ahimsa.

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## 6.4 Satyagraha vs. Passive Resistance

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Gandhi was in favour of using the term Satyagraha in lieu of Passive resistance. Gandhi said, "I have drawn the distinction between passive resistance as understood and practised in the West and satyagraha before I had evolved the doctrine of the latter to its full logical and spiritual extent. I often used 'Passive resistance' and 'satyagraha' as synonymous terms; but as the doctrine of satyagraha developed, the expression 'Passive resistance' ceases even to be synonymous, as passive resistance has admitted violence as in the case of the suffragettes and has been universally acknowledged to be a weapon of the weak. Moreover, passive resistance does not necessarily involve adherence to truth under every circumstance. Therefore, it is different from Satyagraha in three essentials:

"Satyagraha is a weapon of the strong; it admits of no violence under any circumstances whatsoever; and it ever insists upon truth". Thus Gandhi in his own statement has clearly made clear the distinction between the two concepts. Gandhi further summed up his panegyric of passive resistance in Hind Swaraj in the following words: "Passive resistance is an all-sided sword, it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood it produces far-reaching results. It never rusts and cannot be stolen ..."

Although, in Hind Swaraj, Gandhi used the two terms synonymously but he sharpened the distinction between them in 'Satyagraha in South Africa, pointing out the differences between passive resistance and satyagraha.

- (a) Passive resistance offers resistance but it would never make us strong. On the other hand, Satyagraha makes us strong. Fostering the idea of strength, we grow stronger and stronger every day.

- (b) While there is no love in passive resistance, there is not only no place for hatred in Satyagraha, but it is a positive breach of its ruling principle.
- (c) While in passive resistance, there is a scope for the use of arms, in Satyagraha physical force is forbidden even in the most favourable circumstances. Brute force is negation of Satyagraha, but not necessarily of passive resistance.
- (d) Satyagraha may be offered to one's nearest and dearest, whereas passive resistance cannot unless they have ceased to be dear to us.
- (e) In passive resistance, there is always present an idea of harassing the other party, which in Satyagraha here is not the remotest idea of injuring the opponent.

On the whole, it may be pointed out that unlike passive resistance, Satyagraha is an endeavour of the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own pension. In this connection, he regarded Jesus Christ, as "the price of Passive Resistance", as a true Satyagrahi.

Thus, by making distinction between them Gandhi wanted to mean his Indian vocabulary of 'satyagraha' and the English phrase 'passive resistance' characterising the passive resistance as the 'North Pole from the South'. The real contrast by this phrase for him was between violent and non-violent, not between active and passive resistance.

The differentiation made by Gandhi exposes the fact that Satyagraha is a higher principle than the passive resistance. As a moral weapon, it purifies the sufferer, intensifies favourable public opinion and makes direct appeal to the soul of the oppressor. Passive resistance, as a political weapon believes in physical force, defiles the soul. The former is dynamic, while the latter is static.

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## **6.5 Gandhi and concepts of Truth, Ahimsa and Satyagraha: An intrinsic connection**

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Gandhi's enunciation of Satyagraha shows that a few precepts are basic to Satyagraha. Truth, Ahimsa or non-violence and Self-suffering are the principles on which Satyagraha is based. Understanding of these fundamentals combined with the skill in application determines the effective functioning of Satyagraha. The failure to comprehend these underlying assumption and the methods based on them may lead to the impression that any unarmed mass action inventive of its nature resembles Satyagraha. Appearance is not enough, he would emphasise, and the strength of this

technique lies in soul-force. So, in order to comprehend the technique one must try to have a precise grasp of the concepts of truth, non-violence and self-suffering as understood by Gandhi and employed by him in Satyagraha. The true meaning of Satyagraha cannot be explained without exploring the non-violence and self-suffering.

### **Truth**

Satyagraha means, 'the path of truth'. According to Gandhi, truth is moral, unified, unchanging and transcendental. Truth is as real and omnipotent as God himself. Truth is God. The world rests upon the bedrock of satya..... Which can never be destroyed? Truth can be defined as the right path and therefore power and persuasive. There is no greater duty than adherence to truth. But the search for truth is a continuous process. Man/woman is not capable of completely understanding or interpreting the meaning of truth in its absolute form. Truth could have different meanings to different people. It could be interpreted differently by different people. This emphasises the need for man/woman to be open regarding the meaning of truth and its numerous interpretation. The path of truth leads to justice. Justice requires that the adversary's views and requirements need to be given due consideration. An effort should be made to be empathetic and understanding with regard to the view point of the adversary. Justice requires that the final agreement should be acceptable to all concerned.

Gandhi's realisation of truth is 'seeing God face to face'. The path of the realisation of truth is different as a relative concept. Due to this relative character of truth, Gandhi had to take reform the course of action in different social and political problem. In this respect, Satyagraha is not a dogma. It is neither static nor substantial. For Gandhi holding on to truth in Satyagraha is a dynamic concept.

Then, a question crops up that how confusion can be avoided if striving after truth differs in every case. Gandhi finds the answer to this confusion in the relation Truth has with Ahimsa (non-violence).

### **Non-Violence (Ahimsa)**

Non-violence could be considered as a way towards the realisation of truth, but without ahimsa, it is not possible to seek and find Truth". Ahimsa and Truth are so interconnected that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. 'Ahimsa is not merely a negative state of harmlessness but it is a positive state of love, of doing good even to evil-doer. To Gandhi, ahimsa was not simply non-killing; it

took him to a much higher realm of being humane. A true follower of ahimsa, Gandhi taught, must refuse to offend anybody, not even harbour an uncharitable thought against an enemy.

Regarding the inseparableness of truth and non-violence in Satyagraha, Gandhi describes Satyagraha as follows; “It is a movement intended to replace methods of violence and it is a movement based entirely on truth”. Gandhi considers truth and non-violence (love) as the two sides of the same coin. Gandhi continues “.... without ahimsa it is not possible to seek and find truth. Ahimsa is the means; Truth is the end.” In Satyagraha movement for Gandhi, Truth is the ultimate goal and non-violence is the means to it. It is a programme for transformation of relationships ending in a peaceful transfer of power. Satyagraha as the firm adherence to truth is the victory over the opponent through an act of non-violence. If words fail to convince the opponent, they will be won over by our patience and sympathy. Like truth, ahimsa too is a dynamic concept which leads every satyagrahi into the third fundamental element of Satyagraha known as tapasya – self- suffering.

### **Self-suffering (Tapasya)**

The Hindu traditional background of self-suffering or tapasya conceived as a matter of discipline for attaining individual salvation. Gandhi had given a new connotation and was introduced in the field of soul practice by Gandhi. Ahimsa, according to Gandhi, is love. Gandhi relates love and self-suffering (tapasya) as follows: “love never claims, it ever gives. Love ever suffers, never resents, and never revenges itself. The test of love is tapasya and tapasya means self-suffering”.

Self-suffering is neither an inability to win over the opponent through violence nor a meek submission to the will of the evil-doer. It is a fight against an evil system and a tyrant with one’s soul force. According to the ‘Science of Satyagraha’ the greater the repression and lawlessness on the part of authority, the greater should be the suffering courted by the victims.

Self-suffering in Satyagraha is directed to resisting humiliation as well. Gandhi gives supreme value to the dignity of a person. This is why we believed that submitting to humiliation should be resisted even at the cost of self-suffering of the body, even unto death. Gandhi considered being forced to act against one’s own conscience is dehumanising. Therefore, he insisted that every satyagrahi “must refuse to do that which his conscience forbids him to do and must preserve the dignity of the individual though it means loss of property or even life”.



Self-suffering is integral to non-violence as it is a means in Satyagraha to overcome fear. “He who has not overcome all fear cannot practise ahimsa to perfection”.

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## **6.6 Distinction between Satyagraha and Duragraha**

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The three basic precepts as mentioned above are fundamentals to the realisation of Satyagraha. So, any deviation from the path of Satyagraha would mean a contrary effects i.e. Duragraha. The main task of Satyagraha is to eliminate antagonisms without harming the antagonists, as Satyagraha is opposed to violent resistance. A satyagrahi therefore, does not seek to end or destroy the relationship with antagonist but instead seeks to transform or purify it to a higher level. Satyagraha is a ‘silent force’ or a ‘soul force’ aimed at the individual with moral power rather than physical power. It is also a ‘universal force’ as it essentially makes no distinction between kinsmen and strangers, young and old, man and woman, friend and foe.

Satyagraha (holding on to truth) with ‘duragraha’(holding on by force) as in protest meant more to harass than enlighten opponents. Gandhi wrote: “....there must be no impatience, no barbarity, no insolence, no undue pressure. If we want to cultivate a true democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one’s cause”.

Civil disobedience and non-cooperation as practised under Satyagraha are based on the ‘law of suffering’, a doctrine that endurance of suffering is a means to an end. The end implies a moral upliftment or progress of an individual or society. Therefore, non-cooperation in Satyagraha is in fact a means to secure the cooperation of the opponent with truth and justice.

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## **6.7 Means and Ends in Satyagraha**

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The theory of Satyagraha sees means and ends as inseparable. The means used to obtain an end are wrapped up and attached to that end. Therefore, it is contradictory to try to use unjust means or to try to use violence to obtain peace. As Gandhi wrote: “They say, ‘means are, after all, everything’. As the means so the end”.

Gandhi in this context quoted an example explaining this, “If I want to deprive you of your watch, I shall certainly have to fight for it; if I want to buy your watch, I shall have to pay for it, if I want a gift, I have to plead for it; and according to the means I employ, the watch is stolen property, my own property or a donation”.

Gandhi rejected the idea that injustice should or even could be fought against 'by any means necessary' – if you use violent, coercive, unjust means whatever ends you produce will necessarily embed that injustice. Those who preached violence and called non-violent actionists are cowards. If India resorts to arms in order to defend her honour in a cowardly manner, it would become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour. Gandhi wrote: "I believe that non-violence is definitely superior to violence, forgiveness is manlier than punishment". Therefore, Satyagraha is a moral technique to resolve conflicts where the means determine the ends.

The mission of Satyagraha as a means was to ensure justice and a dignified and a moral way of life for everyone. It involved the creation of a society in which there was complete employment, full-cooperation and democratic participation for all members.

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## 6.8 Principles of Satyagraha

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Gandhi envisaged Satyagraha as not only a tactic to be used in acute political struggle, but as a universal solvent for injustice and hard. He felt that it was applicable to large-scale political struggle and to one -to-one interpersonal conflicts and that it should be taught to everyone.

Gandhi founded the Sabarmati Ashram to teach Satyagraha. He asked Satyagrahis to follow the following principles:

1. Non-violence (Ahimsa)
2. Truth includes honesty, but it goes beyond it to mean living fully in accord with end in devotion to that which is true.
3. Non-stealing
4. Chastity (brahmacharya) includes sexual chastity, but also subordination of other sexual desires to the primary devotion to truth.
5. Non-possession
6. Body-labour or bread labour
7. Control of the palate
8. Fearlessness
9. Equal respect for all religions
10. Economic strategy such as boycotts (Swadeshi)

### 11. Freedom from untouchability

On another occasion, he listed seven rules as essential for every Satyagrahi in India:

- 1) Must have living faith in God
- 2) Must believe in truth and non-violence and have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by suffering in the Satyagraha effort.
- 3) Must be a habitual khadi wearer and spinner
- 4) Must abstain from alcohol and intoxicants
- 5) Must wittingly carry out all rules of discipline that are issued
- 6) Must be leading a chaste life and be willing to die or lose all his possessions.
- 7) Must obey the jail rules unless they are specially devised to hurt his self-respect.

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## **6.9 Fundamental Rules Governing Satyagraha Campaign**

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According to Bondurant, fundamental campaign for Satyagraha includes not only rules but also the code of discipline and various steps in a Satyagraha campaign.

### **Fundamental Rules**

- 1) Only those who suffer from a wrong should offer resistance against it. Do not count on outside help as it fails in the last resort. One has to rely on oneself or the justice of one's cause or on truth and God.
- 2) Adequate propaganda is an integral part of satyagraha
- 3) Civil resistance should be resorted to only after attempts at honourable settlement, including an offer of impartial arbitration have failed.
- 4) The Satyagrahi should preserve the initiative in his own hands and not allow it to pass into the hands of the opponent.
- 5) Keep the demands low, but consistent with truth and justice. "In aiming beyond our capacity we are likely to lose all".
- 6) Satyagraha should be progressive in character.
- 7) There should be no impatience, no hurry, no bluff and no attempt to cover inner weakness from oneself. Non-cooperation requires solid and silent self-sacrifices.

- 8) Always seek avenues of cooperation with the adversary on honourable terms. The end of non-violent war is always an agreed solution in conformity with the claims of justice and true human welfare.
- 9) In a negotiation, do not surrender essentials, sacrifice non-essentials.
- 10) When in doubt, apply the following test :  
If there is a feeling of expansion you are on the right track, if of contradiction you are likely to be wrong.

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## **6.10 Code of Discipline: Rules for staging Satyagraha Campaigns**

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In 1930, Gandhi elaborated the code of discipline for volunteers. As an individual:

1. A Satyagrahi i.e. a civil register will harbour no anger.
2. He will suffer the anger of the opponent.
3. Never retaliate to assaults or punishment but do not submit, out of fear of punishment or assault to an order given on anger.
4. When any person in authority seeks to arrest a civil register, he will voluntarily submit to the arrest or confiscation of your own property.
5. If a civil register has any property in his possession as a trustee, he will refuse to surrender it and in defending it he might lose his life, yet he will never retaliate.
6. A civil register will never insult his opponent. He is to be strict to the spirit of ahimsa.
7. A civil register will not salute the Union Jack, nor will he insult it or officials, English or Indian.
8. In the cause of struggle if any one insults an official or commits an insult upon him, a civil register will protect such officials from the insult or attack at the risk of his life.
9. If taken prisoner, behave in an exemplary manner.
10. As a member of Satyagraha unit, obey the orders of Satyagraha leader and resign from the unit in the event of serious disagreement.

11. Do not expect guarantee for maintenance of dependents.
12. No civil register will incidentally become a cause of communal quarrels.

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## **6.11 Methods followed in a Satyagraha Campaign**

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The methods of Satyagraha may be broadly classified into four categories: purificatory; penitential devices; forms of non-cooperation; methods of civil disobedience; the constructive programme. All these may be applied by individuals, groups or mass movements in the political arena and in different spheres of social life. The discussion is mainly for conceptual clarity and convenience of presentation. There is an inevitable overlap, especially in practice but even in theory, between these four categories.

The different methods available are legitimated by the concept of satya, moralised by the application of ahimsa and spiritualised by the performance of tapas. The purity of a particular method in a specific context will be determined by the extent of rightness of the purpose to which it is put the degree and genuineness of non-violence and non-retaliation displayed and the intensity of inconvenience and suffering resulting to the user as well as the amount of penance undergone. Thus, regarding the use of any method in a given situation, it will depend upon the character and position of the Satyagrahi and his opponent. In this situation, the best judge of the use of a particular method in a concrete situation is the Satyagrahi himself.

We may now categorise the methods followed in a Satyagraha in the following manner:

### **1. Negotiation and arbitration**

Every effort should be taken to resolve the conflict or grievances through normal established channels before proceeding further. The preliminary action should be centred on activities that minimise the risk of conflicts or crises occurring. Satyagrahis should show that direct action will be their last resort and final weapon. The first state of satyagraha includes exploring various legislative channels, entering into negotiations with opponents, sending deputations consisting of influential and notable citizens to persuade the opposite side and seeking assistance through arbitration carried out by a third party acceptable to both the disputants. When all avenues fail, the Satyagrahis should move towards the stage of non-violent direct action.

## **2. Direct action**

On recognising that a conflict situation cannot be resolved by the methods of the first stage, the participants are required to carefully assess the circumstances, their opponents, the climate of public opinion, the groups capacity for self-disciplined and so forth. This step often included for Indian Satyagrahi, purificatory fasting.

## **3. Agitation**

This step includes an active propaganda campaign together with demonstration, mass meeting, parades, slogan-shouting, strike etc. Pamphlets, books and papers explaining the reason for dispute, its implications and its consequences are circulated and distributed. Media such as radio, cinema and television are used as instruments of mass propaganda. The main objective is to gain widespread interest in the issue from a sympathetic population so as to influence the decision of the opponents.

## **4. Ultimatum**

When no agreement is in the offing, Satyagrahis are required to issue an ultimatum to the opponent. An ultimatum contains a constructive solution to the problem, no offensive language and a broad and flexible in terms of wording. An ultimatum amounts to a conditional declaration of war. The aim is to force the issue on the opponent and threaten direct action if it is ignored or not settled.

## **5. Resistance**

Resistance takes the form of picketing, dharna sit-down-strike, slow-down strike and all other non-violent means. Strikes are labourer's instrument to make the employer accede to their demands. Picketing is a natural consequence of strikes. Picketing involves an appeal to the public to withdraw its patronage from certain shops, concerns and businesses. Dharna is a type of sit-down strike intended to involve large groups of people blocking roadways causing inconvenience unless their demands are met. Dharna, the technique of sitting down to demonstrate, has proved itself to be powerful technique in public life.

## **6. Economic boycott and non-cooperation**

This takes the form of non-payment of taxes, boycotting of schools and offices, ostracism and voluntary exile. Such forms of behaviour result in the arrest of Satyagrahis. Satyagrahis in the face of these forms of oppression are pledged to receive all penalties without retaliation. They are to suffer in silence. Another strategy known as 'hizrat' is an offshoot of no-tax campaigns. In this case, rather than

retaliate, the oppressed group migrates to adjoining territories. *Hizrat* is an effective means to neutralise power of the opponent as it is impossible to govern and punish when there is no one to be governed. Ostracism or social boycott is a further weapon. In this case, the Satyagrahis treat those community members as political pariahs with whom one should avoid any form of social intercourse.

## 7. Civil Disobedience

Laws central to the function of the government are boycotted or not obeyed by the Satyagrahis. Disobeying the unjust laws and statutes, it brings people's attention to the fact and assists in generating public sympathy and support. After completely paralysing the administration and neutralising the coercive agencies of the opponents, the Satyagrahis should now embark on creating a parallel government. By establishing a parallel government, the Satyagrahis should make an effort to replicate governmental functioning.

Corollary to civil disobedience, discussion of Gandhi's constructive programme is relevant. Gandhi realised that to an inert people having no awareness of their condition, and having no self-reliance, any talk of resistance would fall flat. Resistance to achieve its end must be based on the strength generated from below which means that the people must reach development as to determine their own. They must have self-reliance, cause-consciousness, self-initiative and discipline. The people must overcome their own weaknesses which alone would enable them to throw themselves in bigger resistance battles. Constructive programme, in short, is a platform of action for the building up of strength of people at the bottom. Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose clarified the relation between civil disobedience and constructive programme. To Prof. Bose, it means that the masses gain an idea of the exploitation-force social and economic order which they are going to build up through their own effort. Secondly, it generates the type of self-reliance and internal cohesion which prove useful in times of non-violent resistance. Thirdly, it gives staying power in a long-drawn struggle and preserves morale. And lastly, a bond of trust is created between active civil resisters and the average citizen through constructive work pursued continuously in peace time. The presence of all these together provides the Satyagrahi to channel the upsurge of the masses long effective, non-violent lines. Thus, constructive programme as the part of Satyagraha technique is the combined effort of promoting common good and system of non-violent self-rule for a new social-order. Gandhi pointed out that the handling of civil disobedience without the constructive programme will be like a paralysed hand to lift a spoon. In the Indian

context, Gandhi started on the need for working towards communal unity, the removal of untouchability, a programme of adult education and village improvement, peasant uplift, and the development of non-violent labour unions, economic and social inequality, decentralised economic production and distribution through promotion of cottage and small-scale industries and abolition of various social evils.

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## **6.12 Satyagraha in Action in South Africa and in India**

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The campaign to secure basic human rights for Indian labourers in South Africa in 1906 was Gandhi's first experiment with Satyagraha. The Satyagraha campaign was directed against a bill which imposed a three tax on indentured Indian labourers by the Transvaal Government which demanded the registration and fingerprinting of all Indian residents. The bill required ex-indentured Indians to leave for India on the termination of the indenture agreement or enter into further indenture. For Gandhi, the bill was intended to make people continue to live as slaves or force them back to the country from which they had come, only to avoid starvation.

Describing the tax as a 'blood tax' he argued for civil disobedience against the bill. Gandhi advised the Indians of the Transvaal and Natal to disobey the Black Act and the Immigration Registration Act. The Indians did the job quite non-violently and accepted self-suffering by going to prison instead of paying the fine imposed on them for the violation of the Acts. Gandhi also applied the methods of Satyagraha in the form of non-violent non-cooperation and civil disobedience in the Indian national movement for seeking redress of grievances against the colonial government and for achieving the freedom of India.

In India, the events in Champaran, the Ahmedabad Mill incident, the agitation against the Rowlatt Act of 1919 and the Civil Disobedience Movement highlighted the practice of Satyagraha as a means to voice protest against the tyranny of laws. The agitation against the Rowlatt Act was the first occasion in which Gandhi experimented nationally with the philosophy of Satyagraha. The Rowlatt Act extended War-time Powers of the British government and it sought to restrict civil rights by providing for a system of special courts, arbitrary arrest and detention without trial for a period of two years. This was deeply resented by Indians. Gandhi then proposed a practicable form of protest which initially involved volunteers courting arrest by public sale of prohibited items but it later took the form of a nation-wide strike. There were peaceful but massive strikes in different parts of the country and the British found it difficult to control them. The nation-wide strike finally culminated in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.



From 1920-1922, Gandhi launched a Non-cooperation Movement—which included non-cooperation activities such as resignation from the army and bureaucracy and the boycott of foreign cloth, elections, Law Courts and Government Schools. It had a remarkable impact on the masses. But it resulted in unparalleled magnitude of disorder presenting a serious challenge to foreign rule. However, Gandhi called off the movement following the widespread use of violence at Chauri Chaura. Before the outbreak of violence and torture Gandhi struck to non-violence being a core tenet of Satyagraha.

The Civil Disobedience or Salt Satyagraha began on 12 March 1930. The Salt Satyagraha started from his residence, Sabarmati Asram, near Ahmedabad, to the coastal village of Dandi to produce salt without paying the tax. The campaign was based on Gandhi's principles of non-violent protest as envisioned in Satyagraha. The British Government arrested Gandhi but the protest continued with thousands going to jail. The Salt Satyagraha received world-wide news coverage as an effective use of civil disobedience technique for fighting social and political injustice. This Satyagraha technique of March to Dandi had a significant influence on American activists Martin Luther King (Jr.) James Bevel and others during the movement for civil rights for blacks and other minority groups in the 1960s.

The Ahmedabad labour Satyagraha that took place in Feb-March 1918, is another Satyagraha movement led by Gandhi. The workers had numerous grievances against the mill owners in terms of low wages and unbearable poverty. The labourers sought the assistance of Satyagraha to change the hearts of their employers through the weapon of fasting. Ultimately, the labourers could be able to realise their demands remaining loyal to their cause and making the mill-owners feel guilty as well as gaining the sympathy of the public. Consequently, the workers received justice with complete acceptance of their demands within 25 days from the start of the campaign.

In this campaign, Gandhi took up the role of an external arbitrator. The success of non-violent direct action in Ahmedabad indicates the effectiveness of the role of arbitration – as a tool of Satyagraha.

The Quit India Movement/August Movement was a civil disobedience movement launched on 8 August 1942 in response to Gandhi's call for immediate independence of India. He asked the teachers to leave their schools and other Indians to leave their respective jobs and take part in this movement. Gandhi's request was followed by a massive proportion of the population. The aim of the movement was to force the British Government to the negotiating table. But the large-scale violence and sabotage along with the British repression and arrest made the movement a leaderless. The

county witnessed the deviation from Gandhi's principle of non-violence. In large parts of the country, the local underground organisations took over the movement. And by 1943, Quit India had petered out.

It appears to us that Gandhian technique of Satyagraha in action for fighting injustice is equated with "rebellion without the element of violence in it". It is really a wonderful technique. It is the legitimate weapon of the injured individuals or groups. It is dynamic method based on a highly moral and ethical man of achieving civil disobedience in protest against injustice and exploitation. The focus was on truth, non-violence and suffering and on educating the opponents about the unfairness of their acts without any insults, violent retaliation, or similar techniques. Satyagraha techniques can be described as the "most civilised and ethical form of warfare".

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### 6.13 Conclusion

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The critiquing of Gandhian philosophy would be outdated from the view-points of modern times. The period within which Gandhi composed of his ideals and philosophy was relevant enough as without this ideals and techniques at those time it was not possible to wage a war with violence against an armed mighty power of the British Colonial rulers. Rather the beautiful weapon developed by Gandhi in rousing the conscience of the enemy and fighting the injustice through truth, non-violence and suffering is undoubtedly a positive function in a particular historical juncture of India. Gandhi did that by discovering his moral and ethical design model of Satyagraha to effectively resolve conflicts in a peaceful and cooperative manner. Some leaders like Sri Aurobinda expressed about the universal application of Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha. Nehru told that it is narrowly moralist, an individual or social affair, devoid of political content. But on a closer examination of the massive destructive weapon of modern world, it cannot be denied that "it was a program that enabled the weak and the poor to resist the strong. It was a political expedient". It had the potential to rally the masses of people usually the oppressed and suppressed with a "rejoined sense of hope of accomplishing a civilised form of warfare over a powerful opponent in a highly ethical format".

The philosophy and technique of Satyagraha can be described as a 'self encapsulating conflict method'. It has 'built – in devices' to keep the conflict within acceptable bounds and to habit violent extremism and unbridled escalation'. The labour -employer conflict has the potential to become violent and uncontrollable due to factors related to secrecy, education and envy and also issues pertaining to power,

control and politics. Here, the strategy of Satyagraha is a panacea to a step by step model of conflict negotiation characterised by openness of information and action. This model breaks the cycle of escalation of conflicts bringing both labour and employer interface for negotiation in conflict situation. Satyagraha is a core principle of non-violence having an inherent tendency of making an individual or groups keep the viewpoints non-violently. Satyagraha protestors should aim to educate management through due process of talking, sharing and making them understood and finally realise their mistakes. Violent actions and behaviours may prove harmful and cause undue suffering. Thus, Satyagraha techniques advocate non-violence and peace, resisting violent means to achieve quick solution to conflict.

Whether Satyagraha is a universal panacea or not, it can be said that Gandhi met the need of the hour with his practical programme of Satyagraha. The novelty of this weapon lay in harnessing the moral strength of the people and at the same time it acted as a good political tactic. The combination of moral force with political realism distinguished Satyagraha from other conventional methods. Satyagraha in essence roused the masses from their torpor and made them conscious; it stirred them and steeled their will, made them fearless and threw them into unarmed but heroic battle. Herein lay the superiority of this method.

The basic assumption underlying this technique may be subject to question from many who are committed to otherwise. But, there are elements in Satyagraha technique that compel admiration even from non-believers. A social scientist of any persuasion must forge methods to develop mass-consciousness, mass initiative, discipline, and a spirit of fearlessness, courage and self-suffering and must put unhesitating reliance on the creative political role of the masses the absence of which renders ineffective any mass resistance-action. Thus Satyagraha is an action-oriented technique or wherewithal of resistance. It is an eternal strategy and the philosophy for the new technique of protest.

Gandhi conceived and practised Satyagraha as a way of life for him. Satyagraha as a truth and non-violence and self-suffering is certainly a new feature. The application of this principle to every walk of life and all human affairs, and especially the use of this principle on a mass scale to fight evil and injustice, to establish truth and justice, is certainly a new way of life. The extension of this principle to all fields of life and to the solution of all conflicts, socio-economic as well as political, would serve as an instrument of social and political change. The four words, namely, Satya

(truth), ahimsa (non-violence), Satyagraha (adherence to truth) and Sarvodaya (welfare of all) constitute a whole system of thought and action which envisages the collective salvation of humanity. So, Satyagraha is a novel invention of the creative and moral genius of Gandhi and it is India's original contribution to the world.

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## 6.14 Summing Up

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- (i) Gandhi's fight for independence had brought down the British Empire to its knees with his weapons of non-violence, brotherhood and Satyagraha.
- (ii) The term satyagrahi was coined and developed by Gandhi. He deployed satyagrahi in the Indian independence movement and also during his earlier struggles in South Africa for Indian rights.
- (iii) Satyagraha is a compound of two Sanskrit words, 'Satya'-truth and 'Agrha'—firm grasping.
- (iv) A Satyagrahi with love-force can solve all problems and conflicts by winning the hearts of the opponents.
- (v) Gandhi was sure that morally belittling strategies and techniques of the colonial rulers would not be able to sustain themselves in the face of moral courage or conviction shown by the Indian masses.
- (vi) Gandhi's democratic state is akin to 'Swaraj', meaning all-round awakening-social, educational, moral, economic and political.
- (vii) Gandhi was in favour of using the term Satyagraha in lieu of Passive resistance.
- (viii) The philosophy and technique of Satyagraha can be described as a 'self-encapsulating conflict method'.
- (ix) The basic assumption underlying this technique may be subject to question from many who are committed to otherwise.

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## 6.15 Glossary

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- |               |   |                                 |
|---------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Satya      | — | Truth                           |
| 2. Agrha      | — | Firmness of grasp               |
| 3. Sarvodaya  | — | Social good, universal welfare  |
| 4. Satyagrahi | — | One who offers Satyagraha       |
| 5. Swadeshi   | — | Self-sufficiency; self-reliance |

- |                |   |                                     |
|----------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 6. Tapas       | — | Self-suffering, purificatory action |
| 7. Sadagraha   | — | Firmness in a good cause            |
| 8. Himsa       | — | Injury, violence                    |
| 9. Duragraha   | — | Persistence in wrongdoing           |
| 10. Khadi      | — | Hand-spun cloth                     |
| 11. Satyagraha | — | Non-violent resistance              |

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## 6.16 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Describe the Philosophy of Satyagraha as enunciated by Gandhi.
2. Explain the genesis and the meaning of Satyagraha.
3. Enumerate the methods of Satyagraha.
4. How did Gandhi distinguish between Passive Resistance and Satyagraha?
5. Highlight the significance of civil disobedience movement.
6. What does the term Satyagraha mean and what are its basic principles?

### Short Questions :

1. Briefly analyse how Salt Satyagraha could become more than just a symbolic act of breaking the Salt Law during India's freedom movement.
2. Mention the Principles of Satyagraha Campaign.
3. Examine Gandhi's views on the importance of 'ends' and 'means' on the resolution of conflicts.

*OR,*

Explain, according to Gandhi how Satyagraha is intrinsically linked with his notion of truth, non-violence and self-suffering.

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. Who have described Gandhi as "Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth?"  
(a) Rabindranath Tagore (b) Einstein (c) Toynbee (d) None of them

Ans. : (b)

2. Who is the author of *At the Feet of Mahatma Gandhi*?

- (a) Rajendra Prasad (b) R. R. Diwakar  
(c) Bhikhu Parekh (d) John. V. Bondurant

Ans. : (a)

3. In which incident the term Satyagraha was first coined by Gandhi?

- (a) Non Cooperation Movement  
(b) Champaran Movement  
(c) Quit India Movement  
(d) Human Rights Movement of Indian Immigrants in South Africa

Ans. : (d)

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## **Unit-7 □ Satyagraha as an approach to Conflict Resolution**

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### **Structure**

#### **7.0 Objective**

#### **7.1 Introduction.**

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#### **7.15 Summing Up**

#### **7.16 Glossary**

#### **7.17 Probable Questions**

#### **7.18 Further Reading**

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### **7.0 Objective**

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The Unit seeks to explain:

- 1 The concept of conflict and the identification of the causes of conflict.



- 1 The Gandhian approach to conflict resolution showing difference between Western and Gandhian approaches to the resolution of conflict.
- 1 The classification of conflicts.
- 1 The distinction between destructive and productive conflict.
- 1 The fundamental concepts related to the philosophy of Satyagraha as the basis of conflict resolution.
- 1 The dialectics of Satyagraha.
- 1 The types of non-violent action.
- 1 The principles and process in conducting Satyagraha as a way to conflict resolution.
- 1 The Role of individuals in conflict situation.
- 1 Different methods in a Satyagraha for the resolution of conflicts.
- 1 The application of Satyagraha in various kinds of conflict.

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## 7.1 Introduction

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Conflicts are considered as an omnipresent part of human interaction. Conflicts occur between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings. It is defined as an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings towards each other. The incompatibility or difference may exist in reality or may be perceived by the parties involved. The opposing actions and the hostile emotions are very hallmarks of human conflict. Man has attempted to eliminate it since time immemorial, but failed to stop its occurrence. So, it is less about the question of its elimination, but it is rather to be attempted to regulate or resolve it through peaceful settlement. From ontological point of view, research into the sources, and categories of conflict have usually centered around two conflict approaches: the subjectivist and the objectivist approach. The latter approach looks for the origin of conflict in the social and political structure of society and considers that the goals at stake can be thoroughly compatible. The former approach, on the contrary, focuses primarily on the perceived incompatibility of goals and differences. Incompatibility of goals and interests or at least their perception as incompatible by the parties in dispute is the essence of the conflict analysis. The level of incompatibility is the most important variable that impacts the intensity of the dispute and dynamic of conflict phases.

Gandhi expounded the philosophy of Satyagraha hundred years back as an approach to resolve conflict and manage it in a better manner. Satyagraha as practised by Gandhi is a technique of action designed to set in motion a process to achieve lasting peace and overcome conflict.

Gandhi eulogized the nonviolent way as a choice of resolving conflicts which he termed as Satyagraha. It emerged from the realization that violence bred violence; war fought to end wars and bring peace brought greater and more devastating wars. Satyagraha replaced brute force by soul-force, also known as love force through self-suffering and non-violence with the sole objective of winning the hearts or feeling of opponent and awakening in him the inherent capacity of love of the enemy. It is a Gandhian ethic of conflict resolution.

Satyagraha is basically a relentless and perennial search for truth and a determination to reach truth. According to Gandhi, it is a dialectical process that is creative, constructive and centrally concerned with human needs. Gandhi's Satyagraha as an approach to conflict resolution is a win-win approach as opposed to power based and zero sum approach in which neither side is won nor defeated. It is a form of mutually agreed-upon solutions. Thus, adherence to the philosophy of Satyagraha and its techniques not only paves the way for the resolution of conflict but also it inaugurates socio-political change and peace.

The Gandhian fundamental concept was based on his thought and practice. The element of Gandhian conflict resolution includes faith in human goodness, creative suffering, rejection of coercion, fearlessness and many more. He emphasizes on the dialectics of Satyagraha, principles of Satyagraha, process of Satyagraha and application of Satyagraha. Gandhian Satyagraha has a viable autonomy-producing method of conflict resolution. It stresses on shared humanity of all, including opponents and makes it ethically superior to other methods of conflict resolution. Gandhi first evolved and practised it in South Africa and later he applied it in India.

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## **7.2 Concept of Conflict**

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Conflict is intrinsic in the human nature. It happens to occur inevitably but its solution is possible. In the interactions between individuals, groups, organization or nations, conflicts are omnipresent. It arises out of emotions and incompatible goals or values between two or more parties in the relationship of the wide range of emotions that breed conflict. Anger is the most prominent and pervasive. It is the potential element of human nature that sets in eye-ball to eye-ball relation in interaction implying the absence of meaningful interaction.

Conflict defined as the pursuit of incompatible goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship combined with attempts to control and influence each other and antagonistic feelings towards each other. The incompatibility or difference may either exist in reality or may be perceived by the parties involved. In fact, the opposing actions and the hostile emotions are very real manifestation of human conflict.

Conflicts have been further described as existing “whenever incompatible activities occur, when no people wish to carry out acts which are mutually inconsistent, when there is a state of tension between two actors, when there is the active striving for one’s preferred outcome which if attained, precludes the attainment by others of their own preferred outcome, thereby producing hostility”. Conflict also ensues “when one individual, community, nation or even supranational bloc desires something that can be obtained at the expense of what another individual or group also desires”.

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### **7.3 The Causes of Conflict**

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There are different ways of examining the nature of conflict and identifying the factors or reasons that give rise to it. It may emanate from a complex and multiple set economic and cultural dynamics. And they may take various forms: from personal quarrels through family, class and community disagreements; disagreements between individuals and larger groups; disputes between political parties or workers and management; religious and international disputes. Conflicts may arise from differences in information or belief. It may reflect differences in interests, desires or values. It may also occur as a result of scarcity of some resources such as money, time, and space, position which includes success, pride, authority, status, recognition etc. in which a rivalry takes place trying to outdo or undo the other.

Such diversity of nature and causes of conflict makes it difficult to have a precise definition of conflict. Scholars like Fink deals with a definition of conflict from social perspective. A conflict, according to Fink, is any “situation or process in which two or more social entities are linked by at least one form of antagonistic psychological relation or one form of antagonistic interaction”. According to this definition, psychological antagonisms include such things as incompatible goals, mutually exclusive interests, emotional hostility, value dissension and traditional enmities; while antagonistic interactions range from the direct, violent and unregulated struggle to the most subtle, indirect and highly regulated forms of mutual interference. In other words, “A conflict emerges whenever two or more persons or groups seek to possess the same subject,

occupy the same space or the same exclusive position, play incompatible roles, maintain incompatible goals, or undertake mutually incompatible means for achieving their purposes”.

Conflicts do not occur randomly. They take place within certain kinds of structures or system of relationships, such as, inequality, economic deprivation, human rights abuses, failed states etc. In all relationships, whether interpersonal or otherwise, there occurs some form of behaviour which annoys, causes tension to or engender resentment in one of the parties involved. These feelings or the behaviour patterns causing conflicts happen to occur with little notice. Sometimes, they lead to open conflicts. In these conflicts, both actors and parties are aware of the incompatibility. Deutsch calls this position ‘manifest conflict’ to distinguish it from the underlying tension or ‘underlying conflict’. The manifest and underlying causes are interconnected but in conflict situation, more attention needs to be paid to indentifying the underlying or root causes if we want to work towards sustainable peace.

Nader and Todd have broken down the conflict situations into three distinct evolutionary phrases. First, there is a ‘grievance’ or ‘pre-conflict stage’ in which injustice or grounds for resentment or complaints are perceived by one party. For example, in any society that some people are treated unequally and unjustly is likely to form grievance or pre-conflict stage. This is followed by what they call the ‘conflict stage’ where the aggrieved party or people opts for confrontation and communicates their feelings to the offending party openly. This is a stage of protest, rebellion and violence. Finally, the conflict enters the ‘dispute stage’ when it becomes public and third parties involved. The third party involvement may either escalate the conflict or de-escalate it. That is to say, the role of third party may be an important factor for either precipitating a conflict into dispute stage or preventing the movement from such development.

Once the conflict has become apparent and open, disputing has commenced, there are many ways to bring about a resolution. A conflict can be resolved when both parties have given up any hope of changing on demanding the situation. In the Gandhian dialectic, conflicts can be said to have been resolved when all parties are satisfied with the outcome that is “when some mutually consistent set of actions is worked out”.

Some theorists are of the opinion that conflict as Francis Galton emphasized, is the influence of heredity and environment. Galton was influenced by the book on ‘The Origin of Species’ wrote by Charles Darwin. Some other theories argue in the relationship between human nature and behavioural traits of conflict. By this theory it is argued that aggressive behaviour is innate and biologically programmed in the human species. Thomas Hobbes believed that human beings are selfish by nature and

that humanity is characterized by careless and relentless thirst for power. Similar view was expressed by Edmund Burke.

Psychoanalytical theory argues that early differentiation among human beings between 'self' and 'other' manifests itself in a deep psychological need for enemies.

The socio-psychological perspective focuses on processes of group formation and differentiation especially the role that images, misperceptions, stereotyping and dehumanization play in the decision-making which lead to violent conflict. Socio-structural theories, however, opine that aggression or violence is not innate but its expression depends on the organization of society that creates the causes and conditions for conflict. In this connection, Marx's theory of class-conflict is the result of the social institutions and structures which reflect the material reality of society. The antagonistic feelings are the outcome of the economic structure of the society. On the other hand, Antonio Gramsci, a neo-Marxist opposed to the economic determinism. He introduced the theory of ideological hegemony as the sole cause of conflictual situation in society.

Thus, the violent conflict is not caused by biological factors alone but rather it is a result of the interaction between biological, psychological and social determinants. Conflicts involve several issues in differing degrees which change over time. So, it is dynamic in nature. Disagreement over the exact causes of conflict as a term dominates till today.

Gandhi's concept of conflict is need-based. The creation of new structures is necessary for the satisfaction of human needs the lack of which give rise to conflict. He therefore, suggested a method of struggle for satisfying the three conditions for the resolution of conflict. These include: destruction of need-denying structures, creation of need-satisfying structures and respecting the needs of the conflicting parties during the struggle which act as a means of Satyagraha based on moral principles.

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## **7.4 Conflict Resolution: Western and Gandhian Approach:**

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Since conflict is in the nature of human beings, its resolution is of imperative necessity. There are several approaches to the conflict resolution.

### **Western Approach to Conflict Resolution**

Most western approaches to conflict resolution advocate to the requirement of a 'go-between' or an intermediary or involvement of third party, a people, organization

or nations who enter a conflict with the objective of trying to help the disputants de-escalate or resolve it. Sometimes, the hostile groups or individuals may decide to resolve the conflict of their own initiative by discussing the issues between themselves without involving any intermediary. Besides, some other approaches are used to resolve conflict. These are:-

- 1) **Conciliation:** It is the process between aggrieved parties using different means to reduce hostilities against themselves.
- 2) **Mediation:** This is the next step to resolve conflict. In mediation one can seek active assistance from intermediary in exploring options and negotiating a settlement. But the responsibility to decide on acceptable solution is ultimately in the hands of the contending parties.
- 3) **Arbitration:** If mediation fails, one must take the next step i.e. arbitration. In arbitration, the arbitrator would behave like a judge, decide on the right and wrong and impose a decision.
- 4) **Litigation:** It is the last step to solve the dispute.
- 5) **Facilitation:** It includes creating a congenial atmosphere for talk between contending parties. The facilitator is a person who takes initiative to lead a collaborative process in which individuals and groups with divergent views meet to reach consensus on a goal or to solve a problem.

### **Gandhian Approach to Conflict Resolution**

The Gandhian philosophy of conflict and conflict resolution is an alternative to the western approach to conflict resolution methods. Conflict is essentially a subjective phenomenon and therefore its resolution must involve analysis and reconstruction of perceptions of belief and attitudes towards the other side, improving communication and facilitating the development of trust and cooperation between the hostile groups and individuals, but not only limited to negotiation, mediation, diplomacy and peace-building based on the interplay of power.

Gandhi's alternative to conflict resolution is the choice of resolving conflict through non-violent means which he termed as Satyagraha. It is basically a way of "relentless search for truth and a determination to reach truth. Satyagraha as conceived by Gandhi is a dialectical process that is creative, constructive and centrally concerned with human needs. The application of this principle to every walk of life and all human affairs, and especially the use of this principle on a mass scale to fight evil and injustice, to establish truth and justice, is certainly a new and creative feature.

The emphasis on action which always has to be non-violent against all evil and every injustice distinguishes the Satyagraha a way of life. The extension of this principle to all fields of life and to the solution of conflicts, socio-economic as well as political, is again a new feature. In addition to it, Gandhian Satyagraha should be treated as discourse of conflict-resolution. Apart from the technique of resistance to evil and untruth, his Satyagraha is inspired by boundless love and compassion. It is opposed to sin, not sinner, the evil, not evil-doer. For him, truth is God. Truth is not yours or mine. It is neither Western nor Eastern. Many thinkers and activists in the world today have begun to turn to the life, thoughts and methods of Gandhi to look for solution of human problems.

Satyagraha as a path-breaking method of conflict resolution was born almost a century ago, far away from India, in South Africa. Following Tolstoy, he called it passive resistance. But the action that followed was not passive, it was pro-active. So, he renamed it Satyagraha.

In course of time, Satyagraha became a technique of action designed to set in motion a process to achieve lasting peace. It emerged out of a realization that violence breded violence, war fought to end wars and bring peace brought greater and more devastating wars. Satyagraha replaced brute force by soul force with which Satyagrahis would achieve their desired end. Gandhi used the weapon of Satyagraha instead of 'rebel' as the millions in India were involved in superstition, poverty, ignorance, and religious beliefs and had no weapon with which to resist the mighty empire. Gandhi provided them the weapon of non-violence, urged them to resist with non-cooperation and shook the foundation of the empire on which the sun was never set.

To resolve conflict, Gandhi employed three basic approaches:

- 1) Satyagraha implied cooperation with the opponent as a person but non-cooperation with the opponent's role in the context of the social structure. Gandhi saw conflict as built into structures and not into people. Hence, he advised "to hate the sin and not the sinner". Thus, the substance of Gandhi's approach was to preserve the people while demolishing the evil structure.
- 2) Gandhi was not averse to compromise when basic principles had not been challenged. He was thus, ready to cooperate with the opponents in order to build relationships and to create the basis for a sound conflict free life.
- 3) Gandhi sought synthesis of mutually opposing viewpoints and acceptable to all parties and superior to any one of the original positions – with the aim of creating new choices and restructuring the opposing elements of a conflict.

This would include the correction in the attitudes, reversal of behavioural polarization pattern and removal of incompatible goals.

The Gandhian approach is different from the Western political thinkers. Gandhi did not ignore the mediation as the means of dispute or conflict resolution. The quest for peace is an eternal pursuit for human fulfillment. So, appeal to the heart and conscience is much more effective than power and violence. This appeal has to satisfy three conditions: It must destroy the need-denying structures, create need-satisfying structures and respect the needs of the conflicting parties. Satyagraha was Gandhi's methodology of struggles that satisfied all the three conditions.

Gandhi gave thrust on the Panchayat system in which a respected elder of the village assists in resolving conflicts at the community level. Here the village elder acts as mediator. In contrast to the Western approach, this mediator is a known and respected third person who is trusted by the conflicting parties.

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## **7.5 Forms of Conflict: Destructive vs. Productive Conflict**

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Conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. A conflict can be as small as a disagreement or as large as a war. It can originate in one person, between two or more people or between two or more groups. Conflicts can be classified as:

### **Destructive vs. Productive Conflict**

Among the forms of conflict, two types of conflicts become prominent whether conflicts are destructive or productive. A conflict can be turned destructive when the participants in it are dissatisfied with the outcomes and they feel they have lost as a result of conflict. It is productive when the participants are satisfied with their outcomes and feel that they have gained as a result of conflict.

In destructive conflict, when one party marshals all its forces to compel the other party to do what the first has decided it wants, then it leads to confrontation or violence. Its nature is destructive in essence. On the other hand, productive conflict is non-threatening and cooperative. It promotes the strategy of persuasion, conciliation and enhancement of mutual understanding and good-will. This cooperative process entails the recognition of the legitimacy of the adversary's interests and of the necessity to engage in the search for solution that meets the needs of both parties. The Gandhian non-violent ways of resolving conflicts have a far greater chance than other method as it is productive rather than destructive. Conducting a conflict in a non-violent non-threatening way prevents the opponent "from reacting out of fear in the mindless reflex action". Violence or resolution of conflict in a destructive way has the tendency to become self-perpetuating through the cycle of vengeance and



counter-vengeance. A productive resolution of conflict is more likely to be achieved if it is based on non-violence as it leaves “no aftermath of resentment, bitterness or revenge, no necessity for further threats of force”. In the case of destructive conflicts, violence begets violence. It humiliates the opponent. Such humiliation produces hatred that may turn to violence. So, it is ethically unjustifiable to injure an opponent if it is not verified that he is wrong and you are right. Therefore, it is always unjustifiable to injure an opponent.

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## 7.6 The Philosophy of Satyagraha: Fundamentals to Conflict Resolution

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The Gandhian philosophy of Satyagraha is the effective weapon for preventing violence and tackling the conflict. Satyagraha is Gandhi’s technique of non-violent activism in productive lines. The term Satyagraha was coined by Gandhi in South Africa as a name for the force that Indians used in the fight to earn, respect and basic rights and later in India during the freedom struggle. The root meaning of Satyagraha is holding on to truth, hence it is truth force. It is a combination of two words – Satya and Agraaha. The word Satya derived from Sanskrit ‘Sat’ which means ‘being’ or to exist ‘eternally’. Nothing really exists eternally except truth. Truth is absolute which means God: Therefore, truth is God. Agraaha means holding firmly on to truth. The doctrine of Satyagraha is philosophy of action for truth.

There are some fundamental concepts to the understanding of Gandhi’s philosophy of action applicable to the resolution of conflict.

**1) Faith in Human Goodness :** Gandhi believed that “Everyone of us is a mixture of good and evil... The difference that exists among human beings is a difference of degree”. Gandhi considers it violent to classify human beings as inferior or dehumanize them. Gandhi also believed “Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the goodness of human nature. Methods hitherto have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking. Gandhi also believed in human rationality and considered it important to Satyagraha. These twin beliefs in human goodness and human rationality lead to a belief in the possibility of conversion.

**2) Truth:** Truth or Satya “is what you believe to be true at this moment. And that is your God”. Gandhi classified truth into Absolute Truth and relative truth. He believed that “God was an impersonal, all-pervading reality” – this is Absolute Truth;

“discoveries on the way to the realization of Truth” is referred to as relative truth. A Satyagrahi who lives a life of truth will be harmonious in his thoughts, words and actions. Ahimsa or non-violent is the only means of realizing the truth.

**3) Ahimsa/Non-violence:** Ahimsa/non-violence is a positive concept that requires doing, not just refraining from injury. Gandhi had a strong belief in the unity of all life and thus, non-injury to all living beings.

**4) Creative Self-suffering :** Self-suffering is a necessary part of Satyagraha. It has several benefits. First of all, it appeals to the reason of an opponent. Secondly, it transforms both the sufferer and the opponent – the sufferer is morally enriched as he/she is not compromising fundamental principles and the opponent is forced to confront his/her views on the nature of truth of the given situation – which may possibly end in converting him/her. As Gandhi said, “suffering injury in one’s own person is the essence of non-violence and it is the chosen substitute of violence to others”.

**5) Means and Ends :** The relationship of means and ends is an essential principle of Gandhi’s thoughts. It was a reflection of the Hindu belief in ‘Karma’. For Gandhi, the law of Karma not only applied to future lives but to the present life as well. Gandhi said, “The means may be linked to a seed, the end to a tree: and there is just some inviolable connection between the means and the end.....”. He said means are justified by ends. For him, truth is the end and non-violence is the means to that end.

**6) Rejection of Coercion:** Thomas Weber defines coercion “as the use of force, including moral force, to compel an opponent to act in a way that is contrary to either their will or judgment”. Gandhi insisted on a principle of non-coercion and cautioned against the use of coercion because perceptions vary from person to person and one can never be certain that their perception is correct. However, Gandhi has been criticized for not sticking to this principle as some scholars claim that the method of Satyagraha contains an element of coercion. Gandhi however, believed that coercion was against the spirit of Satyagraha and moral coercion is preferable to physical coercion because it would have the support of the general public.

**7) Fearlessness :** Satyagraha entails self-suffering which in turn requires some courage on the part of the satyagrahi as it is not easy to endure self-suffering. Fearlessness is a great quality for it leads to the growth of other noble qualities – “how one can seek truth or cherish love, without fearlessness”. Gandhi clarified the concept that Satyagraha does not require courage based on physical strength; it requires courage that comes from “determined and constant endeavour... by cultivating self-confidence” and “from an indomitable will”.

The elements as enumerated above reflect the Gandhian philosophy of Satyagraha. These are the means to attain truth. The ultimate aim of Gandhian philosophy of Satyagraha is to reach the higher level of truth in a non-violent manner. Violence seeks to destroy the opponent or at least to injure him, is not the way to convert or reform him. The Satyagrahi should try to avoid all intentional injury to the opponent in thought, word and deed. Gandhian Satyagraha is considered as the weapon of resolving conflict in a productive way.

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## **7.7 The Dialectics of Satyagraha**

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Violence to human being and property clouds the real issues of the conflict while non-coercive, non-violent actions invite the parties to a dialogue between the stakeholders about the issues of conflict. Gandhi therefore warns that we must “Hate the sin and not the sinner”. In Gandhi’s words: “The essence of non-violence technique is that it seeks to liquidate antagonisms but not the antagonists themselves”; “Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and determination to reach truth”. In conflict situations Satyagraha merely means that the Satyagrahi follows no other plan than the adherence to non-violence and has no other goal than to reach the truth. The truth being the end of the process, non-violence the means to achieve it. Because good ends can never grow out of bad means. The person offering the Satyagraha must undergo self-suffering with the optimistic belief that the opponent can be converted to see the truth of his/her claim by touching the opponent’s conscience or that a cleaner vision of truth will grow out of the dialectical process for both parties. In this process, the Satyagrahi should convert the opponent, they must themselves also remain open to persuasion. In this way, Satyagraha goes beyond redressing the immediate grievance that has surfaced as conflict, but aims to resolve the distrust and friction that are underlying sources of conflict.

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## **7.8 Types of Non-violent Action**

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In conflict situation, success through non-violent action can be achieved in three separate ways: (1) accommodation, where the opponent does not believe in the changes made but nevertheless believes that it is best to give in on some or all points to gain place or to cut losses; (2) non-violent coercion, where the opponent wants to continue the struggle but cannot because they have lost the sources of power and means of control; and (3) conversion, where the opponent has changed inwardly to the degree that they want to make the changes desired by the non-violent activist.

The first two modes of non-violent conflict resolution are based on power that respective parties can exert on each other. Powerlessness of one party to a conflict means that a truly productive outcome will rarely be arrived at. Conversion, on the other hand, operates outside the framework of the interplay between power and powerlessness. Consequently, conversion is “the touching of the conscience” as the effective mode of conducting a struggle based on truth. It is also the morally correct way to conduct conflict because only through dialectical process can truth be arrived at or at least be approached and such quest for truth is the aim of life.

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## 7.9 The Principles of Satyagraha

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For Gandhi, Satyagraha is not just a set of actions; it is also an attitude, a way of life. If the underlying principles of Satyagraha are not present in the Satyagraha campaign, then it would be a ‘duragraha’ as Bondurant, a Gandhian peace researcher, has termed it. The following principles or precepts and rules of a Satyagraha can be presented in a systematic way: It contains ten principles:

- (1) Violence is invited from opponents if they are humiliated or provoked. “It is never the intention of a satyagrahi to embarrass the wrong-doers. The appeal is never to his fear, it must be always to his heart.
- (2) The Satyagrahi should be clear about the essential elements of his case and the purpose of his struggle. The struggle should be conducted by following the sincere undertaking of a conflict along Gandhian lines. He is just to realize the goal of the campaign and not to wish to injure the opponent. This type of move is less likely to invite a violent attitude.
- (3) Opponents are less likely to use violent means if they can understand the Satyagrahi’s case and conduct. The philosophy of non-violence assets the honest and straight-forward dissemination of information. The reconciliation cannot be achieved if there is withdrawal of information and the making of unsubstantiated charges.
- (4) Essential interests which opponents have in common should be clearly formulated and cooperation established on these lines or basis. The most important point in Satyagraha is to attempt to see the validity in the opponent’s position; it is as if “we begin to think of things as our opponent thinks of them. To do this, it requires a detached state of mind. We will then agree with our adversaries quickly or think of them charitably”.

- (5) Opponents should not be judged harder than self. Here, “the golden rule of conduct ... is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never think alike and we shall see truth in fragment and from different angles of vision. Conscience is not the same thing for all. We must guarantee to them same freedom we claim for ourselves”.
- (6) A Satyagrahi must trust his/her opponents. Because, ‘trust begets trust’. A trustworthy response does not mean waiting endlessly for conversion to occur. When the limit is reached, then he takes risks and conceives plans of active Satyagraha which may mean civil disobedience and the like. Till that, he must keep up patience.
- (7) A satyagrahi should always be willing to compromise on non-essentials. In fact, Satyagraha requires willingness on the part of the opponents to make large concessions on all points except where a principle is involved. In simple way, satyagrahi is a man of compromise. In the case of compromise, the opponent may be persuaded that he is in error in so holding them.
- (8) The conversion of an opponent is furthered by personal sincerity. Personal sincerity on the part of the Satyagrahi is the key. Genuine Satyagraha is a quest for truth and it cannot be used in an unjust cause.
- (9) The best way of convincing an opponent of his sincerity is to make sacrifices for the given cause.
- (10) A Satyagrahi should never exploit a position of weakness in an opponent. Intrigue and manipulation of opinion are to be rejected.

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## **7.10 Process of Satyagraha**

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Thomas Weber opines that the success of a Satyagraha campaign to resolve any conflict rests on three basic assumptions. They are:

- (1) That there can always be found some elements of common interests to all the contending parties;
- (2) That the parties are or at least might be, amenable to an appeal to the heart and mind; and
- (3) That those in position to commence Satyagraha are also in a position to carry it through to the end.

Once these prerequisites are fulfilled, the process of conversion can be initiated. This can involve several steps, firstly reasoning with the opponent, secondly persuasion or what Richard Gregg has aptly termed moral 'jiu-jitsu' or moral appeal through self-suffering. In case, none of these attempts are successful, then the tools of non-cooperation or civil disobedience can be used.

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## **7.11 Gandhian conception of the Individual, Conflict and Violence:**

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Gandhi gives prime importance to the individual because, according to him, the individual has a soul while society does not. For Gandhi, the individual preceded society. So, "the individual is the supreme consideration. Ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit". As Raghavan Iyer points out, Gandhi refused to believe that society is governed by the laws of growth which are beyond the ability of any individual to alter. At the heart of all his personal and social actions lay the individual who will and can effect social and political change. Gandhi developed his concept of truth in an effort to understand external authority and to reaffirm the moral autonomy and authority of the individual as an agent, and an active performer in the arena of politics and social life.

Gandhi had a very positive view of human nature as it has the ability to rise above selfishness and violence.

Gandhi rejected the conception of conflict in terms of class as was elucidated by socialism; He viewed conflict as a positive and desirable thing. It is in fact an opportunity to transform the self and society. Conflict is an important means to greater human unity, for it reminds human beings of the bonds that relate to each other.

Conflict, according to Gandhi, was built into social structures and not into people. Therefore, pressure the individual while systematically targeting the structure. Gandhi 'saw conflict as a perennial condition' and was thus more concerned about managing conflict and creating new social arrangements free of structural violence.

Concentrating on the Gandhian conception of conflict, Robert J Burrows said, "Three principles underpin the Gandhian approach to conflict... the unity of means and end, recognition of the unity of all life and a willingness on the part of a satyagrahi to undergo suffering".

Gandhi believed that "conflict is a part of human nature but violence is not. Therefore, he looked for human ways to settle disputes rather than to our animal past and use brute force".

On the question of whether aggression is a basic human instinct or an innate quality. Gandhi had observed, "...non-violence pervades human life and" if human beings were not essentially non-violent in nature it would have been self-destroyed ages ago".

Thus, it can be said in the words of Thomas Weber, "In the Gandhian model, the individual comes to a conflict situation as one who is not innately aggressive and has the freedom of will to resolve conflicts in a non-violent way freely chosen".

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## **7.12 Methods in Satyagraha for the Resolution of Conflicts**

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Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Fasting are the some important forms conducting Satyagraha. Before applying these methods, there are sequential orders of stages central to Satyagraha will have to be followed. Non-cooperative, Civil disobedience and fasting are the last resort and final weapon when no other course of action is available in redressing the grievances against an established political system. The following stages can also be adopted to other conflict situation as needed.

**(1) Negotiation and Arbitration :** The first stage of Satyagraha includes exploring various legislative channels, entering into negotiation with the opponents, sending deputations consisting of influential and notable citizens to persuade the opposite side and seeking assistance through arbitration carried but by a third party acceptable to both the disputants. When these avenues fail, the Satyagrahi should move towards the stage of no-violent direct action.

**(2) Direct Action :** On recognizing the futility of the first stage, participants are required to carefully assess the pros and cons of the circumstances, their opponents, the climate of public opinion, the group's capacity for self-discipline and so forth. At this stage, continuing reassessment of the situation and objectives with a view to possible adjustment of demands is essential. Decision as to when to proceed for a further phase of Satyagraha must be carefully weighed in the light of ever changing circumstances, but static condition must be avoided.

**(3) Agitation:** At this stage, the Satyagrahi seeks to support of the people who are most affected by the dispute. The objective now is to generate 'cause consciousness' among all the affected groups. The Satyagrahi must examine the weaknesses within the group along with programme of boosting morale. This stage includes action by the Satyagrahi against the opponents taking the form of demonstrations, slogan

shouting, boycotts, mass meetings and strike. Pamphlets, books and papers explaining the reason for the dispute, its implications and its consequences are circulated and distributed. Media such as radio, cinema and television are used as instruments of mass propaganda to publicize speeches, group meetings, debates and discussions. The main objective is to gain widespread interest in the issue from a sympathetic population so as to influence the decision of the opponents.

**(4) Ultimatum:** When no agreement is in the offing, the Satyagrahi are required to issue ultimatum to the opponent containing in it a constructive solution without using any offensive language and flexibility of words. The list of demands is arranged in consultation with the group and placed before the opponent specifying time. In this way, an ultimatum amounts to a conditional declaration of war. The aim is to force the issue on the opponent and threaten direct action if it is ignored or not settled.

**(5) Self-purification:** Self-purification is a revolutionary strategy and it includes fasting and public prayers and the refusal of lucrative government post, luxurious articles and products and intoxicating drinks and drugs. The idea is to emphasise the concept of self-sacrifice and suffering in order to morally persuade the opponent, embarrass him/her and pressurize towards a just and honorable settlement of the dispute.

**(6) Types of Resistance :** Resistance takes the form of picketing, dharna, slow-down strike and all non-violent forms of strikes. A strike means cessation of work till the opponent accedes to the demands of the Satyagrahis. Strikes entail a continued education of the public regarding the cause of the conflict. Picketing is a natural consequence of strikes involving an appeal to the public to withdraw its patronage from certain shops, concerns and businesses. Rallies are held to openly inspire members of the public and persuade them with powerful arguments to disown certain groups, councils and business.

Among the resistances, dharna, is very popular. It involves large group of people blocking roadways, passage ways, entrance to mills or factory, causing inconvenience unless their demands are met. Sometimes, it is seen to have dramatic forms such as people lying themselves flat on the ground and requesting officials to tread on their bodies to enter their places of work. Dharna, thus, demonstrates itself as a powerful technique of meeting the demands.

**(7) Economic Boycott and Non-cooperation:** It is the form of non-payment of taxes, boycotting schools and offices, ostracism and voluntary exile. These activities lead to the arrest of Satyagrahis, the confiscation of lands, the confiscation of other



properties such as bank amounts, shoot-at-sight orders and so on. Satyagrahis in the face of these forms of oppression are committed to receive all penalties without retaliation. They are to suffer in silence. Such suffering generates sympathy from community members and officials and compels them to reciprocate by being unable to continue the reign of terror. This breaks down the momentum of the opposition as without individuals there are no groups and systems to punish the Satyagrahis, resulting in shuttering the opponent's system.

Another strategy known as Hizrat, is an offshoot of no-tax campaigns. Instead of retaliating, the oppressed group takes recourse to migration to adjoining territory. This strategy works as an effective means to neutralize the power of the opponent as there is none to govern and punish.

Social boycott or ostracism is another weapon with which the community completely boycott those who refuse to join the programme of non-cooperation with the opponents. The Satyagrahis treat those community members as political pariahs with whom one should avoid any form of social intercourse. The ultimate aim of all these techniques is the conversion of adversaries, not to pain him.

**(8) Civil Disobedience:** The next step of Satyagraha is civil disobedience movement. Laws central to the function of the government are boycotted or not obeyed by the Satyagrahis in a non-violent manner. By violating the unjust laws of the Government, it brings people's attention and tries to generate public sympathy and support. No government will allow deliberate disobedience or breach of its laws. So, government takes the way of arrest and imprisonment of the law breakers. The Satyagrahis by failing to respond with violence and by willingly submitting to punishment will baffle their opponents. Large-scale arrest and imprisonment will overflow with inmates the jails and this act will ultimately neutralize the coercive agencies of the state. The non-violent resistance acts as a moral jiu-jitsu to the opponent not to further oppress the Satyagrahis. The opponent's conscience starts bothering him/her leading to disgust and the cessation of violent actions and activities. Gandhi started this type technique as demonstrated in a 1930 campaign in India.

The Ahmadabad movement illustrates Gandhi's ideology of Satyagraha in the field of class struggle and labour exploitation and its role in resolving conflicts against the powerful capitalist opponents without bloodshed and with the support and sympathy of the public.

Similarly, the Salt Satyagraha campaign was highly moral and ethical means of achieving civil disobedience in protest against oppression, injustice and exploitation.

The focus was on truth, non-violence and suffering and on educating the opponents about the unfairness of their acts.

**(9) Self-Suffering :** Self-suffering is one of the important method in Gandhian Satyagraha. In a non-violent resistance, Satyagraha is not a method of punishing or inflicting pain on others, but a method of converting them by appealing to them better self through a process of self-sufferings. When a party is failed to convince the evil-doer the reason of their argument, self-suffering is the way to resolve conflict. Voluntary self-suffering opens the eyes of the evil-doer who shuts his heart to the voice of reason. Thus, self-suffering has to appeal continuously to the evil-doer's head and heart combined.

Apart from those techniques of resolving conflict, Gandhi's constructive programme was emphasized as effective means in conflict transformation process. Constructive programme is to build a new social and economic order through voluntary constructive work. Gandhi considered it more important than resistance. In Gandhian concept of conflict transformation there is no victory and there is no vanquished. Gandhi's constructive programme included a variety of specific measures aimed at social improvements, education. Decentralized economic production and consumption, and improvement in the lot of the oppressed sections of the population. Self-purification and constructive programme can transform the individual and the society. It is a programme of transforming the antagonistic, violent society to new on-violent society.

Satyagraha as an approach to conflict resolution in the past acted brilliantly in the past and there is no doubt that its present is interesting and its future is promising. But unless the world is really war weary and the people disgusted with the barren results of mutual slaughter, violence and the spell of war-mongers, they are not going to be interested in the doctrine of love and peace. Unless there is hunger for peace and peaceful resolution of conflict, the attraction to the doctrine of Satyagraha is likely to prove fruitless.

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### **7.13 Application of Satyagraha in various kinds of Conflict**

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Gandhi's Satyagraha as an approach to conflict resolution can be used in various kinds of conflict i.e. in domestic situations as well as in broader fields. Gandhi was of the opinion that "he who fails in the domestic sphere and seeks to apply it only in the political and social sphere will not succeed". Thus, a Satyagrahi had to start by solving small conflicts at the home front before going out to resolve the larger

issues. “For it will be those small things that you shall be judged”. The salient features of application of Satyagraha in different categories of conflicts are as follows:

**(1) Inter-Personal Conflicts:** Satyagraha in inter-personal conflicts should be applied in the form of persuasion and discussion. In the Gandhian approach, resolution of inter-personal conflicts would depend largely on the internalization of the principles of Satyagraha. This internalization “presupposes great study, tremendous perseverance and through cleaning of one’s self of all impurities, through living the creed in your life which must be living sermon” and through a wide and varied experience of internal conflict. In inter-personal conflict, one thing is evident that is, to replace the deep-seated emotion of fear with trust. In this conflict, both parties want to dominate. Under this situation, Satyagrahi cannot adopt rigid attitudes but while hoping to win over the opponent should be willing to change their own attitudes as the issues and underlying causes become clearer.

Thomas Weber pointed out some other techniques as well on Gandhian lines that can be used in conflict resolution. The first of these techniques is known as ‘I – Message’. It is appropriate for conflicts where the focus is on personal needs rather than values or beliefs. The initial response in interpersonal conflicts is to blame the other for unacceptable behaviour and its consequences by sending ‘You — Message’, which masks the real issues of the conflict and provokes resistance. When blame statements are reformulated into ‘I — Message’, it helps in clarifying issues by explaining the feeling of the speaker as a result of the unacceptable behaviour by the other and giving the speaker’s perception of the consequences of behaviour on them.

The second technique is “the role-reversal technique of switching view points, where each party honestly tries to argue for the other’s view point, while the other listens”. It works well in domestic situations or in situations where there is enough rapport or intimacy via. between friends, between neighbours etc. This technique is a combination of ‘active listening’ and ‘mirroring’. Active technique involves ‘mirroring back what has been said’. This not only assures accuracy of listening but also assures the sender that he has been understood when he hears his own message fed back to him accurately. This can not only be used to solve inter-personal conflicts but also can be used by a third party to help one of the parties in a conflict situation classify his/her own feelings and think creatively about solution.

**(2) Legal Conflicts :** Gandhi being a lawyer by profession has expressed his views on the resolution of legal conflicts via the legal court system. It is the institutional solution to conflict resolution among individuals or groups. Legal dispute

solution is seen as a major method of non-violent settlement of disputes in modern times. Gandhi, however, views the appearance of a civil case in a court as the failure on the part of the parties to settle the dispute on their own. Once the case goes to the court, there is risk of loss for one party and victory for the other or both parties will have to pay costs as well.

In the Gandhian perspective to redress conflict, the lawyer can play the role of a catalyst – a mediator – rather than just indulging in legal negotiations in the court and bringing out points of law in favour of their clients. Gandhi himself did that a number of times during my twenty years of his practice as a lawyer, but this legal method is not to my soul.

Pointing out the negatives of the legal method of conflict resolution, Thomas Weber said, “when disputes enter the legal process the disputants lose control not only of the outcome of the process but also their own ability to handle the situation – they become less than self-sufficient, more reliant on experts”.

**(3) Industrial Conflicts:** Gandhi’s approach to industrial conflict is not zero-sum or compromise; he instead, insists on mutual problem solving, which will lead to the truth. Conflicts within the industry are a result of economic or social causes such as changes in the social structure of the plant or “changes in management policies, frustrations that result from a lack of communication with the management, a feeling of powerlessness resulting from the lack of opportunity in having an effective voice in the running of the industry, and the basic conflicts of interests between workers and management”. If workers have greater involvement in the affairs of the work place, it is likely to lessen the occurrence of industrial conflict, Gandhi suggested, “labour should have the same status and dignity as capital”.

**(4) Social Conflicts :** Employing the principles of Satyagraha to group social conflicts are a difficult proposition because it is easier to appeal to the conscience of an individual and make them see the reason in comparison to a group. It is also easy for individuals to remain truthful and non-violent in contrast to a group. In this connection, Gandhi recommends ‘Mass Satyagraha’ as a method of resolving social conflicts. The general rules of Satyagraha such as truth, non-violence, self-suffering, coercion and means and ends will also be applied in mass Satyagraha. Another Gandhian measure for resolving social conflicts is Trusteeship, wherein owners of the wealth are supposed to voluntarily convert themselves into trustees of their wealth for the poor. Redistribution of wealth should not involve any coercion because the foundation of a non-violent state cannot be based on violence. Large non-violent

campaign such as civil disobedience should be coupled with constructive work as it helps in influencing public opinion and equip people with discipline for non-violence.

**(5) International Conflicts :** Principles like truth, non violence and means and ends are also applicable to the international arena, guiding interactions between nations. Gandhi expounded the concept of civilian defence to solve international conflicts instead of doing so through the means of war. Civilian defence aims to defend the whole society, not just borders or some crucial buildings. When a nation is attacked by another nation, the aggrieved citizens should adopt the method of civilian defence instead of military defence and start a political struggle employing tactics of civil disobedience and non-cooperation. A country that adopts civilian defence is less likely to be invaded by another country because it is no longer seen as a threat. However, this can only happen when unilateral disarmament is first undertaken. Such unilateral actions will reduce international tensions.

Several scholars, however, have subjected Gandhi's method of civilian defence to severe criticism and termed it impractical. But one thing is certain that Gandhi's "non-violent equivalent to war suffers fewer of the moral deficiencies than war suffers from".

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## 7.14 Conclusion

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Gandhi had the firm belief that human beings were basically good and humanity essentially had a non-violent nature. The underlying sources of conflict are distrust and friction and therefore Gandhian method of conflict resolution does not focus on the immediate/manifest grievances of the conflict; it goes beyond that to look at the underlying sources of the conflict as well. Satyagraha essentially a non-violent method that touches all three aspects: the attitude, the behaviour and the goal incompatibility can be applied to smaller as well as large disputes occurring in different areas of life.

Gandhi's Satyagraha is a conflict resolution discourse and a win-win approach as opposed to power-based and zero-sum approaches. It is an integrative conflict resolution discourse advocating conflict resolution techniques for the solution of not only immediate problems but a broader personal and societal transformation as the ultimate goal based on truth and non-violence. In this principle of non-violence, Gandhi introduced technique of resistance to evil and untruth. His Satyagraha is inspired by boundless love and compassion. It is opposed to sin, not sinner, the evil, not evil doer. The conflict resolution process must target a change in the attitude, behaviour and structure.

To conclude in the words of Thomas Weber: “Satyagraha, then, from the Gandhian perspective, is a viable autonomy- producing method of conflict resolution. Its stress on the shared humanity of all, including opponents, also makes it ethically superior to other methods of conflict resolution”. Not only that, even when Satyagraha fails to resolve conflicts,” the subjective benefits of dignity that comes from leading a moral life, is always present and this is missing with other methods”.

The philosophy of Satyagraha is thus, a new and dynamic way of conflict resolution and a democratic method of transforming violent to a new non-violent society. Its realization is possible only when violent relationships are transformed into non-violent relationships, where energies of the opponent are utilized in a higher integration. This highlights a new dimension to non-violence in which the passive principles are converted into a dynamic doctrine of Satyagraha to fight against injustice, exploitation and different other forms of violence.

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## 7.15 Summing Up

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- i) Conflicts occur between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings.
- ii) Satyagraha is basically a relentless and perennial search for truth and a determination to reach truth. According to Gandhi, it is a dialectical process that is creative, constructive and centrally concerned with human needs.
- iii) The element of Gandhian conflict resolution includes faith in human goodness, creative suffering, rejection of coercion, fearlessness and many more.
- iv) Conflict is intrinsic in the human nature. It happens to occur inevitably but its solution is possible.
- v) Conflict defined as the pursuit of incompatible goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship combined with attempts to control and influence each other and antagonistic feelings towards each other.
- vi) Conflicts do not occur randomly. They take place within certain kinds of structures or system of relationships, such as, inequality, economic deprivation, human rights abuses. failed states etc.
- vii) Most western approaches to conflict resolution advocate to the requirement of a ‘go-between’ or an intermediary or involvement of third party, a people, organization or nations who enter a conflict with the objective of trying to help the disputants d-escalate or resolve it.

- viii) The Gandhian philosophy of conflict and conflict resolution is an alternative to the western approach to conflict resolution methods.
- ix) Satyagraha as a path-breaking method of conflict resolution was born almost a century ago, far away from India, in South Africa.
- x) Gandhi saw conflict as built into structures and not into people. Hence, he advised “to hate the sin and not the sinner”.

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## 7.16 Glossary

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- 1. Karma — Activities
- 2. Jiu-jitsu — Moral Appeal
- 3. Satyagraha — Adherence to Truth
- 4. Dharna — Seated demonstration for obtaining justice.
- 5. Hizrat — Migration

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## 7.17 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions:

- 1. Enumerate the fundamental concepts of Satyagraha in Gandhian thought and practice in respect to conflict resolution.
- 2. Define conflict. What are the similarities and differences between the Western approach and the Gandhian approach to conflict resolution?
- 3. Explain how Satyagraha can be applied towards resolving various kinds of conflicts.
- 4. Describe the principles of Satyagraha as a guide to conflict resolution.
- 5. Write a short note on fasting and its importance in conflict resolution.
- 6. How does Gandhi conceptualize the individual, conflict and violence?

### Short Questions:

- 1. Mention briefly the techniques of conducting Satyagraha in conflict situation.
- 2. What is the nature of conflict? Explain briefly its causes.
- 3. Write a note on the concept of civilian defence as enumerated by Gandhi, in the context of resolving international conflict.

**Objective Questions (MCQ):**

1. Name the political theorist who made a distinction between manifest conflict and underlying conflict.

- (a) Fink (b) Deutsch (c) Nader and Todd (d) Galton

Ans. : (b)

2. Who is the author of *The Origin of Species*?

- (a) Francis Galton (b) Charles Darwin (c) Thomas Hobbes (d) Edmund Burke

Ans. : (b)

3. What according to Gandhi, can lead to on the performance of fasting and public prayers?

- (a) Negotiation (b) Agitation (c) Self purification (d) All of these

Ans. : (c)

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**7.18 Further Reading**

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## **Unit-8 □ Peasant Satyagraha**

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### **Structure**

#### **3.0 Objective**

#### **8.1 Introduction.**

#### **8.2 Peasants in colonial India: Historical Background.**

#### **8.3 The Early peasant Revolts in Colonial India.**

#### **8.4 Gandhian Ideology of Peasant Movement: Satyagraha.**

#### **8.5 Gandhi's Experiments of Satyagraha.**

##### **8.5.1 The Champaran Peasant Satyagraha : (1917-18)**

##### **8.5.2 The Kheda (Kaira) Satyagraha**

##### **8.5.3 Ahmedabad Satyagraha**

##### **8.5.4 Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)**

#### **8.6 Conclusion**

#### **8.7 Summing Up**

#### **8.8 Glossary**

#### **8.9 Probable Questions**

#### **8.10 Further Reading**

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### **8.0 Objective**

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The present study focuses on the following:

- 1 Outlining of the agrarian social structure of India in the context of the understanding of Gandhi's peasant movements in India.
- 1 Tracing the early peasant movements occurred in Pre-Gandhian era of peasant movements and their influence.
- 1 Analysing the ideology of Satyagraha as a tool of organizing peasant movements.

- 1 Exploring the application of the Gandhian technique of Satyagraha in Champaran Kheda, Ahmadabad and Bardoli peasant uprisings.
- 1 Making the assessment of Gandhi's peasant movement in a critical perspective.

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## 8.1 Introduction

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Peasants are the people who engage in agrarian work. The agriculture is the mainstay of Indian economy and the peasants are the backbone of it. India was conquered and ruled by several foreign races, but such conquests and invasions mainly were confined to change of rulers or a change of dynasty that exercised political authority over the people, it did not affect the social fabric, the productive organization, the property relations or the system of administration. The village stood as a cooperative group in which functions were fixed by tradition and custom and the individual were merged in the collectivity.

But the establishment of the British colonial rule in India brought new revenue collecting pattern in which the landlords (Zamindars) became the intermediaries. The introduction of new land tenure system known as the permanent settlement system in Bengal was first introduced in Bengal and subsequently all over India whereby the landlord was proclaimed as the real sovereign of the land under his control. Now, the Zamindars became the absolute owner and proprietor of his estate and permitted him to appropriate the whole of the rental to himself after defraying the dues to the Government. The revenue due to the Government was to be deposited in time; otherwise their estate could be confiscated and auctioned. Afraid of this cruel arrangement the landlords used to adopt more cruel methods of realizing revenues from the peasants/tenants. The landlords also got the right to eject the cultivator forcibly and attach property in the event of default of payment of rental arrears by a particular time. It opened the flood gates of exploitation of the helpless peasantry. As a result of this, the cooperative pattern of village life changed.

The colonial rule was, thus, accompanied by an un-mitigated disaster for the Indian agriculture. The rate of accumulation of agricultural wealth fell quite drastically owing to ruthless plunder carried out by the agents and officials of the British in India in the name of collecting revenues. Due to the neglect of administration and irrigation, a series of famines ravaged and depopulated the country driving the peasantry at various places. The landlords, planters, moneylenders and the British rulers who stood behind the revenue collecting agents, pushed the peasants into abject poverty. The peasants were forced to borrow money from moneylenders at high interests as there was no other source of income. The land was sold to the moneylenders since they could not repay the amount taken. The social status of the farmers got down badly

and as a result of this, vast majority of such farmers (Kisan) turned into tenants and finally became labourers.

The ruthless exploitation and oppression perpetrated by the British colonial rule pushed the peasants to organize movements in India. The three decades in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were characterized by a series of peasant uprisings. The chief causes of their uprisings. Consequently, agrarian tensions had its manifestation in the form of sporadic and spontaneous peasant uprisings in India, cutting across caste and communal barriers.

The early nationalists failed to do anything substantial for the peasant upliftment as the Congress was ambivalent in the early years to adopt the programme of the basic agrarian issues. The Indian National Congress, instead of laying stress on the need for relief for the peasants, designed its organization as a 'safety valve' to all such uprisings. Despite having an elaborate agrarian programme, the Congress could not provide an appropriate philosophy for a broad-based peasant movement. Due to its class character based on the upper and middle classes in the society, the activities of the Congress were confined to the urban centers only. Thus, even though the Congress organized a nation-wide struggle, it remained a struggle of a minority against the British Raj. The lacking of mass-base of the Congress debarred it from mounting movement in the rural areas. Besides, the agenda of peasant movement of the Congress might go against the interests of landlords, zamindars, money lenders and businessmen because the Congress was dominated by professional classes, the intelligentsia and the urban middle classes. It was because of this class interest that the Indian National Congress did not lay as much stress on the need for relief to peasants as it did on the need of Indian industrialists.

It was only after the arrival of Gandhi on the political scenario of India, a real breakthrough was marked in the peasant movement. With his assumption of leadership in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the style and content of the Indian peasant movement gained momentum. An entirely new dynamic and politically revolutionary tendency came to be imported into peasant struggle by Gandhi. Gandhi with his remarkable background in South Africa and experience of mass mobilization properly armed with new ideology and technique for mobilizing the masses, diverse groups with antagonistic ethos, brought them into the broad united anti-imperialist movement.

The basic Gandhian style of mobilizing the peasantry involved careful training of the disciplined cadres as in the line of phoenix settlement and the Tolstoy Farm, and the non-violent Satyagraha. The Gandhian idiom of Swaraj, Swadeshi, Satyagraha, non-violence etc. undoubtedly endeared the Indian rural masses – the peasants and the

village artisans. With his principles of ahimsa and Satyagraha, Gandhi entered into Indian political scene in 1916 through three local struggles which he carried on in Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad. He also had a definite policy for other movements which were not directly under his control such as those in the United Provinces, Malabar and Guntur and Bardoli as well. The technique of fighting in Champaran and its success not only fulfilled his political mission but also led Gandhi to use the weapon of ahimsa and Satyagraha in other peasant and labour movements in India. The peasant Satyagraha of Gandhi was an important landmark not only in his political career, but also in his political struggle in India. It revealed in him the great appeal of his philosophy of non-violence and Satyagraha made popular both to the peasantry and the landlord.

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## **8.2 Peasants in Colonial India: Historical Background**

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The establishment of the British rule in India brought about tremendous disaster for the Indian agriculture. In pre-British India, a self-sufficient village based on agriculture carried on with the primitive plough and bullock-power and handicrafts by means of simple instruments was a basic feature of Indian society. This self-sufficient village as the basic economic unit had existed for centuries except for some minor modifications, and this system had survived till the advent of the British rule in spite of all political convulsions, religious upheavals and devastating wars. It withstood all foreign invasions, dynamic changes even all violent territorial shifting in inter-state struggles. Kingdoms rose and collapsed but the self-sufficient village survived.

The village population was mainly composed of peasants. The village committee, representing the village community which was the de facto owner of the village land, distributed this land among the peasant families in the form of holdings. Each holding was cultivated by the peasant family by means of the collective labour of its members with the aid of plough and bullocks. The peasant family enjoyed traditional hereditary rights to possess and cultivate its holdings from generation to generation. Pre-British invaders in India did not disturb the existing revenue administrative structure. Millions of the rural folk remained, therefore, indifferent to the ruling class. As a result, village agriculture produced for the needs of the village excepting a share of his produce which the village had to surrender to lord of the moment. The conflict between the lords who were concerned not at all with the methods of cultivations, but to draw an income from the peasantry ensued. The village and the peasantry remained passive subject of conflict.

Another feature of the village economic life was the absence of the division of labour. While a farmer attending to agriculture was also engaged in domestic weaving. Similarly the artisan who got a plot of land carried on agricultural activity. Thus, economically, the village was predominantly autarchic. There was very little exchange between the village and the outside world. Marx described this type of social organism as the blending of agriculture based on possession in common of the land and handicrafts. Amidst an ocean of tiny, autarchic villages, a few towns had sprung up and existed.

The transformation of the pre-British feudal economy occurred with the British conquest of India after introducing a capitalist economy. The introduction of capitalist economy in India was bound up with the decay and extinction of old land relations and artisan and handicraft industries. In place of village commune, there appeared the modern peasant proprietor or the Zamindar as the private owners of land while the class of artisans and handicraft men disappeared with the rise of industry, trade and transport. Under the British rule, new classes appeared such as the class of capitalists, class of industrial and transport workers, the class of agricultural labourers, the class of tenants, the class of a new type of merchants connected with trade. The British impact, in fact, on India not only led to the transformation of the 'economic anatomy' of Indian society but also its 'social physiognomy'.

The British rule in India led to a revolution in the existing land system. The new revenue system introduced by the British in India superseded the traditional rights of the village community over the village land and created two forms of property in land and landlordism in some parts of the country and the individual peasant proprietorship in others. It was Lord Cornwallis who during his term of office, created the first group of landlords in India by introducing the Permanent Land Settlement for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1793. These landlords were created out of the tax farmers in the provinces who had been appointed by the political predecessors of the British rulers to collect revenue from these provinces on a commission basis. The permanent land settlement converted these revenue collectors into landlords. Under the terms of the settlement, they had henceforth to make a fixed payment to the government.

While the British rule created in some parts of the country large scale landlords, in other parts, it created individual peasant proprietorship. This peasant proprietorship is known as the Ryotwari. Under this system, the individual cultivator was transformed into the owner of the land he tilled. This Ryotwari system was actually the Zamindari system unknown to Pre-British India.

Thus, private property in land came into being in India: Land became private property, a commodity in the market which could be mortgaged, purchased or sold. With the commercialization of agriculture, there arose various intermediaries such as landlords, planters and money-lenders.

The British traders in order to ensure easy transaction of trade captured the political machinery and introduced their own legal system and replaced the proportional payment of revenue by fixed payment. In the name of trade, they introduced an 'age of plunder' which led to utter ruination of the peasants, artisans particularly the weaving community. These people began to depend on agriculture. Over pressure on land in addition to negligence of irrigational work since the decaying Mughal period, gradually diminished the rate of production. Famines and starvation became the order of the day. Along with the destruction of Indian cottage industry and diminishing production in agriculture, encroachment of forest land by the British authority, antagonized a large section of peasant, artisan, especially the tribal population. With the accumulation of capital from plundering and undue exaction of revenue, the British capitalists established large-scale industries particularly textile ones in their home land. The nature of exploitation had changed. India so far an exporter of textile goods turned to an importer of the same goods and began to export cotton and indigo along with food crops.

The forced indigo plantation by the indigo planters turned a large section of cultivating peasants into landless ones. The blow upon the weavers was felt more fatal than it was in the earlier phase of plunder and exploitation. The markets were flooded with cheap foreign textiles. The indigenous cottage-made goods failed to compete with the machine made ones. The enhancement of revenue frequently added more suffering. This severely affected the rent-paying peasantry as the revenue collector exacted the enhanced revenue from the tenants. Along with this, a class of money-lenders emerged to whom the defaulters mortgaged their land. This ultimately resulted in large scale eviction of the tilling peasants and increasing concentration of land in the hands of a few. The exploitation and oppression generated by the British rule against the peasantry created discontent among them giving rise to spontaneous outburst of rebellions in India. Transcending the barriers of caste and communal, the peasant revolts in early colonial India played significant role against the British misrule.

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### 8.3 The early Peasant revolts in Colonial India

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A few of the peasant uprisings were:

i) Sannyasi Rebellion (1763-1800) :

The Sannyasi rebellion developed out of the rising revenue demand. The growing hardship of peasantry, their forced eviction, Bengal famine of 1770 propelled the movement that originally started with a small group of Hindu Sannyasi who resisted the restriction imposed on their movement to religious places.

Similarly, the Muslim fakir also rebelled. Both the Muslim fakir and the Sannyasi were peasants concentrated their movements in a few districts of East and North Bengal, Jessore, Khulna, Murshidabad, Chapra and Champaran in Bihar.

ii) Wahabi rebellion (1830-31) in Baduria, 24 Parganas of Bengal.

iii) Faraizi rebellion (1838-1848) in Faridpur, Bengal.

iv) Santal rebellion (1855-1856) in Birbhum, Bihar and parts of Murshidabad;

v) Indigo rebellion (1858-1861) in Nadia, Jessore, Khulna, 24-Parganas, Pabna of West Bengal;

vi) Uprising in Pabna and Bagura in (1872-1873);

vii) Moplah rebellion (1836-1849) in Malabar; and

viii) Deccan riots in 1875.

In most of the uprisings, peasants were generally mobilized on the basis of religion. Wahabi rebellion was against the imposition of tax by the Hindu Zamindars on the Muslim peasants which sparked off the rebellion. Faraizi also initially started with a religious issue and ultimately culminated in peasant rebellion.

Despite being mobilized on religious issues, in course of the movement class polarization surpassed the other divisions. Hindu-Muslim, tribal, non-tribal and all the poor peasantry stood against the Zamindars and Mahajans (Money-lenders).

The movements were spontaneous and marked by massive participation. But due to the lack of organization and specific ideology, these movements were short lived and in some cases the movement partially achieved their demands.



Another feature of the movements is that all these movements were led by the charismatic leader like Manju Shah in Sanyasi rebellion, Titu Mir in Wahabi rebellion, Dudu Mia in Faraizi rebellion, Bir Singh in Santal rebellion.

Apart from the economic demands, these movements also challenged the political authorities. Titu Mir in Wahabi rebellion established in Baduria his own rule and peasants refused to pay the rent to the landlords. Santal rebels demanded their lost land and liberation.

Though the British authority suppressed the movements brutally, it nevertheless, had to accede to the demands of the rebels. During the Sanyasi rebellion, the British officials had to pay some amounts from the treasury as tax to quell the rebels in Bagura. The creation of a new district of Santal Pargana was another recognition of the just demands of the santal rebels. The indigo planters had to withdraw from Bengal the forced cultivation of indigo. The Decan Agricultural Relief Act of 1879 and the Bengal Treasury Act of 1885 were the outcomes of Decan riots of 1872-75.

The people of rural Bengal joined hands with leaders of the movement. Anti-Zamindar and anti-money-lender stand of the movement helped them come under the common umbrella of peasant movement.

Except in the case of indigo rebellion, the middle class was against these peasant-rebellions. In the indigo rebellion, Ram Mohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, Harish Mukherjee and especially Dinabandhu Mitra by his Nil Darpan could win a substantial section of intellectuals.

These movements, by and large, lost their militancy over the years, but the early peasant uprisings paved the way for Gandhian peasant Satyagraha in different parts of India successfully.

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## **8.4 Gandhian Ideology and Technique of the Peasant Movement: Satyagraha**

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The emergence of Gandhi on the national horizon marked a crucial phase in India's struggle for freedom. The whole national movement took a new shape with renewed vigour. It goes to the credit of Gandhi for widening the social base of the movement by incorporating the masses which had been skillfully avoided by the pre-Gandhian national leadership. The peasantry in India constituted a predominant part of the masses, but the pre-Gandhian national leadership showed little concern for the peasants' cause. But it cannot be denied that occasionally the Congress took note of

the key issues and land problems that affected millions of the masses. Land revenue assessment and the increasing burden of taxation on poor peasants were among the main issues. The Congress resolution of 1888 drew attention to the hardships caused to the ryots by the periodical revision of the revenue assessment. A resolution of 1892 demanded fixing up of Government's revenue. Apart from this, the Congress focused on the tribal peasants' problems in 1891, 1893, 1895 and pleaded for an amendment of forest laws. The repeated outbreaks of famines in different parts of India and the consequent misery of the rural population forced the Congress leaders to take interest in agrarian questions. But the agrarian programme of the Congress confined mainly to the reform of the land revenue policy of the Government only. The early nationalists failed to do anything substantial for the peasant upliftment as they feared it would go against the interests of landlords, Zamindars, money-lenders and businessmen and it might have weakened the Congress organization. The congress being remained as an organization for the upper and middle classes of the society it functioned as a 'safety-valve' to all such peasant uprisings. It was because of the elite based organization, the neglect of the agrarian issues was inherent in the class character of the Indian politics.

With the entrance of Mahatma Gandhi into the political arena in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the situation changed to a large extent. An entirely new dynamic and politically revolutionary tendency came to be imported into peasant struggles. The era was marked as a real break-through in Indian politics. With the assumption of leadership, the style and content of the Indian political movement for national liberation changed considerably. It assumed a mass character under Gandhi, bringing the urban commercial, trading and industrial capitalists as well as the peasants into the nationalist movement, making the break from the earlier tradition set by the previous congress.

Gandhi is the first Indian leader who tried to organize the masses for freedom. Gandhi, with his remarkable background in South Africa and experience of mass mobilization, was armed properly with new ideology and technique for mobilizing the masses, diverse groups with antagonistic ethos into the broad united anti-imperialist movement. This involved careful training of the disciplined cadres as in the phoenix settlement and the Tolstoy Farm, the non-violent Satyagraha. Non-violence or Ahimsa and Satyagraha to Gandhi constituted a deeply felt and worked out philosophy fitted in with the interests and sentiments of socially decisive sections of Indian people and especially the peasants.

The whole Gandhian philosophy revolves around the concept of non-violence (Ahimsa) and Satyagraha (Path of truth) which was believed to be a nucleus for Indian politics and became a solid hindrance to the colonial power. The ultimate value-goal of Gandhian philosophy was 'Truth' which was very much related with 'Ahimsa' or non-violence. For Gandhi non-violence was a wider name of fraternity, swaraj or liberty. He propagated the methods of performing a value-creating function which would achieve ultimate values like purity. Thus, Gandhian ideology was based on Satyagraha. Gandhi defines Satyagraha: "Satyagraha is soul force pure and simple, and whenever and to whatever extent there is room for the use of arms or physical force.....".

For Gandhi, Satyagraha is free from the use of any kind of force. A Satyagrahi should not use physical force but he or she should use the force of their soul. According to Gandhi, Satyagraha is based on non-violence, a weapon of the strong.

Gandhi used his ideology of Satyagraha and Ahimsa (non-violence) in those movements he led. "Satyagraha is the way to live truthfully and constructively. It was a war against injustice and transformation of society". Satyagraha is also a 'Tapasya' i.e. self-suffering. Gandhi's Satyagraha is based on love, Tapasya and constructive action. Gandhi used truth, love and non-violence in all the peasant movements in India. He always talked about heart change. He was of the view that non-violent heart of human being can do any movement without violence. Therefore, Gandhi was dead against the use of violence. He wrote in 'Young India' in 1925 that, "Ahimsa is my God and Truth is my God. When I look for Ahimsa, Truth says, find it through me". For Gandhi, "end depends on means; therefore means should be focused more. If our means is clear then our end will also be clear". Thus, Ahimsa and Satyagraha were the main weapons applied by Gandhi in the entire national struggle. These were not meant for bloodshed but to risk one's life to save humanity insisting upon truth and adherence to truth. Many peasant movements occurred in India which were based on Gandhian ideology of Ahimsa and Satyagraha. So, Gandhi with his ideology of Ahimsa and Satyagraha mobilized the peasants and social reconstruction in a non-elitist perspective and realized that no anti-imperialist struggle could possibly succeed in India without the involvement of millions of village folk and peasants whom the early congress had ignored. Thus, Gandhi's peasant Satyagraha involved 'the science of non-violence' for it provided a grammar of Gandhian political mobilization in which civil registers represent the non-violent army of the nation. Gandhi's Satyagraha translated 'the voice of protest', a means and device through which Truth and freedom could be attained from colonial rule.

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## 8.5 Gandhi's Experiment of Satyagraha

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Gandhi's Experiments of Satyagraha in Champaran, Kheda, Ahmadabad, Bardoli peasant movements.

In the aftermath of the 1919 anti-Rowlatt Satyagraha, ahimsa or non-violence was integral to Gandhi's Satyagraha Campaign. There is no doubt that ahimsa always remained a significant influence in the conceptualization of Satyagraha. As a method, Satyagraha was always informed by ahimsa, but its role was vividly articulated in the 1919 campaign against the Rowlatt Act. From now on, Gandhi paid enormous attention to justifying the importance of ahimsa in political mobilization. The Pan-Indian Non-Cooperation Movement that played a determining role in political mobilization led Gandhi to assume his experiments of Satyagraha in Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad peasant movements as in these movements; ahimsa was constitutive of the Gandhian model of anti-imperialism.

### 8.5.1 The Champaran Peasant Satyagraha : (1917-18)

In Champaran, Gandhi first applied his technique of Satyagraha in India. The technique of fighting in Champaran adopted by Gandhi not only fulfilled his political mission and shook the British empire politically but he also started a great social mission in Champaran by prosecuting his constructive programme. In fact, the civil disobedience and his constructive programme which he carried in Champaran were the twin weapons in his armory to fight the British throughout his life in 1920-22, 1930-32 and in other minor campaigns. Champaran, in fact, was the laboratory for the execution of the Gandhian political philosophy.

Champaran is a district in the north-western corner of Bihar. Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, indigo began to be grown there by European planters who in course of time secured on temporary and permanent leases, the large tracts of land from the Zamindars of the district, particularly the Maharaja of Bettiah, who ran into heavy debts. The planters with the influence and status thus acquired that land and very soon were able to get indigo grown by the tenants of the villages on portions of their holdings varying between 3/20<sup>th</sup> to 5/20 Kathas of land as the compulsory cultivation of indigo. This system was known as 'Tinkathia' system. Under the system, it was obligatory on the part of the peasants to sell the produced at the price fixed by the planters.

The conversion of lands into indigo fields, forced labour, poor payments and heavy fines inflicted on peasants for the failure to grow indigo, were some of the worst oppressive features of this system. The forcible indigo cultivation made radical

interventions in the peasant production process, commoditizing almost every aspect of it. For poorer peasants, the ecological parameters of survival were threatened as demands imposed by indigo cropping prevented the growth of a variety of food crops. On the other hand, the better-off peasants resented that they could not indulge in the indigo trade. The riots particularly resented the Tinkathia system and when their peaceful efforts failed to bring them any relief they revolted from time to time. Their helpless anger resulted in outbursts of revolts in 1867-68, 1876-78 and 1907-08, however, the oppression over the impoverished peasantry continued unabated. Even in 1911, a large number of ryots agitated before King George V. and in 1912, the representatives of ryots were sent to Calcutta to present their memorandum narrating their story of oppression by the planters but they did not get any relief from the planter side.

It was in this background that Raj Kumar Shukla, a brave and resolute middle class ryot from Bihar who had experienced excessive tyranny at the hands of the indigo planters, came forward to fight against the mighty planters for the thousands who were suffering as he had suffered. In December 1916, he attended the 31<sup>st</sup> session of the Indian National Congress in Lucknow in the hope of acquainting his countrymen with the sad plight of the indigo workers of Bihar and particularly of Champaran. He called on Gandhi to acquaint him personally with the situation. Gandhi at first declined to take part in the Champaran debate. However, he was successfully persuaded by some Bihar Congress leaders to visit Champaran and help in alleviating the ryots' condition.

In early 1917, Gandhi left for Champaran and reached Patna. On the spot enquiry of the pitiable peasants' condition, Gandhi started campaign. But his arrival was resented by the Government. As soon as he reached Motihari he was served with a notice under section 144 C.P.C. (Criminal Procedure Code) to quit the district. Gandhi's refusal to obey the Government order, at once made him hero of the peasants. This decision of Gandhi visualizes his personality that he was a staunch supporter of Satyagraha as he had no fear of ill effects for the sake of ryots. The Government subsequently withdrew the order against Gandhi.

Hence, on touring the district Gandhi was satisfied as to the urgency of doing something for the oppressed peasants in the face of Government opposition. In Champaran, Gandhi came into contact with the Indian peasants. A throng of ryots at railway stations and elsewhere combined with the influx of peasants from a large number of villages met Gandhi with evidence against the planters. Gandhi, by these

incidents, understood that not only the European planters but also the Indian Zamindars were equally responsible for such poor conditions of the ryots. And finally he made it clear that his presence in Champaran was only to wipe off the grievances of the ryots, without hurting the planters feeling. His presence and work in the villages of Champaran district sent a wave of enthusiasm and inspiration to the people who were thirsting for a selfless leader. Even the British Sub-divisional Officer agreed that Gandhi's relationship with Champaran peasantry was almost messianic.

While conducting the enquiry, Gandhi simultaneously educated the peasants in the principle of Satyagraha. Gandhi explained to them (ryots) that "The plinth on which alone freedom could be raised was freedom from fear". He organized volunteers to instruct the illiterate peasants in elementary hygiene and to run schools for their children. The people, to be free, must learn to stand on their own feet. Even he emboldened them to fight for the rights, he taught them to fulfill their obligations.

The more he worked among the people, the more embarrassed and unnerved the authorities became. The Government saw that situation was going from bad to worse. Then the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Edward Gait asked Gandhi to see him at Ranchi on June 4, 1917. In a meeting, the decision was reached to institute an enquiry committee representing the representatives of the landlords, planters and the Government and Gandhi himself as representative of the tenants on June 10, 1917. The most important decisions taken by the Committee were:

1. To abolish the oppressive Tinkathia System.
2. The continuation of the temporary lease system in the estates under the management of the court wards with adequate safeguards against the exaction of abwab and other improper or undesirable practices.
3. Other measures designed to meet the grievances arising out of the existing practices or arrangements.
4. The abolition of the customs of imposing fines on ryots.

These recommendations were ultimately embodied in the Champaran Agrarian Act of May, 1918. With the passage of this Act, the 'blue raj' somehow came to an end. Despite some loopholes, the Champaran Satyagraha had telling effect on the peasants and they all came under a banner of Satyagraha against planters. Dr. Rajendra Prasad said: "Gandhi's advent imbued the people of this area with a consciousness and moral faith in the righteousness of their cause.' It is clear that the Champaran Movement helped in determining the future shape of the Gandhian agrarian movement. According to J. M. Brown, "Champaran did give him an all-India public reputation". The success of their movement instilled a new vigour in the peasantry.

### 8.5.2 The Kheda (Kaira) Satyagraha

When Gandhi was preoccupied with the Champaran Agrarian Enquiry Committee, another peasant agitation was brewing up in Kheda in Gujarat. The second scene of Satyagraha by Gandhi was witnessed in this region. Kheda was situated in the northern division of Bombay presidency. Kheda possesses fertile plains which were suitable for cultivation with an adequate availability of water particularly from wells, ponds and river Mahi and Sabarmati just in contrast with the lands in Bihar districts with its barren and hilly tracts.

Kheda was a land of relatively prosperous Kanbi-Patidar peasant proprietors producing food grains, cotton and tobacco for nearby Ahmedabad. Kheda was one of the richest agricultural tracts, with the domination of Patidar Community over it. As a close-knit social and commercial group, they became highly prosperous. Hence, their position depended on their economic success.

But in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘Golden Age’ was followed by repeated famines and plague after 1899, making revenue payments difficult. In 1917-18, there prevailed a deep distress among the farmers of the Kheda district as excessive rains had damaged the crop considerably. The Kheda peasants demanded a suspension of the land revenue for 1917-18 on account of crop-failure. Petitions, representations and resolutions in the provincial council were of no avail. Even no specific reference was made to the Kheda situation in the resolution on agrarian matters by the first Gujarat Political conference at Godhra held in November, 1917. This led certain local leaders of the Kheda district to initiate for no-tax campaign, but without any effect. Finally, they approached Gandhi for assistance, who agreed to guide the movement in March, 1918 after a lot of hesitation.

Taking up the case of the Kheda peasants, Gandhi announced in his letter to F. G. Pratt in which he said: “I would like to reassure you that it is not my intention just to start an agitation. I am going to Kheda in search of truth..... It is my duty to verify the facts for myself. If you are able to postpone the land revenue recovery work till my enquiry is completed, it will help a great deal in reducing the discontent that has now spread among the people”.

But Gandhi’s correspondence proved ineffective. Gandhi at last reached the conclusion that peasants’ demand was legitimate; and it was so moderate as to make a strong case for its acceptance.

In Kheda, Gandhi repeated the Champaran methods of Satyagraha once again. The programme of work at Kheda covered visiting villages and asking his

co-workers to form groups to enquire into crop conditions in all the 600 villages affected by famine and also to record statements of ryots about harassment by talatis (local revenue Officers).

As the Kheda peasant movement is known as no-tax peasant struggle, the peasants were required to sign pledge of non-payment of tax in the face of Government's high-handedness. Gandhi sought to bind them all into a pledge which he made out as a 'sacred obligation'. The idea of this sacred pledge played a crucial role in Gandhian Satyagraha which was taking a mature shape in the Kheda agitation. This kind of idea provided Gandhi to evolve 'controlled mass movement' subsequently in Indian Politics.

The actual programme of Satyagraha in Kheda consisted of the refusal to pay the taxes and suffer whatever consequences might follow from this violation of law. At a local level, massive effort went in for mass mobilization. The meetings held throughout for the success of the movement were in full swing from March to June, 1918.

Unlike at Champaran, in Kheda, Gandhi himself worked on two main lines, external publicity and internal consolidation. Throughout the country, he tried to capture public sympathy for the cause of the peasants.

The boycott campaign adopted in Kheda gathered momentum. The Government responded with repressive measures including confiscation and sale of the property and the cattle belonging to the farmers for realizing the tax. But the farmers showed no signs of yielding to the threats. In all, eleven hundred villagers had signed the pledge while Gandhi had been touring in the villages. Some satyagrahis were beaten up and cases were lodged and more inhuman forms of torture were also taken place. Properties including the household utensils, milk cows were also attached.

Despite the repressive measures adopted by the Government, the peasants, by and large, remained adamant in their struggle. Finally, after five months of struggle in July, 1918, an agreement was arrived at between the officials and the representatives of the peasants according to which the land revenue of only the poor sections of the farmers was waived for one year. At the same time, as the sowing season came in June, the peasants then had started paying up their dues. Thus, the peasant Satyagraha had ended.

Gandhi records in his Autobiography that "Campaign came to an unexpected end because the people were exhausted and he then hesitated to let the unbending be driven to utter ruin". In the circumstances, when the mamlatdar of Nadiad Taluka sent



Gandhi a word that if the well-to-do patidars paid up, the poorer ones would be granted suspension. Gandhi at once accepted the offer, calling off the movement.

The Government call for relief was a welcome step. But although the poor were to be granted suspension, hardly got any benefit. Very few got the benefit of the belated, unacknowledged and grudging settlement and the triumph of Satyagraha was one in principle, lacked the essentials of a complete triumph. Hence, the success of the Satyagraha was strictly limited. Sumit Sarkar has rightly put it, “Kheda, the first real Gandhian peasant Satyagraha in India, consequently proved a rather patchy affair”. The people did not feel the glow of immediate success nor did they realize the benefit they had gained. Gandhi himself observed, “It is an end without grace. It lacks dignity”. The main reason of partial success was that the Government had succeeded in dividing the ranks of the people by discrimination in realizing the assessment. Whatever may have the pit falls, the Kheda peasant movement as described by Gandhi, was the beginning of an awakening of their true political education.

In kheda Satyagraha, the distinguishing features involved solution to the problems of the impoverished peasants apart from the reduction of revenue, his ‘controlled mass movements’. The patidar being well-to-do peasants was benefitted much more than the poor peasants in Gujarat during anti-tax movement. The ‘controlled mass movement’ was nothing more than the concept of constructive programme as Gandhi understood that the basic facets of the agrarian structure in Gujarat, where the Patidar had been prospering on the toils of the poor peasants, were ignored. The constructive programme as an ideological mechanism was adopted to smoothen and ease out class contradictions. This constructive programme in the rural areas provided a great help in developing a powerful Gandhian rural base in this region.

Hence, in these two campaigns – Champaran and Kheda, Gandhi showed the subsequent congress a practical and effective way to force the Government to accede to the popular demands. Gandhi’s success in leading these two peasant movements with limited objectives of amelioration, made him a house-hold word in India and secured his position at the top of the congress. It brought a mass base of the congress to conduct mass-struggle against the British Raj. Thus, the non-violent Satyagraha, the controlled mass movement and the constructive programme which had started taking shape in Champaran, were also being perfected in Kheda which later helped Gandhi in launching a broad united anti-imperialist movement.

### 8.5.3 Ahmedabad Satyagraha

During 1918, Gandhi also organized a Satyagraha Campaign in Ahmedabad for the first time against Indian employers and not government officials. Unlike Champaran and kheda, Ahmedabad was an urban setting. It was the commercial centre and under the British rule it emerged as a growing cotton industry and expanding markets which turned Ahmedabad into a modern industrial city.

As an industrial city, the Mill Owners needed sufficient labour in their mills and as there was shortage of labour in Gujarat. In consequence, they had to pay high wages to attract the labourers. During the late 1917, due to plague there was an acute shortage of labour as large member of mill workers went back to their villages in order to avoid infection. To make them stay there, the mill owners thought an attractive scheme of plague bonus which was as high as 75%, declared.

This new arrangements of plague bonus was quite satisfactory but for about 350 labourers were not getting the plague bonus which resulted in unrest. The Mill owners wanted to withdraw the bonus. The whole workers demanded a 50% wage hike. The Mill owners were willing to give only 20% wage hike.

At this point, Gandhi was invited by Anasuya Ben Sarabai and her brother Ambalal Sarabai, rich mill owner of Ahmedabad, towards the cause of the Mill owners.

In March 1918, under the leadership of Gandhi, there was a strike in the cotton mills. In this strike, Gandhi used the weapon of hunger strike. If Gandhi was not there as a leader of this revolt, the situation would have turned out violent. But Gandhi carried out his programme in purely non-violent disciplined way. The result was that the strike was successful and the workers got a 35% wage increase.

Gandhi's fast was directed not against the mill owners, but against the lack of coordination and unity among the workers. The fast lasted only for three days. It influenced the mill owners so much that they came to an agreement with the workers. His Ahmedabad Satyagraha became successful. It was another feather to his cap.

In addition to the three movements, many other peasant movements based on Gandhian ideology occurred in India. On 1921, the peasants of Awadh in the united province started movements against the colonial government with the help of Indian National Congress and Kishan Sabha. The peasants of Faizabad, Rae Bareli and Sultanpur started movement. Earlier these peasants adopted violent methods and looted bazars, shops, attacked on the houses of landlords and they also opposed

police. The same situation occurred in Agra also. Gandhi went to the peasants of Awadh in 1921 and told them as they were fighting for attaining Swaraj, they would have to follow a non-violent principles in their movements. Later under the guidance of Gandhi, the congress tried to lead these peasant movements peacefully.

In Kerala, Mappilla revolt or Moplah revolt occurred during the Non-Cooperation Movement. Mappillas were the Muslim Community of Malabar district of Kerala. The Mappillas were in good position because of their developed trade but after the arrival of European Colonial Power in India, Mappillas became peasants and lost their command on trade. After the establishment of the British Government, their condition became more pitiable. High taxation and establishment of Zamindari system became the cause of their problems. They raised their voice against both the British Government and Hindu Landlords. All India Home Rule League and District Congress Committee started participating in these movements against the exploitation of Mappilla peasants. Gandhi gave his support to this movement in early phase but soon he decided to withdraw himself from this movement for making this movement violent. E.M.S.Namboodripad criticized Gandhi because he stopped supporting the Mappilla rebellion.

#### **8.5.4 Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)**

Quite like Kheda peasant struggle, the Bardoli (Surat, Gujarat) movement was also a no-tax movement. Gandhi, after the Non-Cooperation Movement, selected Bardoli as a suitable place for launching Civil Disobedience Campaign. D. N. Dhanagare has sketched a portrait of the socio-economic background of Bardoli. He says that Patidars were the dominant cultivators in Surat taluka. They were divided into two classes: (1) Kali Paraj and (2) Ujta Paraj. The Kali Paraj class of peasants literally means black-skinned. It included the lower castes, tribals, backward classes and untouchables. The Ujta Paraj literally means fair-complexioned people comprising all upper and well-to-do castes such as Patidar, Vania, and Brahmin and so on. Gandhi observed that the Kali Paraj was living in dire poverty surviving a near-slave like condition in Bardoli.

The relations of the Patidar with the lower caste were quite unsatisfactory. The land with the poorer peasants was very meager and largely unproductive. The wages of the agricultural labourers were so small that they could hardly maintain the body and soul together.

The Patidar, on the other hand, could afford to invest their surplus money in the improvement of land. Some of the Patidars also worked in London and Africa. The

surplus money they got from there was invested in the purchase of new land and provision of irrigation facilities.

The Bardoli Satyagraha was launched in mid-February, 1928. The main causes of launching Satyagraha were that the relation between Kali Paraj and Ujta Paraj were characterized by exploitation. The Ujta Paraj peasants cornered most of the benefits in terms of ownership of land and other facilities. This created an antagonism between the rich and big Patidar peasants and; the poor, small, marginal and agricultural labourers.

At the initiative of Gandhi, some constructive work was started in the entire Bardoli taluka. This created an awakening among the peasant masses to get mobilized for fulfilling their demands. The constructive work trained the youths to prepare for non-violence and Satyagraha movement. The Patidar Yuvak Mandals constituted for the social reforms had not only created unity among the patidars but also developed among them a sense of antagonism against the peasants of lower castes.

The Bardoli peasants were against the Hali System. In this system, the poor borrowed money and in repayment of it worked as his master's permanent agricultural labourer for a life time.

Gandhi's spinning wheel-charkha had become popular among the backward castes and tribes. A Swarajya Ashram was established in Surat as the centre of constructive work to diffuse new political culture. But the Hali System as the source of exploitation was not abolished. Hence, the Bardoli Satyagraha was much against the Hali System.

The Bardoli peasant agitation had the sympathy of educated persons and also the nationalist leaders. The contact of the local leaders with Gandhi helped to observe non-violence movement. The Bardoli movement was led by Sardar Patel on the lines of Gandhian ideology of Satyagraha. One hundred political workers drawn from all over the province, assisted by 1,500 volunteers, many of whom were students, formed an army of non-violent workers.

An extensive network of mobilizing the peasants was made. Regular meetings, speeches, distribution of pamphlets, door-to-door persuasion and other propaganda were taken up. When the peasants were rallied with their demands, the government of Bombay took all repressive measures such as attachment of land and crops and confiscation of cattle and other movable property. Very soon, the Bardoli movement became a national issue. Gandhi along with Patel conducted the movement in such a way that it carried throughout the period, its non-violent character.

Ultimately, an enquiry committee was constituted by the government to find out the details about Bardoli agitation. The findings of the committee came to the conclusion that increase of tax had been unjustified. At last, verbally the government agreed to reduce the enhancement of rent. But nobody took the governor's declaration seriously. Gradually, the intensity of the movement petered out.

However, the Bardoli Satyagraha influenced not only other peasant movements in the country, but it also provided a new strength to the national freedom struggle.

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## 8.6 Conclusion

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Gandhi undoubtedly made a sincere and successful attempt to transform an elitist movement into a mass movement primarily through his appeal to the peasantry. At the same time, he restrained the peasant movement from leaning towards class struggle. To accomplish this task, Gandhi promoted two integrative principles. Firstly, he took effort in instilling the notion of the peasantry as a single cohesive social group in order to overcome the peasantry's division of caste, community or on local bases. The notion of the peasantry had within it the elements of class cohesion and consciousness. But this notion was not promoted by Gandhi to accentuate the class struggle against the Zamindars and landlords. Consequently, despite the propagation of the ideology of a single peasantry, the peasant class consciousness remained on the whole at a low level. Besides, such propagation of a single peasantry, or a social group was used to cover up the increasing differentiation within it. During the peasant movement, the small and ruined landlords were found to have been integrated with the peasantry. Secondly, the mobilization of the peasantry into a united anti-imperialist front involved a lot of inherent problems. With the emergence of multi-class mass movement, Gandhi had faced problem to define a particular group to perform its own task.

For the peasants, the Gandhian programme included village reconstruction through self-help which envisaged economic revival and highlighted the abuse of industrialization but not at the cost of the industrialists. This was in keeping with the fear of antagonism of the wealthy classes such as industrial mill-owners, the landed Zamindars and so on and thus would divide the united movement of his scheme and also would violate his ethic of non-violent struggle. Gandhi aimed to maintain the broad unity of his anti-imperialist movement based on class harmony as the bed-rock of his nationalism. This policy had started developing since the Champaran days up to the Bardoli Satyagraha. In Champaran, Gandhi might easily put the match to fire

as Champaran was in a inflammable condition. Gandhi poured water on the fire, saying that his mission was aimed at 'making peace with honour'. In fact, Gandhi had exercised a restraining influence on the revolutionary potentiality of the peasants at Champaran.

In Kheda, Gandhi was aware that in a famine-like conditions and agrarian structure in Gujarat where the peasant proprietors mostly Patidars had been prospering on the toils of the poor peasants were ignored by Gandhi. His solution to the problems of the impoverished peasants was nothing more than a package of constructive programmes. The real problem of changing basic social or economic structure was not solved. Gandhi's assumption that the dominant classes in rural areas could be persuaded by words alone to give a better deal to the poor yielded no result. Despite this, it is Kheda more than Champaran which clearly brought out the broad configuration of Gandhian nationalism vis-à-vis peasants and their agitations.

In the same way, Gandhi tried to uphold the cause of the peasantry without injuring the Zamindars' interest in other peasant movements in India. Gandhi's 'No Rent' movement in U.P. in 1921 was contemplated seeking not to hurt the Zamindars' interest. In this context, D. N. Dhanagare commented that Gandhi shed tears for the poor without adopting any concrete programme for their upliftment. He mobilized the rural folk without doing anything substantial for them. "The Gandhian Political Idioms of 'village uplift, Swaraj (freedom), Swadeshi (self-reliance) and Satyagraha – non-violent political struggle, left the fundamental land relations unhurt and unexamined".

Sumit Sarkar has shown that in the so-called Gandhian peasant movement the initiative and leadership actually came from local level elite, Gandhi remained in the background. "The initiative of non-revenue really came not from Gandhi or Ahmedabad politicians, but from local village leaders in Kheda in November 1917; it was taken up by Gandhi after a lot of hesitation only on 22 March, 1918".

Similarly, Arvind N. Das opposing the views of 'the classical historians' stand on passive immobile Indian peasantry who were only driven to politics by the Gandhian clarion call, he referred to the peasantry as not passive but that local peasant leaders had a far more important role in the agitation than has been described".

D. N. Dhanagare further mentioned that "the main support to Gandhi came primarily from the better off sections of the Indian peasantry". Gandhi instead, through his constructive programme maintained a semblance of relief for the poorer sections of the rural society. This constructive work "helped the congress to sustain

its basic liberal, political and economic reformism and to prevent any potential revolutionary actively at the grass-roots level”.

D. N. Dhanagare has raised the issue of Bardoli Satyagraha either as a reality myth created by the Gandhian. Bardoli agitation was more a national issue for experimenting Satyagraha as a method for political freedom. But not much attention was paid to the basic problems of the peasants. The problem of Hali Pratha which was highly exploitative was not raised at all by the movement. Instead the movement pleaded the cause of the rich and middle class peasants. The interests of the poorer masses were altogether neglected.

But there can be no denying the fact that the Gandhian movements initiated the process of peasant mobilization in which peasants from every nook and corner were appealed to the cause of the poorer sections at the cost of the upper section of the community. Under the Gandhian leadership, the peasants of India first came to be acquainted with modern organized movement. The pre-Gandhian peasant movements were sporadic, transitory and lacked organizational backing. It was only with the arrival of Gandhi in politics in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the peasant unrest took a sustained and ; organized form different from the earlier movements.

It may be concluded that in spite of criticisms made against Gandhi, he played a crucial role throughout at various places and gave the Indian peasants the awakening to realize their problems by mobilizing them through non-violent ways in a wider nationalistic perspective.

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## 8.7 Summing Up

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- i) The colonial rule was accompanied by an un-mitigated disaster for the Indian agriculture. An unmitigated disaster for Indian agriculture accompanied colonial rule.
- ii) The peasants were forced to borrow money from money lenders at high interests as there was no other source of income.
- iii) The early nationalists failed to do anything substantial for the peasant upliftment as the Congress was ambivalent in the early years to adopt the programme of the fundamental agrarian issues.
- iv) An entirely new dynamic and politically revolutionary tendency came to be imported into peasant struggle by Gandhi.

- v) The whole national movement took a new shape with renewed vigour. It goes to the credit of Gandhi for widening the social base of the movement by incorporating the masses, which the pre-Gandhian national leadership had skillfully avoided.
- vi) For Gandhi, Satyagraha is free from the use of any force. A Satyagrahi should not use physical force, but he or she should use the force of their soul. According to Gandhi, Satyagraha is based on non-violence, a weapon of the strong.
- vii) Gandhi used his ideology of Satyagraha and Ahimsa (non-violence) in the movements which he led. "Satyagraha is the way to live truthfully and constructively. It was a war against injustice and transformation of society"
- ix) Gandhi undoubtedly made a sincere and successful attempt to transform an elitist movement into a mass movement primarily by appealing to the peasantry.
- x) For the peasants, the Gandhian programme included village reconstruction through self-help, envisaged economic revival, and highlighted the abuse of industrialization but not the industrialists' cost.
- xi) With the emergence of a multi-class mass movement, Gandhi had faced a problem defining a particular group to perform its task.
- xii) Gandhi tried to uphold the cause of the peasantry without injuring the Zamindars' interest in other peasant movements in India.
- xiii) Gandhi played a crucial role throughout at various places and gave the Indian peasants the awakening to realize their problems by mobilizing them through non-violent ways in a broader nationalistic perspective.

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## 8.8 Glossary

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- |    |            |   |                             |
|----|------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Zamindar   | — | Landlord                    |
| 2. | Ryots      | — | Land revenue system         |
| 3. | Fakir      | — | Medicant                    |
| 4. | Faraizi    | — | Obligatory religious duties |
| 5. | Satyagraha | — | Adherence to truth          |
| 6. | Ahimsa     | — | Non-violence                |
| 7. | Tapasya    | — | Self-suffering              |



- |     |            |   |   |
|-----|------------|---|---|
| 8.  | Tinkathia  | — | Cultivation on 3/20 <sup>th</sup> portion of land |
| 9.  | Talatis    | — | Local Revenue Officer                             |
| 10. | Kali Paraj | — | Black-skinned                                     |
| 11. | Ujta Paraj | — | Fair-complexioned                                 |
| 12. | Hali       | — | Beggar System                                     |
| 13. | Swaraj     | — | Freedom   |
| 14. | Swadeshi   | — | Self-reliance                                     |

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## 8.9 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions:

1. Describe Gandhi's Role in peasant movements in India.
2. Analyse the causes of peasant unrest in different regions in India.
3. What was the significance of the Champaran movement in India's journey of freedom movement?
4. Make an assessment of Gandhi's Satyagraha technique in resolving peasant problems in India.
5. Give an outline of Gandhi's Champaran and Kheda peasant movements.
6. Describe three major problems faced by the peasants of Bardoli in the days of freedom movement.

### Short Questions:

1. Write a short note on 'Tinkathiya' system.
2. Describe in brief the early peasant movements in India.
3. Do you agree with the view that Gandhi's peasant Satyagraha was designed to reconcile class contradiction with class harmony? Give reasons in support of your answer.

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. Which of the following Satyagraha movement was not a peasant movement?  
(a) Champaran (b) Kheda (c) Ahmedabad (d) Bardoli

Ans. : (c)

2. Which of the following peasant revolts in colonial India originated in Baduria, 24 Parganas of Bengal?

- (a) Sannyasi Rebellion (b) Wahabi Rebellion  
(c) Faraizi Rebellion (d) Santal Rebellion

Ans. : (b)

3. Name the movement led by Titu Mir?

- (a) Sannyasi Rebellion (b) Wahabi Rebellion  
(c) Faraizi Rebellion (d) Santal Rebellion

Ans. : (b)

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## 8.10 Further Reading

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## **Unit-9 □ Satyagraha : An Assessment**

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### **Structure**

#### **9.0 Objective**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

#### **9.2 Gandhian Satyagraha : An Assessment**

#### **9.3 Conclusion**

#### **9.4 Summing Up**

#### **9.5 Glossary**

#### **4.6 Probable Questions**

#### **4.7 Further Reading**

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### **9.0 Objective**

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This Unit aims at:-

- 1 Introducing the meaning of Gandhi's ideology of Satyagraha.
- 1 Assessing Gandhi's Satyagraha and its justification as a moral pressure.

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### **9.1 Introduction**

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Gandhi's supreme invention, discovery or creation was Satyagraha. Satyagraha stood for Gandhi's way of fighting the British Raj. It was a war with an alien government. Satyagraha may better be understood as a technique for solving conflicts and a method of fighting evil. Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose defines Satyagraha as "a way of conducting 'war' by means of non-violence. Krishanlal Sridharani defined Satyagraha as "no-violent direct action". So, Satyagraha is titled "war without violence".

Literally, Satyagraha means "holding fast to truth", adherence to truth", "and insistence on truth"and"reliance on truth". Gene Sharp says: ..."this weapon is an

expression of a way of looking at life and a way of living: Gandhi's philosophy of life and his method of opposing evil are both called Satyagraha. It thus, means that a Satyagrahi is merely a "seeker after truth" for "the good life". It is essentially a moral or ethic-principle the essence of which is a social technique of action. In pursuit of Satyagraha, a Satyagrahi must be a vegetarian and must observe "brahmacharya" (continence) and must develop 'aparigraha' (non-possession).

Truth, non-violence and self-suffering are the principles on which Satyagraha is based. The root meaning of Satyagraha is "holding on to truth, hence Truth Force". Gandhi also called it "love force or soul force: From the term 'Sadagraha\*' meaning Sat and Agraha (Truth and Firmness). Gandhi's modified term is Satyagraha. It is based on the conviction that love, non-violence and conscious self-suffering are the only means to overcome the evil forces because this is Divine way; the way of truth. In fact, it is the way of God.

Satyagraha can be undertaken only for social good and never for personal gain. Satyagrahi is not in any use to crush, defeat or punish the tyrant or break his will. The essence of non-violent technique is to do away with evil, not evildoer. A Satyagrahi has never to humiliate the opponent. It is non-coercive in nature.

Satyagraha thus aims at moralization of politics, fighting injustice and tyranny, settling disputes, establishing effective democracy, laying the foundation of new social order based on equality and justice, paving the way for world peace. In this task, the Satyagrahi will always try to work for conversion or correction of the wrong doers.

The entire philosophy of Gandhi is based upon truth. Gandhi identifies truth with God in the sense of absolute truth - God. To realize absolute truth, one should hold the relative truth which is considered as truth — insistence on truth as the road to the realization of the eternal truth. God.

Intertwined with the concept of truth is Ahimsa or non-violence. It is through the practice of non-violence that is; non-killing, refraining from causing pain or killing any life out of anger, truth will be discovered conquering evil by good. It stands for moral opposition to immorality, the resistance of soul against physical force or violence. The third element of Satyagraha is self-suffering. It is directed towards the conversion and moral persuasion of his opponent. The purer a Satyagrahi is and the more he suffers, the quicker the progress. Confronted with a situation of conflict, the devotee of non-violence seeks to break the deadlock by self-suffering.

To establish non-violent social and political order, Gandhi evolved diversified techniques such as non-cooperation, civil disobedience, fasting, picketing etc. as

strong and perfect non-violent weapons for fighting socio-political evils.

For Gandhi, Satyagraha has universal applicability as an effective universal principle and method in society. But he warned that it is a process of educating the masses, otherwise violence interrupts the process and prolongs the real resolution of the whole structure. What is highly needed in making Satyagraha universally applicable is the capital in the shape of character. This is why Gandhi indicated the prerequisites and conditions for the application of Satyagraha as well as he laid down some rules for the behavior of Satyagrahi during the campaign and inside prison. Because Gandhi had repeatedly reminded that it is “rebellion without the element of violence in it”.

Satyagraha is one of the greatest contribution of Gandhi to Indian history in particular and world history, in general as an ethico-religious doctrine of effecting change of society and polity. But the different forms and elements of Satyagraha have been subjected to criticisms due to its inherent contradictions which Gandhi had failed to see in the course of his formulating the theory of Satyagraha.

Scholars have differed in their opinions that Methods of Non-Cooperation, like Civil-Disobedience, Fasting, Picketing as techniques and methods of Satyagraha confused the minds of the Satyagrahis as well as the people. All these methods of non-violence have little practicability. The incident of Chauri-Chaura is a classic example in this regard.

Similarly, the elements of God, Truth, Non-violence and Swadeshi are inherently contradictory. Blending metaphysics and politics together. Gandhi created a confusion between spiritual and earthly aims. The ailments of the people were earthly and material but the solutions offered by Gandhi are spiritual by upholding the spirituality. Gandhi failed to notice the class-character of the people. The spiritual situation is not a weapon of revolution, but probably of religion. This is why M. N. Roy calls Gandhism a reflection and not a philosophy. The contradictory features in the concepts of Gandhian Satyagraha upheld by his critics necessitate an impartial assessment.

In assessing the Gandhian Satyagraha and the moral principles attached with it confirms the fact that Gandhi was a man of action rather than an abstract theorist. It would be wrong to conclude that Gandhi was an essentially negative thinker. The impact of spirituality which Gandhi had gained from diverse areas of religion was applied in politics as a resistance to political authority mainly with a view to mobilize the people of multi-class character concerning the many problems facing Indian society. Though it cannot be regarded as valid or feasible in differing conditions.

Behind Gandhi's practical proposals there lay vision and imagination that took his at times out of the religion of existing realities into the realm of Utopian fantasy, the anarchist's paradise and the city of God. Despite all these factors, Gandhi's practical proposals in Satyagraha cannot be examined without full consideration of the Indian context in which it was formulated.

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## **9.2 Gandhian Satyagraha : An Assessment**

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Gandhi's Satyagraha has been subjected to criticisms assessing its various aspects among the scholars and interpretators. Though all are not hostile critics, some are sympathetic - in terming Satyagraha as a form of non-violent coercion. Whether Satyagraha contains elements of coercion or violence or moral or immoral, is a matter of intense interpretation. According to Acharya Kripalani, Satyagraha denies any motive of coercion in non-violent resistance. Dr. B. Sharma in his book, 'Gandhi as a Political Thinker', described that instead of the word coercion, Gandhian Satyagraha is a technique of "moral pressure". Gandhi also suggested this term. The term of "coercion" is generally understood in terms of application of physical force. If Gandhi's 'moral pressure' is accepted, then it is not physical but moral or psychological pressure. Similar view has been expressed by Clarence Marsh Case who denies a contradiction in the term non-violent coercion. But Dr. Bondurant in his 'Conquest of Violence' advocates that despite being persuasive" it "contains a positive element of coercion". Non-cooperation, boycott, strike - all of these tools involve in Satyagraha an element of compulsion which may effect change on the part of an opponent which initially was contrary to his will - and he may suffer from indirect results of these actions.

But for the realists like Mark Sheppard, Satyagraha aroused "public sympathy" for the cause and brought them on streets, where they broke law politely and forced the government to negotiate with Mahatma Gandhi. According to Gandhi, non-cooperation should be completely non-violent. But some thinkers are of the view that coercion and its use offered in the movements like non-cooperation and civil disobedience were hidden or indirect, came from the public rather than from the leaders. "Instead of changing the heart of the opponents or government, it changed the heart of the public". This analysis can be supported with the tragedy of Chauri Chaura incident where the participants of 'non-violence' Satyagraha committed the serious level of violence. It is an ample example of practical invalidity in Gandhian conception of non-violence. Being an idealist thinker, Gandhi's emphasis was only on pure idea rather than its practical implications.

Moreover, critics argue that Gandhi ignored the basic physiological character of human being, the existence of idea in human brain. An individual can independently practice non-cooperation non-violently, but it may not be always true that a group of people or human being will collectively be non-violent in the application of non-cooperation. In group, the mob-fury which has no trained mind can easily turn out to be violent. And it proved in Chauri-Chaura incident. Gandhi believed in the goodness of man. But the character of man is not of a uniform composition. The world of action is not like the world of ideas free from the laws of “motion and friction”. Gandhi himself accepts that a group of followers of non-cooperation may not be non-violent and truthful as an individual because sometimes a group action tends to shift from inner purity to external conformity, leading ultimately to violence. So, Gandhi’s insistence of his non-cooperation as non-violent movement does not hold good.

Similarly, critics argue that civil disobedience is also violent. The spirit of civil disobedience called non-violent is not purely non-violent because to disobey an individual, law or any institution is to give some mental pain or fiscal damage which is a part of violence. To use arms or give physical harm to someone is violence but to inject pain or trouble either mentally or in any other way to the opponent proves more harmful than physical assault or trouble. In addition, some people use this technique for personal gain creating lawlessness and disorder in society, but other people suffer directly or indirectly by its effect. When a group of man resorts to perform civil disobedience for fulfilling their own demands, the whole society or state runs through a chaotic situation and fiscal instability. As a result, pain or suffering sustained by the opponents amounts to violence. Thus, civil disobedience, in fact, is a violent means. It may further be contended that an individual can practice civil disobedience in non-violent manner, but it is not essentially true that combination of more than one individual tends to be violent. The act and behaviour of more than one individual in collective action is not all the time peaceful and moral.

Fasting as a pious means is religious. Gandhi used it as an instrument of political movement. Gandhi’s logic of non-violence or ‘suffering love’ is defective in theory and practice of Satyagraha. The human beings could not suffer or act beyond their capacity. The things can become worse when the participants of suffering in the form of non-violence creed had to face a foreign prejudiced government like that of Great Britain who had the least interest in the miseries of their colonial citizens. The “suffering of love” or sacrificing one’s life in the name of ‘ahimsa’ could hardly change the imperialist attitudes towards the sufferers. The ‘stony heart’ of the British



could not be melted with a passive gesture of suffering of love as it was proved in the case of the massacre of hundreds in Jallianwallah Bagh Tragedy in India. Such experiences compelled Gandhi to introduce the elements of 'force' and coercion into his strategy such as in 'economic boycotts', non-payment of taxes etc. All these strategies were not actually based on the 'suffering of love' alone, rather it contained the elements of "force" and "coercion", in order to compel the government to listen to the demands of Gandhi and the political party. One of the limitations and difficulties in the practical implementation of Satyagraha is its basis of moral force. Gandhi could not stick to these techniques of conversion of heart of the government. Consequently, he had to launch "Quit India Movement".

Gandhi adopted fasting as a religious practice in his own life and later interpreted it as way or instrument to practice Satyagraha. He was a staunch follower of Hinduism, especially Vaisnavism and used to practice fast for several religious occasions. But Gandhi could not realise the sanity and sacredness of the fast and transferred it into socio-political device. But it is clear that fasting as religious way is to attain God through self-purification i.e. fasting, it is hardly impossible to practice in socio-political sphere to attain the desired goal. Gandhi seems to have committed mistake in transferring religious norms into political and social practice.

Fasting is also a threat upon the life of one who adopts it. It affects the opponents easily. But on the ground of health, fasting is not useful. On the contrary, according to Gandhi, fasting is not only useful for health but considers a successful weapon to pressurize the superior authority or alien rulers. Here it means fasting as a type of threatening, and is as good as violence. This is why Dr. Krishnalal Sridharani in his book "War without Violence" contended that Satyagraha is a form of non-violent coercion though he acknowledged that it contains an aspect of coercion. Jawaharlal Nehru said, "whatever the motive of conversion behind it (fasting), in practice it has a powerful weapon of compulsion as well, though that compulsion is exercised in the most civilized and least objectionable manner".

The Gandhian Satyagraha movement aimed at Hindu-Muslim unity as one of three ultimate goals. Gandhi's enthusiastic participation in the Khilafat Movement collaborates his desire to fight for the independence with the mutual collaboration of Hindus and Muslims. But what went wrong and why the British left India as two independent states is the fact that Gandhi's philosophy of "Change of Heart" could hardly change the hearts of Muslim leaders ranging from Shaukat Ali Iqbal to Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Gandhi took utmost effort to include the Muslim in All India Congress and made them the part of his non-violent civil disobedience movement in

order to strengthen united fight against the government. But the language, the style, the structure and practices of Satyagraha being Hindu-dominated, the politically literate Muslims did not respond to it positively. In a multi-cultural society like India, the liberal zeal of Gandhian Satyagraha was overshadowed by his religious over-toned political maneuvers and frequent use of Hindu phrases on almost every occasions. "Reformer through and through", Gandhi contradicted his modernism with his insistence upon the values of orthodox Hinduism. 'Gandhi who was to be the leader of both Hindus and Muslims, became communal when he exposed himself as a "Sanatanist" (orthodox) Hindu and hence created misunderstandings and suspicious among the Muslim ranks. His repeated invocation of idol worship, cow protection, Ramrajya and blind faith in the Hindu Laws of "Vedas", "Upanishads" 're-incarnation' had made him misinterpreted by scholars.

'Hindu Scriptures' alienated the Muslims from the mainstream of nationalist politics painting him as a orthodox Hindu. Even the language he used in the political battle against the British was characteristically Hindu. Though the Hindus found sheer satisfaction in Gandhi for generating Hindu symbols and his open loyalty to the Vedic Laws and the majority of the Hindu Congressmen believed Gandhi as the messiah in reviving Hindu Civilization, its values and traditions, but Gandhi's sanity cum political outlook adhering to orthodox Hinduism and belief in the Hindu doctrine of ahimsa or non-violence as the way to obtain Swaraj naturally rendered the Muslims in the sideline of his appeal.

It may be noted here that during the Khilafat and Non-cooperation days starting from 1919 to 1922, he was definitely the idol of the Muslim masses and looked upon as a saint except Mr. Jinnah who did not accept his leadership. From the late twenties his popularity began to wane among the Muslim leaders. With the growing dominance of the Muslim League from 1937-38 onwards, his influence began to decline rapidly.. The League started a virulent propaganda against him, raised the slogan of 'Islam in danger' and made him responsible for all acts of omission and commission of the Congress even for the rise of Hindu Mahasabha. The Muslim alienation then from the mainstream of nationalist struggle resulted in the riots and eventually in the partition of the country. The Khilafat movement accepted Gandhi as the true friend, but in the aftermath of riot that broke out in different parts of India for which he could never win back the affection that was given to him during the Non-cooperation days.

B. R. Nanda and Bhikhu Parekh however, in their defence of Gandhi repudiated the unnecessary anxieties which emerged among the Muslims regarding Gandhi's use of "Ramrajya". To them, Gandhi's term of Ramrajya was not Hindu 'monarchical

kingdom' with Ram as Raja, but "it was an ideal polity, free from inequality, injustice and exploitation". Such defence is weak because Gandhi's own words and statements where he himself declared his support for a class-divided society in which the Hindu elite was at the helm of affairs, were not on the basis of merit but due to privilege of their birth. Besides, the practices of spinning wheel, Khadi etc. meant complete negation to their Islamic culture and political past in India. Satyagraha no doubt, had a powerful contribution to the independence, but to the Muslims, the Hindu religious practices seemed to them enforcing of perpetual domination on Muslims as second class citizens. This sentiment among the Muslims showed a complete detachment of Indian Muslims from the Satyagraha spirit of Hindu-Muslim unity. Thus, blending metaphysics and politics together, Gandhi created confusion between spiritual and earthly aims. The ailments of the people were earthly and material but the solution offered by Gandhi was spiritual. In Satyagraha Movement. Gandhi overlooked this aspect. This is why M. N. Roy in his book 'India in Transition' calls Gandhism a religion not a philosophy. Even Satyagraha failed to transform the prejudices of elites towards Harijans.

Gandhi's Satyagraha movement is being described by the Marxist School as an attempt to safeguard the interests of capitalist and industrialist classes at the expense of the poor peasantry of India. Gandhi's Satyagraha failed to bring an agrarian or a socialist revolution because of the control of the movement by the capitalists over both the Congress and Gandhi turned the Satyagraha movement into merely a tool to safeguard the interests of the elite and industrial classes. The Indian Marxist School represented by M. N. Roy raised 'great defects' in the Gandhi-led Satyagraha as it missed the point that class conflict was an inevitable reality of any rational society. Moreover, Gandhi's involvement of religion into politics was an extreme folly in a multi-cultural society like that of India.

Rabindra Nath Tagore, the leading poet-philosopher of Bengal, slammed Gandhi's spinning cloth, burning foreign clothes being dogmatic methods and he felt as that it could never bring real Swaraj to India. In addition to it, Tagore conceived Gandhi's treatment of nationalism as 'isolator' and conflicting, short-sighted phenomenon that lacked scientific reasoning and knowledge. Satyagraha based on spiritualism would lag India behind the modern age of science.

Gandhi's claim of universal applicability of Satyagraha methodology cannot be accepted to be applicable in a totalitarian regime. Because in such a system, the slightest resistance meant complete annihilation or torture. In other words, Gandhi's method could not be employed or directed against the totalitarian regimes like

Mussolini or Hitler. So, Gandhi's doctrine of Satyagraha is not a universal panacea in resolving conflicts.

Whether Gandhi failed in his Satyagraha movement or not is a difficult and perplexing question to answer as there are different standards and criteria to judge his Satyagraha movement.

From one school of thought Gandhi was found extremely successful. His three decades of national leadership transformed the face of the whole body politic of India. The miserable and frightened Indians under the British imperialism had gained self-confidence ready through Satyagraha and made them to defy fearlessly the unjust laws of the colonial powers.

Secondly, the traditional Hinduism had been revived which acted as a further check against the disintegration of India's cultural and social heritage at the hands of modern materialist civilization. Thirdly, Gandhi's adoption of the democratic and secular spirit of Satyagraha paved the way for Indian unity. It brought together the scattered groups and divergent voices in a strong and coherent Indian nationalism.

Even Gandhi was able to break the orthodoxy of the Indians as the stumbling block to progress by bringing in both men and women as equal partner of Indian freedom movement.

But apart from his achievements, interpreting Gandhi from a different critical point of view, his successes are overshadowed by failures.

First of all, his Satyagraha movement appeared to establish the 'Hindu mind' in the 'Muslim body' which led to the disunity between the two communities in India. Gandhi failed to understand the distinct and independent nature of Islam by submerging Muslims into Hinduism.

It would be unfair if one fails to appreciate the politically significant role Gandhi and his Satyagraha movement played for the achievement of the independence of India. Gandhi's remarkable contribution is that he brought the politics to the grass roots level, made all the Indians equal partners in the struggle for autonomy directing their whole strength against the 'British Raj'. India followed Gandhi as because he appeared to them, a simple, charismatic and sanity person who strongly believed in the Hindu religion and tradition. There were many other great social, national and religious reformers yet no one touched his towering personality with which he alone had achieved. His versatile, practical nature of Satyagraha technique made him very popular worldwide. Gandhi's Satyagraha had a mesmerizing impact on the people and the leaders alike. It would not be out of context in comparing Gandhi's philosophy

of Satyagraha with Marx's philosophy. Then it may be stated that Gandhi and Marx, the two great philosophers of all time, had both conflicting as well as mutual narratives and ideologies that have shaped the world politics. It can be said that there is a great similarity between Gandhi and Karl Marx. While the final aim of both was to establish a stateless and classless society, their means for achieving this aim was different. Gandhi wanted to achieve this end through non-violent means but Marx wanted to achieve it through violent means.

Marx proposed the idea of a communist society whereby the proletariat or working class would seize the power away from the bourgeoisie or rich landowner and they would work together for the upliftment of the society and eventually class differences would vanish away. He believed in the idea of 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' and collective ownership of the means of production. Gandhi, on the other hand, was in favour of Sarvodaya society to be formed on the basis of economic equality. But unlike Marx, he did not believe in coercion or application as offered; rather people and rich landowners would voluntarily come forward to offer or share the surplus land with the needy. Thus, society would be free from any injustice and exploitation.

Another striking feature between Gandhi and Marx is that both Gandhi and Marx were against capitalism. While Marx initiated the revolutionary doctrine for social change by overthrowing the capitalist society, Gandhi took to non-violent measures for effecting social change. Despite differences in measures, they shared a similar objective. Both Marx and Gandhi believed in social ownership and a socialist mode of production. Being inspired by John Ruskin's 'Unto This Last', Gandhi introduced the concept of 'Sarvodaya' to promote the welfare of all instead of favouring one particular class or section of society. Similarly, Marx believed that the forerunner of the social form is socialism in which everybody will enjoy freedom, equality and justice.

Gandhi was in favour of establishing 'Sarvodaya Samaj' or 'Satyagraha Samaj' by means of using Satyagraha techniques i.e. using love, soul force and change of heart of the oppressor. For establishing Satyagraha Samaj, Gandhi emphasized on economic decentralization, cottage industries and making trustees. But Marx wanted to remove the exploitative capitalist system through revolution root and branch.

Gandhi has been regarded as believer in spiritualism. Social elements as well as popular hearts were represented by 'love for God' in Satyagraha. This ethical things or 'Love for God' did not appear in Marx's writings. Gandhi used the spiritualism in

his Satyagraha in order to rally the people's support against the British rule in India. Marx's ideology, on the contrary, was based on "Dialectical Materialism" proclaiming as the only true conception of reality. Gandhi did not attach any importance to materialism; rather Gandhi viewed that politics devoid of religion is meaningless. Marx considered religion as opium for the workers. Religion debars the working class from enthusiasm that needed for a revolution. Marx was a materialist and he gave materialistic and economic interpretation of history. Marx stressed the importance of economic factors.

Gandhi is driven by the conviction that divine is the central truth in man. This firm faith in divinity or God is indispensable for good life. Marx, on the other hand, had a hatred for idealism as according to Marx, materialistic view decides all the norms of life, including ethics. Denying the existence of soul in the idealistic sense of the term. Marx interprets it as consciousness. Thus, ideal is nothing else than the material world. This is why Marx observes: "It is not the consciousness of man that determines their existence but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness". So Marx's philosophy is more precisely anti-religious than atheistic. Religion intoxicates the human mind to lose his consciousness making them slave in the hands of exploiters. Another aspect of difference is that Gandhi wanted class collaboration in Indian society and politics with a view to having united fight against colonialism. Even Gandhi was of the opinion that all propertied persons were not bad. There was an urgent need to change their minds through love. Whereas Marxists have a deep faith in class struggle. The interests of the two main antagonistic classes, the exploited and the exploiters, can never be compromised. Hence, the need for class struggle and revolution was strongly felt.

Despite differences with Marxism, Gandhi's ethical ideas are not utopian. Gandhi was not a mere visionary. He was a practical idealist and practiced himself whatever he preached. Marx is also a great humanist. But Marx's rejection of religion does not appeal much to Indian consciousness in general. The thing is that in the present ethical chaos and confusion, it is necessary to connect Gandhi's morality with Marx's scientific rationality. Though the Marxist theory of socialism is based on objectivity and laws of history, it cannot be definitely claimed that on the basis of Marxist formulation the capitalist society would give birth to the new order of socialism. Rather Marxist ideology dominated in the communist bloc of the world produced an opposite picture. In India, so far as the Socialists and the Marxists thoughts are concerned it is seen that Socialists tried to combine the insights of Gandhi and Marx in their construction of Satyagrahi Samajbad. Later Gandhian thinkers like Vinoba

Bhave attempted to develop the Gandhian thought. The Bhoodan movement initiated by Vinoba was seen as a novel Satyagrahi experiment on the spiritual and non-violent way during the post-independence period. Vinoba in comparing Gandhi with Marx came to the formulation stating 'Gandhism is communism minus violence'. It is interesting to note that Praja Socialist Party was recognized as the leader of Satyagrahi socialist revolution in India. But the communists in India did not support Satyagrahi Samajbad. Indian communists never recognized Gandhian contribution towards development of emancipation thought in India. According to them, Gandhian thought was seen as a bourgeois thought. They criticized Gandhi's political thought on several grounds. Gandhian notion of trusteeship, the use of varnashram dharma and complete negation of industrialism were not accepted within the communist framework of thought. Gandhian acceptance of principle of non-violence was seen as inadequate by the communists. So the communist ideological strands in India remain outside the context of Satyagraha principles.

Contextually, it may be stated that the Bolshevik revolution in Russia inspired two political movements in India. The Communist Party of India was officially established in 1925. On the other hand, Congress Socialist Party took shape within the Congress organization in 1934. These political parties accepted socialist ideal, but their politics always remained different from each other. The Communist Party of India worked mainly to realize the communist ideal on Indian soil. It was critical of the nationalist movement. The Socialist groups on the other belonged to nationalist fold. Therefore, Socialism in India always played a supportive role to the nationalist freedom movement. Socialism therefore accepted Gandhian insights in its ideological formulation. The Socialists though critical on some of the actual practices of Marxism, accepted Gandhian strategy of non-violence. In the post-independence socialist politics, some socialists accepted Nehruvian democratic socialism. It aims at creation of classless and casteless society with the help of democratic methods. The main protagonist in later period was Ram Monohar Lohia. According to Lohia, the real class struggle will consist of civil disobedience. Satyagraha and class struggle are but two names for a single exercise in power, reduction in the power of the evil and increasing the power of the good.

Here it may be stated that although Gandhi and Marx envisioned a socialist society free of inequality and injustice, they had very different ideas, measures and principles. Nevertheless, both are respected and viewed as great social thinkers and philosophers of all times and have shaped the political systems of the contemporary world.

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### 9.3 Conclusion

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Gandhian approach to Satyagraha served some positive function in a particular historical juncture of India. Jawaharlal Nehru said that the dynamic of Satyagraha largely justified itself in India. Gandhi met the needs of the hour with his practical programme of Satyagraha. The novelty of this weapon lay in harnessing the moral strength of the people and at the same time it acted as a good political strategy. The combination of moral force with political realism distinguished Satyagraha from other conventional methods. Though pacific, it was, in essence, a revolt against the weakness. Satyagraha launched a battle against the age-old weaknesses of the people. It roused the masses from their infirmities and made them conscious; it stirred them and stole their will, made them fearless and threw them into unarmed but heroic battles.

It is to be noted that a social scientist of any persuasion must forge methods to develop mass consciousness, mass initiative, discipline, a spirit of fearlessness, courage and self-suffering and must put it on the creative political role of the masses the absence of which it renders ineffective any mass resistance action. In this respect. Gandhi's Satyagraha is a viable weapon of resistance.

Gandhian philosophy of Satyagraha is a help to individual salvation as well as it overflows to include social salvation of the whole of mankind. In fact, the four words namely, Satya (truth), ahimsa (non-injury), Satyagraha (adherence to truth) and Sarvodaya (welfare of all) constitute a whole system of thought and action which envisages the collective salvation of humanity. This re-education of the whole humanity is a worthy task handed down to our times by Gandhi. Hence, the message of Satyagraha is eternal. In addition to it, the twentieth century witnessed two of the worst wars in human history. When such kind of the worst war among nations, hatred, violence and tension in the society loom largely in the horizon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Gandhi's message for non-violence and Satyagraha is still relevant. In the words of Romain Rolland, Gandhi is described as "Jesus Christ without a cross". Gandhi is thus, the apostle of peace and a ray of hope for every mankind.

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### 9.4 Summing Up

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- i) Gandhi's supreme invention, discovery or creation was Satyagraha. Satyagraha stood for Gandhi's way of fighting the British Raj.
- ii) Satyagraha means "holding fast to truth", adherence to truth", "and insistence on truth" and "reliance on truth".



- iii) It is essentially a moral or ethical-principle the essence of which is a social technique of action.
- iv) Truth, non-violence and self-suffering are the principles on which Satyagraha is based. Truth, non-violence and self-suffering are the principles on which Satyagraha is based.
- v) The entire philosophy of Gandhi is based upon truth. Gandhi identifies truth with God in the sense of absolute truth - God.
- vi) For Gandhi, Satyagraha has universal applicability as an effective universal principle and method in society.
- vii) The Gandhian Satyagraha movement aimed at Hindu-Muslim unity as one of three ultimate goals.
- viii) Gandhi's Satyagraha movement is being described by the Marxist School as an attempt to safeguard the interests of capitalist and industrialist classes at the expense of the poor peasantry of India.
- ix) Gandhian approach to Satyagraha served some positive function in a particular historical juncture of India.
- x) Gandhian philosophy of Satyagraha is a help to individual salvation as well as it overflows to include social salvation of the whole of mankind.

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## 9.5 Glossary

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1. Advaita	—	Non-dualism, monism
2. Agraha	—	Firmness of grasp
3. Ahimsa	—	Non-violence, non-injury, non-coercion
4. Sarvodaya	—	Social good, welfare of all
5. Swadeshi	—	Self-sufficiency
6. Swaraj	—	Self-rule
7. Tapas	—	Self-suffering
8. Harijan	—	Untouchables, people of God
9. Satya	—	Truth
10. Aparigraha	—	Renunciation

11. Brahmacharya — Continenence
12. Chit — Knowledge
13. Sanatanist — Orthodox

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## 9.6 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss the meaning of Satyagraha with special reference to the three principles of Satyagraha.
2. Explain Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha. Do you think Satyagraha is still a relevant mode of protest in modern times?
3. Mention the contradictions of the concept of Satyagraha.
4. Make a comparative estimate between Gandhi and Marx.
5. Make a critical appreciation of Satyagraha.
6. Why did Gandhi fail to forge Hindu-Muslim unity in his Satyagraha movement? Explain.

### Short Questions :

1. Enumerate briefly Gandhi's methods of Satyagraha movement.
2. Do you think Gandhi's principles of Satyagraha are more religious than political? Give reasons for your answer.
3. What are the views of the Indian Communists and Socialists about Gandhi's Satyagraha philosophy?

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. Which method amongst the following has universal applicability according to Gandhi?  
(a) Non cooperation (b) Fasting (c) Picketing (d) Satyagraha

Ans. : (d)

2. Who described Gandhi as a philosophical Anarchist'?  
(a) M. N. Roy (b) Acharya Kripalini  
(c) George Woodcock (d) Mark Shepard

Ans. : (c)

3. Which incident in India compelled Gandhi to employ economic boycott?  
(a) Jallianwallah Bagh Tragedy (b) Communal Riots  
(c) Malabar Rebellion (d) Siege of Cawnpur

Ans. : (a)

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## 9.7 Further Reading

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## **Unit-10 □ The Idea of Trusteeship**

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### **Structure**

- 10.0 Objective**
- 10.1 Introduction**
- 10.2 The idea of Trusteeship**
- 10.3 Socio-economic Aspects of Trusteeship**
- 10.4 The Origin/Sources of Trusteeship**
- 10.5 The concept of Aparigraha (Non-Possession)**
- 10.6 Trusteeship of Labour-Capital Relations**
- 10.7 Principles of Trusteeship**
- 10.8 Methods of Realising Trusteeship**
- 10.9 Gandhism versus Marxism**
- 10.10 Trusteeship: An Assessment**
- 10.11 Conclusion**
- 10.12 Summing Up**
- 10.13 Glossary**
- 10.14 Probable Questions**
- 10.15 Further Reading**

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### **10.0 Objective**

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This unit will enable us to:

- 1 Understand the idea and meaning of Trusteeship.
- 1 Have the views of Gandhi regarding the socio-economic aspects in building an ideal society.
- 1 Introduce about the development of trusteeship.
- 1 Point out the central theme of 'Aparigraha' as renunciation of wealth for upliftment of society and humanity.

- 1 Address the very idea of transforming the ownership of capital and labour.
- 1 Provide Gandhi's principles of trusteeship between the Wealthy and Poor.
- 1 Acquaint with the methodology of realizing trusteeship.
- 1 Make aware of the similarities and differences between Gandhism and Marxism on the question of social change.
- 1 Find out through an assessment of the innovativeness of Gandhian thinking for the achievement of an egalitarian society based on non-violence.

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## 10.1 Introduction

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The voluntary abdication of privileges, power and prestige without expecting anything in return by way of appreciation or recognition and sharing the same for the common good is the Gandhian concept of trusteeship. It implies regeneration and rebirth of self as well as complete renunciation of possession of ownership. To achieve this principle of trusteeship, Gandhi worked for a moral, spiritual and cultural awakening together with the battle for political and economic freedom of the people. His trusteeship was involved in bringing about economic equality with the favour of spirituality of man in social action and social change. Gandhi's thought in this connection was inextricably linked with his action for which he claimed that 'my life is my message'.

Trusteeship is one of the unique socio-economic doctrine of Gandhi. Gandhi's views on wealth, private property, possession etc. are all envisioned in this doctrine. His view is that evils in man emanate from unjust social order which have to be abolished at any rate and it is not impossibility. Gandhi believed that both good and evil are part and parcel of human nature and it is the duty of the individual to minimize evil. The minimization of evil can be done away with ahimsa as history shows the fact that man's existence is the result of unending triumph of ahimsa in society. So, the struggle between good and evil is the result of non-violent forces and violent forces. Virtually, Gandhi's trusteeship main goals are non-possession, non-violence, non-exploitation of the poor by the rich, equality, welfarism (Sarvodaya), voluntary transformation of social order etc. These are the foundations of his trusteeship.

Gandhi believed that his system of trusteeship survived the ravages of time and history as it dealt basically with the question of economic structure and organization which other systems failed to answer. His theory of trusteeship is developed as an

alternative to capitalism and scientific socialism on the one hand and capitalism and communism on the other hand. The primary purpose of trusteeship is to transform the capitalist order of society into an egalitarian society.

In trusteeship, there is no room for serving the personal interest through accumulation of wealth either of the owners or the workers even of the enterprise at the cost of rest of the society. Its tenets are if individual property is allowed to continue without any check, it will lead to selfishness and exploitation which are the basic features of capitalism. Gandhi believed that economic equality through equitable sharing and distribution of wealth in society. He felt that trusteeship is the only truthful and non-violent means for this realization. Trusteeship is, therefore, looked upon as “a non-violent alternative to state ownership”.

Gandhi wanted to create a new social order – a Sarvodaya society which would ensure 'welfare of all'. According to the principle of trusteeship, one can earn huge amount of money by following any right economic activity. But he should understand that the wealth does not belong to him but to the people. He can take what he wants for his legitimate needs and use the reminder for society. By trusteeship Gandhi further meant that people who own wealth are in a privileged position and they could be persuaded to sacrifice excess wealth for the betterment of the under-privileged of the society. In this social order no concentration of wealth is allotted to create a gulf between the privileged few and the under-privileged majority. He visualized transformation from individual ownership to trust ownership in the long run. To realize his ideal, Gandhi advocated dispersal of economic power through his plan of decentralization. It is a communitarian society or village that would look after food, clothing, shelter and educational needs of every individual in the rural area. It is co-equal with his concept of swaraj and swadeshi. It is through his doctrine of trusteeship. Gandhi tried to uplift the moral of the people during the freedom struggle as a weapon of mass mobilization.

Gandhi was of the view that as children of nature, human beings are equal. Hence, there should not be any economic discrimination among different individuals in a society in respect of income, consumption and other bare necessities of life. The main spirit of his theory of trusteeship is a kin to Ramrajya in which the rich would become the trustees of the society by sharing their surplus wealth with the poor. All these programme of trusteeship is based on non-violence in thought, action and demeanor. It is a healthy economic order the essence of which also extends to capital and labour in corporate world. This is the quintessence of Indian thought through the ages.

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## 10.2 The Idea of Trusteeship

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The term 'trusteeship' was first in currency in relation to property and its ownership. In India, the word 'trustee' is used in connection with temples and other organizations. In this context, it means a person is entrusted as trustee who manages the property of the temple without any selfish interest. And those for whom the property is to be used are called beneficiaries. Dr. Arunachalam, a Gandhian scholar, has defined it that "Trusteeship means confidence reposed in a person with respect to property of which he has possession and over which he can exercise power to the extent that he may hold property or exercise the power for the benefit of other person or persons". He further wrote "Mahatma Gandhi, whose concern was with setting right human relationships in all fields on the basis of truth and non-violence, was attracted towards the doctrine of trusteeship". He gave a new meaning and interpretation to the word of 'Trusteeship' and recommended the idea to the Prince, landed aristocracy and propertied capitalists for adoption. As a matter of fact, he wanted everyone to be a 'trustee'. The word trusteeship was used by Gandhi to denote the possibility of effecting socially desirable change in the present concept of private properties and the special talents of the individual to the best interests of the society and not to be motivated by consideration of the narrow self. Vinoba Bhave used the term as the use of one's capacities for the good of all from a feeling of confidence accompanied with non-possession.

To Gandhi, trusteeship refers to "all people having property and hold it as a social trust". Such 'social trust' is intended to realizing a state of equality on earth. So, trusteeship stands for economic liberty, distributive justice and radical change of a structure. It is a part of Gandhi's larger economic philosophy contingent upon the concepts of non-possession, non-violence, swaraj and economic equality, which are interlinked with one another. Some scholars are of the opinion that trusteeship implies self-reliance, self-discipline and certain autonomy of the producing unit. In it non-violence, equal distribution, self-reliance and trusteeship are the integral parts. It is Gandhi's economic system. It is not a make-shift arrangement and no camouflage. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it.

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## 10.3 Socio-Economic Aspects of Trusteeship

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The idea of trusteeship leads to the fact that it is a unique socio-economic doctrine of Gandhi. Gandhi's views on wealth, private property, possession etc. have all well-meaning in this doctrine. Gandhi wanted to create a new social order in which

the Sarvodaya society securing 'welfare of all' would be established. In order to secure his objective, Gandhi thought of a means of converting the existing exploitative capitalistic form of society following his unique method of non-violence. In this new social order, the rich man in society should make an effort to realize their social responsibility and transform themselves without interference or correction. He found such a society based on 'regeneration and rebirth' of all individuals-rich and poor, by means of his theory of trusteeship. This moral tone he found in the Gita and the Bible, underlines the belief in man's capacity for goodness, transformation of heart and consciousness to building a new society through man's moral regeneration and rebirth. Gandhi felt that the spirit of man was supreme and could take always to rise above the brute in him. There is a spark of divinity in everyman and Gandhi thought if the spark was fed with proper fuel-much adherence to truth, ahimsa, right choice of means to achieve the end and eternal vigilance to keep on the right track, man could come to the level where he would feel that all the wealth he earned including the wealth which he got through inheritance does not really belong to him, it belongs to the people or society. Thus in his concept of trusteeship Gandhi wanted the upliftment of the morale of the people. In trusteeship, man's urge for higher life would find fulfillment in the expansion of self to as wider area as possible where it can help in self-realization. It is this self-realization of the evils of private property and accumulation of wealth by a few in society that create and recreates wide gulf of inequality. This is why Gandhi took initiative in recommending the idea that "take what you require for your legitimate need, and use the remainder for the society". So, Gandhi's doctrine of trusteeship is a moral response to the need for regeneration and rebirth of man's consciousness for building an ideal society.

The concept of trusteeship also visualizes an ideal economic order as an alternative to transform the capitalist order of society into an egalitarian society. To achieve the goal, trusteeship advocates a doctrine of economic equality in which there is no room for serving the personal interest either of the owners or of the workers even of the enterprise as a whole at the cost of the rest of the society. Because, uncontrolled selfishness is the worst basis of economic order leading to the law of jungle or a world of demons where men in their greed for gain become worse than brutes and compete with each other in fraud, deception, inhuman cruelties and world-wide exploitation and destruction.

As to his trusteeship, Gandhi believed that of all the doctrines of trusteeship, his doctrine was one that would survive the ravages of time and history because it dealt with the question of economic structure and organization which other systems failed



to answer. Gandhi was of the view that concentration of economic power created the capitalist class which was exploitative of the talent and resources available in society, creating a gulf between the privileged few and the under-privileged majority. He was aware of the fact that concentration of economic power went hand in hand with political power, leading to the development of a dictatorial or authoritarian system. Taking all these obnoxious features into account, Gandhi recommended trusteeship and decentralization of economic power. In this connection, his concept of swaraj is coeval with full self-sufficiency in economic matters of every village. He further visualized a communitarian village that would look after food, clothing, shelter and educational needs of every individual in the rural area. Here Gandhi's trusteeship is equivalent to communitarianism. Since Gandhi's trusteeship is meant for economic distributive justice, it can be done through non-violent way by persuading those who own wealth and are economically in a dominant position. So, trusteeship is understood as an ideological struggle founded on Satyagraha. Trusteeship in Gandhi's word: "The rich will be left in possession of his wealth of which he will use what he reasonably requires for his personal needs and will act as a trustee for the remainder to be used for the society". Gandhi further said: "It is an attempt to secure the best use of property for the people by competent hands". Thus, trusteeship in Gandhian economy promotes economic equality. It is a visualization of his concept of the Ramrajya in which rich would become the trustees of the society by sharing their surplus wealth with the poor. According to Gandhi, "God is the owner and the master of the whole material universe. Humans are merely trustees". Hence, there should not be any economic discrimination among different individuals in a society in respect of income, consumption and other bare necessities of life. The main spirit of his theory of trusteeship is non-violence in thought, action and demeanor. Trusteeship, is therefore, looked upon as 'a non-violent alternative' to state ownership. Philosophically, trusteeship is economic conscience or a sense of renunciation of wealth by which the individual when engaged in economic activity takes into account not only his own interests but also interest of others. When a man is attuned to the idea of renunciation of wealth rather than its owner, the whole attitude or behaviour takes a moral dimension.

Politically, trusteeship is an instrument of breaking down the monopoly of political power and introducing distribution of that power in the most decentralized democratic way. But at the same time, Gandhi felt that political freedom to be meaningful needed to be complemented by economic equality.

Organizationally, trusteeship is a system of business organizations such as corporate structures or state public sector enterprises, co-operatives etc. Gandhi's statement in this case was that in organization such as in industry and factory.

“Capital was power, Labour too was power. Either could be used constructively or destructively. Both should, therefore, hold their power in trust”. Trusteeship would transform the very concept of ownership, both for the owners of capital and labour. Thus, Gandhi advocated mutual trusteeship or trusteeship of labour and capital for the welfare of both.

The principle of trusteeship applies not only to the owning class but to everybody even to those who have special talents. Thus, to Gandhi, the trusteeship encompasses artistic, professional and intellectual skills and spiritual attainments. Whatever qualities a man possesses are gifts from nature and should be used not merely for his own interests but for the good of humanity. This is the quintessence of Indian thought through ages. In the ultimate sense, Gandhi subscribes to the theory of ‘non-possession’, “enjoying thy wealth by renouncing it”.

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## 10.4 The origin of Trusteeship

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Gandhi developed out his idea of trusteeship from the celebrated verses of the religio-social tradition of India, from the influence of John Ruskin’s ‘Unto This Last and other essays’ Andrew Carnegie’s ‘The Gospel of Wealth’, from English law and Edmund Burke.

First, the religio-social tradition of India particularly the Iso Upanishad had a deep influence on Gandhi in formulating his concept of trusteeship. This celebrated verse insists that one should dedicate everything to God and then use it only what is required for one’s survival. One therefore does not have the right to anything beyond what is necessary for one’s existence. The essence of this statement points out to the spirit of detachment and service. The Isha Upanishad which dealt with private property, doctrines of Vedanta, teachings in the Bhagavad-Gita, Mahabharata, Buddhism, Bible and many others. The Isha verse reads, “God, the rule, pervades all there in the universe. Therefore, renounce and dedicate all to Him and then enjoy or use the portion that may fall to thy lot. Never covet anybody’s possessions”. The Bhagavad Gita namely aparigraha (non-possession) and Samabhavana (equality) remained critical in his formulation of trusteeship. Gandhi’s idea was rooted in the law of non-possession or aparigraha because he firmly believed that “the selfish grasping for possessions of any kind not only violates the deeper purposes of our human odyssey but eventually leads to possessiveness and greed, exploitation and revenge”. Based on the spirit of Iso Upanishad, Gandhi’s trusteeship was a well meaning effort to resolve all social and economic conflicts which grew out of inequalities and privileges

of the prevalent social order. The idea was to delegitimize the gross accumulation of wealth and trusteeship is a principle of economic conscience.

Gandhi's alternative to the exploitative functioning of private property also stemmed from his reading of the spiritual tradition of Vedanta. Advaita Vedanta speaks of the identity of the individual self (Jiva) with universal self (Brahman). Gandhi applied this view to all aspects of human activity including the individual operation of private property. If all men are identified with Brahman, all that belongs to atman should also belong to Brahman. Hence, all property belongs to God. And no one should treat his private property as his personal possession. This principle was also found to have been uttered by Lord Krishna to Arjuna. In the shanti parva of Mahabharata, wherein it is stated that one who takes more than his need commits theft. Being advised by these teachings, Gandhi exhorted the capitalists to regard themselves as trustees of their wealth and spend it for the well-being of all. Buddha conveyed the same message to his disciples not to use their property for personal gain but for the welfare of the people.

The words of the Gita had influence on his thought which Gandhi referred to it in his autobiography. The message of the Gita made Gandhi believe in man's capacity for essential goodness and transformation of heart and moral consciousness. Gandhi shared this view with 'Bhagavata Purana' that "one is entitled to take as much as is sufficient for fulfilling the stomach, he who takes more than this is guilty of theft and deserve to be punished".

Secondly, Gandhi while formulating his idea of trusteeship was influenced by John Ruskin's 'Unto This Last and other Essays'. It created in him a "magic spell" in changing his mind set in accordance with the ideas of Ruskin. Later, under the spell of Ruskin's teachings, Gandhi wrote a book into Gujarati Language with the title 'Sarvodaya' The three points which have direct bearing on his doctrine of trusteeship are :

- (a) That the Good of individual is contained in the Good of all.
- (b) All works are of equal importance.
- (c) The work of agriculture and handicrafts are more important than others.

Ruskin appealed to businessmen to consider the inherent meaning of business. Ruskin wanted that the businessmen should be the trustees of their surplus money. Gandhi spoke the same thing taking inspiration from Ruskin. Ruskin's 'Economy of Heaven' was a powerful metaphor to draw out an ideal economy for the humanity

where the marginalized could both participate and share the benefits of the economy out of the industrial revolution. Gandhi applied Ruskin's powerful arguments to combat the form of industrialism that the colonial power had introduced in India disregarding entirely its obligations to the colonized.

Like Ruskin, Leo Tolstoy influenced Gandhi in a great measure. By reading Tolstoy's book 'The kingdom of God is within you' Gandhi was overwhelmed. Gandhi summarized Tolstoy's teachings in this manner:

1. Man should not accumulate wealth.
2. It is no matter how much evil a person does to us, we should always do good to him
3. No one should take part in fighting
4. Wielding of political power is sinful as it leads to many to the evils in the world
5. Man is born to do his duty to his creator; he should therefore perform his duties more than of his rights
6. Agriculture is the true occupation of man. It is, therefore, contrary to divine law to establish large cities, to employ hundreds of thousands for minding machines in factories so that a few can wallow in riches by exploiting the helplessness and poverty of the many.

These teachings of Tolstoy had led Gandhi to the spirit of trusteeship meaning trusteeship as service and detachment to all kinds of riches and service to community. Gandhi became aware of the vices of Western Capitalism as it provides impetus to unregulated private property giving scope to the rich to accumulate more wealth by exploiting the masses and leading to unjustified disparities in wealth.

Thirdly, Gandhi was also influenced by Andrew Carnegie's 'The Gospel of Wealth' while he was pursuing his training as a law student in England. Seeking to offer an alternative to socialism within Capitalism, Carnegie devised a scheme by urging the wealthy to adopt the principle of trusteeship which is held to be the duty of the man of wealth. In order to serve the poor, Carnegie recommended that the surplus wealth should be spent on good causes like building, educational institutions, hospitals and churches etc. Carnegie believed that one should grow one's capital to combat poverty.

Gandhi took effort at 'spiritualizing economics' which is based on trust. For an inclusive society, the common man should trust his trustee and the trustee should play

the role of custodian. Trusteeship thus means that ‘the rich man will be left in possession of his wealth which he will use what he reasonably requires for his personal needs and will act as a trustee for the remainder to be used for society’. Gandhi was not different from Carnegie as both defended the role of the trustee as custodian of wealth for the poor. Unlike Carnegie, Gandhi did not appreciate the role of capital as he witnessed both in South Africa and in India that ‘the British failed to be trustee’ and failed ‘to live in perfect peace with the whole of the inhabitants of India. As a result, Gandhi took concern in line with Ruskin to reinforce “the Economy of Heaven”.

Fourthly, Gandhi derived trusteeship from his study of English Law which recognized the importance of ‘tutelage’ in treating the colonial subjects. Edmund Burke was the first of the British ideologue who formulated the idea of trusteeship in the context of famous trial of Warren Hastings when he mentioned that all political power ought to be in the benefit for men. Trusteeship was a moral design that consisted in promoting the welfare of people who were incapable of choosing for themselves the ends for which they should strive. Trusteeship thus sought to fulfill the so-called benevolent ends of colonial rule by insisting on its moral commitment to the colonized. So, the relationship between the ruler and the ruled was not exploitative, but one that accrued benefit to both.

The preceding discussion on the sources of trusteeship it appears that Gandhi’s trusteeship was based on a perfect marriage between the ideas of Isopanishad with that of Ruskin and Carnegie. It was also an outcome of his understanding of the British legal discourse which put in place the moral obligations of the privileged over the socio-economically under privileged sections. Gandhi also defended trusteeship as morally apt in pursuing a clean political agenda in conformity with his multi-class campaign against the British and trusteeship was therefore a model cementing a bond among contradictory class forces.

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## **10.5 The Concept of Aparigraha (Non-Possession)**

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The regeneration and rebirth of one’s self for the upliftment of society and humanity along with the renunciation of wealth for the benefit of all are the central theme of ‘aparigraha’. ‘Aparigraha’ is the ethical ideal of non-possession, of renunciation of ownership, liberation from subtle as well as course bonds that possessions forge for one. Gandhi came to realize that the principles of non-possession and renunciation of one’s possessions as propounded in Gita, could be achieved through trusteeship

where the propertied people could retain their ego by still possessing it, but at the same time utilizing it in the interest of the real beneficiary. As all human beings are equal by nature and there should not be any economic discrimination or disparity among different individuals in respect of income, consumption and other bare necessities of life.

‘Aparigraha’ stands for not only abstinence from material possession, but also for the avoidance of desire for such possession. Excessive desire for material possession is Parigraha and it must be avoided as it deprives others of their legitimate rights. Attachment leads to ‘moha’ and its result is ‘himsa’.

There can be no peace in society so long as glaring inequality and the wide gap exist between high and low, haves and have-nots. Gandhi’s trusteeship may provide a way to solve inequalities in the socio-economic sphere. Possession cannot be eliminated altogether. Even our body and talents are possession in addition to wealth. But it is possible to eliminate possessiveness. The root of the evil lies not in possession but in possessiveness. It is possible to tackle the problem created by the existence of natural and recurring inequalities in nature through trusteeship in which individual has to regard his talents and wealth, whether inherited or acquired, not as a personal possession to be used for one’s selfish satisfaction but as a trust from God to be used for the service of society. Here Gandhi reminded the dictum that nature provides enough for everybody’s need but not for anybody’s greed. This is the ethical principle in support of trusteeship doctrine.

Gandhi pointed out five reasons to explain why one should refrain from acquisitions:

1. The fundamental law of nature never permits appropriation of wealth more than the minimum. One who appropriates more than the minimum is really guilty of theft.
2. When we are born into this universe, we get access to resources that we did not create. We depend on resources that nature and society have produced. It is our duty to replenish the resources what we consumed by repaying the debt with physical labour.
3. Sequestration for future use by cornering wealth is an act of depriving others as the other beneficiary cannot use it in their need.
4. An avid search for possession invites obsession that takes away one’s spirit of life, makes one oblivious of social ethics, thereby loses one’s place of mind and society.

5. Possession means retention for future use or for the acquisition of power. But one cannot retain a possession unless one is ready to defend it. To do such one has to use force. This makes one become a part of an apparatus of coercion. All men who believe in non-violence should opt for the principle of aparigraha. In observing this principle one can lead to a progressive simplification of life. It would facilitate and promote equal distribution. So trusteeship, to Gandhi, is an ideal of equal distribution.

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## 10.6 Trusteeship in Labour-Capital Relations

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Gandhi's principle of trusteeship is thus considered to use a revolutionary idea for transforming the society. It seeks to transform society on an egalitarian basis through non-violent means. It transcends the liberal management of private property as well as its collective management under the Marxist system. Trusteeship is an effort to combine the best elements of Marxist and capitalist systems as it retains both individual initiative and collective wellbeing. Gandhi's idea of trusteeship was basically addressed to the capitalists or the privileged classes who owned the lion's share of wealth and resources in the society. He wanted them to outgrow their greed and sense of possession and to come down in spite of their wealth to the level of those who earn their bread by labour. So, his trusteeship is not only confined to the capitalists alone, his idea was holistic in its very nature. It also seeks to transform the very idea of ownership of capital and labour. He wanted the labourer to realize that wealthy person is less owner of his wealth than labourer. In the case of labourer, he is owner of his own, viz., 'the power to work'. Inspired by the ideal of aparigraha, Gandhi wanted every individual to work as trustee of his wealth, resources and even talents in an altruistic manner. Gandhi was of the view that wealth that is transferred to the off-springs of the owing classes is a joint product of capital and labour. Like the right of inheritance of the owing classes, there is similar right to a share in inherited property to labour. The worker's son should get the same right to the sons of owing classes. If property is the joint product of capital and labour, it should be given due share to the labourers. Either both should not get any or both should get their due share. But at present, the laws that govern socio-economic institutions permit the owing classes alone to benefit through inheritance. This error needs rectification. The toiling masses will not be liberated from exploitation unless the character of ownership is altered to make them equal beneficiaries of the assets. Gandhi's idea of trusteeship is an attempt to correct the built-in distributive justice in our society. Trusteeship offered as an alternative to transform capital and labour to trust. Because, capital

cannot fructify without labour. Both the power of capital and labour will be mutual trustees and both will be trustees of consumers. Thus, Gandhi advocated trusteeship of labour and capital.

But in spite of the utmost efforts, the rich do not become guardians of the poor, and the poor are more and more crushed and die of hunger. The Communist suggested a class-struggle, but Gandhi held that non-violent, non-cooperation and civil disobedience were the right way or means to solve this problem. The forcible dispossession through class-struggle and revolution would lead to economic instability and rapid decline.

Gandhi approached the concept of trusteeship at four different levels. First of all, trusteeship as universalizable means of distributing wealth should be attained through the principle of non-violence and its intelligent use of wealth. Wealth coercively distributed would result violence. Secondly, psychologically, fear would prevent other means of economic distribution as fearful man tyrannises others, that is to say, forced re-distribution would bring fearful responses from owners when they would see their lives and future threatened. For Gandhi, the social change must be approached from a possession of truth and courage. Thirdly, Gandhi reiterated that the idea of trusteeship could be put into practice non-violently. It is a non-violent socialist reformation.

Finally, Gandhi believed that social conditions were ripe for imaginative applications for the principle of trusteeship. The collapse of western imperialism, the spiritual and social poverty of fascism and totalitarianism and the psychological failure of capitalists, the moral bankruptcy of state socialism and ideological inflexibility of communism, all indicate an ineluctable movement toward a reconstruction of social order through trusteeship.

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## 10.7 Principles of Trusteeship

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Gandhi's trusteeship was a creative articulation of a relationship between the wealthy and poor. On the basis of his creative outlook of trusteeship, he provided six-point guidelines in order to seek a new social order by redefining the relationship between the haves and have-nots.

### **The six-point principles or guidelines are:**

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism but gives the



present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.

2. It does not recognize any right of private property except in so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.
3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of ownership and use of wealth.
4. Thus, under the state-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interests of society.
5. Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that would be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time, so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.
6. Under the Gandhian economic order the charter of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.

The six-point agenda represent philosophically the agreement that trusteeship is an “an economic conscience by which an individual when engaged in economic activity takes into account not only his own interest but also the interests of others”. Thus, trusteeship is “a theory of need-based production, equitable distribution and social justice”. A trustee is thus one “who self-consciously assumes responsibility for upholding, protecting and putting to good use whatever he possesses, acquires or earns and he has no heir, but the public. Hence, trusteeship as a theoretical construct based on high moral values is an effort at redefining capitalism as a system of production within “the limits imposed upon its use for sustaining minimum living standards, the constraints it imposes by prohibiting its use for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the social interest and the inclusion of legislature regulation for determining its ownership and use it in the desired direction for non-exploitative purposes”.

The Gandhian model is cooperation between the factory owners and the workers. While the owners have a right to profit, the workers have to work for them for their survival. So, the relationship should be based on mutually-benefitting manner.

Gandhi was not in favour of increasing the wage of the factory workers beyond what is absolutely necessary for their daily existence. Accusing workers of squandering money as a matter of habit, Gandhi insisted that instead of giving ‘extra money’ paid

to the workers because of increase in wages, the mill-owner should retain that amount for education and other welfare measures for the workers and their children.

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## **10.8 Methods of Realising Trusteeship : The Ideology of Non-violence**

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Gandhi's trusteeship is a means to an end. The end is the establishment of an egalitarian socialist society. To realize the end, Gandhi advocated ahimsa as trusteeship is an inescapable stage in the methodology of a non-violent revolution. Non-violence is understood as a body of norms, interdictions or sanctions regarding avoidance or control of violence and the practice of day-to-day behavior. Like 'tapasya', a follower of true ahimsa must always be ready to die without any desire ever to hurt or kill anyone. It is the observance of self-suffering rather than inflicting suffering upon the wrong doer. Gandhi firmly believed that truth without non-violence is not truth but untruth, and hence truth can be attained only by non-violent means.

Gandhi's idea of trusteeship was inherent in the ideology of ahimsa. The principle of ahimsa, Gandhi further observed, is violated by holding on to what the world needs. There was to be an identification with all that exists, a tender concern for the fellow beings. The consumer should not choose to think of getting what he can; rather he should refrain from receiving what others cannot have. So, like 'aparigraha', ahimsa too is the abdication of violence.

A society that accepts non-violence has to be a non-acquisitive society. A non-violent society which is also non-exploitative must be based on economic equality. Equal distribution is the ideal of trusteeship and non-violent society. To bring this ideal into being, the entire society has to be reconstructed.

Trusteeship then has to be understood as a part of the scenario of a non-violent revolution as an instrument of Satyagraha struggle for economic equality and the elimination of all classes. The Satyagrahi will make every effort to persuade the holders of capital that trusteeship is the only alternative to destruction. But if all the attempts at persuasion fail, he will resort to corrective mass action such as non-violent, non-cooperation within the industrial system or political system.

Instead of class war, Gandhi believed in accentuating class-reconciliation through education and love. The Satyagrahi by his power of love and truth in a non-violent way will enable the workers and capitalists to create a congenial climate for socio-economic change. Satyagraha, thus, is not merely a pious appeal, nor a verbal

persuasion. It asks for revolutionary action by the exploited to elicit revolutionary change in the attitude of the exploiter and to bring about the total paralysis and extinction of the system of exploitation. Thus, the realization of Gandhi's trusteeship is integral to non-violence.

In the formation of the theory of trusteeship and the method of its realization, Gandhi was influenced by the following factors:

1. The multi-class character of the national independent movement in which all Indians irrespective of their class affiliation had to be mobilized.
2. The unregulated private enterprise was prevalent in India and the Western countries during his time.
3. His mistrust on the state power to suppress capitalism and creativism as an ideal solution.
4. His non-violent creed which prevented him from accepting forcible seizure of wealth from the rich.
5. His essential belief in the inherent Goodness of man which made him to hold that capitalists are not beyond redemption.
6. His unshakable faith in the efficacy of non-violent, non-cooperation as the method to bring about changes in the attitude of the rich.

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## 10.9 Gandhism and Marxism

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There is a similarity between Gandhi and Marx. While the final aim of both is the establishment of a stateless and classless society, their means for achieving this aim are different. Gandhi wanted to achieve this end through ethical appeal of non-violent means but Marx's character is ethically very high similar to the character of Gandhi. In achieving the end Marx wanted to realize it through violent means.

Gandhi has been regarded as the votary of ethical, moral and religions qualities. Gandhian ethics tends towards theology, whereas there is an element of utilitarianism in Marx's ethics. Though both have a constant sympathy with the oppressed and the downtrodden, Marx is non-spiritual but Gandhi is spiritual.

Ethically and politically, Gandhi's spiritualism is unique as it helps him in his endeavour of relating politics with religion. Gandhi introduced religion into politics to give a new colour to the ethico-social problem of the world. His concept of religion is attached closely with life. As a new weapon in politics, his non-violence is the greatest contribution to the world.

On the other hand, Marx's denial of the concepts of 'God' and 'Soul' has inspired a crude communist morality. The 'dialectical materialism' has been proclaimed to be the only true conception of reality.

Gandhi is confident about the presence of spirit in man. Because of this spiritual power, he believes in the basic goodness of man. His spiritual consciousness enables him to believe in the unity of all souls. This metaphysics of Gandhi is also the basis of his humanism. Thus, Gandhi's spiritualism has an inherent potency to combine the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, Buddha's compassion, the Hindu concept of love and the Islamic obedience to the will of God. Marx, on the contrary, observes that it is not the spirit; man becomes aware of himself only by rationality.

Gandhi's conviction is that divine is the central truth in man. This faith leads man to good life. For Gandhi, truth is God. On the other hand, Marx is a materialist. His materialistic view decides all his norms including ethics. Denying the existence of soul in the idealistic sense of the term, Marx interprets it as consciousness. According to Marx "It is not the consciousness of man that determines their existence but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness". So, Marx's philosophy is precisely anti-religious. Religion is 'opium' which intoxicates the human mind to lose his consciousness and thus being slave in the hands of exploiters. Being a materialist Marx gave materialistic and economic interpretation of history, in which he stressed the importance of economic factors.

Though both Gandhi and Marx were opposed to capitalism and exploitation, yet they propagated different means to remove capitalism. Gandhian philosophy is based on non-violence, while Marx does not discard violence. According to Marx, violence is unavoidable in any society with antagonistic classes. His concept of socialism is to be achieved in employing violent means. Gandhi's cottage industries and decentralization as well as parliamentary system are anathema to Marx. He wanted to remove the state apparatus through revolution in order to destroy capitalism. Socialism for Marx is the real objective of human life. In socialist society, there are no classes to act against one another. Contrary to Gandhi's concept of love and persuasion, Marx allows even violence in order to bring about social change.

Gandhi was dead against the use of violence as means for achieving a good end. For this, he adopted non-violent means for the achievement of Indian's freedom and criticized revolutionaries who wanted to adopt all types of means, including the violent ones. Marxists do not believe in non-violence.

Though both Marx and Gandhi have belief in the ideal of class-less society. In this pursuit, Marx's approach is radical. Morality, according to Marx, is not higher than the economic structure of society and without class struggle there would be no progress in the society. And the concept of morality is shaped by the forces of production relations of the existing society. The differing interests of the antagonistic classes lead inevitably to class-struggle ushering in ultimately a revolution in which the end will justify the means. Gandhi's view is that class-struggle is also violence and it ruins the country and its production of goods. All propertied persons were not bad. There was an urgent need to change their minds. The capitalists in Gandhian Philosophy should become trustees of the country's wealth and they should use their talents for the common good. The capitalists should fix a nominal profit in consultation with the society. All classes should cooperate with one another in order to increase production. Gandhi was not in favour of big industries. Here Gandhi's approach to social change was persuasive.

Gandhi also said that big industries encouraged capitalism. He was in favour of small industries which freed the workers from the domination of the capitalists and did not allow the concentration of the country's wealth in the hands of a few persons. He wanted the people to limit their daily needs and lead a simple life.

Regarding investment of capital, the views of Marx and Gandhi are different. Marxists say that there should be socialization of the means of production. Gandhi however, allows the investment of private Capital. He wants to make the Capitalists trustees of the national wealth. In case, the capitalists do not agree to become trustees, he is ready to give power to the state to control the industries of the capitalists by using minimum force. He is not in favour of snatching land from the landlords by force. Gandhi in fact is in favour of cooperative farming, while the Marxists are in favour of collective farming in which there is a great control of the state.

Gandhi had a firm faith in democracy in which there should be decentralization of power. The state according to Gandhi is a welfare state not a dictatorship or autocracy. The Marxists believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat. They want to give maximum powers to the workers. In this transitory period the Marxists want to give more powers to the state.

In the name of the working class, the state powers have been utilized by the Communist Party controlling and intruding into almost all the aspects of the individual's life and democracy has been reduced to a mockery. Gandhi was a staunch

supporter of individual liberty. He wanted to win over the entire humanity with the power of love.

From the foregoing discussion of Gandhi and Marx reveals the truth that on several issues Gandhi's views were similar in his approach to Marx's analysis of society and politics but Gandhi and Marx were diametrically opposed in respect of their ethical ideologies. Equally, they were opposed to each other in respect of using the means and the end in order to achieve their respective goals and visions.

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### **10.10 Trusteeship: An Assessment**

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Gandhi's theory of trusteeship is no doubt an innovative thinking for the achievement of an egalitarian society based on love and non-violence. But some scholars are of the opinion that the attainment of egalitarian society founded on morality is a 'Utopia'. Even Pandit Nehru had his criticism. The Marxists and the other liberals both had their reservation against it.

But a closer examination of Gandhi's idea of trusteeship reveals the fact that Gandhi had developed the idea during the period of colonialism. In the context of colonialism, address to the 'change of heart' of the colonial ruler was not impractical as there was no other way to address to the mighty colonial power and to the rich for the removal of gulf between the wealthy and poor for the common good. Gandhi could understand that unless the socio-economic differences between the wealthy and poor were meaningfully changed it was likely to create a revolutionary situation.

Gandhi's trusteeship is also an answer to those who ridiculed it as 'impractical' as to them 'trusteeship is a legal fiction' But Gandhi was confident of its success for reasons (1) it has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it and (2) absolute trusteeship, though unattainable, if we strive for it is realizable a state of equality on earth than any other method.

Gandhi's trusteeship is basically a mental construct founded on moral values seeking to establish economic equality as an idea of mobilizing the masses for non-violent independence. Economic equality meant as Gandhi defined, that everyone would literally have the same amount. It's simple meaning is that everybody should have enough for his needs. It approximates to the Marxist formulation of 'each according to his needs'. Unlike the Marxists, Gandhi was opposed to 'forcible snatching of property' from the wealthy. Gandhi argued: "wealthy people should act as trustee of their wealth. But if they are robbed of their wealth through violent means, it would not be in the interest of the country. This is known as communism.

Moreover, by adopting violent means we would be depriving society of the services of capable individuals”.

Gandhi was averse to the communist way of bringing economic equality because he instead of using violence believed in ahimsa as a way to the foundation of better society. Gandhi was convinced that use of forcible method for depriving the wealth from the rich would not yield result rather the wealthy people would never abdicate their responsibility. Hence, the best option is to resort to non-violence—as an effective mechanism of convincing the wealthy to abdicate wealth for their social role for the poor. On this way, Gandhi prescribed his trusteeship as a reconciliatory method of resolving conflicting class interests between the rich and the poor. In lieu of class war, the wealthy would convert themselves into trustees of wealth retaining stewardship of their possessions and to use their talents to increase wealth, not for their own sakes but for the sake of the nation without exploitation.

Gandhi justified the application of violence to dispossess them of their property if the rich did not behave as trustee. He referred to two agencies which were capable of translating his trusteeship into reality : First, the state by legal means could by far the most effective instrument to implement the people-oriented welfare schemes by snatching the wealth of what they amassed as ‘disproportionate wealth’. Secondly, the role of public opinion was considered to be another powerful weapon to articulate trusteeship in its true sense if the owing classes do not accept trusteeship voluntarily.

Gandhi was opposed to state ownership as an economic model for people’s wellbeing. He was in favour of private property and private ownership because state to Gandhi, represented violence ‘in a concentrated and organized form’. Trusteeship can be organized if individuals are persuaded to convince them that wealth belongs to the individual. As the individual has a soul, he is to be persuaded to conversion, on the contrary, the state is a soulless machine, and it can never abdicate itself from violence, as the violence is the basis of its existence. Thus, In Gandhi’s world-view, non-violence remained the critical factor for judging one’s action. For changing the prevalent social system based on class-conflict and exploitation of the poor by the rich, he preferred non-violent means and cooperation. The world view Gandhi adopted to make such socio-economic change through trusteeship at a time when the colonial power was in ascendancy in India. The need of the united mobilization of masses against the colonial power for attaining independence required economic equality and cooperation of the property owners by the masses. This is why Gandhi upheld ‘the national democratic’ argument in defending the business interests at a

particular juncture of India's political history that remained significant influence in independent India.

For Gandhi, trusteeship was not a utopia, but a realizable goal based on compassion and care for the poor. It was also not a mere ethical appeal. Its roots had in the contemporary socio-economic and political milieu of Gandhian politics during the freedom struggle. For a multi-class mass mobilization Gandhi emphasized on class reconciliation through his trusteeship in order to garner the support of the wealthy, though they were not exactly pro-poor for ensuring India's independence and its economic future. Gandhi through his trusteeship played a realistic role in creating a political platform in which people with contradictory socio-economic interests coalesced under his leadership. In fact, his entire philosophy of non-violence as means to achieve the end grounded on morality and ethics was a realistic reading of colonial circumstances which made non-violence far more effective than any other competing ideologies. Trusteeship as a doctrine of socio-economic scheme of Gandhi fulfilled the grand design of his realism in practice. In independent India, the institutionalized form of trusteeship in labour-industry relations is found to have been realized in the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Although it is highly questionable whether the concept of CSR is itself a paradox or not. Because the corporate business is based principally on the appropriation of labour of the poor masses.

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## 10.11 Conclusion

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The doctrine of trusteeship is Gandhi's contribution towards the peaceful transformation of society. Its basic theme is a new social order. The approach of Gandhi was political, economic and moral. It is a concept to be exercised at all levels of life, not to any particular class or section.

Gandhi's views with respect to wealth, private property, possession etc. are best illustrated in the doctrine of trusteeship. It holds that each individual having wealth and property should hold it in trust for the society. It implies regeneration and rebirth of self as well as complete renunciation of ownership. The inequality of wealth has to be abolished at any rate as it is the result of an unequal and unjust social order. The wealth or property or ability should be placed in the trust to be accessible to all who need it. It does not distinguish legacy or personal ownership or acknowledge all holdings of wealth above and beyond one's requirement as robbery. It provides scope for the state to control the requisition of the trustees. It declares that the owning class ought to be permitted to hold the stewardship of their possession and use their talents



to expand their wealth for the common benefit of society. Trusteeship distinguished between capitalism and capitalists and asserted that only the former was to be removed and not the latter because the decimation of the capitalists would mean decimation of the labour.

Gandhi's theory of trusteeship strongly believes in the principle of non-possession. The rich must be made to realize the abandoning process, the ethics of non-possession. It aims at creating economic equality through non-possession.

The prime objective of Gandhi's trusteeship is equitable distribution. Equal distribution does not imply possessing equal amount of everything to every individual. It intends to fulfill common necessities of every individual by pursuing enough things. To achieve this, Gandhi suggested conditions like equality of opportunity, equality of income, reduction of wage disparity, reorganizing framework about production, decentralization of political and economic power etc.

Trusteeship advocates a doctrine of happy blending of capitalism and communism. Under the doctrine, there is no room for serving the personal interest either of the owners or of the workers alone or even of the enterprise as a whole at the cost of the rest of the society. The basic principle is to prevent exploitation. The wealthy in the society must hold their wealth as the trustees of the poorer sections in the social order. The wealthy should realize that the wealth over their control is the fruit of the labour of the poor man. This realization would aggravate the feeling that the welfare of the society lies in utilizing abundance for the society and not for one's personal delight.

Gandhi's theory of trusteeship is centered to each according to his need. Besides satisfaction of needs, welfare of all, equality, non-exploitation and creative work for all are some of the essential focus of trusteeship theory. He visualized the Ramrajya in which the rich would become the trustees of the society by sharing their surplus wealth with the poor.

The essence of trusteeship is voluntary conversion of social order. It is founded more on trust in the individual than in the state. Thus, the main spirit of trusteeship is non-violence in thought, action and demeanor. He viewed man's existence as an unending triumph of ahimsa in society which is the result of struggle between good and evil; in the form of non-violence and violent forces.

Gandhi's economic equality as envisioned in trusteeship should be based on mutual cooperation and trust not on class conflicts. The privileged classes are not necessarily heartless. If they are inspired by the philosophy of love they will realize

it as no person was too bad as to be beyond reclamation. The method of non-violent transformation can attain the allowing goal to establish an equitable order. Gandhi took up the doctrine of trusteeship in order to gather multi-class support for mass mobilization during the freedom struggle in India.

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## 10.12 Summing Up

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- i) The term “trusteeship” was first in currency in relation to property and its ownership. In India, the word ‘trustee’ is used in connection with Temples and other organizations.
- ii) Trusteeship is one of the unique socio-economic doctrine of Gandhi. Gandhi’s views on wealth, private property, possession etc. are all envisioned in this doctrine.
- iii) Gandhi developed his idea of trusteeship from the celebrated verses of the religio-social tradition of India, from the influence of John Ruskin’s ‘unto This last and other essays’ Andrew Carnegie’s ‘The Gospel of Wealth’, from English law and also from Edmund Burke.
- iv) Gandhi believed that his system of trusteeship survived the ravages of time and history as it dealt basically with the question of economic structure and organization which other systems failed to answer.
- v) To Gandhi, trusteeship refers to “all people having property and hold it as a social trust”. Such ‘social trust’ is intended to realizing a state of equality on earth.
- vi) The idea of trusteeship leads to the fact that it is a unique socio-economic doctrine of Gandhi. Gandhi’s views on wealth, private property, possession etc. have all well-meaning in this doctrine. Gandhi wanted to create a new social order in which the Sarvadaya society securing ‘welfare of all’ would be established.
- vii) Gandhi’s theory of trusteeship is no doubt an innovative thinking for the achievement of an egalitarian society based on love and non-violence.
- viii) Gandhi’s theory of trusteeship strongly believes in the principle of non-possession.
- ix) The prime objective of Gandhi’s trusteeship is equitable distribution. Equal distribution does not imply possessing equal amount of everything to every individual.

- x) Gandhi's economic equality as envisioned in trusteeship should be based on mutual cooperation and trust not on class conflicts.

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### 10.13 Glossary

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1. Aparigraha	—	Non-possession of wealth
2. Swaraj	—	Self-rule
3. Swadeshi	—	Home-made
4. Sarvodaya	—	Welfare of all
5. Isha Upanishad	—	Hindu religions script
6. Samabhavana	—	Equality
7. Jiva	—	Self
8. Moha	—	Attachment
9. Ahimsa	—	Non-violence
10. Tapasya	—	Self-suffering

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### 10.14 Probable Questions

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#### Essay Type Questions :

1. Discuss Gandhi's theory of trusteeship. Is it practicable in our time?
2. Trace the spiritual foundations of Gandhi's trusteeship.
3. Describe the six principles as enunciated by Gandhi in relation to his trusteeship.
4. Explain Gandhi's doctrine of 'Aparigraha' (Non-possession) as the principles of regeneration and rebirth as well as renunciation.
5. Highlight the methods of realizing Gandhi's trusteeship.
6. Analyse how Gandhi's trusteeship can solve capital-labour relation leading to an ideal of corporate social responsibility.

#### Short Questions:

1. Mention the objectives of Gandhi's theory of Satyagraha.
2. Write a short note on economic equality as envisioned in Gandhi's trusteeship.

3. Compare and contrast of Gandhi's means and the ends with that of Marx regarding socio-economic change.

**Objective Questions (MCQ)**

1. Which of the Gandhian concept visualises an ideal economic order?  
(a) Sarvodaya (b) Satyagraha (c) Trusteeship (d) None of these

Ans. : (c)

2. From which spiritual text Gandhi derived his principle of 'Aparighaha' (non-possession)?  
(a) Mahabharata (b) Ramayana (c) Vedanta (d) Bhagavat-Gita

Ans. : (d)

3. Who is the author of 'The Gospel of Wealth'?  
(a) Andrew Carnegie (b) Leo Tolstoy (c) John Ruskin (d) Edmund Burke

Ans. : (a)

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**10.15 Further Reading**

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**Module – IV**  
**Gandhi on Women**



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## **Unit-16** □ **Gandhi on Women**

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### **Structure**

#### **16.1 Objective**

#### **16.2 Introduction**

#### **16.3 Gandhi on Women**

##### **16.3.1 Equality of the Sexes**

##### **16.3.2 Marriage**

##### **16.3.3. Dowry System**

##### **16.3.4 Divorce**

##### **16.3.5. Women's Chastity**

##### **16.3.7 Birth Control and Artificial Sterilization**

##### **16.3.8 Purdah System**

##### **16.3.9 Women and Satyagraha**

##### **16.3.10 Economic Self-reliance**

#### **16.4 Conclusion**

#### **16.5 Summing Up**

#### **16.6 Probable Questions**

#### **16.7 Further Reading**

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### **16.1 Objective**

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This unit hopes to discuss the following aspects of Gandhi's thoughts :

- 1 Gandhi's views on women, is discussed with reference to the essential changes and the way in which Gandhi answered controversial questions on the equality of the sexes, his views regarding women's education, child marriage, marriage, widow remarriage, the right of women to participate in politics.
- 1 The present unit tries to evaluate how successful Gandhi was in emancipating Indian women from the inhuman existence that Manu and his ilk had yoked them to.



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## 16.2 Introduction

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Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi needs no introduction to students of Politics, Philosophy and other branches of Social Sciences. What is more interesting is that his ideas and actions have not remained confined to either the country of his birth or to the time during which he lived. He has supporters and critics, perhaps in equal measure and remains the centre of all debates and discussions on the nature and exact methods of political protest and civic- social resistance even today. Whether Gandhi's ideas are applicable to all people and all their individual, social and political crises remains a debatable question, but what is uncontested is that he had introduced the world to a very unique and novel method of resisting evil and injustice: and introduced the concepts like non violence and truth.

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## 16.3 Gandhi on Women

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Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was a prolific writer, an intense thinker, a spiritualist, a philosopher and the first mass leader of the freedom struggle of India. By his own admission, he was not a political thinker per se, but his copious writings and speeches, touching upon almost all aspects of human existence during his times make him relevant to social and political thought today and for the foreseeable future as well. Gandhi had the ability to look at existing phenomenon, customs and conventions in a manner that was different from common perception. He was by no means an iconoclast but definitely he was an innovator. He could look at the old in a new light and with the aid of his charismatic personality, he could influence many people to think and do things differently. Gandhi's views upon women are no exception. In India as in most other parts of the world at that time, women were looked upon as inferior to men. They were considered to be both physically and intellectually inferior to men and so the private domain of the household was considered to be best suited to them. Child-bearing and child-rearing, housekeeping, household chores were considered to be the woman's forte. Their existence was centred around the predominant male figure of their lives: their fathers, husbands and sons. That women possessed an identity and independent personality and thinking was not acknowledged at all. In fact, they enjoyed neither the privilege of education nor the luxury of right to property. Hence, families in India had been typically patrilocal, patrilineal and patriarchal. This was reflected in the structure of society as well. As men were considered to be intellectually and physically superior of the two sexes, they alone participated in the social and political spheres and they alone were entitled to power, both within and outside the realm of the home.

We shall discuss Gandhi's views on women under particular headings, so that we may clearly understand what Gandhi thought about these various issues related to women more clearly.

### **16.3.1. Equality of the Sexes**

Gandhi did not believe that women were inferior to men. Rather, he thought that they had different tendencies, capacities and inclinations from those of men. He said that women were the companions of men, 'gifted with equal mental capacities'. Gandhi preached that woman had every right to participate in every activity of man and insisted that they had every right to liberty as men did. However, they would have to change the way in which they saw themselves. Women alone could change the way they were looked upon by society and they should bring about this change by refusing to play mere ornamental roles to their male counterparts in all social and public occasions. He did not think that women did not deserve to be educated. In fact, he insisted upon women being educated so that they could complement men in all social and political activities. He thus, removed the public-private divide that had become popular globally with respect to determining the roles and functions of women in society. Gandhi encouraged the woman to stop thinking of themselves as the 'objects of sexual gratification' of men. His ideas earned him many women followers and definitely increased the number of women who participated in political movements in India. Women felt emancipated from the age-old shackles of tradition that relegated them to their homes and killed their initiatives that could benefit society in the long run.

### **16.3.2 Marriage**

Firstly, Gandhi was vehemently opposed to the practice of child marriage. He considered child marriage to be amoral and physical evil. A custom that does not allow the full development of the personality of the child and forbids the child brides from being in a position to make conscious choices about their own bodies and minds. He believed that marriage was a sacrament, a sacred bond, that needed preservation from both the partners, not just the wives. Marital fidelity or loyalty was not to be expected from women alone while allowing men the right to have multiple partners and also the right to remarry. Moreover, according to Gandhi, marriage was a social bond to legitimise the birth of children and he insisted that having borne a child or two even a married couple should exercise sexual abstinence. In this regard, brahmacharya was to be a virtue that was desirable for both men and women and also insisted that this sexual abstention could not be imposed from outside but rather had

to arise spontaneously from within the husband and the wife. Gandhi also supported remarriage of child widows because he did not consider them to have been truly married at all. Gandhi supported arranged marriage and further proposed that men above the age of twenty five should be consulted by their parents while arranging their marriage. He went to the extent of saying that the only honourable terms in marriage are mutual love and mutual consent. Gandhi was also sensitive to the miseries of widowhood and abhorred the right of a widower to remarry, almost immediately after the demise of his wife whereas a widow was expelled from enjoyment of life on account of losing her husband! He wrote that voluntary widowhood chosen by women to practise sexual abstinence is better than compulsory widowhood imposed by custom. The latter inevitably creates space for sexual promiscuity and does more harm than good.

### **16.3.3. Dowry System**

According to Gandhi, the dowry system was a product of the caste system and could be done away with only when the caste system is abolished. The dowry system was one of the many insults that women in India had been afflicted with and Gandhi was so staunchly against the system that he proposed that any man who demands dowry should be excommunicated or boycotted by society. He encouraged parents of young girls to opt for inter caste marriages rather than submit to the derogatory practise of giving dowry. In this case too, he wanted young women to desist the practise of dowry and wait for their ideal suitors rather than marry available caste boy by paying dowry. Unless the women resisted this practise, it could not be done away with.

### **16.3.4 Divorce**

Gandhi did not subscribe to the taboo associated with divorce in India during his times. Moreover, he gave the right to dissolve a marriage both to men and women. Since he too believed that marriage was a sacred bond, the fidelity or faithfulness to marriage vows had to be adhered to by both men and women and fidelity was to be moral and not just physical.

### **16.3.5. Women's chastity**

In this regard Gandhi's views were different from the traditional view. Gandhi believed in purity of thought and laid more emphasis upon it than physical purity. He also insisted that chastity or purity of the body had been wrongly associated with women alone in Indian culture and tradition. Men too should strive to achieve and

acquire chastity of thought and that should be reflected in their physical habits. He did not support the view that chastity was a virtue of women alone and neither did he believe that chastity could be measured on physical grounds alone.

### **16.3.6 Women's Honour**

Having said whatever is written in the foregoing point, Gandhi still discussed at length how a woman should attempt to protect her honour. He believed that it was physically impossible to violate a woman against her will. Whenever a woman's honour was at risk, Gandhi insisted that she should use all her strength of mind and body, her teeth and her nails to protect her honour. In most cases of violation of modesty of a woman, Gandhi felt, the criminals succeeded in their evil intentions not because of their superior physical strength but because of the fear in the minds of the women!

### **16.3.7 Birth Control and Artificial Sterilization**

Considering the population of India and its rate of growth, Gandhi preached the need to control the rate of birth in India but did not support artificial sterilization and birth control measures. He believed that if the masses had access to artificial means of sterilization, there would be gross moral decay and uncontrolled and even promiscuous relationships. All control with regards to physical needs and their fulfilment would be lost and society at large would face moral decay. He suggested that birth control should be voluntarily practiced by married couples and that would improve the quality of their relationship and companionship. This control had to be exercised by both men and women as both were equal partners in the marital bond. He preached 'brahmacharya' as a means of birth control would be both spontaneous and would help to build a strong character in both men and women and they could dedicate their lives to more meaningful services to the community.

### **16.3.8 Purdah System**

Gandhi considered the system of 'purdah' to be 'vicious, brutal and barbarous'. He believed that the 'purdah' system depicted a 'morbid anxiety' about the chastity of women and further opposed it on the ground that the same culture that pushed women into seclusion did not allow women to question the chastity of men in any manner. In fact, the chastity of men was not a matter of concern at all in India, as if, being a man meant entitlement to freedom of choice, thought and action, whereas, being a woman meant that they would have to be the receptacles of virtue and chastity and the upholders of tradition and customs. Gandhi pointed out that it was these very traditions and customs that had turned pernicious and was responsible for dehumanizing women in India and relegating them to non-entities.

### **16.3.9 Women and Satyagraha**

Gandhi had immense faith in the inherent capacity that women possessed for both truth and non-violence. He constantly urged women to tap their inner reservoirs of patience, love, tolerance, determination and to channelize these qualities towards service to community. He also believed that women had less physical appetite and voluntary 'brahmacharya' would come instinctively to them. They were thus, potential foot soldiers of the Satyagraha movement. Gandhi thus resented those traditions and customs of Indian society which had, instead of harnessing these latent potentials in women, had subjugated and repressed them to lead a meaningless existence. However, one thing must be kept in mind at this point: Gandhi did not want women to break away from all traditions of society but wanted them to carve out a niche of 'service rather than power' within the prevailing social structure. At Gandhi's call women participated and organized political protests, staged public picketing, courted arrest, and were the first to ignore and mitigate the boundaries set by caste and religion. The nationalist movement of India became imbued with a feminist fervour and the women on their part realized that they too had a meaningful role to play in the movement against the foreign rule.

### **16.3.10 Economic Self-reliance**

Gandhi, despite all his adulatory views about women, failed to visualise women as being capable of economic independence. He wanted women to be educated so that they could in turn play a positive role in the education and upbringing of their children. He did not however, think that a woman's education could enable her to earn a substantial income to support herself or her family. She could at best take to spinning 'khadi'. This might enable her to make a contribution to her family's income and keep her engaged during her idle hours besides catering to the nationalist agenda. In fact, he calls spinning 'a widow's best companion'!

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## **16.4 Conclusion**

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The above discussion summarizes the basic ideas that Gandhi had regarding different aspects of the lives of women in India. While going through the above discussion itself we might have noted certain positive features and certain not-so-positive features. We must remember that every thinker should be judged or evaluated within the particular temporal and spatial context within which he was located. It would be unfair to dismiss the thoughts and views of social and political thinkers simply because they seem dated to us. Moreover, a personality like Gandhi, who did make an undeniable impact upon the freedom struggle of India and gained global

recognition because of his emphasis on unique modes of protest: satyagraha and civil resistance cannot be dismissed summarily because his ideas regarding women seem outdated and limited in scope to us today. Keeping this in mind, let us discuss below a few limitations or drawbacks on Gandhi's ideas on women:

- 1 Michael Connellan in an article for The Guardian, titled 'Women suffer from Gandhi's legacy' (dated 27 January, 2010) pointed out that "Gandhi was a puritan and a misogynist who helped ensure that India remains one of the most sexually repressed nations on earth – and by and large a dreadful place to be born a woman." This criticism of Gandhi's views on women cannot be totally ignored nor negated. It is true that though Gandhi spoke about the equality of the sexes, he never took up the project of breaking down the stereotypes of gender in India. In fact, it would be more correct to say that he never wanted to break away from these gender stereotypes. Rather, he took refuge under the 'feminine' methods of passive or non-violent resistance and satyagraha as opposed to the 'masculine' brutalities of the British empire.
- 1 His notions on celibacy or brahmacharya and the extreme distaste with which he regarded sex for pleasure as opposed to sex for procreation has also been criticised as unnatural and artificially imposed from outside and one that would resign India to 'the hell of celibacy' in the words of Martin Luther.
- 1 Moreover, Gandhi was a puritan who believed that women should take responsibility for all types of sexual assaults and undesirable advancements rather than the men who make these assaults and advancements. This mentality has deep roots in Indian tradition and has staunch supporters even today. Many of the states of Northern and North Western India, with the highest incidence of rape, female foeticide and inverse sex ratio depict the females as responsible for all crimes against women, blaming them for either provoking or consenting to sexual assaults.
- 1 Gandhi's views about the need of educating women is also only partially liberating because beyond the primary knowledge of the letters, the women were to remain confined to home and hearth, give birth to and raise good, well-mannered children and in free time, to spin. He did not propose to educate women so that they could work shoulder to shoulder with men and be bread-earners of the family.

- 1 Though Gandhi calls marriage a sacred bond, a sacrament, he did not think that marriage was a bond between two equal individuals. While he proposed that men not to marry before the age of twenty-five, he endorsed arranged marriage and gave the men the right to be consulted by their parents regarding the match. He did not give any such liberty or right to the woman.
- 1 He did advocate remarriage of child widows but conveniently remained silent on remarriage of adult widows. He preferred these widows to dedicate their entire life and energy to the service of the community, forgetting that these widows were mortal creatures with their own emotional and physical needs.
- 1 Gandhi's thrust upon non-violent means of protest inflicted and re-endorsed the traditional violence against women though he did encourage the participation of women in political movements but his disproportionate emphasis upon celibacy, chastity and sexual repression did not improve the position of women in India.

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## 16.5 Summing Up

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- i) Gandhi did not believe that women were inferior to men. Rather, he thought that they had different tendencies, capacities and inclinations from those of men.
- ii) Gandhi did not think that women did not deserve to be educated. In fact, he insisted upon women being educated so that they could complement men in all social and political activities.
- iii) Gandhi was vehemently opposed to the practice of child marriage. He considered child marriage to be amoral and a physical evil.
- iv) According to Gandhi, the dowry system was a product of the caste system and could be done away with only when the caste system is abolished.
- v) Gandhi did not subscribe to the taboo associated with divorce in India during his times. Moreover, he gave the right to dissolve a marriage both to men and women.
- vi) Gandhi believed that it was physically impossible to violate a woman against her will.
- vii) Gandhi had immense faith in the inherent capacity that women possessed for both truth and non-violence. He constantly urged women to tap their inner reservoirs of patience, love, tolerance, determination and to channelize these qualities towards service to community

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## 16.6 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Make a critical evaluation of Gandhi's views on women.
2. Was Gandhi successful in completely liberating women in India.
3. Can Gandhi be regarded as a feminist?
4. Discuss Gandhi's views on Marriage.
5. Discuss Gandhi's views on celibacy and artificial sterilization.
6. Discuss Gandhi's views on widow remarriage.

### Short Questions :

1. What were Gandhi's ideas regarding the education of women?
2. What were Gandhi's views regarding economic emancipation of women?
3. What were Gandhi's views on the purdah system?

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. Which of the following social practice was opposed by Gandhi?  
(a) Sati (b) Child Marriage (c) Widow's remarriage (d) None of these

Ans. : (b)

2. Dowry system was a product of which social system in accordance to Gandhi?  
(a) Caste (b) Purdah (c) Polygamy (d) None of these

Ans. : (a)

3. Who is the author of *Debating Gandhi*?  
(a) A. Raghuramaraju (b) B. R. Nanda  
(c) R. K. Prabhu (d) Nirmal Kumar Bose

Ans. : (a)

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## 16.7 Further Reading

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## **Unit-17 □ Influence of Gandhi on World Reform Movements: Anti-Apartheid and Pacifist Movements**

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### **Structure**

#### **17.1 Objective**

#### **17.2 Introduction**

#### **17.3 Gandhi and Anti-Apartheid Movements**

#### **17.4 Gandhi and Pacifist Movements**

#### **17.5 Conclusion**

#### **17.6 Summing Up**

#### **17.7 Probable Questions**

#### **17.8 Further Reading**

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### **17.1 Objective**

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This unit hopes to discuss the following aspects of Gandhi's thoughts:

- 1 In this unit it is discussed how Gandhi's ideas and unique methods of political resistance have influenced world peace movements with special reference to the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America.
- 1 The present unit gives us a glimpse of how Gandhi's genre of politics has helped shaping peaceful protests during and after his time.

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### **17.2 Introduction**

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The term 'pacifism' was coined by French peace campaigner Emile Arnaud (1864 – 1921) and was adopted as a more humane and creative means of conflict resolution at a global level by peace activists at the Tenth Universal Peace Congress in Glasgow in 1901. The pacifist approach believes that all conflicts, including international disputes can and must be resolved using peaceful means. A pacifist is a person who

is morally and practically against war and against the use of violence in any form or scale to resolve disputes of all kinds, ranging from the very individual interpersonal conflicts to local, regional, national and even international levels. Peter Brook and Thomas Paul Socknat, historians of Pacifism, define it as an 'unconditional rejection of all forms of warfare. Jenny Teichman, a philosopher has used the term 'anti-warism' to define pacifism. The faith in pacifism arises from the grounds of moral consideration, which propounds that ends do not justify means and thus an inhuman and immoral means such as war cannot lead to a morally correct end. The deontological view of pacifism is the moral justification of pacifism as the most upright and human approach to conflict resolution. The consequentialist view of pacifism looks upon the practical benefits of using peaceful means for conflict resolution as opposed to the use of coercive means at the disposal of the states as these means do not cause any physical harm or injury to person and property. The cost of war and dehumanizing consequences therein cannot justify and fruits accumulated from such violent expeditions according to pragmatic pacifism.

This thrust on peaceful and diplomatic means to resolve conflicts and resist organized violence or unjust laws has had a deep and long history in India. The term 'ahimsa' though popularized by Gandhi as his political and ethical tool, was not a new idea in India. 'Ahimsa' formed the core philosophy of certain branches of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. In fact, living in consonance with other members of one's community, being tolerant of mutual differences and respecting these differences as well as extending this sensitivity to nature, as a recognition of the fact that men live a 'related existence' where each and every member of a system whether sentient or non-sentient play a crucial role in the survival and wellbeing of every other member of the system has pervaded Indian way of life since the beginning of our civilization. Gandhi was deeply influenced by this long tradition of emphasis upon peaceful coexistence and resorted to the essence of this tradition when faced with crisis and adversity in his personal and social life. Other famous proponents of pacifism have been Leo Tolstoy, whose work 'The Kingdom of God Is Within You' deeply influenced Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., James Lawson, James Bevel and other such personalities who have been associated with civil rights movements, globally.

A peace movement refers to a social movement that prefers the use of nonviolent means of protest and resistance like diplomacy, boycotts, peace camps, moral purchasing, voting for anti-war candidates, promoting concept and awareness about good governance that emphasizes upon instituting transparency and accountability of government to the governed, especially on questions of Government military deals and exposes vested interest of the government, supporting direct democracy, peaceful

protests and such other means. There is a rich history of pacifism since the time of the ancient Greek Empire, across the globe. In recent times, especially since the end of the Second World War, the extreme nature of devastation and destruction that the world had witnessed during the course of the two World Wars, there has been a rising concern regarding the preservation of the human civilization and hence the number of pacifist movements have been on the rise.

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### **17.3 Gandhi and Anti-Apartheid Movements**

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In this regard Gandhi has been an international point of reference and reverence. His insistence upon the power of 'soul force' and 'truth force' as palpable instruments and methods of resisting organized coercive forces have inspired many peace movements and specifically anti-apartheid movements. By insisting upon 'satyagraha' Gandhi meant that no man had the right to use physical force or violence into the realm of Truth, that there were multiple interpretations of truth and each man had the right to hold on to his own perception of it. Gandhi strongly believed that since there was one Truth, in the end, all the different interpretations of Truth would appear like the different leaves of the same tree. He insisted that Truth force should be the one and only force used to overcome all differences of opinions and misunderstandings amongst men. He espoused that a small well-trained band of 'satyagrahis' could lead nonviolent non-cooperation movements successfully and in the long run would be successful in bringing about a 'change of heart' or change of stand of even the toughest of war generals. Through his personal experiences in South Africa, Gandhi became conscious of the limitations of such peaceful methods of resistance but never lost faith in the inherent humane utility of these methods. He recognized the fact the masses would not be capable of consistently sticking to peaceful resistance in the face of extreme brutalities carried out by the government and would give in to the temptation of using violent means of protest under extreme provocation. Here, he laid emphasis upon the need for a small band of trained 'satyagrahis' who would possess qualities of love, forgiveness, acceptance of all and also have the capacity to bear extreme self-suffering and self-deprivation. Such qualities in the 'satyagrahis' would permeate into the larger body of the masses and help them to sustain passive resistance. These traits of Gandhi's faith are deeply rooted in his religious beliefs. He was born into a Vaishnava family and the influence Jain tenets are also clearly reflected in his espousal of love of humanity, treating all men as equal, self-suffering as a means of expiation. Though critics have been quick to point out that Gandhi's faith in 'ahimsa' and truth have relevance in the specific cultural context of Indian

culture, it is undeniable that the Civil Rights Movements in United States under Martin Luther King Jr. and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa owe a lot to Gandhian ideals.

From 1893 to 1914, Gandhi stayed in South Africa and worked as an attorney and a social activist for the rights of Indians in South Africa and the discrimination carried out by the British government against the natives and all other coloured people. His experiences in South Africa made him the man he became later. Gandhi established the Natal Indian Congress in 1894 in response to the treatment meted out to him while travelling on a train from Pretoria. He was thrown off the train despite having a ticket because a White man refused to travel in the company of an Indian! Gandhi was already aware of the discrimination and extreme oppression faced by native African and Indians, this personal experience further sensitised him to the problem. He founded the Natal Indian Congress to organize peaceful resistance to the atrocities of the British government. He also established the Phoenix Farm and later the Tolstoy farm with the aim to organize and create a common platform for all exploited and oppressed people. During the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899, Gandhi along with his followers formed an ambulance corps with a strength of eleven hundred ambulances and yet the British did nothing to reduce the discrimination against and the exploitation of the natives. Gandhi was arrested several times and each time Gandhi's resolve to develop and use 'satyagraha' as a means of protest was further strengthened. His work in South Africa for the natives was of such magnitude that he is still looked upon as a leader there and revered as a person who felt deeply the atrocities committed upon them.

Claude Markovits in his book *The Un-Gandhian Gandhi: The Life and the After life of the Mahatma* has written that the African National Congress, launched its first mass movement in 1952 against apartheid under the leadership of Dr. Albert Luthuli, had been founded in 1912 on the model of the Natal Indian Congress, with which Gandhi had been very closely associated. Gandhi's influence on the anti-apartheid movement may be measured by the extent to which the former's biographers have tried to capture the works and ideas of Nelson Mandela and claimed that the latter was tremendously influenced by Gandhi. Nelson Mandela in his autobiography has written that "Nonviolent passive resistance is effective as long as your opposition adheres to the same rules as you do." He continued, to state that "if peaceful protest is met with violence, its efficacy is at an end. For me, nonviolence was not a moral

principle but a political strategy.” Mandela’s understanding of nonviolence was different from that of Gandhi. He did not consider violence and nonviolence to be mutually exclusive, “...it is the predominance of one or the other that labels a struggle.” Despite this difference in understanding and interpretation of one of the basic tenets of protest, it is undeniable that Gandhi’s influence on Mandela and his foundational contributions to the anti-apartheid movement did limit the range and use of violence in the later stages.

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## **17.4 Gandhi and Pacifist Movements**

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Martin Luther King Jr. (1929 – 1968) led the Civil Rights Movement in the United States from 1955 to 1968 successfully, was also deeply influenced by Gandhi and his insistence on the use of ‘soul force’ and ‘truth force’ in the face of extreme violence and brutality. By his own admission, for his Civil Rights Movements in the United States “India’s Gandhi was the guiding light”. In Martin Luther King Jr.’s mind, Gandhi’s insistence on love, tolerance, patience and continued self-suffering till there is a ‘change of heart’ in the opponent, was inextricably connected with Jesus’ message “Love your enemy and pray for those who hurt you.” He successfully used nonviolent and organized collective action to protest against racial segregation in his country. The later political campaigns and controversies notwithstanding, King Jr. Realized the power of nonviolent resistance and won the Noble Peace Prize in 1964 for fighting against racial inequality through peaceful means.

Besides these two illustrations of Gandhi’s influence on anti-apartheid and pacifist movements numerous other leaders across the globe have acknowledged Gandhi’s contributions and influences upon developing and strengthening the faith in nonviolent civil disobedience in opposing governmental brutalities and injustices. Moreover, Gandhi’s belief that the means are as important as the end has also enhanced the faith in the moralist view of pacifism. A wrong means could never lead to a right end. True nonviolence entails nonviolence in thought, words and deeds. If the opponent remains unaffected by the peaceful protests of the ‘satyagrahis’, the latter would have to persevere patiently till he brought about a change in the attitude of the aggressor. If the ‘satyagrahis’ failed to achieve this, they would peacefully have to give in to the atrocities of the oppressor but under no circumstances could violence be resorted to.

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## 17.5 Conclusion

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Stanley Maron in his paper 'The Non-Universality of Satyagraha' in the book *Gandhi, India and the World* edited by Sibnarayan Ray has pointed out that Gandhi's 'satyagraha' and 'ahimsa' have utility and are effective for the Indian cultural context alone because both these ideas are derived from Indian religious beliefs and traditions. He also points out the inconsistencies in Gandhi's espousal of nonviolence when the latter suggests nonviolence to the Jews in concentration camps but in the face of an imminent Japanese attack on India preaches that India should be ready to defend itself in any manner possible. Maron also makes a very interesting comparison of the core values of Hinduism and Hebrew faith to explain why he believes that the method of 'satyagraha' was relevant to India but not to the Jews, who were grossly persecuted due to the dictatorial excesses of Hitler. He specifically mentions the fact that self-abnegation and penance have formed a very important part of traditional Hinduism as a means of self-purification and as a means to acquire desired boons from the Gods. The Hebrew tradition, on the other hand, Maron points out, expects each man to respect himself and treat himself as an equal to every other man because God has created each man as equal to another. It does not support service to a cause or to another human being at the cost of one's own self. The Hebrew faith does not insist upon its followers to stick to either violence or nonviolence but advocates that a faithful Jew shall do whatever is necessary to protect his life which is a gift from the Supreme being. Thus he finds the Hebrew faith to be far more realistic and practical and humane as compared to the lofty ideals preached by Gandhi which presume that every mortal man has the capacity to overcome personal interests and instincts of self-preservation and behave like saints or Gods.

Maron acknowledges the fact that Gandhi contributed greatly to the perception of nonviolence as a plausible and desirable means of protest but to claim that it was universally applicable or desirable portrayed Gandhi's inability to cope with modernism and its various institutions. Gandhi was referring to traditional beliefs and faith of diverse strands of Hinduism (specifically Vaishnavism and Jainism) when he was espousing nonviolence and non-harming in all aspects of life. when he was faced with concrete institutions of coercive power like the state and its various repressive machineries like the police and the army, he battled to fit his traditional ideas into the modern context and here lay the root of his inconsistencies.

In conclusion, it may be said that despite Gandhi's recognition as one of the most influential personalities at the global level in the modern age, the applicability of all his ideas and ideals may always not be possible nor very practicable. Yet, since the end of the Second World War, there has been an effort on the part of the leading states to resort more to 'soft power' politics rather than 'hard power' politics as means of conflict resolution. More importance has been laid upon diplomacy, arbitration, mediation and negotiation to regulate relations upon nations. Globalization is also another factor responsible for shifting the focus towards soft power politics as the economies of all countries have become intertwined and interdependent and the world cannot really afford to go through any more hot wars. Yet every time a peaceful protest or civil disobedience is organized to protest against any wrong, Gandhi's faith in nonviolence is recalled and relived.

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## 17.6 Summing Up

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- i) The pacifist approach believes that all conflicts, including international disputes, can be resolved using peaceful means.
- ii) The consequentialist view of pacifism looks upon the practical benefits of using peaceful means for conflict resolution instead of coercive means at the disposal of the state, as these means do not cause any physical harm or injury to a person and property.
- iii) Gandhi firmly believed that since there was one Truth, in the end, all the different interpretations of Truth would appear like the different leaves of the same tree.
- iv) Gandhi's faith is deeply rooted in his religious beliefs.
- v) Gandhi contributed significantly to the perception of nonviolence as a reasonable and desirable means of protest.
- vi) Gandhi's recognition as one of the most influential personalities at the global level in the modern age, the applicability of all his ideas and ideals may always not be possible nor very practicable.



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## 17.7 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Is Gandhi's ideas of passive resistance relevant to contemporary protest movements?
2. How have Gandhian ideas of passive resistance influenced the shift from 'hard power politics' to 'soft power politics'?
3. Can organized civil disobedience on nonviolent lines truly helped in resolving international and national conflicts?
4. Discuss Gandhi's concept of 'Satyagraha' as a means of resisting evil.
5. How did Gandhi influence the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa?
6. How did Gandhian ideas influence the civil rights movements in United States under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr.?

### Short Questions :

1. What do you understand by the term 'pacifism'?
2. Discuss with examples about peace movements.
3. What is meant by the term anti-apartheid movement?

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. Who coined the term 'Pacifism'?  
(a) Emile Arnaud (b) William James (c) M. K. Gandhi (d) C. S. Lewis

Ans. : (a)

2. Who is the author of the Kingdom of God is Within you?  
(a) M. K. Gandhi (b) Peter Brook (c) Thomas Paul (d) Leo Tolstoy

Ans. : (d)

3. Who led the first mass movement against apartheid in South Africa in 1952?  
(a) Nelson Mandela (b) Albert Luthuli (c) Vella Pillay (d) Ros Ainslie

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## 17.8 Further Reading

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1. Dasgupta, Pannalal, *Gandhi Gabeshana*, Nabapatra Prakashan, Kolkata (1986).

2. Bandyopadhyay, Jayantanuj *Social and Political Thought of Gandhi*, Manuscript India, Howrah (1969).
3. Prabhu, R.K. edited (19<sup>th</sup> Impression, 2016) *India of my Dreams*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad (1947).
4. Gandhi, M.K. (1943) *Constructive Programme*, retrieved from [www.mkgandhi.org](http://www.mkgandhi.org) on September 30, 2013
5. Raghurama, Raju, *A Debating Gandhi*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi (2006).
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## **Unit-18 □ ‘Gandhigiri’ – Perceptions in Popular Culture**

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### **Structure**

#### **18.1 Objective**

#### **18.2 Introduction**

#### **18.3 ‘Gandhigiri’ – Perceptions in Popular Culture**

#### **18.4 Conclusion**

#### **18.5 Summing Up**

#### **18.6 Probable Questions**

#### **18.7 Further Reading**

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### **18.1 Objective**

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- 1 The third unit is a very contemporary and non- traditional look at Gandhi.
- 1 This unit discusses how Gandhi is portrayed in contemporary Popular Culture.
- 1 Just that there are intellectuals who have differences with Gandhi’s ideas and methods so are the reflections of Gandhi in Pop Culture – not all of it is ‘positive’ or adulatory. Yet Gandhi’s afterlife seems to be longer than his life. Whether he is praised or attacked for being what he was, it seems impossible to ignore him and push him into historical oblivion.

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### **18.2 Introduction**

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Culture, simply stated refers to a collective way of life of a people. It cannot be individually created or sustained. A particular group of people with a specific set of norms and values, common language, common religious and ethico-moral beliefs, common customs and conventions, common perceptions of the sacred and the profane, faith in common principles of justice, similar food habits and dress codes create and sustain a particular culture over a long period of time. It gives individuals some very important characteristics of their identity and is not necessarily limited

within the geographical expanse of a state. Thus, we have people belonging to or subscribing to one culture across multiple states and one state comprising of multiple cultural groups. When we talk about different types of culture, a tripartite classification is most commonly adhered to: (a) high culture and low culture, (b) elite culture and mass or popular culture and (c) folk culture and mainstream culture.

In this segment before we embark upon discussing how Gandhi has been represented in popular culture, let us first discuss what popular culture means. The Oxford English Dictionary defines popular culture as culture based on the tastes of ordinary people rather than an educated elite. Wikipedia defines popular culture as culture that is “generally recognized by members of a set of the practices, beliefs and objects that are dominant and ubiquitous in a society at a given point of time. Popular culture also encompasses the activities and feelings produced as a result of interaction with these dominant objects. Heavily influenced in modern times by mass media, this collection of ideas permeates the everyday lives of people in a given society. Therefore, popular culture has a way of influencing an individual’s attitudes towards certain topics. However, there are various ways of defining pop culture. Because of this, popular culture is considered an empty conceptual category, or something that can be defined in a variety of conflicting ways by different people across different contexts. It is generally defined in contrast to other forms of culture such as folk culture, working class culture or high culture and also through different theoretical perspectives such as psychoanalysis, structuralism, postmodernism and more.” Popular culture is also referred to as Pop culture. It is often looked down upon as a culture that is created by mass media and promotes mass consumerism and also lacks the taste and quality that is characteristic of elite/ intellectual culture.

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### **18.3 ‘Gandhigiri’ – Perceptions in Popular Culture**

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Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi has been reverentially called ‘the Mahatma’ by his comrades in South Africa and then by the world poet Rabindranath Tagore. Eventually he was hailed as the Father of the Nation in India. He is credited by most of his hagiographers to have brought the freedom struggle of India to the doorstep of the masses and having turned the nationalist struggle into a mass struggle for the first time since its inception. Before Gandhi, the freedom fighters had mostly come from Western educated upper and upper middle classes of Indian society. Gandhi’s Indian attire, walking barefoot and speaking in native Indian languages established an instant

connexion between him and the villagers of India who had till then failed to identify much with the highly Western bred nationalist leaders. While Gandhi's emergence on the Indian political scene in 1915 inaugurated the age of mass participation in political movements, it also augered the age when Gandhi would be looked upon, understood and interpreted not just by the educated, erudite intellectuals of India and those abroad but also by his critics and sceptics and admirers who would portray him in 'unsophisticated', 'unintellectual' and 'unflattering' ways.

Gandhi had supporters and admirers not just in India but across the world but it must be remembered that he had his critics as well, both during his lifetime and thereafter. The name of 'Gandhi' continues to hold a rich legacy with connotations to truth, nonviolence, peaceful civil disobedience, honesty, uprightness, morality, equal worth of both means and ends, love, peace, tolerance, patience and extreme self abnegation in the face of a mighty opponent. His philosophy has deep traditional and spiritual moorings which are not exactly easily comprehensible for the masses. While Gandhi has been eulogised and revered for his ideas by intellectuals both within and outside India, his image and name still holds intrinsic and instrumental value for the masses as well. This perhaps explains why even so many years after his assassination in 1948, Gandhi's portraits adorn government offices, schools, colleges, banks. Roads bearing his name are found in almost all cities across India. His statues abound. His portrait is also found on the currency notes of India. Most Indians as kids must have dressed at least once as Gandhi in go-as-you-like competitions in primary school. In the political sphere too, India has been dominated by the Indian National Congress (as either the party in power or as the leading opposition party) and frequent claims are made to the Gandhi/ Nehru legacy that the party boasts of. Even non-Congress political parties use the image of Gandhi to secure mass support to particular projects launched by it. The posters and advertisements of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan launched by Bharatiya Janata Party after it came to power in 2014 is a case in point. Using Gandhi's imagery immediately connotes the values that Gandhi held dear during his life and help the party to secure mass support. Besides Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Jayprakash Narayan who were Gandhi's ardent followers and continued to practise his ideals in practice in post independence India, numerous other political leaders have continued to use Gandhian methods of fasting, peaceful picketing, courting political arrests, observing nonviolent civil disobedience and non-cooperation from across the political spectrum in India. Kisan Baburao Hazare or more popularly, Anna Hazare

– Padmashree and Padma Bhushan awardee explicitly launched political and social construction programmes and followed Gandhian tactics as recently as 2011 and 2012.

The obsession with Gandhi, the man and his methods, has not remained confined to the political sphere alone. India Today Web Desk on September 1, 2015 made a list of articles belonging to Gandhi being auctioned and the price these items had fetched. Gandhi's eyeglasses, were auctioned in the year 2009 in Manhattan and was bought by Vijay Mallya for an unbelievable Rs. 41,88,363/- ! His Spinning Wheel, his Will and specimen of blood, soil on which he fell when he was assassinated, his autographed letters and sandals are amongst some of the items related to Gandhi which have been auctioned and which have fetched unimaginably high sums of money at home and abroad. All these objects became valuable because they are symbolic of the ideas and ideals that Gandhi preached and practised and his continued relevance is seen in his all pervading presence so long after his death.

The Deccan Herald, in its issue of September 30, 2018 discussed the portrayal of Gandhi through films, plays and songs in popular culture on the occasion of 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Gandhi. It mentions '*Gandhi – The Musical*' written and directed by Ganesh Khambata consisting of eighteen original songs that celebrated and outlined the journey of Gandhi. '*Yugpurush – Mahatma Ka Mahatma*' directed by Rajesh Joshi was based on the relationship between Gandhi and his spiritual mentor Shrimad Rajchandraji and was awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Excellence Awards 2017 for the best play. It also mentioned the song 'Sabarmati ke Sant Tune Kare Diya Kamal' written by Kavi Pradeep and sung by none other than Asha Bhosle for the film 'Jagriti'. This song became a huge hit. This article also discussed films made on Gandhi like the epic '*Gandhi*' by Richard Attenborough in 1982, Shyam Benegal's 1996 film '*The Making of the Mahatma*', an adaptation of Fatima Meer's book: *The Apprenticeship of a Mahatma*, Kamal Hasan's '*Hey Ram*' made in 2000 and the huge box office hit directed by Raj Kumar Hirani, '*Lage Raho Munnabhai*' in 2006. It must be noted that all these films, songs and plays are adulatory and pay tribute to the man and the leader in Gandhi. The best representation of Gandhi in pop culture would be depicted by '*Lage Raho Munnabhai*' because it created the term 'Gandhigiri' in keeping with the 'mawwali' or 'tapori' language used by the goons in Mumbai. While the protagonist and his sidekick are goons yet they are comical rather than dark characters representing the underworld and its networks that Mumbai has been infamous for. The film has catchy songs, love, drama, conspiracy and 'a chemical locha' that eggs the protagonist Munnabhai portrayed onscreen by Sanjay Dutt, to

study about Mahatma Gandhi. The protagonist is so influenced by Gandhi's ideas that he starts hallucinating about Gandhi and gives up violence and all criminal activities thereafter. This film epitomises the incorporation and portayal of Gandhi in popular culture. The easy to understand and informal language in which Gandhi's core ideas are portrayed in this film sent an important message to the youth who might otherwise consider Gandhism to be 'too heavy' or 'too philosophical' to be of any practical use in contemporary times. Dominique Atkinson and Doug Greene in their book *The Men Who Changed the Course of History* (2015) counted Gandhi along with Jesus Christ, Napoleon Bonaparte, David Moses, Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great and Prophet Mohammad.

However, not all depictions of Gandhi in popular culture have been adulatory or complimentary by nature. There have been spoofs and satires that have tried to prove that Gandhian ideas and ideals have lost their effectivity and do not suffice to solve the complicated problems that states are faced with today. Gandhi's emphasis upon building up self-sufficient village economies and a minimal state truly seem out of context in a globalized world with too many states that are nuclear enabled and engaged in constant competition for more and more power. Shashi Tharoor's book *The Great Indian Novel* written in 1989 portrays Gandhi with a slight degree of 'irreverence' and humour through his fictional character Gangaji with snide insinuations to the character's insistence on sitting for 'dharnas' and fasting at the drop of a hat. This character too is killed in the end, in a manner uncannily similar to the assassination of Gandhi. Feroz Abbas Khan's film, '*Gandhi, My Father*' made in 2007 looked at the troubled relationship between Gandhi and his son Harilal and was different from all other hagiographic and biographic films in that it dealt with Gandhi's personal life and the conflicts therein rather than his social political ideas. A different take on Gandhi was also provided in the film *Gandhi to Hitler*, made in 2011, which explored the exchange of letters between these two personalities and explored a lesser known aspect of the life of Gandhi. The film received mixed response at the Belgium International Film Festival as it was thought to have eulogized Hitler more.

While the above mentioned books and films look at different aspects of Gandhi's life or propose to look differently at the known aspects of Gandhi's life, it may be noted that within India, the stature that Gandhi enjoys in the mass mind had made it difficult if not impossible for Indian writers, playwrights, filmmakers to take too harsh a view of Gandhi. In the West however, there has been no such compulsion nor the fear of igniting public rage. It may be said that the Western media has taken 'creative'

liberties by constantly referring to Gandhi and his ideas that are as widespread there as they are here. The 2001 animation series in the West, *Clone High* shows a school full of clones of historical figures in which Gandhi's clone ends up becoming an alcoholic and a partygoer under stress of living up to the expectations of becoming the Mahatma. This series had to be pulled off air by MTV after running 19 episodes when minor protests erupted in Delhi. Non-reverential, comical and even sarcastic comments, references have been common in Western films, television shows, short films and sitcoms like *South Park*, *Family Guy*, *Celebrity Deathmatch*, *Supernatural*, *Gandhi at the Bat* (2006), *Mohandas and Betty: A Love Story* (2002), *Seinfeld*, *Modern Family* etc. which question, critique and ridicule everything from Gandhi's insistence upon nonviolence to his frequent fasts as a means of 'satyagraha' and also make insinuations regarding his love interests. 'Propagandhi' is a Canadian punk rock band that creates music which focuses upon politics and rebellion. Its proclaimed agenda was to antagonise and not to entertain. This four -member band promotes and supports everything from gay rights to veganism and uses music to agitate and create public opinion in support of issues.

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## 18.4 Conclusion

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The above discussion includes both positive and negative portrayals of Gandhi in popular culture. As a student of politics or any branch of social sciences, we should recognize the fact that through both kinds of portrayal Gandhi has continued to live, long after his violent physical death. He has in fact, had a very busy afterlife as compared to most of his contemporaries, both at home and abroad. While some have agreed with his ideals completely and raised him to the pedestal of sainthood, others have taken a critical and practical look at the feasibility and practicality of his views. But that is natural and to be expected. It is undeniable that Gandhi has influenced many world leaders and civil rights movements globally and continues to remain relevant even if not acceptable without reserve. Even while critiquing Gandhi, reference has to be made to his ideas and that demands a knowledge of the man and his ideas in the first instance. Thus, Gandhi continues to remain a point of reverence or a point of relevance.

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## 18.5 Summing Up

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- i) Culture, stated, refers to a collective way of life of a people. It cannot be individually created or sustained.



- ii) Popular culture as culture based on the tastes of ordinary people rather than an educated elite.
- iii) Gandhi's Indian attire, walking barefoot and speaking in native Indian languages, established an instant connection between him and the villagers of India who had till then failed to identify much with the highly Western bred nationalist leader.
- iv) Gandhi had supporters and admirers not just in India but across the world, but it must be remembered that he had his critics, both during his lifetime and after that.
- iv) Gandhi has influenced many world leaders and civil rights movements globally and remains relevant even if not acceptable without reserve.

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## 18.6 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. Has Pop Culture added to Gandhi's charisma and made him more understandable to today's youth?
2. Gandhi can rightly be viewed only through the lenses of 'high culture'? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Discuss a few films which portray the life of Gandhi.
4. Mention some songs and plays that have depicted the life of Gandhi in the popular medium.
5. Mention some popular depictions of Gandhi that have critiqued his ideas and methods.

### Short Questions :

1. What does the term culture imply to you?
2. Define popular culture.
3. Is popular culture necessarily derogatory? Argue your case.

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. What is the term used for a culture, based on the tastes of ordinary people rather than an educated elite?  
(a) Common culture (b) Everyday Culture  
(c) Popular Culture (d) Intellectual culture

Ans. : (c)

2. Who amongst the following were the followers of Gandhi?

- (a) Jayprakash Narayan (b) Vinoba Bhave  
(c) Anna Hazare (d) All of them

Ans. : (d)

3. Name the films based on Gandhian principles which was a box office hit in 2006?

- (a) Gandhi the Musical (b) Gandhi  
(c) The Making of the Mahatma (d) Lage Raho Munnabhai

Ans. : (d)

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## 18.7 Further Reading

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1. India Today Web Desk on September 1, 2015, accessed on December 10, 2019
2. The Deccan Herald, September 30, 2018, accessed on December 10, 2019
3. Tharoor, Shashi (2014) *The Great Indian Novel*, Penguin, New Delhi
4. Films mentioned in the above discussion.

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## **Unit-19** □ **Gandhi and his Critics**

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### **Structure**

- 19.1 Objective**
- 19.2 Introduction**
- 19.3 Gandhi's views regarding Non violence or Ahimsa**
- 19.4 Gandhi's views on Universality of 'Satyagraha'**
- 19.5 Gandhi's views regarding the State**
- 19.6 Gandhi's views on Untouchability and Caste System**
- 19.7 Gandhi's views on 'Brahmacharya'**
- 19.8 Gandhi's views on Modernization**
- 19.9 Gandhi's views on Women**
- 19.10 Gandhi's Inconsistencies**
- 19.11 Conclusion**
- 19.12 Summing Up**
- 19.13 Probable Questions**
- 19.14 Further Reading**

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### **19.1 Objective**

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- <sup>1</sup> The fourth unit is dealt with Gandhi and his critics.
- <sup>1</sup> Though it may seem impossible that the man who was given the epithets of the Mahatma and the Father of the Nation, during his lifetime (more so because most of the writings on him have been rather hagiographic in nature) may have critics and dissenters, this unit shall discuss the numerous issues through which Gandhi was criticized.

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### **19.2 Introduction**

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Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had as many critics as he had followers. In fact, whether at home or abroad and even within his own party, the Indian National

Congress, he had adherents and followers as well as critics. His admirers and critics abound. Romain Rolland in his book *Mahatma Gandhi* (1924) wrote: "One thing is certain, either Gandhi's spirit will triumph, or it will manifest itself again, as were manifested centuries before, the Messiah and the Buddha." Albert Einstein wrote of Gandhi that: "Generations to come, it may be, will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth." While Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. would acknowledge the undeniable contribution of Gandhi and his ideas in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and the Civil Rights Movement in United States respectively, yet there is no dearth of detractors and critics of Gandhi. The British looked upon Gandhi with suspicion. Lord Wavell wrote in his journal in 1946 that Gandhi was an 'exceedingly shrewd, obstinate, double-tongued, single-minded politician.' The orthodox Hindus mistrusted him because of his preachings against untouchability and the acceptance of the dalits as 'Harijan' or children of God. The Muslims suspected him of insincerity to the cause of partitioning the country and creating a Muslim majority state. The young Congressmen grew restive for want of action and initiative and grew tired of his slow and patient insistence upon nonviolence in the face of extreme and brutal provocation by the imperial rulers. The Communists were critical of his economic ideas and the Hindutva parties accused him of pacifying Muslims. From his actions to his ideas everything has been put to minute inspection and examination. We shall discuss below some of the common criticisms levelled against him.

We shall discuss the various criticisms levelled against Gandhi under the following sub-headings for our convenience:

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### **19.3 Gandhi's views regarding Non violence or Ahimsa**

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While this is one of the main tenets of Gandhian philosophy and one of the quintessential elements of his creed, it has drawn maximum flak from critics. Outside of Hinduism, Vaishnavism and Jainism and The New Testament, very few cultures and people would repose full faith in nonviolence as a method of protest in the face of atrocities and exploitation. Even without reference to religious and cultural moorings, this excessive thrust on nonviolence under extreme provocation seems to go against basic human instinct and almost natural in case the persecution or threat is based on immoral and invalid grounds. Especially as a method of political resistance which was to be undertaken by the masses at large it was too much to expect the masses to stick resolutely to nonviolence over a long stretch of time and under constant use of violence against them. Gandhi himself accepted that there was always

such a possibility and in such cases he relied heavily upon a small or core band of extremely well-trained 'satyagrahis' to sustain the movement and restrain the masses from taking recourse to violence. However, the practical decision of Gandhi to withdraw the Civil Disobedience movement after a small group of protestors resorted to violence at Chauri Chaura, proved counter-productive to the movement and left many people (both within and outside the party) extremely dissatisfied and disillusioned with Gandhi's means and methods since the movement was at its very peak at that time. Nelson Mandela too, though crediting Gandhi's contribution towards the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, unhesitatingly acknowledged that for him 'nonviolence was not a moral principle but a political strategy' and that gave him ample space to manoeuvre the later anti-racist movements in South Africa. Gandhi was in fact making very high demands from the masses of a nation that had suffered too much and for too long.

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#### **19.4 Gandhi's views on universality of 'Satyagraha'**

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For Gandhi, 'satyagraha' depicted 'Truth Force' and Gandhi wrote that 'Satya' or Truth was derived from the root word 'Sat' which means the 'being or self', the eagerness to discover the 'being or self' is the journey towards Truth. He thinks that it is perhaps for this reason that the most important name of God is 'Sat'. All the activities of man are directed towards the realization of this Supreme Truth. The different paths suggested to reach or find the Ultimate Truth, are but like the different leaves of the same tree. Gandhi derived from the Bhagavad Gita the two core values of 'non-possession' and 'detachment'. From Jainism, he borrowed the three aspects of Janina yoga: knowledge, faith and action. Action, in Jain philosophy emphasizes upon desisting from doing evil. It consists of five virtues of negative direction: *ahimsa* (non-injury), *sunrita* (non-greed), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (sexual abstinence) and *aparigraha* (non-attachment to possessions). For a certain period during his adolescent years Gandhi had also remained an agnostic, but at the age of 19 when he reached England to study law he was referred Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Song Celestial* (the English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which he had not read till then) and this was to become his life-long reference book henceforth. Gandhi was also introduced to the *Holy Bible* and was especially influenced by the *Sermon on the Mount*, the message of treating opponents with love and returning hatred and harm with love and kindness deeply engraved itself on Gandhi's impressionable mind. When one reads into these religious influences on Gandhi one understands his insistence on 'satyagraha'. But what remains to be noted it, he was preaching this doctrine or method, not as a personal experiment for spiritual uplift of the individual but

propagating that this be the weapon of protest across the globe in every instance of exploitation and discrimination, no matter how unjust and cruel the basis of such exploitation and discrimination were! This became the prime undoing of his philosophy. The realm of politics and political movements falls not in the ambit of abstract philosophy and spiritual expeditions to discover the Ultimate Being or Truth but are played out in the realistic realm of power politics.

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### **19.5 Gandhi's views regarding the State**

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Gandhi viewed the State as conceived in the West with extreme distaste and mistrust. He was of the opinion that an institution that had its birth through violence could only be a 'concrete expression of violence'. Since the state represented a machinery of concentrated force and violence and had such repressive coercive apparatuses as the army and the police force to extract allegiance and obedience from the people, it killed spontaneity and initiative on part of the people to participate in the life of the community and make any meaningful contribution towards the betterment of the same. The Western State also disallowed any resistance to unjust laws and policies by the people. While all of these points are morally correct and philosophically lofty, it must be recognized that in modern times, the organization of the world human population cannot be imagined or affected in any manner other than the nation states. The Liberals in Western political thought had recognized the state as 'a necessary evil' but one that was necessary, so Liberalism, along the course of its evolution has tried to determine newer and more positive functions for the state to mitigate its inherent threat to the individual's rights and liberties. Gandhi thus, is awarded with the unsavoury epithet of 'a philosophical anarchist'.

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### **19.6 Gandhi's views on Untouchability and Caste system**

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Herein too Gandhi has been widely criticised. On the one hand, he spoke of doing away with the abominable practice of Untouchability yet he would not do away expressly with the varna system, which he considered to be a core pillar of Hinduism. This was contradictory in the sense that when Gandhi said 'Let all men become Harijans' he allowed the category of 'Harijans' to exist. When he disallowed the creation of separate electorates for the 'dalits' and entered headlong confrontation with another giant of Indian politics, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, because the arrangement would tear away the very fabric of Hindu society, Gandhi was being ambivalent. He was trying to appease orthodox caste Hindus and the 'depressed classes' who had

found a home-grown leader in Ambedkar. By denying separate electorates to the depressed classes, Gandhi dealt a severe blow to the 'untouchables' who, under Ambedkar's leadership had learnt to organize movements seeking salvage from centuries of oppression that had been meted out to them by the caste Hindus. His fast unto death for the withdrawal of the demand for separate electorates was sheer emotional blackmail and Ambedkar was forced to give into his demands.

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### **19.7 Gandhi's views on 'Brahmacharya'**

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His notions on celibacy or brahmacharya and the extreme distaste with which he regarded sex for pleasure as opposed to sex for procreation has also been criticised as unnatural and artificially imposed from outside and one that would resign India to "the hell of celibacy" in the words of Martin Luther. According to Gandhi, marriage was a social bond to legitimise the birth of children and he insisted that having borne a child or two even a married couple should exercise sexual abstinence. In this regard, brahmacharya was to be a virtue that was desirable for both men and women and also insisted that this sexual abstention could not be imposed from outside but rather had to arise spontaneously from within the husband and the wife. This excessive emphasis on leading a life of continence and controlling all sorts of desires of the flesh was praiseworthy and possible for 'sannyasins' who have renounced the world and turned their backs upon the ways of the world but not for 'men of the world' as Jawaharlal Nehru would write in his Autobiography.

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### **19.8 Gandhi's views on Modernization**

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Here again, is a reflection of the ambivalence of Gandhi. He was right in opposing the use of machinery where a high population remained at the risk of losing employment. But when Gandhi insists that the root of all evils afflicting human societies, were all the institutions and implements that symbolized modernity, Gandhi spun the impossible and anachronistic utopia of going back to nature, to the traditional self-sufficient and self-sustaining village economies. When he proposed that there shall be no police force nor an army for purposes of defence, he was again being unrealistic and these views seem absolutely unsuitable for our times.

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### **19.9 Gandhi's views on Women**

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Gandhi was a puritan who believed that women should take responsibility for all types of sexual assaults and undesirable advancements rather than the men who make

these assaults and advancements. This mentality has deep roots in Indian tradition and has staunch supporters even today. Many of the states of Northern and North Western India, with the highest incidence of rape, female foeticide and inverse sex ratio depict the females as responsible for all crimes against women, blaming them for either provoking or consenting to sexual assaults. Gandhi's views about the need of educating women is also only partially liberating because beyond the primary knowledge of the letters, the women were to remain confined to home and hearth, give birth to and raise good, well-mannered children and in free time, to spin. He did not propose to educate women so that they could work shoulder to shoulder with men and be bread-earners of the family. Though Gandhi calls marriage a sacred bond, a sacrament, he did not think that marriage was a bond between two equal individuals. While he proposed that men not marry before the age of twenty-five, he endorsed arranged marriage and gave the men the right to be consulted by their parents regarding the match. He did not give any such liberty or right to the woman. He did advocate remarriage of child widows but conveniently remained silent on remarriage of adult widows. He preferred these widows to dedicate their entire life and energy to the service of the community, forgetting that these widows were mortal creatures with their own emotional and physical needs. Gandhi's thrust upon non-violent means of protest inflicted and re-endorsed the traditional violence against women though he did encourage the participation of women in political movements but his disproportionate emphasis upon celibacy, chastity and sexual repression did not improve the position of women in India.

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### **19.10 Gandhi's Inconsistencies**

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Gandhi's critics have also alleged that Gandhi has changed his ideas and his stands on various critical issues, too frequently. One instance that may be cited here is that of a letter written by Gandhi in 1938, wherein he had explicitly preached nonviolent satyagraha to the Jews put into concentration camps by Hitler's regime and had urged them to not resort to violence under any provocation whatsoever because for Godfearing people, "death has no terror. It is a joyful sleep to be followed by waking that would be all the more refreshing for the long sleep." On the other hand, during the Second World War, when a Japanese attack on India becomes imminent, Gandhi insists that any means whatsoever so be resorted to, in order to resist the attack. Similarly, after having insisted upon nonviolent civil disobedience throughout the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience movements, Gandhi's leadership to the Quit India movement in 1942 carried the slogan "Do or Die". True that this movement was carried out largely without Gandhi's direction yet, he never publicly



dissociated himself from the movement. Gandhi always defended his changes of opinion by saying that all his thoughts and ideas were a result of his thoughts and experiments and that he had every right to change his mind in accordance with the results of such experiments.

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### **19.11 Conclusion**

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The above criticisms are indicative of the most commonly raised objections to Gandhian thought and political methods. Another recurring criticism levelled against Gandhi is that of his inconsistency and changes that he introduced in his social political philosophical ideas without batting an eyelid. Gandhi, of course, replied that he was living and learning and had every right to change his mind with new experiences and lessons that he learnt from them. Despite the above critical discussions on Gandhi, we must keep in mind that his ideas and views must be judged within the specific temporal and spatial context in which he was located. He was as much a product of the time that he did so much to shape. We cannot reject the entire body of Gandhian thought and his works because of certain limitations that these suffered from. We must remember that Gandhi gave to the world the creed of nonviolence, 'sarvodaya', 'satyagraha', arbitration councils to mitigate local conflicts at the local level, self-sufficient village economies, Nai Talim or New Education with emphasis upon vocational and technical training and a very original, very homespun political creed and action map.

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### **19.12 Summing Up**

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- i) Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had as many critics as he had followers.
- ii) Romain Rolland, in his book Mahatma Gandhi (1924), wrote: "One thing is certain, either Gandhi's spirit will triumph, or it will manifest itself again, as were manifested centuries before, the Messiah and the Buddha.
- iii) The British looked upon Gandhi with suspicion.
- iv) The orthodox Hindus mistrusted him because he preached against untouchability and accepted the Dalits as 'Harijan' or children of God.
- v) The Communists were critical of his economic ideas, and the Hindutva parties accused him of pacifying Muslims.
- vi) Another recurring criticism leveled against Gandhi is that of his inconsistency and changes that he introduced in his social, political-philosophical ideas without batting an eyelid.

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## 19.13 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

- 1 Do you regard Gandhi's views on 'brahmacharya' or continence to be perfect? Give reasons for your answer.
- 2 Do you agree with Gandhi's views on the caste system? Give reasons in support of your answer.
- 3 Make a summary of the core Gandhian ideas that have been criticized most often.
4. Is Gandhi's notion of satyagraha truly universal in its scope?
5. What do you think about the inconsistencies found in Gandhian thought?
6. On what grounds have Gandhi's views on women been criticised?

### Short Questions :

1. Discuss Gandhi's views on modernization.
2. Why do you think Gandhi is apprehensive about the modern Western conception of the state?
3. On what grounds are Gandhi's views on civil disobedience criticised?

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. The song Celestial was a translation of which book?  
(a) Vedas (b) Gita (c) Puranas (d) Jataksa

Ans. : (b)

2. What is the meaning of the word 'aparigraha'?  
(a) non-injury (b) non greed (c) non stealing (d) non attachment

Ans. : (d)

3. Which movement in India was associated with the slogan 'Do or Die'?  
(a) Non Cooperation Movement (b) Civil Disobidience Movement  
(c) Quit India Movement (d) Swadeshi Movement

Ans. : (c)

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## 19.14 Further Reading

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1. Dasgupta, Pannalal *Gandhi Gabeshana*, Nabapatra Prakashan, Kolkata (1986).

2. Bandyopadhyay, Jayantanuj *Social and Political Thought of Gandhi*, Manuscript India, Howrah (1969).
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## **Unit-20 □ Contemporary Relevance of Gandhi**

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### **Structure**

- 20.1 Objective**
- 20.2 Introduction**
- 20.3 Non violence**
- 20.4 Organized Passive Resistance**
- 20.5 Ideas on Environmental Preservation**
- 20.6 Decentralization of Political Power**
- 20.7 Insistence upon need for Institutions of Local Governance**
- 20.8 Swaraj**
- 20.9 Ethical Politics**
- 20.10 Inclusive Politics**
- 20.11 Conclusion**
- 20.12 Summing Up**
- 20.13 Probable Questions**
- 20.14 Further Readingm**

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### **20.1 Objective**

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- <sup>1</sup> The present unit analyses moment when mankind has discovered weapons and destructive technologies of great sophistication and is continuously fighting on lines of race, ethnicity, religion and territorial borders, Gandhi seems to have been anachronistic, a quirk of history.
- <sup>1</sup> This unit shall try to look at those ideas of Gandhi which make him not just relevant but also necessary to the modern world.

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### **20.2 Introduction**

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This last unit deals with an obvious question that has been raised frequently both in India and abroad in recent times. Yet it is this very question which should make

readers of Gandhi realise that he has not been lost to human memory since his assassination in 1948. Even seven decades after his death if we are still to consider whether his thoughts have relevance in contemporary times, it means that we have not dismissed Gandhi and his ideas altogether, rather, we are contemplating how to fit Gandhian ideas to the needs of present times. Keeping this in mind, let us discuss the core ideas of Gandhi that are still highly relevant.

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### **20.3 Non violence**

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The world has seen and is still seeing and suffering greatly from the use of violence on a mass scale to resolve disputes. Such violent and coercive means of conflict resolution or what is termed as ‘hard power’ politics in present-day political jargon, sows the seeds of future violence and mass destruction as has been proved by the two World Wars. In fact, even after the end of the Second World War, the immediate beginning of the Cold War and the ensuing arms race literally turned the world into a live bomb, waiting to explode. The latest war technologies, the level of sophistication that biological and chemical warfare has reached, the latest weapons of mass destruction all combine to surprise us at the fact that we are still alive. The world, while getting more integrated in terms of their economies in the age of globalization, is still divided by parochial identities based on race, language, religion, ethnicity etc. and violence and hatred threaten the very existence of the human race, Gandhi’s creed of nonviolence or non-harming seems like a life- saving elixir. The religious and cultural moorings of Gandhi’s ideas on nonviolence have already been discussed in the previous unit, but notwithstanding those specificities, it must be borne in mind that the world needs peace and nonviolence. In keeping with Gandhi’s nonviolent creed, we have noticed a worldwide shift of emphasis from ‘hard power’ politics to that of ‘soft power politics’ of diplomacy, negotiation, arbitration and other peaceful means of conflict resolution. War has become an instance of last resort rather than the regular and normal means of conflict resolution amongst nations. Even within a country as diverse and as densely populated as India, differences and conflict of interest are bound to surface. Here too, nonviolent means of conflict resolution are to be promoted and resorted to, so that the social fabric of the country may be kept intact.

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### **20.4 Organized Passive Resistance**

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Civil rights movements, protest movements – be it against the state or particular issues that afflict particular sections of society, organized nonviolent civil disobedience has been resorted to, both in India and abroad. As a means of protest this has proved

to be most effective and least destructive or disruptive of public life and property. Silent marches, strikes, picketing, postering, mass demonstrations are often resorted to by students, civil rights activists, political activists, common people and protestors of every ilk to bring to the notice of the government the demands of people and facilitates necessary governmental intervention. Gandhi had successfully used passive resistance and civil disobedience in South Africa and India and had influenced similar movements in the United States. This method still continues to remain effective.

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## **20.5 Ideas on Environmental Preservation**

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Gandhi showed great farsightedness when he warned that the world has enough to satisfy everyone's needs but does not have enough to satiate every man's greed. Very few people who were contemporaries of Gandhi realised the threat that man would one day pose to the environment which was his primary and natural source of sustenance. Gandhi was one of the earliest environmentalists of India and the world. There have been many critics who have accused Gandhi of being against industrialization and therefore, against modernity. It is correct that Gandhi viewed all elements of modernity with suspicion. But his suspicions or apprehensions have not proved to be totally unfounded and baseless. In the bid to become developed, countries have entered into the race to become industrialised, which in turn have brought about urbanization at a very rapid pace. All these changes have weighed heavily upon the environment and the resources that it contains for mankind. Gandhi was not against industrialization per se, but against the use of machinery which would replace human labour. He was also against the noxious by-products and the pollution caused by unchecked and rapid industrialization. He was also the first to point out that in order to lead a healthy life and a complete existence, man needs to realise that human existence is a 'related existence' and nature (both sentient and non-sentient elements in it) and man are equally important. Modern day Economics and Political Economy have introduced us to the term 'sustained development'. Gandhi's emphasis on controlling human wants and greed was actually a call for minimizing excessive and unbalanced demands on nature and thereby jeopardise the ecological balance. Today's environmentalists and the entire genre of Green Theory bear out the warning given by Gandhi during his lifetime.

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## **20.6 Decentralization of Political Power**

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Gandhi's views on the institution of the state and the nature of political power have been discussed earlier and we know that he had very little regard for this

institution that represented ‘violence in concentrated form’ to him. He insisted that power must not be imposed from above but must grow spontaneously from below. He was especially apprehensive of the Western concept of the state with its monopoly over instruments of coercive power at its disposal – the army and the police force that could be used to extract unquestioned allegiance to the dictates of the state. This was considered by Gandhi to be extremely detrimental to individual existence, interest and initiative. He said that freedom of a citizen could be measured accurately not by the number of rights he enjoyed but by his right to disobey unjust laws made by the state. This is the essence of the principle of decentralization of political power, which simultaneously creates multiple opportunities to participate in politics and also brings about transparency and accountability of government to the governed. These are the very basic principles of what is today termed as Good Governance and has emerged as a new branch of Public Administration studies.

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## **20.7 Insistence upon need for Institutions of Local Governance**

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In continuation of the above principle of decentralization of political power, Gandhi’s insistence upon the need for institutions of local governance may be discussed. His ideas on such institutions have multiple dimensions which can be discussed in the following manner:

- (a) Since Gandhi wanted each village in India to evolve as a self-sufficient Republic in itself with no or little dependence upon cities for meeting their basic needs, he wanted the institutions of local governance to play proactive role in allowing all the members to participate in the social life of the community,
- (b) These institutions of local governance would also help to train and educate people on how to play a meaningful role in society. Each individual would be given the opportunity to participate in discussions on public matters and in the local decision making process, that would create positive involvement and awareness in the minds of the people regarding the social, economic and political issues that affect the life of the community,
- (c) Moreover, these institutions of local governance would also act as ‘arbitration councils’ to resolve petty and local disputes among residents. This would help reduce dependence upon the state run judicial machinery for which the villagers anyway had an antipathy,
- (d) The ‘panchayats’ as Gandhi called the institutions of local governance at the village level, would ensure that equal attention was given to both agriculture and small-scale cottage industries so that a balanced development could be

brought about and local crafts and skills could also be sustained. These views of Gandhi had found reflection in the Indian Constitution, first as Article 40, under the Directive Principles of State Policy and later made mandatory through the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Acts of 1993. Globally too, there has been a rising trend toward creation of institutions of local governance as a basic prerequisite of democratic politics.

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## 20.8 Swaraj

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Gandhi's ideas on Swaraj translate to literally mean self-rule. Simple as the term sounds, it has very deep and broad meaning and implications. He does not merely mean 'political independence' or 'the right to self-determination' by the term 'swaraj'. An individual has to first rule over himself, his senses, desires and then alone can he be said to be under rule of the self. Only an individual who is spiritually elevated and socially conscious and responsible could become a member of the 'enlightened anarchy' that Gandhi had envisioned. From an enlightened individual, would emerge an enlightened society and from there would emerge an enlightened state at the outermost level. Each of the preceding circles would be self-sufficient and play a supplementary role to the next circle. Gandhi had proposed to construct the Self before seeking to construct the society and the State. This emphasis on the individual's self-construction is not the same as the emphasis laid by the Individualists and Liberals on individual's rights and liberties against the state based on individual's rationality and morality. Gandhi views the individual as a member of society and one who should play a meaningful role in the life of the community and did not promote the rights of any one member of community at the cost of other's. This view of Gandhi is more humane and communitarian than that of the Individualists and Liberals.

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## 20.9 Ethical politics

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Gandhi had himself said that for him religion or ethics and politics were not two mutually exclusive categories. For Gandhi, there was no sphere of life in which ethics should not have a role to play. A philosopher by choice and an experimentalist in spirituality by habit, Gandhi proposed a creed of politics which was imbued in the rich religious and spiritual heritage that India boasts of. His views on politics are in stark contrast to the Western views on politics which sees politics as 'what the state does'. In fact, Gandhi proposed that after India would become independent, the Congress



should give up 'rajniti' (politics) and continue as a band of social workers engaged in 'Lokniti' (social work). This shows that Gandhi did not view politics as the ladder to power but gave more credence to non- state centric social activities that would encourage the healthy growth of society without exploiting anyone in the bargain. This ethical view of politics as espoused by Gandhi ought to be promoted and adopted by more countries so that the politics of hate may be effectively replaced by a common journey toward development and security of all of mankind, irrespective of national borders.

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## **20.10 Inclusive politics**

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The first contribution of Gandhi to Indian politics and history had been to open the nationalist struggle of India to its vast masses of people living in the villages and cities of India who had till then not been incorporated into the mainstream political struggle. He invited and encouraged the participation of the women, the untouchables, the unlettered to attend political meetings and voice their political opinions because they all belonged to India as much as the mainstream, upper caste, western educated elites in India. This brand of inclusive politics is the real foundation of any democratic government. All over the world, we have witnessed this increasing demand to include more and more such sections of populations which had till then been excluded from participating in the mainstream politics based on religion, ethnicity, race, language, caste, gender and so on.

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## **20.11 Conclusion**

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The above list of points is indicative and by no means comprehensive of the reasons why we should consider Gandhi to be relevant to the contemporary world. His influence on his contemporaries and his successors have been such that books continue to be written, films made on him, his works, ideas and activities have been the issues for debates and essays, new and more critical analysis of his works are still undertaken and the term 'Bapu' still remains a name that India uses most reverentially. Not just in India, but abroad too, Gandhi has been held in high esteem. Albert Einstein has famously said, "I believe that Gandhi's views were the most enlightened of all political men in our time. We should strive to do things in his spirit: not to use violence in fighting for our cause but , by non- participation in anything you believe is evil." Martin Luther King Jr., another ardent admirer of Gandhi said of him: "If

humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, thought, and acted, inspired by the vision of humanity evolving toward a world of peace and harmony. We may ignore him at our own risk.” The Dalai Lama too had said I have the greatest admiration and respect for Mahatma Gandhi. He was a great human being with a deep understanding of human nature. He made every effort to encourage the full development of positive aspects of human potential and to reduce or restrain the negative. His life has inspired me ever since I was a small boy.” The World Poet, and a native contemporary of Gandhi, who did not agree with everything the latter said or did, had nonetheless huge respect for Gandhi. Tagore said: “Mahatma Gandhi came and stood at the door of India’s destitute millions, clad as one of themselves, speaking to them in their own language... who else has unreservedly accepted the vast masses of Indian people as his flesh and blood... Truth awakened Truth.”

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## 20.12 Summing Up

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- i) Albert Einstein has famously said. “I believe that Gandhi’s views were the most enlightened of all political men in our time. We should strive to do things in his spirit; not to use violence in fighting for our cause but by non-participation in anything you believe is evil.”
- ii) The world, while getting more integrated in terms of their economies in the age of globalization. is still divided by parochial identities based on race, language, religion, ethnicity etc. and violence and hatred threaten the very existence of the human race. Gandhi’s creed of nonviolence or non-harming seems like a life-saving elixir.
- iii) Gandhi had successfully used passive resistance and civil disobedience in South Africa and India and had influenced similar movements in the United States. This method continues to remain effective.
- iv) Gandhi showed remarkable farsightedness when he warned that the world has enough to satisfy everyone’s needs but does not have enough to satiate every man’s greed.
- v) He insisted that power must not be imposed from above but must grow spontaneously from below.
- vi) Gandhi had himself said that for him, religion or ethics and politics were not two mutually exclusive categories. For Gandhi, there was no sphere of life in which ethics should not have a role to play.

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## 20.13 Probable Questions

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### Essay Type Questions :

1. What were Gandhi's views upon the need for preservation of the environment?
2. Do you consider Gandhi to be truly relevant to modern day social and political crisis resolution?
3. Why did Gandhi insist upon decentralization of power?
4. Define the Gandhian notion of 'swaraj'.
5. Discuss the reasons for Gandhi to insist upon the creation of institutions of local governance.

### Short Questions :

1. How was Gandhi's politics 'inclusive'?
2. How did Gandhi imbue politics with ethics?
3. Distinguish between 'rajniti' and 'lokniti' after Gandhi.

### Objective Questions (MCQ)

1. The Panchayat System in India is based on which of the following Gandhian principles?  
(a) Satyagraha (b) Decentralization of Political Power  
(c) Ahimsa (d) None of these

Ans. : (b)

2. Who said 'Gandhi is inescapable'?  
(a) Martin Luther King (b) Dalai Lama (c) A. Einstein (d) R. Tagore

Ans. : (a)

3. Who is the author of Gandhi and his Critics ?  
(a) A. Raghuramaraju (b) B. R. Nanda (c) L. Fischer (d) Nirmal Kumar Bose

Ans. : (b)

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## 20.14 Further Reading

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2. Bandyopadhyay, Jayantanuj *Social and Political Thought of Gandhi*, Manuscript India, Howrah (1969).

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মানুষের জ্ঞান ও ভাবকে বইয়ের মধ্যে সঞ্চিত করিবার যে একটা প্রচুর সুবিধা আছে, সে কথা কেইই অস্বীকার করিতে পারে না। কিন্তু সেই সুবিধার দ্বারা মনের স্বাভাবিক শক্তিকে একেবারে আচ্ছন্ন করিয়া ফেলিলে বুদ্ধিকে বাবু করিয়া তোলা হয়।

— রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

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**"Any system of education which ignores Indian conditions, requirements, history and sociology is too unscientific to commend itself to any rational support".**

— Subhas Chandra Bose

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ভারতের একটা mission আছে, একটা গৌরবময় ভবিষ্যৎ আছে, সেই ভবিষ্যৎ ভারতের উত্তরাধিকারী আমরাই। নূতন ভারতের মুক্তির ইতিহাস আমরাই রচনা করছি এবং করব। এই বিশ্বাস আছে বলেই আমরা সব দুঃখ কষ্ট সহ্য করতে পারি, অন্ধকারময় বর্তমানকে অগ্রাহ্য করতে পারি, বাস্তবের নিষ্ঠুর সত্যগুলি আদর্শের কঠিন আঘাতে ধূলিসাৎ করতে পারি।

— সুভাষচন্দ্র বসু

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Price : Rs. 475.00

( NSOU-র ছাত্রছাত্রীদের কাছে  
বিক্রয়ের জন্য নয় )