

CHAPTER – IV

FOUNDATIONS OF GANDHIAN JOURNALISM

Mahatma Gandhi is an inspiration to millions of people even today. It is because he embodies the kind of transformational change that can be made when ordinary people come together to do extraordinary things. It is preposterous to think that good things will only come from Washington or from New Delhi – they will come from good people anywhere in the world. Gandhi used many tools to bring about positive changes in the people. Journalism was one of most effective instruments for achieving his purpose.

Gandhi was both a visionary and a revolutionary. He was the undisputed leader of one of the greatest struggle for justice in history. He was a great communicator also. The methods of his communication he employed were novel and noteworthy. “He wrote his letters in his own handwriting. He used his publications fruitfully at a time when 83% of his countrymen were illiterate. Gandhi’s publications were not circulated as large scale newspapers. But many newspapers in the world got main stories from Gandhi’s publications. The picture of that small, aged man in two linen clothes was seen in newspapers and news reels everyday”.¹

The main ideas and principles of Mahatma Gandhi were put forward through his journals. He knew that the success of Satyagraha was largely dependent on its wide publicity.² As a Satyagrahi, Gandhi always keenly observed the press material even in its smallest details. He took precautions against the malicious agitations engineered by his opponents. He wrote in his autobiography – “all sorts of falsehoods appeared in the press about my co-workers and myself. But my extreme cautiousness and my insistence on truth, even to the minutest detail, turned the edge of their sword.”³

Gandhi attached great importance to moral and ethical standards in journalism. Even today, in journalism the content is very important. Journalists must stand by good initiatives and time-honored values. Gandhi insisted that journalists must not join hands with evil forces. They must sympathise with the victims of attributes. Then they get a moral strength to fight for justice. This moral force is the fuel of a nation's progress. Gandhi considered the media persons as the torch bearers of national progress. But they are under tremendous pressure from various quarters, in carrying out their day to day work. Luckily for the society, the media still enjoy considerable power to act as an effective agent for effecting positive changes in the society. The immediate task before journalists is to recapture the respect of the profession much of which it has lost in recent times. To win back the professional respect, journalists have to show the courage, to be firm and point out what is right and what is wrong without fear or favour.

As a political activist Gandhi used the media to achieve this objective. It is a model to all other political leaders. Gandhi prepared the Green Pamphlet and printed ten thousand copies of it. He sent it to all the papers and leaders of every political party in India. "The Pioneer was the first to notice it editorially. A summary of the article was cabled by Renter to England, and a summary of that summary was cabled to Natal by Renter's London office. This cable was not longer than three lines in print. It was a miniature, but exaggerated, edition of the picture I had drawn of the treatment accorded to the Indians in Natal, and it was not my words".⁴

The language of Gandhi was simple and moderate. He wrote this in his autobiography. "The language I used was more moderate than that of the two pamphlets which I have referred to before, as I knew that things heard of from a distance appear bigger than they

are”.⁵ He believed that in a country like India the journalists must use only simple language. Otherwise they could not read the mind of the country or reach the mind of the people. He wrote, “A journalist’s peculiar function is to read the mind of the country and to give definite and fearless expression to that mind.”⁶

Gandhi considered the sole aim of journalism as service to the country and to the people. Money motive was alien to his principles. “The sole aim of journalism should be service,” he advised.⁷ To him, everything in life is an experiment. He was experimenting journalism through his publications – Navajivan, Young India, Indian Opinion and Harijan.

Today we hear that journalists and newspaper owners accept money and gifts for publishing news. Gandhi was strongly against this money-making business approach. He wrote, “I am definitely of opinion that a public worker should accept no costly gifts.”⁸ He opined that all good action will lead us to good goals. “It is my firm conviction that all good action is bound to bear fruit in the end. Let us forget the past and think of the task before us”.⁹ He believed in this while saying that all good means will lead us to good ends. The purity of means is more important than the ultimate goal.

Article – 1. Gandhiji’s Uniqueness

Mahatma Gandhi transcended the bounds of race, country or religion and became the prophetic voice of the twentieth century. The depth of his insight, the sweep of his vision, the purity of his character, the steadfastness of his devotion to ideals, his titanic heroism and utter trust in the higher attributes of the spirit were unique. As Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru rightly remarked, “The light that has illuminated this country for these many years will illuminate this country for many more years; and a thousand years later, that light

will be seen in this country, and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts.”¹⁰

Gandhi followed the twin stars of Truth and Non- Violence all along the path of his most difficult and eventful life. He acted according to principles, not expediency. Gandhi worked ceaselessly for the realization of what the sociologists call ‘Common Human’ values, for the triumph of the common human way of life. He did not believe imposing his values or way of life upon others; by the same token, he resisted unto death the attempts of others to impose upon his or his people their values and way of life. Gandhi, the Saint of Sabarmati was one of the greatest spiritual forces of all times. His dharmic approach and such a way of living brings man near unto God.

Modern methods of transportation and communication have spanned the oceans, linked countries together, and made it easy for man to travel from one part of the world to another. Gandhi visualized such a world far ahead. He put forward a way of life commensurate with this change. This was another uniqueness found in this great man. Gandhiji admired every thing in Indian cultural heritage. He believed that every thing what a man need is in this ancient land.

Gandhiji said, “My life is my message.” His life was an experiment with truth. Before this experiment he believed that ‘God is Truth’. After the experiment he realized that “Truth is God”. Gandhi’s life of 89 years, his writings of about 110 volumes and above one lakh printed pages are the story of this great experiment. In his writings of Hind Swaraj Gandhi revealed his vision as conversation between the reader and editor. His journalistic skill is extra ordinary.

Now I will try to trace the course of Gandhiji’s career as a journalist. In 1903, in South Africa, Gandhi started a weekly newspaper, Indian Opinion (16 pages tabloid), issued every Saturday

in four languages. Three years later Gandhi had to confine it to two languages for want of competent editors. He himself edited the paper in these two languages and issued the paper punctually until he left South Africa in 1914.

From India Gandhi continued supporting 'Indian Opinion' all his life by providing regular editorial material and moral and financial support. In 1919 Gandhi started two weeklies in India, Young India and Navajivan and issued them regularly all his life except for short intervals durations his press was under government siege. In 1933 Gandhi added a third weekly. 'Harijan' (which means the 'Children of God') and ran it all his life except when the press was ceased.

More than 75% of the content in Gandhij's papers came from his own pen. It is estimated that during his life time Gandhi wrote more than 10 million words. That translates into 500 words every day for 50 years. What a unique writer he was! And almost all of his writings were related to personal improvement and social and political reform. In short, we can easily say that the single factor that helped Gandhi the most in earning the title of 'Mahatma' and the leadership of the masses was his dedication of running the weekly newspapers for nearly 40 years of his life.

It is singularly amazing to note that nearly 400 biographies of Gandhi have been written in various languages. Hundreds of books were written about him by various scholars and writers. He was called Mahatma (an extra ordinary great soul) by every one. Newspapers also helped Gandhi in becoming an extra ordinary human being. We can not recognize him fully. A person like him was not fully understandable to ordinary men like us. There was only one absolute Gandhian – that was Gandhi, though he said that he was an erring follower of Gandhism.

(i) How Gandhi used Newspapers for his Political Career?

Gandhi used newspapers to educate himself and his followers. Newspapers served him as a powerful ally in his struggle for the removal of racial discrimination. They are a powerful weapon for him to social change and political struggle. Political and social reforms led by Gandhi got ample coverage both in his publications and in other newspapers.

As Michael Hodges, Executive Director, Texas Press Association remarked, ‘Gandhi could enter into the minds of millions as a great journalist and political leader. It is the time of newspaper operations and political activities are becoming methods of money making. Gandhi never thought in that line.’¹¹

A journalist like Gandhi is quite unique in history. We can not find another journalist like him before or after him in the history of humanity. Now the media have degraded themselves into a business activity. The sensational approach to each news has tarnish its image greatly. Gandhi never followed the sensational approach in his writings or in his publications. His only commitment was to truth. He believed that journalists must have clear vision. To him, good truthful work must be rewarded in the end. “It is my firm conviction that all good action is bound to bear fruit in the end.” – He wrote in his Autobiography.¹²

In ‘Hind Swaraj’ we find Gandhi first announcing his own life mission. We can say that Hind Swaraj is his political manifesto. “His mission is nothing other than showing the way for the moral regeneration of Indians and the political emancipation of India.”¹³ In wider sense the motto of Gandhi’s journalistic experiments is also same. He always insisted for dharma. ‘Even when I have used politics

I really tried to offer a glimpse of dharma. What is dharmic will be suitable for the welfare of others.’¹⁴

His dharmic concepts are also fit for life in modern world. Gandhi redefined the scope of dharma to include notions of citizenship, equality, liberty, fraternity and mutual assistance.

Today’s world concentrates on profit, power and capital. But Gandhi redefined stands alone as the North Star in the purity of his journalistic career. His journalistic skills, aesthetics, symbolic representations and sense of ethics helped him in his political career. The language of Gandhi was very powerful. For example his slogans like, ‘Do or Die’, ‘Quit India’ .. etc. attracted millions of people. When Gandhi was in London, he came into contact with a lot of western literature as well as with people interested in Indian religious traditions. This influence reflected in his journalistic writing.

The sterling qualities were compassion, fearlessness, respect for human rights and love for liberty. Truth and nonviolence are the foundations of whole Gandhian Philosophy. Gandhi exhorted to one of his friends while traveling on board a ship named S.S. Pilwana. It was; ‘be true’. This was indeed his message to the world. Today in the field of journalism the brightness of truth is fading. So the relevance of Gandhian approach is increasing.

Article 2. Basic Principles of Gandhian Philosophy

Once Gandhiji said to Dr. Radhakrishnan that ‘truth and non violence is my religion’. “I am being led to my religion through Truth and Non-violence ie, love in the broadest sense.”¹⁵ Every action in his life was supported by moral force. When any one has any doubt about the moral aspect of his act he can easily solve it by asking himself, how far his act helps the poor. “I will give you a talisman. When even you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, try the

following experiment: Recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless man whom you may have seen and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he be able to gain anything by it?... Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away.”¹⁶

Gandhiji believed that life without service is fraud. To him, religion was a means to serve others without any restriction. “If he served one, the spirit actuating him to render that service was that he served the one individual as part not only of India or one religion but the whole of humanity.”¹⁷ Thus for Gandhi religion was to serve others without any restriction.

Truth, Nonviolence, Sarvodaya and Satyagraha are basic principles of Gandhian Philosophy. Satyagraha is associated with contemporary India, and gives Indian leaders a moral platform and a way of playing a role in global politics that is potentially quite positive. Gandhi knew that violence begets violence. So he always stood for nonviolent approach in life. The sanctions that Gandhi would rely upon were the sanctions of non violent resistance or of soul force.

Rely upon the inner light, arrive at a judgement, and abide by it fearless of the consequences – such was the emerging pattern of Gandhi’s life. He was always wrestling with the problems that confronted him and finding tentative answers and acting upon them. Life was conceived by Mahatma Gandhi as a field for experimentation; the purpose of the experiment on life was conceived by him to be the attainment of Truth. The methods to be used in this experiment upon life for the purpose of attaining Truth were those of the inner light, of conscience, of the still small voice within. It was Gandhi’s conception that the truth or falsity in a situation had to be decided in the light of one’s own conscience, not on the basis of accepted authority whether secular or sacred. Once the inner light led him to believe something to

be right, Gandhi felt he was under obligation to carry out the dictates of his conscience regardless of the consequences. Throughout his life these principles have been vividly illustrated indeed, not just in word.

(i) Truth

Gandhi dedicated his life to the wider purpose of discovering truth or satya. He tried to achieve this by learning from his own mistakes and conducting experiments on himself. He named his autobiography 'The Story of My Experiments with Truth'.

Gandhi once stated that the most important battle to fight was against his own demons- fears, and insecurities. Gandhi summarised his beliefs when he said, 'God is Truth'. He would later change this statement to 'Truth is God'. Thus, Satya (Truth) in Gandhi's Philosophy is 'God'. He repeatedly said that Truth was to him God, and God was Truth.¹⁸ He was a man who gave supreme importance to God in his life. He wrote, "I may live without air and water but not without God."¹⁹

Gandhi gave primary importance to Truth in his Ashram vows. Gandhi was convinced that if any one observed the vow of Truth, he would be able to keep all the rules of correct living without effort. The word Satya or Truth must be understood in a much wider sense. "There should be Truth in thought, Truth in speech, and Truth in action."²⁰ In the wider sense a good follower of Truth must have the fullest control over all the senses in thought, word and deed. He said, "Truth is like a vast tree which yields more and more fruit, the more you nurture it."²¹

Gandhiji believed that, every truth is self acting and possesses inherent strength. The tools for the search of truth are simple ones. But the practice of Truth is not so. That is why Gandhiji said, 'The path of Truth is as narrow as it is straight. Even so is that of

ahimsa.²² A seeker of Truth must be simpler than sand or soil, he wrote in his Autobiography.²³ Every thing in this world will perish; but truth will live for ever. It is the power of Truth. Truth is strong as metals and soft as flowers at the same time. (ibid, P. 149) We saw that Truth is like a vast tree which yields more and more fruits the more you nurture it. Gandhi had the opinion that Truth is superior to man's wisdom. Truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles.

Gandhiji's concept of truth has two faces – absolute and relative. He said, we are fearing truth, because we fear the consequences of truth. In the context of journalism, Gandhiji's views on truth is highly relevant today. He said, the editor has to be patient and seek truth only. "Fugitives cannot be free. If you want to be free you must take freedom and you must stand for freedom. If you cling to wealth, you cannot be loyal to truth" – Gandhiji observed. Today the journalists are not ready to correct their own errors. Gandhi said, that the errors must not be disclosed; they must be call and corrected. Gandhi gave the various practical applications of these principles. At the same time Gandhi remarked that 'a man of truth must also be a man of care.'²⁴ "The deeper the search in the mine of truth, the richer the discovery of the gems buried there, in the shape of openings for an ever greater variety of service." – Gandhiji gave another implication of truth.²⁵ To him, the experiment in truth has no failure. Such an experiment leads to a quicker discovery of truth, and God always protects the honest experiments. A devotee of Truth always hold himself open to correction, and whenever he discovers himself to be wrong, he must confess it at all costs and atone for it. Truth is a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes.

Truth was the first and the last love of Gandhi who had an unshakable faith in the aphorism, "Truth alone prevails." "Truth is

the first thing to be sought for and Beauty and Goodness will then be added unto you.²⁶ The propagation of truth can be done by actually living it and less through books. Life truly lived is more than books. Words and good intentions are not enough. Gandhi clearly stated: “I call myself a seeker of truth, a speaker of truth and a Satyagrahi. I will not therefore deliberately give support to those resorting to injustice.”²⁷

Gandhi remarked, “In my opinion the Sanskrit text ‘satyam bruyat, priyam bruyat, Na bruyat Satyamapriyam’ means that one should speak the truth in gentle language. One had better not speak it, if one cannot do so in a gentle way; meaning thereby that there is no truth in a man who cannot control his tongue.”²⁸ He again advised, ‘whatever you do, be true to yourselves and to the world. Hide not your thoughts. If it is shameful to reveal them, it is more shameful to think them’.²⁹

We know that, Gandhi considered journalism as service. To him every journalist must be a public servant, in the Gandhian sense a true Satyagrahi. He remarked, “With Satya combined with Ahimsa, you can bring the world to your feet. Satyagraha in its essence is nothing but the introduction of truth and gentleness in the political, i.e., The national Life.³⁰ A Satyagrahi bids goodbye to fear. He is therefore, never afraid of trusting the opponent. Even if the opponent plays him false, twenty times, the Satyagrahi is ready to trust him the twenty-first time, for an implicit trust in human nature is the very essence of his creed.”³¹

Today most of the journalists and newspaper houses are under the murky shadows of untruth and even bribery. The above words of Mahatma Gandhi convince us the importance of truth in life. His contribution to numerous spheres of life is so great. Ordinary persons cannot even recognise these. Gandhiji was an extremely open minded seeker of truth. At times even great men are reluctant to appear as

they are before the society. But Gandhiji was a clear exception to this, for his life was an open book and he had nothing to hide from others.

(ii) Non-violence

Gandhiji believed that Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. Non-violence is the road to Truth.

The tradition of ahimsa was further developed in the two epics of India: the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. For Gandhi these epics, though probably some of the figures they deal with are historical, are allegories which describe the duel that goes on within man between the forces of light and darkness. Gandhi has also clearly affirmed that he derived his belief in nonviolence from the Gita.³² According to Gandhi, the Gita teaches the doctrine of ahimsa. The Sermon on the Mount gives the same law in wonderful language.³³

The principle of ahimsa is the same for all but everyone applies it in his or her own way. But this is not relativism because nonviolence is a universal law acting under all circumstances. nonviolence is based on soul-force. While brute-force is based on egotism, soul-force is based on love, trust and humility. Ahimsa is not a denial of power as positive influence or healthy moral persuasion, but only for power in its violent forms. Soul-energy is expressed in man's capacity for constructive action and creative power for achieving justice and perfection. One who acquires soul-force becomes capable of challenging and disobeying unjust laws in a completely nonviolent way. This means of defence is only truth-force. Gandhi wrote, "Nonviolence is an active force of the highest order. It is soul-force or the power of Godhead within us."³⁴

Pure motives can never justify impure or violent action. By using violence to subjugate one another we are using violence against our own souls.³⁵ Nonviolence is a negative word, means it is an effort to abandon the violence that is inevitable in life. Gandhi insisted on the necessity of nonviolence by saying repeatedly, for we are all tarred with the same brush, of children of one and the same Creator and as such the divine powers within us are infinite.³⁶ “If we believe that mankind has steadily progressed towards ahimsa, it follows that it has to progress towards it still further. Nothing in this world is static, everything is kinetic. If there is no progression, then there is inevitable retrogression.”³⁷ Gandhiji believed that nonviolence propagated by him is applicable worldwide. “The basic principle on which the practice on nonviolence rests is that what holds good in respect of oneself equally applied to the whole universe. All mankind in essence are alike. What is therefore possible for everybody.”³⁸ Nonviolent approach is the urgent need of our times. Gandhiji believed that nonviolent action is applicable in all fields of life. “I have been practising with scientific precision nonviolence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life, domestic, institutional, economic and political.”³⁹ The novelty of Gandhi’s doctrine lies in the fact that he has shown the world, that this great virtue can be applied for the solution of the day-to-day problems of the common man. In the words of Mr. K. Santhanam: “It was the unique contribution of Gandhiji to have elaborated the idea of nonviolence in all its implications and applied it to solve domestic, social, economic and political problems.”⁴⁰

Ahimsa is the attribute of the soul, and therefore to be practiced by everybody in all the affairs of life. Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. “Ahimsa was preached to man when he was in full vigour of life

and able to look his adversaries straight in the face.”⁴¹ The votary of soul force, the soldier of nonviolence, must by will power and inner compulsion, rigidly discipline himself – his body mind and heart – and by constant practice learn to remain nonviolent in thought, word, and deed, even under the severest provocation. He must learn to engage in right action, right as prescribed by the sense of duty and to be detached as to the fruits of his action.

(iii) Satyagraha

Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and a determination to reach truth. Satyagraha is utter self-effacement, greatest humiliation, greatest patience and brightest faith. It is its own reward.⁴² Gandhiji said, “A Satyagrahi must believe in truth and nonviolence as his creed and therefore, have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by his truth and love expressed through his suffering. In Satyagraha there is no place for fraud or falsehood or any kind of untruth. Satyagraha is a process of educating public opinion, such that it occurs all the elements of society and in the end makes itself irresistible. Violence interrupts the process and prolongs the real revolution of the whole social structure.

The conditions necessary for the success of Satyagraha are
 (1) The Satyagrahi should not love any hatred in his heart against the opponent. (2) The issue must be true and substantial. (3) The Satyagrahi must be prepared to suffer till the end of his cause.

In Gandhian philosophy, means and ends are convertible terms. The two are inseparable and should be equally pure. For Gandhi, life is an organic whole and cannot therefore be divided into different water tight compartments. It is one of the main characteristics of Gandhian approach. Gandhi’s philosophy has a strong, brightly defined thread in the fibre of India’s cultural history.

Satyagraha is gentle, it never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice. It is never fussy, never impatient, never vociferous. It is the direct opposite of compulsion. It was conceived as a complete substitute for violence.⁴³ Gandhiji believed that Satya combined with Ahimsa, we can bring the world to our feet. Satyagraha in its essence is nothing but the introduction of truth and gentleness in the political, i.e., the national life. "A Satyagrahi bids good-bye to fear. He is, therefore, never afraid of trusting the opponent. Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the Satyagrahi is ready to trust him the twenty-first time, for an implicit trust in human nature is the very essence of his creed."⁴⁴ According to Rev. Jack C. Winslow: "With no hatred to the foreigner, but only love and good will towards him, he (Gandhi) was led, nevertheless, by the very principle of his faith, to an uncompromising aggression to the foreign yoke."⁴⁵

The technique of Satyagraha is considered to be the most potent contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to India and to the world. In the words of R.R. Diwakar, "Satyagraha is a total and integral way of life based on truth and nonviolence."⁴⁶ Passive resistance is the weapon of the weak, while Satyagraha can be practiced only by the bravest who have the courage of dying if necessary, without killing. "The aim of passive resistance is to embarrass the opponent into submission, but Satyagraha aims to wean him from error by love and patient suffering."⁴⁷ A Satyagrahi should be an exemplary citizen in serving society. "A Satyagrahi obeys the laws of the society intelligently and of his own free will, because he considers it to be his sacred duty to do so. It is only when a person has thus obeyed the laws of the society scrupulously that he is in a position to judge as to which particular laws are good and just and which unjust and iniquitous."⁴⁸ Before undertaking Satyagraha one should try all other means. Since Satyagraha is one of the most powerful methods of direct action, a

Satyagrahi exhausts all other means before he resorts to Satyagraha. He will, therefore, constantly and continually approach the constituted authority, he will appeal to public opinion, state his case calmly and coolly before everybody who wants to listen to him, and only after he has exhausted all these avenues will he resort to Satyagraha.⁴⁹ For this conscientisation process newspapers are a good tool. Gandhi used both his publications and other popular newspapers for opinion creation. The spread of news is very important even today.

To Gandhi, the eagerness and readiness for compromise is an integral part of Satyagraha, because a Satyagrahi should believe in the inherent goodness of human nature and also in the spiritual kinship with the adversary. A Satyagrahi must always be ready to compromise. In this world men see truth only in fragments and that also from different perspectives. This also shows the necessity of compromise. "I am essentially a man of compromise, because I am never sure that I am right."⁵⁰ It is breach of Satyagraha to wish ill to an opponent or to say a harsh word to him or of him with the intention of harming him. "Often the evil thought or evil word may in terms of Satyagraha, be more dangerous than actual violence used in the heat of the moment and perhaps repented and forgotten the next moment."⁵¹ Gandhi insisted that the publication of articles not contemplating or instigating to violence in spite of prohibitory orders is defensive civil disobedience.

(iv) Sarvodaya

Sarvodaya, the word literally means, 'the upliftment of all.' According to Joan V. Bondurant, Gandhian notions can be divided into three: They are Gandhian objectives (Swaraj, Sarvodaya, etc.), Gandhian Principles (nonviolence, adherence to truth and dignity of

labour) and Gandhian means. (Satyagraha, Bhoodan, ie., land gift).⁵² Here we deal with Sarvodaya, a Gandhian objective.

Gandhiji believed that if an individual cannot gain spiritually when those who surround him suffer. He believed in the essential unity of man and all that live. “Therefore I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent.”⁵³ Gandhi gave more importance to the service of man. To him, serve man is serving God. Man’s ultimate aim is the realisation of God and all his activities, social, political, religious have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. Man is a part and parcel of the whole and he can not find Him apart from the rest of humanity.

Gandhi got the idea of Sarvodaya from John Ruskin’s book ‘Unto This Last.’ That book marked the turning point in his life. He studied the lesson that we must do even unto this last as we would have the world do by us. All must have equal opportunity. Given the opportunity, every human being has the same possibility for spiritual growth. Gandhi translated the book ‘Unto This Last’ to Gujarati renaming it ‘Sarvodaya.’

Gandhi drew from it three lessons: (1) That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all. (2) 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. (3) That the life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living.⁵⁴ The first of these Gandhi had known earlier. The second he had dimly realized. The third was new to him. This book made it clear that the second and third were implied in the first.

The principle of Sarvodaya inspired Gandhi to develop his ideas about equality and universal brotherhood. Speaking to the Ministers of Industries on July 3, 1946, Gandhi said, "I read Ruskins 'Unto This Last' during a train journey to Durban. I saw clearly that if mankind was to progress and to realize the ideal of equality and brotherhood, it must adapt and act on the principle of 'Unto This Last'. It must take along with it even the dumb, the halt 'and the lame'.⁵⁵ For Gandhi, the only way to love God and to attain salvation was to love one's neighbour. And since the aim of human life is salvation, each and every person is obliged to love his neighbour. "Man's Ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, whether social, political or religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all."⁵⁶ In short, it is Gandhi's belief that the only way to love God is to love one's neighbour by following the doctrine of Sarvodaya. Then to follow the path of action, or love one's neighbour through a life of selfless service, is the only means of attaining Salvation or 'Moksha'. And since the ultimate goal of human life is salvation, all are obliged to lead a life of service. By fulfilling the obligation of accepting bread-labour and leading a life of Yajna, or rather of loving one's neighbour.

A rotary of Sarvodaya cannot subscribe to the Utilitarian formula of the greatest good of the greatest number. He will instead strive for the greatest good of all. In this ideal social order all are to be equal members by sharing in work and rest. The strong protect the weak and everybody contributes to the general welfare and social justice. Sarvodaya implies that everybody would regard all as equals to one self and would know how to earn an honest living by the sweat of one's brow.

Article 3. Role of Mahatma Gandhi in Indian Journalism

Mahatma Gandhi's ascendancy in Indian politics and his assumption of the leadership in the National struggle acted as elixir to Indian journalism. After his successful political and social experiment in South Africa, Gandhi returned to India in 1915 and plunged into the Indian freedom movement. He was not new to journalism. In South Africa he had published a newspaper called 'Indian Opinion' to bring into lime-light the sad the plight of the Indians there.

The deportation of B.G. Horniman and the closing of the Bombay Chronicle made it necessary to found a suitable newspaper to project the cause of the freedom struggle. It was at that time Indulal Yagnik, an associate of Gandhi entrusted his monthly 'Navajivana Ana Satya' (new life and thought) to Gandhi. Its name was abbreviated and it was converted into a weekly. On September 7, 1919 a periodical hit the newsstands of India. It was a 16 page journal in Gujarati, published from Ahmmadabad with neither a good name plate nor a design. It was priced one anna. It never carried any advertisement, it never succumbed to pressures: In set in motion a process that made a difference in Indian language journalism and also became the standard bearer of a new ideology in fighting colonial rule.

Gandhi took over the 'Young India' in 1919 from Jamnadas Dwarakadas of Bombay. Navjivan and Young India served as Gandhi's main instruments to communicate his thoughts, actions and plans to the people. He described the objects of a newspaper in these words – "One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it; another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; the third is fearlessly to expouse popular defects."

Although the Mahatma wielded a facile pen in English he preferred to write in his mother tongue Gujarati. His autobiography, History of the Satyagraha in South Africa, Experiences in Yarwada Jail, Anasakti Yoga etc were first serialised in Gujarati in the Navajivan. It was also instrumental in publishing many articles by the leading figures of the freedom movement.

Between 1920 and 1946 Gandhi organized three major campaigns against the foreign governments. (1) Civil disobedience movement (2) Boycott of the Simon Commission and (3) Salt Satyagraha. The biggest, grandest and the most non-violent among them was the salt satyagraha. It was in that struggle that the nationalist press played a memorable role, which perhaps is unique in the history of any freedom movement.

The circulation of Navajivan shot up from 600 to 6000 by one month. Within six months the weekly could be printed in its own press-Navajivan Mudranalaya. In 1922 Gandhi was sentenced to six years imprisonment for his writings against the British Government in Navajivan and Young India. The government confiscated the press and the paper went underground. It was published again in 1931, but it could continue only till January 1933. The political situation in India became worse with the launching of the civil disobedience movement in 1930. The government retaliated by enacting many repressing measures including the Indian Press (emergency powers) Act. Under the provision of the Act, the government ganged several nationalist newspapers by punishing with fine and imprisonment of the journalists. With the failure of the second round table conference the British government adopted the policy of 'divide and rule'. It succeeded in creating disunity and hatred among the Hindus and the Muslims and even among the sub-castes in the Hindu society. In

several native states the Princes, Maharajas and Navabs developed an antipathy towards the freedom movement and the National leaders.

It was during that period of this crisis that Gandhi thought of starting another English weekly which could be circulated throughout India. G.D. Birla agreed to sponsor the paper. Thus the first issue of the Harijan appeared on February 11, 1933 under the editorship of R.V Shastri. The paper very soon became popular and self-supporting. Response given to the Harijan by the public prompted Gandhi to start its various language editions. The Hindi edition was named 'Harijan Bandhu' to which he gave extra attention considering the vast readership. Articles published in the Harijan mostly came from Gandhi's versatile pen. He had a clear and simple style, direct and free from all flourishes. Mahadev Desai, K.G. Mashruwala, Jawaharlal Nehru, R.R. Diwakar, C. Rajagopal Achari, Kaka Kalekar and such other eminent freedom fighters regularly contributed to 'Harijan.'

'Harijan' was mainly intended to promote Gandhi's campaign against untouchability and temple entry. For the untouchables whom he called Harijan's, the children of God it was a crusader for social justice. It became the biggest news source for the newspaper and agencies in these days. Every week Gandhi had something important to say and what he wrote become front page stories. The Harijan was issued every Friday with news articles, notices, provincial gottings and translated articles. The annual subscription was Rs.4/- which also helped to build up a good circulation. As a protest amongst the Communal Award which provided for the formation of separate communal electorates for Muslims and Harijans for the election to state legislatures, the Harijan was stopped in 1940. It re-appeared in 1946 and continued to serve till 1949. Today the three journals are part of the history of the freedom movement. Navajivan had been

rejuvenated as a publishing house under the Navajivan trust, which holds the copy right of all the works of Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhiji's approach to anything is wholistic. Even in the field of journalism, he did not give up his ideals and ideas. i.e., his experiments in life. Gandhiji remarked, "I cannot claim complete success for any experiment. Even medical men make no such claim for their experiments. My object is only to show that he who would go in for novel experiments must begin with himself. That leads to a quicker discovery of truth, and God always protect the honest experimenter".⁵⁷

Gandhi's attention and activities embraced several spheres of life. Journalism was one among them. "Most men who have possessed one-track minds; they have one aim, and spend their energies in obtaining it. Gandhi's aims were various".⁵⁸ He was a man of political and social action, inspired by a religious interpretation of human existence. He wrote, "To see the universal and all- pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love and the meanest of creation as one self. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life".⁵⁹

As a great political personality Gandhi used the columns of major dailies in his time. He wrote several articles in 'Madras Standard' and in 'The Hindu' Journalists like G. Subramanian, G. Parameswaran Pillai, Sonders, etc., helped him very much. He expressed his ideas in the columns of 'Statesman', 'English man' etc. Gandhi wrote these things vividly in his Autobiography.⁶⁰

(i) Gandhiji's Entry to Journalism

The British government in India had not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but also had enacted laws aimed at the

exploitation of the masses thereby running India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. Gandhi girt his loins to resist this policy of the colonialists. By the Rowlatt Act, the Executive got the right and power to restrict the residence of individuals, to arrest and imprison suspects, without trial, to prevent people from engaging themselves in journalism, distributing leaflets, holding meetings, etc. Gandhi considered it as “unjust, subversive of the principle of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals”.⁶¹ Gandhi fought against the suppression of expression. Gandhi wrote about this wherever possible. But his journalistic approach was based on nonviolence. There was no hatred in his writings against the Britishers. This social aspect of non violence in journalism is Gandhi’s unique contribution. “The credit of putting the concept of non violence on the map of collective action must go to Mahatma Gandhi.”⁶² Gandhi showed an alternative journalistic approach to Indian people. He wrote, “I am confident that God has made me the instrument of showing the better way.”⁶³

One would be simply amazed at the voluminous extent of his workings. Gandhi was a man who was not in the habit of reading newspapers in his younger days. When he was in England, he read the ‘Daily news’, ‘The Daily Telegraph’, ‘The Palnal Gazette’ etc regularly. This also helped him to develop his extra ordinary journalistic skill. As a journalist, Gandhi could teach the media world many valuable lessons in mass communication. An effective communicator, fearless and eloquent with his words, he reached out to millions of people and convinced them of the justness of his cause. He was the most effective mass medium of the 20th century. His journalism belongs to an era when there was neither television nor internet. Such was the power of his ‘soul communication’ that

whatever he said and wrote reached the farthest corners of the country within days and to the entire world thereon.

(ii) Gandhiji's Journalistic Approach

We had seen in the previous chapters that Gandhiji's journalistic approach was unique and extraordinary. He was sincere and honest and practiced what he preached or wrote. For example, in September 1924 Gandhi started a fast for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. Gandhiji utilized the entire space of one full issue of his weekly for advocating the communal harmony. We cannot easily believe it today when most newspapers try to fan the fire of sectarianism particularly in time of crises with a view to boost their circulation. But Gandhi never did so. His sole concern was communal harmony, in Gandhian terms 'Sarvadharmā Samābhava.'

Gandhi had realistic view about the situation in a newspaper desk. He wrote about it in his autobiography: A newsroom is a place of hard work. The editors are fighting against time. Each visitor in that office believes that the editor is a big power. But the power of the editor is limited in the surroundings of the office.⁶⁴

Gandhiji wrote several letters to newspapers when he was in England. The papers like 'Englishman' published them with ample importance. The editors like Mr. Sonders are friends of Gandhi. This also helped him write and publish the letters to the editor. He admit this in his Autobiography.⁶⁵

What Gandhi wrote was fully true to his knowledge and belief. He believed that there is no other God than Truth. Realization of Truth is Ahimsa. "Truth is a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes. In fact what I have caught is only the faintest glimmer of that mighty effulgence. But this much I can say

with assurance, as a result of all my experiments that a perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of Ahimsa. To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life.”⁶⁶

Gandhi considered every walk of his life as a way to self-purification. Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification which is the observance of the law of Ahimsa. “Self purification therefore must mean purification in all the walks of life. But the path of self-purification is hard and steep. To attain to perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action.”⁶⁷

This experiences and experiments in life including that in the field of journalism gave him great joy. For this, he reduced himself to zero. He admits these things in the last words of his autobiography. “There is nothing more potent than thought. Deed follows word and word follows thought. The word is the result of a mighty thought and pure the result is always mighty and pure.”⁶⁸ Journalism is a work based on thoughts and ideas. Writing must be a result of deep thinking and developing ideas. In that sense journalism is a result of pure intellectual work.

Gandhi’s journalistic approach was founded on moral principles. To him, it was a dharmic fight. He did not have a profit motive. “Economics that hurt the moral wellbeing of an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful. Thus, the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral.”⁶⁹ Today journalism is becoming a business. There is an anonymous saying: “The challenge today before the newspaper management is how to eliminate the editor in editorial matters.” Gandhi was fully against to advertisements. Today, in Newspapers we can even see the advertisement of liquor.

Hind Swaraj was written in the genre of dialogue: a dialogue between a newspaper Editor and a Reader. It is significant that Gandhi chose for himself the role of a newspaper editor, in quite a new style – not that of a traditional figure, the guru. His readers compressed a composite of ‘modern’ Indians including the expatriates he had met in London in 1906 and 1909.

While in South Africa, Gandhi Wrote two pamphlets, ‘An Apeal to every Briton in South Africa’ and ‘The Indian Franchise.’ These were against a government bill aimed at cutting short the rights of Indians. Gandhi counted on the support and sympathy of the good and just members of the European community too. The fact that the London Times devoted eight leading articles to the Indian problems in South Africa showed the success of Gandhi as a publicist. The Indian National Congress recorded its protest against the disfranchising bill units annual session in December 1894. Gandhi prepared a huge petition with 10,000 signature covering almost the entire population of free Indians in Natal and sent it to Lord Ripon, the colonial Secretary in London. Copies of the petition were printed and mailed to prominent political personalities and to the newspapers. The newspapers both in India and in Britain reported the case of the National Indians prominently. This shows how Gandhi used the media for his causes.

We can see that Gandhi’s approach followed an all pervasive to the problems he had to confront. Journalism was no exception. In The Young India edition of October 22, 1925 he gave a list of seven social evils: wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, politics without principle and worship without sacrifice. People need to know these not merely through the intellect “but know them through the heart so as to avoid them.”⁷⁰ Gandhi tried to

convince the world of the 'priority of ethics over technology, of the primacy of the person over things, of the superiority of the spirit over the matter.' This ethical approach is the journalistic method of Gandhiji.

Article 4. Objectives of Gandhiji's Journalistic Experiments

Gandhiji used journals as well as newspapers for conscientisation process. To inform and to educate are major roles of media. For example Gandhi prepared the 'Green Pamphlet' and send to almost all newspapers in India. It got wide publicity. 'The pioneer' newspaper wrote editorial about the issue of the Indians in South Africa. There are several such examples in Gandhi's life.

We all know only partial truths. To Gandhi the absolute Truth is God, Himself. All his activities are experimentations. He admit this in his autobiography. If we nurture truth more, the reward will be greater. Journalism in its real sense, is a search after truth. Journalistic experiments of Mahatma Gandhi was a truthful and scientific approach to desirable intellectual activity.

During Gandhi's major Satagrahas he sent reports to politicians and newspapers. Some of such reports were not meant for publication. There were strictly for their information. Gandhi scrupulously followed this principle in the conduct of Satyagraha. To him, Satyagraha was also a social educating process. Gandhiji lifted the Indian struggle for freedom from the plane of mere political fight and transformed it into an ethical conflict between right and might. Real journalism is a crusade for right over unethical situations and mighty powers.

We had seen in the former article that the ultimate goal of all his activities was self realisation. His journalistic activities are also not an

exemption. From his works and writings we will soon be convinced that the love of the poor and of the oppressed is deep in him. The poorest of the poor (In his words, the 'Daridra Narayanas') is to be uplifted. This was the aim of his social, political, economic and journalistic activities. As a Karma-yogi Gandhi utilised each and every second in his life for these goals.

Needless to say that today, the journalistic field is in utter competition. Then we have to hear Gandhi's words: "Not killing competition, but life-giving co-operation, is the law of the human being. Ignoring the emotion is to forget that man has feelings. Not the good of the few, not even good of the many, but it is the good of all that we are made to promote, if we are made in His own image".⁷¹

Also Gandhi's life was an open book. He had the strength to magnify his errors as Himalayan. His autobiography is proof of this. No other journalist or writer can easily attain this height. We all hide our errors. Gandhiji's image as a great champion of humanitarian journalism was over shadowed by other glittering aspects of his multifaceted personality.

(i) Service

Gandhi's major goal of journalistic experiments is service. He himself admit it by saying that the true function of journalism is to educate the public mind, not to stock it with wanted and unwanted impressions.⁷² Gandhi was not a professional journalist. What he wrote is directly related to these thoughts. His life was his message. "Man's ultimate aim is the realisation of God and all his activities, social, political religious have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavor, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be

done by service of all. I am a part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity".⁷³ Gandhi considered the sole aim of journalism should be service.

Today, when there is wide spread concern over the growing influence of market forces on media , and regret over journalism being no longer a social service, Gandhiji' views on values of journalism bring to bear on the profession of journalism the force of ethics and morality. In this context he had said, 'It is often observed that newspapers published any matter that they have, just to fill in space. The reason is that most newspapers have their eyes on profit. There are newspapers in the west which are so full of trash that it will be a sin even to touch them. At times, they produce bitterness and strife even between different families and communities. Thus, newspapers can not escape criticism merely because they serve the people.' He also said, "The true function of journalism is to educate the public mind, not to stock it with wanted and unwanted impressions."

Gandhi realised from his experience in the "Indian Opinion' that the newspaper press is a great power, but just as an uncontrolled torrent of water submerges whole countryside's and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised from within. (An Autobiography p.331) The journalistic work of Mahatma Gandhi both in South Africa and in India is for service and for service only. Gandhi said, "My creed is service of God and therefore of humanity".⁷⁴ While considering journalism as a means of service, Gandhi upheld the freedom of the press and the freedom of speech and expression even at the risk of his life.

(ii) Press as a Tool for Sarvodaya (The Welfare of All)

Gandhi's greatest contribution to social philosophy is his theory of Sarvodaya social order. Gandhi knew that we were all the parts of the same absolute entity. The concepts like 'Sarva bootho Hithradha' and 'Vasudhaiva Kudumabakom' influenced Gandhi. He consider the entire universe as his family. Gandhi considered press as a tool for attaining Sarvodaya. He was not believed in the 'maximum welfare to the maximum number'. He believed in the welfare of all. Majoritarian concept in Economics is not attracted Gandhi, 99.99% is not equal to all. Because 0.01% is neglected. Nobody bother about them. Naturally they will ruin gradually. This was against to Gandhi's moral approach. Mahatma Gandhi insisted that while framing policies, the needs of the last and the least privileged man should also be taken into consideration. He was also of the opinion that explaining to the people why a decision was taken is equally important if not more important than taking a decision. Press is a medium for two-way communication between people and the government.

In his (Gandhi's) writings and what is of much more significance, in his day-to-day life, he preached and practiced the principle that ultimate sanction of authority and of public policy rests in the respect for the dignity of the individual and his welfare."⁷⁵ Gandhi's concept of Sarvodaya is related to universalism. His life and teachings have a universal appeal. He believed in the essential unity of man and the underlying unity of all nations. He did not make any distinctions between religions, nations or races. "We all tarred with the same brush. We are members of the vast human family.... Humanity is not divided into compartments. They may occupy one thousand rooms, but they are related to one another" – cited in the message of Mahatma Gandhi, compiled and edited by U.S. Mohan Rao.⁷⁶

Communal Harmony was another dream of Gandhi's life for which he lived and dedicated his life. He observes "If not during my life time, I know that after I had never ceased to yearn after communal peace." He strongly advocated the view that the message of unity and brotherhood had to be communicated to a child from his very birth. Media has significant role in this.⁷⁷ Gandhi propagated Communal Unity (in his term 'Sarvadharmā Samābhava') in his writing in Navajivan, Harijan and in Young India. Today also the news papers have significant role to propagating communal harmony. Unfortunately, today some Indian newspapers are trying to communal disharmony and quarrels. Their eye is only in circulation hike. When a story of a victimised person or a helpless man, appeared in a newspaper the social consciousness arise in favour of him. Helps from different parts followed to that person. This is the power of the media. In this way also a media man can help the helpless people and poor. In policy making the 'Daridra Narayanas' are being neglected. Then the media must fight against that. This is the lesson which Gandhiji taught us. Then only the atrocities will be diminished from the society.

(iii) Social Transformation

Another major goal of Gandhiji's Journalistic experiment is social transformation. He used constructive programmes for attaining the social transformation. He wrote, "..... My work of social reform was in no way less than or subordinate to political work. The fact is that when I saw that to a certain extent my social work would be impossible without the help of political work, I took to the latter and only to the extent that it helped the former. I must therefore confess that work of social reform or self purification of this nature is a hundred times dearer to me than what is called purely political work".⁷⁸ In his 'Young India' Gandhiji wrote repeatedly against the

Dowry system, which was a curse in India. In 'Harijan' (14-11-1936) he wrote against obscene advertisements. He suggested that the readers must inform their ill-feeling to the editor. After that if the daily continue the same way the reader must avoid that daily. This is an example of awakening process triggered off by Gandhiji.

Gandhi wrote: "the newspapers have become more important to the average man than the scriptures."⁷⁹ "In the East, as in the west, the newspapers are fast becoming the people's Bible, Koran, the Zend Avesta and the Gita rolled into one."⁸⁰ Writing these lines Gandhi had the knowledge about the power of the media in social transformation. Today the media has a major role in society. It plays a significant role in every walk of life. Gandhi foresaw this long ago. He used his own publications and many other major newspapers for promoting social transformation.

(iv) Opinion Creation

'Nothing can succeed without public opinion', remarked Abraham Lincoln, one of the great exponents of democracy. It was he who again defined democracy as the rule of the people, by the people and for the people. Connecting these two statements one can infer that the strength of democracy lays in the effectiveness of the freedom of expression, the two way communication and opinion creation. Today we all are bothered about public relations. The base of public relations is in opinion creation. Gandhiji believed: "Journalism has a distinct place in familiarising and expressing public opinion."⁸¹

Creating opinion among the people is one of the main objectives of the media. Gandhi could develop desirable attitudes and opinions through the media among people for decades. He realized that the people believed in the newspapers to a large extent. He repeatedly said: "The newspapers today had almost replaced the Bible, the Koran, the

Gita and other religious scriptures.”⁸² This influence of the newspapers are sometimes overcoming all its limits. Gandhi warned about this also. “The newspapers should be read for the study of facts. They should not be allowed to kill the habit of independent thinking”.⁸³

Gandhiji’s Journals which he described as ‘views papers’ were organs of political and social movements and discussed with intensity and concentration, problems that demanded immediate action. As professor K. Swaminathan put in a but shall in his talk in 1976 at the Nationalist Forum of Journalists held in New Delhi, “While the topics and their treatment in the three journals varied according to the historical contingency, these was nevertheless running through them all a common refrain, viz the insistence on truth and non-violence, on fairness to all and the public good, which provided the first principles, the firm universal frame work within which alone Gandhiji’s thinking and acting could function.... The regard for truth in the abstract issued in practice as severance for fact.”⁸⁴

It will be pertinent to point out as to what Mahatma Gandhi considered to be the role of newspapers. He wrote: In my humble opinion, it is wrong to use a newspaper as a means of earning a living. These are certain spheres of work which are of such consequence and have such bearing on public welfare that to undertake them for earning one’s livelihood will defeat that primary aim behind them. When further a newspaper is treated as a means of making profits, the result is likely to be serious malpractices. It is not necessary to prove to those who have some experience of journalism that such malpractices do prevail on a large scale. He was of the opinion, ‘Newspapers are meant primarily to educate the people. They make the latter familiar with contemporary history.’

Article 5. Satyagraha and Media

The Media have lived up to the expectations in some critical periods in history. The role of the media in the freedom struggle is a glorious example. The media have helped in creating feeling of nationality and a sense of purpose to the agitation. In those days the objectives of the media and those of the society were almost identical.

Gandhiji's new weapon of satyagraha was a method of resistance which called for continuous public attention. During the Salt Satyagraha the need of public support was fully demonstrated. The breath of salt satyagraha reached throughout the world. The reports of the American and British journalists about the police excesses on the one hand and the endurance of suffering incidental to satyagraha on the other, gave the whole world a lively picture of the dramatic scene. Mr. Webb Miller of the New Freeman wrote: "During eighteen years of reporting.... I have never witnessed such harrowing scenes as at Dharasana. Sometimes the scenes were so painful that I have to turn away momentarily. One surprising feature was the discipline of the volunteers. It seemed they were thoroughly imbued with Gandhi's non-violent creed.⁸⁵ There are so many examples like this, Gandhi said, "Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and a determination to search truth."⁸⁶ Journalism is also a search for truth relentlessly. Again, "Satyagraha is a process of educating public opinion, Such that it covers all the elements of the society and in the end makes itself irresistible."⁸⁷ One of the major role of media is educating people. Satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within. Media should also arouse the real good feelings of the individual's mind.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "My newspapers became for me a training ground in self-restraint and a means for studying human nature in all its shades and variation. Without the newspapers a

movement like satyagraha could not have been possible.”⁸⁸ Gandhi served as Editor of Indian opinion for 12 years from 1903 to 1915. Gandhi often declared that journalism was not a profession or business for him, but an effective medium of communicating with the common people. For this reason he wrote more and more in the Indian languages and spoke to the masses directly. It is not therefore surprising that Indian Opinion was bi-lingual (English and Gujarati) right from the beginning. Later for sometime it had also Hindi and Tamil sections. Indian opinion more or less forced that South African provincial regimes to modify their repressive laws against Indians. Gandhi himself has confirmed this fact. He says of his ‘Indian opinion’ articles: ‘There was no padding, no essays given to the readers. I used to reason out for them their difficulties. I had no time to discuss theories. They had instructions as to what they were to do. I have no doubt that Indian Opinion had a vital part to play in moulding and guiding the satyagraha. (1-7-1940)

The two journals, ‘Young India’ and ‘Navajivan’ were used by Gandhiji to ventilate his views and to educate the public on satyagraha. In 1933 Gandhi started ‘Harijan’, ‘ Harijan Bandhu’, ‘Harijan sevak’ in English, Gujarati and Hindi respectively. These papers were the vehicles of his crusade against untouchables and poverty in rural areas. These papers published no advertisements even then they enjoyed wide circulation. His note of defiance and sacrifice gave a new stimulus to the evolution of press as a weapon of satyagraha. He always stressed the importance of newspapers in educating the people. He knew newspapers could become powerful medium for spreading ideas. To him, a good journalist’s duty is to teach people to brave, not to instill fear into them. The satyagrahi must also be a brave person. He criticised that the newspaper man has

become a walking plague. This is because of the reason that some journalists instill fear in the society.

Gandhi published an unregistered weekly 'Satyagraha' In 1919, defying the Government orders. This one-sheet weekly was sold for one paisa. Gandhi's journals were read even by his political opponents and by the British officials as well as the congress leaders because Gandhi used his journals for loud thinking. After Champaran the Mahatma took to journalism as his most potent weapon of satyagraha. Also his crusade for the repeal of the Press Act of 1910 was a unique piece of journalism. He was telling the rulers that it was in the best interests of the government to repeal the law. This we will discuss in detail latter.

Article 6. Value Based Journalism

Gandhi was a journalist who gave primary importance to values. His journals deal with the evils of exploitation of the workers, the degradation of the peasants, the absence of the virtue of modernisation, and the rampant consumerism which is the characteristic of modern life. Gandhi criticised the modern western civilization. Gandhi was the doctor of modern civilization when it was considered as curable disease.

Blount's pamphlet, "A Crusade (which was also the name of an organization he founded to counteract the ill effects of modern civilization) was summarized in 'Indian Opinion' in 1905. Its motto, 'Simplicity, art, aspiration' appealed to Gandhi greatly. It's principles did so even more; the betterment of society begins with the betterment of the individual; county life is the best form of the good life; handicrafts and agriculture are conducive to human well-being; machinery is the 'Devil's instrument; politics can only seal, never initiate, social reform; life without work is guilt, while work without art is brutality: work is a form of liturgy, etc. Taylor's fallacy of speed was

also summarised in 'Indian Opinion.'⁸⁹ Divided into three short chapters- 'Speed and population', 'Speed and Profit' and 'Speed and Pleasure' – the book challenges the prevailing assumption that 'faster is better' these examples taught us that Gandhi's approach was value based and ethical.

Today the dailies like, 'New York Times' saying about the need of ethical codes in journalism and put forward ethical codes for journalists. Gandhi realized this far before. Gandhi's principles are helping newspapers for attaining newsroom integrity. It will avoid all kinds of errors. It ensures impartial approaches. It envisages just and moral principles. The reporters must work with freedom, courage and impartiality.

It is an age of globalisation. The value erosion happened by globalisation make the society having many atrocities. The everlasting principles based on Indian culture was lost. Consumer culture prevails every where including in the media field. The value system is also changed. The good values must be replaced. For this, the guidelines put forward by Gandhiji will be helpful.

(i) Editor with a Difference

Gandhiji was a journalist who spent a substantial portion of his time in politics. To quote Gandhi himself: "Politics are a part of our being; we ought to understand our national institutions.... So in our Ashram every child is taught to understand the political institutions of our country and to know how the country is vibrating with new emotions, with new aspirations, with new life."⁹⁰ Before independence the Press was under the fetters of restrictive laws and enjoyed little freedom of expression. Gandhi wrote in his journals in such circumstances. Freedom of expression and press freedom which we now consider sacred were quite limited in those days. The situation in

England was very different. The rights which the British people enjoyed in their country were denied to Indians in their own motherland. There was much discrimination in the field of freedom of expression. However, Gandhi decided to swim against the tide.

In Free India the newspapers enjoyed full freedom which was limited only against irresponsible words and deeds. During the emergency period, this freedom was considerably curtailed. The freedom of the press that we enjoyed today is largely due to the big contribution that it made for the success of our struggle for independence. What makes Gandhi a journalist par excellence is that he was free from hatred and malice. Journals in the world appreciated this unique quality of Mahatma Gandhi. 'News Chronicle' wrote about him that, 'Gandhi inspires the world with hope.' The Times narrated his courage as rarest of the rare. Manchester Guardian called him as the saint among politicians. Washington Post described his political approach as 'the wave of sanctity'.⁹¹

Gandhi's views and approach were prophetic. He had foreseen problems like the scarcity of resources, the increase in population etc. He never wastes even a small piece of paper. He limited all his wants, even food. He used the one side of old envelopes. He was against the production of anything which was not useful. This prophetic view is a good quality which a journalist needs. A good journalist is the representative of the common people in the society. So he has to express his prophetic approach and attitude for a better society. The theories enunciated by Gandhiji were theories to practice. He practiced all the theories he put forward. He was a theoretician and simultaneously was a practitioner. Whoever enjoys self-rule transforms himself or herself in some measure. Self-rule without self-transformation is not Gandhian. Gandhi himself said about it: "it is

the experience everywhere in the world that an ounce of practice achieves more than a ton of preaching.”⁹²

Gandhi was a crusader for human rights. We can see this in almost all his major writings. In all his activities, including journalistic work he upheld the ultimate purpose of human existence and pointed to the final goal of man in life. The respect and regard for every person is founded on the identity of human nature and man’s common vocation. The supreme consideration is man. Moralisation by incorporating the values of justice and truth into society and politics was based to the Gandhian journalistic approach and Indian philosophy.

The Mahatma could effect a cultural change which brought humanity a step forward towards non-violence and tranquility. It generated a fresh awareness of man’s innate spiritual orientation. It was a sort of interior renewal for many persons whose relationship with others became warm and pacific. They experienced in themselves a radiant internal serenity and strength which led to changes in all spheres of their life. A great transformation within and without was taking place. For the liberation that was necessary in various fields such as political, social, economic and journalistic, non-violence became central. This realization is the main contribution of Gandhi who was an editor with differences.

(ii) Alternative Journalism

From the former articles we can easily understand that Gandhi had a peculiar way of writing, which has come to be termed alternative journalism. The path led by him was unique. His journalism was a journalism based on justice. In Gandhi’s opinion, the industrialisation on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villages as the problems of competition and marketing come in.

Today, even newspapers are produced massively and marketed aggressively. Also today journalism is city centered. Gandhi always gave importance to the villages.

Gandhi's alternative approach in journalism concentrated on the poorest of the poor in the society. He was a symbol of the poor men. For a hungry man, God appears in the form of bread – He wrote in 'Young India'. (20.5.1926). He argued for the 30 cores of unemployed persons in the country. Gandhi was against all kinds of exploitation. His mighty pen was a sword against exploitation. He stands with human rights. He was against to all kinds of slavery.

Gandhi gave importance to gender equality. "The exploitation of women by men is violence. Women had equal mental capacity having men. Her place in society must be high". Gandhiji wrote.⁹³ In his opinion the social force and power of nonviolence is more to women. If nonviolence is the dharma of human race the future is of the women.⁹⁴ He was against child marriage. Through his publications he tried to encourage re-marriage of widows.

Gandhi's approaches are more relevant today. Another journalism (Alternative journalism) is considered as a new branch in this profession all over the world now. But Gandhiji foreseen this. To his opinion, newspaper is a mirror image of the society. He turned to alternative way not only because of the news value of that approach but also because of the justice behind that. Today, we are saying about the democratisation of the media. But Gandhi never gave importance only to the elite class. He gave importance to ordinary peasants, handicrafts men, women and children. Social importance is significant in alternative journalism. Gandhi's approach was based on social significance of issues. He never gives news fragments as we give today in the journals. He considered every thing as a part of social setup and a process. He believed that all have the right to know. He tried to hear

the unheard voices. It is the method of alternative journalism. Today, the unheard voices are increasing in the world. We can say that alternative journalism is the applied form of Gandhian values in journalistic field. Today alternative journalists, all over the world write features, news items, provides and diary notes in this method. But Gandhi wrote this in a simple language with graphic manner.

Today journalism is urban based. But alternative journalism has its focus on villages. Gandhi concentrated on pure editing, reporting and crafting. He was highly conscious and careful about each word he wrote. He asked intelligent questions in his mind before writing each sentence. That was interesting also. Unfortunately, we are not followed the methods of alternative Gandhian approach in journalism on large scale.

Article 7. What Gandhi said:

In this article we will try to discuss about various aspects of journalism in the Gandhian way. Gandhiji said, “Journalism has become the art of intelligent anticipation of events”.⁹⁵

Mahatma Gandhi, in a journalistic career spanning nearly four decades, edited four journals. None, including Harijan and Navajivan, could boast a circulation of more than a few thousand copies. But such was Gandhi’s grasp of the basics of mass communication that he ensured that his daily “Out pouring of heart and should” reached all. If one were to ask the question as to who came first- Gandhi – the freedom fighter or Gandhi the media crusader – the truth would be that Gandhi – the journalist pre-dated Gandhi the freedom fighter by at least 20 years. The burden of leading a nation towards freedom and the contingency of having to face trials followed by jail terms, did not stem the flow of writings from Gandhi’s pen. There was not a day when

he was not writing on some issue or the other in Young India and Navajivan.

Gandhiji's journals carried articles on a variety of subjects written by him and others ranging from the spinning wheel to the most important political problem of the day. But writings on one subject where conspicuous by their absence throughout viz. art and aesthetics. Even so, Gandhiji tried his hand on intellectual and aesthetic subjects as well. An extract of an article on 'Indian art' published in the issue of the Indian opinion dated Sept. 17, 1903. Years later in an interview to G. Ramachandran, Gandhiji admitted that "I do not speak or write about art because I am conscious of my own limitations. That consciousness is my only strength. My functions are different from the artists and I shall not go out of my way to assume his position. "Gandhiji even quipped during that interview that "Neither Jesus nor Mohammed wrote on art!"⁹⁶

(i) About Poisonous Journalism

Gandhiji defined poisonous journalism as the journalism which was not helped to attain the goals of sarvodaya. It is dangerous to the health of the society. Anything morally wrong will never be practically correct. Gandhi wrote: "An itch for news is a variety of dissipation, debilitating to the mind and spirit, unless it is properly curbed".⁹⁷

In the news business media men help to provide the people with the information they need to frame their attitudes and to make, or at any rate to authorize or ratify, the decisions on which the well-being of the nation rests. Most of the journalists are in it because it seemed a pleasant way to make a living, or because we are unable to do anything else, or because of the promise of excitement. Gandhiji insisted that we must bother about the consequences of what we do for the nation and for the world.⁹⁸

Gandhi gave guidelines against poisonous journalism through Harijan. He was also bothered about such advertisements. On 2nd January 1937 an editor of the 'Nispraha' paper wrote in Harijan about Gandhi's stand. He read about obscene advertisements which Gandhi wrote about in Harijan. He translated it and published in 'Nispraha'. He sent one such advertisement to Gandhi. Gandhi found it was a false advertisement meant to misguide the villagers. He warned about such journalism. Gandhi knew that poisonous journalism is the enemy of developmental journalism. His impartiality, truthfulness and credibility are extraordinary.

To those who said that Gandhiji's ideas are not practical in a largely self-driven world, the Mahatma replied that "these have never been an experiment on a large scale in nonviolence".⁹⁹ This is true in the case of Gandhi's journalistic experiments. No one tried to follow Gandhism on a large scale. Gandhi's journalistic experiments also need good followers. No one tried to follow it on a large scale. But Gandhi's work in the field of journalism had a strong influence not only on every newspaper in India but also on the entire literary world of every language in India.

(ii) Duty of Journalists

Gandhi expatiated on the duties and the function of journalists in his speech at 'The Hindu' office in Madras on 22nd March, 1925 after unveiling the portrait of the late Mr. Kasthuriranga Iyengar: "I never thought that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar was an out and out reformer but he had cultivated journalism for the sake of journalism as it appeared to him. These are three functional duties for journalists. (1) Accurately reflect the opinion. (2) Do not change the editorial policies in which way the wind is blowing. (3) But whenever we saw the country as a whole is changing we must recognize it". He added, "A journalist

peculiar function is to read the mind of the country and to give definite and fearless expression to that mind.”

Gandhi extolled the approach of the Hindu and late Iyengar. He said, The Hindu’s news columns satisfied the ambition of a most voracious reader. Journalists must know the art of clipping. It is an art as I can tell you from my own experience. He said that the journalists must give news comprehensively that an average reader gets information from a single newspaper. World news must be displayed in an attractive manner in newspapers and magazines.

Journalists must be bold and express differences in a decent way. They must remember that the country’s interests are more important than those of individuals. Journalism has a distinct place in creating and propagating public opinion. “We are yet cultivating or we have yet to cultivate the best of journalism among us we have many wonderfully able journalists to copy. Whatever little I know of journalism, I realize that there is still a great deal to be done. In our march towards our goal, I know that journalism will play a most important part in shaping the destinies of our country.”¹⁰⁰

Gandhi practiced all the above things which he preached. This makes him unique among journalists. His words appeared in the ‘Young India’ of August 1927 are epitome of his philosophy: it is better to allow our lives to speak for us than our words.

(ii) Purity of Journalism

Journalism had social reforming capacity. This capacity attracted Gandhiji. So he insisted that journalism must be pure. It must be based on certain ideals. Gandhi said, if we have an ideal approach we don’t need any idol. Idolatry is permissible in Hinduism when it sub serves an ideal. It becomes a sinful fetish when the idol

itself becomes an ideal. The pen is our foundry and the hands of willing copyists, our printing machine.¹⁰¹ But the handwritten newspaper is I admit is a heroic remedy meant for heroic times. If the government did not allow printing machine, this method is useful. The restoration of free speech, free association and free press is almost the whole swaraj. The Public press has been gagged, in short freedom with self respect has become impossible throughout the length and breadth of the land. ¹⁰²

Gandhi considered journalism as a noble profession as he put forward certain restrictions to the press. “We should rely on ourselves to expatiate on our grievances, but we must not forget that we have to do that under certain restrictions born of politeness and sobriety.¹⁰³ An editor could convey his thoughts to the readers without any deviation. Independent views of writers must be published. What is published is to be correct and advisable to read. “I have myself been editor of newspapers for several years and can explain from personal experience the difficulties which the editor has to undergo in the true discharge of his duties. I am not disputing the fact that some restraint is necessary” ¹⁰⁴

Gandhi put forward to avoid the restrictions to the press. The journalists must be plain-speaking, honest and truth seeking persons. In this journey, they must fight for truth. Even if then, their bodies were taken away, the souls will become free.¹⁰⁵ Gandhi insisted on the depth of insights, power of personality, purity of character, steadfastness of devotion to ideals, titanic heroism and utter trust in higher attributes of the spirit of journalists. He said, we must act in accordance with principles, not expediency. He must stand for common human values and must lead a human way of life. Gandhi, the journalist was a greatest spiritual force of all times. The experiments of Gandhi was based on Truth, to him God. So he always insisted on the

purity of life. Journalism and journalistic experiments also are part of this purification process to him.

(ii) Fearless Press

Gandhi believed that the press must be independent and fearless. He said, "One of the curses of India is often the sin of secrecy. The tendency of human nature is to hide dirt, we do not want to see or touch dirty things; we want to put them out of sight. The Press Act is a symptom of the disease of cowardice. If we would boldly declare our intentions, the Press Act will die of inanition. I notice, too that the most telling passages of my speech in Calcutta have been omitted by the press evidently for of the censor. I would for rather see a complete stoppage of a newspaper if the editor cannot, without fear of the consequence, freely express his sentiments or publish those which he approves"¹⁰⁶ Non Co-operation, while it gladly avails itself of the assistance that may be rendered by the press has to be, by its very nature, independent of the press. There can be no doubt that every thought we print is being printed on sufferance. As soon as its circulation takes effect, the Government, for the sake of its existence will try to prohibit it." We must devise methods of circulating our ideas unless and until the whole press becomes fearless, defies consequences and publishes ideas, even when it is in disagreement with them just for the purpose of securing its freedom. If the government does not allow printing, then the news must be written by one and read loudly for all".¹⁰⁷ Gandhi considered the Press Bill of the British government as reactionary.¹⁰⁸

Liberty of speech means that it is unassailed even when the speech hurts; liberty of the press can be said to be truly respected only when the press can comment in the severest terms upon and even misrepresent matters, protection against misrepresentation or violence

being secured not by an administrative gagging order, not by closing down the press but by punishing the real offender, leaving the press itself restricted. "The Lokamanya (Tilak) spoke more eloquently from the Mandalay for tress than through the columns of the printed Kesari. His influence was multiplied a thousand fold by his incarceration and his speech and his pen had acquired much greater power after he was discharged than before his imprisonment. By his death he is editing his paper without pen and speech through the sacred resolution of the people to realize his life's dream"¹⁰⁹

I (Gandhi) need hardly draw attention to the fact that in a subject country like India, the liberty of the press is double precious. And the editors responsibility if you owned British owned press, is very great at the present critical moment in the history of this country."¹¹⁰ Gandhi wrote, newspapers would have no value if their editors did not have the right to express their views freely. We want the removal of all restrictions imposed by the Government on newspapers: Should we then, tolerate people imposing restrictions by means of threats. We may try to change people's views and their attitudes by love, by presentation and by example. Threats will not succeed. Every one, therefore, and specially a non-co-operator, should improve his language, purify his thoughts and make them gentler. How can anyone whose tongue is sanctified by uttering God's name, in whose heart dwells God, have unworthy words on that tongue and unworthy thoughts in heart even for a moment. Any person who joins the army of non-co-operators with a foul tongue and an evil mind or heart though he may claim to be a friend, acts like an enemy."¹¹¹

Gandhi had a comprehensive concept of freedom. He fought for personal, moral and national freedom. Liberty is basic to man's personality. It does not mean a licence.¹¹² "I value individual freedom and social restraint."¹¹³ Gandhi had an integral approach to freedom

just as he saw life as a whole. Man has to realize freedom at all levels which is a process of wherent growth. “Social, economic, political and moral freedom are intimately interlocked and interdependent. There must be all-sided development”¹¹⁴ So Gandhi always stand for a fearless press “Main freedom to behave according to the dictates of conscience constitutes the most powerful expression of his inalienable nobility.”¹¹⁵ On the level of truth and information, freedom suffers when the social communication media are misused or the objectivity of news and facts is veiled or distorted. “The press is called the Fourth Estate. It is definitely a power but to misuse that power is criminal.”¹¹⁶ Journalists should have the freedom and responsibility to uphold truth. For that they must be fearless.

(v) Obscene Literature

“No country and no language is free from obscene literature. As long as there are self-indulging and immoral people in the world, obscene literature will continue to be produced and read. But when such literature is disseminated through newspapers of good standing, and under the guises of art or service, it is truly horrible”. – Gandhi remarked.¹¹⁷ Gandhi got one such copy of a statement from Marwari Community. He seeks the source of it and found that money is the end of it. He wrote about this in Hindi Navajivan on 6th March 1930. It was on a Marati weekly called ‘Chant’. He responded to it that no man who has any sense or who has the good of society at heart would ever publish such things. To publish such things in the name of reform is unnecessary and harmful.

Gandhi saw the readership of obscene literature in two types: the educated debauchees who wish to satisfy their lust by any means, and innocent men who, though so far free from the ways of vice, are so

impressionable that they may be corrupted. For such people obscene literature is fatal.

Gandhi directed that journalists and editors of newspapers must refrain from publishing obscene literature. It should never buy or read such literature. We should popularise the books and newspapers and boycott the obscene ones. Even today Gandhi's words are relevant because some newspapers use such sub-standard language. They must be avoided.

Gandhi observed: "The proprietors and editors of some newspapers seemed to be engaged in robbery. They make it their profession to rob people's money by inventing all sorts of pretexts, by making unfounded allegations against innocent persons and threatening them."¹¹⁸ Some accept bribes and try to justify dishonest practices and in this manner dupe the innocent public." A friend from Calcutta informed Gandhi of one such instance. A Journal published an article alleging the immoral practices at Govind Bhavan and is malingering many families and among the simple folk of the Marwari community. Having concocted indecent incidents which never took place, they implicate certain family people in them. The friend who has sent Gandhi this filthy paper wants him to write something about such journals so that they may mend their ways. Gandhi's response was as follows: "I have no such hopes for my article. It is therefore not addressed to them but to those families who are being blackmailed by such journals."

In this chapter we had seen Gandhi's experiments in journalism. In the next chapter we will try to look into Gandhi's contributions as a journalist, critically.

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