CHAPTER 4

GANDHIAN CONCEPT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

4.0 Introduction

In the previous two chapters a historical account of industrialization in India and in Kerala and its role in development resulting in environmental degradation and natural resource depletion have been discussed. The present chapter proposes to consider the various ideas and ideals of Gandhi regarding industrialization and its environment friendly nature as compared to the Western model of development.

The ideas and ideals put forward by Gandhi are unique. It is interesting to note that the entire philosophy of Gandhi, whether it is of economics, sociology or politics, has interconnections and cannot be separated. One has its link with the other and is rooted in the traditions of Indian culture.

As the theme of this thesis has much to do with industrialization, Gandhi’s views on it need to be examined first. Gandhi did not present his economic ideas in a systematic form. But they spread out in many of his articles, interviews and speeches. He himself admitted, "I am not built for academic writings. Action is my domain. What I understood according to my lights, to be my duty and what comes my way I do."1 One must therefore go back to Gandhi in order to understand his concept of economic system.
4.1 Gandhi's Formative Background

On the one hand the Gandhi-family, lived in Gujarat, was deeply religious and had respect for other religions. Religious rituals played an important role in the Gandhi-family. The life of the Buddha, the 'Aparigraha' and 'Nishkama Karmayoga' of Gita and the teachings of Jain Monks shaped Gandhi's thinking. This helped Gandhi to give a spiritual dimension to his economic thought also. On the other hand, Gandhi himself had a chance to see the English Industrial scene, while he was a student in England. He found that people were obliged to work at the risk of their lives, for the sake of millionaires, and that they were enslaved by money and the luxuries which money could buy. Gandhi wrote,

"Formerly, men worked in the open air only as much as they liked. Now thousands of work men meet together and for the sake of maintenance work in factories or mines. Their condition is worse than that of beasts ... Now they are enslaved by temptation of money and of the luxuries that money can buy. There are new diseases of which people never dreamt before, and an army of doctors is engaged in finding out their cures, and so hospitals have increased. This is a test of civilization."  

In 1908 in his book 'Hind Swaraj' Gandhi predicted the ultimate downfall of Western Civilization unless it changed its courses and purposes. He did so on the ground that its industrial system was changing the natural order exalting the status of the machine and lowering the status of human beings. So his life in England created a negative impression in his mind.
For shaping his economic ideas, the influence of Ruskin's book 'Unto this Last' was great. Gandhi wrote, "... the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was Unto This Last."³

Another factor which shaped Gandhi's economic ideas was the principle of 'Swaraj'. For him 'Swaraj' means self-rule based upon self-restrain. Therefore, the stress is on economic self-sufficiency in the matter of vital needs which alone could give the people the strength to stand up against the whole world when need arose. These influences together gave shape and content to his idea of an ideal socio-economic order. In short, one can find a blend of his religious upbringing and his Western education in the formulation of his economic ideas.

4.2 Gandhi's Concept of Civilization

The moral approach to the problems of growth and civilization is the speciality of Gandhi. He gives a spiritual interpretation to the universe and history. Gandhi wrote, "Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty".⁴ Thus Gandhi equates the development and evolution of civilization with the progress in duty-oriented moral values. Moral progress in the Gandhian philosophy of civilization meant not only conquests in the field of self-purification, but also a sense of dynamic identification with the exploited and humiliated people. According to him, no civilization was worthwhile unless it provides the criteria and
opportunities for the fullest development of human citizens. To put it in his own words,

"...we had better consider whether we should tolerate it in India or banish it while we have still time to do so. It is a civilization which grinds down the masses and in which a few men capture power in the name of the people and abuse it."

In essence, the basic principles of a 'true civilization' according to Gandhi can be summarised as follows: (i) At the most it should be a quest for truth. He felt the necessity of the quest for the immanent, infinite and eternal God (ii) The Gandhian philosophy is based on a quest for simplicity. His quest for simplicity was the consequence of the natural openness and sincerity of man striving after the perfection of his motivation and conduct. Since Gandhi was an ardent advocate of simplicity, he wanted to raise the standard of living to a limited and moderate extent. Here comes the significance of the concept non-possession. Gandhi holds the view that the perfect fulfilment of the ideal of non-possession requires no reserve for tomorrow. This is the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants (iii) A quest for compromise or reconciliation or harmonious integration is another principle of Gandhian philosophy (iv) Ahimsa or non-violence forms an important principle of Gandhian theory of true civilization. His faith in the efficacy of this mighty weapon is founded on his deep faith in the cultural heritage of India (v) Another important principle that underlines the Gandhian economic civilization is the dignity and sanctity of manual labour. To
Gandhi, labour is the law of nature and its violation is the pivotal cause of our present economic muddle (vi) What comes next in the Gandhian economy is a change in the standard of values. Orthodox economists have been laying undue emphasis on the values of money and material wealth to the exclusion of moral and human values. But what is needed is a revolution of these ideas. To Gandhi economics cannot be devoid of ethics. He remarked,

"I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well being of an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful."  

It can be found that it is on these corner stones that Gandhi built his ideal economy of decentralized cottage industries and self-sufficient village communities. If one goes through Gandhi's pronouncement, it can be found that emphasis was on the removal of poverty and unemployment. Indeed, he tried to interweave the secular and the philosophical into a whole system. Gandhi's thinking about the whole question of industrialization seems to be running along his convictions. He was convinced that the problem of poverty and unemployment could not be tackled through the Western model of large scale industry. According to Gandhi, industries therefore must be small, involving less capital outlay and more labour intensive in nature. Charkha to Gandhi was a symbol of that technique. Not that he envisages charkha for all times to come. But he did lay down the condition that the technique must be such that it would not replace labour. Large scale industry in its very nature tended to displace
labour. Therefore it is not suited to Indian conditions. This approach of Gandhi to economic development compelled him to revive cottage and village industries.

It is worth mentioning in this context that Gandhi welcomed every improvement in the village craft, that is, small units which lead to increase in production. He was ever willing to accept the use of energy or electricity if it could be useful for village industries. As regards the question whether factories should not be replaced by cottage industries, Gandhi is approvingly of the suggestion but said that the economists should first of all examine with patience their indigenous institutions. If they were rotten they must be wiped out and if there were remedies which could be suggested for their betterment, they should improve them.\footnote{Gandhi}

Gandhi condemns the highly sophisticated technology and mode of its production because they lead to conflict among nations and ultimately to war. Here he agrees that this is the result of cut-throat competition for market and to acquire cheap raw materials from other less developed countries. Gandhi opined,

"God forbid that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner 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 millions took to similar economic exploitation, it would bare like locusts."\footnote{Gandhi}
In recent decades the question has been raised: How modern technology has reached a state wherein the very existence of mankind is exposed to danger. The earliest critics of industrialism focused on the consequences which could easily be identified. Urbanization, crime, social disorganization, exploitation of nature and exploitation of labour and a host of other harmful effects were pointed out. But more recently, the critics have gone beyond to say that the whole human race is threatened by the unrestrained march of technological innovations. Currently there are two very salient criticisms of technological advancement. The first is the depletion of non-renewable natural resources and the second is environmental pollution. These two factors are supposed to threaten the human life with extinction.

4.2.1 India Vs West

Western observers hastily argue from Western conditions that what may be true of them must be true of India. But the fact is that the condition in India are different in so many material respects. And therefore the application of the laws of economics must vary with varying conditions. Gandhi emphatically says,

"I would destroy that system today, if I had the power. I would use the most deadly weapons, if I believed that they would destroy it. I refrain only because the use of such weapons would only perpetuate the system though it may destroy its present administrators."
Coming to the Indian scene Gandhi observes,

"Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors.... In fact, India, when it begins to exploit other nations - as it must if it becomes industrialized - will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world .... The future of industrialism is dark .... And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?"

It may be observed that Gandhi wants to go back to natural economy. He comments, "I am quite capable of running a big enterprise, but I deliberately sacrificed the ambition, not as a sacrifice, but because my heart rebelled against it. For I should have no share in the spoilation of the nation which is going on from day to day."

So the idea is plain living. But whether plain living is possible for an isolated nation, however large geographically and numerically, in the face of a world armed to the teeth and in the midst of pomp and circumstance is a question open to the doubt of a sceptic. For him the answer is simple. If plain life is worth living, then the attempt is worth making even though only an individual or a group makes the effort.

Gandhi vehemently opposes the idea of Nehru with regard to industrialization. Nehru stood for the adoption of large scale industries and had an admiration for the Western model of production. Gandhi comments,

"Pandit Nehru wants industrialization, because he thinks that if it is socialised, it would be free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that the evils
are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialization can eradicate them.13 Gandhi further adds, "I have the conviction within me that when all these achievements of the machine age will have disappeared, these our handicrafts will remain; when all exploitation will have ceased, service and honest labour will remain. It is because this faith sustains me that I am going on with my work ... Faith in work sustains me."14

Gandhi sought to halt the process of regimentation of human beings into robots by large scale mechanical industries and by resuscitating decentralized cottage industries he tried to open out new channel for the majority of men and women for the fullest expression of their creative personality.

4.2.2 Collapse of Western Civilization

Not only the opponents of industrialism, but many others fear that the fate of Western civilisation is a result of unusual release of the forces of destruction. The selfishness, acquisitiveness, external pomp, vanity, untruthfulness of propaganda and the evolution of the family and morals in the thin crust of Western aristocracy that passed before us as aspects of modern civilization deserve severe contempt. But against this dismal expression of human achievement, there is another and a brighter side. The growth of science and rationality, freedom and the struggle of common man against the darkness of his own environment give a redeeming picture of the Western civilization.

Modern civilization is based on the false notion that the universal infinite prosperity is possible in the finite world and
the attainment of it is possible on the basis of the materialistic philosophy of 'enrich yourself'. But this attitude to life which seeks fulfilment in the single minded pursuit of life, that is materialism, does not fit into this world because it contains within itself no limiting principles, while the environment in which it is placed is strictly limited. Condemning the modern civilization, Gandhi says,

"I have ventured utterly to condemn modern civilization because I hold that the spirit of it is evil. It is possible to show that some of its incidents are good, but I have examined its tendency in the scale of ethics.... I claim to have tested the life which modern civilization has to give, as also that of the ancient civilization, and I cannot help most strongly contesting the idea that Indian population requires to be roused by the "lash of competition and the other material and sensuous, as well as intellectual, stimuli"; I can not admit that these will add a single inch to its moral stature."

Industrialization can be said to be a product of science. It may be an ugly child of a healthy parent or rather it has been perhaps born unhealthy and radical remedies, even surgical operations, may be required to give health to this child. It can be said that Gandhi opposed industrialization because of the domination of machinery, which aims at mass production and leads to centralization.

4.3 The Ethical Vision of Economics

The Gandhian concept of economic development in which industrialization plays the key role is a combination of economic and real progress. By economic progress, Gandhi means material
advancement with limits, which consists in the growth of material things needed to satisfy human wants. His concept of 'real progress' is 'moral progress' which again is the same thing as progress of permanent element in us. If not, the economic development of society will break and stagnate, leading to its decay. His contention is that grinding pauperism can lead to anything else than moral degradation. So the objective of material progress should be to curb out the deep rooted poverty of society so that there may not be more degradation. This shows that material progress should combine moral values in development process.

Gandhi criticized the historic example of Rome, Britain, the Dwapar India, Egypt etc. which faced their down fall due to a fast deterioration in moral values with high material affluence.¹⁶

Modern economics is concerned with maximization of income, with the false belief that income is a proxy for happiness. But happiness is a state of mind and it cannot be purchased. So the assumption that human happiness is maximized when income is maximized is untenable. Since the edifice of modern economics is built on the foundation of a false assumption, it is not surprising that many of its major tenets are faulty and irrational and its pursuit has not resulted in human betterment.

If a comparison of two economies is made, one based on Gandhian economy and the other on industrialized modern economy,
it appears that the Gandhian economy would be lagging behind the modern economy in efficiency, sophistication and comfort. But a close examination will prove that the Gandhian economy deserves a more searching study and exploration.

The salient features of Gandhi's system of economy are (i) intensive, small scale, individual, diversified farming supported by co-operative effort as opposed to mechanised large scale or collective farming; (ii) development of cottage crafts ancillary to agriculture; (iii) cattle based economy with strict enforcement of the "law of return" viz., to return to the soil in organic form what is taken out of the soil; (iv) proper balance of animal, human and plant life, their relationship being symbiotic, i.e., one of mutually beneficial association; and (v) voluntary protection of both human and animal power against the competition of machinery as a price of social insurance.\(^\text{17}\)

Though Gandhian ideology is the viable alternative, the professional economists consider it impracticable and utopian. It is often described as 'unprogressive, pre-scientific, medievalism', a reversion to "cow-dung era" and 'bullock-cart' mentality. The fact of the matter is that Gandhi was, if anything, ahead of his time.\(^\text{18}\)

Gandhi had the view that evils are inherent in industrialism. The basic reason for this view was (i) the impetus behind modern technology is greed (ii) the main thrust is to indulge in and pamper our passions (iii) it depends entirely
on the capacity to exploit; exploitation of the poor by the rich, exploitation of one nation by another. These factors are imbeded in adopting modern technology.

As against this, the idea of Gandhi was the development of largely self sufficient villages, for he believed that large cities were a spare and a useless encumbrance and that people would not be happy in them. Regarding Gandhi's vision of technology, Nehru once commented,

"Few of us, I think, accepted Gandhi’s old ideas about machinery and modern civilization. We thought that even he looked upon them as utopian and as largely inapplicable to modern conditions."

A major section has the same view because the small scale decentralized industries have lesser productivity and efficiency than their large scale counterparts of modern industrial technology. It, therefore, becomes difficult to visualise how it would be possible to achieve self-sufficiency even in such basic necessities as food, clothing, shelter and industrial technology. But many argue that by design innovation it should be possible to reduce the gap between productivities of decentralized technology and industrial technology, so that self sufficiency is achieved even by choosing the former. In many cases like agriculture, it has been proved that, if other conditions remain the same, farmers with small holdings are able to give more productivity because they can give more care and attention to the limited land.
4.3.1 Opposition to Machinery

Regarding anti-machine ideology, it can be asked: Is it merely a moral abhorrence and instinctive revulsion of an orthodox Hindu to all this new fangled modernism? Or, is it because he considers the industrial society of the Western type un-ethical in itself, irrespective of the exploitation on which it is based? It is true that Gandhi's reaction to machinery was not only ethico-religious but also economical. One can find in his earlier writings, sentiments which suggest his irreconcilable and total opposition to machinery. In 'Hind Swaraj' he wrote, "I cannot recall a single good point in connection with machinery. Books can be written to demonstrate its evils." Gandhi further adds,

"Do not, therefore, forget the main thing. It is necessary to realize that machinery is bad. We shall then be able gradually to do away with it... If, instead of welcoming machinery as a boon, we should look upon it as an evil, it would ultimately go."

But in his later writings, his opposition is not so uncompromising and one can trace several texts where one finds that it is based not so much on spiritual grounds but on grounds of practical economic considerations.

Here Gandhi gives the example of invention of Singer sweing machine. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sweing and seaming with her own hand, and simply out of his love for her, he devised the sweing machine inorder to save her from unnecessary labour. Inorder to make things like
bicycles, surgical instruments, sewing machines, etc. Gandhi insists on heavy industries. At the same time he argues that such heavy industries should be Nationalised or State controlled. It should work for the benefit of people under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit but for the benefit of humanity.\textsuperscript{23} Advocating industrialization he wrote, "I would, indeed, in my sense of the term."\textsuperscript{24} But he wants to go back to natural economy. "I am industrialising the village in a different way. I shall show you a village product which I am sure, compares favorably with American toffee."\textsuperscript{25} Regarding the place of machinery in this he wrote, "I would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all."\textsuperscript{26} He adds, Every machine that helps every individual has a place."\textsuperscript{27} But there would be no place in this for machines, that would displace human labour and concentrate power in a few hands. "Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family."\textsuperscript{28}

Large scale modern industrialization, with its emphasis on labour saving devices, is illogical in tropical countries where underemployment is a wide spread, even endemic, feature of economic life. Further more, industrialization is usually capital intensive and so again it is not wholly appropriate in those parts of the world where supplies of capital and domestic savings are so short. The following writings of Gandhi show that he was not totally against machinery. He aimed not at the
eradication of machinery but its limitation. "What I object to, is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery." 29

"I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few, ....The impetus behind it all is ... greed." 30

"I am uncompromisingly against all destructive machinery. But simple tools and instruments and such machinery as save individual labour and lighten the burden of the millions of cottagers I should welcome." 31

There are also several other citations which are omitted here for want of space. 32 These statements of Gandhi make it clear that Gandhi was not a blind opponent of all machinery. Now let us examine the reasons for his opposition to machinery.

"There is no other country in the world where so many millions of people have only partial employment and where, in spite of the civilization being predominantly rural, the holdings are barely two acres per head. To manufacture the whole of her cloth requirements through steam or electricity, or any other than the human power behind the wheel, is still further to deepen the unemployment of the population." 33

"Mechanization is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as in the case in India..." 34

More citations are there in Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. 35 So it may be noted that Gandhi’s objection to the machine arises from two different sets of reasons. One is based on the evils arising out of capitalist exploitation of the machine and the other on the evils of industrial civilization itself.
4.3.2 Mass Production Vs Production by masses

Gandhi was a man who uncompromisingly opposed the 'mania' for 'mass production', which made production an end in itself to be achieved by the sacrifice of human values in the pursuit of the abstraction called 'national wealth' and 'prosperity'. Gandhi wrote,

"I would categorically state my conviction that the mania for mass production is responsible for the world crisis. Granting for the moment that machinery may supply all the needs of the humanity, still, it would concentrate production in particular areas, so that you would have to go in a round-about way to regulate distribution, whereas, if there is production and distribution both in the respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated, and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation." 36

Gandhi holds the view that the production and distribution should be localised. He states,

"when production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end." 37

This view of Gandhi is directly opposed to the idea of 'world as such an open market' - put forwarded by World Trade Organization (WTO). For, the idea the world is open market encourages competition, which will oust co-operation. Also, in such a world possessiveness will substitute sharing and private profit rather than public good will provide the prime motive and innovative research. Whatever it may be, the final result is
always the same. That is, the rich becomes more rich and the poor more poor. Gandhi was not against mass production. Advocating mass production he wrote:

"Oh yes, mass production certainly, but not based on force. After all, the message of the spinning wheel is that. It is mass production, but mass production in people's own homes. If you multiply individual production to millions of times, would it not give you mass production on a tremendous scale?"38

But Gandhi was certainly against the current trend of mass production which implies mass production by the fewest possible number with the aid of highly complicated machinery".

"Under my system,... it is labour which is the current coin not metal."39 Gandhi holds the view that any person who can use his labour has that coin, has wealth. He converts his labour into cloth, and converts his labour into grain.40

Gandhi also criticized the view that the workers thrown out of the work by the introduction of improved machinery will find occupation in other jobs. In a country where there is only limited avenues of employment, where the worker has become highly skilled in the use of one particular kind of machinery, it is hardly possible.

In a nutshell, what Gandhi preached was that the things we use, must be the things the villages manufacture. We should
evoke the artistic talent of the villager. Gandhi wrote,

"If this is the correct attitude, then, naturally, we begin with ourselves and thus use, say, handmade paper instead of mill-made, use village reed, wherever possible, instead of the fountain pen or the pen holder, ink made in the villages instead of the big factories, etc."41

Gandhi advocates that we should perform the mental trick and fix our gaze upon them, to put millions of rupees to the pockets of our villagers.42 It has been said by Gandhi's critics that Gandhi wanted to put back the hand of the clock of progress. Gandhi himself asks,

"Do I want to put back the hand of the clock of progress? .... My answer is: I would not weep over the disappearance of machinery or consider it a calamity. But I have no design upon machinery as such. What I want to do at the present moment is to supplement the production of yarn and cloth through our mills, save the millions we send out of India, and distribute them in our cottages."43

Pointing out the importance of spinning wheel, Gandhi holds the view that he can work it whilst he is carrying on conversation and is adding a little to the wealth of the country.

4.3.3 Centralization - A Curse of Industrialization

Large scale industrialization inevitably leads to centralization of production and distribution. It expedites the process of urbanization and depletes the villages of their material and human resources. It creates two structural distortions cities become unmanageably large and villages become enfeebled as suppliers of raw materials and labour to the urban
centres and buyers of the consumer goods produced by them. Gandhi visualized a radically different form of development in which the destruction of village crafts and industries by machine made goods from the cities will not be permitted. In this type of economic development villagers or groups of them will attempt to meet all their own needs and export only their surpluses to the cities. Handicrafts and rural industries of villages will be protected from competition from the products of large scale industries. Large scale production and mechanisation will be confined to industries that do not compete with village industries and handicrafts. Actually this sector can be quite large and can be of crucial importance to the entire economy. Gandhi wrote,

"The blood of the village is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built. I want the blood that is today inflating the arteries of the cities to run once again in the blood vessels of the villages."  

Once Gandhi was asked, 'how planning and Gandhism go together as the core of planning is centralization and the basis of Gandhian programme is decentralization'. To this Gandhi replied, "I must dissent from the view that the core of planning is centralization. Why should not decentralization lend itself to planning as well as centralization?" Gandhi finds no incompatibility in the idea of decentralizing, to the greatest extent possible, all industries and crafts economically profitable in the villages of India, and centralizing or
nationalising the key and vital large industries required for India considered as a whole.

"When we have independence cum predominance of village industries in the place of city industries as at present, those who live to see that, as I hope you and I will, will face another and much healthier atmosphere... and we see today only darkly .... Just project in your mind’s eye 700,000 villages of India dominating the center with its few towns required in the interests of the villages."46

The Gandhian programme is essentially a resuscitation of village communities, ensuring the maximum utilisation of human power. It is an evolutionary process.

Thus decentralization is a scientific proposition suited to the peculiar needs of the modern world. Gandhi’s dream of decentralization and rural development can be fulfilled, if a drastic reversal of the current planning process takes place. Decentralization can be regarded as a protective cover to save villages from exploitative cities and also save the small from the big, by providing all opportunities of growth to smaller ones. In fact, centralization is naturally inconsistent with the non-violent structure of the society. He advocates decentralization of economic power through the revival of village industries. Gandhi holds the view that decentralization is the best, quickest and the most efficient way to build up the country from the bottom. Self-sufficiency of each village is the dream of Gandhi. He says,

"The essence of what I have said is that man should rest content with what are his real needs and become self-sufficient. If he does not have this control, he
cannot save himself. After all, the world is made up of individuals just as it is the drops that constitute the ocean.... This is a well known truth..."47

The village civilization and city civilization are totally different things. One depended on machinery and industrialization and the other rested on handicrafts. According to Gandhi, the preference has to be given to the latter.

4.3.4 Significance of Spinning Wheel

Gandhi criticized the view that the Spinning wheel is a waste of effort. Gandhi wrote,

"I showed that anything done with a purpose could not be regarded as waste of effort. The spinning wheel was presented to the nation for giving occupation to the millions who had, at least for four months in the year, nothing to do. I told the objector too that, seeing that the wheel produced at least 100 yards of yarn per every half hour, it could not be regarded as waste of effort."48

Gandhi welcomes every improvement in the cottage machine, but the labour should not be displaced. They should be given some other occupation in their homes. Gandhi says, "... that it has a message ... for the whole world.... The world is spinning in the wrong direction. It must reverse itself and spin its own thread and yarn."49

Gandhi makes it clear that man cannot live without industries. Therefore he cannot be opposed to industrialization.
He says,

"I know that man cannot live without industry. Therefore, I cannot be opposed to industrialization.... The machine produces much too fast, and brings with it a sort of economic system which I cannot grasp. I do not want to accept something when I see its evil effect out-weigh whatever good it brings with it. I want the dumb millions of our land to be healthy and happy, and I want them to grow spiritually."50

4.3.5 Harmonization of Old and New

Gandhi had the view that the cottage and big industries have to be harmonised. He wrote,

"Yes, if they are planned so as to help the villages. Key industries, industries which the nation needs, may be centralized. But then I would not choose anything as a ‘Key industry’ that can be taken up by the villages with a little organizing. For instance, I did not know the possibilities of hand-made paper. Now I am so hopeful that I believe that every village can produce its own paper, though not for newspapers, etc. Supposing the State controlled paper-making and centralized it, I would expect it to protect all the paper that villages can make."51

Protecting village means, protecting them against the inroads of the cities. At one time cities were dependent on the villages. Now it is reverse. There is no interdependence. Villages are exploited and drained by the cities. In Gandhi’s scheme, nothing will be allowed to be produced by cities which can equally be well produced by the villages. The proper function of the cities is to serve as clearing houses for village products.
4.4 Hind Swaraj: A Gandhian Manifesto

Hind Swaraj, considered as the manifesto of Gandhi, was written in 1908. It was during his student life in England that Gandhi came into acquaintance with Indian history. Friedrich Max Muller's 'India: What can it Teach Us' (1883) and Sir Henry Summer Maine's 'East and West' (1871) attracted him and he studied it with much interest. Muller, an ardent admirer of early Indian civilization, opened not only Gandhi's eyes but those of many others in the West and the East, to the wonders of that civilization.

The main thesis of his work 'Hind Swaraj' is the superiority of the East, by which Gandhi meant Indian civilization over Western or 'modern' civilization. He attacks the latter for its materialism, irreligion and lack of depth. The ideas envisaged in 'Hind Swaraj' had been developing slowly in his mind, since he first wrote on Indian civilization in 1894. In the preface to the pamphlet he says:

"I have read much, I have pondered much.... these views are mine and yet not mine. They are mine because I hope to act according to them. They are almost a part of my being. But, yet, they are not mine, because I lay no claim to originality.... That which I dimly felt received support from these books."

By the time he wrote 'Hind Swaraj', in his socio-economic thinking, he was indebted to Tolstoy, Ruskin and most strikingly to Edward Carpenter, whose work 'Civilization: Its Causes and Cure' denouncing civilization as a disease, was instrumental in developing his views on machinery. Thus 'Hind Swaraj' warns against the mad race after civilization or modernization.
4.5 GANDHI AND ENVIRONMENT

It may be true that the term 'Environment' or 'Environmentalism' was somewhat alien during the life time of Gandhi. Even the Western Countries began to use the term now and then only after the publication of the book 'Silent Spring' by Richel Carson in 1962. The term got much momentum after the UN Conference on Environment at Stockholm in 1972.

Surprisingly one can feel a touch of love towards nature and the necessity to live in harmony with the nature in almost all preachings of Gandhi. He was a man who lived according to his words. He had clear ideas on each and every aspect of life and he devoted his life so as to show mankind how successfully his ideas can be practiced. That is why he said 'My life is my message'. He lived in tune with nature. Each and every principle that he formulated is in accordance with nature. However his view towards nature and environment can be best illustrated in the light of the following principles viz. civilization, simple living, decentralization, non-possession industrialization, urbanization and equal distribution which culminate into 'Gram Swaraj', the ideal Gandhian social order.

4.5.1 Civilization and environment

Much of the environmental degradation that we are facing today is the result of the present-day development, the child of modern civilization. Gandhi's philosophical critique of modern
civilization has profound implication for the way we live and relate to the environment today. For Gandhi, the distinguishing characteristic of modern civilization is an indefinite multiplicity of wants; whereas the ancient civilizations were marked by an imperative restriction upon, and a strict regulating of, these wants. He says,

"I wholeheartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilization stands for all this and I have understood it to do so, I call it satanic ..."  

These words are becoming more and more relevant day by day as man is running behind economic development at the cost of nature and human values. The US and the European countries are exploiting nature and natural resources more and more to satisfy their animal appetite. Many of the Gandhian critics are now beginning to realize the meaning and importance of the words of Gandhi when the UNDP in its Human Development Report 1994 pointed out that "the life styles of the rich nations will clearly have to change", 54 which Gandhi predicted long ago. That is why Gandhi advocated the world to follow Indian civilization which is based on limited needs. To Gandhi "Our civilization, our culture, our Swaraj depend not upon multiplying our wants - self-indulgence, but upon restricting our wants - self-denial." 55

4.5.2 Simple living and Environment

According to Gandhi, simplicity is the essence of universality. The essence of Gandhian life is simplicity. In
this regard, it is interesting to note that one of the major reasons for the present day environmental degradation is the style of living of humankind, especially those of industrialized nations. To them, development is leading a luxurious life. Today people are aware of the global warming and ozone layer depletion and the role played by CFC and CO$_2$ in accelerating the same. According to the World Development Report 1992, by the mid 1980s world consumption of CFC was about one million ton per year, 80% of it in industrialized countries. The latest report in this regard shows that in 1991 CFC emission in the US was a huge 90,000 metric tons against 3,000 metric tons in India. The gap will further increase if we calculate the per capita emission ratio. (A detailed comparison between developed and developing nations; and between the US and India with examples has been made in the last chapter). So the amount of CFC, and the destruction to ozone layer, causing global warming, etc. can be much lowered if the Americans could have limited the use of refrigerators and air-conditioners. Likewise the per capita emission of CO$_2$, another green house gas, was only 0.81 metric tons in India in 1991, when compared to the a huge 19.53 metric tons in the US.

However the ill-effects caused by these gases will be felt all over the globe and could have their greatest impact on the poorest countries. For example, with a one metre rise in sea level partly due to global warming, Bangladesh (which produce only 0.3% of global emission) could see its land area shrink by

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So if mankind, especially those belonging to the Western countries and America, would be ready to lead a simple life, or even reduced the luxury to a certain extent, the present day danger of global warming could have been reduced.

Today the industrialized countries are producing much more than they need, resulting in more pollution, more natural resources depletion, more non-bio-degradable wastes (such as plastics, etc.). So if man is ready to follow the Gandhian principle of simple living in all walks of life like consumption of food, clothing, water, etc. much of the natural resources could be saved and would cause less damage to nature.

4.5.3 Trusteeship and Environment

It mainly deals with possessions which is the root cause of all inequalities. The term trusteeship was first used in relation to property. But Gandhi used it in a broader sense to indicate a man’s attitude to his entire life. The attitude of Trusteeship involves our identification with the entire humanity. He denied the very concept of private property. His opposition stemmed from the belief that all riches not only material but also physical and intellectual belonged to God, and could be held by the individual only as a trustee. He was also fond of repeating a Hindu verse of a sacred origin, ‘Sabhi Bhumi Gopal Ki’. Its translation meant ‘All land belongs to God’. The basic principle behind this is simplicity and renunciation. It is the way of life which has been the hallmark of oriental culture and
civilization. So if we have treated the nature as a trust or a gift of God, we would have imposed limitations for the use and the destruction of the natural resources. But we ignored this idea and used the nature for satisfying our greed. So following this principle means a positive step towards protecting nature.

4.5.4 Non-Possession and Environment

Today, the world is spending huge amounts for defence purposes. While the developed nations are competing with each other to produce more and more sophisticated weapons, the third world countries are competing to procure second quality arms and ammunitions from industrialized countries, as they are unable to produce the same or procure the first quality weapons because they are very costly. As far as environmental degradation caused by war is concerned, 'modern war' is more environmentally destructive than the 'ancient war'. The atom bomb dropped by the Allied Forces during the Second World War in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was the first major example of how war can cause environmental degradation in a large scale. The Kuwait-Iraq war was more or less an ecological war. One of the reasons which prompted Iraq to invade Kuwait was its rich natural resources, viz., oil. When they failed to achieve their goal, they turned their attention to destroy the same. Thousands of oil wells were set on fire by bombing. It is assumed, years will take for Kuwait to return to its natural environment.

It is here that the Gandhian principle of non-possession comes into picture. It may be true that Gandhi had not foreseen
the environmental implications of war. However, if we have practiced the principle of Gandhi, much human lives and natural resources could have been saved. The poor countries would have benefited more, if the world followed this Gandhian principle. For example while India spent 16.7% of its total import for the purchase of military weapons and earned nil in the same head in 1988, the US gained 4.4% ($14,300) of its total export through trade of weapons and spent only a negligible 0.2% of its total import in the same year.\textsuperscript{58} So if threat of war is avoided by imbibing this Gandhian principle, large sum of money can be saved and that can be used in eliminating poverty - 'the major polluter'.

4.5.5 Equal distribution and Environment

One of the major problems of the present day development is the unequal distribution of wealth. The consumption pattern and life style of the industrialized countries are much higher than those of the third world countries. Gandhi might have foreseen this disparity and so advocated for equitable distribution. To Gandhi, "My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see, it is not to be realized. I therefore work for equitable distribution."\textsuperscript{59} Gandhi further adds,

"The real implication of equal distribution is that each man shall have the wherewithal to supply all his natural needs and no more. For example, if one man has a weak digestion and requires only a quarter of a pound of flour for his bread and another needs a pound, both should be in a position to satisfy their wants."\textsuperscript{60}
"God never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment, with the result that if any one appropriates more than he really needs, he reduces his neighbour to destitution. The starvation of people in several parts of the world is due to many of us seizing very much more than we need. We may utilize the gifts of nature just as we choose, but in her books the debits are always equal to credits. There is no balance in either column." 61

It is perfectly possible for an individual to adopt this way of life without having to wait for others to do so. The first step towards it is for him, who has made this ideal part of his being to bring about the necessary changes in his personal life. He would reduce his wants to a minimum. 62 The sincerity and far-sightedness of the words of Gandhi are best felt, while going through the following statement, made by UNDP in its Human Development Report 1994.

"The North has roughly one fifth of the world's population and four fifth of its income, and it consumes seventy percent of the world's energy, seventy five per cent of its metals and 85 per cent of its wood." 63

4.5.6 Industrialization and Environment

Gandhi was not a blind opponent of industrialization. But he was clearly against large scale industrialization, where cottage and village industries can prevail. Gandhi's opposition to large scale industries was due to the fact that it would reduce the employment opportunity and would help only the rich to become more rich. Today Gandhi's stand on industrialization is further strengthened due to the large scale pollution and natural resources depletion, which are characteristics of large scale industries.
According to Gandhi, if India should opt for large scale industries which are unavoidable for India's progress it should not be according to the Western way. This statement irritated Gandhian critics, both within and outside the country very much. They argued that Gandhi is trying to pull his people back to the stone-age. To some others, Gandhi was myopic to the progress made by the Western countries. But when the Human Development Report 1994 says the same thing, after a period of 66 years since Gandhi gave this warning, many of the critics of Gandhi not only began to accept the words of Gandhi but also began to admire his farsightedness. UNDP in its Human Development Report 1994 says,

"Poor nations cannot— and should not— imitate the production and consumption pattern of the rich nations. That may not, in any case, be entirely possible, despite advances in technology, or entirely desirable. Replicating the patterns of the North in the South would require ten times the present amount of fossil fuels and roughly 200 times as much mineral wealth. And in another 40 years, these requirements would double again as the world-population doubles."  

4.5.7 Decentralization and Environment

Gandhi always stood for decentralization. Environment will get more attention only in a decentralized economy. It is evident that many centralized, planned economies have had a poor record as far as environmental aspects and protection are concerned. This has been true for Eastern Europe, the former U.S.S.R and China. In India, disputes are common among Central and State Governments while implementing environmental protection laws. The implementation of Water (Prevention and Control of
Pollution Act is a good example for this. This point will be detailed in the next chapter.

4.5.8 Urbanization and Environment

Again, Gandhi had foreseen the adverse effects of urbanization. As described earlier urbanization is an evil but is an inseparable part of development. An ardent believer of villagism, he does not want India to go along the way of the West. According to him, the real India lies in the 7,00,000 villages and the villages constitute the very heart of India. If Indian civilization is to be a model for the building up of a stable world order, it is this vast mass of humanity that has to be uplifted again. He wrote, "I have believed and repeated times without number that India is to be found not in its few cities, but in its 7,00,000 villages."66

Gandhi was quite aware of the fact that the urbans are enjoying largely at the expense of the rural poor. So he often reminded the urbans about the exploitation. As stated earlier, to him the blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built. The ideal village suggested by Gandhi was environmentally sound. Gandhi says,

"An ideal Indian village will be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation. It will have cottages with sufficient light and ventilation built of a material obtainable within a radius of five miles of it. The cottage will have country yards enabling householders to plant vegetables for domestic use and to house their cattle. The village lanes and streets will be free of all avoidable dust. It will have wells according to its needs and accessible to all.... It will produce its own grains vegetables and fruit, and its own khadi. This is roughly my idea of a model village."67
To a Gandhian critic this may sound utopian. But if the Gandhian model of development is practiced this will prove to be a sustainable model of development leading to the establishment of a sustainable society.

4.6 Gandhi and Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development, which has evolved recently would not have come into picture if mankind had followed the Gandhian model of development. The concept of sustainable development raises the issue of whether present life styles are acceptable and whether there is any reason to pass them on to the next generation.

If we had followed the principles of Gandhi that large scale industrialization should be practiced only wherever it is unavoidable, we would have been able to hand-over a clean earth which is devoid of much pollutants to our future generation. Thus we could have provided them with an environment with fresh air and fresh water. If we had followed his principle of equity sharing, we could have hand-over an earth to our future generation, where there is no discrimination of the poor and the rich, of developed, developing and less developed. If we had followed the principle of non-possession, we would have been able to save crores of rupees which we spent for weapons. If every nation has mutual respect, there is no need of so many soldiers so that their service could be utilized for more constructive services. If we had followed these principles, we could have
transferred a peaceful earth to our future generation. If we had practiced the principle of limiting our needs, more natural resources could have been saved - no more deforestation, no more flood, no more desertification, no more production of CFCs, no more production of CO2. Thus we could have transferred a pollution free earth to our future generation.

Gandhi raised doubts about the development-pattern of the Western countries several years back. Then his fellow men criticized him that it was because of his antipathy to the Western countries. UNDP's analysis on modern development justifies how much Gandhi's viewpoint was correct in this regard. UNDP observes,

"Sustainable human development, by contrast, puts people at the centre of development and points out forcefully that the inequities of today are so great that to sustain the present form of development is to perpetuate similar inequities for future generations."68

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the various ideas and ideals of Gandhi have been considered mainly under the following subtitles, Gandhi's Concept of Civilization, his ethical vision of economics, 'Hind Swaraj: A Gandhian Manifesto', Gandhi on Environment, sustainable development, etc. In the light of these considerations, the following conclusions can be drawn. (i) The entire philosophy of Gandhi is rooted in the Indian culture. In particular, some of the great personalities and sacred scriptures
seem to have influenced him significantly during his formative years. (ii) Gandhi’s speciality is his moral approach to civilization and development. According to him the development that discounts duty oriented moral values is no development. (iii) What is good for the west may not be good for India. Gandhi has taken this position because conditions in India are different. (iv) There is a false belief on which the modern civilization is based. Namely, the universal infinite prosperity is possible in this finite world and its attainment is possible on the basis of ‘enrich yourself’. Gandhi did not entertain this belief because it implies no limiting principles. (v) Gandhi’s concept of development is a combination of both economic and real progress. He therefore denounced the uncontrolled use of machines, centralization of economic power and mass production. (vi) The Gandhian critique of modern civilization can be found in his own writing ‘Hind Swaraj’ which is known to be his manifesto. In this book Gandhi advocates a life that is harmonious with nature and natural economy. (vii) Gandhi is being recognized today as an environmentalist though history describes him under different titles such as philanthropist, freedom fighter, educationist, etc. Gandhi was indeed prophetic in his understanding of industrialization and of its impact on environment. His ultimate objective was that all people might live in harmony with nature and with one another. His ideas of civilization, simple living, non-possession, equal distribution, decentralization, etc. are all geared to this one single goal.
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