CHAPTER FIVE

GANDHI'S CONCEPT

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5.a Society : Introduction :

We know that man is a social animal. Society is the whole in which the individual is the unit. Society may be considered as the whole complex of the relationships of individuals. Though born alone, man is a social being by nature. Life of an individual man is inconceivable apart from society. Aristotle, the father of social sciences called man a social animal. It means that without society, without the support of the social heritage the individual personality cannot develop. Society is the whole in which the individual is the unit. So social relations grow and change in accordance with attitudes and interests of the members who compose it. The present society is the product of a series of the evolutionary process. History of social evolutions reveals that man tries to shape and reshape society which, in its turn, again transforms and retransforms him. There is an inseparable relation between the two. Man outside society is no longer a man and society without man is absurd. But no one can say what exactly the original nature of society was millions of years ago. Human history have passed unrecorded, but still the available data logically reveal that there must be a society organised or unorganised at the beginning of man's life.
and that the history of human society is the history of human struggle in which he tries to secure equality and justice so that he may develop himself towards perfection. But society cannot concede man's demand fully because if they are granted to the full extent, it hurts society. According to Maclver and Page, society is the basic organisation which nurtures and sustains individuals. It is a system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many grouping and divisions which controls human behaviour. It is the web of social relationships and it is always changing. Sometimes the state usurps the natural rights and keeps them suppressed. Here arises the problem whether man exists for society or vice-versa. Through ages, the social thinkers have confronted this problem. Attempts have been made to solve it by maintaining the social equilibrium on the one hand and preserving the favourable conditions of freedom equality and justice for the all round development of individual in the society on the other. But Socrates was opposed to social relativism.

According to Hankins "we may for our purpose here define society as any permanent or continuing grouping of men, women and children, able to carry on independently the process of racial perpetuation and maintenance of their own culture level". But society in essence means a state or condition, a relationships. Society is an organisation.
a system or pattern of relationships among human beings. Society has a character distinct from that of the individuals composing it, and affects them all in the same way by its collective character though not always producing the same effect. Cooley says "Self and society are twin born, we know one as immediately as we know the other and the notion of a separate and independent ego is an illusion." Every man is born into a social group and as he grows up, he comes in contact with new fellows and develops an ever-expanding circle of social intercourse. His social universe grows as he grows. This expansion of his social universe is an expansion of his self. Man's personality is well developed in a well organised society. So to form a good society management should be in the hands of the wise and virtuous.

So, Socrates said that without society man is merely a dumb driven animal and society without man is absurd and meaningless. Man needs society to realise his basic needs and to safeguard his life and property. Science, art, culture and all other human values can be developed and become meaningful only in the social context. Man's personality is well developed in a well organised society. So to form a good society management should be in the hands of the wise and virtuous. The art of ruling requires knowledge. Goodness and justice are the means for curing social ills. One cannot remain evil minded if one
knows the good. So for Socrates goodness and justice consist in obedience to the laws.\textsuperscript{(5)}

Regarding society Plato said that the ideal society form a complete unity; one large family. Social life is not an end in itself. it is a means to the perfection of the individuals. Plato's division of the soul into reason, spirit and appetite finds expressions in his division of society into three classes of men, rulers, warriors and farmers. Farmers, artisans, merchants etc. constitute the lowest social state known as common people. The second group consists of warriors whose responsibility is to defend the country from the external and internal attacks of the enemies. The third is the rulers, their function is to co-ordinate all these classes and to govern the state. The rulers of the guardians must be philosopher kings. Plato recommended communism of wives and children among the guardians. But they were strictly forbidden to have property even though private property was recognised in the society.\textsuperscript{(6)} Society, guides it, shapes it, builds it or breaks it down. Society is the outward expression of man and the individual characteristics are his inward expression. Man is a social animal. Cooley said "Social consciousness or awareness of society is inseparable from self-consciousness, because we can hardly think of ourselves excepting with reference to a social group of some sort, or of the group except with
Regarding society Aristotle's idea is basically the same as that of Plato. Society is the result of the physical and biological needs of man. The goal of human life is not the fulfilment of happiness but rather the following of the dictates of reason. Aristotle's concept of social progress lies in running after goodness, which according to his conception is a goal attainable in this sensible world. According to him goodness is not a transcendent ideal. He was more realistic in his conception of virtue than Plato, who was more idealistic in nature. A virtuous life is possible only in an ideal society. Freedom should be a condition for choosing the right and the wrong by the individual. Aristotle thought that family as the smallest unit of society, is prior to it in existence. By his nature man is a political animal. Through the inseparable interaction between man and society we can realise the real nature of man. He believed that democracy is a perverted form of government. The best form of government is the combination of monarchy, aristocracy and polity. The ultimate end of society is to ensure goodness to the individuals like his predecessors, what Aristotle discussed was about the civil society as governed by its end and therefore the question of social contract, which indicated the origin of state, was out of his vision. We know that the concept of social contract
was propounded by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. All of them agreed that there was a pre-political state of nature before the contract. But their views on the state of nature were different. Hobbes observed, "Everyman has a right to everything, even to one another's body"\(^{(12)}\). The concept of right or wrong, just or unjust and good and evil are very much subjective and consequently conflicting. Life in the state of nature is "Solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short"\(^{(13)}\). In this state of nature characterised by barbarism and insecurity, man being a creature of passions and reason loved peace and security in life. According to Hobbes, the law of nature means the general universal law suggested by reason in conformity with the self-interest and specially with common interest. This means that everyman surrendered his natural rights to an authority who was not a party in the contract for the common security and peaceful life. That time men authorised the sovereign to frame civil laws. Hobbes saw no limitation in the power of the sovereign. If the absolute civil power was given to the authority, the right to revolt against the abuse of that power was totally stripped off from the individuals. Hobbes again support that if the sovereign acted contrary to the objective of the contract the individuals had the right to revolt against such a civil authority.

Locke also maintained that man in the state of nature was in
a miserable condition as there was no competent authority. But Locke's view of human nature was different from that of Hobbes.

Hume was another famous thinker of his age. He could not reconcile himself to the idea of Divine Rights Theory of social contract about the origin of the state. He believed that social contract theory was wrong both historically as well as from the philosophical point of view.

Montesquieu also followed Aristotle when he felt that laws were product of collective wisdom of society and that they should suit the circumstances.

Voltaire believed that man had inherited social instinct and racial recreation. He believed that social contract was not a historical fact and that in no case could it come prior to the society but might have existed in a social atmosphere.

According to Burke men helped in the evolution and growth of state but it was not possible for them to retreat the course. According to William Godwin, society was nothing but the aggregate of individuals. He believed that property was the basic problem of human nature and any reforms in individual nature should be based on reasoning and not on violence.

Bentham did not believe that the state was the product of any
social contract. He was of the opinion that obedience to state laws was not the result of any social contract, but because of their utility the laws were both respected and obeyed.

John Austin didn't agree on the view that the state was the result of any social contract. According to him it was wrong to believe that the Government came into existence after the states were fully formed and mature. He believed that it is not any contract which can give birth to state, but it is the utility which it provides to the masses.

According to Kant men by nature were quarrelsome and jealous. He tries to quarrel and stand in the way of others. Every state tried to expand its boundaries by waging wars. But according to Fitche the sovereign was not the authority under whom the individual shall be lost but sovereign thus created was supposed to protect the natural rights of the subjects. Fitche began to realise and preach that the individual doesn't need any property and that the state was the best agency to possess and protect Private property.

Hegel did not agree with the "social contract philosophers that social contract was the basis for the origin of the state. Green too did not agree with Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau that men enjoyed some rights before they joined the society and as such he was not face to face with the problem of adjusting these rights of the citizens with the
Francis Herbert Bradley was of the view that the state was a moral institution and each individual was a unit in it.

Herbert Spencer believed in the doctrine of the 'survival of the fittest' as expounded by Darwin. According to him, society like other biological organisms, was also an organism in itself. In an ideal state Spencer felt that there will be assurances or mutual co-operation.

Herbert Spencer was definitely the chief philosopher of nineteenth century evolutionism. According to him, the ideal state was the industrial society. All social progress is an advance in the number and complexity of the adjustments of organism and environment, advancing through the physical to the intellectual. In the industrial society, industry will cease to be directed by absolute masters. Every one will be happy, because his conduct becomes good. Conduct is good if it makes the individual or group more integrated and coherent in the midst of a heterogeneity of ends. According to Spencer, the happiness is the happiness attained by the state. The happy individual is not the individual of the present day competitive society.

Karl Marx believed that a classless society was the ultimate object or end of communism. His ideal society was one in which there was neither class distinction nor disparity between the rich
and the poor. It was a society in which all will get according to their needs.

Marx believed that the state is an institution of violence. It stands not on the will of the people but on violence. The dominant class employs every instrument to exploit and suppress the dependent class. The military, police, courts, law, bureaucracy etc. are all employed to use violence and force for the good of the dominant class. Every society undergoes a change by means of a revolution. The bourgeoisie prepares the ground for revolution.

Marx considered the state as a temporary institution. The proletariat will set up its own centralised apparatus of forces in order to complete the defeat of the capitalist class and defend the new order against attacks from enemies. Ultimately the state will wither away and a stateless and classless society will come into existence. According to him the state is a class institution. It is nothing more than a machine for the exploitation and oppression of one class by another. The edifice of the state is rooted in class war. The state is not a natural institution. It comes into being when society is divided.
As early as the Rig Veda we find the conception of the universe as an organic whole, and society is also conceived as an organism composed of different limbs. The idea is very clearly revealed by the hymn to man in which the different classes of society are metaphorically described as forming the mouth, the arms, the thighs, and the feet of the Supreme Person who manifests Himself in the world and also remains mostly un-manifested.

In Rigveda we have seen fourfold Hindu classification of society. As for example, a brahmana with knowledge, a kshatriya with his power of protection, a vaishya with his commercial ability and a sudra by bodily labour. The different classes in vedic period seem to have been based on the different functions done by each individual in accordance with their diverse natural aptitudes. We know that all kinds of labour whether intellectual, military, commercial, agricultural and merely manual are important for a good society. It was their duty. All are equally valuable for society. Therefore no class should consider itself higher and look down upon any other class. The organisation of society on the basic principle of dutiful service would support economy of energy. Every individual in the Hindu society has to pass through four successive stages of life-Brahmacharya, Garhasthya, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa. According to the Rigveda four varnas sprung from the different parts of the body of creative spirit. The Brahmins from head of the spirit, the Kshatriyas from his arms, the
Vaishyas from his thighs and Sudras out of the feet. Just as the different parts of an organism are important, similarly varnas are also important.

5.b State and Society:- The vital task before Gandhi was to explore alternatives not just to the contemporary forms of government but to the very institution of the state. Gandhi felt deeply uneasy with the modern state. It was abstracted from the society, centralized, bureaucratic obsessed with homogeneity and suffused with the spirit of violence. He thought that since all the prevailing forms of government took the modern state for granted and represented different ways of organizing it, they were inherently incapable of tackling its structural defects. Even liberal democracy, the least objectionable of them all, did little to integrate state and society, decentralize political power, involve citizen in the conduct of public affairs, and reduce the extent and depth of internal and external violence.

For Gandhi a society is based on Swaraj, a true democracy as he called it, was the only morally acceptable alternative to the modern state. It was shasanmukta, or free of domination and coercion, and institutionalized and nurtured lokshakti or people's power. People here were, and knew themselves to be, the role source of political power.
and governed their affairs themselves. Swaraj involved not just the periodic accountability of government but the daily exercise of popular power, not just the enjoyment of civil and political rights but the constantly confirmed consciousness of being in charge of one’s destiny, not just liberty but power.

As Gandhi imagined it, the swaraj based polity would be composed of small, cultured, well-organised, thoroughly regenerated and self-governing village committees. Although he was not entirely clear on this he expected these communities to manage local affairs themselves and to elect small bodies of people to enforce their decisions. They would administer justice, maintain order and take important economic decisions, and would be not merely administrative but powerful economic and political units.

The villages would be grouped into districts, these into provinces, and so on, each governed by representatives elected by its constituent units. Each province would draw up its own constitution to suit local requirements and in conformity with that of the country as a whole. The central government would wield enough authority to hold them all together, but not enough to dominate them. Gandhi was opposed to direct elections to the central assembly because they would be divisive and encourage corruption, and because the average voter was unlikely to be knowledgeable enough about the large issues of national policy to vote intelligently.

When a society consisted of different cultural and religious
communities and respect their languages, cultures, institutions, personal laws and educational institutions.

Gandhi insisted that the state should be secular in the sense that it should not enforce, institutionalize, patronize or financially support one or more religions. Religion was a personal though not a private matter.

5.c Gandhi's concept of society: Gandhi held that he did not evolve any new philosophical system, of course, he stood for certain ideals which were of universal significance till date. In order to see this clearly let us review his thought - political, social and economic. Gandhi considered human personality as an integrated whole.

5.c.1 Political order: Gandhi introduced religion - religion that was not of the superstitions one but it was the Religion of toleration. According to him politics without morality is a thing to be avoided. Gandhi's freedom struggle represented the struggle of the exploited. Gandhi held that the Indian movement was not so much national in character in as much as it stressed on the establishment of a universal, humanistic and global world order.

Mahatma Gandhi extended his political thought to the level of common man and thus in a major way he revived the Indian nationalist movement. He held that an mass action against the authority of the state to be successful had to be non-violent one.
Non violent revolution is the noblest way to achieve the desired result, since it teaches people to suffer voluntarily for the cause of truth and justice. Gandhi told that it was his search for Truth which led him to politics. Fighting for the eternal principle to truth, relying on inner strength and without caring for the amount of suffering inflicted upon, he fought against evils.

True Swaraj could be possible by working out the constructive programme. By Swaraj Gandhi meant not only the political freedom from foreign rule but also it meant making the people of India economically self-reliant, politically self-governing and morally self-respecting and courageous.

5.c.2 Social order :- Gandhian social reform starts from the individual. Gandhi was of the opinion that by due performance of duties by all individuals, there will be peace in the society. But Marx laid stress on the reformation of the economic foundations of society and he entirely forgot the main aspect that without the reformation of individuals, the reformation of society is unthinkable. Gandhi realised the defect in Marxian thought and he started the task of reformation from the individual.

Mahatma Gandhi wanted to harmonise the dignity and integrity of the individual with social development. Gandhi wanted to place man on
a high moral level and at the same time, wanted that the social atmosphere should be congenial to his full development. It is not possible under materialism. Gandhi recognised this peculiarity of human nature. Even though he retains his brutal instincts he also has his moral instincts. But though Gandhi tried for the progress of individuals, he could not be considered as an individualist. Gandhi stressed on individuals in the same measure as he stressed over the establishment of a good society. But, at the same time, he did not want the society to stand in the way of the full expression of the genius of its best members.

The social goal that Gandhi strove for throughout life, was the establishment of a society free from all forms of exploitation. As a means to achieve this end, Gandhi laid emphasis on Swaraj and spinning wheel. Besides Khadi, the chief tenets of his social reforms are (1) Establishment of Hindu-Muslim unity, (2) Removal of untouchability, (3) Prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs, (4) Emancipation of women, (5) Substitution of Indian vernaculars for English as medium of instruction and (6) Cow Protection.

Gandhi gave importance to social problems rather than to political ones. Further, to prevent exploitation, he gave out his "Sarvodaya" philosophy of "from each according to his capacity to each according
Gandhian thought is the mixture of the ideal and the practical. They are describable in his ideas of two levels of thinking: the ideal termed as the first level norms and the practical or the second level norms. The first is unattainable but it has at least as much value as Euclid's point in Mathematics. Gandhi's picture of the ideal society may be utopian, but we must have a proper picture of what we want before we can have something approaching it. In connection with the working for an ideal society Gandhi observed, "If we continue to work for such a society, it will slowly come into being to an extent such that the people can benefit by it. Euclid's line is one without breath but no one has so far been able to draw it and never will. All the same it is only by keeping the ideal line in mind that we have made progress in geometry. What is true here is true of every ideal". For Gandhi an ideal state is a perfect state, which cannot be realized. He said "Let us be sure of our ideal. We shall ever fail to realize it, but should never cease to strive for it, between the ideal and practice there must always be gulf. The ideal will cease to be one if it becomes possible to realize it".

For the development of morality in man, Gandhi prescribed a very strenuous discipline which consists in taking certain vows such as
"Brahmacharya, control of Palate, fearlessness, non-stealing, non-possession, hard labour, Swadeshi, removal of untouchability, equal respect for all religions and humility. The success in a nonviolent society is based on the endurance of the non-violent soldiers who undergo suffering.

Mahatma Gandhi believed that the central theme in man is the soul and the highest good is self-realization. It means the realization of one's ownself, that is God which is omnipresent in this human body. Even though attainment of perfection is difficult, a sincere quest of the perfection is desirable. Hence, man must live in such a way that he is in view of this final goal and should faithfully discharge his duties in all walks of life.

Recognition of goal itself is a difficult thing, God is infinite and His attributes are innumerable. Each and everyone has his own conception of God and the approach to God varies in each and every individual. Gandhi recognised God as Truth and hence for him the aim of man is realization of "Truth" in thought, word and action.

Mahatma Gandhi wanted (a) the restoration of a spiritual social order not only in India but throughout the world and (b) the freedom of India from foreign domination which was for him an essential goal to achieve his primary goal.

5.c.3 Economic order:- Gandhi introduced religion in the field of
economics also. He was against mechanisation. According to him the real growth is moral growth and the possession of riches is a hindrance to moral growth. Gandhi stressed on the limitation of wants. Man should not consider the search of wealth as his ideal. As man is a social animal and his place is in a society and that too in a society which has order and purpose. A society where chaos and confusion reign supreme, was unthinkable for Gandhi. The love of order and purpose is given to him in his self-consciousness. But in the present world which has come under the spell of demoniac civilization, Gandhian view is out of reach. Although Gandhi was not against civilization, he attacked the evil aspects of modern civilization. Modern man has given up his goal and he stoops to any depth to attain power and monetary gains. Gandhi vehemently attacked this notion. The difference that persists between Gandhian thought and the present world context lies in forgetting what Gandhi lived and stood for throughout his life.

Gandhi opposed the development of industrialization which depends on mechanization. In fact, he realized that the growth of mechanization sapped the growth of man. Forgetting this, man tries to raise the standard of living. As a check to the growing interest of this money-making tendency, Gandhi set up the theory of Aparigraha and the minimisation of wants. On the contrary, if we carefully examine the
current society, we can very clearly understand that it deviates very much from the Gandhian concept of society.

Gandhi thought that, "labour was far superior to capital. Without labour gold, silver and copper were a useless burden. It was labour which extracted precious one from the bowels of the earth."(19)

He thus came quite close to Marx’s labour theory of value. He also thought like Marx that the combination of labour against capital could subvert capitalism. No society can thrive on hatred and violence in any form. Just as it is immoral for the capitalist to steal the legitimate fruits of the worker’s labour, it is equally immoral for labourer to wreck the industries and tyrannize over the capitalist, by exaggerated demands. Gandhi’s whole moral philosophy and the belief in the inner goodness of man discounted the Marxist conception that class struggle was the basic truth of human history and that it must be accentuated more and more until the working class become the rulers of society and state."(20)

In the present society, there are the rich people who hold the reins of society and poor people are left behind. The development of the latter class is ignored. Gandhi was against such treatment of a group of people at the sub-human level. His dream was a society in which all individual, are held in the same esteem irrespective of their
caste, colour or creed. Such position is beyond our reach in the present world context. The whole of Gandhian political philosophy is a challenge to the whole trend of modern civilization. Modern civilization is based on material prosperity and physical amenities whereas in the Gandhian order moral purity and spiritual strength are the cornerstones over which it should be based. In spite of material advancement due to scientific and technological developments man is still in a pitiable condition.

Mahatma Gandhi strove for the revival of village industries and for the restoration of the traditional village institutions of self-governement. In fact, his basic emphasis on the villages as key to India's new social order remained unaffected. 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 poor. There should be a true partnership between the capital and labour with the state functioning as the mediator between the two with the minimum use of force.

Though Gandhi's ideal was equality, he recognised that there were some inherent limitations in the capacities of the individuals that could not be removed. Consequently, if equal opportunities are given to the individuals some would earn more than others even if the rates of
wages be more or less equal for equal amount of work. To enforce absolute equality artificially by law would be to create a rigid steel frame which would have little initiative for individual enterprise and voluntary moral growth. This can be achieved only by the creation of moral enthusiasm for following the basic moral principles of love or non-violence, non-stealing and non-possession. The principle of non-stealing would demand the recognition that everyone has a right to his own property and this right should not be violated. This would be a curb on the greed for the property of others and for anything not earned by one's own labour. On the other hand the principle of non-possession would teach that everyone should keep the minimum for him and spend the rest for the welfare of others.\(^{(21)}\)

So Gandhi said that "If we have no love for our neighbour, no change, however revolutionary, can do us good"\(^{(22)}\). Mahatma Gandhi was not satisfied with the mere change of the external structure of the society. So he taught meta social solution which postulates a rational interpretation of the human soul. When the world is running after mad rush for power Gandhi laid the foundation of "Sarvodaya" which he regarded as the only way to salvation of India and the world. Gandhi chose the path of Karmayoga as a means to the ultimate goal of realization of truth and set as the ultimate goal in this life the achieve-
ment of a Sarvodaya society wherein each individual will be free from want, free from exploitation, free from envy and selfishness, free from pride or the ridicule of others, free from communal problems and free from external control.

Mahatma Gandhi believed in truth and non-violence as the basis of his socio-political dynamics. Where there will be truth and non-violence there will be peace and bliss. So he gave importance to the means and ends. If the means are good the ends would also prove good. By keeping non-violence as means we can attain the end truth.

Gandhi defined his ideal society as **Ram-Rajya**. It is conceived as a society where truth prevails, people lead moral and spiritual life and evil is eliminated. His ideal society is based on love and cooperation. It is an idealised society where ethical considerations would govern the life of the individuals. Every individual becomes a Satyagrahi - seeker after truth and lives a life of non-violence.

Gandhi stood out as an isolated and most impressive figure. He was a man obeyed by millions, not because they feared him but because they loved him. Gandhi learned from the past Indian history that the rule of emperor like Rama could achieve high ideals.
The things he prized most were all sided welfare of the people which was traditionally associated with the rule of Rama.

Gandhi's dream about Rama-Rajya is related with his concept of Swaraj or Self rule. Ram-Rajya is a new social order based on universal love and ahimsa. It is the idea of establishing a non-violence society and related to it is his conceptions of stateless society, democracy, decentralization of economic and political powers, varna-vyavastha, trusteeship and so on. A man is moral when he acts freely and voluntarily. According to him only a society based on non-violence could be stateless. Hence there was no place for violence in Gandhi's ideal Ram Rajya.

Ram-Rajya would be a stateless society consisting of self-sufficing, self-regulating, self-governing village communities. In fact, Gandhi's ideal state was a non-violent democratic state where social life would remain self-regulated. In Ram-Rajya everyone is his own ruler. Manual work gives an opportunity to all who wish to take part in the government and the well-being of the state. Here the powers are to be decentralized and equality is to prevail in every sphere of life. Every individual is to be given fullest freedom to devote himself to social service according to his capacity. Gandhi was opposed to heavy transport, courts, lawyers, the modern system of medicine and big cities.

According to Gandhi, self-control, self-discipline, self-awareness and self-respect are the true marks of Ram-Rajya.

In his concept of Ram-Rajya he depicted his dream of the gradual
spatial expansion of the individual towards its identity with humanity through service and self-sacrifice. In Ram-Rajya the individual being free, sacrifices himself to the family, the latter for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation, the nation for all.

Gandhi's vision of a non-violent Ram-Rajya is informed by a powerful concern to place human beings at the centre of economic and political life and contains many valuable insights. He explained on the moral and cultural implications of the economic system, a humane process of production, sustainable development, a more balanced relation to nature, the right to gainful employment and decentralized production are all well taken. So too are his imaginative explorations of new ways of reconstituting the state, new forms of state-society partnership, a non-violently constituted political order, humane ways of dealing with crime, a communally grounded system of justice, and politically responsible citizenship. Rama-Rajya’s ideas have inspired new movements of thoughts.

Criticism to Rama-Rajya has been found surfaced over in the years. Gandhi postulated largely rural and self-sufficient village communities, and it is difficult to see how these are possible in a globally integrated economy. Gandhi believed that some large industries needed to be nationalized, and that the capitalists were unlikely to become trustees of their
industries unless compelled to do so by the law. Gandhi's proposals require a fairly strong central government. Inspite of such criticism, however, Gandhi's Ram Rajya's vision was intensely moralistic and yet it remained remarkably free from the defects and despair that have often shadowed the present set up of today. Ram-Rajya is a battle against injustice.

Gandhi's ideal society was a stateless democracy that is a state where social life has become so perfect as to be self regulated.

Gandhi formulated a complete ethics for remaking man. So his ideal society is based on moral principle. According to him moral discipline of the individual is the most important means of social reconstruction, and it is these moral principles which determine the structure of non-violent social order. So Gandhi believed "He who is not prepared to regulate his life in questioning obedience to the laws of morality cannot be said to be a man in the full sense of the term."(24)

Gandhi's conception of an ideal social order revolved around his basic ideal of a non violent society. This was, indeed, a measuring rod by which he judged the legitimacy of social institutions, human motivations and social processes. His conception of an ideal social order in the manner of all utopias, was thus a critique of society in a fundamental sense.
According to Hinduism, an individual must be free to do what he considers best for self-realization. Such individual freedom is perfect only in a completely non-violent society. The result of non-violence is thus the freedom of individual choice on the basis of one's own thinking and this, for its own part, is a presupposition that violence is exploitation in its essence. Social freedom is for Gandhi a much wider concept than political freedom. In Gandhi's time the division between society and the state was seen in the fact that the British colonial government represented the state and the Indian independence movement represented society. The latter, too was organised in its own way, even though it lacked many features typical of a state. The society in question appeared so nakedly that the state was opposed to it, even though it had the support of the great majority of the people.

The Marxian concept of ideal society corresponds to Gandhi's concept of Ramrajya, where everybody rules himself. Even though their approaches are different, Gandhi was also fighting against the ills of capitalism, Gandhi's social system is really the unification of all individuals with a view to eliminating all types of conflicts either intrapersonal or interpersonal, either political or economic, either social or global on the basis of his spiritual and ethical principles of truth and non-violence. He visualized the social system as an undivided whole in which all the departments of social life—political, economic, and religious are inseparably inter related.
He said "I claim that human mind or human society is not divided into watertight compartments called social, political and religious." On such religious and ethical consideration Gandhi refused to accept the empirical self as the true self and insisted on the realization of the universal self through this empirical and imperfect self so that the concept of social cohesion could be realized. For this objective, he prescribed his religious and ethical principles such as truth, Non-violence, Satyagraha, Brahmacharya, Non-possessions, Non-stealing etc. to be practiced in thought, word and action. In this opinion society is not a mere aggregate of individuals Gandhi like other neo-vedantins Aurobindo and Radhakrishnaan had an inclination towards the organic conception of society. According to Aurobindo "Society as an individual has a body, an organic life, a moral and aesthetic temperament, a developing mind and a soul." 

This organic form of society is not a new concept. It is rooted in the ancient Hindu scripture, Rig-veda in which society is conceived as an organism having different functions. In the vedic society, these different social classes performed their respective duties with a view to the well being of the society. Yet these social classes at first didn't form a rigid and unalterable social stratification but later on became a rigid hereditary varna-system in Hindu society. Gandhi accepted this social system of varnashram. But he was very much critical in accepting this social institution and did not like to lead to undesirable ef-
fects of the original concept. Gandhi said that "In my opinion there is no such thing as inherited or acquired superiority. I believe implicitly that all men are born equal and I consider that it is unmanly for any person to claim superiority over a fellow-being." In his opinion this natural stratification of society is required for its effective maintenance. The original four varnas may be considered as the divisions of labour in this modern concept.

Mahatma Gandhi wanted to restructure the human society under such a democratic ideal that all members should avail themselves of the equal opportunities in the political economic and social development. He did not propound any particular theory for this objective, but his ideas and concepts relating to these branches of human knowledge have a great relevance to the present trend of development of science and technology not only in the Indian society but also in the human society as a whole.

Mahatma Gandhi was not a systematic thinker of the academic type in the field of metaphysics and political philosophy, but certainly he has stressed some fundamental ideas for the regeneration of man and the reconstitution of the moral and political thinker. He was a prophet, teacher and leader but not a rational dialectician of the type of Sankara or Kant. He is far more akin to Socrates and Buddha pouring fourth his feelings and the results of his realization of truth.
The Gandhian alternative is Sarvodaya, or the welfare of all, a classless society based on destruction of the classes but not on the destruction of the individuals who constitute the classes, a system of production that does not fail to make use of science and technology for creating an economy of abundance but does not in the process either kill individual initiative or freedom for development nor create a psychology of ceaseless string for more and more of material goods, a system of distribution that will ensure a reasonable minimum income for all and while not aiming at a universal equality of an arithmetical kind, will nevertheless ensure the protection of all private property or talent. The minimum will be used as a trust for the public good and not for individual aggrandisement, a social order where all will work but there will be no inequality, either in status or in opportunity for any individual and a political system where change is the result of persuasion, differences are resolved by discussion, and conflicts by love and recognition of mutuality of interest.

Gandhi had propagated the doctrine of a classless equalitarian society. His criterion to judge an ideal society was whether a social order was or was not based on non-violence. To him a non-violent society meant a non-exploitative equalitarian society. His law of bread labour was regarded in his lifetime as a product of ascetic idealism and not grounded on reality. His communist critics argued that it had
little to do with communism of their conception. But there seems to have been a method in what many regarded as our without exploitation in which the gulf between the town and country, between the rich and the poor, the higher classes and lower classes and the manual worker and brain workers, is entirely bridged, then it stands to reason that Gandhi found a rational and non-violent alternative path leading to such a society.

Gandhi's conception of a new economic order in the village included a programme of co-operative farming in agriculture.

(1) Every village will be a republic or panchayat having powers. Indian independence must begin at the bottom.

(2) Ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. But this does not exclude dependence on the willing help from willing neighbours or from the world. It will be a free and voluntary play of mutual forces.

(3) Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man or woman knows what he or she wants, and what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others can not have with equal labour.

(4) In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a Pyra-
mid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready for the higher cause of village, circle of villages etc. Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle, but will give strength to all within and will derive its own strength from it.

(5) In it there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hands.

(6) Gandhi wanted that India should live for this true and utopian picture, though never realized in its completeness.

5.d **Educational reconstruction**:- Gandhi realized the necessity of educational reconstruction for the general and political regeneration of his country. He and his followers devoted themselves to educational work in different parts of India. According to Gandhi, "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in the child in mind, body and spirit".(22) Every individual is born with certain capacities which can be developed to the best advantage of the individual and society by proper education. All round development is possible only if education can combine knowledge with work, precept with example. The first responsibility lies with the parents whose action, thought, feeling according to Gandhi influence the child imperceptibly but very deeply, even from the very time of conception. Unless the parents live up to high
ideals, children can not be properly trained (29). Gandhi believed that to observe strict celibacy, sense-control and self-discipline are necessary for the youth. Gandhi thought that celibacy and self-discipline are necessary for study and they prepare the youth best for the world. The early education of the child can be best imparted by word of mouth. A child can be taught ten times more by this method than through books and much earlier than he can read and write. In basic education a student is taught to use some basic crafts like carding cotton, spinning, weaving, carpentry, gardening etc. In this type of education all literacy and scientific education centres round these crafts supplying their intellectual background as well as the solution of problems arising out of such work.

In Gandhi's concept of society we have seen that the basic system of education is still in an experimental state in India. Gandhi's dreams of making the villages self-supporting on the basis of agriculture and some basic crafts yet remain mostly unrealized. Some plans for harmonious adjustment between large-scale industries and efficient cottage industries are however, now under way. The tide of industrialism is sweeping over every land since the last war. Gandhi's ideas have not yet received a fair trial, neither perhaps would they do so until the present system is confronted by some crisis that can turn the
Gandhi was a firm believer in teaching art, music and drill to develop the ecstatic and rhythmic sense of the young people. Gandhi said that "Music means rhythm, order. Its effect is electrical. It immediately soothes. There is a rhythm and music in drill that makes action effortless and eliminates fatigue. All these should be combined to ensure the all round development of the young." 

Gandhi thought that character building, the development of strength, courage, virtue and ability to forget oneself in working towards great aims, this was the aim of education.

Mahatma Gandhi believed that truth and love are the most important basis of human society and the individual's progress. Each person should be physically, mentally and spiritually educated to realize truth and love in every sphere of life, so that the individual society and humanity can progress towards increasing happiness.

Gandhi's philosophy as well as the plan of social work was grounded on a broad strategy of total social development. Gandhi was not satisfied with the mere change of the external structure of the society. So he taught meta social solution which postulates a rational interpretation of the human soul. When the world is running after mad rush for power Gandhi laid the foundation of Sarvodaya which he re-
garded as the only way to salvation of India and the world. Sarvodaya appeals is implicitly present in our culture. Sarvodaya stands for the emancipation or elevation of all. Gandhi derived the theoretical roots of it from the vedic and vedantic technique with regard to all beings as participants of a super material reality. Sarvodaya emphasises on the distributive social and economic justice. It accepts the concepts that all forms of wealth belong to society. According to Gandhi, "Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught that all land belongs to Gopal." (32). The real credit of Gandhi, however, lies in the fact that he brought about a synthesis of the theological, the metaphysical and the scientific positive attitude, Gandhi was able to reconcile the age old belief in the Karma, rebirth, inner voice etc. with the mechanical objectivists value, neutral value of modern science. Gandhi says that Swaraj is the only goal of Indian people. So, Jawaharlal Nehru writes, "I have been attracted by Gandhi's stress on the right means and think one of the greatest contribution to our public life has been this emphasis. This idea is by no means new, but his application of ethical doctrine in public activity was certainly novel." (33)

5. Conclusion:- There are different shades of opinion about Gandhi - the man - his philosophy, and his sociopolitical activities. Gandhi has been regarded as a great leader of freedom struggle and a tool of the
British, as a mahatma and also a shrews political manipulator, as a muddling politician and also as accomplished strategist and political innovator. He has been variously described as a liberal, a sociologist, a radical, a communist, a philosopher anarchist, a revivalist, a conservative and non-violence revolutionary where many of the opinions are rarely based upon deep knowledge and understanding of the life and work of Gandhi, most of the above characterisation about him are true, although taken together they appear paradoxical. This is because of the fact that Gandhi is a multi-dimensional personality. Above all he was an individualist The individual was his supreme consideration. He maintained that the individual is an end in itself. The state exists for the individuals. It is the means for the development of the personality of the individual. He was an advocate of individual freedom. The individual is prior to the state. But his individual is not the solitary and isolated one. He is a social being, whose welfare is linked with the welfare of other individuals in the society. He is the individual who has duties only but little rights, one whose actions are meant for the welfare of other member of the society. Gandhi's life reflects his philosophy. His life shows that example is better than mere precept - for him life means action - it means struggle in which the higher you aim the more you wish to achieve, the greater is the work and sacrifice de-
manded of you.

But in the context of social evolution, Marxism believes that both evolution and revolution even violent revolution if the situation requires are necessary. Gandhi's opinion in this context is almost the same as that of Marxism. But he did not admit that violent and bloody revolution is a necessary condition of social progress. Gandhi said, "The nations have progressed both by evolution and revolution. The one is as necessary as the other" (N.K. Bose, selections from Gandhi P.34)

Marxian and Gandhian concepts of history are different. In Marxism historical events are to be empirical and factual, whereas in Gandhian view the under - current of history is spiritual. Gandhi said " History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul, Soul force, being natural is not noted in history." (35) A society is changing under a definite law. Gandhi said, " Human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment interim of spirituality." (36) Marx also had seen this contradictory nature of the law of change. Following Hegel, Marx called this law of nature as, " Dialectics". Engels said it as universal law applicable to every field of life. As he said, " In fact, dialectics is nothing more than the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought." (37) Both Marx and Gandhi recognised the abiding and unchanging nature in the changing world, but they interpreted it in two
different ways. Marx materialized this law while Gandhi was spiritualizing it.

One important aspect which should not be forgotten here is the fact that there is greater awareness of Gandhi's contribution to humanity now more than ever before, no matter that in India. Gandhi's relevance is a favourite topic for academic discussions. The big question here is does Gandhi mean anything to the present day men and women? During the last fifty years that separate us from Gandhi, humanity has witnessed breath-taking achievements in science and technology and even the texture and rhythm of our life seem to have been altered. A life in harmony with nature, a life of simplicity, a life which recognised the pain in others, and a society which ensures minimum for everybody to live like decent human beings - A world vision which ex- tols the virtue of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakan" (world is one family).

We cannot say that Gandhian insistence on simple life, Gandhian insistence on purity between ends and means, Gandhian insistence on the core values that sustain humanity is irrelevant just because we are in a new century. Gandhi's belief that nobody does any evil on his own volition, that everybody is a spark of the Divine and that
nobody is capable of doing anything that would hurt anybody or any-
thing, went well with a considerable segment of international commu-
nity. This distinguishes Gandhi from all other philosophers and teach-
ers we have. So we need to adopt a new method to understand Gan-
dhi's concept of society. Gandhi cannot be discovered through an aca-
demic approach either. So at last we can say that Gandhian concept of
society have a relevance that is timeless.
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