CHAPTER XI.

RELAVANCE OF GANDHIJI'S IDEALS TO THE PRESENT SET-UP

The Basic Factors of Gandhiji's Economics:

Ideals of life are the reins of Gandhiji's economic thought. His economic ideas have been enunciated from these ideals. The economics of Gandhiji, like the orthodox economics concerns with the fulfilment of human necessities. But the guiding factors which govern Gandhiji's economic principles are different. The crux of the guiding factors is non-violence. The seed of non-violence is not only the seed of his economics but of other social sciences too. According to Gandhiji, different problems of life are treated as one common denominator of life. Gandhiji never differentiated between economics and ethics. They are correlated and inseparable according to his precepts.

The supreme consideration of Gandhiji's economics is man. Principles of orthodox economics devolved on the man's helplessness against laws of consumption wants. In Gandhiji's economics man is required to know his own psychological weakness and mould his thought in the direction of righteousness. It is concerned with the awakening of moral consciousness. Through spreading moral consciousness in man, a reform is brought about in society.

Economic activities (which means activities performed
for fulfilment of material needs) are born in the human thought. If we govern thought that creates desire and develops into wants, we actually govern our economics. When activities of human beings are reformed, a ground for better human relations is prepared in the community. Exploitation and competition are easily minimised.

Every individual is induced to be fruitfully industrious for the common good.

Gandhiji's economic order works in consonance with nature and helps to maintain the ecological balance. The society is brought nearer the nature. Gandhiji's economics puts a limit to the use of non-recurring articles and maintains ecological balance of nature by least disturbing the nature.

The economic activities are so ordered according to Gandhiji's concept that each individual acquires a certain amount of economic power. The major portions of production of articles is done by masses and not undertaken by a few as is done in industrialism. Even the consumption is regulated by the masses and not by a few innovators. These factors help to spread the economic power in each individual. The more the economy is decentralised, the more is the economic power centred in common man. The underlying fact in decentralisation and preference in the use of small tools is that they promote a peaceful economic order, whereas it is very difficult to maintain peace and order under
centralised economy of a highly mechanised society. Complications are created through mass production and trade becomes a tug-of-war, involving cut-throat-competition, hampering the root of peace and order of society.

Production of two basic needs viz. food and clothing form the two main pillars on which the whole of Gandhiji's economics is based. It is the claim of Gandhiji's economics that if these two factors are properly handled, peace and happiness will automatically come to the society.

Gandhiji's economics upholds equality. In a family if one person is under-fed and other is overfed, both suffer. Both need different types of treatment to come to normal condition. In the same manner, poverty and richness are the two great diseases of society which need different types of treatment to bring equality in society. Special protection is provided to depressed class and stewardship is expected from the privileged class in Gandhiji's economic order.

The whole of Gandhiji's economic order is a great piece of mutual cooperation. 'Self-help through mutual help' is its philosophy of Gandhiji's economics. Self confidence and faith in each other are the outcome of such economic order which ultimately removes fear from the minds
of the people. The whole society lives in the present, with the least care of unforeseen imaginary future, which takes care by itself as a natural sequence after the 'present' has been properly taken care of. Under Gandhiji's economic order sufficient freedom is reserved with each individual. Gandhiji's economics does not admit of any particular 'ism' or any 'sect'. Its code of conduct is drawn from religious scriptures. Approach to economics changes according to the circumstances, but the moral code of this economics remains unchanged. It calls for healthy optimism. 'One step is enough for me'. It calls for examples rather than precepts.

It is only by understanding the basic facts or the basis and the goal of Gandhiji's economic thought that we shall be able to judge the under-current in the following views expressed by Gandhiji.

'Man is the end of each economic planning.'

'Begin the plan function from the lowest rung.'

'Basic needs must employ the most.'

'Idleness is the root cause of downfall of village economy.'

Each village should be self-sufficient at least for their basic needs.'

'Each home should be the production centre and a busy hive,' (meaning adopting decentralisation)

'Nature has made the neighbour to be the first care of man.'
'The greater the decentralization of labour the simpler and cheaper the tools.'

'Human labour and material should never be used in a wasteful or unproductive way.'

'As with the individual so with the universe.'

'We must not go (abroad) a begging; it demoralises.'

'The acid test of Swadeshi spirit, is how much we put into the pockets of the poor.'

'The test of Swadeshi is not the Universality of the use of an article, but the universality of participation in the production or manufacture of such article.'

'Bring economic freedom by replacing economic slavery.'

'The conflict between labour and capital is between unintelligence and intelligence.'

India's Face Turned:

For many generations, India had followed such economic ideals and enjoyed the fruits thereof. Our economy has suffered many reverses since the invasion of the Mughals into India nearly seven centuries ago. British intervention started nearly three and a half centuries ago added impetus to these reverses and India completely lost her proud position in her internal economy due to the British Policy being rigorously pursued in this country. In the beginning when the British started ruling over our country, they were quite puzzled over our internal economic set up where-in each village functioned as an independent unit. The following three steps, taken during the British regime, proved
disastrous to our age-old economy. They were:

a. Introduction of cash payment of land revenue;

b. Introduction of the judiciary system;

c. Macaulay's education policy.

These steps, supported by our own people in their selfish interest, put our economy in reverse gear. The down fall of India's economy had definite relation with the industrialisation of Britain. Five hundred years of Mughal rule in India was not so much damaging to our economic order as was the British intervention in latter days. Gradually our economy turned into the shadow of British economy, we began to ape the British. As a result independence of our villages ended. The advanced nations began to employ the backward nations for their own development. Towns of India worked as their agents and our villages were regularly sapped by the advanced nations with help of our own people living in cities. Sapping continuing for a long time we completely forgot our past glory. We inculcated the idea of pure industrialisation and neglected our own culture. We can still witness the ruins of our past economy in our villages. It is a great pity that we now compare the ruins or reminiscence of our old economic order (taking it to be the ideals of Gandhiji's economic order) with the highly industrialised nations of the world. Under these conditions criticism of Gandhiji is very apt.
Our villages enjoyed such an economic order where no one suffered for want of work or food or cloth. Art and culture was highly respected. Wit and wisdom was emanating from young and old alike. Nature also was in favour of such economic order and culture. Gandhiji worked for such an economic order and not for one where unemployment and under-employment is rampant, and villagers have to live like animals, even ordinary amenities of life being denied to them.

Problems facing the World:

There are certain specific problems from which each nation of the world is suffering; the more the nation is advancing, the severe is the problem they have to face. These are:

1. Grave disparity of income and status.
2. Under-employment and unemployment.
3. Creating employment for the addition in population.
4. Increasing economic strains (with increase in inflationary pressures, rising prices, import restrictions etc.)
5. Frustration and moral degradation on the increase along with advancement of nations.

Occasional crisis in important currencies of the world like dollar, sterling etc. is the enigma before the world. The recent dollar crisis has been the most serious one.

There is hardly any country in the world which could claim that it has got rid of the calamities mentioned above.
We have yet to find out an economic order which shall free us from such calamities in the world economic scene. In the absence of any such economic order all the nations of the world are following willy nilly the advanced nations. 'Industrialise or perish' has become the watchword of the day. The science and technology is advancing day by day. Instead of happiness it has increased discontent along with the spectacular achievements in many fields. Dependency and mental slavery are fast increasing. We take pride to assert that time, space and nature have been conquered. But it needs only a little thinking to know that we have really disturbed them for our selfish ends, and developed a false ego in us.

INDUSTRIALISM QUESTIONED:

We may pose some questions on industrialism in order to understand it clearly.

- Can we bring reform in our villages through industrialism?
- If so what shall be its cost?
- Whether industrialism have solved the economic problems of the West?
- What is the social cost of industrialism?
- What is the aim of life?
- How is a man treated in industrialism?
- Can all the nations of the world go ahead smoothly by adopting industrialism?

These are some of the pertinent inquiries which are only vaguely answered and veiled under the glimmer of
industrialism, in the selfishness of the privileged class of society, and also in the inactiveness and the apathy of the lower class of society.

The pathetic condition of villages of India moved Gandhiji. The insight of Gandhiji inspired him to bring out the fact of his incessant inquiry and therefrom sprouted Gandhiji's economic thought. Gandhiji was born and brought up in India during the period when re-shuffling in our economy took a severe turn and industrialism was in its hey day in the pioneering country of the Great Britain. He visited the Great Britain in his young days and settled in South Africa for a considerable period. There he had an opportunity to witness industrialism in full bloom and closely study British policies in practice. The two other great leaders, (Gandhiji's contemporaries), Nikolai Lenin and Sun Yat-Sen, turned revolutionaries, by the repercussions of bureaucracy and industrialism. But they failed to arrive at the basic facts of disorder in the society. A thought flashed in Gandhiji's mind as to what would be the fate of India when even a small nation like the British had to exploit so many countries to find markets for her large scale products, especially in the difficult situation ahead, when competition will increase and become rampant all over. Example of Japan is most remarkable. In quite a short period, after she was smashed by nuclear attack during the Second World War, she emerged as the second leading industrial country in the world. The point to remember is that she had equally developed her age-old
cottage industries and under the joint production scheme many small scale industries as, ancillaries for large scale industries. Japan has to depend on foreign markets to keep her economy stable. America's economy is in the doldrum. Her gold reserves have diminished as to cause anxiety. The leading countries of the world are busy in maintaining and enhancing their trade credits to uphold industrialism. Different measures are being evolved to establish factories for war materials e.g. now China is going to establish one such factory in Pakistan.

Lesson for India:

The United States of America is the leading industrialist and a highly developed country in the world. But at the same time she is also leading in lunaticism, suicide, murder and many other crimes. The more is a country advanced, the greater is the moral and mental degradation she suffers.

A close study of the recent flare up and insurrection in East Bengal resulting in the influx of millions of refugees pushed into our country and the part played by the world to rush to their help and rescue will reveal some startling facts about the leading industrialists of the world. It was purely an economic war perpetrated by the military rulers of West Pakistan on the aspirations of the Bangladeshi people whose only fault was that they resisted economic exploitation by the West Pakistan industrialists.
who joined hands with the military junta in power in doing so. Leading nations of the world remained a silent witness to the genocide, arson, looting, destruction on a scale which finds no parallel in the history of the world. Beyond a lip sympathy for the unfortunate sufferers or throwing a few coffers which would not meet an iota of their daily need they did nothing to stop Pakistan in her mad act of rank aggression, taking shelter under the plea that it was an internal matter of Pakistan. Some of the advanced countries like China and the United States openly supported Pakistan, rather encouraged her in her mad military action in East Bengal purely on economic considerations because they had a good market in Pakistan for their commercial goods and military ware. Even the United Nations Organisation failed in her duty to prevent this very unfortunate episode in East Bengal. India rose to the occasion and took upon her the very heavy burden of looking after the ten million refugees from East Bengal and for this great fault India was suddenly attacked by Pakistan. India was forcibly invoked in to war with Pakistan yet both China and the United States who all along supported Pakistan in her mad onslaughts and supplied her arms and ammunitions, blamed India for aggression because it served their economic interest. This is a glaring example of economic exploitation to support industrialism and brings out before us the ultimate results it leads to.

War is a boon for such a nation which is industrially advanced and is constantly seeking markets for her goods; she remains neutral only as far as direct participation in the war.
but she would always aspire to witness war in action in other parts of the world.

The U.S.A. is still entangled in the war in Vietnam, not on the prestige issue, but mainly due to the internal economic pressure, though the secrets of the Vietnam politics are made public.

The two world Wars were fought not on the political issues but on economic issues.

Partition of India in 1947 and occasionally flare between India and Pakistan have economic reasons behind them more than political ones. It is rather difficult to understand the tactics played secretly by the industrially advanced nations in making under-developed countries their scape-goats.

India is the second largest country in the world. We can not adopt the economy of other nations like Switzerland, Denmark, England, Japan or of the U.S.A. Our culture, our religion and our social and political background is quite different from other Eastern and Western nations. If we adopt the tactics of highly industrialised countries we shall be ruining our country's culture, strangling its capacity to bring peace in the world.

Looking to the present development of our nation, we feel that Gandhiji's foresight is coming true in our country. Gandhiji visualized that after independence all the vices will sprout up and there shall be a state of violence spreading throughout the nation. It is high time we think deeply over
our present degraded condition and ponder over the ideals of Gandhiji as a remedial measure. Now people have begun to lose faith in democracy and feel that dictatorship would better suit India at least for few years to come. It is with the help of the police force and with great difficulty that the government is able to control the disturbances occurring from time to time in different parts of the country. Gandhiji had forewarned us that it would be a bad day for India if the military, including the police, rule India.¹)

Compromise Inevitable:

About the future development of India, Gandhiji visualised quite earlier, "I am afraid that for years to come India would be engaged in passing legislation in order to raise the downtrodden, the fallen, from the mire into which they have been sunk by the capitalists, by the landlords, by the so called higher classes, and then, subsequently and scientifically by the British rulers. If we are to lift these people from the mire, then it would be the bounden duty of the national Government of India, in order to set its house in order, continually to give protection to these people and even free them from the burdens under which they are being crushed. And, if the landlords, the zamindars, moneyed men and those who are today enjoying privileges -- I do not care whether they are Europeans or Indian -- if they find that they are discriminated against, I shall sympathise with them but I will not be able to help them, even if I could

¹. Mathur, Economic Thought, p.419 (4 April 13, 1947)
possibly do so, because I would seek their assistance in that process, and without their assistance it would not be possible to raise these people out of the mire.”

A question was asked from Gandhiji, 'Is no compromise with the industrialisation possible without imperilling the ideals of self-sufficiency?' The reply of Gandhiji was, "Oh yes! railways are there, I do not avoid them. I hate motor cars, but I made use of them willy nilly all the same. Again I dislike fountain pens, but just now I am making use of one, though I carry a reed pen in my box. Compromise comes in at every step. But one must realise that it is a compromise, and keep the final goal constantly in front of the mind's eye."2

In no circumstances industrialism should be adopted. There is difference between industrialism and opening a few sporadic large scale industries. Where industrialism becomes the dogma, exploitation, markets, export problems etc. become a must for the existing economy and exploitation takes place. Gandhiji exclaims, "... as soon as the existing exploitation of the so called weaker nations of the earth by the strong nations of the West ceases as it is bound some day to cease, the world will have to return to the spinning wheel."3 The inner meaning of this statement is that if the present trend of development continues and all the weaker nations also develop along the lines of Westerners, then a time will come when they will be producing most of their needs in their country itself.

2. D.G.Tendulkar;ichtigina - Vol.V
But all of them will be producing things on a large scale and all will have the problem of exploitation of other markets before them. Then the satiation on production will come. At the same time people will be tired of lifeless machineries. Nature demands from us to have direct contact with the land as we get our requirements fulfilled from it. We shall reach a state of perplexity when we would have developed our science so much that we shall not need bodily labour for our bread. We shall then be required to turn back to spinning wheel (meaning decentralised way of production) to bring an economic stability.

Science and Gandhiji’s Economic Order:

It is a common criticism that Gandhiji’s economic order does not cover the present scientific progress. Science has done wonders in the society. It has shortened distance and time and minimised human labour. But to what purpose? Gandhiji holds, “I whole heartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilisation stands for all this and I have understood it to do so, I call it satanic and with it the present system of government, its best exponent.”

In the future development of society under Gandhiji’s ideals we will need more and more science to be more scientific. Gandhiji mentions, “We shall need a number of scientists and chemists prepared to lay not only their expert knowledge at our

1. Mathur, Economic Thought, p.81
disposal but to sit down in our laboratories and to devote hours of time, free of charge, to experiment in the directions I have indicated. We shall have not only to publish the results from time to time, but we shall have to inspect and certify various products."

On another occasion Gandhiji said, "We will have experts and chemists who will be prepared to place their knowledge at the disposal of villagers. We will though our experts, offer to test our articles manufactured by village craftsmen and make them suggestion to improve their works and would sell them if they could accept our conditions."

The fundamental issue behind research under Gandhiji's concept will be to find means to develop each individual's talent and utilise his efficiency and time more and more deliberately. The whole work will be to find ways to utilise all the available resources scientifically.

Population Problem:

For a man who over eats, it is good to have an ache and observe a fast than to re-indulge in it and go again for medicine. Gandhiji contemplates, "It is still worse for a person to indulge in his animal passions and escape the consequences of his acts. Nature is relentless and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws. Moral results can only be produced by moral restrains. All other restrains defeat the very purpose for which they are intended."
No doubt population is increasing very fast, but it is really embarrassing, where our so called advanced scientific knowledge encourages the use of different types of family planning measures which teach us only indulgence in animal passions and then find measures to nullify the reaction of this act. It has not taught to the world as Gandhiji teaches us, " All power comes from the preservation of and sublimation of the vitality that is responsible for the creation of life. This vitality is continuously and even unconsciously dissipated by evil or even rambling, disorderly, unwanted thoughts. And since thought is the root of all speech and action, the quality of the latter corresponds to that of the former."1 Perfectly controlled thought has a great potency of its own. This is possible by limiting our activities of life. Economic activities have great influence over controlling thoughts.

The carnal desires and passions have given birth to birth-control measures. World is now looking for controlling the repercussions of sex indulgence through scientific devices. The argument put forward is that sex urge is natural and is one of the ways to lead a happy marital life.

We still need further progress in science to prove the worth of Gandhiji's thought on birth control through self-control. At present birth control measures are taking us to perdition. More population is less harmful than the adoption of birth control measures on a wide scale for self indulgence. Addition of one mouth brings with it two hands. It is the weakness of our

1. Kripiani, Brothers, p.112.
economic science which does not know how to make best use of the same. Gandhiji has shown the natural solution for it. It is to go on decentralising the activities of our daily life. Gandhiji has pointed out the obstructing elements in economics which are repelling the hands from productive work. Industrialism, automation and robot are certainly against the natural development of society and hindrance against the productive use of each head (and two hands) of human beings.

A Warning:

In 1921, a period of severe exploitation, Gandhiji passed the following remark: "We must protect our own bodies from disruption through indulgence, before we would protect the sanctity of others. India is to-day nothing but a dead mass movable at the will of another. Let her become alive by self purification i.e., self restraint and self-denial, and she will be a boon to herself and mankind. Let her be carelessly self indulgent, aggressive, grasping; and if she rises, she will do so like Kumbhakarna only to destroy and be a curse to herself and mankind."  

We forget that one in every five persons remains hungry and three in every five suffer from mal-nutrition in the world. We little realise that modernism goes a great way against the happiness of human beings. Boredom, worry, frustration, and promiscuity are more prevalent with the so called most civilised nations of the universe.

India's Role:

Gandhiji enjoins on us to prepare ourselves for the noble task neglected since long and says, 'India is essentially a Karamabhumi' (land of duty) in contradiction to 'bhogabhumi' (land of enjoyment). If India gets rid of the three enemies viz laziness, poverty and apathy, she will inherit the glorious heritage of peace and harmony and spread the knowledge of perpetual peace in the world. Our ignorance and lack of insight are driving us away from the path of reality. These are the main drawbacks in us; we do not understand the merits of the approach Gandhiji has suggested us and the demerits of the path we are now following through excessive emphasis on industrialisation of centralised nature.

Non-violent way as suggested by Gandhiji is unfailing but calls for patience to adhere to it in order to succeed. This path seems to be path of longer order, but this alone will bring solace to the world and ensure everlasting results.

Cautious rethinking needed:

We have adopted secularism as our creed and have remodeled our education on those lines. Moral teaching which is vital in national building, has been neglected. This has done incalculable harm to the society. It has not only deprived us of ethics, but has also drastically affected our economic, social and political sides.
Training in non-violence must get preference over physical training. Gandhiji had shown us the way to develop the force of non-violence, which is the soul force or spiritual force by adopting non-violent economic order, its strength is incomparable with any of the combined atomic forces. It knows no defeat.

Gandhiji's approach is the scientific approach. Our prejudices against it do not permit us to appreciate its efficacy. Everyone of us blindly admits that the use of a tractor in agriculture is scientific and not the use of a plough and more of labour, where it is available in abundance and cultivators are poor. We all ridicule Charkha before technically advanced textile mills. None appreciates the hand pounding of rice, to keep employed our village women and to maintain the natural organic combination in rice, thus helping to utilise time and energy in productive work, in preference to rice mills. Similarly we discard the mud houses prepared from the resources available locally in preference to Pukka buildings. Gandhiji always stood against such accepted beliefs, We prepared our minds for sound thinking so that we could grasp the principle underlying his approach. We will appreciate him better if we could catch the spirit of his statement, "A science to be science must afford fullest scope for satisfying the hunger of body, mind and soul."¹

Gandhiji was not antagonistic to machines of advanced nature or to inventions. He favoured such inventions which

¹. Rathur, Economic Thought, p.175-76.
could uphold natural development of body, mind and soul.
He was only antagonistic to such advancements which were
obstructing their natural development of man. The
decentralised production with small tools and light
machineries, with special emphasis to Charkha etc. helping
to build of village economics was the primary concern of
Gandhiji. Gandhiji makes it amply clear, "My views on
national planning differ from the prevailing ones. I do
not want it along industrial lines. I want to prevent our
villages from catching the infection of industrialism." ¹

Though we have developed cities and many new avenues
of employment have been evolved with the introduction of new
industries, still the fact remains that more than eighty
percent of our population live in villages; agriculture
therefore holds the supreme place in the economics of the
villages. With the gradual decay of subsidiary industries,
at least four months are even now wasted in unproductive work.
In olden times village women and children were kept busy in
different household in the types of work like cleaning the
house, supervising the cattles, preparing butter for their
daily needs, grinding the wheat and many other allied
activities. With the introduction of machines, much of the
routine household works was done by machines which increased
their monetary burden. If each family of a village takes up
Charkha for at least 4 months and produces eight annas worth
of labour each day, they shall be adding Rs.60/- per annum to
their otherwise meagre income. Gandhiji assures us that with

¹. Mathur, Economic Thought, p.513
the introduction of Charkha and inculcation of swadeshi spirit, idleness, poverty and general apathy will be gradually wiped out. If these diseases are not tackled bloody strife will become inevitable.”¹ The non-violent economic order is the sure safeguard against blood-shed and bloody strife which seem hanging on the posterity. Gandhiji makes us realise. “Khadi is the only true economic proposition in terms of the millions of villagers until such time, if ever, when a better system of supplying work and adequate wages for every able bodied person above the age of sixteen, male or female, is found for his field, cottage or even factory in every one of the villages of India; or till sufficient cities are built up to displace the villages so as to give the villagers the necessary comforts and amenities that a well-regulated life demands and is entitled to.”² It may not be mistaken from this statement that Gandhiji introduced Khadi as a temporary measures or that he wanted to impose his ideas on others. Gandhiji did not like to enforce his ideals on others. He wished that others may also try to find better means, if they could. But till then let them try Charkha. We must remember that Khaddar has no importance for a hunting class or a society which lives on exploitation of others.³ Khadi impart s a spiritual message and Gandhiji feels that it is specially for India that this spiritual message suits the most for better economic achievements.

¹. Mathur, Economic Thought, p.291
². Ibid., p.170
³. Ibid., p. 50
Hand spinning is a 'universal productive occupation which could be taken up during odd moments and which did not require any special talents.'

Time Not Ripe: It was a great surprise to Gandhiji that stopped the use of Khadi after independence when it was the proper time to take it up with greater zeal. This is the reason why we are led to fratricidal strifes and lawlessness in different places. Khadi movement can be successful only when people accept non-violence as their creed. Giving his opinion on picketing of foreign cloth in 1926 Gandhiji remarked, "But I have a genuine dread people resorting to violence. When even a thing springing from love and non-violence is abused, we must take it that time is not ripe for placing it before the public". "To-day when ugliness of our passions have come to the surface, all peaceful experiments also must be reduced to a minimum. That is why I have hitched my wagon to only one star-spinning and weaving and propagating Khaddar - where abuse is unthinkable, and where there is no possibility of any harm being done."2

Though many people have adopted Khadi as a daily ware but that is mainly because in certain politics it has become the fashion of the day. They have seldom gone deep into the spirit that is working behind Khadi. That is the reason that its mission is not being fulfilled. Intelligentsia were required to wear khadi so that the villagers may get the incentive to

1 Rathur, Economic Thought, p.56.
2 Ibid., p.280.
produce it in their spare time and wear it themselves.

In Nov. 1947 Gandhiji felt, "It is true that I deceived myself into the belief that people were being wedded to non-violence with Khadi as its symbol. As a matter of fact in the name of non-violence people observed the outward peace of the impotent. They had never even attempted to drive violence from their hearts. He who runs can see for himself the verification of this fact." But it has to work for its own end.

It is clear that Khadi movement can not be easily taken up when the atmosphere is against it. It is the most difficult task to make the atmosphere favourable to introduce Khadi.

Present State: Looking to the present trend in society and the fate of Khadi and other institutions concerned with its development and promotion there are persons who have begun to feel that time has been lost to revive Gandhiji's ideals into practice and that it now stands nowhere applicable in the changed economic and social set-up.

We forget what Gandhiji stood for. Independent India had never tried to understand the ideals and spirit of Khadi in its perspective. Gandhiji's main ideal was non-violence and non-violence knows no defeat.

Gandhiji gave us a reorientation programme of Khadi works. It was expected from urban consumers to contribute

1 Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 264.
a portion of the yarn consumed for the Khadi bought by them. It was not seriously taken by the people. Again in the year 1956 'Chaliagaon proposal' was put forth but it was not held as important to give the necessary turning to Khadi ideals. Vinobaji (our most revered leader who stands next to Gandhiji) himself tried this as a last resort in the year 1963 and a tripartite programme was introduced in Raipur Sarvodaya Conference.

On 6th April 1964 Government introduced 'Khadi Free Weaving Scheme'. The first part of the programme was to give weaving subsidy in the form of rebate on the sale of Khadi. The second part of it was to subsidise the weaving of hand spun yarn. The real implication of it was to get the cloth at the price of cotton by utilising the idle hours of the villagers.

But due to lack of faith, lack of its education and public consciousness, there is no visible improvement in Khadi. Khadi's sale in the shops of the cities may have increased, but that is no promotion of Khadi ideals. What is essential is that it's place should be next to hearth in each hut of the village. This fact is completely ignored.

To be the real saviour of the masses of our nation, Gandhiji asks us to be village minded. It does not mean that we should have no concern with the West. Gandhiji has stated, "When we have become village minded we will not mind imitations of the West or machine-made products, but we will develop a true national taste in keeping with the vision of new India.
in which pauperism, starvation and idleness will be unknown."¹

(Constructive Programme; its meaning and plans, p.11).

In the scheme of Gandhiji, all the resources of the village have to be tapped. Human resource holds the key position in it. Gandhiji states, 'Any plan which exploited the raw materials of a country and neglected the potentiality of more powerful man-power was lop-sided and could never tend to establish human equality.' Gandhiji ensures us thus, 'if we tap all resources, I am quite sure, we can be again the richest country in the world which we were, I suppose at one time.' We must cease to be idle. We have to be industrious. It requires proper moulding of the economy of the nation which is a difficult job. But it is not impracticable. We must have the 'will' to do it. Gandhiji says, "The revival cannot take place without an army of selfless Indians of intelligence and patriotism working with a single mind in the villages to spread the message of the Charkha and bring a ray of hope and light into their lusterless eyes. This is a mighty effort about a silent and sure revolution like the silent but sure and life giving revolution of the Charkha."²

To reemphasise the disease of our country in the context of our present development we quote Gandhiji, "Our real malady is not destitution but laziness, apathy and inertia. You may achieve marvels of irrigational engineering. But well-filled granaries alone cannot and will not end our slavery. To end

¹ Constructive Programme, p.11.
² Mathur, Economic Thought, p.209.
slavery you must overcome the mental and physical inertia of the masses and quicken their intelligence and creative faculty. It is my claim that the universalisation of hand spinning with a full knowledge of all that it stands for alone can bring that about in a sub-continent so vast and varied as India.\(^1\)

Gandhiji believed that when our villagers are fully developed, then, "... there will be no dearth in them of men with high degree of skill and artistic talent. There will be village poets, village artists, village architects, linguists and research workers. In short there will be nothing in life worth having which will not be had in the villages."\(^2\)

What Gandhiji wished was to provide a life of varied chances of development for each member of the society. He has reminded us time and again that he was not hankering after providing plenty meaning more than the bare needs.

Some people may doubt that under Gandhiji's economics, towns may get paralysed or they may be put in precarious condition. Such doubts are natural because at present towns have become the exploiting centres of the villages. There is unnatural link in between them. Gandhiji wanted to reverse the order to bring about natural relationship between the two. The more the towns are industrialised and more we are attracted by the machine made articles for our need, more will be the exploitation of villages, as the marketing and competition problem comes up. (ETRG-502; H. Aug. 29, 1936).

1 Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 216.
2 Ibid, p. 332.
Gandhiji was even blamed that he had made the beginning of the firm campaign of an endless and quixotic war against modern civilisation. Gandhiji was actually intending to provide purposeful job to the poor villagers who were suffering since many decades without adequate employment. Gandhiji could realise the gravity of disintegrated villages. He said, "Why am I turning back the course of modern civilisation, when I ask the villager to grind his own meal, eat it whole, including the nourishing bran or when I ask him to turn his sugarcane into gur for his own requirements, if not for sale? Am I turning back the course of modern civilisation, when I ask the villagers not merely to grow raw produce, but to turn it into marketable products and thereby add a few more paise to their daily income?"¹ (ETMG-310; H.Jan.4, 1935).

Modern civilisation is not a new concept. In the revival of village industries lies the hope for famished villagers.

A Hope of Future India:

Gandhiji points out very clearly, "When India becomes self-supporting, self-reliant and proof against temptations and exploitation, she will cease to be the object of greedy attraction for any power in the West or the East and will then feel secure without having to carry the burden of expensive armament. Her internal economy will be India's strongest bulwark against aggression."²

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¹ Mathur, Economic Thought, p.310.
² Ibid., p.489.
Let us prepare our nation to follow non-violent economic order and make each village a self-reliant unit mainly for its bare necessities.

Giving his opinion on the problem of modern machines and modern appliances, in a reply to Dr. Rammanohar Lohia's letter, Gandhiji wrote, "I do visualise electricity, ship-building, iron-works, machine-making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. But the order of dependance will be reversed. Hitherto the industrialisation has been so planned as to destroy the village and village crafts. In the state of the future it will subsist the villages and their crafts."1 Neither socialism nor capitalism could help in regenerating the villagers on Gandhiji's principles. Looking to the vastness of the village population, the place of most of the advanced technologies will be very insignificant in our entire Indian economic structure.

Gandhiji was not only concerned with sipping out the poverty but he wished to see India ever progressive. In his plan of progressive 'deliberate' simplification there is hidden a continuous chain of progress. "If my dream is fulfilled, "observes Gandhiji, "and everyone of the seven lacs of villages becomes a well-living republic in which there are no illiterates, in which no one is idle for want of work, in which everyone is usefully occupied and has nourishing food, well ventilated dwelling, and sufficient Khadi for covering the body, and in which all the villagers know and observe the laws of hygiene and sanitation, such a State must have varied

1 Mather, Economic Thought, p.598.
and increasing needs, which it must supply unless it would stagnate."

There are differences between increasing wants of the materialist economy and increasing needs under Gandhi's ideal conditions. One has self-indulgence and selfishness attached to it while the other stands for encouragement of art, skill and ingenuity of human being. There would not be a single man who would suffer for want of food and clothing. Every one will get sufficient work to enable him to meet his dire necessities. Means of production of elementary necessaries of life will remain in the hands of the masses. It means that the key to economic progress will be with every individual member of the society, unlike capitalism or socialism where a few persons hold the key of economic progress. Bodily labour is the life and breath of such economic order.

Institutions like saving banks, insurance companies and railways, will be there doing their specific jobs. But the order of priority and motto of service will be changed. What is the motto behind banks insurance companies, different industrial concerns manufacturing articles of daily need and manufacturing luxuries and comforts of human life, cinemas, exhibitions, club etc? Are they philanthropic in their motive or do they have some greed driving them? Is there the least feeling of understanding of the interference, they cause to smooth running of the village life? At present they help the centralised planning, stand by industrialism as they are outcome

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1 Mathur, Economic Thought, p.591.
of industrial civilisation. Under Gandhiji's economic ideals these institutions do not change, but the fundamental principle behind which they shall have to work will certainly change.

Against Sectarianism:

Nothing (no idea) should be made a fetish. No one should blindly accept what Gandhiji has said, Gandhiji himself observes, "I would feel extremely sorry to discover that the country had unthinkingly and blindly followed all I had said or done. I am quite conscious of the fact that blind surrender to love is often more mischievous than a forced surrender to the lash of the tyrant. There is hope for the slave of the brute, none for that of love. Love is needed to strengthen the weak, love becomes tyrannical when it exacts obedience from an unbeliever."

We cannot climb on the mountain all at once. We must take so sure a step that we shall have little fear of going down again. Let us start our planning from below. Let there be incessant inquiry by each individual about life and its purpose. Have faith in non-violence- the supreme power that each individual is bestowed with. It will be the greatest revolution, the world has ever witnessed. Only we should have faith, as without faith our efforts will be useless. The people should be given proper education in non-violence. Gandhiji warns that, "need not be, she ought not to be drawn into the

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1 Rathur, Economic Thought, p.528.
vortex of mad and ruinous competition which breeds fratricide, jealously and many other evils. But who is to stop her great millionaires from entering into the world competition? Certainly not legislation. Force of public opinion, proper education, however, can do a great deal in the desired direction. 1

Relevance of Gandhiji's economics depends on condition that man realises two distinct existences in him. His physical body is interconnected with his causal body, and the two are inseparable. Physical activities of his daily life interact on his causal body which in turn influences his physical activities. Properly controlled and well guarded physical activities lead to the realisation of his causal body, the central abode of the real 'self' in man.

Even if we have far advanced in physical science and secured a fairly good amount of control over physical forces of nature, it shall be of little use to humanity unless we also develop side by side our knowledge of the 'self'. Enquiry into Nature reveals wonders of Nature and helps a man to gain control over Nature. But it makes a man grow selfish, arrogant and one sided, developing unabating craving for material gains. This alone can not give him satisfaction of life; for it develops in him unceasing, ever-increasing demands for material things thus creating a great imbalanced and inflated economic field.

1 Mathur, Economic Thought, p.525.
An enquiry into the self is far superior to the enquiry into Nature. Self-enquiry answers questions pertaining to man's individuality. Knowledge of the self exercises a great control on man's needs, reduces his demands and thus helps to develop a balanced and controlled economics. This is the universal truth and admits of no fallacy, yet it is invariably neglected by us. It brings peace in all spheres of life; it is the secret of real happiness. Gandhiji believed that the Divine descends on earth in human form and shows us the path of Truth, righteousness, love, peace and non-violence. This factor has a great way worked to mould our life to its right attitude and save us from going astray. It encourages us to shake off our selfishness and think of others' needs in preference to ours. As a natural sequence it brings a soothing effect on our economics and save it from ruin. It brings real happiness to humanity.

It is quite fascinating to hear that on an average an American possesses two cars. Most of them possess tape-records, transistors, television sets, pressure cookers, refrigerators; their average income is the highest in the world. All these marvels of scientific achievements adopted for human service is quite fascinating and that way of life attracts our immediate attention. Advanced nations are sincerely striving after material happiness through their different measures of material gains. They have miraculously succeeded in material gains, but they have not been able to fulfil their long cherished desire of happiness. Those people are now turning
to Eastern nations to seek happiness. It is a great pity that we in India seek happiness in Western culture in which the Westerners feel frustrated. The Westerners have sincerely laboured to find happiness through different material advancements. We the Indians however know the secret knowledge of happiness yet we are eager to ape the Western nations, ignoring the fact that with all their sincere efforts and earnest labour happiness is a mirage to them it is a riddle which they could not solve inspite of their sincere efforts. If we could imbibe these facts, Gandhiji's economic though ensures a great hope for us ; if however the fact is ignored, it stands little chance in the present set up.

We felt it our duty to give shelter to millions of refugees from East Bengal, our immediate neighbour in their most trying period to save them from mass murder and general genocide perpetrated by West Pakistan military Junta. We have however yet to realise still greater duty which is wanting in us. It is to lead the country on the way of balanced development of material as well as spiritual advancement.

So far our planned efforts to bring prosperity to the nation has not been fruitful for the poor masses who are in overwhelming majority. Prof. Mahalanobis Committee's report makes it clear that poor is becoming poorer and rich is growing richer in our country. Vanchu Committee (Direct Taxation Inquiry Committee) has revealed the fact that black money is fast increasing inspite of drastic measures to curb it by our
The Auditor General of India reports that at the end of 31st March 1970, Rs.960 crores of taxes were outstanding and government is able to recover only 66 percent of the income tax. Direct taxes are highest in India. but a few percentage of people come under the limit of paying the taxes. Inflationary trend is mounting high, unemployment is at a very high level along with our rising population. Our economy is facing many acute problems. Our agricultural and industrial labour classes are severely affected. Besides governments efforts and new legislative measures in their favour, number of landless cultivators and labourers are increasing. A vast majority of our population is leading a depressed life. Twentyfive years of freedom and four five year plans have brought about little reform in our villages where 82 percent of our population resides.

Our primary duty is to raise the economic level of our down trodden and lift them from the mire. We have not yet realised the gravity of poverty among us and simply pity the miserable conditions of our poor people. In the economic science there is no definite measures suggested for raising the standard of the poor on equality basis (equality not of utilitarian type but of the Sarvodaya nature). Gandhiji's contribution in this field is the lone unique contribution. It will not cost us much like our five year plans but will

1. Flow of Black Money was of the order of Rs.511 crores. In the year 1965-66 it rose to Rs.1216 crores and the figure reached to Rs.1400 crores during the year 1968-69.
2. Maximum rate is 97.5%, 75%, and 70% in India, Japan and the U.S.A. respectively.
give definite and gradual result. Uptil now we have followed the orthodox principles of economic growth to uplift our nation but we could not raise the lot of our poor countryman. Economic principles of Gandhiji, viz., beginning with the lower strata, broad labour, priority to locally available resources with special emphasis on human labour, decentralisation, needs for simpler and cheaper tools, basic needs employing the most, self-reliant village units for their basic needs etc., are specifically meant for underdeveloped countries and poor section of the masses; they have a message for advanced nations also. They give the alarm in advance that enticement of material gains for the self and exploiting tendency can never take us nearer the happiness. Our tendency to help our neighbour will make us happy and provide satisfaction of witnessing equality and peace around us.

Our planning efforts clearly show that we have given only lip sympathy to Gandhiji and discarded his principles completely. We have rejected Gandhiji's principles of economics without even understanding them or giving them a trial. Our education is greatly responsible for our criticizing Gandhiji's thinking. It is difficult to understand that it is the orthodox principles of economics of growth which has failed us in our attempt to achieve our objectives of planning.

We will have to remove from our mind that under Gandhiji's economic order we shall be required to discard present day achievements of science. We will allow the development and use of televisions, swift means of transportation and communications etc., if they come naturally to us. But it shall not be the
primary concern of the government to encourage them.

Gandhiji's economics stands for the discovery of the beauty and grace of life. For the available car facilities we should not hamper our capacity to walk long distances and preserve our health. In order to upholding audio-visual appliances we should not cramp our art of singing, dancing and acting. For the sake of regular club going, we should not bring drudgery in our daily activities of life. In order to take to the use of tractors we should not allow to hamper our capacity for hard work and utilise our bullocks. for adopting modern unnatural way of production, we should not disturb nature. Fresh food, fresh vegetables, milk, curd, butter should be preferred to tinned or cold stored articles. It does not mean that we should disregard the science of preserving the articles, which may be essentially needed under certain circumstances. Scientific inventions will always be encouraged. But our real knowledge of science confirms the fact that nature's fresh vegetables and fruits, fresh air and fresh water have no comparison with tinned (preserved) fruits and vegetables, airconditioned climate and aerated water. Our knowledge of science makes amply clear that our body is a supreme place of machine which must be protected from rusting. Economic though of Mahatma Gandhi stands on such invaluable scientific truths. They call for novel way of value judgement of life. The voluntary simplicity of Gandhiji bears some sanctity. Gandhiji holds the view, "... the modern rage for variety, for flying through the air, for multiplicity of wants etc., have no fascination for me. They dreaden the inner being in us. The giddy heights which man's ingenuity is attempting,
take us away from our Maker who is near to us than the nails are to the flesh which they cover."

Our indulgence in modern cult unables us to appreciate the value of all what Gandhiji says. We call Gandhiji's thinking primitive. By ascribing it primitive it does not become primitive. Gandhiji was conscious of such criticism when he stressed to revive our hand-grinding, hand-husking and such other measures which solved some of the grave problems of the nation like, giving employment to idle hands, saving penny after penny for the villagers whose income is very low and maintaining a sound health and cooperative efforts in life. Gandhiji remarks, "I have no partiality for return to the primitive method of grinding and husking for the sake of them. I suggest the return because there is no other way of giving employment to the millions of villagers who are living in idleness. In my opinion village uplift is impossible unless we solve the pressing economic distress." 2 Gandhiji has suggested that people who are eager to realise the worth of Gandhiji's statement, should go to the villages and should try to live like them in the midst of the villages and soon they will perceive the soundness of his argument. They will realise the soundness of his equality and cooperative life instead of privilege and monopoly which is witnessed in advanced towns. Gandhiji opines, "Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me." 3 At another place he points

1. Mathur, Economic Thought, p.512
2. Ibid, p.495
3. Ibid, p.494
out, "Hand spun cloth, hand made paper, hand pounded rice, home made bread and jam are not uncommon in the West. Only there they do not have one hundredth of the importance they have in India. For with us their revival means life, their destruction means death, to the villagers, as he who runs may see. Whatever the machine age may do, it will never give employment to the millions whom the wholesale introduction of power machinery must displace."¹

Our present trend of planning is giving predominance to urban civilisation of the Western type. Rural civilisation is continuously neglected. But in no case this rural part (and rural civilisation) can be wiped out in our country. As viewed by Gandhiji, "We are inheritor of rural civilisation. The vastness of our country, the vastness of the population, the situation and the climate of the country have in my opinion destined it for a rural civilisation. Its defects are well known but not one of them is irredeemable. The uproot it and substitute for it an urban civilisation seems to me an impossibility, unless we are prepared by some drastic means to reduce the population from these hundred millions to three or even thirty."²

Realising the gravity of our apathy and idleness and their consequences in our village life Gandhiji expresses, "I therefore decided that I must even in the evening of my life make a heroic effort to end this idleness, this inertia.

¹. Mathur, Economic Thought, p.310
². Ibid., p. 260-61
This may be considered to be quixotic but it is my firm faith that he who undertakes to do something in the name of God, and in full faith in Him, even in the end of his days, does not work in vain, and I am sure that the work I have undertaken is not mine, it is God's.  

Looking to the speed with which the world is moving towards industrialism and higher technological achievements, it seems there is no stoppage to it. A few persons who are sincerely thinking over the havoc it is bringing to the humanity, also understand the difficulty in moulding the people to Gandhiji's ways of thinking. For Gandhiji, it is a necessity. He says, "It has still to be proved that displacement of the hand by the machine is a blessing in every case. Nor is it true that which is easy is better than that which is hard. It is still less proved that every change is a blessing or that everything old is fit only to be discarded."  

Thus Gandhiji wanted to stir our thinking to a purposive direction. It is a great revolution, that he wanted to bring about in our nation. Gandhiji stood for a graceful life of each individual member of the society unlike the order where corruption, black marketing, nepotism are rampant and where people are hankering after money the power of industrial order.

Gandhiji believed in the efficacy of our villages to

2. Ibid, p. 488.
reverence. He believed that wisdom drops from our villagers' lips. They still possess the reservoir of spirituality. He says, "In the case of Indian villager an age-old culture is hidden under an encrustation of crudeness. Take away the encrustation, remove his chronic poverty and his illiteracy, and you have the finest specimen of what a cultured, cultivated, free citizen should be."¹

The gospel of Gandhiji's economic policy for saving humanity from pestilence, poverty and bloodshed is 'serve thy neighbour'. It alone can bring a balanced growth in the society. It aims at bringing about a natural order based on truth. Thus the economic thought of Mahatma Gandhiji is revolutionary in itself. It starts from the individual. The weapons that individuals have to acquire by themselves are self-sacrifice, austerity, penance and patience to overcome lust, greed, indulgence and exploitation. Peace and happiness as the fruits of the successful implementation of Gandhiji's economics are aglow in the face of each individual. Every individual can share in this glorious quest wherever he may be and whatever may be his business in life.

Thus Gandhiji's economics deals with ennobling in just and non-violent way the tapping of the existing resources (human natural and material) by every member of the society in a manner that will help him to attain the coveted goal the goal of Truth wedded to non-violence, bringing harmony, peace and happiness to humanity.

¹. Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 510.