CHAPTER VI

BREAD, LABOUR AND GANDHIAN SOCIALISM
CHAPTER VI

FROM LABOUR & COMMUNISM

A. SOCIALISM & LABOUR

Modern socialism that has arisen as a reaction to industrialism, is primarily a philosophy of labour. Since it arose as an offshoot of the Industrial and technological revolution that taxed at the expense of labour, and progressed and prospered by exploiting the labour and set before itself the objective of elimination of such exploitation and amelioration of the lot of the labourers it is no exaggeration to say that socialism as a social doctrine is a philosophy of the labouring class. Engels has written:

"Modern Socialism is in its essence, the direct product of the recognition on the one hand of the class antagonisms existing in the society of today between proprietors and non-proprietors, between capitalists and wage workers, on the other hand of the anarchy existing in production."

It is not only a 'product of the recognition' of the antagonism that exists between the capitalists and the work; it is also a conscious effort to even out the antagonism in favour of the labour in order to give him a distinct status and dignity in the society.

1. Engels F. - Socialism, Utopian and Scientific - Progress Publishers Moscow 1966 P-29
It is no denying the fact that "Socialism is a science of a new society as well as the vision of a new civilisation yet the new society and the new civilisation whose governing principles shall be equality, fraternity and fellowship is primarily concerned with tilting the balance in favour of the weak and the oppressed, the exploited and the lost and since the labour under industrial capitalism constitutes such oppressed and the exploited class, improvement of their lot and elevation of their status constitute the very core of social. Therefore socialism particularly socialism of the west, stand out as a doctrine that champions the claims of the labourers and workers, who are being exploited and on whose exploitation rest the property, prosperity and the privileges of the rest the community. Labour thus occupies the same place in the doctrine of socialism as the Prince of Denmark in the play Macbeth. This is true of both "Utopian Socialism" and "Scientific Socialism".

Saint Simon, the Utopian Socialist, as a protagonist of Industrial Revolution and technological transformation, desirous of science and industry. Industrial and technological progress was inconceivable during his days without exploiting labourers; yet he was a champion of the cause of the work as distinguished from "idlers" although the term "worker" used by him is more comprehensive, having a wider connotation than what it ordinarily signifies. As Engels has elaborated

2. Mehta A. - Democratic Socialism P-1
"The idlers were not merely the old privileged classes, but also all who without taking any part in production or distribution lived on their incomes. And the workers were not only the wage workers, but also the manufacturers, the merchants of bakers. As a utopian socialistic his vision of an egalitarian social order he assigned a dignified place to labour. In G.D.H. Cole has observed:

"At the root of his doctrine was the notion that the essential task and duty of man was labour and that in the new social order, no respect would be paid to any man save in proportion to his service, through labour to the community.

Although Charles Fourier moved in the reverse direction was averse to industrialism and reposed his faith on agriculture and development of creative crafts and horticulture he Phalanstereos laid emphasis on work and the workers - the quality of work and the quality of life of the workers. The health of the worker and the labourer was his primary concern. Work according to him must be made interesting, attractive - satisfying, instead of being irksome and a source of frustration. Besides, satisfaction, he said, can be derived only from work. In engaging oneself in creative endeavour, one qualifies himself for maximum joy. His Phalanstereos were intended to provide opportunity for creative activity and maximum joy the producer. As Cole has observed:

3. Engels F - Socialism, Utopian and Scientific P - 35
4. Cole G.D.H - Socialist Thought - The Forerunners 1789-
P - 45
Fourier was not in the least interested in technology: he disliked large scale production, mechanisation and centralisation in all their forms. He believed in small communities as best for meeting the real needs of mankind.\(^5\)

Robert Owen the philanthropic textile manufacturer and the Utopian Socialist who shook all his fortune and his entire future for the amelioration of the lot of the workers, made the working class the centre of his scheme of things and the core of his ideal social structure. He could not be contented in merely serving them: he recognised that they constitute the link-pin of the entire economic system and their status must be elevated. "The people" he said "were slaves at my mercy." Speaking about the "new power" that remained behind the spectacular progress of his textile mill at New Lanark in Scotland he wrote: "This new power was the creation of the working class."\(^6\)

Thus the utopian socialists considered labour as the centre of their doctrine. From the dignified place they assigned to labour in the economic system, proceeded their doctrine of exploitation, and amelioration of their lot, and the promotion of their interest was uppermost in their minds. Hence as C.H. Cole is of opinion:

---

5. Ibid. P- 62
6. Engels F - Socialism Scientific and Utopian P. - 39
7. Quoted in Ibid. p- 40
"All three were deeply distrustful of politics and of politicians, and believed that the future control of social affairs should lie mainly not with parliament or ministers but with the producers."

As he has further observed "They all agreed that as things were, the workers were victims of exploitation; they all stood forth as advocates of what Saint Simon termed 'la classe la plus noble et la plus pauvre'."

Marx and Engels, the co-architects of Scientific Socialism, became the champions of labour or the Proletariat in a far greater measure. The Communist Manifesto their joint production was primarily a manifesto of the Proletariat intended to be their hand-book and a guide for their revolution against the bourgeoisie. Marx borrowed the Labour Theory of Value from Adam Smith and Ricardo and made labour the source and means of all values in order to finally prove that it is the labor or the Proletariat who should occupy a place of pre-eminence in the society. According to Marx and Engels "The proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class." Their clarion-call therefore was to the working class. As they reiterated "Workers of all countries, Unite!" the initiative in the social revolution leading to the establishment of an egalitarian society they expected shall be taken by the

8. Cole C.G.N. - Socialist Thought - The Forerunners P-3
9. Ibid. P-5
10. Marx K and Engels - Manifesto of the Communist Party
11. Ibid. P-96
Proletariat and the Proletariat shall seize the machinery of the state to stage the transformation. The Proletariat does not take the initiative in the revolution and seize the political and economic power in the state on behalf of some other power, group or a class and it is also not used as a cts-a-paw. After the revolution it makes itself the master of the situation and the determinant of the destiny of the society. As they said:

"The first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class.

Thus, the Proletariat becomes the ruling power after the revolution and during the transitional period between the elimination of the bourgeoisie supremacy and emergence of class-less society, it plays a dominant role. The Proletariat during the transitional period submerges upon the process of elimination of a bourgeoisie elements from the society, and ultimately the society as such consists only of the Proletariat, the only class that is left behind when the state as political power of the capitalists as their primary concern was amelioration of the lot of the
working class, improvement of their status and their elevation to a position of dignity. The syndicalists who branded themselves as a "new school" of socialists aspired to place the worker in an environment where highest manifestation of human personality and affirmation of his creative power and individual ingenuity became a reality and they believed in an idea of "free work in a free society". The Guild Socialists proclaimed their objective as releasing the labourers from the state of bondage and state of wage slavery. In their ideal society the "labour will no longer be a commodity; the worker will no longer be a wage slave". The degradation of labour resulting from the wage system where human beings are treated as commodities and are bought and sold as a gross-sells butter and where the status of labour is exactly that of manure is to be brought to an end.

Thus the modern socialists whether Utopian or Scientific, Marxian or Syndicalist or Guild Socialist, make labour their hero and champion its cause. Modern socialism is therefore found to be labour-oriented. Although an egalitarian society inspired by the ideal of equality, fraternity and fellowship is the ultimate objective of socialism the greatest beneficiary according to all brands of modern socialism shall be labour, the most underprivileged and exploited class in the society.

Gandhi made labour the core of his socialist theory, his public life and his struggle with the authorities sta-

13. Cohen P.J. - Recent Political Thought P= 236
16. Kobben - Guild Principles in War and Peace P= 65
as much with his championship of the rights and privileges of indentured labourers in South Africa as with espousing the cause of the Indian settlers in general and creation of the Natal Indian Congress. His first success in public life came with getting a release for Salundaran an indentured labourer who was tortured and tormented by his white master. As Gandhi has himself acknowledged:

"Salundaran's case reached the ears of every indentured labourer and I came to be regarded as their friend. I hailed this connection with delight. A regular stream of indentured labourers began to pour into my office and I got the best opportunity of learning their joys and sorrows." 17

On return to India, Gandhi made the cause of the textile-mill-workers of Ahmedabad his own. He had so much identified himself with the cause of the workers on the issue of their wage increase - that even when the labourers were vacillating and were on the verge of retracing their steps and calling off their strike, Gandhi went on a fast to impress upon them the moral aspect of the problem and the legitimacy of the worker's demand for wage increase. As Gandhi said:

"I can not tolerate for a minute that you break your pledge. I shall not take any food nor use a car till you get 35 percent increase or all of you die in the fight for it". 18

17. Gandhi K. K. - The Story of My Experiments with Truth P-
18. Mahadev Desai - A Righteous Struggle P- 26
When Ambalal Sarabhai on behalf of the Mill-owners came forward to concede to the Labourers' demand for 35% increase in their salary provided Gandhi gave an undertaking not to champion their cause in future, he declined the offer. "It is impossible that Gandhi who always fought at the dictates of conscience, against injustice, moral turpitude, and exploitation would agree to abstain from serving labour for all time."

Gandhi's programme of Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods, and particularly textiles, was primarily intended to come to the rescue of the textile workers of India who went without work because of import of foreign textiles. When Harial Lesi invited him to come to England, Gandhi said:

"I will come to England if you can persuade the cotton spinners of Manchester not to ship any more of their manufactured goods to India."

While Gandhi was in England in connection with the Round Table Conference a Lancashire worker wrote: "May I say that I, as a Lancashire cotton working man, who is extent suffering through the action of the Indian Congress leaders have a profound admiration for Mr. Gandhi and a great many of my fellow workers share that spirit of admiration."

21. Gandhi on his part wrote in the Harijan: "You will perhaps be surprised to know that even labourers in Lancashire instinctively recognised me as one of themselves, and flocked around me in hundreds and thousands."

19. Ibid. P - 33
20. Shukla C. - (Edtd) Gandhi As We Know Him P - 62
22. Harijan 8, 12, 1933 P - 6
Thus Gandhi was a comrade of the working people or labourers and he championed their cause throughout his life. As Gandhi has written:

"You may know if you do not know already that I have been closely associated with labourers ever since I went to South Africa. In India or whatever part of the world, they have recognised me as a fellow labourer and received me as one of themselves."

He so much identified himself with the hopes and aspirations of the workers that he claimed to be a "founding member" of the workers' republic. But more than that Gandhi considered labour as the very source of life and the basis human existence, and elevated it to the status of a great equaliser, a panacea for effecting social transformation in the direction of an egalitarian social order.

Marx and Engels the co-architects of Scientific Socialism made labour the source and measure of all values. In going to the very root of the commodities Marx wrote:

"If we leave out of consideration the use-value commodities, they have only one common property left that of being products of labour."

Speaking about the exchange value of two commodities he carried on:

"The value of one commodity is to the value of any other as the labour time necessary for the production of the

---

23. Ibid. P- 6
one is to that necessary for the production of the
other."

But Marx adopted this Labour theory of value to prov-
his theory of capitalist exploitation. That Labour is the ve-
source of all values and is at the root of all productivity
directly proves that the prosperity of the capitalists or of
bourgeoisie is based on the exploitation of the labour and de
deprivation of the latter of their rightful due. Thus the the-
theory of value is meant to reveal the essence of the theory
surplus value and capitalistic exploitation. But the theory
itself is not an adequate solvent of the problem of exploit
and existing disparity in the society. To put an end to exp
ination, to give a goby to the inegalitarian society, Marx and
Engels devised the theory of violent upsurge or forcible se
sure of political and economic power by the proletariat fro
the bourgeoisie. For the resurgence of the proletariat, for
their deliverance from a state of economic exploitation and
wage slavery, uncertainty and unemployment, deprivation and
starvation, the device of dissolution of the existing socio-
economic order was visualised. Only a violent overthrow of
the bourgeoisie" shall lay "the foundation for the way of
the proletariat.²⁷ Dissolution is thus the cause-way to the
emergence of an egalitarian social order.

But Gandhi went a step ahead. He treated labour as
the root of the entire creation, the source of all values e
even the appropriate apparatus for socialistic transformat
For elaborating his thesis Gandhi adopted the theory of B.

²⁶. Ibid P= 39
²⁷. Marx K, and Engels F. - Manifesto of the Communist
Labour and this theory along with his concept of Trusteeship became the panacea for the establishment of an egalitarian society. As Gandhi writes: "Indiscriminate distinctions of rank would be abolished, when everyone without exception assumes the obligation of broad labour". Not only Gandhi was certain that the distinction of rank as prevalent in India shall be resolved by the adoption of this apparatus of bread labour even the perpetual conflict between the capitalists and the labourers or the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat, that has assumed world dimensions can also be resolved by the application of this apparatus. As he said: "If this principle is observed everywhere, all men would be equal, none would starve and the world be saved from many a sin.

B. MEANING AND NATURE OF BREAD LABOUR.

The Gandhian concept of Bread Labour implies that each individual in order to earn his livelihood must perform sufficient labour. No body who does not perform sufficient labour has a right to collect his food or subsistence from the society. One's subsistence shall be directly connected with labour one's bread shall be connected with one's labour or a product of one's labour. Thus an indissoluble bond between bread and labour and bread is inconceivable without labour. Every individual therefore shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. As he wrote in Young India on November 5, 1929:

28. Gandhi M. K. - From the Varanasi Mandir P-36
29. Gandhi M. K. - Ibid. P - 36
30. Gandhi M. K. - From Ahram Observances in Action P- (1955 Edn.)
"Just as both prince and peasant must eat and clothe themselves, so must both labour for supplying their primary wants."

Labour is the only passport to earn one's bread and the who does not work, has no right to his bread, and if he collects his bread without adequate labour, he is in the nature of a usurper, a thief and an exploiter. Gandhi wrote in Young India "The rule should be 'No labour, no meal'.

Gandhi was a friend of the poor and down-trodden and a champion of their cause. His supreme deity was "Daridra-narayana", the semi-naked and semi-starved millions, on whose altar he made complete self-sacrifices and self-surrender. If he was not prepared to compromise his principle that any boy would get his food without rendering sufficient labour in it—and he would rather see them starve than collecting food without work or through begging or living on anybody's charity. Accordingly he wrote:

"My friendship for them must be a sorry affair if I could be satisfied with a large part of humanity being reduced to begging. Little did my friends know that my friendship for the pauper of India has made me heard-hearted enough to contemplate their utter starvation with equanimity in preference to their utter reduction to begging."

Gandhi believed that all able-bodied individuals must earn their bread by the sweat of their brow and he wa—

31. Young India 13.8.1925 p = 282
32. Young India 13.8.1925 p = 282
not prepared to accept any compromise. Hence he wrote "The idea is that every healthy individual must labour enough for his food". The case may be different with the sickly, disabled, incapacitated and the weak who are incapable of rendering any labour. But everybody with sound-body capable of doing some labour must not shirk labour and by shirking one disqualify himself for a living. Even though Gandhi was an advocate of universal love and compassion for the suffering, and an apostle of non-violence, he would rather allow the able-bodied individual to die of starvation rather than acquiring one's livelihood without any labour. He considered any charity-feeding of able-bodied men with good health as undesirable and a social crime. As he wrote:

"My Ahimsa would not tolerate the idea of giving a free meal to a healthy person who has not worked for it in some honest way and if I had the power I would stop every Sadacar where free meals are given. It has degraded the nation and has encouraged laziness, idleness, hypocrisy and even crime. Such misplaced charity adds nothing to the wealth of the country, whether material or spiritual, and gives a false sense of meritoriousness to the donor."

Bread Labour is therefore the ideal that shall be emulated and guided every able-bodied and healthy individual. This ideal may not be realised by all; all may not collect their food..."

---

33. Gandhi K. K. - Ahimsa Observances in Action P. - 60
34. Young India 13.8.1925 P. - 282
exchange of bread-labour. Some may be parasites depending on others’ labour; others may be well-intentioned persons, but they lack the opportunity for such bread labour. All the same, Gandhi considered bread-labour as the ideal and the golden rule. As he wrote in the Harijan:

"I have never imagined that every man or earth will earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, but I have simply enunciated the golden rule." 35

Gandhi was conscious that he himself was not doing sufficient bread labour or his bread was not a product of labour that he was capable of doing. But he did not encourage him from criticising and considered himself as a parasite far from the ideal. Hence he said about himself:

"I do not give enough labour. That is also one of the reasons why I consider myself as living upon charity." 36

Later on, Gandhi said that people like him who fell from the ideal and got their bread without earning it in return for labour deserved pity and condemnation. As he wrote:

"I may not be able to earn what fruit and milk I eat by labour, but that means that I am to be pitied?......

Gandhi had so tightly fastened his thought processes to the concept of bread labour that he believed that if this concept is accepted as the guiding principle by all individuals, a heaven may descend upon earth or all the problems of mankind may be solved without much effort. According to him, he said:

35. Harijan 3. 8. 1935
36. Young India - 5. 11. 1925 P = 378
37. Harijan 3. 8. 1935 P = 196
"If every body lived by the sweat of his brow, the earth would become a paradise."

But the term Bread Labour had far greater and deeper significance for Gandhi than the mere fact that we all need work before laying their claim on food. His emphasis was not only on labour as such against idleness but on body-labour, manual-labour or physical-labour. Each individual in order to live a life of purity and honesty must earn his living by physical labour. Intellectual labour or white-collar job does not entitle one according to Gandhi, to earn his upkeep. The manual labour and bread are intimately related. Speaking of their relationship Gandhi wrote in Young India:

"It (Bread Labour) means that every one is expected to perform sufficient body labour in order to entitle him to it." (to his bread.)

Manual labour during Gandhi's time — no less in own time — was being looked down upon with contempt and as labourers like farmers in the fields or workers in the factories were treated as sub-human beings by the white collar workers, the officers or the bureaucrats. The intellectuals, the white-collar workers — doctors, engineers, professors, bureaucrats or business executives — claimed for themselves higher pay, better amenities and superior social status, as constituted themselves as a privileged class claiming the work to be of better quality and of higher social significance. As Gandhi felt "the rich and the so-called higher classes—despite body labour."

38. Harijan 2, 3, 1947 P. 47
40. Gandhian M. K. — Ashram Observances in Action P. 66
Gandhi joined issue with those who held the brief on behalf of the intellectual labourers who in turn not only claim a right to their livelihood by virtue of intellectual labour but even often claim and often acquire much more than what is necessary for their survival claim privileged status in the society. Gandhi wrote in the Harijan:

"May not men earn their bread by intellectual labour? No. The needs of the body must be supplied by the body." Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's perhaps applied here a well." 41

Gandhi did not relegate intellectual labour to the background and did not treat it with contempt or as of second rate importance. Intellectual labour has its place in the society and people engaged in intellectual labour shall no doubt occupy important places in the society. But in spite of its important intellectual work does not entitle one to lay his claim on living or to get his bread. Even people engaged in the high type of intellectual labour must contribute their portion of body labour to earn their living. Accordingly Gandhi wrote:

"Let me not be misunderstood. I do not discount the value of intellectual labour, but no amount of it is any compensation for bodily labour which everyone of us is born to give for the common good of all. It may be, often is, infinitely superior to bodily labour, but it never is or can a substitute for it, even as intellectual food though far superior to the grains we eat never can be a substitute for them." 42

41. Harijan 26, 9, 1935 P - 156
42. Young India 15, 10, 1925 PP - 355- 56
Thus every individual whatever may be his intellectual attainment engage himself in some physical or manual labour to earn his upkeep. Arguing his point further Gandhi felt that intellectual labour may be satisfying to the intellect or the soul, but for the sake the individuals engaged in such labour need not demand any payment or compensation. For the sake of the same, Gandhi would not allow any lawyer, doctor, engineer, scientist, professor, poet or playwright to receive any payment for his intellectual labour. He shall have to engage himself in some amount of bodily labour apart from his intellectual labour to earn his upkeep. Hence he wrote in the Harijan:

"More mental, that is intellectual labour is for the soul, and in its own satisfaction. It should never demand payment. In the ideal State doctors, lawyers, and the like will work solely for the benefit of society, not for self." 43

Gandhi did not underrate the importance of intellectual labour nor did he consider it as an appendage of the bodily labour. What he really meant by his advocacy of the concept of Bread Labour is that bodily labour is in no way inferior to intellectual labour or mental work. What is more significant— he forged an indissoluble bond between intellectual development and bodily labour which he called Bread Labour. Intellectual development according to him is inconceivable without bodily labour and adequate bodily labour can only ensure balanced physical and intellectual development. The divorce between bodily labour and intellectual development has been rejected by G.
as that shall engineer incalculable harm to real mental and intellectual development. Accordingly he said:

"Even for real intellectual development one should engage in some useful bodily activity". 44

Gandhi was conscious that the work-oriented and particularly the manual-work-oriented life of his Ashrams was a subject-matter of ridicule for the white collar, bureaucratic and pseudo-intellectual labourers who thrive on the labour of others. Therefore Gandhi came out with a defence for the manual labour and wrote:

"People often say that in an institution like the Ashram, where body labour is given pride of place, there is no scope for intellectual development, but a my experience is just the reverse. Every one who has been to the Ashram has made intellectual progress also; I know of none who was the worse on account of a sojourn in the Ashram". 45

Real intellectual refinement comes not from mere reading, gathering of information, idle speculations or unproductive contemplation, but from study combined with bodily labour and the exercise of different limbs of the body. Accordingly Gandhi wrote:

"I hold that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, eg, hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose etc." 46

Gandhi was conscious that the advocates of the superior of intellectual labour may sometimes argue that manual or be

---

44. Gandhi M. K. - Ashram Observances in Action P = 66
45. Ibid. P = 64 = 65
46. Merven 8. 5. 1937 P = 106
labour however necessary for intellectual development of ordin
mortalis, is not essential for great intellectuals or in other u
such intellectuals may be made free from the obligation of bod
labour. They may argue that bodily labour by such great intel-
llectuals will not only be a waste of effort on their part; it u
put unnecessary strain on their intellectual development and
impede their natural intellectual growth. They may further an
that intellectual development of such potential intellectual
giants may be stunted and the society may ultimately be depriv
of their contribution and be poorer to that extent. When a
question was put to Gandhi why intellectual giants such as
Rabindranath or C.V. Raman shall engage themselves in bodily
labour and thereby withdraw themselves from the most creative
enterprises that shall involve a positive loss to the society
Gandhi replied:

"Intellectual work is important and has an undoubted place
in the scheme of life. But what 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."

Thus during the course of his controversy with Rabindra
Tagore on the issue of performance of physical labour by each
individual, Gandhi wrote in Young India on November 5, 1925 "I
the Poet span half an hour daily his poetry would gain in ri
ness."

Thus intellectual culture and bodily labour according
Gandhi are inseparable and the latter improves the quality a
and texture of the former. Any attempt to separate the two or to think of intellectual development short of bodily labour is doomed to failure. Any divorce of intellectual labour from bodily labour shall pull down the quality of the former. Gandhi therefore pointed out:

"They tried to do it in ancient Rome and failed miserably. Culture without labour or culture which is not the fruit of labour would be 'vanitaria' as a Roman Catholic writer says. The Romans made indulgence a habit and were ruined. Man can not develop his mind by simply writing and reading or making speeches all day long." 49

Even citing his own example Gandhi said:

"And though I have worked physically for days and months for eight hours or and I don't think I suffered from mental decay. I have often walked as much as 40 miles a day and yet never felt dull." 49

Gandhi even felt that great men like Buddha would have done better and rendered better and greater service to humanity had they advocated association of work with intellectual effort or integration of intellectual and bodily work. 50

Besides, Gandhi who was concerned with the welfare of all round welfare or cultivation of both intellectual and physical vigour of each individual laid as much emphasis on body labour as on intellectual labour; rather he emphasised an integrated or an integrated growth of all elements..."
faculties of the individual and he felt shy if championing intellectual development at the cost of the development of body or improvement of the quality of the soul. Hence he said:

"A proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore can take place only when it proceeds, pari passu with the education of the physical, and spiritual faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole".

Thus a perfect, well-balanced, and all-round development of each individual required development of body, soul and mind. More development of intellectual faculties without spiritual and physical development would make development of human personalities lop-sided, as he said:

"Man is neither mere intellect, nor a gross animal body, nor the hearts or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man, and constitutes the true economics of education".

Thus Gandhi's concept of Bread Labour gives a status to body labour that is in no way inferior to the status of intellectual labour. Rather there is so much emphasis on body labour, that body labour appears to be more important than intellectual labour. He was so much a champion of body labour that he said: "I should never be satisfied until all men plenty of productive work, say eight hours a day". He should even turn-down the philanthropy of those who would offer to provide all the needs of recipients who would agree to disengage themselves from all types of body labour in future.

51. Harijan 8. 5. 1935 P = 104
52. Ibid. 8. 5. 1937 P = 104
Of course Gandhi would say so because that shall impair the respect of the recipients and to that extent hinder the balanced growth of their personality. At the same time he would reject the offer because that would compromise his theory of Broad Labour or special emphasis on body labour. As he wrote:

"No, not only because of that (self-respect) but specially because it strikes at the root of the fundamental law of our being, viz., that we must work for our bread that we eat our bread by the sweat of our brow.”

C. SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Although the Gandhian concept of Broad Labour appears an equivalent of the Marxian emphasis on labour and labour theory of value, yet Broad Labour as a concept had nothing to do with the Marxian Labour theory of value. Gandhi made a systematic study of the Marxian literature, very late in his life and as late as nineteen forties, but long before it, the term Bread Labour had gained currency in Gandhian thought, speeches, and writings.

As Gandhi has acknowledged, his concept of Bread Labour is a composite product of the influences of Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau, and the Bhagavad Gita and the Bible. As he has written in his autobiography: "Three moderns have left a deep impression on my life, and captivated me: Roy Chandhrai by his living contact, Tolstoy by his book the Kingdom of God is Within You, and Ruskin by his Unto This Last." In respect —

94. Ibid. P 340
95. Honor A. Jack - Gandhi and the Congressmen, Gandhi Park Vol. II No. 2 - P=123
96. Young India 5.11.1925
97. Gandhi M. K. - The Story of My Experiments with Truth
his concept of Bread Labour he was no doubt influenced by
Tolstoy and Ruskin, but he went far beyond their influences
for the maturity of this concept. As Gandhi has written:

"The law that to live, man must work, first came home
to me upon reading Tolstoy's writing on Bread Labour.
But even before that I had begun to pay homage to it
after reading Ruskin's Unto This Last......In my view
the same principle has been set forth in the third
chapter of the Gita, where we are told, that he who
eats without offering sacrifice eats stolen food.
Sacrifice here can only mean bread labour...... In
the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat by bread says
the Bible."

Besides, in respect of this concept the influence of
the impact of Thoreau's emphasis on body labour can also be
traced.

(a) TOLESTOY

Although Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau are the three
distinguished intellectuals who profoundly influenced Gandhi's
thought process he came in contact with Tolstoy's ideas
earlier. When Gandhi visited Paris in 1893 to witness the
Great Exhibition held there, he became conscious of the
disparaging remark of Tolstoy about the Cisal Tower. During
his first year in South Africa, he read the most celebrated
works of Tolstoy, "The Kingdom of God Is Within You", "The
Gospel in Brief" and "What to Do?". That Gandhi was
influenced by the social philosophy of Tolstoy is therefore

58. Gandhi M. K. - From Varèvda Mándir P. 35
60. Ibid. P 102 and P 119
no wonder. But Tolstoy considered bread labour or bodily labours the key for the solution of the problems of social injustice and economic exploitation and since it was the speciality of Tolstoy to practice what he preached, he also experimented with a philosophy of bread labour in his own life. Gandhi wrote to Tolstoy on October 1, 1909. "I had the privilege of studying your writings... which left a deep impression on my mind. Speaking about Bread Labour Gandhi said:

"The law that to live men must work first came to me upon reading Tolstoy's writing on Bread Labour."

Apart from his writings, Tolstoy's life dedicated to the philosophy of bread-labour must have exerted sufficient influence on Gandhi's in shaping his concept of Bread Labour.

Tolstoy belonged to the Russian nobility who inherited vast landed estate, fabulous wealth and enormous opportunities for leading a life of luxury. During his youth, he lived a life of power, drunkenness and debauchery. As Gandhi has written about Tolstoy:

"In those days, like the other noblemen of his time he used to enjoy all the pleasures of life, kept mistresses, drank and was strongly addicted to smoking."

Not only he lived a parasitic life natural to the nobility and the landed aristocracy according to his own confession, there was no vice from which he was away.

"I killed men in war and challenged men to duels in order to kill them. I lost at cards, consumed the

---

63. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol. IX P = 44
64. Gandhi M. K. – From Varanada Mandir P = 35
labour of the peasants, sentenced them to punishments; lived loosely and deceived people, lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence murder, there was no crime I did not commit *****

Tolstoy was conscious that he had been blessed with a loving wife and children and considered from the worldly standard, a happy family life. He had acquired high social status and wide reputation. He had been endowed with intellectual brilliance and physical vigour that was almost rare to the nobility. But such a life of affluence, leisure, comfort and luxuries, of idleness and amusements, was far from satisfactory to him. He somehow felt tired of this life of futile and less existence, a life devoid of work and productivity. He was so much overwhelmed by scepticism and cynicism that at one stage he even thought of committing suicide. "And to rid myself of the terror" says Tolstoy "I wished to kill myself. But he discovered that the labourers and the poor peasants were engaged in heavy toil were pulsating with real life of happiness and contentment.

In drawing a contrast between the life of inactivity, idleness, leisure, comfort and luxuries of the nobility on one hand and the life dedicated to heavy toil, on the other, Tolstoy preferred a life full of work to one of leisure and parasitism. As he has written in his confession:

"It came about that the life of our circle, the rich and learned, not merely became distasteful to me but lost a meaning in my eyes. All our action, discussions, science..."
art presented itself to me in a new light. I understood that it is all merely self-indulgence, and that to find a meaning in it is impossible; while the life of the whole labouring people, the whole of mankind, who produce life, appeared to me in its true significance. I understood that that is life itself and that the meaning given to that life is true and I accepted it.

Further he added "if one is to think and speak of the life of mankind, one must think and speak of that life and none of the life of some of life's parasites."

Thus Tolstoy came to the conclusion that real life, a life of undiluted and unbroken happiness, can be lived not by para who live upon other's work and other's labour but by the poor who work and are engaged in unremitting toil. The essence of life according to him is therefore work, and life acquires meaning and significance by a sense of involvement in work. One must earn his living by work, no honest life is conceivable without work. Even the animals like birds, beasts and even insects earn their living by work thereby providing the irrevocability of the concept of work preceding any life and existence. Accordingly Tolstoy wrote in his confession:

And indeed a bird is so made that it must fly, collect food, and build a nest and when I see that a bird does this I have pleasure in its joy. A goat, a hare and a wolf are so made that they must feed themselves and must breed and feed their family, and when they do so, I feel firmly assured that they are happy and that.

68. Tolstoy L - A Confession P = 58
69. Ibid. P = 59
their life is a reasonable one. Then what should man do? He too should produce his living as the animals do. And when he does that I have a firm assurance, that he is happy, and that his life is reasonable.  

Tolstoy was conscious that mankind constituted a species that is different from and superior to ordinary animals, insects, beasts or birds. But this superiority lay not in idleness, parasitism and exploitation of others, and living on the labour of others but in engaging oneself in work for productive apart for oneself "for all". He considered his own life rotten and lost life that deserved to be despised and pitied since it was a life based on parasitism. According to him the meaning of human life lies in supporting it or self-reliance is the root of life. He felt that "man's first and most unquestionable duty is to participate in the struggle of nature to support his own life and that of others."

Thus Tolstoy felt that work or labour is the essence of life and each individual shall support himself by his work or one's subsistence shall be earned in exchange of work. Some body remains idle he forfeits his right to livelihood. One's subsistence follows automatically from his work and some body stops working, the flow of subsistence shall also cease. Hence Tolstoy firmly believed that work and subsis are intimately and indissolubly related and one can not conceive of the latter without a reference to the former. Tolstoy wrote in his "What I Believe":

70. Ibid. P - 59-60
71. Ibid. P - 60
72. Ibid. P - 60
73. Tolstoy L - What Then Must We Do P - 310
One must return to the conception that the necessary condition of happiness for man is not idleness, but work; that a man can not reject work, that not to work is dull, wearisome and hard, as it is dull and hard for an ant, a horse or any other animal not to work).

Tolstoy therefore was convinced that man must work in order to earn his bread. He may by virtue of his work, earn bread for others, his neighbours and the humanity at large, but to acquire one's bread without sufficient labour or work is considered a sin by Tolstoy and as going against the Divine law. "In a word man does not live that others should work for him, but that he should work for others." Further he wrote "work is a necessary condition of man's life."

As he wrote in "What Then Must We Do"? "It is shameful, uncomfortable and impossible to go on eating and not to work; that to eat and not to work is a most dangerous conditions of resembling a conflagration."

Tolstoy not merely advocated that the essence of life is work, and life is impossible without work and happiness is inconceivable without labour he also gave priority to manual work or body labour over intellectual labour or the so-called intellectual labour of the officer, judge, governor or minister. In the language of Tolstoy:

"So it is with physical labour. It is man's dignity, his sacred duty and obligation to use the hands and feet.

75. Ibid. P = 497
76. Ibid. P = 491
77. Tolstoy L - What Then Must We Do P = 322
given him for the purpose for which they were given and to expend the food he consumes on labour to produce food and not to let them atrophy nor to wash them and clean them and use them only to put food, drink and cigarettes into his own mouth."

He felt real happiness is intimately associated not with work but with manual work or physical labour. As Tolstoy has written:

"Another undoubted condition of happiness is work in the first place voluntary work which one is fond of and secondly physical work which gives one an appetite and sound restful sleep."

Thus for sound health that is a condition for real happiness, physical labour has been considered as indispensable by Tolstoy. Speaking about his own experience with physical labour Tolstoy says:

"The harder I worked the stronger fitter happier and kindlier did I feel and speaking about the effect of physical labour in general he recommended in the first place the simplest and most certain result will be that you will be merrier healthier fitter and kindlier and will learn what real life is."

He despised the life of those so-called fortunate people who lived either a leisurely life free from work or any kind of physical labour. He pointed out that most of them suffered from various ailments because of lack of physical labour. As he has written:

78. Tolstoy L - What Then Must We Do? P = 334-335
79. Tolstoy L - What I Believe P = 473
78. Tolstoy L - What Then Must We Do P = 317 & 333
"All the fortunate ones of the world, the men in important places and the rich live like prisoners quite deprived of work and vainly struggling with diseases that arise from the absence of physical labour and still more vainly with the ennui which over comes them." 81

Thus he idealised the life of manual workers and people engaged in physical labour. Intellectual labour, the labour of bankers, officers, public prosecutors, governors or ministers is held at a discount instead of being assigned special importance and attention.

Not only Tolstoy held at a discount intellectual labour or work of the educated men like officers, ministers, men of science and arts, and men engaged in church services; he considered such work as most unproductive and treated men engaged such work as those "who produce nothing, palpable or useful the people." 82 He felt that the educated classes performing useful work were enjoying additional privileges from the society under the cover of a false philosophy of division of labour. He said:

"We ... as a result of an imaginary division of labour all us not only to dine first and then work, but allowing whole generations to eat well without producing anything". 83

Such persons felt Tolstoy do not earn any title to the livelihood by mere intellectual labour. The intellectual la

81. What I Believe P = 473-74
82. Tolstoy L. - What Then Must We Do? P = 255
83. Ibid. P = 264.
or the services of the scientists or men of art, should be rendered to the society, with a real spirit of service without expecting any thing in return; rather men of science and arts should be prepared to suffer during the course of rendering such service to the society. As Tolstoy felt:

"Scientific and artistic activity in its real sense is only fruitful when it ignores rights and knows only duties; because it is always of that kind and its nature is to be self-sacrificing does humanity value this activity so highly.

"Men who are really called to serve others by mental labour will always suffer in performing that service for only suffering as by birth pangs, is the spiritual world brought to birth.

"Self-sacrifice and suffering will be the lot of a thinker and an artist because their aim is the welfare of man".

Hence Tolstoy's dictum was that all intellectual workers must perform bodily labour in order to earn their living. Citing his own example he posed the issue "that must I do who am a perverted man?" The answer comes; "try first of all feed yourself honestly, that is to say learn not to live on backs of others; and while learning that, and after learnt it, take every opportunity to serve others with hands, feet, heart and all the powers you possess".

Tolstoy was convinced that physical labour by intellectual workers would not adversely affect either the quantity or quality of their intellectual pursuits. He felt that out o
hours if five hours a day are devoted to intellectual work, or "will get through an immense amount ".

Besides the quality of intellectual labour will improve in direct proportion to the physical labour performed. Speaking from his own experience, said:

"The energy of my mental work increased and increased in proportion to my bodily exertion and to my emancipation from all superfluity ... It turned out that physical labor far from rendering mental work impossible improved and added to it... the more intensive the labour and the nearer it approached to rough work on the land, the more enjoyment and information I obtained and the closer and more amicable was the intercourse I had with men, and the more happiness... life brought me."

Thus Tolstoy's concept of Bread Labour implied that intellectual workers should not be free from the obligation of physical labour. Besides intellectual labourers shall not engage themselves in some form of physical labour to earn their living, they will not claim a standard of living higher than of people engaged in physical labour. As he said:

"Service of the people by sciences and arts will only exist when men live with the people and as the people live and without presenting any claims will offer their scientific and artistic services, which the people will be free to accept or decline as they please."
Apart from Tolstoy's life and writings an other most potent factor that profoundly influenced Gandhi's concept of Bread Labour is the philosophy of Ruskin contained in his book "Unto This Last". Of course Gandhi read Tolstoy's writing earlier than he read Ruskin's Unto This Last. The Gospel in Brief and "What Then Must We Do?" of Tolstoy are positive pleas in favour of Bread Labour. Hence it is quite natural to believe that the Gandhian concept of Bread Labour derived its primary inspiration from the writings of Tolstoy. But Gandhi while acknowledging that the law that to live, man must work, came home to him upon reading Tolstoy's writings on BreadLabour claims that even before that he had begun to pay homage to after reading Ruskin's Unto This Last. However it will more accurate to say that Ruskin's Unto This Last had as much to contribute to the development of the Gandhian concept of Bread Labour as that of the writings of Tolstoy.

Ruskin's fundamental thesis as contained in the "Unto This Last" is a fervent plea for the creation of an economic environment, an atmosphere of honesty, and "certain moral conditions of society" that shall produce "as many as possible breathed, bright-eyed happy-hearted human creatures", and not "the greatest number of noble and happy human beings". Bread on Bread Labour, or that man shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, is not distinctly discernible in the pages of." Unto This Last", although the creed of the Guild of St. George founded by Ruskin and run on socialist lines was "I will

88. Gandhi M. K. - The Story of My Experiments With Truth, P. 119 and P. 224
89. Gandhi M. K. - From Varada Mandir P. 35
90. Ruskin J - Unto This Last P. 2, 3, 30 and 83
with such strength and opportunity as God gives me for my daily bread; and all that my hand finds to do." As Ruskin has himself made it clear, "The subject of the organisation of labour is only casually touched upon." But Gandhi, while preparing a paraphrase of Ruskin's Unto This Last in the concluding paragraph has written, "This is not a time for self-indulgence for each of us to labour according to our capacity. If one of us live in idleness, another has to put in a double amount of work. This is at the root of the distress of the poor in England."  

Thus after reading "Unto This Last" Gandhi was convinced of the need that one must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow or by performing Bread Labour. Hence speaking about the messages of Unto This Last he says that one of them was "the life of labour, i.e. the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicrafts man, is the life worth living." What is very much significant, as per his claim it had never occurred to him earlier and the reading of the Unto This Last made it for him as clear as day light. Thus on his own admission, a study of Unto This Last made a major contribution to Gandhi's concept of Bread Labour.  

Even if the doctrine that one must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow is not categorically and explicitly conveyed through the pages of "Unto This Last," Ruskin quite unequivocally and unambiguously puts his weight on the side that "a labour ought to be paid by an invariable standard."  

Equality of wage is advocated on the ground that wage earners inspite of the difference in their physical or mental
capacity have identical basic needs and such basic needs of all the individuals must be met. He does not distinguish between qualities of labour. Good or bad, all the labourers do.

According to Ruskin identical treatment. As he argued:

"You pay with equal fees contentedly, the good and bad workmen upon your soul and the good and bad workmen upon your body; much more may you pay, contentedly, with equal fees, the good and bad workmen upon your house." 97

Further as he felt "This equality of wages, then first object towards which we have to discover the road." 98

Ruskin did not accord a higher place to intellectual labour over manual labour, nor did he feel that there is any justification for paying the intellectual profession a high wage than the manual labourers. As Ruskin felt whether a physician, a lawyer, or a merchant, he need not be paid a higher than the other categories of labour because "the death of all these men is, on due occasion to die for it", and not claim a higher reward for his work. Their primary consider should be service and not reward nor special treatment nor even additional facilities. Remuneration adequate enough for their existence, may be paid to them and perhaps he would should be paid to them. But that does not justify special treatment to them or award of additional reward. As he had written: The

"The stipend is a due and necessary adjunct but not the object, of his life, if he be a true clergyman, any more

---

97. Ruskin - Unto This Last. P=16
98. Ibid. P = 17
99. Ibid. P = 22
than his fee (or honorarium) is the object of life to a true physician. Neither is his fee the object of life to a true merchant. All three if true men have a work to be done irrespective of fee—to be done even at any cost or for quite the contrary of fee; the pastor's function being to teach, the physician's to heal and the merchant's to provide. 100.

Gandhi after going through Ruskin's Unto This Last has written that one of the teachings of the book was that "a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's in as much as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work." Under the impact of Ruskin's Unto This Last he equally believed that differential wage should not be paid for intellectual work in preference to manual work since intellectual labour should not be treated as superior to manual labour.

(c) THOREAU

Thoreau's writings that profoundly influenced Gandhi's philosophy of life and action must have also influenced his concept of Bread Labour. Thoreau was no doubt one of the greatest intellectuals that U.S.A. has so far produced. A graduate of Harvard University who knew Greek, Latin, French, and German, was as well versed in the religions and philosophies of the East as of the West, interested in Poetry and tried his luck in teaching he was also a believer in the Philosophy that one must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow or manual physical labour. Of course he has written quite jestingly "it is not necessary that a man should earn his living by the

100. Ibid P = 22
sweat of his brow unless he sweats easier than I do. But he was a firm believer in the philosophy that one must earn his living by his own labour. As he was convinced that the life of a labourer was a worthy life, he was full of admiration for the same. As he has written, "It certainly is fair to look at the class by whose labour the works which distinguish this generation are accomplished." He has further written:

"For myself I found that the occupation of a day labourer was the most independent of any, especially as it required only thirty or forty days in a year to support one."

Hence it has been written about him "He enjoyed activity and could not understand people who disliked work. He thought work was the proper activity of a man."

Thoreau was not happy with the men of liberal professions who live parasitical life. He was critical of the Professors who professed and practised according to him every thing but the "art of life." An intellectual he felt should not only "survey the world through a telescope or a microscope" or "Study chemistry"; he should also learn "how his bread is made" and "how it is earned." He considered the idle life of the intellectuals, uninspiring devoid of bodily labour, as posed the problem:

"How long shall we sit in our porticoes practising idle and musty virtues, which any work would make impertinent? As one were to begin the day with long suffering and hire a

102. Thoreau D. - The Veritias of Walden P - 52
103. Ibid. P - 25
104. Ibid. P - 51
105. Good J. P. - Henry David Thoreau; The Man who would be Free P - 67
106. Thoreau D. - The Veritias of Walden P - 37
Christian meekness and charity with goodness a forethought! Consider the Chinese pride and stagnant self-complacency of mankind."

Thus Thoreau was an advocate of the philosophy that one must earn his living by honest bodily labour.

Thoreau not only preached this philosophy; he practised it in his own life. He at one stage earned his upkeep by manufacturing pencil in his father's firm. He built his own house in the vicinity of the Walden Pond. Not only he cultivated the ground, prepared the field, and produced foodstuffs like beans, potatoes etc.; he fell trees, prepared firwood, cooked his own food and made his own furniture.

Thus Thoreau was convinced that every one should earn his bread by his own labour. His very thesis that one can produce his own food for the year only by working for six weeks is a hint that earning one's bread by physical labour is a philosophy that covers even intellectuals. Intellectuals should not only not free from such labour; after performance of such physical labour there is enough time left for intellectual pursuit.

Hence Gandhi's concept of Bread Labour must have been influenced by Thoreau's life and philosophy.

(a) BREAD LABOUR AND THE BIBLE

That the writings of Tolstoy and Ruskin left an indelible impression on the life and philosophy of Gandhi can be explained by the fact that both the inspirers of Gandhi were true Christians who preached and lived the life advocated in the Sermon on the Mount. Gandhi became acquainted with the New Testament at

107. Ibid., p. 250
the Sermon on the Mount before he came across writings of

"The Kingdom of God is Within You" and other books of Tolstoy and "Unto This Last" of Ruskin. As for his own claim, when he read the New Testament and the Sermon on the Mount, it straight went into his heart. Since the life, philosophy and writings of Tolstoy and Ruskin reflected the message contained in the New Testament and the Sermon on the Mount, they had a deeper appeal for Gandhi. But apart from other things the emphasis of the New Testament and the Sermon on the Mount is on work. The message is never one of idleness or exploitation but work and performance of one's duty. One in order to live, must work and thereby earn his bread instead of living upon others labor and thus becoming a parasite. As Jesus Christ said:

"Come to me all whose work is hard, whose load is heavy, and I will give your relief."

Even Jesus himself did not claim freedom from work for his own sustenance. Thus even superhuman forces and people who are considered sons of God, cannot live on charity. Once his disciples were in a dilemma as to the source from which his food was being collected and even suspected that perhaps Jesus was living on some body's charity. He replied categorically that his food was being derived from the fulfillment of his duties that God had assigned him or from his performance of work. As he said:

"It is meat and drink for me to do the will of him who sent me until I have finished his work."

108. Gandhi M. K. - The Story of My Experiments with Truth
110. John, IV - P 34
Even if God the universal father is conceived kind
hearted enough to make provision for everybody, and every living
being, one shall have to qualify for such love and charity by
ministering oneself to His designs by way of engaging oneself
in efforts and in performing one’s assigned duties. Even if grace is profusely available, one shall have to make sufficient
effort to collect such grace. As Tolstoy interpreted it:

"Our life is a field God has sown, and our business is to
gather its fruits. If we gather its fruits we receive the
reward of a life beyond time... And if we labour to gather
in life then like harvest-men we receive a reward."

As is evident from Jesus’s advice to the man who waited
by the side of the pool for thirty eight years to be redeemed
to be relieved of his sufferings, Jesus Christ wanted that every
body must be self-reliant and should not wait for the charity
or benevolence of others. One must work out his own solution
and make efforts for his own relief. As Jesus Christ advised

"Rise to your feet take up your bed and walk."

As Tolstoy understood the message of the New Testament
the Kingdom of God can be realised by the fulfilment of His
will and "that fulfilment depends on each man’s efforts."

As is further evident from the parable of the rich man who ga
away "ten cities" and "five cities" to the two slaves who
worked and earned during his absence and took away the pound
from the slave who remained idle and did not work during the
absence of his master the burden of the philosophy of Jesus
Christ is work and nobody can nor should prosper without wort

111: Tolstoy D - The Gospel in Brief P - 173
112: John V - 6
113: Tolstoy D - Gospel in Brief P - 176
114: Luke XIX - 11-25
Prosperity is the reward for work and not a product of exploitation. As Tolstoy understood it: "each to work by himself". earn his living.

The New Testament not only conveys the message of work for the sake of earning one's living and earning prosperity there is equal emphasis on sacrifice of the body for the sake of real happiness and real enjoyment. The flesh and the blood need not be sacrificed and there should be sublimation of flesh and blood for the sake of real happiness. Jesus Christ was prepared to sacrifice his body, flesh and blood so that his disciples can have eternal life and true happiness. An intellectually invigorating and spiritually inspiring life can be lived only by sublimating the body. Even for spiritual and intellectual growth not merely exercise of the intellect and culture of the spirit are necessary; sacrifice of the is a pre-condition for such spiritual and intellectual upsurge as Tolstoy felt:

"If you do not give your body for the life of the spirit there will be no life in you. He who does not give his body for the life of the spirit has no real life. Only that in me which gives up the body for the spirit has real life. And therefore our bodies are truly fool for the real life".

Thus the New Testament not only emphasizes on work – efforts of the individual for one's existence and prosperity

it lays equal stress on bodily labour or manual labour, since
sacrifice of body for the sake of real development of the
individual forms the core of such emphasis. The sacrifice of
the body does not mean committing suicide but sacrifice of
bodily comforts or luxuries, idleness or pampering of
the body. Thus positively speaking, it implies labour with the
body, sacrifice of bodily comfort that arises as a corollary of
idleness and enjoyment of real worth of life, the intellectual,
excellences and spiritual bliss by way of work or bodily labor.
If Tolstoy got inspiration for his concept of Bread Labour from
the Russian peasant Bondaref, it will be equally true to say
that the Bible also influenced his concept of Bread Labour.

Ruskin’s Unto This Last as per Gandhi’s claim provided
the primary inspiration for him to think on the lines of Bread
Labour. But Ruskin’s Unto This Last, the philosophy contained
it, and the ideology expressed through it are themselves derived
from the Bible; the Parable of the Vineyard. The owner of the
Vineyard is no doubt philanthropic enough to pay the last man
who came to work just one hour before the sunset same wage as
he paid to those who came and worked from early in the morn.
but he did not distribute does among the unemployed persons—
The payment is made in return for work. One must work as per
his capacity and according to the opportunity provided to him.
He must work till the dusk of his life in order to earn his
living. Each is entitled to maintenance wage only in return
for work. Thus toil is a necessary condition of life. One who
does not toil forfeits his claim for subsistence and right —
life.

118: Matthew XI: 1-16
"One has to toil till evening, till the end of one's life and that too cheerfully and ungrudgingly." 119

This is the message of the Parable of the Vineyard.

(d) THE GITA

Gandhi considered the Bhagavad Gita as the most loving, affectionate, and nourishing mother, who never disappointed him and from whom he derived sustenance throughout his life. It was like his Open Sesame at each critical juncture of his life. As he further felt: "The Gita is the universal mother. She turns away no body." 120 He added: "The recitation of the Gita verse will support you in your trials and console you in your distress and even in the darkness of solitary confinement." 121 But what is the essence of the message of the Gita? As Dal Gangadhar Tilak has interpreted it:

"The definite injunction of the Blessed Lord to Arjuna was:

"Fight! .... Nay the doctrine of the Gita has come into existence only in order to explain why a wise man must perform a particular act notwithstanding that he sees before his eyes the terrible consequences of it, and this is indeed the most important feature of the Gita." 122

The primary objective of the Gita is therefore propagation of the philosophy of action or Karma Yoga. The Lord advises Arjuna, who having been overwhelmed by sorrow and over-taken by dejection and despondency at the sight of his own kinsmen on the battle field, had renounced his armaments, to shake off Saint-heartedness, unmanliness, and effeminacy, and rise up to

119. Honon V. Laxmi. - Ruskin and Gandhi P. 10
120. Gandhi M. K., - Harijan August 24, 1934
121. Ibid.
122. Tilak B. G., - Gita Rahasya or the Science of Karma Yoga.
the occasion, take up his position and fight. The Lord's exhortation to Arjuna to engage oneself in the battle is evident in verses 3, 18, 37 and 38 of Chapter II of the Gita. In verses 31 38 the Lord tries to convince Arjuna why he should fight. The emphasis here is on the duty of the Kshatriya or the clan to which Arjuna belonged. As a Kshatriya or one belonging to the warrior class, it was the bounden duty of Arjuna to engage himself in a battle for the cause of justice and fair play. A Kshatriya's happiness lies not in domestic pleasures and comforts, but in fighting for the right. Unless Arjuna takes up his arms and engages himself in the battle against injustice, reputation as a Kshatriya shall dwindle and shall be soiled. Reputation therefore according to Bhagavad Gita depends upon performance of one's duty or the action of one's calling. The battle, or the fight as referred to in the Gita is only symbolical. It stands for activity and that too unceasing and unrelenting activity for the performance of the calling of one's station. The epithet of battle simply signifies that for a Kshatriya, a battle-field is always the appropriate place for performance of one's duty or Dharma or Swadharma. The essence of the emphasis lies in unceasing effort. As Gandhi has observed:

"The description of the battle serves only as a pretext. The Mahabharata itself was not composed with the objective of describing a battle. In the Bhagavad Gita the author has cleverly made use of the event to teach great truths."

123. Radhakrishnan S - Bhagavad Gita P - 112
124. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi - Vol. XXII P - 125
125. Ibid. P - 102
The real significance of the battle as depicted in the
Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita is therefore an exhortation
for performance of one's duty. Since Arjuna is a warrior by
birth and profession, it has been enjoined on him to take up
arms and fight the battle. Had Arjuna been born to any other
caste or profession, the action associated with that profession
would have been advocated, be it the work of a farmer, a husband
man or a Brahmin.

Thirty four verses of a total of 72 of Chapter II or
Chapter on Santhya Yoga have been devoted to Karmayoga, or the
Path of Action. Besides, Chapter III has been christened as
Karmayoga and Chapter IV, V and VI have attempted to demonst-
the superiority of the Path of Action or Karmayoga. According
as Bal Gangadhar Tilak has observed "the principal subject-
matter of the Gita is "the exposition of the Karmayoga," his interpretation of the Gita has been entitled as the "San
of Karmayoga." Dr. S.Radhakrishnan speaking about the Gita
observed:

"It raises the question whether action or renunciation of
action is better and concludes that action is better..." Right through, the teacher emphasises the need for action.
He does not adopt the solution of dismissing the world
an illusion and action as a snare. He recommends the fa-
active life of man in the world with the inner life and
red in the Eternal Spirit. The Gita is therefore a mand-
for action."

126. Tilak B. G. - Gita Rahasya Vol. II P = 900
127. Radhakrishnan S - The Bhagavad Gita P = 66
The Lord’s exhortation to Arjuna to renounce faint-heartedness and despondency and take to fight because true performance of the duties of a Kshatriya warranted such a move is reinforced by the argument that Buddha-yoga or the Path of knowledge as described in verses 39-53 of Chapter II also enjoins upon him pursuit of the path of action, although one has to perform such action in a spirit of renunciation and detachment without expectation of fruits thereof. A Buddha-yogi need not renounce action; it is only expected of him that he renounce his attachment to the fruits of such action or work with a spirit of detachment. As it has been explained by Bhagavan Shri Satyasai Baba "then the desire to attain the fruits of action is renounced with full intellectual awareness then it becomes what Krishna calls Buddha-yoga." Thus Buddha-yoga indicates the way of performance of action with a spirit of detachment and disinterestedness. Hence in verse 30 of Chapter II Yoga has been described as the "skill in action." The injunction of the Lord goes on:

"tasmad yogaya yujyesva
yogah karmasu kaucahah" 129

The Sthitaprajnya as described in the last part of Chapter II, verses 54-72, is not one who has renounced all action but one who has liberated himself from the expectations of fruits thereof. As Bhagavan Shri Satyasai has observed: "The Sthitaprajnya releases himself from attachment."

128. Bhagavan Shri Satyasai Baba - Gita Vahini P - 33
129. Radhakrishnan S - Bhagavad Gita P - 120
130. Bhagavan Shri Satyasai Baba - Gita Vahini P - 37.
Further "The shakti prajña knows neither the pains of
grievous or the thrill of joy. He is not repulsed by one or attrac-
ted by the other, he will not retreat before pain or run for-
towards pleasure. Thus the Lord's emphasis is not on inaction but action without attachment for the fruits thereof.

In Chapter III an attempt has been made to establish the
fact that work of action is inevitable for existence and inse-
parable from life. None can remain even for a moment without
engaging himself in some work. Human nature impels him to be
engaged in some work or the other. As Dr. Radhakrishnan has
explained:

"So long as we lead embodied lives, we cannot escape from
action, without work life cannot be sustained. While
life remains, action is unavoidable. Thinking is an act,
living is an act."

Hence the Lord's injunction to Arjuna is that he should
engage himself in unwavering toil since work is worthier than
idleness and action is better than inaction. Even the mainten-
of one's physical life is inconceivable without action. As Ed
Arnold has explained:

"Do thine allotted task:
Work is more excellent than idleness;
The body's life proceeds not lacking work!"

As the Lord explains to Arjuna the entire creation proc
from Vajña or work: work and creation were born together. The

---
131. Ibid p. 38
132. Bhagavad Gita Chapter III Verse 5
133. Radhakrishnan S - The Bhagavad Gita p. 133
134. Gita - Chapter III Verse 5
135. Arnold E - The Song Celestial p. 14
creation is the result of Yajna or the work of Prajapati, and Prajapati or the Creator ordained that the creation can prosper or flourish, and rise to its full splendour and magnificence, or through action or Yajna Gods can be worshipped only through action and not idleness and they bestow prosperity on those who perform their assigned duties. Persons who do not perform their duties but remain idle and enjoy the endowments of God are thieves.

As Sir Edwin Arnold has translated it:

"Spake Prajapati —
In the beginning, when all men were made,
And, with mankind, the sacrifice — " Do this!
Work! sacrifice! Increase and multiply
With sacrifice! This shall be Kamaduka.
Your ' Cow of Plenty,' giving back her milk
Of all abundance. Worship the gods thereby;
The gods shall yield thee grace. Those meats ye crave,
The gods will grant to Labour, when it pays
Tithes in the altar-flame. But if one eats
Fruits of the earth, rendering to kindly Heaven
No gift of toil, that thief steals from his world".

Thus Edwin Arnold has interpreted Yajna as Labour and
This is also evident from the interpretation of Bal Gangadha
Tilek. "It is clear that the word ' Yajna ' means all the
(duties) prescribed for the four castes".

136. Gita Chapter III Verse — 10-12
137. Arnold B — The Bhagavad Gita P — 15
138. Tilek 9. 3. — Gita Rahasya Vol. II P-919
The Lord has even gone on to explain in detail how human existence is impossible without work or labour. Leaving aside the ideological and philosophical arguments, to come to the law of mundane existence of man, he explains that life is sustained by good food; food is the product of rain and rain in turn is directly connected with work and is a product of work or labour.

Thus, work or labour is indissolubly related to the universe or the creation. The creation proceeds from the work of the Creator and the creation can be sustained only by work. Work proceeds from the imperishable Brahma and the Brahma or the imperishable remains established in work. As Dr. S. Radhakrishna has expressed:

"Action is rooted in the imperishable. But for the action of Supreme, the world will fall into ruin."

As he has further added "Action is a moral as well as physical necessity for embodied beings."

What to speak of ordinary mortals; even saints and Siddhas who have attained perfection in this world can not liberate themselves from the cycle of action. Even Saints like Janaka who had attained blessedness and lived a life completely detached from worldly enjoyment and pleasures kept themselves busied in action. The Lord pointed out to Arjuna that although He Himself was the embodiment of all virtues and every perfection was the creator of the entire universe, omnipresent and omniscient, He had nothing beyond reach and nothing unattained and unattainable.

139. Bhagavad Gita - Chapter III Verse - 14
140. Bhagavad Gita - Chapter III verse - 15
141. Radhakrishnan S - Bhagavad Gita P - 137
142. Ibid, P - 137
He took for granted the cycle of work and remained active throughout. As Edwin Arnold has interpreted it:

"Look on me,
Thou Son of Pritha! in the three wide worlds
I am not bound to any toil, no height
Awaits to scale, no gift remains to gains
Yet I act here."

Hence the Lord finally administers the advice to Arjuna to remain perpetually busy in the performance of one's duties. Those who in defiance of the wheel of action, remain idle are treated by the Lord as perpetually depraved, leading a vain life. As Edwin Arnold has interpreted:

"He that abstains
To help the rolling wheels of this great world,
Gluttung his idle sense, lives a lost life,
Shameful and vain."

Even in Chapter IV of the Bhagavad Gita that is meant to expound the cause of knowledge or to establish the significance of the Path of Knowledge, the emphasis is on work and activity. As Bal Gangadhar Tilak has explained, Chapter IV "is further emphasis of the principles of Karmayoga, which have been explained so far namely...as no body can escape! (Action). Action must be performed, though the reason may have become desireless. In this Chapter the path of knowledge not advocate renunciation of action but advocates desireless action, or action without expecting fruits thereof or renunciation."

143. Bhagavad Gita - Chapter III verse 22
144. Arnold B - Bhagavad Gita P -16
145. Gita - Chapter III Verse 16
146. Arnold B - P 15
147. Tilak B. G. - Gita Rahasya P - 939
tion of expectations of fruits of one's action, while performing the duties of one's station. As the Lord said in verse 13, the four-fold class division in the society is based on the nature of and work of persons. Hence the emphasis in this chapter is on work free from the bondage of expectation of fruits thereof. Since work does not defile the Lord as He performs his duties with a sense of detachment, He advises Arjuna and through Arjuna all human beings, to perform their assigned duties with the same spirit of detachment. Of course it is contended that those who attain wisdom realisation by adopting the path of knowledge attain supreme peace and highest bliss. It is no doubt advocated in this chapter that the Path of Knowledge like fire consumes all actions. But the emphasis here is not on inaction or idleness, but rather the essence of these verses is renunciation of selfish action or a plea for self-less action. In verse 31 the Lord has said that non-performers of sacrifice or Vajña or y ś is not even entitled to worldly success when to speak of other bliss and in verse 32 it is said that no sacrifice or Vajña is conceivable without work or labour.

Thus even though the path of knowledge, the Lord tries to establish the superiority of action although the emphasis is on actions free from desires or fruits thereof or actions performed with a sense of detachment and self-lessness.

Accordingly Bal Gangadhar Tilak has observed "The advice has been given to Arjuna to perform action with the joint help of Jñāna and yoga" but not renunciation of action—

148. Bhagavad Gita - Chapter IV Verse - 39
149. Chapter IV Verse - 37
150. Tilak B. G. - Gita Rahasya Vol. III P =566
Even in Chapter V superiority of action over mere acquisition of knowledge and renunciation of action has been emphasised. Although the same result or supreme bliss is attainable both by pursuing the path of action or karma-yoga and renunciation of action or the path of knowledge, yet action has been shown as superior to inaction or renunciation of action. As Lord said in verse 6, Sannyasa or a state of renunciation becomes impossible of attainment without yoga or action when those who earnestly pursue the path of karma-yoga or the path of action reach the Absolute and thus a state of real Sannyasa. Hence although both renunciation of action and unselfish performance of one's duties lead to the same goal, i.e., salvation for the soul, performance of action is considered a better or superior method for the attainment of the objective. As Bal Gangadhar Tilak has interpreted it:

"The firm doctrine of the Gita is that though the Karma Yoga and renunciation are both equally productive of release that is to say, though from the point of view of release the effect of both is the same, yet considering the course of life in the world the better or more praiseworthy path is to continue to desirously perform action even after one has acquired knowledge". 152

Hence true renunciation or a state of true Sannyasa is not incompatible with performance of action; rather performance of action is the precondition even for the attainment of a state of Sannyasa. A state of perfection or a state of liberation...
the bondage of action is inconceivable without performance of action. 153 For the attainment of a state of Sannyasa or to be a true yogi, action is thus a precondition. As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has interpreted it:

"That is demanded is not renunciation of works but, renunciation of selfish desire."

Again the same emphasis on Karma or work or action is evident from Chapter VI. Negatively put, the Lord says that a Sannyasi or a yogi is not one who does not perform his duty and remains in a state of inactivity and idleness. A State of Sannyasa implies a state of disciplined performance of one's duty and hence yoga or Karma yoga or honest performance of selfless action with a sense of detachment for the fruits of one's efforts is a state of true sannyasa. As B.C. Tilak has observed:

"True Sannyasa consists in giving up a Desirable Reason or the Hope of Fruit. Sannyasa consists in the frame of the mind and not in the external act of giving up the maintenance of the sacrificial fire or ritual. Therefore that man alone who gives up the Hope of Fruit or the Sankalpa and thus performs his duties can be called the true Sannyasa."

The Lord's injunction to Arjuna is that whether it is stage of aspiration for liberation or perfection or a stage of attainment of liberation or perfection, for a Sannyasi, work is an infallible guide and invaluable weapon. Through work, an

153. G Tilak B. G. - Gita Rahasya Vol. II P - 970
154. Radhakrishnan S - The Bhagavad Gita P - 133
155. Gita - Chapter VI Verse - 1-2
156. Tilak B. G. - Gita Rahasya Vol. II P - 983
aspiring yogi makes his effort to attain a state of Sannyasa and even after attainment of Sannyasa, he must keep himself perpetually engaged in work. For a Sannyasi, Karmayoga is not a mere preliminary accomplishment. Even the yoga-rudha - he has acquired a state of eternal bliss and tranquillity - is required to remain ever busy in action. According to Tilak:

"The Karmanyogin should even in the state of perfection (Sidhavastha) continue to perform all actions desirously and merely as duties, and as long as he is alive, in the same manner as the Blessed Lord." 157

After the attainment of Sidhavastha or perfection the Yogarudha or Sannyasi acts remaining in a state of equanimity or "Sama". But as Dr. Radhakrishnan has observed "Sama does not mean the cessation of karma". The Yogarudha performs his duties merely as duties, and without entertaining the hope of fruits. Accordingly Edwin Arnold has observed:

"Regard as true Renouncer him that makes Worship by work, for who renounceth not Works not as Yogan. So is that well said:

"By works the votary doth rise to faith,
And saintship is the ceasing from all works,"
Because the perfect Yogan acts - but acts Unmoved by passions and unbound by dooms,
Setting result aside." 160

Thus a Yogarudha, a true yogi or a true Sannyasi shall renounce action, but perform all his duties, renouncing the

157: Ibid. P = 983
158: Radhakrishnan S - The Bhagavad Gita P = 169
159: Tilak B. G. - Gita Rahasya Vol. II P = 984
160: Arnold E. - The Song Celestial P = 28
expectations of fruits thereof. He does not perform those acts to satisfy his senses but with a sense of duty and detachment, casting away all desires and hopes of the fruits of those actions.  

The true message of the Gita therefore is the philosophic of action. As Dr. Radhakrishnan has very appropriately observed,  

"The Gita is therefore a mandate for action".  

As he has further observed "The Gita advocates detachment from desires and not cessation from work".  

Not only the Bhagavad Gita makes a plea for action in place of inactivity or performance of one's duty and perpetual engagement in work; the theory of bread labour i.e., work is intimately and indissolubly related to one's bread, is contained in the Gita. Particularly verse 14 of Chapter III of the Bhagavad Gita, speaks of the indissoluble relationship between bread and work and attempts to establish the truth that one's substance must be the product of one's own efforts and work, as Sir Edwin Arnold has explained this verse:  

"By food the living live, food comes of rains,  
And rain comes by the pious sacrifice,  
And sacrifice is paid with tithes of toil ".  

Thus food must be the product of one's own toil and not a gift from any body, not even from God.  

Gandhi, who was profoundly influenced by the Bhagavad Gita, which was his own boat of plenty or karmayuddha, derived his

162. Radhakrishnan S. — The Bhagavad Gita P = 66  
163. Ibid. P = 68  
164. Arnold S. — The Song Celestial P = 15
first lessons on the theory of Bread Labour from the Bhagavad Gita. For the idea that every body, whatever may be his status in life, must perform some function appropriate to his status and his subsistence shall come as a reward for such function duly performed, Gandhi was no doubt indebted to Ruskin, Tolstoy and Bondaref; but he grasped the significance of the indissoluble bond between one's subsistence and one's labour even before he read the writings of Tolstoy & Ruskin and became acquainted with the ideas of Bondaref. The Primary source of inspiration for the ideas of Bread Labour as per his own acknowledgement was the Bhagavad Gita. Speaking about his indebtedness to Bhagavad Gita in respect of the concept of Bread Labour, Gandhi said on April 14, 1926 "It is not recently that I have come to attach this meaning to Yojna. I have understood it that sense ever since I first read the Gita. That I read about the Russian writer Bondaref's views on "Bread Labour" only confirmed my idea but the idea was with me from the beginning and has grown stronger with years".165

Gandhi not only derived the idea of Bread Labour from Bhagavad Gita in the sense that one must perform some function and engage himself in some work or action to justify his claim for the bread that he eats but he also derived the idea of Bread Labour in the sense of performance of some bodily labour or manual labour from the Gita too. The term yajna, or sacrifice or work as referred to at different places in the Gita has understood by Gandhi as meaning bodily labour or physical. In explaining verse 10 of Chapter III of the Bhagavad Gita, Gandhi said:

165. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol. XXXII P-1
"Along with yajna the Lord created men*, which type of yajna is meant here? Does the term have any special meaning? I think it has. The reference here is not to mental or intellectual work. Brahma did not ask human beings to multiply and prosper merely by working with their minds; what he meant was that they should do so through bodily yajna, by working with the body. Thus bodily labour is our lot in life. The yajna commencing with Sahayajna then talks of bodily yajna."

Yajna therefore as contained in the Bhagavad Gita has been understood by Gandhi as meaning body labour. He has warned that we are doomed if we do not labour, if we do not tend the body and work with it:

"If people worked with the shovel, or pickaxe would they be disturbed with evil desires? If we do our bodily yajna properly all will be well with us, we shall advance the good of our atma and of the world." 166

Gandhi argued that if the emphasis of the Bhagavad Gita is on Yajna, such yajna can not be performed "by lighting a stick" or arranging a bonfire. As Gandhi understood it Yajna in the sense of lighting bonfire might have had its relevance in the olden days, when the world was full of jungle, whose fire was essential for human existence and defence against deadly animals and venomous reptiles but in the modern world such lighting of fire is not the very essence of true Yajna and I

166. Ibid. P - 156
167. Ibid. P - 157
thus no relevance. As Gandhi said:

"Immemerable ceremonies were devised, all of which required the lighting of fire. If these rishis had lived in the desert of Sahara, they would have conceived of yajna as refraining from cutting a single twig, as planting of trees or drawing a certain quantity of water". 168

The idea of work or labour as contained in the Bhagavat Gita was therefore understood by Gandhi in the sense of bodily labour. As Gandhi understood verse 10 of Chapter 3 yajna no bodily labour. Accordingly he said:

"Using one's limbs, labouring, working for others good, these ideas follow from this one verse." 169

Gandhi believed that the Bhagavad Gita instead of exalting on simple, prayer or meditation, made a plea for bodily labour. Man's existence in this world does not depend so much on intellectual or mental labour as on physical or bodily labour:

"The world would go on even if there were no intelligent men and women in it, but it would be nowhere if all people refused to do physical work ". 170

In interpreting verse 12 of Chapter III that speaks of sacrifice and describes the person who acquires his means livelihood without performing any sacrifice, as a thief, Gandhi said: "He is a thief who does not do bodily labour for see

168. Ibid. P - 157
169. Ibid. P - 159
170. Ibid. P - 159
171. Ibid. P - 160
In interpreting verse 13 that says that the righteous men should collect their food after appropriate sacrifice Gandhi said:

"One should regularly and daily perform yajna, make a sacrifice, of which body labour is the foundation." 172

Thus Gandhi under the influence of the Bhagavad Gita was thoroughly convinced that yajna or performance of Svadharma is inconceivable without bodily labour. Bodily sacrifice is essential for earning one's means of survival. Tender care of the body is the very negation of the law of nature and the law of the universe. "There is no yajna for him who is not ready to mortify his body." He further said:

"The original intention behind the idea of yajna was that people should do physical work." 174

Hence Gandhi's concept of Bread Labour particularly his emphasis on bodily labour was initially due to the inspiration he derived from the Bhagavad Gita. As Gandhi has himself admitted whereas the Russian writer Bondaref's emphasis was on labour the source of one's livelihood, the influence of the Gita made him to see the other side of the medal i.e. the labour so performed must be necessarily manual or bodily labour. As Gandhi has said about his indebtedness to Bondaref in respect of his concept of Bread Labour:

"The Russian writer has stated one side of the truth. To understand the other side too, we now understand the idea of bread labour better for by yajna, we do not mean labour as a means of livelihood. Thanks to the associations whi

172. Ibid. P. 160
173. Ibid. P. 164
174. Ibid. P. 164
the term call up we do not restrict yajna to mean this and no more. Labour in this context means bodily labour. He alone should eat who has laboured for twelve hours. 175

To sum up the Gandhian concept of bread labour derived its inspiration both from foreign and indigenous sources, from the great religious scriptures like the Bible and the Gita - the philosophy of great thinkers like Ruskin and Tolstoy, as an adopted child of Bhagavad Gita he derived his primary inspiration for the concept of bread labour from the "Karma Yoga" or the philosophy of action his deep attachment to the Bible and the philosophy of work of Ruskin and Tolstoy proved further confirmation to the belief that each shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. Hence M.A. Drobychev the Soviet scholar of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences observed in the UNESCO Symposium held at Paris:

"Under the influence of ancient Indian religions and philosophies, on the one hand and such nineteenth century American and European authors as Thoreau, Ruskin and Leo Tolstoy on the other Gandhi came to the conclusion that man must live by his own labour, which implies not only renunciation of parasitic living and the necessity for each to make his contribution to the labour effort of society, but more particularly production by one's own hand of all or almost all means of subsistence."

176: Ibid, P = 159
176: Mohadevan R. K. = Truth and Non-Violence P = 162
Thus the concept of Bread Labour of Gandhi is a composite product of all those various influences and the influence of Bible that shaped his life and philosophy in general.

D. BREAD LABOUR AND THE NATURE OF WORK

The emphasis of the Gandhian concept of Bread Labour - not only on labour for earning one's bread but also on physical, mental or bodily labour. Gandhi interpreted to term 'yogas', so much valued and so much emphasised in the Shagavad Gita, to bodily labour or action through employment of one's limbs. Even in respect of bodily labour Gandhi differentiated between different types of bodily labour and was far from being convinced that all types of bodily labour would satisfy the requirements of Bread Labour conceived by him. Physical labour of a lion who runs across and hills innocent citizens for the physical bodily labour of policemen who stamp at the crowd causing casualties or of military personnel busy in bombing would far short of the nature of Gandhian Bread Labour. Besides in the French Physiocrats, he was not prepared to accept the idea of labour, the movement of the limbs of the industrialists or commercialists or the trading section of the community as labour and treated such labour as sterile. It is said about Physiocrats:

"The majority of them thought or implied that by growing wheat a man added to the wealth of the nation more than he did by making bread out of the wheat. Only the ground or catching or digging up of something seemed to increase the world's stock of 'real' wealth." 177

177. Nancy L. H. - History of Economic Thought 9 - 183
Thus the Physiocrats considered only agriculture as productive, and the real source of all wealth. Like the Physiocrats, Gandhi also advocated that labour or manual labour in order to acquire the dignity and status of Bread Labour must be really productive and he discovered like the Physiocrats such productivity in agriculture alone. Hence for Gandhi agricultural operation constitutes the right and ideal type of Bread Labour. Accordingly Gandhi has written:

"This labour can truly be related to agriculture alone".

Thus Gandhi, idealised and idolised the work of agriculturists and considered agricultural operations as the only work that invests manual labour with the dignity of Bread Labour. His preference for agricultural operation as the true and real-type of Bread Labour that entitles one to earn his bread is due to the influence of Physiocrats. It is as much a result of his pragmatic approach, it is as a result of his emotional attainment to the philosophical position of his masters like Ruskin and Tolstoy, protagonist of the idea of Bread Labour like Bond and the influences of the Gita and the Bible.

A practical idealist that he was, Gandhi was conscious: any other ordinary mortal that food stuff is a direct product of agriculture and no other labour and no other work, neither the work of a trader nor that of an industrialist and produce anything, any real wealth, or any value and least of all any good-stuff. Even industries producing food-stuffs like edible oil, biscuits, sugar and processed food are inconceivable with primary commodities produced by agriculture. Literally speak.

178. Gandhi G. K. — From Varavda Mandir P. — 36
entitles one to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow or the only real type of Bread Labour of Gandhian conception.

Ideologically speaking under the influence of Tolstoy Ruskin, Thoreau and Bunderoff, and the Bhagavad Gita and the B, while learning the doctrine of Bread Labour Gandhi learnt a: that Bread Labour should be intimately related to agriculture.

Tolstoy, an advocate of Bread Labour not only gave a p. of preeminence to physical labour; he particularly elevate the work of the peasants to a very high pedestal in his sch of things. As he said "Man live and support themselves by agriculture as is proper for all men". As a matter of fact realisation came to him about the intimate relationship bet life and labour by his contact with the peasants. As early in 1860 while working with the peasants in his estate Yassa Poliyana, Tolstoy discovered that manual labour in farms is capable of providing the highest satisfaction of life. "I got up one fine morning at 5 O'clock in order to direct the farm work myself; towards evening he had found himself growing angry, but instead of giving way to his feeling he started to work at the manuring, side by side with the peas mostly serfs, until he was in heavy sweat and he had not on thrown off his anger, but had reached a stage in which every thing seemed good and he felt fond of every body".

In the seventiles Tolstoy's more frequent contact with the peasantry and particularly through the organisation of Famine Relief Fund in 1873 when the country had been engulfed in a famine and his work in educating the peasants, brought

---

179. Tolstoy L - What Then Must Do P = 254
180. Bagohidna - Tolstoy & Gandhi P = 5
closer to the peasants. As it has been observed: "About the time Tolstoy began thinking in terms of Bread Labour", he derived further confirmation for his idea of Bread Labour from the writings of Bondaref, a Russian peasant who wrote a book on the "Law of Labour". As Tolstoy has written: "In the B: it is said that it is a law for human beings to eat bread in sweat of their brow, and in sorrow to bring forth children. That peasantry, Bondaref who wrote an article about this lit up for the wisdom of that saying. Bondaref, said in his book: "Thou shalt eat thy bread with the sweats of thy brow. That is an immutable law. Just as women obey the law of child birth through labour pain so man should obey the hard law of labour. Woman can not liberate herself from her destiny. If she add a child not of her own, that child will be a stranger impotent all and the women will be deprived of the joy of motherhood. That same law is applicable to man's labour. If a man eats bread which he has not earned he is deprived of the joy of labour. Tolstoy has quoted it with approval in his LA MENSUB DES L.

HUMAINE ". In defending Henry George's "Single Tax proposal on land, Tolstoy wrote to Bondaref that it shall uphold the interests of the peasants, liberate them from a state of bondage and elevate their status and put an end to idleness and leisure life of the landholders or the nobility. That the non-workers would be saved from the sin of exploiting other people's labour. In doing which they are often not the guilty parties for they have from childhood been educated in idleness, and do

181. Ibid. p. 7
182. Tolstoy L - What Then Must We Do? p. 320
183. Nog Kalidas & Tolstoy and Gandhi p. 7
know up to work) and from the still greater sin of all kinds of shuffling and lying to justify themselves in committing this sin; and the workers would be saved from the temptation and of envying, condemning and being exasperated with the non-work so that one cause of separation among men would be destroyed.

Thus Tolstoy was a champion of the rights of the peasant and an advocate of their liberation from feudalistic bondage. He considered the life of a peasant as enviable not only because a peasant's life involves physical labour because of their involvement in physical labour the peasants keep themselves physically fit whereas the so-called fortunate people rolling in luxury really suffer both physically and mentally. As Tolstoy writes:

"Count ever in your memory, the rich man and their wives, you have known, or now know, and you will notice that most of them are ill. Among them a healthy man who is not under going treatment, continually or periodically, suffers after suffer is as much an exception as is a sickman among the peasantry. All these fortunate people without exception begin with ennui... they all have bad teeth, are all grey or bald at an age when a worker is just reaching his full strength. They are nearly all subject to nervous, digestive and sexual illness, from gluttony, drunkenness, debauchery and doctoring and those who do not die young spend half their life in being doctoring and taking injec-
tions of morphia... Consider their deaths: this one shot himself; that one rotted with Syphilis; another old man died from the effects of a stimulant; while another died
Young from a flogging to which he submitted in his desire for sex stimulation; one was eaten alive by lice, another by worms, one drank himself to death, another died of overeating; one from morphia and another as the result of an abortion". 184

Tolstoy not only preferred agricultural operations over all other forms of bread labour; he renounced the privilege of his station, liberated his tenants, gave away his land to the and even worked with the peasants and lived the life of a farm. Gandhi's admiration for Tolstoy was partly due to the fact that he embraced the life of a peasant. Speaking about Tolstoy as early as 1905 Gandhi wrote in the Indian Opinion: "He gave up his wealth and took to a life of poverty; he has lived like a peasant for many years now and earns his needs by his own labour". Later on, he wrote in the Indian Opinion: "It was as a good man that the world knew him; in India we would have described him as a nashtri or Fakir. He renounced his wealth; he gave up a life of comfort to embrace that of a simple peasant. Speaking about Tolstoy's philosophy, Gandhi wrote in his Indian Opinion: "He believes that .... Agriculture is the true occupation of man". 187

Thus Tolstoy, whose life and philosophy so profoundly influenced the life and philosophy of Gandhi and from whom he partly derived his inspiration for his concept of bread labour also acted as a major force in setting the tone to the Gandhian concept that agricultural operation is the true, real and the ideal manifestation of bread labour.

186. Ibid. Vol. X P. 369
Gandhi while deriving the concept of Bread Labour from Tolstoy was conscious that the latter in turn had been influent in respect of this concept by Bondaref. Hence he has written "The divine law that man must earn his bread by labouring with his own hands was first stressed by a writer named T.M. Bondaref. Tolstoy advertised it and gave it wider publicity". But Bondaref was a peasant. The initial advocacy of the concept of Bread Labour by a peasant must have convinced Gandhi that Bread Labour is inconceivable without work in the farm.

Although emphasis on Bread Labour in the sense that one must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow is not so clear in evidence in the pages of Unto This Last, Ruskin has unerringly expressed his preference for work in the field or agriculture operation. He considered agricultural operation as the really productive operation and has held at a discount professions like trade, exchange or commerce. As he observed:

"One man by sowing and reaping turns one measure of corn into two. That is profit...Profit or material gain is attainable not by exchange".

Further he considered that there are only two kinds of "true production" - "one of seed, one of food or productio for the ground and for the mouth". Besides he felt that "the prosperity of any nation is in exact proportion to the quantity of labour which it spends in obtaining...means of life". Ruskin also treated agricultural implements as the capital. As he said:

188. Gandhi M. K. - From Yeravda Mandir P - 35
189. Ruskin - Unto This Last P - 70
190. Ibid. P - 79
191. Ibid. P - 77
"The best and simplest general type of capital is a well made plough share...It becomes true capital only by another kind of splendour, when it is seen...to grow bright in the furrow."

That apart, in his view only operations connected with the soil are truly beautiful. Hence he said: "No scene is continually and untiringly loved but one rich by joyful human labour smooth in field; fair in garden, full in orchard trim, sweet, and frequent in homestead; ringing with voices of vivid existence."

Thus although Ruskin belonged to the pedagogic profession and was a great intellectual, he held in high esteem agricultural operations. If Gandhi learned the lesson of Bread Labour after a study of The Last He discovered from it the message that the life of the tiller of the soil...is the life worth living. Thus partly under the influence of Ruskin Gandhi subscribed to the idea that agricultural operation is the pure and perfected form of Bread Labour.

If Thoreau profoundly influenced Gandhi's socio-economic doctrine, it is but natural to expect that Gandhi's concept of Bread Labour must have been duly influenced by the life and philosophy of Thoreau. Gandhi wrote in the Indian Opinion on October 26, 1905: "David Thoreau was a great writer, philosopher, poet, and withal a most practical man, that is he taught

192. Ibid., p. 78
193. Ibid., p. 88
194. Gandhi, M. K. - The Story of My Experiments with Truth
nothing he was not prepared to practice in himself. He was one of the greatest and most moral men America has produced. But apart from other messages that Thoreau's life held out for the posterity, the one that is most important is his life near the Walden Pond. He lived the life of a peasant, a simple farmer who ploughed his land, prepared his field and produced his own food, from the soil i.e. beans, potatoes, peas and sweetcorn. As he has written:

Those summer days which some of my contemporaries devoted to the fine arts in Boston or Rome, and others to contemplation in India and others to trade in London or New York. I thus with the other farmers of New England devoted to husbandry. Not that I wanted bean to eat, for I am by nature a Pythagorean, so far as beans are concerned, whether they mean porridge or voting and exchanged them for rice, but perchance, as some must work in fields if only for the sake of tropes and expression, to serve a parable-maker one day.

This Thoreau not only believed in the philosophy that one must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; he practiced it in right earnest in his own life, and that too through agricultural operation. This must have influenced Gandhi to consider agricultural operation as the most pure, perfect and the ideal form of Bread/Labour.

The influence of Revishankar Gandhi's cook to whom reference has been made in Gandhi's autobiography is perhaps not

---

196. Thoreau D - The Variorum of Walden P = 40
197. Thoreau D - The Variorum of Walden P = 122
important in driving home to Gandhi the primacy of agricultural operations as a means of earning one's livelihood. When Ravishanker a Brahmin and Gandhi's amateur cook was asked whether he knew Sandhya (daily worship) he replied "Sandhya Sir! The plough is our Sandhya, and the spade our daily ritual. That is the type of Brahmin I am. I must live on your mercy; otherwise agriculture is of course there for me". Of course Gandhi has written "So I had to be Ravishanker's teacher", but it can not be doubted that Ravishanker also taught Gandhi the lesson the agricultural operation is the real means of earning one's livelihood and plough and spade or other agricultural implements are the real capital for earning one's livelihood. That bread must be earned by the sweat of one's brow that comes out of one's engagement in agricultural operations must have been realized by Gandhi partly due to his contact with Ravishanker.

The Bhagavad Gita and the Bible must have also influenced Gandhi's conviction that agricultural operation is the most and the perfect form of Bread Labour. Chapter III of the Gita—while preaching the philosophy of karmayoga or the doctrine of ceaseless effort speaks in verse 14.

"annad bhavanti bhutani,
parjanyad amasambahaveh
vajnadhavati parjano
vajnah karmamuktahaveh".

199. Ibid, P = 67.
Thus the verse speaks that human beings are sustained by food which is nourished by water that comes of yajna which ultimately is a product of work. Hence the verse indirectly conveys that human life is sustained by agricultural operations. Food is the direct product of agricultural operation. Gandhi rightly understood the message of the Karmayoga of the Gita contained in this verse and accordingly under its influence said:

"To violate one of the precepts of the Gita and suffer dire consequences. It says that a person who eats without performing yajna is a thief; the true meaning of yajna here is physical labour on a farm. If we make it a rule to work hard, to work, that is with a shovel for four hours every day in a field, for the purpose of digesting our food, and would observe other rules... premature deaths might be far fewer among us."

Later explaining the concept of bread labour he said The one universal form of such labour is agriculture and it should therefore be looked upon as yajna. Thus the Gita must have amply contributed to the Gandhian notion that agriculture is the ideal form of bread labour.

The Bible, apart from conveying the message of unceasing effort as discussed earlier is full of references to activity in the field or in the farm-yard. The emphasis of the Parable of the Vineyard is not only on work or bodily labour, but on manual work in the farm. The Parable of the "figtree" is sufficient indicator that man in order to live, blossom and

201. The Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi XIII P - 271
202. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol. XXXII P-1
produce fruits that can nourish the rest of the world, must now
and must do a lot of digging the ground round the tree, manuring
and watering it. As the gardener advised the owner of the garden
who suggested removal of the fig-tree that did not bear fruit
consecutively for three years:

"Leave it sir, this one year while I dig round it and manure
it. And if it bears next season well and good; if not, you
shall let it alone." 203

Thus according to the Bible, the fertility of life and its
productivity, depend upon manual work done on the soil, from whih
Gandhi must have also derived his inspiration for the concept of
Bread Labour understood in the sense of manual labour in the

Thus under the composite influences of Tolstoy, Ruskin,
Thoreau, Bonarae, Nivishankar and of the Gita and the Bible, Ga-
gasped that agricultural operation constitutes the ideal type
Bread Labour. Hence when Gandhi said that: "after all nature
intended man to earn his bread by manual labour" by the swe-
of his brow "—he qualified it by saying, "simple agriculture
or such other calling must be the highest method of earning a-
livelihood." 204

If agricultural operation according to Gandhi is the only form of bread labour, all should necessarily engage themselves in
agricultural operation to earn their bread. In an agricultur-

204. The Collected Works of Nehatma Gandhi Vol. X P —130
engagement in agricultural operation as the ideal form of Bread Labour. But Gandhi, as a practical idealist, realised that agriculture in the present state of things cannot support an ensure dignified existence to all the inhabitants in the community. Agricultural operation by the very nature of things, cannot provide engagement and full employment to all round the year, and sufficient bread to all. Agricultural operations should be supplemented by other activities to provide opportunities to all to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow or engage themselves in Bread Labour. Hence as Gandhi has written:

"This labour (Bread 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."

Bread Labour may therefore assume the form of spinning, weaving and other handicrafts apart from agriculture. Gandhi's emphasis was on productivity and social utility of work. He even included scavenging within the scope of Bread Labour although agricultural operation forms the ideal form of Bread Labour.

**E. GANDHI AND BREAD LABOUR IN PRACTICE**

Gandhi speaking about Tolstoy has written, "Tolstoy practices what he preaches." Like his master, it was also Gandhian speciality to live as he preached. Gandhi not only sincerely

---

205. Gandhi M. K.— From Varavda Mandir P = 36-37
believed and preached that each shall earn his bread by the use of his brow or by engaging himself in some form of Bread Labour and particularly agricultural operation; he practised it in his own life and induced his followers to live as per this prescription. The Phoenix Settlement Gandhi's first experiment in community living in a more organised form (because his family was more than a family and more or less a community) was no doubt partly conceived as a measure to tide over the financial stringency to which Indian Opinion was constantly bringing up. As Gandhi has written:

"Still the paper continued octopus life, to devour all it received and wanted more. The situation could only be saved by heroic measures. Patch work was useless, palliatives were dangerous. There remained then an appeal to the devoted workers and friends in favour of adopting a novel and revolutionary project... The plan was this: if a piece of ground sufficiently large and far away from the hustle of the town, could be secured for housing the plant and machinery each one of the workers could have his plot of land on which he could live. This would simplify the question of living under sanitary and healthy conditions without heavy expenses... The management would thus be saved the necessity of having to find a large sum of money from week to week...."

But the creation of the Phoenix Settlement was the immediate effect of the transformation wrought in his thought processes as a result of his reading of Ruskin's Unto This Last. After reading Unto This Last as Gandhi has written in his

autobiography. "I arose with the dawn, ready to reduce, these
principles to practice..." But to start with, what he wanted
to reduce to practice is the third and the most important
message of Unto This Last: "That a life of labour, i.e., the
life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the
life worth living" from which follow as natural corollaries:
the first two messages i.e., equality of wages and welfare of
all. Hence Gandhi has written:

"I talked over the whole thing with Mr. East, described to
him the effect Unto This Last had produced on my mind,
and proposed that Indian Opinion should be removed to a
farm, on which every one should labour drawing the same
living wage and attending to the press work in spare
time." 209

The financial stringency that Indian Opinion was confron-
ted with, was no doubt a factor in influencing the decision of
Gandhi to establish the Phoenix Settlement, yet the most im-
potent factor in urging Gandhi to embark upon such venture was
undoubtedly his passion to put his concept of Broad Labour in
practice. Accordingly it has been very appropriately observed

"The financial complications of Indian Opinion seemed to
be a trivial affair to one who henceforward would hold
his profession in no greater esteem, than he would hold
the trade of the banker, and who would dedicate himself
to a life of labour." 210

The hundred acre Phoenix Settlement was divided into 3
acre plots and allotted to the inmates for cultivation. Gandhi

208. Gandhi M. K. - The Story of My Experiments with Truth
209. Ibid. P - 225
210. Bolton Glany - The Tragedy of Gandhi P - 105
himself worked in the farm and engaged himself in all productive manual labour.

"He himself worked in the kitchen, ground corn and turned the wheel in printing his weekly Indian Opinion. He not only toiled cheerfully, but what was more made the tasks of others light and happy."

Gandhi and Mr. Nest purchased the plot of land that constituted the Phoenix Settlement. He was almost a co-proprietor of the Settlement, yet he did not exempt himself from the fulfillment of the general requirement of hand labour and worked almost as sincerely as other inmates of the Settlements. Men as it has been observed:

"Mr. Gandhi settled down on his new property with some European friends and led the life about which Ruskin had written but not lived."

As for Gandhi's own admission, it cannot be disputed that the Settlement was partly a device to tide over the financial stringency that Indian Opinion was then confronted with, yet the most weighty reason that propelled Gandhi to undertake such experiment was the desire to give effect to the philosophy of Ruskin and Tolstoy to the effect that one shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow or manual labour or both. Hence he has himself said about the objective behind the establishment of the Phoenix Settlement:

"The workers could live a more simple and natural life and the idea of Ruskin and Tolstoy (be) combined with strict business principles."

211. Shahani Ranjee = Mr. Gandhi P = 17
212. Ibid. P = 77
213. The Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol. IV P = 32
Some years later, he wrote once again in the Indian Opinion: "The scheme as readers of this journal are aware, is intended to put into practice, the essential teaching of Tolstoy and Ruskin". But what Ruskin and Tolstoy made the core of their thought is physical work by all in order to earn their livelihood.

As it has been indicated earlier Gandhi under the influence of Tolstoy and Ruskin not only considered manual labour or bodily labour as the only passport to means of living; he considered agricultural operation as the ideal form of Bread Labour. Accordingly it was one of the objectives of Gandhi to engage the inmates of the Settlement in agricultural operation i.e., the real, ideal, and unadulterated type of Bread Labour. Hence he wrote about the aim of the Phoenix Settlement in the Indian Opinion that apart from filling other objectives: "Each could become his own agriculturist and have an immediate prospect of owning a piece of land on the most advantageous terms".

Gandhi so firmly adhered to the idea of Bread Labour and the idea so pre-occupied his mind and became so much a part of his philosophy of life that in his letter to Chagani Lal written on May 5, 1906 from Johannesburg he wrote:

"I am glad you are attending to the improvement of your ground. It is most necessary work and I would like you now that you will be freeer to devote your time to it methodically. There should not be a weed within your two acres".

The Phoenix trust deed as published in the Indian Opinion on 14.9.1912 unerringly stated that the pioneers who establish...
the Settlement, had before them the lofty objective "To follow and promote the ideals set forth by Tolstoy, and Ruskin in their lives and works" and "so far as possible to order their lives so as to be able ultimately to earn their living by handicraft or agriculture carried on without the aid so far as possible of machinery". Thus the Phoenix Settlement was primarily a device to implement the Gandhian concept of Bread Labour.

The Tolstoy Farm or the Settlement started by Gandhi in South Africa during the days of Satyagraha movement primarily with the immediate objective of lodging the dependents of the imprisoned Satyagrahis and providing them with their subsistence also provided Gandhi another provocation to further experiment his theory of Bread Labour. His Satyagraha campaign implied voluntary courting of imprisonment by the Satyagrahis. "But what about their families, in the meanwhile? No one would engage as an employee a man who was constantly going to jail and when he was released how was he to maintain himself as well as those dependent in him?" Prior to the starting of the S Tolstoy Farm Gandhi had so arranged that the families and dependents of the Satyagrahis could get subsistence allowance depending upon their respective needs. But there were no large "at Mr. Gandhi's command". As Gandhi himself acknowledges was not free from anxiety on the score of finance. "As he said "It was indeed hard to prosecute a long and protracted struggle, without funds." Of course funds used to trickle in.

217. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol III P = 321
218. Gandhi M. K. - Satyagraha in South Africa P = 233
219. Bolton Glorney - The Tragedy of Gandhi P = 128
220. Gandhi M. K. - Satyagraha in South Africa P = 232
221. Ibid. P = 232
at the time of need. On his return from London after the failure of the negotiation for a settlement, he got a donation of Rs. 25,000 from Ratanji Jamshedji Tata. The amount of course was sufficient for meeting the immediate needs but Gandhi's idealistic mind, his passion for truth, and his flair for the ideal, that one should earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, had the better of him. Satyagrahis and their families must practise the principle of self-reliance and the ideology of bread labour. Hence speaking about the gift of money obtained from R.J. Tata Gandhi has written:

"But this or even the largest possible gifts of money could not by itself help forward a Satyagraha struggle, a fight on behalf of Truth consisting chiefly in self-purification and self-reliance. A Satyagraha struggle is impossible without Capital in the shape of character."

Hence Gandhi's emphasis was mainly on moral value and the spirit of self-reliance of the family and dependents of the Satyagrahis. In selecting a place for the rehabilitation of these affected people, one of Gandhi's criteria was no doubt economy but the selection of a plot of land outside the town and naming it after Tolstoy, explains Gandhi's real motive. As Gandhi has written:

"To live in a city would have been like starting at a gnat and swallowing a camel. The house rent alone would perhaps amount to the same sum as the food bill and it would not be easy to live simple life amidst the varied distractions of a city. Again in a city it would be 

222. Ibid. P. 233
impossible to find a place where many families could
prosecute some useful industry, in their own homes". 223

Hence the Tolstoy Farm, or the "Cooperative Commonwealth"
that Gandhi established in South Africa for the rehabilitation
of the family of the Satyagrahis with the benevolence and co-
operation of Mr. Kallenbach was based on the idea of Broad Lab
Every inmate of the farm co-operated in the collective venture
of self-reliance and self-help. For the construction of the Farm,
its operation, and for the household work, no hired labour was
employed. The inmates worked as masons and carpenters. As Gand
has written "Everything therefore from cooking to scavanging
was done with our own hands". The ladies were engaged in cook-
whereas the rest assisted them or engaged themselves in famin
activities or gardening." The settlers worked harder on the fo-
than in the prisons. It was obligation on all, young and old, if
were not engaged in the kitchen to give sometime to gardening
and to look the fruits trees". Apart from gardening and fam
activities that the inmates undertook - the task on which
Gandhi laid so much emphasis as the embodiment of broad Labo-
small scale industries were started in the Farm to make it se
supporting. Carpentry and sandal-making were undertaken on
commercial basis. As Gandhi has written:

"The work before us was to make the Farm, a busy hive of
industry, thus to save money and in the end to make the
families, self-supporting".

223. Ibid p. 234
224. Ibid. p. 236
225. Tendulkar D.G. - Mahanta Vol I p. 116
All the inmates of the Farm not only worked and lived like labourers, but they donned the dress of labourers. As Gandhi has himself written "we had all become labourers and therefore put on labourers' dress". The ladies took charge of tailoring department apart from cooking. Even Gandhi helped the ladies in cooking and "Kallenbach a rich or at any rate well to-do man shared every labour". To sum up as Gandhi has written:

"The labour for putting up the building is contributed by the Satyagrahis, and Mr. Kallenbach. They do every kind of work, such as loading and unloading, fetching water, chopping wood, transporting goods from the station etc.".

The work in the Tolstoy Farm went so deep into his heart and the idea of Bread Labour overtook him so much that he renounced his lucrative legal profession in the year 1910, which fetched him an annual income of about five to six thousand pounds a year, for all times to come and embraced the life of a labourer perpetually. In his letter to Manganese from the Tolstoy Farm on August 21, 1910 Gandhi wrote "I for one an farmer and I wish you all to become farmers, or continue as such, if you have already become farmers. My way of life has completely changed here. The whole day is spent in digging the land and other manual labour instead of in writing and explaining things to people. I prefer this work and consider this to be my duty". Thus Gandhi's life underwent a significant change.

227. Ibid P - 246
228. Tendulkar D.G. - Mahatma Vol I P - 117
229. Sheela Vincent - Mahatma Gandhi - A Great Life in Br P - 68
231. Romain Rolland - Mahatma Gandhi P - 8
transformation in the direction of complete identification with his ideal of Bread Labour while he was at the Tolstoy Farm. He was not only convinced about the rationality of the concept of Bread Labour, he had himself taken a deep plunge into the Philosophy and lived the life of a labourer. Hence forward his bread became directly related to manual labour. He practised what he preached. As he has written about his observance of the theory of Bread Labour while in South Africa:

"Tolstoy made a deep impression on my mind, and even in South Africa, I began to observe the rule to the best of my ability."

The bed-rock of the Satyagraha Ashram established by Gandhi on his return to India was also Bread Labour. Before the Ashram was actually launched, Gandhi prepared an "Estimate of Expenditure" a study of which reveals that what was uppermost in Gandhi's mind was starting an Ashram with emphasis on Bread Labour and agricultural and allied operations for the inmates. As the Estimate reads:

"At least five acres of land will be required for cultivation. Agricultural implements sufficient for at least thirty persons to work with will be needed. These should include hoes, shovels and pickaxes."

Gandhi not only planned in terms of agricultural operations in the Ashram; the Estimate also includes provision for carpenter's tools, and cobbler's tools. He further wrote:

---

234. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol. XIII P - 84
235. Ibid P - 85
"I think we shall need blacksmith's and mason's tools and many others besides. But I have not taken into account these and also equipment for educational purposes. Five or more indigenous icons will be the main requirements among the latter as far as I can see." 236

The emphasis was not only on manual labour for the sake of earning one's bread, the labour must be enough to produce sufficient bread for all the inmates and thus make all the inmates and the Ashram at large self-sufficient. The idea "I don't see any possibility of our being able to provide, this (the annual expenses) from our produce, during the first year has inherent in it the ideal of making the Ashram self-sufficient."

The Draft Constitution of the Ashram and the statement of its objectives, stipulated among other things the importance of Bread Labour or manual work:

"The controllers believe that body labour is a duty imposed by nature upon mankind. Such labour is the only means by which man may sustain himself, his mental and spiritual powers should be used for the common good only." 238

As already indicated earlier Gandhi not only made body labour an essential condition for acquiring one's bread; he considered agricultural operation as the ideal type of Bread Labour. In the statement of the objectives of the Ashram such emphasis is also evident:

236. Ibid P - 86
237. Ibid P - 85
238. Ibid P - 95
"As the vast majority in the world live on agriculture, the controllers will always devote some part of their time to working on the land when that is not possible, they will perform some other bodily labour".  

Even the lessons imparted to the students in the Ashram included training in agriculture and handloom-weaving as its important components. In the Ashram all the inmates engaged themselves in some type of manual labour. Everyday the inmates did manual work for three and half hours in form of drawing water, grinding, sweeping, weaving, cooking etc. As Gandhi wrote in the Young India in reply to a critic who felt that the Ashramites were living on charity, "let him understand that every member of the institution gives both his or her body and mind to its work." And later on Gandhi wrote in the Ashram Observances in Action that the Ashram holds that every man and woman must work in order to live......And ever since the Ashram was founded, bread labour has been perhaps its most characteristic feature". As he further added "so that as it may, the observance best kept in the Ashram is that of bread labour, and no wonder, Its fulfillment is easy with ordinary care. For certain hours in the day there is nothing to be done but work. Work is therefore bound to be put in. A worker may be lazy, inefficient, or inattentive, but he works for a number of hours all the same".  

Thus Bread labour in one form or the other, drawing-wate or splitting firewood, agriculture, dairying, weaving, carpentry, tanning etc. formed an essential part of an inmate's daily life.
Gandhi was no exception to the general principles and vows of the Ashram and he contributed his quota of labour to the com pool in exchange of his own bread. He did his part of the job either as a spinner or a weaver or a drawer of water, or as a sweeper, cleaning latrines being his most favourite craft. Hence it has been observed:

"What he could do and with surprising energy, for such a small, and apparently frail man, was manual labour, including the digging of latrines and the transport of cement.

Gandhi not only wanted the inmates of his Ashram to practise the principle of Bread Labour and himself lived a life as per such prescription; he even prescribed that ministers of independent India should also "perform body labour for at least one hour daily either in the form of spinning or scavenging, growing of food or of vegetables."

F. BREAD LABOUR AND THE RACE

Gandhi’s Concept of Bread Labour, that each must perform manual labour in order to earn his bread, speaks not only of the duty of each to engage oneself in some form of bodily labour to lay claim on one’s livelihood; its emphasis on the right of each individual who engages himself in some form of creative productive body labour to claim a dignified existence should be lost sight of. It is as much a right of each individual to

245. Sheseen Vincent - Mahatma Gandhi P - 82
246. Pyar Lal Mahatma Gandhi - The Last Phase Vol. II P-122
a dignified existence as it is his duty to engage himself in some form of bodily labour to qualify himself for his subsistence. If one's subsistence shall be a product of his bodily labour, one's labours must necessarily get his subsistence. If labour shall be treated as the source of livelihood, when labour is performed, subsistence should naturally flow from it. If labour is treated as the cause of one's subsistence the fulfillment of the cause must necessarily give rise to its effect, the subsistence. Depri- vation of one who engages himself in some form of honest bodily labour or manual labour, of his livelihood or subsistence, is as much an infringement of the law of Bread Labour, as is the act of laying claim on one's subsistence without performing some kind of bodily labour. This in short is the real essence of Gandhian concept of Bread Labour.

The Gandhian concept of Sarvodaya or Socialism that encompassed the welfare of all, and the balanced development of each individual, while laying comparatively greater emphasis on the moral and spiritual growth of the individual, does not completely neglect his material needs. In Gandhi's scheme of things, each individual must have his basic minimum to meet the material needs of the body. Hence as already referred to earlier he comprehended

"Every one must have a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of one's children, and adequate medical relief". Interpreted in the context of Bread Labour, each individual in the Sarvodaya social order or under the Socialism of Gandhi conception who engages himself in some type of honest bodily lab- or manual labour shall therefore be entitled to a balanced diet, a decent house and enough resources for the education of his children and medical relief of himself and his family. But in
age of money-economy, where all transactions are usually made cash and not in kind in order to ensure enjoyment of absolute minimum by all and reasonably decent living standard to each persons engaged in some form of Bread Labour must be paid wage enough to satisfy their absolute needs. Thus it follows from Gandhi's concept of Bread Labour as a direct corollary that engaged in Bread Labour must be paid adequate wage, to have a dignified existence by satisfying his basic needs. Bread Labour and adequate wage are therefore intimately related and const the obverse and reverse of the same issue.

When the issue of minimum living wage of the workers, artisans of the All India Village Industries Association eng the attention of the Board of the Association and it was also agreed that account must be taken of providing balanced diet the workers that shall include sufficient amount of milk, the vitaminous food, it obtained Gandhi's full support. "If we split Gandhi said " that it is not possible for any industry to pay this minimum living wage, we had better close our shop. We who see that in any industry that we handle, the wage covers a re able maintenance allowance. 247" Holding the brief on behalf of spinners Gandhi pleaded later that their wage should be such that the element of exploitation shall be absent from the transacation. As Gandhi said " We have ignored the proletarian for centuries and whilst we have arrogated to ourselves, the right of commanding their labour the thought had never creas.

us that they have a right to dictate their wage, that labour is as much their capital as money is ours. It is time we began to think in terms of their needs, their hours of work and leisure and their standard of living”. 248

Gandhi considered agricultural operation as the ideal for that bread labour can assume. But a practical idealist that he was, he realised that agricultural operation may not be pursued by all because in a country like India many did not possess sufficient land that they can claim to be their own which could provide honest and dignified existence to them and their family. Accordingly as it has been referred to earlier, Gandhi said:

"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, instead of tilling the soil, always regarding agriculture however to be the ideal”. 249

The Phoenix Settlement, the Tolstoy Farm and the Satyagrah Ashram extended the scope of bread labour by including within their periphery, apart from spinning, weaving and carpentry, small shoe-making, printing, grinding of corn, etc. In his constructive programmes Gandhi considered engagement in village industries like hand-pounding, soap-making, paper-making, match-making, tannery, oil pressing, etc., as forms of bread labour. 250

Hence all these categories of bodily labour or manual work accordingly to Gandhi should be paid almost equal wage. Hence he wrote in the Harijan "All useful labour ought to bring in the same and adequate wage to the labourer”. 251

249. Gandhi M. K. - From Yeravda Mandir P = 36-37
250. Gandhi M. K. - Constructive Programme P = 10
Gandhi not only desired that all categories of bodily labour shall be paid equal wage but went further and advocated that the wage of the manual labourers shall be equal to the wage of the intellectual labourers like civil servants, lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers or statesmen. In his scheme of things, these intellectual labourers can not pitch their claim to a higher wage on the basis of the assumed principle of superiority of their work, rather as already discussed according to Gandhi, only bodily labour entitles one to lay his claim to his livelihood and intellectual labour of different categories of persons like doctors, lawyers, engineers or teachers, however useful for the society, is meant purely for the sake of rendering service to the community and not as sources of self-aggrandisement. These persons shall have to perform some bodily labour in order to earn their eligibility to their livelihood. If that is the ideal state of things for Gandhi, the intellectual labourers who perform no bodily labour can not claim wage at a rate higher than that is paid to the people engaged in manual labour or those who perform pure and perfect type of bread labour. At best they may claim a living wage which by no stretch of imagination can be more than the wage of manual labourers or a wage equal to that earned by manual labourers. Hence Gandhi advocated that the wage of manual labourers shall be equal to the wage of intellectual labourers like doctors, teachers, engineers or lawyers.

Gandhi derived his inspiration for the concept of equal wage for different categories of labourers from Ruskin’s The True Law Of Growth. As per Gandhi’s own admission, one of the teaching of
Unto This Last of Ruskin was "It That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's in as much as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work". Gandhi experiment this principle of equality of wage for all categories of worker for the first time in the Phoenix Settlement. All the inmates received the same living wage and £ 3 was laid down as the monthly allowance per head, irrespective of colour or nationality In the Tolstoy Farm, the principle of Common Kitchen was introd and the essential needs of all the inmates were met. All got the same type of food and there was no distinction between Kellenbah donor of the 1100 acre land of the Tolstoy Far or Gandhi and Joseph Roweppen the barristers on the one hand and other inmate of the Farm on the other. Even in the Satyagraha Ashram that Gandhi established in India, satisfaction of the basic needs of all the inmates was the guiding principle.

Accordingly it has been observed:

"He believed in the division of Labour or Work. But he did insist on equality of wages. The lawyer, the doctor, or the teacher was entitled to no more than the bhangi. There was no other royal road to true civilisation or happiness."

Thus in the socialist society of Gandhian conception whether one works as a farmer or a priest, a teacher or an engineer, a doctor or a bhangi, each shall be entitled to a living wage, and the living wage each shall get shall be more or less the same, due allowance having been made for reasonable

---

differences, in the light of their differential need. Hence it has been observed:

"As to this Gandhiji had no doubt that if India was to live an exemplary life of independence, which would be the envy of the world, all the bhangis, doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants and others would get the same wages for an honest day's work."

On the formation of the Congress Governments in the provinces, the issue of fixation of ministers' salary at Rs. 1500.00 per month whereas the chaprasis drew Rs. 15.00 per month was brought to Gandhi's notice. Gandhi expressed his dissatisfaction at the existence of such disparity. As he said: "All therefore that is possible today is to try to reduce the difference as far as possible". I was convinced that the ministers do not require such fat salaries and the chaprasis' remuneration should be enhanced. The chaprasis felt Gandhi required a higher salary to keep their body and mind together, and live a decent life. Hence he posed the problem:

"Is it possible for the chaprasi to support himself and his family on Rs. 15.00 per month without taking bribes? Should he not be given enough to keep him above temptation? ... if we need them, we must pay them enough for their requirements. In this way the big gulf that exists between minister and chaprasi will be bridged."

To sum up, Gandhi not only advocated the theory of Bread Labour or that each shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; it followed from his theory of Bread Labour that each

256. Gandhi M. K. - Harijan 21.4.1946 P = 93
who worked with the application of his limbs shall get a wage sufficient to meet his basic needs. In this respect there shall not be any distinction between the wage of the intellectual workers and those engaged in some form of bodily labour.

The Gandhian concept of wage that follows from his doctrine of Bread Labour far transcends the practices in the Communist countries. In the communist countries the practice is one of distribution of wages on the basis of work - its quality and quantity - and is grounded on the principle of "to each according to his work", although the architects of the system pitch their ambition in the ultimate and the distant ideal of "to each according to his need". But the Gandhian theory of wage synthesises both the principles i.e. "to each according to his work" and "to each according to his need". Whereas the wage is "need" based, the emphasis is on the "work" of the individual. Both "work" and "need" are the double criteria that is adopted simultaneously to determine the quantum of wage that one gets. The criterion of work is adopted to determine the eligibility whereas the criterion of "need" is the determining factor in respect of the quantum of wage. But unlike the communist practice of discrimination in the matter of wage distribution during the transitional period or the basis of equality and quantity of work, the Gandhian principle of wage is one of equality of wage irrespective of the quality or the ultimate Pashudan or Communist objective of need-based wage.

C. BREAD LABOUR AND THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

Labour constitutes the essence of Gandhian socialism and it is in the elimination of the distress and disabilities of the labourer and his social and economic elevation that the saner
and rationalistic social order of socialism is concerned with. Not only in the ultimate analysis, the interest of the labour, his material and moral uplift is the vision that inspires the socialist thinkers; it is the labour or in the language of Marx the proletariat that plays the most creative and dynamic role in bringing about socialist transformation. Although the Marxian or social dynamics, repose its faith in the pre-ordained and pre-determined inevitability of socialism - its natural and inevitable emergence from the womb of capitalist - it equally recognises the historic role of the proletariat for the establishment of a socialist society. But the Proletariat plays a historic role in socialist transformation, by transforming itself into a conscious agent of the historic inevitability of socialism, and by becoming the standard-bearer of the revolution preceding such socialist transformation. The handle of revolution is taken by the Proletariat and the Proletariat by taking hold of the reign of revolution, revolutionises the entire social process, an economic framework thereby bringing about its own emancipation. Socialists after Marx, Syndicalists and Guild Socialists repose equal faith on labour although modern communists including Lenin elevate the Party elite to a new height of power and influence while the Marxists make revolution the vehicle, through which labour plays its historic role, the Syndicalists make strike the chief instrument of the labour for the necessary change-over.

Gandhi while advocating the theory of Bread Labour and through it, emancipation of the lot and the status of labour, never a fatalist so as to believe that through any pre-determined and historically ordained process, the labour shall get its due
and shall be assured of his absolute minimum. He considered
conscious effort on the part of the Labour as much necessary for
its own emancipation as Marx and the syndicalists who reposed
their faith in violent revolution and strike respectively as the
appropriate tools to be wielded and used by the labour for their
own deliverance. If it is the right of each labourer engaged in
honest bread labour to get his absolute minimum and enough wage
to ensure such basic needs, those who are deprived of such absol
needs and such fair wage have equal right and duty to assert
their rights to get their claim fulfilled. Like the Syndicalists
Gandhi realised the potency of the method of strike as an instr
ment to be wielded and utilised by the labourers to obtain recep
tion from their misfortune.

Gandhi did not preach anything that he did not practise.
He himself organised two major strikes, one in South Africa and
another at Ahmedabad. Thousands of coal miners of New Castle
(South Africa) went on strike at his behest. Gandhi's impris
onment sparked of such discontent in Natal that 20,000 labour
of Natal struck work. The planning and organisation of strike
was so elaborately done by Gandhi that the credit for the succe
of the strike goes to him. Although the Strike of the Textile
Mill Workers of Ahmedabad was not Gandhi's brain child, yet one
it started, he not only realised the reasonableness of their
demand for wage increase; he even staked his life for the sake
of obtaining such increase. As Gandhi said: "I shall not take
any food nor use a car till you get 33 per cent increase or all
of you die in the fight for it." 259 Subsequently Gandhi wrote in

258 Tendulkar P. G. - Mahatma Vol. I, P. 144
259. Deol, Mohadev - A Righteous Struggle P. 26
the Harijan, "I consider myself to be an expert in organised strikes. My first successful attempt was made in South Africa, under most adverse circumstances. I improve the technique in Ahmedabad .... I know that strikes can be made irresistible."

Thus Gandhi considered it fair and legitimate on the part of the labour to go on strike to press their just claim and obtain their rightful due, yet a pragmatist that he was, considering everything on its merit, Gandhi would not condone strike indiscriminately at all times and in all circumstances. Every strike according to him shall be judged on its own merit on the basis of the justness of the demand of the workers who contemplate in terms of going on strike or have gone on strike. The primary consideration is therefore fairness of the demand and justness of the dues of the labour. As he said "The cause of the strike must be just." If the labourers are exploited and are not paid their dues or at least their absolute minimum, strike becomes a right and so also a duty of the labourers. Strike therefore, for the present" said Gandhi "should only take place for the direct betterment of the labourers' lot."

As far as the justness of the demand of the workers is concerned Gandhi was as much concerned with the paying capacity of the employers as the basic need and the fair wage of the workers. Unless the employers have the paying capacity, unless there is scope for reasonable return for their capital and enterprise after payment of the enhanced wage that is demand

261. Gandhi M. K. - Harijan 31.3.1946 P = 60
262. Gandhi M. K. - Young India 16.2.1921 P = 52
263. Ibid. 18.2.1921 P = 52
the concerns shall be closed down which may bring greater misery to the workers. Therefore the long-term interest of the labour rests not in pitching its demand high so as to make the employer bleed white, but to properly balance its need with the paying capacity of the employer. Gandhi felt that even-handed justice and morality demanded of the labour as much awareness of the interest of the employer as of its own interest. Hence Gandhi advised the Ahmedabad Mill Workers:

"If workers make a demand merely because they feel they have the strength to do so, regardless of the employer’s condition it will mean that they have succumbed to the modern demonical justice. At any rate, we want the workers to observe the ancient justice, and its canons as we know them and only thus do we wish to help them to secure their rights."

When Gandhi was requested by the Collector of Ahmedabad to intervene on the issue of mill workers’ demand for 50% increase in their pay in form of Dearness Allowance, he on the basis of thorough inquiry into the condition of the mills, the mill owners and the workers suggested that "the workers should not demand more than 35 per cent."

The workers who were more ambitious and too much milit—were presumably not satisfied with Gandhi’s formula. To those considered 35% increase as inadequate, Gandhi said:

"Some workers say that we can demand more than 35 percent. I say you can demand even a 100 percent increase. But if you make such a demand it would be unjust. Be content

264. Desai Mahadev H - A Righteous Struggle P = 50
265. Ibid. P = 7
with what you have demanded in the present circumstances. If you ask for more it will pain me. We can not make an unreasonable demand from anybody. I believe that the demand for 35 per cent is just.

Gandhi was thus fastidious about the justness of the strike. Strike may be resorted to only when the labour’s demand is just, measured by the standard of absolute economic minimum of the workers and the employers’ capacity to afford such increments of wages without affecting adversely the economy of the concern. If balancing of the demand of the workers against the paying capacity of the employers justifies wage increase, strike may be resorted to. Thus before taking a decision to launch a strike, the workers must properly weigh the pros and cons. But once decision on strike has been taken after considering its fairness and justness retracing the steps or calling off the strike before the fulfilment of the just demand, is denounced by Gandhi, as immoral and unjust. On the issue of the textile mill workers’ strike of Ahmedabad, when vacillation among the workers became visible and report reached Gandhi that some of the workers were contemplating resumption of work even before their just demand was fulfilled, Gandhi considered the step contemplated as breach of faith and breaking of a pledge. The Leaflet No. 11 Gandhi wrote:

"But what is the worker’s duty? They have stated that an increase of 20 per cent is not adequate and have given notice accordingly. They have taken an oath not to accept anything less than 35 per cent. Under these circumstances, the workers can not go back without compromising his pledge, his honour and his manliness."
In the Leaflet No. 12 he further said:

"The workers have considered all things before taking the pledge, and now they cannot resume work without securing a 35 percent increase, whatever may be the temptation or the misery they may have to encounter. Here in lies their honesty. If you weigh a pledge against lakhs of rupees, the weigh of the pledge will be greater." 269

Not only Gandhi considered withdrawal from strike and resumption of work by the labourers before the fulfilment of their demand a breach of pledge and morally reprehensible; when he unravelled that the workers were at the breaking point and were most on the verge of resumption of duty, he himself went on so as to exert moral pressure on the workers to stand fast and firm on their pledge of continuing the strike until 35% increment in their salary was effected. Thus according to Gandhi, once a decision is taken to start a strike for wage increase after considering the justifiability of the demand, every nerve must be strained to obtain fruition of the just demand.

But if Gandhi considered strike of workers for pressing their just demand justified he was equally emphatic about the manner of pressing such demand and the form the strike shall assume. The Syndicalists who elevated strike as a strategy to Heraclean height, prescribed adoption of the technique of sabotage and paralysis of the economy. They advocate application of the technique of strike with a spirit of wreaking vengeance on employers or the capitalists. The strike is based on a spirit of hatred and is perpetrated with the help of violence. As Bert Russell has observed:
By far the most important of the Syndicalist methods, is the strike. ... Syndicalists aim at using the strike, not to secure such improvements of detail as employers may grant, but to destroy the whole system of employer and employed, and win the complete emancipation of the worker. For this purpose, what is wanted is the General Strike: the complete cessation of work by a sufficient proportion of the wage earners to secure the paralysis of capitalism.

Thus the spirit of hatred, violence and sabotage form the very core of the strike recommended by the Syndicalists.

But Gandhi while commanding a just strike recommended that strikes should be non-violently conducted, with no rancour or bitterness against the employers. For him, strike was meant to be used as an intelligent device, a technique of collective action of the labourers to convince the employers that the economic enterprises were the products of joint endeavour of the employers and the employees and the owners and the workers. The very fact that stoppage of work through strike shall lead to the stoppage of production and the drying out of the spring of wealth of the capitalist shall convince the latter of their helplessness without the co-operation of the labourers. Hence the objective behind the strike is not one of exhibition of anger and enmity or bitterness and hatred against the cap. Thus while lending moral support to the striking workers of Ahmedabad, Gandhi proscribed for them certain code of conduct which included:

"He (labourer) will not show anger nor harbour enmity towards his employer."
On the next day he exhorted the workers saying, "We can never wish ill of the employers, and in every action of our, we shall take into consideration their good. We would seek the welfare of the workers, while at the same time we safeguarded the employers interest." 271

Thus Gandhi who had a profound faith in the technique of Satyagraha as an instrument for fighting a battle against one adversary expected that the striking labourers, should not adopt malice, hatred, force and intimidation against the employers. As he advised the workers:

"If we conduct our struggle with a sense of justice, if we bear no malice towards the employers and we rely always on the right, we shall not only succeed, but good relations between workers and employers will increase." 272

Thus the technique recommended by Gandhi is not the unpractised of eye for an eye or employment of violence against violence but application of the Gandhian technique of truth and love against the adversary. Hence as against the Marodon or Syndicalist technique of violence or demolition of machinery or sabotage leading to the paralysis of the productive system through gradual tactics etc., the striking labourers of Ahmedabad resolved not to cause any disturbance, not to indulge in beating or assaulting, not to commit robbery, not to damage employers property, not to use abusive language but to remain peaceful. 273

A true Satyagrahi that Gandhi was, he would not condone labourers making capital of the employers' distress, taking

---

271. Ibid. P - 45
272. Ibid. P - 51-52
273. Ibid. P - 11
advantage of the employers' helplessness or attempting the technique of intimidation against the employers. The opponent's embarrassment is never treated as an opportunity by a Satyagrahi. The European railway workers' strike in South Africa synchronised with the strike of the Indian workers and the European workers sought the co-operation of Indian workers to paralyse the government and to bring the Government to their knees. Gandhi, the leader of Indian workers on strike and the strategist-in-chief desisted from cashing on the Government's trouble. Had the Indian workers joined the European workers the Government would have been forced to come to terms early. But Gandhi suspended the Indian workers' strike during the pendency of the railway workers' strike with the avowed intention of not causing any embarrassment to the Government. Accordingly Gandhi has written:

"Our workers respected the feelings of the other side, and did not seek to benefit out of the opponent's embarrassment".

The untouchables were Gandhi's Harijan's. His real comprehension of their emancipation. He advocated that the swaraj and the bhangi should get as much material benefits from society as lawyers or doctors. As Gandhi said: "I count a Harijan and it pleases me call myself a bhangi among them. He pleaded for enhancement of their material comforts, yet would not command adoption of the method of coercion by th—

274. Ibid. P = 51
275. Gandhi, M. K. = Harijan 12.5.1946 P = 125
bhangis for pressing their demand or obtaining enhancement of their dues. Accordingly he wrote in the Harijan on the occasion of the Bombay sweepers' strike: "Inspite of my close attacks to sweepers, better because of it, I must denounce the coercive methods they are said to have employed". Work in essential services like cleaning the towns and cities and keeping the atmosphere healthy is a duty that Gandhi considered sacred. Strike such services with a motive to intimidate the society, so that it shall concede the demand of the strikers is considered by Gandhi unjust and illegitimate. The most honest and honourable method for getting relief is not temporary suspension of work or going on strike but, permanent withdrawal from such services. Hence when all legitimate methods for getting redress of the just grievances have failed, Gandhi would suggest:

"I claim that in such cases the proper remedy is not a strike, but a notice to the public in general and the employing corporation in particular that the bhangis must give up the sweeping service which consigns those reserved for that service to a life of starvation and all it means".

Not only strikers should not use violence and intimidate against the employers, violence should also not be used by the striking labourers against those of them who are willing to join work or withdraw their support from the strike. Participation in the strike should be voluntarily undertaken and not

277. Gandhi M. K. - Harijan 23.4.1946 P = 189
imposed from above with the threat for the real use of coercion.
During the Ahmedabad Mill Workers' strike when it came to Gandhian
that attempts were being made to prevent those workers who
wanted to resume work through coercion or threat of physical
assault, Gandhi wrote:

"It is necessary for every worker to remember our resolve
that if they bring pressure to bear on their fellows and
stop them from going to work by threats, we shall not be
able to help them at all. In this struggle, he alone will
succeed who keeps to his pledge voluntarily. No one can
be forced to keep his honour inviolate. It is essentially
a voluntary matter."

If the Gandhian concept of strike shall be devoid of
violence, coercion, intimidation and sabotage, the primary motive
force is to exert moral pressure on the employers through the
adoption of the technique of self-suffering. Gandhi the archi-
tect of the theory of Satyagraha whose co-ordinate principles
are love for the adversary on the one hand and self-suffering
on the other, therefore recommended to the strikers that they
should rather undergo self-suffering in form of starvation a
loss of work to impress upon the employers the justness of
their demand instead of resorting to the dubious method of
violence or coercion. Coercion or violence if employed by the
strikers shall be physical coercion practised on oneself which
shall have its direct impact on the conscience and moral sen
of the employer who may concede to the just and reasonable
demands of the workers in form of a wage increase. It is
through penance and self-suffering instead of inflicting

278. - Dossi A - Righteous Struggle P - 60-61
suffering on the employers that the labourers' just demand can be fulfilled. Hence Gandhi wrote in Leaflet No. 2 issued on the occasion of the Textile Mill Workers' Strike. "Every worker should remember that there is bound to be suffering for him in such a big struggle". As he further said "If workers are firm in their resolve even the hardest hearts will relent". Thus Gandhi like Marx and the Syndicalists instead of relying on the inevitability of the emergence of an egalitarian society believe in the conscious effort of labour for the improvement of their own lot. Although a champion of non-violence and a protagonist of Satyagraha, Gandhi was neither a pacifist nor a fatalist but an activist who not only believed in Karmayoga in form of performance of one's duty but also in form of conscious positive and creative effort on the part of the labour to obtain redemption from their miserable lot. Strike of workers is not only considered a right of the workers but also a moral obligation although the strike shall be tempered with a sense of justice, unflinching devotion to the pledge and a determination to continue the strike till the just claim is attained. But unlike Ma and the Syndicalists Gandhi instead of relying on violent act by the labourers and the technique of sabotage, pinned his fail on peaceful, non-violent strike of workers, inspired by the absence of hatred for the adversary.

To sum up Gandhi like Marx not only gave labour a place of preeminence in his scheme of things; labour is made the i in his drama of socio-economic regeneration leading to an egalitarian society. His socialist philosophy not only aims at attaining a place of dignity to the labour; labour and particular

279. [Desai H - Ibid P = 42]
280. [Ibid P = 50]
manual labour becomes the engine for egalitarian reorganization of the society. But Gandhi while agreeing with the major premise of Marx differed from the latter in respect of the conclusion, that the labour should adopt the technique of violence and forcibly seize the state machine and means of production, distribution and exchange thereby preparing the ground for the sway of the Proletariat and paving the way for the establishment of an egalitarian society. He felt that by mere application of the theory of bread labour i.e., by making each earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, an egalitarian society can be ushered in. As Gandhi observed:

"If this principle is observed, everywhere all men would be equal, none would starve and the world would be saved from many a sin".

---

281. Gandhi M. K. - Ashram Observances in Action P - 60