CHAPTER - III

GANDHIJI'S PRINCIPLES OF ECONOMICS

Gandhiji's economic order stands on certain principles which have their root in the twin virtues of non-violence (the means) and Truth (the end), in other words, 'the duty' and 'the law' that governs the well ordered society of Gandhiji's conception. They are related to:

1. Natural division of the society.
2. Making the society a busy hive by
   a) removing idleness and providing bread-labour.
   b) giving priority to skill of human hand over machines.
3. Industrialising each home and saving the society from mass exploitation.
4. Socialism - beginning with the first convert.
5. Adoption of the doctrine of 'trusteeship' to safeguard society from exploitation.

1. Natural Division of Society: The Varnashrama

Industrialism being the unnatural order, it cannot bring a balanced society where there will be full employment and equal distribution of income. If such a society with full employment and equally distributed income could be created, we shall witness equality, peace and contentment in the society. Law of Varnashrama has been placed by Gandhiji as a means to this end. Gandhiji has pointed out the
economic aspect of Varnasrama-dharma as a panacea for the economic evils of the society. ¹

The society is for the uplift of common men who agree by nature to live collectively. Society cannot stand by itself without certain laws that govern it. The laws of varna and ashram were not invented and introduced in the society. They were products of natural evolution. They were not invented but discovered by the society and were adopted as doctrine for their guidance.

"Varna" :

Gandhiji contemplates, "Varna is however no mere institution made by man but it is a law discovered by him. It cannot therefore be set aside, its hidden meaning and potentialities should be explored and utilised for the good of society. We have seen that the evil is not in the law or the institution itself, but it lies in the doctrine of superiority and inferiority which are superadded to it."²

The law of varna is universal law. It is applicable to all human beings without any reservation.

Law of varna means following the ancestral vocation for earning one's own bread. It means a pre-determined choice of man's profession. "I believe", says Gandhiji, "that every man is born in the world with certain natural tendencies. Every person is born with certain definite limitations which he cannot overcome. From a careful

². Mathur, Economic Thought, p.541
observation of those limitations the law of varna was deduced. It establishes certain spheres of operation for certain people with certain tendencies.1

A cobbler's son should earn his bread by shoe making and a farmer's son follow his father's occupation for his livelihood. The analysis of Varna as done by Gandhiji, "If man's as distinguished from lower animal's function is to know God, it follows that he must not devote the chief part of his life to making experiments in finding out what occupation will best suit him for earning his livelihood. On the contrary, he will recognise that it is best for him to follow his father's occupation, and devote his spare time and talent to qualifying himself for the task to which mankind is called."2

Varna is the natural division of the society, as per the nature of the job which Nature assigns to different members of the society, for their natural pursuit of attaining the Truth. In ancient times, it was realised that each member of the society needed four types of work for the healthy upkeep of his body, and spirit and smooth running of the society. They were 1. knowledge, 2. defence, 3. trade and 4. manual labour. Society was divided into four Varnas accordingly and this was adapted for protection against anti-social elements. These distinctions necessitated greatest cooperation and mutual help. Herein lies one of the greatest principles of co-existence i.e., 'live and let live'.

1. Tendulkar 'Mahatma\' vol. III, 1-16
2. Mathur, Economic Thought , p. 540
There is no rigidity in the Law of Varna. Gandhiji says, "It is a recognition to me of a scientific fact whether we know it or not". Every one is required to do labour without any exception of caste or varna. Human law treats all men equal. Equality means freedom to live without undue interference. From ethical point of view all men are equal but not psychologically. No two persons are identical in this world. Each man acquires knowledge according to his mental make up, physical surroundings and the degree of his efforts. Law of Varna provides each man equal rights and equal status. It is the society which shows more respect to knowledge and learning. All the varnas are described by Gandhiji as parts of one body. As head is not superior and feet inferior because of their position, and they have no entity of their own independently of the rest of the body, so is the position of all the varnas. Law of Varna does not fence all the activities of human being; it only restricts the means of earning a living. A man must choose his livelihood from the pursuits of his forefathers. For economic gains the law of Varna enjoins upon man to inherit his ways of living. The field where man expects a return for his labour is restricted to his Varna or the family trait.

Every human being is free to follow the activities of his choice but without expecting any profit therefrom. It means, a man can undertake any work besides his family trait, but he must undertake it as a hobby or as a social service.
rather than work for pecuniary gains. Gandhiji remarks,
"Every one is free to render any useful service so long
as he does not claim reward for it." Thus, man should not
demand payment for intellectual services from his fellow
members of the society.

Gandhiji has remarked that Varna of the present is
'a monstrous parody of the original'. Many evils have crept
into human nature in the name of Varnashram-dharma. We
witness that innumerable castes and subcastes have cropped
up, dividing human beings into watertight compartments. The
worst of all such evils is seen in the observance of
untouchability.

Gandhiji felt that our nation has to realise that it is
our ignorance and the breach of the moral laws which are
responsible for our suffering.

Varna has no relation with superiority or inferiority
concerning work. All types of work are equally respectable.
The work of a weaver is equal to that of a farmer or a
soldier; feeling of superiority or inferiority in respect of
work is the outcome of ignorance and selfishness. Gandhiji
clearly says, 'Varna has nothing to do with caste. Caste is
an excrescence, just like untouchability, upon Hinduism.'

We are going ahead with the sub-human rule of 'survival
of the fittest' and therefore we follow the downward trend of

1. Ibid.
2. Rathur, Economic Thought, p. 543
the mind. It militates against human nature and has brought about superiority and inferiority complex. The present education leading to shirking of manual work has added fuel to fire. Profit motive associated with this gave birth to industrialism. Introduction of industrialism in Indian economy has changed the face of Varnashram institutions altogether. Thus for example, a supervisor of the Bata Shoe Company will be respected whereas a shoe maker in his hut would be looked down upon. Shoe seller on the road side is disrespected whereas a salesman of the Bata Company is treated with respect.

Economic concepts of Varna has its basis in the 'spiritual economics', profitably applicable in a decentralised economic order. While 82 percent population of our country lives in villages, we can not ignore the law of Varna which forms the crux of our village economy.

The doctrine of 'serve thy neighbour', the essence of Gandhiji's economic thought, visualises collective living of a community and envisages actively working in the spirit of cooperation for the benefit of the community in general. This is in consonance with Varnashramdharma.

Writing on the restrictions of Varnashramacharya, Gandhiji says, "The bar altogether normal is against change of hereditary occupation for the sake of bettering one's material condition and thus setting up a system of unhealthy and ruinous competition which is today robbing life of its joy and beauty." 1

Varna ensures employment and pay on the basis of equality. It changes the motive of education. As there is predetermined field of profession, the main purpose of education will be knowledge. It will save the time and energies of the young generation, which may be channelised for greater skill in their profession and higher pursuits of life.

It presents a fine picture of division of labour in the society.

The democratic socialism could be materialised only when Varnashramdharma is revived. In the present state of industrialisation with increasing trend of centralised and large scale production, peculiar admixture of competition and monopoly and exploiting trend, it shall be only a day dream to think of democratic socialism. Gandhi says, "In an age where competition is held to be the law of life, and possession in the largest measure of world's goods the 'sumnum bonum', and every one counts oneself free to following any calling one likes, this attempt to hold up varna as the law of life may well be regarded as an idle dream, and an attempt to revive it as childish folly. Be that as it may, it is my firm conviction that it is true socialism."1

As far as talent is concerned, it will differ from person to person. It is quite likely that a few may acquire

1. Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 573
more of material wealth. But the feeling to serve the neighbour and trusteeship will equalize the wealth.

Ultimately, Varna puts an end to all the 'isms' and helps in bringing real freedom. "Let us, therefore," says Gandhiji, "pursue our callings according to our own bent and temperaments, content to earn according to our barest needs, and careless of labelling ourselves as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, etc. That will put an end to all bickerings arising out of the different 'isms' - Socialism, Communism and Gandhism."¹

The following extracts from Gandhiji's writings makes it amply clear how much faith Gandhiji had in the law of Varna: "Varna thus conceived is no man-made institution but the law of life universally governing the human family. Fulfilment of the law would make life liveable, would spread peace and content, and all clashes and conflicts, put an end to starvation and pauperisation, solve the problem of population and even end disease and suffering."²

Shirking from manual labour and taking only to intellectual pursuits of life as a profession result in the breaking up of the society into two groups, wide apart, separated by a deep gulf. It calls for different forms of human services like those of doctors and lawyers. These avocations are generally employed for selfish gains, for exploitation, and for amassing wealth rather than adopted in a spirit of social service and reducing

¹. Ratnur, Economic Thought, p. 595
². Ibid., 571
human misery. This has resulted in the enormous increase in social crimes and in self-indulgent diseases for a man always finds some one readily available to protect him against his vagaries.

As per the theory of bread-labour and varna, these two services cannot be the ground for amassing wealth. It was a matter of fact, feels Gandhiji, when there was not the ambition of encroaching on others profession and amassing wealth... And it would be quite right for any brainy carpenter to become a lawyer for service, not for money."¹

This tendency would save the society from exploitation of men by their fellow beings. Quacks and liars are there well reputed as doctors and lawyers who would come forward to save the self-indulged patients or victims of social crimes in return for a good amount, their aim being to exploit their fellow men for their selfish end. Then people change their motto of becoming inordinately rich to 'service' of their fellow being, earning their livelihood by bread-labour, and following the varna, real doctors and lawyers would be available who would dedicate their life for the right cause. People will then be afraid of self-indulging habits or doing social crimes.

Gandhiji's philosophy saves the society not from the effects of evil or disease but from the cause of the evil or the disease itself. His philosophy is such that it makes

us cautious in the beginning to ensure us that 'prevention
is better than cure'. Gandhi remarks, "what we find
To-day are freaks, and that is why there is violence and
disruption of society."\footnote{1}

Can we work for wiping out Varna from society itself? The foundation of Varna was laid down in our society by
Nature. It has come into being as a natural development in
the evolutionary process of society and not arbitrarily
forced upon it. It is the capital investment of Nature in society. Varna forms the very basis of our society. To give
up Varna means to destroy the foundation itself. Once Gandhi was asked, "The present practice is so distorted, that may it
not be the best thing to give it up altogether and begin on
a clean slate?" Gandhi replied, "Only if we were creators.
We cannot by a stroke of the pen alter Hindu nature. We can
find out a method of working the law, not destroying it."\footnote{2}
All that we need is cleansing of varnashram in practice. For
this we need drastic measures to be taken by every individual
member of society. Reshuffling of the Varna is neither possible
nor desirable in the present set up of the society which is
fast changing. Any attempt to that direction would result
in the breaking up of the society and disturbs its balance.
We may however work on certain schemes of re-construction to
save it from further degeneration, and for this introduction
of Gandhi’s economic order in the society will be the best
remedy. Varna does not admit inequality of status, it holds

\begin{quote}
1. Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 544
2. Gandhi, Varnashramadharma, p. 20
\end{quote}
service as supreme. There is no superiority or
inferiority of status in Varna; it has definitely a sense
of superiority of services -- "Capacity for superior
service but not superior status," as Gandhiji puts it. He
further adds, "The moment superior status is arrogated,
it becomes worthy of being trampled under foot." He
advocates that if any such notion has crept into the
society, it should be speedily eradicated. A deeprooted
notion of 'inequality of status' has however crept into
the society at present and this is the root cause of the
economic disparity present in the society. As a safeguard
against this evil, Gandhiji advocates that we should renovate
our society and start from the bottom, combining all the
Varnas in to one and then allow a natural development therein.
We will thereby learn the values of labour and hold it
supreme. Gandhiji suggests, let there be one Varna. This
Varna can be called Harijan. 2 "It is," feels Gandhiji, "the
so called superior that has to descend from his height, if
the reform is to be peaceful. Those who for ages have been
trained to consider themselves as the lowest in the social
scale can not suddenly have the equipment of the so called
highest classes. They can therefore rise to power only
by bloodshed, in other words by destroying society itself." 3
then we have realised this, other Varnas will evolve in
natural courses.

1. Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 544
2. Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 544
3. Ibid., 545.
The whole community has to act as trustee without any distinction of caste and creed and should try to give back to the society manifold of what they take from it. The guiding principle is, "Let us not want to be what to be what everyone else cannot be."\(^1\) Therewith Gandhiji expresses, "I would not even learn the Gita if every one who wished could not do it."\(^2\)

"Ashram":

The law of varna has another importance. It alone has the capacity to reinstate the law of ashrama. Rather, as Gandhiji feels, both of them are interlinked.\(^3\)

Law of Ashrama with its four stages viz. Brahmacharya (continent student), Grihastha (householder), Vanaprastha (retired) and Sanyasa (renouncer) has now become a dead-letter with the law of varna. It is extinct alike in profession as in observance.

Upto 25 years of age every man must lead a life of complete celibacy in thought, word and action and devote his life to learning ethics, acquiring knowledge of every day life with emphasis on his profession of Varna which shall fetch him his bread.

Next 25 years are reserved for leading a family life wherein ideals have to be practiced. Man may earn to his

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1. Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 544
2. Ibid., 545
3. Ibid., 570.
capacity, but only honestly, with hard labour and intelligence. He is enjoined upon to marry, rear children and bring them up the best possible manner, giving them training according to family trait and helping them to develop their natural trend. He has to lead a life of righteousness so as to present a living example as a guide to his children. In no circumstances indulgence should be practised. Such life alone can make a man realised the importance of controlled life. This should become the base to enter the third stage i.e. Vanaprastha Ashram.

It is the stage of transition. It is the step to go up to the final stage of Sanyasa. Sanyasa does not necessarily mean to leave the worldly life and make a cave at the Himalayas or live on the bank of some river. Really man must by this time understand the ultimate goal of life. Having fulfilled his duties as a house-holder man actually reaches a stage where he is completely free from pride, lust, material gains, etc. Here he realises that the world is the creation of God who is the actual propeller of the universal activities. He is simply a tool in His hands. He must therefore endeavour to realise this truth.

Uruhasta has all the responsibility of looking after each member of the society of other Ashrams.

The four ashramas have an economic bearing in life. The 'grahastha ashram' enjoins upon man to share his earning with other members of his family, his relations, his village, city and the country, for the good of humanity. He is dissuaded against any undue hoardings.
Grahashta ashram has a limit of 25 years which will mark the period of a man's earning under strict rules of celibacy. These rules in a very natural way introduce family planning and ensures circulation of wealth rather than its accumulation at one place for he full well understands that in the ultimate 'sanyas ashram' he has to leave everything to the world and himself live on the philanthropy of other house holders. He is therefore saved from the greed of money and chances of its accumulation at one place are reduced.

Varna and Ashrama together solve most of the problems of economics of the day like unemployment, hoarding, disparity, over population etc. Both the Laws help in limiting our material ambitions and thus conserving our energy for higher pursuits like art, skill, literature and ultimately God realisation.

2. Making the society a busy hive by:
   (a) removing idleness and introducing bread-labour:

   A sound economic proposition must have the quality of solving the problem of idleness. The problem of idleness is very grave; it remains concealed and becomes a part and parcel of our social life and our economists can not feel its gravity. It was the opinion of Gandhiji that idleness is the root cause of continuously growing poverty.

   The root of all economic evil is enforced idleness. We may be able to succeed in removing poverty and may even succeed in curbing exploitation fully, but that won't be
fruitful if idleness is not altogether eliminated. A well ordered economy will be that which employs all the hands in some kind of productive work at least as a measure of bread-labour. Gandhiji is of opinion, "It is not the (economic) drain that matters so much as poverty, and it is not even poverty that matters so much as idleness which was at first enforced, and has now become a habit that matters. The (economic) drain may be stopped and poverty is merely a symptom, but idleness is the great cause, the root of all evil, and if that can be destroyed most of the evils can be remedied without further effort." 1

Idleness of the villages killed the very soul of our nation that repose on villages. Hands are the priceless gift to human beings. But they are neglected and kept away from their natural function. The two primary needs of human beings, food and clothing, form the vital necessities of life. It calls for physical efforts to fulfil these basic needs. A man devoid of physical labour of some kind cannot achieve his life's objective.

During British rule in India many hands were deprived of their work and remained idle where in the 18th century A.D. mill industry was introduced in England and British made cloth made its appearance in Indian market. Our village weavers could not stand in competition with this cheap mass production and as a result village charkha and looms became idle in villages.

The fact that villages have become living sculptures is mainly due to this unnatural state of inertia which is a corollary of idleness. "It is a tragedy" feels Gandhiji, "of the first magnitude that millions have ceased to use their hands as hands. Nature is revenging upon us with terrible effect for this criminal waste of the gift she has bestowed upon human beings. We refuse to make full use of the gift. And it is the exquisite mechanism of the hands that among a few other things separates us from the beast. Millions of us use them merely as feet. The result is that she starves both the body and the mind."¹ Reasonable comforts to these villages can be achieved, without the least dislocation of the general economy prevailing in the country as a whole, if this idleness can be shed. ²

Idleness is a form of violence. Our villages therefore are standing on violence. Non-violent economics succeed in removing this idleness completely. Addressing the Burmese at Foulmain, Gandhiji said that one, who follows the teachings of Budha, cannot afford to be idle even for a single minute. One, "who idles away a single minute, becomes to that extent a burden upon his neighbours and to do so is to commit a breach of the very first lesson of ahimsa."³

Gandhiji feels, "My experiments in Ahimsa have taught me that non-violence in practice means common labour with the body. A Russian philosopher, Bodaraf, has called it

¹. Rathur, Economic Thought, p. 78
². Ibid., p. 498
³. Ibid., p. 115
bread-labour. It means closest co-operation."

Gandhiji founded two colonies in South Africa. Narrating his experiences he writes, "Thirtyfour years of continuous experience and experimenting in Truth and non-violence have convinced me that non-violence cannot be sustained unless it is linked to conscious body-labour and finds expression in our daily contact programme."  

In the present developed society, we see that there are clubs where different, games are arranged so as to keep the body fit and proper appetite may be felt while at the same time providing a media for recreation. This is not the natural way to fulfil the need of the body and the mind. Our routine work should be such as to employ the hands in some kind of productive work to such an extent that games may not be felt necessary for kindling appetite. Gandhiji once remarked, "Millions cannot keep themselves fit by games and athletics. And why should they exchange the useful, productive hardy occupations for the useless, un-productive and expensive games and exercises? They are all right to-day for a change and recreation. They will jar upon us when they become a necessary occupation in order that we may have the appetite for eating the food in the production of which we had no hand or part." 

Work should be in some way connected with fulfilling our necessities of life. If such work is not taken as

1. Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 599
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 488.
drudgery, then we shall enjoy it in the natural way. It shall become a game to us. Even the work of shoodras then will be revered and enjoyed. It is the motto that governs the rule of recreation. The more we do a work prescribed under the circumstances with interest and feeling of service and duty, the better must we feel.

This had been the reason why Gandhiji could not appreciate reducing the working hours to 4 or even less, being the view of socialists like Bertrand Russell and others. Reducing labour hours shall only be profitable when it is fully paid to meet the two ends and made to take up intellectual and artistic pursuits for the rest half period thus saved.

Bread Labour: The theory of bread labour is more or less a solution for removing the greatest evil of our economic and social order i.e., idleness. One will lose the incentive if he has not to work for his own bread. Gandhiji says, "We must work for our bread, that we eat our bread by the sweat of our brow."¹

It is the claim of Gandhiji, "If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry for over population, no disease and no such misery as we see around. Such labour will be the highest form of sacrifice."² Bread labour has the quality of removing inequality and makes for true culture.

¹. Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 500
². Ibid., 574.
Sacrifice must be the bounden duty of each member of society who wishes to eat righteously. Bread-labour is one of the forms of sacrifice. Gandhiji quotes the Gita and the Bible to show its religious ties. From the Gita he quotes "... who eats without offering sacrifice eats stolen food", (sacrifice is explained as bread labour by Gandhiji). From the Bible, "In the sweat of the brow shalt thou eat thy bread."¹

Bread-labour is a panacea for many evils and miseries (e.g., disguised unemployment, social crimes etc.) facing the economic scene today. Besides tackling the greatest evil of today (i.e., idleness itself), it has the capacity to bring equality, health, and moral wellbeing.

The essence of bread labour is "the needs of the body must be supplied by the body". Body labour differs from intellectual labour. Gandhiji says, "Mere mental, that is intellectual labour is for the soul and is its own satisfaction. It should never demand payment. In the ideal state, doctors, lawyers and the like will work solely for the benefit of the society, not for self."² It is the highest form of sacrifice.

Intellectual labour cannot be compared with bread labour just as we cannot compare intellectual food with the foodgrains we eat.

¹. Mathur, Economic Thought, p.613.
². Mathur, Economic Thought, p.574
Gandhiji says, "Nature compels animals to work and live naturally. We have so debased our working classes that they can not work and live naturally. If our people had laboured intelligently and with joy, we should have been quite different today."

"Work and culture cannot be separated then!"

"No. They tried to do it in ancient Rome and failed miserably!" It is due to avoiding the natural routine work and adopting indulgence that the great civilisation of Greece, Roma and the Yadavaya dynasty saw their downfall. Bread labour is the panacea for the ills of civilisation.

Physical labour undertaken for sustenance will develop 'love' in a man, provided the work is not taken as drudgery. We cannot make distinction in different sorts of labour. All are equal. It is due to ignorance that scavenging is taken to be the lovest work in society. 'Evacuation: is as necessary as eating'. Gandhi therefore remarks, "I have felt for years, that there must be something radically wrong, where scavenging has been made the concern of a separate class in society." Further he gives its solution, "We should from our very childhood, have the idea impressed upon our minds that we are all scavengers, and the easiest way of doing so is, for every one who has realised this, to commence bread-labour as a scavenger. Scavenging, thus intelligently taken up, will help one to a true appreciation of the equality of man." 

1. Mathur, Economic Thought, p.581
2. Ibid., p.581
3. Ibid., p.614.
This will undoubtedly inspire us with dignity of labour. The class distinction of society according to different types of manual labour must go. There should not be great disparity in remuneration between different types of manual work since all manual work is the same.

We must remember that bread labour is not to be undertaken under compulsion nor with the only motive of keeping body fit. Gandhiji enjoins, "Compulsory obedience to a master is a state of slavery, willing obedience to one's father is the glory of the sonship. Similarly, compulsory obedience to the law of bread-labour breeds poverty, disease and discontent. It is a state of slavery. Willing obedience to it must bring contentment and health." ¹

The ideal bread-labour has its connection with food, the supreme necessity of man. This bread-labour calls for each individual to do some manual labour connected with producing food i.e., agriculture. "This labour can truly be related to agriculture alone. But at present at any rate, everybody is not in a position to take to it. A person can therefore spin or weave or take up carpentry or smithery instead of tilling the soil, always regarding agriculture however to be the ideal." ²

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2. Ibid., p.614.
Intelectual labour has connection with the soul. Its motto should in no case be monetary gain, otherwise it will hamper the very purpose of intelligence. It should be utilised with care and without prejudice.

As Gandhiji feels, "Intellectual work is important and has an undoubted place in the scheme of life. But that I insist on, is the necessity of physical labour. No man, I claim, ought to be free from that obligation. It will serve to improve even the quality of his intellectual output." It is clear that even persons like Rabindranath and Raman must do some kind of bread labour. Division of labour may then be questioned here. Gandhiji favours division of labour. But that cannot be on the ground of keeping distinctions between intellectual labour and bodily labour. Intellectual labour should not come in the way of division of labour. Bodily labour is necessary for the up-keep of the body whereas intellectual labour is essential for the up-keep of the mind. Neglect of any one will lead to deficiency in human life and therefore in society. Hence, says Gandhiji, "Bodily sustenance should come from bodily labour, and intellectual labour is necessary for the culture of the mind. Division of labour there will necessarily be, but it will be a division into various species of bodily labour and not a division into

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1 Mathur, Economic Thought, p.629.
intellectual labour to be confined to another class.\(^1\)
Thus according to Gandhi division of labour has a
different purpose to be solved and that is to bring
equality and making each individual to do some type
of bread-labour. Ignorance of this law is the cause
of our idleness in India. Gandhi advocated, "Our
compulsory or voluntary idleness has to go. If it does
not go, no panacea will be of any avail, and semi-
starvation will remain the eternal problem that it is."\(^2\)

Culture is the outcome of such labour. We lost our
culture due to our idleness that enveloped our society
with the change in the economic front. We lost our age-
old glorious culture as we took our work as drudgery.
Our status would have been quite different to-day if our
people had laboured intelligently and with joy. We are non-
plussed when we think of adopting bread-labour because we
prefer that instruction which ensures good return for
little or no exertion. This goes against Gandhi's
teaching. "Culture without labour, "says Gandhi,"or
culture which is not the fruit of labour, would be
'vomitoria' as a Roman Catholic writer says. The Romans
made indulgence a habit, and were ruined. Man cannot
develop his mind by simply writing and reading or making
speeches all day long."\(^3\) It is due to neglecting the
principle of bread-labour that inferiority and superiority

\(^{1}\) Rethur, Economic Thought, p. 291
\(^{2}\) Ibid
\(^{3}\) Ibid., p. 561.
complex cropped up in our society in ever widening scale.
Manual labour is the most disrespected in our modern economy
resulting in two classes found in society; viz. capitalist
and labour. This has deflected economics to a different
channel.

Bread-labour helps in limiting our wants, while at the
same time reducing luxuries to the minimum and promoting
happier, healthier and peaceful life. It does not mean that
it reduces the production and consumption function of a
society as a whole. It increases the productive capacity and
skill of each individual. It raises the standard of living
from below and to a great extent reduces the luxurious way of
life of the richer class and thus presents a unique economic
set up as well as social equilibrium. Production definitely
increases but with the least problem of 'surplus production'
and 'created scarcity'.

Count for national income of a country calls for two
factors:

a) Services (total) rendered.
b) Goods (total) produced.

Thus wealth of a nation consists of goods produced with
the help of actual human labour and skill employed. It does
not reckon the work of large scale machineries. Importance
of manual labour and its contribution in reckoning a national
income can not therefore be under-estimated.
Giving priority to skill of human hand over machines:

Gandhiji asserts, "Nations are tired of the worship of lifeless machines multiplied ad-infinitem. We are destroying the matchless living machines, viz. our own bodies by leaving them to rust and trying to substitute lifeless machinery for them. It is a law of God that the body must be fully worked and utilised. We dare not ignore it."¹ We are forgetting gradually that our body is a living machine, more valuable, more precious, having no comparison with machine. Therefore we care more and more for acquiring machines of modern type instead of bringing skills in our hands. Bread-labour aims at fulfilling the gap between untapped human hands and machines.

Gandhiji says, "Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour."² This statement makes it clear that he was not antagonistic to the machinery. The supermost necessity of life viz. food has to be produced by ploughing which is undertaken with the help of a machine (i.e., plough). There is conditional clause added to the use of machinery which limits its use. The condition is human labour should not be supplanted by machine, rather machine has to provide chance for using untapped human labour.

The inner meaning is far deeper and much more important which has to be valued. It has already been discussed that

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¹ Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 54
² Ibid., p. 470.
laziness leads a man to losing his precious faculties. That machine which replaces human labour and makes him lazy is fatal for all round development of man. "The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man." It is clear that machines should be used in a limited sphere. We must limit the machinery "just where they cease to help the individual and encroach upon his individuality. The machine should not be allowed to cripple the limbs of man."  

Gandhiji was asked "Ideally would you not rule out all machinery? When you accept the sewing machine you will have to make exceptions of the bicycle, the motor car etc" Gandhiji replied, "No. I don't, because they do not satisfy any of the primary wants of man, for it is not the primary need of man to traverse distances with the rapidity of a motor car. The needle, on the contrary, happens to be an essential thing in life a primary need. Ideally, however, I would rule out all machinery, even as I would reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation, and seek the absolute liberation of the soul. From that point of view, I would reject all machinery, but machines will remain because like body they are inevitable."

It may be argued that attainment of this extreme ideal is unimaginable. But man must have the ideal before him. It is but evident that machines have to be used but limit has to be there. That is essential in using the machine is that it should not be the basis for exploitation as it is found in

1. Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 475  
2. Ibid., p. 476  
3. Ibid.,
industrial age. History of the industrial revolution is a history of exploitation of one class by another or of backward countries by advanced nations and competition among developed countries in contriving higher grade of machinery. Gandhiji's earnest plea in this connection was, "The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian considerations, and not greed, the motive. ... replace greed by love and every thing will come right."\(^1\)

Under the village economy of Gandhiji, a village should protect"... any machinery which does not deprive masses of men of the opportunity to labour, but which helps the individual and adds to his efficiency, and which a man can handle at will without being its slave."\(^2\)

Machine has great relation with the economic system. The extent of its use, the degree of its invention and adoption all are related with the economic structure and therefore the condition of the masses.

Gandhiji says, "My machinery must be of the most elementary type which I can put in the homes of the millions."\(^3\) "The heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour has its inevitable place; but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people."\(^4\)

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1. Rathur, Economic Thought, p. 476
2. Ibid., p. 496
3. Rathur, Essays, p. 37
4. Ibid., p. 36.
Ingenuity in human skill: We have seen that economics to be worth anything must keep the human being in the forefront. It must observe the human faculties to grow with little hindrance. There had been many inventions of the side of technology, but most of them were at the cost of decay of the hidden human ingenuity. There is unknown and untold skill in human hands. More of ingenuity of machines and technology is smothering this gift of God. Lifeless machinery is becoming the hindrance for ingenuity in human skill. Finest cloth with charming colours and designs prepared by our people with the least help of machinery and without the cotton research institute of the modern type is the story of our country well known to every one. Our old palaces, Loha Stambha of Delhi, the Tajmahal, our temples, ivory works, brass and other vessels and innumerable instances can be cited which had been the living proof of the skill of hand and not the skill of machinery.

It is a well known historical fact regarding India, that she had been the pioneer in setting aesthetic standards in cotton fabrics. When people of different countries were so backward as not to know the use of cloth, India developed a taste in finest fabrics in a variety of colours. It is usually forgotten that decay of this very industry was mainly due to the exploiting tendency of the East India Company and later of the British regime. The sorrowful fate of India was the result of accepting machine made cloth in place of hand spun and hand woven cloth.
"Advice has been given to me" remarks Gandhiji, "that I must look for salvation in the direction of using the powers of nature that the inventive brain of man has brought under subjection. The critics say that water, air, oil and electricity should be fully utilized as they are being utilized in the go ahead West. They say that control over these hidden powers of nature enables every American to have 33 slaves. "Repeat the process in India, and I dare say that it will thirtythree times enslave every inhabitant of this land instead of giving everyone thirtythree slaves."¹

Our greatest problem is to find additional employment to 60 percent of our villagers, who are idle for at least 4 months in a year. Western economy standing on cut-throat competition and exploitation cannot be exemplary to India. We need go deep into that Gandhiji warns; "Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred snakes."²

3. **Industrialism and Exploitation**

Western economics has its base on industrialism. There are marvolo and miraculous achievements under industrialism which have been witnessed by the spectators of the world and therefore industrialism attracts many. Spectacular achievements like huge production with the least exertion to labour, while, at the same time providing them lucrative employment and better living and working conditions, highly developed, quick and comfortable means of transportation and communication etc. appeal to the minds of people and create a favourable atmosphere.

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² Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 473
in favour of industrialism. Western economics is therefore, naturally holding an ever growing importance in the studies of humanities.

Gandhiji had little attraction towards industrial revolution and Western economics. As far as India is concerned, Gandhiji believed that industrialism and Western economics do not fit-in here and therefore he disdained them on economic, social, moral and cultural grounds. The primary objection against industrialism and Western Economics was, that this institution was based on selfish ends. Therefore, it cannot stand on such means which are non-violent and therefore harmful in the end to the society as a whole. It follows the rule of 'survival of the fittest'. In other words this institution is knitted to exploitation.

Gandhiji explains industrialism thus: "WHAT IS INDUSTRIALISM BUT A CONTROL OF THE MAJORITY BY A SMALL MINORITY? THERE IS NOTHING ATTRACTIVE ABOUT IT NOR IS THERE ANYTHING INEVITABLE IN IT. IF THE MAJORITY SIMPLY WILLS TO SAY 'NO' TO THE CLAMOROUS .MENTS OF THE MINORITY THE LATTER IS POWERLESS FOR MISCHE."

Control of the majority by the minority is a psychological factor. The minority undertakes the production of articles on a mass scale at a cheaper cost, with attractive designs with the result that the masses feel it essential to have such articles to lead a more cultured way of life. This atmosphere

1. Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 476
is brought about through various advertising media like newspapers, cinema, magazines, radio, television etc., which are under the control of these minorities. Man is so much captivated by this minority blandishment that he is not able to free himself of it. His thoughts are now so much taken up with this modernity cult as it may be called, that he feels it to be natural Industrialism has thus become the order of the day. This has marred independent thinking.

Self-centeredness promotes industrialism. Cheapness of articles attracts a self-centered man or a man without independent thought. This psychology of man is the cause for the minority controlling the majority and the concentration of wealth in a few hands.

Exploitation is easier in large scale production. Large scale production is not possible without the accumulated wealth. When tendency to produce things on large scale increases there will be concentration and uneven distribution of wealth in the society. More wealth helps more concentration of wealth and power and with it more greed. These tendencies lead to automation. All these are abscesses on the economic structure of society. No amount of effort on the top by government can be successful in rearranging the economy on equality basis until this greed is weaned or people become aware of the defects of industrialism. Gandhi clearly says, 'No man can amass wealth without the co-operation willing or forced of the people concerned.'
A cycle of industrialism as per Gandhi's view can be put as under:

"INDUSTRIALISM—EXPLOITATION—CRAVING FOR MARKET—WAR"

Path (or track) of this industrial cycle is 'selfishness'.

Selfishness here means that poor would fain become rich and rich the richer—all without the least consideration of their neighbour. Gandhi felt that such psychology of man is detrimental to the economic as well as the social and ethical order of the society. It is at the cost of sufferings to the majority that industrialism could go ahead. Gandhi has clarified the picture thus: "If you want to become inordinately rich you must draw on other countries and impoverish them. If you want an inflated head— I know it from experience,—you must draw on all the other limbs of the body. In fact you will have to do more. For exploitation will not be enough. You will have to arm yourselves to fight with other countries for trade monopolies. I want to save India from the catastrophe of ruinous exploitation." "Exploitation brings in its train the craving for market and that brings war." ¹

Industrialism is nothing but the game of capitalism and an invisible dictatorship. Therefore it must bear the evils of capitalism and bureaucracy. No amount of socialisation can turn its track of greed and selfishness and therefore

¹ Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 464.
exploitation, struggle for market and war. Neither the
exploited nor the exploiter can be benefitted when it is
studied on individual basis.

Criticising Pandit Jawaharal Nehru's opinion on
industrialism Gandhiji says, "Pd. Nehru wants industrialisation
because he thinks, that if it is socialised, it would be
free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that the
evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of
socialisation can eradicate them.⁴⁴ Gandhiji realised well
that perfect equality is a blasphemy but that does not mean
that grave inequalities can not be removed. In no circumstances
industrialism of the age can remove the poverty. Gandhiji
says, "I cannot picture to my self a time when no man shall
be richer than another. But I do picture to my self a time
when the rich will spurn to enrich themselves at the expense
of the poor and the poor will cease to envy the rich. Even
in a most perfect world, we shall fail to avoid inequalities,
but we can and must avoid strife and bitterness. "² Strife
and bitterness, very common to industrial civilisation, have
their root in violence rooted in selfishness. Clashes of
self interest generate strife and bitterness and which in
turn sow the seeds of war.

If the majority think in terms of helping their neighbours
and be of some service to them, their whole activities will
take a turning point. The majority will then adjust their

1. Rathur, Economic Thought, p.514
2. Ibid., p. 403.
earnings and their expenditure with the idea of serving the neighbour. This is what the economics of Gandhiji has to teach to the masses. Under the non-violent economic order no one should be party to concentration of wealth and exploitation.

The cycle of industrialisation (industrialisation—exploitation—craving for market—war) will have different phases under the non-violent economic order:

"DECENTRALISED INDUSTRIALISATION>SELF HELP AND MUTUAL HELP>SELF RELIANT ECONOMY>PEACE"

The keynote path of this cycle is 'help thy neighbour'.

India has been, since ages past, believer in non-violence. In the whole history of India we don't find that she had ever attacked other countries for the sake of extending her territory or for harassing other people or with some other selfish motive; rather she had to suffer all these from the outside world.

We are no doubt tempted with material advancement and are swayed by the general notion that we shall stand no where in the world if we do not become consonant with the awakening world of the West. More so we accept the notion that the bullock cart economy is backward economy and following the same is retreating to dark ages. Gandhiji had a different opinion. He strongly feels, "India's destiny lies not along the bloody way of the West, of which she shows signs of tiredness, but along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and godly life. India is in danger of losing
hor soul. She cannot lose it and live.\(^1\) Further he warns not to helplessly adopt ourselves to the circumstances saying, 'I can not escape the on-rush from the West.' "I do not believe" emphasises Gandhiji, "that industrialisation is necessary in any case for any country. It is much less so for India. Indeed I believe that Independent India can only discharge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting a simple but ennobled life by developing her thousands of cottages and living at peace with the world."\(^2\)

Our civilisation and culture had been the bulwark of our economy and also peace and contentment of the country which was not shaken even at a time when highly civilized nations saw their ruin gradually. We were not affected by the ruin of other parts of the world. Since the influence of industrial civilisation has entered our nation and since we were compelled to loosen our self-reliant economic order, we have witnessed our downfall. We cannot remove our poverty by following the West. Gandhiji believes, "Pauperism must go. But industrialism is no remedy. The evil does not lie in the use of bullock-carts. It lies in our selfishness and want of consideration for our neighbours. If we have no love for our neighbours, no chance however revolutionary can do us any good."\(^3\) History of India's ruin can be traced to the history of cotton manufacture. The Decay of India was due to the reason that we lost our pride of position in respect of cotton manufactures. Rs.60 crores worth of cloth was imported

2. Ibid, p. 517
from Great Britain every year in the early years of the
20th century — a period of India's decay.

During that period Gandhiji remark, "India was suffering
from a triple curse, the curse of disease — disease not of
normal but of an abnormal kind, the curse of want of food and
lastly that of want of clothing. All proceeded largely from
the same cause, poverty, and poverty was due largely to the
economic drain."

This drain can be divided into two categories:-
1. material; and 2. intellectual. Gandhiji quotes the example
of raw hide which was exported from India to the time of
Rs. 9 crores annually. This alone would not have been so bad
if it were not linked with the import of manufactured leather
goods from other countries. "This means not only a material,
but also an intellectual drain." Tanning requires great
technical skill and, chemical knowledge for different
combination of colours.

The British invasion of Indian life would not have been
so fatal if the spinning wheel that revolved in every home of
our villages would have remained revolving. Its stoppage
brought about poverty along with idleness. People lost their
self-respect and began to appreciate industrialism. If our
people had been industrious they would not have given way to
industrialism to enter into our economic scene. It is our

2. Ibid, 294.
weakness that is responsible for our own drain (material and intellectual).

If we want to industrialise our country, we must exploit other countries too. Gandhiji says, "...unless India becomes an exploiting nation and discovers new nations to exploit, or unless an independent India develops brute strength enough to compel the nations of the West to buy the goods that she may dump down on their soil as India is virtually compelled today to receive goods dumped down on her soil, India must, if she is to rid herself of her economic distress, manufacture the articles of necessity in her own cottage just as she produces her corn, the prime necessity of life, in her own field." At another time Gandhiji says, "Don't you see that if India becomes industrialized, we should need a Nadirshah to find out other worlds to exploit, that we shall have to compete ourselves against the naval and military power of Britain and Japan and America, of Russia and Italy? My head reels to think of these rivalries."

Cottage industry does not mean production on small scales or less production. It means production by the masses as per their needs. This keeps up the case of rural civilisation. Industrialism cannot be developed on rural civilisation. It is rather fatal to it. It urbanises the nation. India consists of villages where 82 percent of her population live. We can not support the country by urbanising it. Urbanised India will be a curse to humanity as a whole. Under such economic order we shall part away with all the graces of life.

1. Baxthur, Economic Thought, p. 127
No doubt industrialism is the outcome of man's strenuous efforts and his intelligence. His application of intelligence and efforts are just like that of the greedy kind Midas who suffered penance to obtain the grace of the Sun God. He did succeed in achieving the desired ambition. He was conferred the boon - a most happy choice for him. But that very boon he could not enjoy and it turned to be a curse to him. Man can satisfy his greed in the form of money and modern luxurious life but it will be at the cost of his own degradation, slavery to the senses, and ruin of the happiness of the society.

India has a mission and that is to arrest industrialisation and exploitation. This can be done by herself adopting the village economy. If she follows the Western economy, "India and with it the whole world will certainly go headlong to ruin."  

We may say that the railway, aeroplane, telecommunication etc., are the outcome of industrialism. They do immense good to the society. How can we afford to leave them and live in the dark ages? What really holds us back is our intellectual dependence and slavery of mind which makes us feel our dependency on them. Gandhiji points out, "We must not suffer exploitation for the sake of steamship and telegraphs. They are in no way indispensable for the permanent welfare of the human race. 'By that we know the use of steam and electricity, we should be able to use them on due occasion and after us"

have learnt to avoid industrialism. Our concern is therefore to destroy industrialism at any cost."  

4. Socialism beginning with the first convert:

Gandhiji had parallel views with Marx and fully endorsed his definition of the ultimate aim of socialism, viz. 'From each according to his ability to each according to his need.' This is an ideal which can never be reached yet it will ever inspire people to aspire for it and in this effort to achieve the objective they will certainly gain a high standard of morality to be reflected in their daily life.

Marx's objective was to create a state of 'statelessness'. Gandhiji upholds this viewpoint, but his approach to the subject is gradual, humanitarian and ethical.

Both Gandhi and Marx differ only in the matter of approach in the means to achieve the end. Their views in this respect are as poles apart and the gulf can never be bridged. About the means to be adopted Gandhiji clearly says, 'The socialism is as pure as crystal. It therefore requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end.' Marx claims to base his approach on historical background wherein class struggle becomes inevitable throughout. He believes in attacking capitalism ruthlessly and rejects the idea of gradual development. Both Marx and Engels believed in meeting force with force. According to Marx, 'Force is the midwife of every society pregnant with a new one'.

1. Rathur, Economic Thought, p. 482  
2. William Z. Foster: 'History of Three Internationals': p. 29
They therefore advocated that the working class has to fight against the ruling class in order to win and preserve its freedom and should use every form of force and violence to force their way through. Marx regarded workers to be "the historical grave diggers of capitalism". As a result therefore a wide gulf was created between the capitalist and the working class. It infused into them hatred for each other. Use of force came in the forefront. Retaliation followed at close heels. Thus a regular strife with violence and bloodshed became a common sight throughout the history of the Marxist struggle.

Both Gandhiji and Marx were of the opinion that production of basic necessities should not be in the hands of capitalists and monopolised. They should be in the hands of the masses. But from the meaning deduced from Marx's theory it is contemplated that Marx preferred large scale industries and centralisation. Gandhiji's emphasis was on adopting decentralised way of production of the basic necessities of life.

Gandhiji has infused a revolutionary spirit amongst the masses but it was a peaceful revolution based on change of heart and spirit of love, tolerance, selfrestraint and morality. As a result, unlike Marx's revolution it would not estrange the working class from the capitalists, but would give place to better human relationship. Marx could never visualise this for he only believed in dialectical materialism and would not recognise the force of the spirit as distinct from the material domain which extends only up to the mental
level. Gandhiji on the other hand boldly asserts that the true entity of a man is not confined to his mind but extends beyond and rests in the spirit.

Socialism Defined: "Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware, in socialism all the members of society are equal. None low none high. In the individual body, the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism."¹ This explanation leaves no room for any doubt. The problem of division of labour is solved. The source of energy for each person is society itself and none will be separated from the society. Each will do his prescribed duty in his own sphere and still will not have a separate entity from the state. "In it the prince and peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level."² This is the picture of democratic socialism. Gandhiji enjoins: "the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all,"³ is democracy.

Socialism begins with the first convert: It is the central fact of Gandhiji's thought. He says, "Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros

¹. Rathur, Economic Thought, p.631, 32.
². Ibid., p.632.
³. Ibid., p. 21.
to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.  

Now we are confronted with a very pertinent question whether all this is a mere preaching and will ever remain a dogma or it can be given a practical shape. Gandhiji lays a crystal-clear condition and that condition is the change of heart and therefore change of life. He says, "But in order to reach this state, we may not look on the things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life, we may go on giving addresses and forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the further it must recede from us." Even a king can be a socialist by becoming a servant of the people.

Gandhiji strongly advocated the adoption of the way of love. He would support neither beheading nor abdication but conversion through love because the other two ways create only hatred.

People generally criticize Gandhiji's concept of socialism on the ground that it promotes private ownership

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1. Natkur, Economic Thought, p.632
2. Ibid.,
and private property. This question does not arise when Gandhiji treats society as a whole as one unit like the body of man with different portions all connected together and in no way separable. Really it is the highest state that can be reached. Everyone will work with his ability and full capacity but with a spirit of sacrifice and help for each other. Love is the binding element in them.

Gandhiji attached non-economic values with the economic progress. Dr. J.S. Mathur opines, "We plan to increase the national income very quickly; we plan for an equitable distribution of the increased national income mostly through fiscal measures. In brief, we plan to improve the standard of living of the people. We, however, do not plan the non-economic life. We do not consciously plan that citizens will become more law abiding, more truthful, more co-operative, more democratic etc."

Unto this Last: Gandhiji got the inspiration mainly from the book 'Unto the Last,' written by Ruskin. Gandhiji writes, "I believe that I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin, and that is why it so captured me and made me transform my life." The teachings of 'Unto the Last as accumulated by Gandhiji was:

1. The good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as a barber's in as much as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.

3. That a life of labour, the life of a tiller of the soil or a handicraftsmen is the life worth living. ¹

Gandhiji felt that such socialism is not new to us. He says, "Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended, socialism, even Communism, is explicit in the first verse of Isopanishad. What is true is that when some reformers lost faith in the method of conversion, the technique of what is known as scientific Socialism was born."²

The socialism of Gandhiji is a pious term with pure objectives having a non-violent base which knows no class-conflict which seems to be the essential part of socialism. Gandhiji opines, "Class war is foreign to the essential genius of India, which is capable of evolving Communism on the fundamental rights of all on equal justice. Ramrajya of my dream ensures rights alike of prince and pauper."³

5. Trusteeship:

In the theory of distribution on Gandhiji's lines trusteeship holds an important place. Trusteeship provides a non-violent means to relagate violent distribution of income and wealth in the society. Disparities of a wide nature have persisted in the society for generations. These cannot be wiped out completely, but with the growth of society, it needs curbing to a great extent.

¹ Gandhi, Sarvodaya, p.4
² Kher, Op. Cit., p.70
Trusteeship is for them who are better privileged than their neighbours. There is some deeper meaning in the idea of trusteeship and that is to go nearer to truth by following the path of 'serve thy neighbour'.

The nature's law that Gandhiji adhered to is that everything belonged to God and was from God. That means all the members of society have equal right over Nature's produce. One who has more than his common requirement, cannot claim the right over it. He may be a labourer or an industrialist, "that belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others."\(^1\) Equality demands from us that we should become the trustee of the surplus that we possess or earn for them who are in need of the same or with whose help we earn the surplus.

Gandhiji stood against possession. He pronounces, "Theoretically when there is perfect love, there must be perfect non-possession."\(^2\) At the same time Gandhiji realised that imperfection will be there attached with us till we possess body. Further continues Gandhiji, "The body is our last possession. So a man can only exercise perfect love and be completely dispossessed, if he is prepared to embrace death and renounce his body for the sake of human service."\(^3\) Perfect equality may be a matter for the distant future, still to go a step further towards it means to remove the present and the future distress of the society, thus progressing towards a

1. Rathur, Economic Thought, p. 594
2. Ibid, p. 57a.
3. Ibid., p. 57a.
non-violent economic order. Gandhi then elaborates his statement, "Life on earth would be governed far more by love than it is at present. Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's definition of a point and inequality unattainable. But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realizing a state of equality on earth than by any other method." 1

Persons possessing extra wealth than ordinarily needed, are bound by ties of duty to treat their extra possessions as belonging to a trust and themselves as trustees of the same. The surplus is to be utilized for the upkeep and maintenance of the depressed class. Trustees can not regard themselves as patrons or benefactors of the people. By becoming trustees they do not confer obligation on people, though they get the right to become trustee of their own surplus to perform an honourable duty." 2

Gandhi declares "The rich moneyed man who made his riches by exploitation or other questionable means, was not less guilty of robbery than the thief who picked a pocket or broke into a house and committed theft. Only the former took refuge behind the facade of responsibility and escaped the penalty of law." 3 In the present industrialism and capitalist set up of the economy we have already discussed how rich classes gather their riches. Gandhi was of the opinion, "No person can amass wealth without the co-operation, willing or forced, of the people concerned." 4 That is evident

1. Ibid.
is that richness has been acquired by the few members of the society violently and the majority (the havenots) unconsciously becomes the party who help the rich class (the havees) to grow inordinately rich. The havenots are duped and are still in the dark. All this is pure violence which only breeds more violence. It is inevitable that in the state of affairs a superior violence will crush down this violent class (of capitalists). Therefore says Gandhiji, "A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good." 

Gandhiji thus introduces an egalitarian society where grave inequality, personal possession of riches, inheritance of property right, persistence of two distinct classes of capital and labour are wiped out from the society which forms the basic characteristic of capitalism. We can not attribute Gandhiji's economic thought to be a measure to reform the capitalism. Gandhiji's thought strikes at the very root of capitalism resting in the right of possession and inheritance. Profit motive which is the generating force of capitalism is treated by Gandhiji on a different line.

Moreover, Gandhiji opposed industrialism and large scale or mechanised production of the basic needs. Under capitalism centralised concentration of power and wealth like bureaucracy, large scale production, inheritance of property etc., are upheld. To quote Cole, '... Under conditions of large-scale operation, central bureaucracies have a strong tendency to gather more and more power into their hands and to choose yes-men to occupy key subordinate posts.'¹ Again to quote Aldous Huxley, 'By supplying the ruling oligarchy with more effective instruments of coercion and persuasion, applied science has contributed directly to the centralisation of power in the hands of the few. But it has also made important indirect contributions to the same end. It has done it in two ways; first by introducing over large areas of the industrial and agricultural economy the methods of large-scale mass production and mass distribution; second by creating, through its very progressiveness, an economic and social insecurity which drives all those concerned, owners and managers, no less than workers, to seek the assistance of the national state.'²

The ultimate goal of Gandhiji and scientific socialism communism (i.e. a class-less and state-less society) may be treated as the same but there is little ground of similarity between the two. Gandhiji believed in natural course to be

¹ Cole, G.U.H., The Case for Industrial p-74; (quoted in the paper prepared for a symposium by Dr. J.S.Mathur on 'The Relevance of Gandhian Ideas to Contemporary Indian Society' organised by the Gandhi Bhavan, University of Alld. 2. Huxley, Aldous, 'Science, Liberty and Peace,'p-12, ab-cit.
adopted to bring about a reform and did not believe in hasty and quick action. There can not be a sudden make shift in society. If individual's mind and heart are not changed and instead, some force or violence does the miracle in bringing about a reform, it shall not be able to stand on its own legs.

For Gandhiji's approach of reform, change in individual mind and heart is the first condition to achieve success. It is a measure to give supreme importance to individual freedom.

It is the degree of understanding between the masses and the classes that determines the efficacy of one's ideals. Communist ideology is totally antagonistic to the capitalist or the employer class (the haves). It created hatred towards that class. Gandhiji was of the opinion that what is obtained by love is retained for all time and what is obtained by hatred proves a burden in reality. It increases hatred. Therefore it is the duty of human being is to diminish hatred and to promote love. There is hatred in the communist slogan 'loot the looters'. Gandhiji suggests that, means should justify the end, but, a communist ideology holds that end justifies the means. As Lenin says, 'It is necessary, to use any ruse, cunning, unlawful method, evasion, concealment of truth.'

Gandhiji did not believe in hatching perennial conflict or ill will between the employer and the employee or between the exploited and the exploiter. He says, "I never said that there should be co-operation between the exploiter

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1. Shukla Chandrashekhar: Gandhi's View of Life: p. 89
and the exploited so long as exploitation and the will to exploit persists. Only I do not believe that the capitalists and the landlords are all exploiters by an inherent necessity, or that there is a basic or irreconciliable antagonism between their interests and those of the masses. All exploitation is based on cooperation, willing or forced, of the exploited."¹ Gandhiji says, "What is needed is not the extinction of landlords and capitalists, but a transformation of the existing relationship between them and the masses into something healthier and purer."² Gandhiji would utilise his best of efforts to use the landlords and the capitalists for the service of the masses."³ Gandhiji did not believe in the inevitability of 'class conflict'."⁴ He says, "The idea of class was does not appeal to me. In India a class war is not only not inevitable, but it is avoidable if you have understood the message of non-violence."⁵ Gandhiji would never compromise with violence, whatever may be the resultant fruits as he believed that violence will breed greater violence and its fruits, however good they may appear will have to be retained through greater violence. His ways may seem to be a long way, but he advocated them to be the shorter way as the results so achieved will bear greater benefit, having tendency to multiply whereas the other way will create more complications.

Like the socialists, Gandhiji advocated conditional state intervention to reduce in equality e.g., progressive taxation, death duties, minimum wages etc.

¹ Selections from Gandhi p.93
² Ibid. - 93
³ Ibid.
⁴ LTN - 315
⁵ Selections from Gandhi p.94.
The meeting ground between Gandhiji's views and Communism ideology lies in their extreme concern for the downtrodden and in their final aim. But in practice they differ widely. Gandhiji's love towards all humanity is untainted and have their base in 'truth'.

By introducing the non-violent way, Gandhiji wished to reduce future clashes which is inevitable when there comes social awareness for which he also strived hard. No sooner does the social awareness come than the people will demand equality and the rich class, naturally stick to their riches and a class struggle will sprout. Trusteeship, a precursor of non-violent economic order and a great leveller of the society with the least problems has been evolved by Gandhiji to obviate violent class struggles.

The question may arise then as to why we should not legalise trusteeship. The very first difficulty in legalising is that it is the state which should enact the laws for it. The state is a legal body which has centralised power and is an outcome of violence itself. Therefore Gandhiji enunciates, "that I would personally prefer would be not a centralisation of power in the hands of the state, but an extension of the sense of trusteeship, as in my opinion the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the state." Gandhiji believed more in man than in the state. He said that state is soulless whereas man has soul. Many instances can be cited where men acted as trustees of their own wealth.

and utilised the same for the benefit of the masses, but there are no instances to cite that a state has stood for the poor. The great difference between the state and man is that one can work only in a limited sphere whereas the other has the great potentiality to think and for the betterment of his fellow beings. Gandhiji believed that 'men are capable of developing their will to an extent that will reduce exploitation to a minimum'\(^1\)

The state is organised by force or violence. Voluntary organisations are formed with the least of violence. Trusteeship, when voluntarily accepted will do immense good to society in levelling the disparities and at the same time upholding 'individuality' - the root of all progress of mankind.

Gandhiji has placed 'Satyagraha' before us as a chief weapon to fight against persons who amass wealth and who are in a position to enlargete it but who are not ready to abdicate their riches voluntarily in the larger interest of the general masses. Satyagraha is the way of peaceful transformation. It takes its own time.

The best shield against exploitation and the resultant violent revolution is to rouse of the masses from their torpid state and inspire them to be bold enough to non-cooperate with the evils of the society (the way of Satyagraha). Changes brought about through change of heart will be a permanent feature and will bring peace for years to come, whereas any coercion by the state, will only produce harm.

\(^1\) Mathur, Economic Thought, p. 579.
2. Ibid., 617
3. Ibid., 648
4. Ibid., 620
Gandhiji was against inherited riches. A richman who amasses wealth has no right to use it for his self-interest. Possession of inordinate wealth itself is a crime against humanity. At one place he remarks, "... the maximum limit of taxation of riches beyond a certain margin can never be reached... Why should there not be death duties? ... the inheritance should rightly belong to the nation."¹

Individual freedom: Gandhiji says, "No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man."² Just as a man cannot grow a tail or horn, similarly he cannot be a man if he has no mind of his own. Trusteeship theory is to uphold the talent of each individual and not to cramp it. All men are equal in status but not in intelligence and diligence. These qualities should be properly nourished in the society. Gandhiji opines, "My ideal of society is that while we are born equal meaning that we have a right to equal opportunity, all have not the same capacity. It is in the nature of things impossible." All differ in height, colour, talents etc. and ability to earn also differs. Gandhiji therefore implores, "If they utilised their talents kindly, they will be performing the work of the state."

Man's individuality is lost no sooner than he becomes a slave to his temptations and desires. Trusteeship therefore teaches him non-possession and contentment. "Man's happiness really lies in contentment. He who is discontented, however much he possess, becomes a slave to his desires. And there is

¹. Rathur, Economic Thought, p.444.
². Ibid., 616.
really no slavery equal to that of his desires."  

The law of non-possession teaches us, "If each retained possession only of what he needed, no one would be in want, and all would live in contentment. As it is, the rich are discontented no less than the poor."  

Theory of trusteeship is akin to our joint family system which is at present disappearing gradually. The more a man will become self-centred, the more will the trusteeship and joint family system fade away. Trusteeship is a wider form of joint family system. Just as under joint family system individual member learns the lesson of sacrifice and looks to others' benefit, so is it under trusteeship.

Force of Public Opinion: Ganchhiji sets forth that if the zamindar and the capitalist class do not become trustees of their own accord, force of circumstances will compel the reform unless they court utter destruction. When Panchayat Raj is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do. The present power of the zamindars, the capitalists and the Rajas can hold sway only so long as the common people do not realise their own strength. If people non-cooperate with the evil of the Zamindary system or capitalism, it must die of inanition."  

With the dawn of independence public consciousness is bound to increase hence at this critical juncture the right type of education is a must to restore balance.

1. Thakur, Economic Thought, p. 612  
2. Ibid., p. 612.  
3. Ganchhiji, Trusteeship, p. 34.
It is always safer to cultivate public opinion in our favour before any legislative measure is adopted. Personal examples and right education are the best measures for conversion of the people. Gandhiji avers, "Conversion must precede legislation. Legislation in the absence of conversion remains a dead letter."\(^1\)

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1. Gandhi: Trusteeship: p. 34.