CHAPTER EIGHT
SEARCH FOR A BETTER
INDIAN SOCIETY
8.(a). Introduction:

Mahatma Gandhi was one of the few men in history to fight simultaneously on moral, religious, political, social, economic and cultural fronts. Gandhi’s life and thoughts has had an enormous impact both within and outside India and he continues to be widely revered as one of the greatest moral and political leaders of the twentieth century.

Even five decades after Gandhi’s death, opinions about his achievements remain divided. For his critics he was too implacably hostile to modernity to offer an adequate understanding of its nature, let alone provide answer to its malaise. He was basically a man of action whose major contribution consisted in leading his country’s struggle for independence. Some of his critics regard even this as a mixed legacy. In their view his basically conservative, puritanical, probourgeois, and pacifist thought hindered the development of radical political movements, harmed the long term interests of the dalits, (untouchable) burdened the Indian psyche with a sense of guilt about
economic development, hampered the emergence of a strong and powerful state, and perpetuated unrealistic and confused ideas about human sexuality.\(^{(1)}\)

The entire Gandhian approach is derived from the principle of the spiritual unity of all life. Man being rooted in Satya, his growth and self expression require him to know it and to hold fast to it. to be a satyagrahi. The greatest truth being the unity of all life, consists in loving and serving all, in striving after "the greatest good of all". The basis of his techniques is his faith in Satya.

Today, as ever before, not only India but the whole world needs Gandhi's message of love, liberty, communal harmony, international peace and justice. He dreamt of India in which "there will be neither paupers nor beggers, nor high nor low, neither millionaire employers nor half-starved employees. There will be the same respect for women as vouchsafed to men and the chastity and purity of men and women will be jealously guarded."\(^{(2)}\)

Gandhi has always in his mind a constant urge for a better Indian society. He had the belief that mere stereotype following of westernised thought of upgradation, exploration of society is not the panacea in context of Indian society which has its own history and traditional uniqueness. A single ideal model for all societies is a misfit.
absurd and dangerous. So Gandhi has the opinion that there may be general principles of governing good society.

Gandhi's conception of an ideal social order crystallised around his basic ideal of a non-violent society.

In 1939 Gandhi said "A country whose culture is based on non-violence will find it necessary to have every home as much self contained as possible. Indian society was at one times, unknowingly considerer on a non-violent basis." Gandhi's concept of human nature guides all his regulative principles towards a non-violent or good society. In his theory of human nature he considers human wings as an integral part of the cosmos. This cosmocentric view of human being emanates from his belief in Hinduism.

The cosmos is a well-coordinated whole whose various parts are all linked in a system, interdependence and natural service. The divinity is infused in everywhere and everything in the universe, and so the society being a part of it should be approach by the sprit of cosmic piety and friendliness. So Gandhi viewed that people should organise their collective life with a view that they are not the master or owners but guardians of the rest of creation and hence respect its intricity, diversity, rhythm and inner balance. People
has no right in demanding from the universe more than what is needed for a life of moderate comfort.

Another important consideration in this regard is human independence. Human beings are interdependent and formed an organic whole. Every human being owed his humanity to others and benefited from the world to the creation of which he contributed nothing. For Gandhi human beings are both debtors and involuntarily inherited debts that are extremely vast to be repaid. So good society should discourage all forms of exploitation, domination, injustice, oppression and inequality. Such a society is based upon mutual love, cooperation, truthfulness social service and solidarity.

Next, according to him, since human beings are spiritual in nature, in good society should help them develop their moral and spiritual powers and create the conditions for Swaraj. By nature men have intend feeling of independence and self-respect. They do not like to be under the dictation of external agency or the state which tend to discipline them and regulate their social relations. So a Gandhian society based on the concept of Swaraj is based on qualities such as self-discipline, self-restraint, a sense of mutual responsibility, the character neither to dominate nor be dominated by others, and a sense of dharma. A free society imbibed with all
the above qualities and in juxtaposition with these it has moral
powers and virtues also. Such a society encourages glorification
of individual liberty, enhancement of morality and consequently
requirement of state interventions is minimum.

Further, the good society should cherish epistemological
pluralism. It should have the virtue of encouraging and recognising
the fact that reason, intuition, faith, traditions generationwise
accumulated collective wisdom, and emotions are all valuable
sources of knowledge, and throw their unique contributions of
understanding and coping with the complexities of human life.
Dialogue with critical orientation is always welcomed and
dominance of a single arbiter over others is not allowed. All claims
of knowledge should have base in reasoning which is an important
human faculty. Personal autonomy is a prime ingredient of a good
society. The good society provides autonomy to each to the
maximum possible extent in planning his own life. According to
Gandhi people learn from their mistakes. Every human being in a
society should feel others as brothers and should understand the
limitations of others in a spirit of charity, love and help when
required. However, this should not involve any form of coercion.
best of all the legal, except when their behaviour damages clearly defined collective interests.

Gandhi applied these principles of good society to different areas of life, especially the economic and political. This principle of non-violent or good society as universal. But his specific proposals regarding this was based on Indian context and unlike his guiding principles, did not claim universal applicability.

In his restless search for a better society, he had carried out several constructive programmes, which had relevancy in the context of Indian society prevalent in that time. To prepare and uplift the society in moulding towards his ideal he had carried out such constructive social programmes which were unique in nature and helped a lot in the process of social development.

Gandhi had a step by step method of thinking, the steps leading from bottom upwards. This is particularly true of his thinking on social organisation and economic planning. Eminent scientists and thinkers have examined the order and history of the growth and decay of various human groups from various angles, such as, of ethnology, language, religion, political rule, social and economic institutions, literature, music, painting, sculpture etc. Science society has a longer life than its individuals, and since the latter's
attainments and defects are transmitted to the survivors either through heredity or association, some have attached greater importance to society than to the individual, regarding the latter as no more than a leg of a centipede, a few of which may be sacrificed by it to save its life.

Gandhi survived Indian independence by just under six months. During that brief period when he was not busy fighting violence, he spent his time nurturing the Indian state and worrying about its future. He regularly advised Nehru, a secular socialist whom he declared his 'political heir' several years earlier and who was the Prime Minister of the country. As for India's future course of action, Gandhi distinctly followed the constructive programmes. He discovered the various items of constructive work whenever he found them necessary to the historical situation in which he placed.

He used it for rebuilding India according to his vision of a non-violent society.

8.(b) **Gandhi and constructive programme**: Gandhi was politically shrewd, intellectually alert, morally the greatest, humble. pious, helpful, with a unique approach to religion and God, to ethics and ethos, having imbibed the best of the values
of Indian culture, a man who reformed himself first but never displayed his superiority over others.

Constructive work is a unique concept used by Gandhi to express his method of non violent liberation. Liberation obtained through 'constructive work' enables everyone to enjoy freedom, equality and fraternity. Constructive programme according to Gandhi is designed to build up the nation from the very bottom. For Gandhi, constructive work was the heart of the matter.

8.(C) Principles of Constructive Programme:

1. It is performed of its own accord. It is purely a moral action which strengthens morality in man.

2. Cooperation and mutual aid are the importance of constructive work. Voluntariness and sharing are the core of the constructive activities.

3. Self-reliance and self-help is another important principle of constructive programme.

4. The fourth principle of constructive programme is building from below.

5. Constructive programme is the concrete expression of the spirit of Non-violence.
6. Decentralisation is another important principle of constructive programme.

8.(d) The Frame Work: Framework is a structure for supporting anything. Constructive programme consist of several apparently unconnected, independent activities. Gandhi was confident that his constructive programme would lead to this happy consumation.

The framework of constructive programme are truth and non-violence supported by determination and dedication, vairagya and tyaga. Truth is the good and non-violence is the means. The path of the goal on either side are guarded by the virtue of vairagya and tyaga.

8.(e) The Content: Constructive programme was not conceived by Gandhi in a single day. It took several years to give shape and form to the programme. Satyagraha and constructive programme are closely related with each other. In 1941 Gandhi has listed the following thirteen items.

1. Communal Unity
2. Removal of Untouchability
3. Prohibition
4. Khadi
5. Other village industries
6. Village Sanitation

7. New or Basic Education

8. Adult Education

9. Uplift of Women

10. Education in Health and Hygiene

11. Provincial Languages

12. Propagation of Rastra Bhasha and

13. Promotion of Economic Equality

In 1945 Gandhi added the following items

14. Kisans

15. Labour

16. Adivasis

17. Lepers

18. Students

After Gandhi's death the following items were added by his followers to strengthen the movement.

19. Cow Protection

20. Nature Cure
21. Bhoodan
22. Gramdan
23. Shanti sena

The goal of constructive work is not to provide economic relief to the unemployed or to distribute some wages to the poor but to build up a non-violent social order. In that we have not made much headway, what was needed was a superior, a more advanced type of worker, who would have a full understanding of the scientific basis of constructive work and awareness of its implications in terms of non-violence.

Communal Unity: Communal unity is an important item in the constructive programme. Not only that, it is the main and basic item to prepare the mind of the people to fight for freedom and also for maintaining it after attaining the freedom.

Everyone is agreed about necessity of communal unity—not political unity but unbreakable heart unity. Everyone should realise that he is a Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Jew etc. at heart. He should feel his identity with every other inhabitant of India. This religious feeling along with the feeling of the removal of untouchability, equality of women, economic equality, eradication of disparity between urban and rural, agriculture and industry, equal opportunity and employment of all, hygiene
and sanitation, education based on craft and vocation etc. will surely pave the way for communal unity.

**Removal of Untouchability**: According to Biblical and Rig Vedic stories, God created a man and a woman. We are all descendants of those two. Then, where is the possibility for various ancestors to produce various castes and untouchability. He was of the opinion that there will be no Swaraj along with untouchability. To obtain equality, rising the economic status is indispensable. Economic equality is a major factor to wipe out other discrimination and to bring about equality in other spheres. The foundation of economy, especially in India, rests on land. The untouchables are all sturdy labourers. Hence they are made to be slaves under selfish high caste people who are interested in them.

Secondly, the untouchables should be given proper training, capital, tools and machines to start various industries along with credit facilities through co-operatives and nationalised banks.

**Alcohol and Society**: To Gandhi total prohibition was tantamount to moral elevation. Instead of being a blessing physically, intellectually and economically, drink sapped both body and soul. He felt that liquor shops were an insufferable curse imposed upon society, and liquor traffic could be brought under effective control only by prohibition. The nation responded to his clarion call against drink, and as a result of national
upsurge against insobriety effective steps were taken in the pre-
independents and post-independence decade, to give prohibition a place of honour.

**Khadi and other village industries**: Eighty percent of India’s population is either engaged in or dependent on agriculture, but in as much as agriculture does not occupy the entire time of the agriculturist, he has plenty of leisure to spare which might well be devoted to a supplementary occupation. Spinning and weaving not only supply this need, not only solve the problem of clothing, the villager but also make a substantial addition to his slender resources. It has never been suggested that those who earn more in any other occupation should give up their work and take to spinning. It is pre-eminently a supplementary industry.

Again, village industry provides us with all the articles of food as also the raw material for clothing. But here industry has a technical meaning. The better word, perhaps, is handicraft.

After food and clothing comes shelter. Sometimes for social reasons, even more importance is attached to dwelling houses than to food and clothing. Gandhi believed that it is important from the point of view of village economy to see that as far as possible our houses are made with materials found in the village and by the employment of village
labour. There is an economy in nature which the modern ages seems to overlook. Large scale industry may be necessary for our certain requirements, but our village life, our culture and art have languished because our cottage industries have died to a large extent. Gandhi poetically described it as "let Khadhi be the sun round which all the lesser planets will revolve, and let all who wish to serve the village use as far as possible nothing but village products." (3)

**Village Sanitation**: Gandhi firmly believed that village sanitation is concerned with the body and environment. The village sanitation is not sanitation at all. Diseases such as hook worms, guinea worms, filariasis, etc. which are responsible for a considerable amount of morbidity in the population, are to a large extent due to inadequacy or lack of environmental hygienic conditions.

While considering the problem of environmental hygiene with particular reference to rural areas one has to bear in mind to the totality of factors in operation, that is, the capability and ability for the provision and maintenance of amenities either by the State or by the people themselves.

**Basic Education**: Gandhi was not an academician nor an educationist in the rigid sense of the term. But his views on education has a serious and lasting outlook towards education that could be of
high value to Indian education system at all time. His contribution in this regard could be considered as the most important one to India for her social development. He wanted education to be a powerful medium for social change and development. He was of the opinion that unless the individual change takes place the social development is impossible. Hence he gave utmost importance to character building and reshaping of the attitudes and values. Gandhi expected all round development of the student and so held the view that the social aim of education does not come in conflict with the individual man. Man is to serve society and society is to help man.

**Adult Education**: Adult education stands for basic minimum education of every adult about 18 years of age. Its main aim is to prepare the individual to lead a healthy life, to work profitably and to raise his economic level through literacy by the provision of extension of education. Adult education has the following objectives.

1. Inculcation of awareness among the illiterate adults
2. Literacy and numeracy
3. Improvement of the occupational skills.

There are some conditions for adult learning

(1) The adult must be adequately motivated to change behaviour.
(2) The adult must be aware of the inadequacy of his present
behaviour.

(3) The adult must have a clear picture of the behaviour which he is required to adopt.

(4) The adult must have opportunities to practice the appropriate behavior.

(5) The adult must get reinforcement of the correct behaviour.

(6) The adult must have availed a sequence of appropriate materials.

Considering education as a social investment, one could aptly comment on the need for a greater integration in adult education programme. It is now necessary to review the programme fully, particularly in the event of governmental initiative and assistance channelled so much to promote the adult literacy. NAEP (National Adult Education Programme) could be rightly considered as the extension of Gandhian ideology to make more and more people of India literate, conscious and educated. There is need for more commitment and devotion on the part of authorities and teachers for a meaningful implementation of the national adult education programme.

**Uplift of Women**: Man inevitably exhibits some feminine qualities and woman a few male propensities.

Gandhi never thought that a child widow is a widow in its true perspective. So he strongly advocated, in the teeth of opposition from
the 'Sanatana Hindus', for the remarriages of the so-called widows. The inferior status of woman was thrust upon her by Manu and his followers. They opined woman, when young must be protected by her parents, when mature should be under the custody of her husband and when old under the support of her children. Gandhi definitely attacked the view that a woman is a toy of lust and that her duty is to bear child as a machine. He had liberated our women bulk from their doldrum and put them on the wheel of national progress and prosperity.

**Education in health and hygiene**: Simple food, clean living and regular exercise are not only health-giving but morally uplifting. For clean living a life of self-restraint is essential. However much a man may regulate his food and exercise he cannot really be termed healthy if he indulges in vice and has no control over his passions. Such control is impossible without a control on the mind. A person who is sound in body and mind can influence and inspire others while his opposite will infect his environment with evil habits. It is essential, therefore, for workers to lead pure and healthy lives so that they may be able to spread the gospel of health and hygiene and thereby bring wealth and happiness to their neighbours.

**Provincial Language**: Language is a step forward in the process of our civilisation. Every country has its own languages. In India Sanskrit
and Tamil are the oldest of the languages. For every one of its states is having its individual language, sometimes quite different and in most occasions slightly different from one another. This multilingualism is a factor to be reckoned with in matters of national. In fact we have divided our country into linguistic provinces.

Mother-tongue is as good as mother's milk to the child. If a mother suckles her baby with her breast milk, it is easily digestible and healthy. In the same manner if a child learns through its mother tongue, it learns quickly and effectively. This situation was altered by the British government through its thrusting English upon all. Added to this it has become the fashion of the day to learn only through English. Every mother seems to feel pleased when her little child calls her mummy instead of Aayi, not knowing that mummy refers to a tanned corpse. This epidemic has infected even the poorest of the rural parents.

There is no better fitted person than Gandhi to speak for mother-tongue. The first book he wrote was in Gujarati only. He wrote his autobiography in Gujarati only. He would not speak to any stranger in India in any other language than his mother-tongue unless he comes to know that he does not know it. Such was his loyalty to his mother-tongue based upon sound psychological principle. Gandhi was of the opinion that all should learn through their mother-tongue at all levels of education. If
this procedure had been followed by us, by this time, we would have progressed a lot.

As for India's future course of action, Gandhi articulated his vision in terms of the tripartite strategy on which he had relied for nearly 30 years. The state was to be relatively autonomous and left in charge of those suited for conventional politics. The congress, which had spearheaded the struggle for independence, was to dissolve itself and be reborn as a national organisation pursuing the Constructive Programme, keeping a watchful eye on the state, and when it acted unjustly, leading saytagrahas against it. Since these were the tasks on which Gandhi had himself concentrated, he was in fact proposing that the congress should institutionalise, preserve, and perpetuate his spirit.

But Gandhi was certainly a creative thinker, a political leader, a social reformer, a deeply religious person, and so on, and in each role he had his strengths and weakness.

We share Gandhi's optimism expressed in his words "I can see in the midst of untruth, truth persists, in the midst of darkness, light persists." (4) Roman Rolland described Gandhi as Christ who only lacked the cross.

There is no mysticism involved in the leadership of Gandhi. It would be futile, nay, dangerous to attempt to assign supernatural powers to
Gandhi. Such an attempt is bound to mystify his leadership and discourage any scientific inquiry into his techniques of mass mobilization and struggle.

Gandhi belongs to the type that redeems the human race

Yad-Yad-Vibhutimat-Sattvam

Srimad-urjitam eva va

tat-tad-eva vagaccha tvam

mama tejo-amsasabavam

Bhagavad Gita x, 41.

**National Language**: Gandhi included national language in his constructive programme in order to awaken the people to see the need for the same. He suggested Hindustani as the lingua Franca of our country. For Hindustani is a combination of Sanskrit, Persian and Urdu which can be easily understood by all the sections of the community. So he said that Hindustani can be written and studied in both Nagari and Urdu scripts. As he was a Karma yogi, he made all these arrangements to popularise the national language.

The Constituent Assembly has already chosen 14 languages as national languages. The educational set up for the country says that at the secondary stage the three language formula must be practised in all
the schools of the nation. This is in accordance with the wishes of Gandhi. All those who are born in India can move freely to any part of India in order to transact business officially and in trade. For them at least a working Knowledge in Hindi will be a great asset.

National languages simply means a link language of a particular multi-lingual nation state. Nobody can deny the need for such a link language. Further we should also think in terms of a universal language which would unite the human kind. We have to live rooted in our own culture but at the same time we are members of this sub-continent and the world. Some misrepresent Gandhi as a narrow linguistic fanatic and a supporter of Hindi imperialism. He is the earliest to support the mother-tongue and encourage multi-linguism. Humankind can achieve unity only in diversity and co-existence.

**Economic Equality**: There is no gain-saying the fact that an immense economic inequality prevails in present day society. Not only are some countries much richer than others but even in the same country there are gross inequalities among individuals as also among sections of society. England and America as countries are vastly richer than India. Even in those countries, however there are rich millionaires in contrast to the poor daily labourer who has to eke out an existence even in the period of dull seasons. Only in our country there are many more hovels
than palaces. Existing inequalities must, therefore, be removed, if peace and happiness are to reign over the earth, the most stable and lasting equality will certainly be that which is not imposed from outside but which grows from within as a result of voluntary control of acquisitive and exploiting tendency in man. Such a change in outlook requires a training on the nation-wide scale, it would certainly be possible, through undoubtedly the task is fraught with difficulty. But such a state of mind can only come into being in a society based on non-violence. All men are not endowed with the same nature nor with an equal amount of talent, intelligence and capacity to work. In present day society these inequalities are aggravated and increased by artificial social advantages or disadvantages of birth, education, income etc.

**Trusteeship:** In accordance with his principle of the unity of mankind, Gandhi very much deplored the economic inequality prevalent specially amongst the people of India. It was a gross moral injustice that the rich lived to lavishly and the poor did not posses even that much which could satisfy their minimum needs. The name that Gandhi gave to this voluntary sharing of riches was Trusteeship. For this Gandhi appealed to the rich for real sacrifice. Both Capitalism and Communism, the two dominant economic systems of his time, were morally unacceptable. Capitalism was based on the morally problematic institution of private
property. Since every man made object was a product of social cooperation, no single individual had an exclusive claim on it.

But communism though free from some of these evils, was just as bad, if not worse. It encouraged sharing and cooperation and did little to develop the moral energies of its citizens.

So, as an alternative, Gandhi proposed his well known theory of trusteeship. For Gandhi economic life in a good society should not be autonomous and overbearing. It should be guided by moral considerations. A society's wealth consisted in the character of its members, not in the quality of its material objects, and the purpose of its economic arrangements should be to create the necessary economic basis of a good life. All its adult members should work for their livelihood as a matter of both right and duty. The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign government and also by their own countrymen—the city dwellers. They produce the food and go hungry. They produce milk and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful. Gandhi was not fundamentally opposed to luxurious life, but then he felt that unless the poor were able to satisfy even their minimum needs it was a crime to go in for luxury. Gandhi was also worried about competition between the large urban-based industries and the village industries which he thought would necessarily lead to the
latter's destruction. The national plan was to be prepared, based on a detailed survey of what could be produced locally and what share of the market was to be reserved for this. This was the only way urban exploitation of the villages could be avoided. Gandhi was not opposed to machines but machinerism, not to industry but industrialism. He advocated appropriate technology, an ecological safe mode of production and a people-based economy.

For Gandhi state should lay down the minimum and maximum incomes. Gandhi thought that since the means of production of the basic necessities of life affected human survival and freedom and could easily lead to the most dangerous forms of exploitation, they should be owned by the state.

Gandhi's principle of trusteeship was ridiculed by many on the ground that showed. Gandhi's utter ignorance of man's natural instinct of acquisition and hoarding. It was said that Gandhi, so called voluntary socialism proposed to be brought through the doctrine of trusteeship was simply a utopia which could never be realized. Nobody could be voluntarily ready to share his wealth with others. But Gandhi was firm in the fact that his doctrine of trusteeship would provide the only non-violent means for bringing about economic equality. According to many it is difficult to see how all this can be achieved by a loosely structured
and highly decentralized polity made up of largely autonomous communities whose members have limited contacts and share little in common.

We must realise that it is a moral duty to spend a minimum of our essential requirements and to hold the surplus in trust for the general good. Gandhi also believed that social honour or status is always based on character and service. But the chief thing for the rich men is to limit their expenses so as to bring them on a level as far as possible with what should be possible for a labourer in an ideal society.

**Kishan**: India is a land of plenty where poor people live. It was left to Gandhi to come to our rescue and he readily responded to the nation's call quite intelligently and with apt remedial measures.

Agriculture has been the nectar of Indian civilisation from times immemorial. To make our villages self-sufficient in food we should adopt the following technique with care and devotion. First of all we should take into consideration the total population of the area. The Gram Sabha should then decide the acreage for cultivating the required quantity and help the farmers in reading the target of production through adopting safe and harmless methods of cultivation. Preference must be given to the use of tank silt, dung and urine of cattle besides green manure and neem cakes. Only in extraordinary circumstances we should resort to the
chemical manures or fertilisers. The procedure of adopting Nature’s cycle for enriching our soil and increasing the quality and quantity of our products is to be dinned in to the ears of our agriculturists. As the easily and readily available manures are used as inputs, the cost of production will come down enabling all sections of the people to get the benefit of the procedure.

**Labour**: Labour employed in factories is a group which has been organised in Trade Union. It is a small group compared with peasants. There is no harm in organising labour for the benefit of labour, but they must not be exploited for political purpose. Trade Unions are necessary to secure for labour just and fair conditions of work and social amenities. but sometimes they are formed solely for organising strikes for creating trouble. Gandhi has claimed that the Ahmedabad Labour Union founded by him is a model for all labourers. Workers should study its history and constitution and try to bring such unions into being whenever possible.

**Uplift of Adivasis**: Gandhi lived for a definite objective in his life. He aimed to wipe off tear from every eye. India, being one of the oldest countries of the world, has a good member of aboriginals called Adivasis. There are about 100 million adivasis in different parts of the country. They are the most backward in every respect and still remain
uncivilised. But they are capable of contributing a lot to the total welfare of this great nation. As they are hard-working people, they can put in physical work for a considerable part of the day, thereby increasing our over all production.

There is nothing wasteful in things created by God. Everything has its own place in the realm of things. If properly motivated, each will contribute its might to the good of the community. So Khadi and village Industries Programme needs must find a place in the hill areas to make the Adivasis earn their living with respect.

**Lepers** : Leprosy is a typical disease usually prevalent in the equatorial regions. It is one of the most dreaded diseases of the world. In older days we in India considered it as a sinner's disease. So in Kerala and other parts of our country, the Lepers were removed far away from the houses. The word Leper in English language also refers to an outcaste. From these we can easily understand the fearful nature of this worst disease.

Gandhi was a great humanist. He was a pragmatic philosopher. So he formed one standing organism under the name 'Hindu Kust Nirvan Sangh' so that even after his death this humanitarian work will be carried out by his progeny. He chose the correct persons to materialise his movements. Prof. Jagadisan was made the Secretary of this sangh and
toured the entire part of the country propagating the truth behind leprosy and the relief measures suggested by Gandhi.

**Students**: Gandhi was a symbol of whatever could be good in man. He was, so to say, the conscience of humanity. He included students among his list of items mainly under his educational philosophy and partly under social, economic and political philosophies.

Students are the flowers of our generation. They are future hopes. Our country is a Democratic Socialist Secular Republic. They should understand the significance of a republic. Gandhi wanted all students to earn good character and conduct.

We may say that

(a) A student is the hope of the humanity.

(b) He should be really educated for life, through life and throughout life.

(c) He should understand his environment and work for its prosperity.

(d) He should practise some craft and stand on his own legs in times of need.

(e) He should educate his neighbours in a happy and healthy living.

(f) He should become the keeper of our morals and traditions.

(g) He should maintain a high ideal and simple living.
(h) He should use only locally made articles in his life.

(i) He should understand the constitution of our country and work for it faithfully.

(j) He should work for communal harmony knowing fully the role of religion in our country.

(k) He should practise Satya and Ahinsha in his life.

(l) He should possess sterling character.

**Cow Protection**: In man's history, the discovery of Science of Agriculture is the greatest of all discoveries till date. The discovery revolutionised the entire lifestyle of Man, more than any other discoveries did. He began to settle as a village community. Family began to be looked upon as sacred.

Cow's part in this new dimension was very great that it gave birth to bullocks to assist man in agriculture. Bullocks helped him to plough his land, to draw water, to drive his cart etc. But now man looked to his cow not only for milk but also for bullocks. One who knew the art of cow-rearing was considered wise and as the elder in the group.

In Vedic period the cow began to be considered as 'Mother' because it gives milk like one's mother which is the most nutritious food.

Since cow contributes power, transport food, employment, manure, milk etc. We have to conclude that our economy is 'Cow-centred
economy. So we have to protect the cows.

**Nature Cure:** Gandhi believed that independence is possible and meaningful only to the healthy people, healthy in the physical, mental and spiritual conditions. So he conducted some experiments in nature cure in England. Later on, he conducted experiments in hydrotherapy, mudtherapy, suntherapy etc. He condemned the allopathy system of medicine as immoral.

He put nature cure as an alternative to allopathic system of medicine. In nature cure, human health is more important than the disease. In nature cure what is emphasised is a hygienic way of life, diet control, meditation, living with nature etc. With a little knowledge about diet, function of the body, structure of the body, disease treatment, everybody can treat their disease and live a happy life.

The nature-cure needs morality, spirituality and disciplines. All our physical, mental and spiritual disorders are due to indiscipline. Man is the result of what he eats. The religion of Gandhi directed him towards vegetarian diet. Man's life is different from that of the animals because he is living with the sense of rationality. Nature cure is really a way of disciplined life and not a treatment. Thinkers such as Ivan Illich, Shelton writes books on the need for natural way of life. Even in Russia people are treated in nature cure hospitals.
Bhoodan: Gandhi has considered Vinoba Bhave as his spiritual heir. The Boodan Movement was started by Vinoba on April 15, 1951 in the Telangana region of Andhra pradesh. The basic objective of Bhoodan has been to inspire the people to develop a selfless attitude and feelings for the good of the masses.

The Bhoodan believes in universal brotherhood, which starts from the lowest level. Starting from the individual it extends to the village, the nation and ultimately the whole world. Love and cooperation should be the basic principles governing the individual and social behaviour. Bhoodan is itself an intensely and deeply political movement. A movement that aims so utterly to revolutionise man and society that cannot be described as political. It does not aim merely as getting land from the people and distributing it among the landless. It tries to abolish the gap between the haves and have nots through nonviolent means of Satya and Ahinsa. It stands for a society which would strive for the welfare of all, and in which everybody would be no distinction of high and low.

But there are some criticism about Bhoodan Movements.

1. Absence of clarity regarding the objective of the movement.

2. Lop-sided approach to the agrarian problem. It aims to help and provide land only to the landless villagers.
3. The movement provides insufficient land to the landless.

4. It leads to the division and fragmentation of already small and scattered fields.

5. Bhoodan creates uneconomic holdings. As poor person join the movement by donating a small piece of land from their already tiny plots, the holdings are reduced to uneconomic units.

6. Most of the donated is of inferior quality and some of it is extremely poor.

7. It will hardly be successful in rehabilitating all the landless agricultural labourers.

8. The slogan 'land to the landless' seems to emphasize the indispensable character of land for those who do not have it.

9. Bhoodan stands in the way of mechanised farming. The small five acres holdings that the Bhoodan aims at providing to the landless of the country are unsuitable for mechanised farming.

10. Its machinery is not efficient and the distribution process is very slow.

11. It was claimed by the protagonists of Bhoodan that they were not enamored of collectivization and they intended rather to give land to the millions of landless labourers in the countryside on an individual or family basis to begin with.
Gramdan: Gramdan, literally means 'village gift' whereas bhoodan means 'land gift'. The Bhoodan movement gave birth to Gramdan. The Gramdan was first put into operation in September 1952 in a village named Mangroth in Uttar Pradesh. Under the Gramdan the resources of the village are to be exploited equally by each and every member of the village community. The entire village community works for its prosperity and welfare. To quote Jayaprakash Narayan, "In the beautiful revolution of Gramdan, ownership was not abolished by force of any kind but freely surrendered to the community." (5) G. Ramachandran says "Gramdan means a large fund of unity of mind in the village, a readiness to face practical changes in the social and economic structure of village, the courage to walk on the new road and readiness on the part of the individual to make a sacrifice in favour of the community." (6) Prof. D.K. Gadgil believes that it is an unprecedented movement with many and complex implications and very great potentialities. Louis Fischer has described it as the most creative thought coming out of the East.

But Bhoodan and Gramdan movements are not without defects. Too much reliance on the mechanism organisation, lack of faith in land donors, lack of committed Sarvodaya workers, too much of focus on same selected areas etc. have resulted in an imbalanced percolation of the ideology and an uneven spread-up of the massage contained in it.
More rigid approach to the target-oriented policy lead to many lacunae and lack of acceptance of the scheme widely. The failure in devising some short-term strategies for the solution of the pressing problems of landless was another defect. Further it failed to influence the Government effectively. Thus the spirit of the movement gradually got diluted.

**Shanti Sena**: By establishment of Santi-Sena, Gandhi described to organise a non-violent force to intervene in the conflicting situation, to root-out the causes of violence and peacelessness and to establish a society dominated by peace, characterised by truth and non-violence. Gandhi considered it as a progressive means to build up a Sarvodaya Society.

Gandhi thought that Shanti Sena acts unlike armed men, as well in times of peace disturbances. They would be constantly engaged in the duty of seeking occasions for bringing warring communities together, carrying on peace propaganda engaging in activities that would bring and keep them in touch with every single person, male and female, adult and child.

Functionally, Shanti Sena has two aspects—'Seva' and 'Shanti'. Vinoba told that the Peace Army will be primarily one of service, it will be also a service army and only on occasion of violence, it will do the work of Shanti Sena. The Seva Sena will provide the Shanti Sena which can be
used when there is an outbreak of violence. Devotional songs and Bhajans with the assistance of musical instruments can help such peace workers. Refresher Programmes are also useful.

Woman also have a crucial role to play in developing a short unit of Shanti Sena. It is also necessary for a peace soldier to cultivate the social service outlook and be fully prepared to help the people in danger and distress. They should discipline the mind through spiritual and moral ways and should uphold the qualities of a true worker with firm faith in Truth and Ahimsa. Then only they can succeed in their task of serving the society for maintaining the peace. A concrete example of a solid effort is that of Gandhigram Rural University-Shanti Sena unit with so much of practical work rendered for the society.

Woman: Gandhi was intensely conscious of the need for improving the status of women in Indian society. Women had been dominated by man for ages past and had thus developed an inferiority complex. Gandhi regarded woman as the incarnation of Ahimsa which meant infinite love. Infinite love in its turn means infinite capacity for suffering.

Gandhi's view of the ideal marriage was that which aimed at spiritual union through the physical. He declared child marriages null and void from the beginning. Gandhi would actually lay down twenty as the age for marriage. The revolutionary view of Gandhi in this matter is
illustrated by his advice to Brahmans that if they could not find a mature girl in their community, they should rather choose one who had become a widow when she was a child. And if one did not get a Brahman widow who had reached that age, then he should take any girl he liked.

**Dowry system**: Gandhi's aim was allround development or welfare of man as a whole. This allround development or welfare included within it man's social, political, economic and spiritual development all taken together. It was with this aim that Gandhi always worked hard for the social upliftment of the woman. He was also irrevocably opposed to the dowry system. He thought that the dowry system was inter-mixed with the problem of inter-caste marriage and it was his view that the boys and girls would have to break the bonds of caste if the evil was to be eradicated. The parents, according to him, should so educate the girls that they should refuse to marry a young man who wanted a price for marriage and should rather remain spinsters than be party to the degrading terms.

**Marriage and love**: In the choice for marriage Gandhi would lay down four conditions, out of which he would accord priority to spiritual development. Service should come next, family considerations and the interest of the social order should have the third place, and mutual attraction of love the fourth and the last place. This means that when the other three conditions are opposing, love alone should not be a valid
reason for marriage. Gandhi considered marriage to be a natural thing in life and it was wholly wrong to consider it derogatory. It is much better to look upon marriage as necessary but to lead a life of self-restraint after marriage.

**Divorce**: Gandhi was primarily a social reformer who worked for the benefit of the human society. On divorce, Gandhi believed that if it was essential and the only alternative for moral progress, he would not hesitate to accept it. Gandhi's definition of marriage was that it was a confirmation of the right of union between two partners to the exclusion of all the others when in their joint opinion they consider such union to be desirable, but it conferred no right upon one partner to demand obedience of the other to one's wish for union.

No doubt Mahatma Gandhi was a spiritual and religious man but he combined spiritual engineering with social engineering in a manner that attracted universal and unique appreciation.

**Widow Remarriage**: He was a saint as well as a social revolutionary. Gandhi was a strong believer in widow remarriage. In the name of the religion, widowhood was forced on three lakhs of Indian girls who could not even understand what marriage was. Gandhi believed that child widows should be treated as virgins, to be remarried. If widowhood was voluntary, it would have meaning and really add grace
and dignity to it but if it was imposed it would act like a poison. For Hinduism to be saved, the position of enforced widowhood needs to be eliminated.

**Pardah**: Gandhi was also against Pardah. Chastity, according to Gandhi could not be protected by the surrounding wall of the pardah. It was to grow from within. And to be worth anything, it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation. He also wondered why so much of talk was there about woman chastity. The woman really did not have any say in the matter of man's chastity.

**Co-Education**: For the development of a new society he taught for co-education to be successful without undesirable results, it was necessary to bring up boys and girls within the family freely and naturally. Then only co-education could become real.

**Contraception**: Gandhi was vigorously opposed to contraception. He did not believe that India was overpopulated. He would advocate self-control instead of birth control. Contraceptives might lead to frightful results and a situation might arise when men and women would live for sex alone, in fact become mental moral wrecks. The real problem about birth control is that the women in India had not developed the capacity to say 'no' to their husbands when they approached them. If they had good education, if they would learn the art of resistance, the problem would solve itself.
**Inter-marriage**: Gandhi stood for inter-marriage among the castes because restrictions on inter-marriage stunned Hindu society.

**Sex urge**: Regarding sex urge Gandhi told that it is a fine and noble thing and these was nothing to be ashamed of. It was meant only for the act of creation. Any other use of it would be sin against God and humanity.

Gandhi did a great job in reconciling spirituality with social service, religion and morality. Of course, he was not alone in this. Modern Indian thinkers like Vivekanand and Tagore also accompanied him in doing the same sort of job. But Gandhi's speciality lies in the fact that he did not bring about the reconciliation only in theory, rather he gave it a concrete shape by practising it in actual life also. He always devoted himself to the act of social service and believed that through this kind of service he was actually realising his real self or God. But Gandhi has been termed as a day-dreamer, an utopian and a religious fanatic. Gandhi looked a common man quite unrealistically and presented an unnecessarily inflated picture of him. In himself, Gandhi might be a saint, a God-man, a pure divine soul, but it was unrealistic and utopian to impose his own image upon every one. Every one cannot be a saint. Men are essentially of evil nature and they are disposed to all sorts of evil designs. But we may well see that Gandhi's cannot be criticized in this way for his conception of human nature. We may very well remember that he never
ignored the animal aspect of man, rather he fully recognized it and also realized that man was very often very easily prone to falling a victim to his animal drives. But then what he took to be the essential nature of man was certainly something far removed from this animal side.

While highlighting some of the neglected dimensions of human existence, Gandhi's intensely moralistic vision also blinded him to several others. He either ignored or took a dim view of the intellectual, scientific, aesthetic and other aspects of life.

But his constructive programme was primarily based on the needs of India, but the main principles were neither local nor temporary in character. The ultimate aim was the regeneration of society through non-violent means and creation of a decentralised economic structure and social equality based on the right kind of education. It is not uncommon to regard Gandhi as an enemy of science and technology. People thought and some still do that he wanted to banish machinery, to abolish all large-scale industry, to take people back to the village, in short, to put the clock of history back. Some body said to Gandhi "You are against this machine age, I see." And he made the reply, "To say that is to caricature my views. I am not against machinery as such but I am totally against it when it masters us."
It is clear that Gandhi was misunderstood. To a certain extent, he himself was to blame for it. He made extreme statements and later proceeded to qualify what he had said.

Gandhi was not opposed to Science. As a matter of fact, he had a highly experimental attitude. He was prepared to accept any method or technology which would fit in with his ultimate purpose.

One mistake that many people, including some scholars, quite commonly make it to think too much in terms of the spinning wheel. The spinning wheel came into prominence during our national struggle because of some special circumstances. His basic idea was agriculture alone could not produce healthy and balanced rural economy, but a supplementary industry was essential.

Hardly had any Indian leader ever touched the mass mind so deeply as Gandhi did during his own lifetime. To reflect with S. Radhakrishnan, Gandhi's voice had penetrated deep into the hovels of obscure villages in the country and reached the ears of the lowest of the low. When he travelled from place to place wearing only a loincloth, thousands of people ran to get a darshan of Gandhi and many prostrated themselves on his feet. Motilal Nehru frankly conceded to Gandhi "Our difficulty is that in politics you beat us at our own game." Later, Jawaharlal Nehru expressed in Gandhi. "But even in the wider sphere, am I not your child in politics?"
Gandhi's techniques of mass mobilization and struggle are a great contribution to the philosophy of social change.

He never asked anyone to do what he had not carried out in practice himself. What always struck an associate of Gandhi was the care and attention he bestowed on everybody. He always made the first test of hypothesis on himself, before he asked anyone else to try it.

A good society for him, not an end in itself, but a means to the ultimate object, which he called the realization of truth or God or salvation. In human society there have always been and will be important differences and conflicts.

Gandhi was not and could not be a bourgeois thinker. Gandhi held that a capitalist society was a violent society because it generated economic disparity and exploitation. To Gandhi, economic equality was the masterkey to non-violent independence. A non-violent society is an impossibility so long as a gulf between the rich and poor persists and the conflict between them is not abolished.

Gandhi's techniques for search of a better Indian society are only the corollaries of his religious and moral principles. For Gandhi, politics like other human activities must be governed by religion.
If a few individuals in a village are influenced by examples set by the leader they are converted to the new way of life and regeneration of the locality is facilitated. Similarly, once the problem of a new village is solved and a spirit of cooperation developed, it will not be difficult to solve the problems of the entire district and so on. Gandhi believed in the reform of one man first. He thus believed in the reform of one village first. His method was a synthesis of individualism and idealism. External force was not his technique. Through moral approach, he wanted to create an insuperable moral force, both individual and collective.

Since millions of Indian could wear nothing but loincloth, Gandhi resolved that he would also wear loincloth so that he could truly identify himself with the masses whom he wanted to serve. The greater part of Indian people owned nothing and that being the case he would be one with them and himself own nothing. Many thought that Gandhi was a strange person. But he did his deliberately as a symbol of his faith and of his life. For rebuilding of Indian society Gandhi has written a small pamphlet in 1941 and latter on revised in 1945 which contain, in brief, the contents of the constructive programme for the liberation of Indian people. There are neither winner nor loser in constructive programmes. His constructive work was a unique concept used by Gandhi to express
his method of non-violent liberation. Everyone can enjoy freedom, equality and fraternity. Gandhi in his early life spoke about social work. But later on, he used the words Constructive Programme instead of social work to express his special approach to rebuild man and the nation.

The word 'Social Work' was replaced by 'Constructive Work' to bring out the full implication of the revolutionary approach of this non-violent method of individual and social transformation leading to Sarvodaya social order. Spiritual perfection of the individual is the ultimate end of society. By constructive programme Gandhi expected such perfection.

But like many religious idealists, Gandhi had great difficulty in understanding the nature and rule of force and violence in human affairs. For him physical force was always evil and could be best have only a limited prudential justification. He had similar difficulties with violence. He believed that non-violence never failed. As Gandhi grew older, his views began to change. He saw that the state could be an instrument of social justice and equality and that it needed the armed forces. Old Gandhi believed that violence was sometimes not only
practically unavoidable but also moral, and needed to be judiciously combined with non violence in a balanced theory of social change. Gandhi's practice showed much realism but theories remained idealistic. That is why Bhikhu Parekh wrote that "Gandhi's emphasis on the human need for roots and the value of small communities is well taken, but his local communities are too isolated and self contained to be realistic and too parochial and self-absorbed to avoid becoming moral prisons. Small communities built behind the back of and in relative contempt of modern civilization are quite different in nature from those that enjoy full access to and delight in drawing upon its diverse resources. Gandhi was too realistic not to see this and kept modifying his views. But his heart hankered after the simplicity of rural life and remained in tension with his head."^9

Gandhi's restless search for a better Indian society is informed by a powerful concern to place human beings at the center of economic and political life, contains many valuable insights. Gandhi's explanation on the moral and cultural implications of the economic system, human system of production, sustainable development, a more balanced relation to nature, the right to gainful employment and decentralized production are all taken. His ideas have inspired new movements of thought not only in our country but also elsewhere in the world.
Some critics often question the universal applicability of corporate non-violence to all group conflicts. They point out that the moral tone of the behaviour groups, specially large ones, is extremely low. Under excitement of emotions, masses lose all restraint and cannot remain non-violent. So it would have little chance of success against the pitiless might and brutality. In this connection Nehru told that "Non-violence coerces as well as violence, sometimes even more terribly."[10]

Gandhi was aware of the need to eliminate poverty, reduce economic inequalities, ensure social justice and to abolish such ugly social practices as untouchability. Gandhi appreciated 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 also recognised that no polity could be held together unless its members shared a common sense of citizenship and saw themselves as a single people. But it is not easy to see how all this can be achieved by a loosely structured and highly decentralized policy made up of largely autonomous communities whose members have limited contacts and share little in common. Gandhi’s view require a strong central government, a strong bureaucracy, a system of national planning, a network for public.
Gandhi felt that there are the darker side of modern civilization. He saw modern society only from outside. Gandhi sometimes failed to appreciate its complex structure. He does not believe that modern civilization encourages equality, liberty, creativity, rationality, intellectual curiosity and all round development.

"It can be said that Gandhi was thus caught up in the paradoxical position of wanting to appropriate part of the spirit of modern civilization while rejecting the very institutions and social structure that embodied and nurtured it."[11]

But Gandhi believed that rational discussion was the best way to resolve conflict. Gandhi's technique of mass mobilization has a deep psychological basis, and its validity depends on his insight into the real nature of man. He is more completely opposed to the point of view of modern psychology and medicine than one could have imagined it possible for any man to be. On the other hand, Gandhi claimed that he was not a visionary but a practical idealist and his long experience as a satyagraha leader, his intensive tours of India, his contact with large masses of men, the intimate correspondence that he kept on for more than a half a century with a large number of men and women in India and abroad, gave him a profound grasp of human psychology.
8(f) Conclusion: Today, as ever before, not only India but the whole world needs Gandhi's message of love, liberty, communal harmony, international peace and justice.

Defending India's multi-ethnic and multi-religious policy is the abiding need which has assumed urgency now as the impact of far reaching changes in the global environment is being felt with great severity. Democracy connotes that the voice of the people is heard and nothing is done to muffle the voice even of the minority.

The meaning and implications of secularism need to be understood in the proper background and should be properly interpreted. A lot of confusion and misunderstanding surrounds the word "secular" in our country. Today, we are facing trouble in protecting our national integration. We are facing problems relating to lack of morality, tremendous corruptions, intolerance, terrorism, secessionism in every walk of our national life etc. In such a dark situation we need thousands and thousands of enlightened men from every corner of India. The spirit of Truth and Non-violence will not be lost if we practice Gandhi's philosophy in every walk of social life.
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