

CHAPTER – V

GANDHI AS A JOURNALIST

Apart from being a national leader and social reformer, Mahatma Gandhi was a great communicator. More than any one else, he recognized that communication is the most effective tool to shape opinion and mobilise popular support. He was successful because he had a latent skill in communication that eventually surfaced in South Africa where he had gone initially to set up practice as a lawyer. The practice of communication started by him in South Africa gave him the clue to rally millions of his country men when he returned to India

Gandhiji was an ardent fighter for the cause of the freedom of the press also. He often said, “Freedom of the press is a precious privilege that no country can forego. The liberty of the press is dear privilege, apart from the advisability or otherwise of civil disobedience”. Gandhi brought in many new elements which brought us new vitality in the field of journalism. On account of his wide interest, his genius for simplification, his eagerness to reach the largest number of people, and the novel nature of his activities, there emerged a new awakening in journalism.¹ Gandhiji undoubtedly introduced a new and noble element in the field of journalism which may justly be termed the human approach. Besides he was well aware of the educational mission of the press.

To whom should the journalist be loyal? To the propriety, one’s own self or the particular class he belongs to? This has often been debated resulting in different conclusions but to Gandhiji, readers were the prime consideration. A journalist may be a patron, a party member, or a faithful employee, but his loyalty according to him should primarily be to his readers. The public has the right to know the truth. It must be informed objectively as to what is happening. If the paper loses confidence of its readers, it forfeits all that is worth in journalism.

Within a few years of his return to India, after more than twenty years of active leadership in South Africa, Gandhiji once again turned to journalism, which would help him to propagate his ideas and programmes and be congenial to the style of his growing political leadership. 'Young India' had already been founded and functioning as an organ of the Home Rule League of Bombay, soon after the inauguration of the Rowlatt Satyagraha campaign in 1919. Gandhiji took over its editorship. He stripped the journal of all advertising and filled its pages his message to the congress party.

In both the weeklies 'The Young India' and 'The Navajivan,' his trademark was a straightforward, disciplined style. In simple yet forceful language, he propagated and elaborated his percepts of truth, nonviolence and satyagraha. Gandhi's achievement was all the greater in that he earned remarkable popularity for his papers which relentlessly argued for the need of bringing about an all-pervasive social change. The most remarkable thing about him was that he carefully kept away from the cheap methods of sensationalism and misrepresentation. He had learned to write with telling effect. Rival Gujarati papers declined in popularity and the circulation of the Navajivan more than doubled within a year of his assuming its editorship.

There was no journal which could stand comparison with the Harijan. It was not a newspaper in the usual sense, for the Harijan made more news than it reported. Its inception in 1933, the impact of its suspension in 1940, the drama of its complete suppression in 1942, and its resumption of publication in 1946 were all events of historical importance. The Harijan was not a party organ, yet it became the most influential journal involved in the movement for Indian independence. The Harijan drew more international contributors than any other Indian publication of that time.

Gandhi often wrote in newspapers when he was in South Africa. This helped

him to create public opinion. This was his first step in journalism. His experiences and experiments are unequal in the history. In less than a few months stay in South Africa, Gandhi realized the need to become a journalist to fight for the rights of the Indian community. And he brought the highest qualities the profession could boast of courage in the face of adversity, unswerving adherence to truth, pursuit of public causes, and objectivity in presentation.

The objectives of satyagraha are, in a way, the objectives of journalism also. Inform the truth, guide the public, analyse things... etc., are the aim of Gandhiji's journalistic experiments. He influenced so many people through his writings. Mahatma had understood the need for stopping the exploitation and corruption be it economic, political, social, religious, moral and what not and fought tooth and nail against these evils. Thus Gandhiji became a great champion and promoter of social justice. His journalistic experiments are based on service to the society. He is a man of prophetic vision who could envisage the shape of things to be in future years.

Gandhiji's life and work in South Africa prepared and formed Gandhi for the greater battle in India. "...Had he begun in India he would have got tangled up in very complex problems such as India presents. His apprenticeship in trying out the possibilities of soul force was gained in a simpler situation. South Africa furnished the rehearsal for the real dharma of India."² The most formative period of Gandhi's life was in South Africa. In journalism also Gandhi had the formative period in South Africa through Indian Opinion.

Truth was the first and the last love of Gandhi who had an unshakable faith in its ultimate victory. Some of his aphoristic pronouncements were: "Truth alone prevails", "Truth is the first thing to be sought for, and Beauty and Goodness will then be added unto you."³ The propagation of truth should be done by living up to it. 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.”⁴ There is obviously the possibility of making mistakes and falling into error and this possibility befalls each and everyone without exception. Gandhi, the journalist had a vision geared to action, suited to the particular situations, and at the same time endowed with a universal dimension. “I can not give myself the certificate that a thoughtless word hardly ever escapes my tongue or pen. I do not recollect ever having had to regret anything in my speech or writing.”⁵

Gandhi read almost all newspapers when he was in jail. He wrote answers to the questions of journalists and sent them to their offices. Gandhi communicated even to illiterate people. At that time 30 crores of Indians were illiterate. The media all over the world started quoting the words of Mahatma Gandhi.

Article 1. Gandhiji’s Journals

(i) Indian Opinion

Gandhi published his articles in English and in Gujarati in his Indian Opinion. In South Africa, he was a lawyer, a political activist, and above all, a journalist. Gandhi was quite well informed of what was going on in the Indian subcontinent. In the first chapter of Hind Swaraj, Gandhi stated the three objectives of the newspaper, the first of which is to understand the popular feeling and to give expression to it; the second is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; and the third is to expose popular misconceptions fearlessly. To a certain extent, the people will have to be expressed; certain sentiments will need to be fostered and defects will have to be brought to light. The three functions mentioned here are also the functions that he had proposed for his newspaper, ‘Indian Opinion.’⁶ “Although this journal supplied a real want, what may be termed a commercial demand had to be created. In other words, the paper

had not only to find its matter, but its readers also” Gandhi added, “It (Indian Opinion) was to educate public opinion to remove causes for misunderstanding; to put before the Indians their own blemishes and to show them the path of duty while they insisted on securing their rights. We (the workers of Indian opinion) write impersonally and no one on the staff of this journal claims any glory over the matter. We therefore think it but right to take the public into our confidence.”⁷ “The journal Indian Opinion is a great instrument of education. It is necessary for every Indian to look upon the journal as belonging to him, not as something mine”. The objects of the journal are threefold: first, to make our grievances known to the Government, to the whites here in South Africa and in England and to people in India; Secondly to tell our people of their own shortcomings and to exhort them to overcome these and, thirdly – and this is perhaps the principal objective to eliminate the rivalry between Hindus and Mohamedians and the caste distinctions among Gujaratis, Tamilians and Bengalis as well as those practised elsewhere in India. All persons connected with the journal are such that they can earn their livelihood by other means.”⁸ 500 complimentary copies of the journal was published first.

In the beginning, The Indian opinion had its editions in Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil and English. Gandhi wrote, “The Indians and the Europeans both knew that, though I was not avowedly the editor of ‘Indian Opinion’, I was virtually responsible for its conduct. It would not have mattered if the journal had never been started, but to stop it after it had once been launched would have been both a loss and a disgrace. So I kept on pouring out my money, until ultimately I was practically sinking all my savings in it. I remember a time when I had to remit £75 each month.”⁹

The journal became to him a training in self restraint, and for friends a medium through which to keep in touch with his thoughts. “Satyagraha would probably have been impossible without Indian Opinion.”¹⁰

Gandhi viewed his journalistic attempts as an 'ethical experiment'. He never considered it as a business even though he has frankly described the difficulties faced by newspaper management in his autobiography.¹¹ But in this study, we are giving importance to the journalistic approach of Mahatma Gandhi; not the newspaper management techniques. We are trying to evaluate the contributions of Gandhi to the Journalistic field. He influenced millions of people through his writing.

Sjt. Madanjit and Magalal Gandhi helped the Mahatma in managing the 'Indian Opinion' Sjt. Madanjit was canvassing subscribers for the 'Indian Opinion'. Gandhi, never considered whether there was profit or not Mr. West left the journal when he discovered that there was no profit. But Gandhi did not blame him. The idea of having an engine to work the press had not appealed to Gandhi. "I had thought that hand-power would be more in keeping with an atmosphere where agricultural work was also to be done by hand."¹² But when the idea was not found feasible, an oil-engine was installed for the purpose. In the initial stages they had to burn midnight oil for bringing art each issue of the journal.

The publication started in 1904 fell in loss many times. Gandhi himself worked hard and compensate the loss of the weekly. Most of the articles in it are written by Gandhiji. Great men like Tolstoy, appreciated Gandhiji. The service, which Indian opinion done to the society was great. The publication was a mirror of Gandhiji's life. Today we are hearing about the principles like, 'media is the message' and 'media man is the message'. But Gandhi, the media man was the message behind his publications. He never wrote a word for the sake of false praising to others. He wrote things after deep study. He never exaggerated things. Gandhi wrote in his autobiography that the journal was helped for his own self control and self purification.

(a) Origin and Development of 'Indian Opinion'

The first editor of 'The Indian Opinion' was Mr. Mansukhlal. But most of the work was done by Gandhiji himself. Gandhi himself wrote the editorial. It was published in four languages-Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil and English. Hindi and Tamil editions were nominal in circulation. So Gandhi stopped the publication of those two editions. On an average 75 sovereigns was the expense of publication. Gandhi gave the money without expecting anything in return.

Gandhi wrote in his autobiography: "Indeed the journal became for me a training in self restraint, and for friends a medium through which to keep in touch with my thoughts. The critic found very little to which he could object. In fact the tone of Indian Opinion compelled the critic to put a curb on his own pen. Satyagraha would probably have been impossible without 'Indian Opinion'. The readers looked forward to it for a trustworthy account of the satyagraha campaign as also of the real condition of Indians in South Africa. For me it became a means for the study of human nature in all its casts and shades, as I always aimed at establishing an intimate and clean bond between the editor and the readers. I was inundated with letters containing the outpourings of my correspondent's hearts. They were friendly, critical or bitter, according to the temper of the writer. It was a fine education for me to study, digest and answer all this correspondence." ¹³

The journal was an effective means of educating and consolidating the Indian community. The Indians all over the world were kept in touch with the course of events in South Africa through this weekly. It was a useful and potent weapon in the struggle of Indians in South Africa. Gandhi expressed through it his thoughts and ideas on all subjects of interest to the Indians. 'Indian Opinion' carried some articles in Gujarati language. Through the Gujarati columns in particular, Gandhi tried to educate the Indians in South Africa in self-discipline,

sanitation and good citizenship and to prepare them for satyagraha. He sought to inspire his readers by recounting the lives of great men and women.¹⁴ For 10 years Gandhi poured out his thought and feeling on all the subjects of interest to the Indian community.¹⁵

A girl named Ms. Shlesin helped Gandhi very much in publishing 'Indian Opinion', especially when he was jailed. Her's was a selfless service. She was sending the communications and doing all financial correspondence. Gandhi utilized the money getting from his cases for 'Indian Opinion'. Mr. Madangit helped Gandhi by joining subscribers and collecting subscription. Gandhi charged the office and press of 'Indian Opinion' to phoenix settlement. He gave equal living wage to all. He insisted on that the journal published in the right day every week. The phoenix have almost a self sufficient atmosphere. Each one worked hand in hand for the success of the journal. The editor Mansukhlal Nazar controlled the paper from its Durban Branch.

The publication was an important tool for the political movement led by Gandhiji and the Natal Indian Congress to fight racial discrimination and win civil right for the Indian immigrant community in South Africa. Through the 19th century Indians were brought to South Africa as indentured labour by the authorities of the British Empire, which governed both South Africa and India. Along side various multi-ethnic communities, the Indian community suffered from significant political, economic and social discrimination, administered by the system of apartheid. In the aftermath of the Boer War, the government of General Smuts introduced significant restrictions on the civil rights of the Indian immigrant community, giving the police power to warrant-less search, seizures and arrests. All Indians were required to carry identification and registration cards at all times. Working as a lawyer in the Natal province, Gandhi organized the publication with the aim of educating European communities in South Africa about Indian needs and issues.

At Phoenix, the press workers were governed by a new work ethic- they would all have a share in the land, in the profits if there were any, they would grow crops to sustain themselves and they would work jointly to produce Indian Opinion. The newspaper's editors included Hebert Kitchin, Henry Polak, Albert west, Manilal Gandhi, who was the paper's longest serving editor (for 36 years) and Sushila Gndhi. All but one of its editors spent some time in jail.

(b) Purpose of Indian Opinion

The Indian opinion began by adopting a very moderate tone, reiterating its faith in British law and seeking not to provoke the hostility of British officials. However, the Indian Opinion boldly highlighted the poor conditions under which indentured labourers worked. Editorials exposed the discrimination and harsh conditions prevalent in the agricultural estates where indentured Indians were employed. Cases of harsh treatment by employers were publicised and the astoundingly high rate of suicide amongst Indians was pointed out. A campaign to end the system was launched and editor Henry Polak, a friend of Gandhi's, went to India to mobilise support. From 1906 onwards it became a vehicle for challenging state laws and urging defiance of these when these were clearly unjust. This tradition began during the satyagraha campaign between 1906 and 1913 by which Gandhi resisted the attempts of the colonialists to impose passes on Indians in the Transvaal. The paper played a decisive role on defeating the registration drive of the officials. Its pages paid tribute to local resisters and Brian Gabriel, one of Natal's earliest Indian photographers, provided visual coverage.

The Indian opinion was a means of bringing news about Indians in the colonies before the public in India. The pages of Indian opinion provide a valuable historical record of the disabilities that Indians suffered under. It also provides an invaluable record of the political life of the Indian community. Gandhi's experience with the publication and the political struggle in South Africa proved a major

experience for him that helped him in his work for the Indian independence movement. In India he would publish *Young India*, *Navajivan* and *Gujarat Samachar*. The *Indian Opinion* continued to publish for many decades and played a significant role in the wider civil rights struggle of South Africa. But it also suffered from not being a commercial enterprise, but rather a publication committed to serving social causes. Gandhi was clear about the nature and content of his newspaper. It would not carry any advertisements nor try to make money. Instead, he sought subscribers who would give donations. *Indian opinion* became certainly a most useful and potent weapon in the struggle for the rights of Indians in South Africa. In South Africa his writing often made the white racists look ridiculous: The white barber refused to cut my black hair, extending his colour prejudice to not only non-Christian skin but non-Christian hair as well.

The paper was important for understanding Gandhi. Through it Gandhi was able to communicate not only with his colleagues but with the general public on the crusade he was leading on political, social and economic issues. The critics found very little to which they could object. In fact, the tone of '*Indian Opinion*' compelled the critics to put a curb on his palm. From Gandhi's writings overseas readers could form a time picture of the happenings in South Africa. Among the distinguished readers were Gokhale in India, Dadabhai Naoroji in England and Tolstoy in Russia. Gandhi worked hard for this weekly. He got two hundred journals per week in exchange of *Indian Opinion*, read each one of them carefully and reproduced such news as might benefit the readers of *Indian Opinion*.

Gandhi was a successful journalist but never intended to make a living from journalism. In his opinion the aim of journalism was service: "Journalism should never be prostituted for selfish ends or for the sake of carrying a livelihood. And whatever happens to the editors or the journal, it should express views of the country irrespective of consequences. They will have to strike a different line of policy if they wanted to penetrate into the hearts of the masses."

When he took charge of the Indian Opinion, it was a losing concern and had a small circulation of four hundred copies. For some months Gandhi had to contribute Rs.1200 per month to keep it going. Altogether he incurred a personal loss of Rs. 26000/-. In spite of this heavy loss, he later decided to keep out advertisements in order to devote more space for propagating his ideas. He knew that he would not be able to serve truth and remain independent if he accepted advertisements. He never cared to increase the sale of his journals through improper means, nor to compete with other newspapers.

The journal did not project any sensational topics. He untiringly wrote on constructive work, satyagraha, non-violence, diet, nature-cure, Hindu-Muslim unity, untouchables, spinning khadi, swadeshi, village industries and prohibition. He stressed the need of re-orientation of education and food habits and was a severe critic of national defects. Indian opinion more or less forced South African provincial regimes to modify their repressive laws against Indians. One-day Gandhi got a call from Bihar where the Indigo farmers of Champaran were subjected to the same kind of indignity and exploitation as the indentured labourers in South Africa. He promptly went there and investigated the issues, and produced a report that would be the envy of the greatest investigative journalist anywhere in the world.

Gandhi's book, 'A Guide to Health' was first published in Indian Opinion. This was a book appreciated both in the East and West. Here Gandhi succeeded in the conscientisation process which was a duty of the media. In the year 1909, 'Hind Swaraj' was written in Gujarati between 13 and 22 November on board the 'Kildonan Castle', on Gandhi's return trip from England to South Africa; it was published in two instalments in the Gujarati section of 'Indian Opinion' (11 and 19 December) Gandhi also translated some books which he read and published partially for the benefit of the readers of Indian Opinion.¹⁶

(ii) Young India

'Young India' (1919-1932) was an English weekly journal published from Bombay under Gandhi's supervision. It was started from Bombay on 7th May 1919. On 8th October 1919 Gandhi became the editor of its Ahmedabad edition. Messrs. Umar Sobani and Shankar lala Banker were controlling 'Young India' in the first phase. Gandhi had already learned from his experience in the 'Indian Opinion' that, a journal needed a press of its own "Moreover the press laws in force in India at that time were such that, "if I wanted to express my views untrammelled, the existing printing presses, which were naturally run for business, would have hesitated to publish them. The need for setting up a press of our own, therefore, became all the more imperative, and since this could be conveniently done only at Ahmedabad, Young India too had to be taken there." ¹⁷

Through the journal Gandhi commenced to the best of his ability the work of educating the reading public in Satyagraha. It had wide circulation which at one time reached the neighbourhood of forty thousand. He set his face against taking advertisements in his journals from the very first. "Incidentally, these journals helped me also to some extent to remain at peace with myself for, whilst immediate support to civil disobedience was out of the question; they enabled me freely to ventilate my views and to put heart into the people. Thus I feel that both the journals rendered good service to the people in this hour of trial, and did their humble bit towards lightening the tyranny of the martial law." ¹⁸

The power of satyagraha was imbibed in whatever Gandhi wrote. In 1930, Gandhi declared the decision for salt satyagraha in Young India. Monday and Wednesday are the days of Gandhi's vow of silence. In these days he wrote articles for Young India and Navajivan. Gandhi revealed his thoughts through these publications even in the disobedience. The hardship of martial law was also simplified due to these publications.

Gandhi had been frequently writing on various aspects of journalism. To him editorial independence, adherence to truth and self-restraint were the three over-riding considerations for journalism. In his message for the editor of the newspaper, 'The Independence' on 30th January 1919 he wrote: "In wishing you success in your new enterprise, I would like to say how I hope your writings would be worthy of the title you have chooses for your journal; and may I further hope that to a robust of independence you will add an equal measure of self-restraint and the strictest adherence to truth? Too often in our journals as in others do we get fiction instead of fact and declamation in place of sober reasoning. You would make 'The Independence' a power in the land and a means of education for the people by avoiding the errors I have drawn attention to." This was the same line of thinking of Gandhi's publications also.

In India Gandhi published his journals for about 30 years, without the aid of any advertisement. He suggested that for each province, there should be only one advertising medium, printing decent descriptions of things useful to the people. After accepting the editorship of Young India, he was keen on conducting a Gujarati paper because a vernacular paper was a felt want. Editing a newspaper in English was no joy to him. He brought out Navajivan, the Hindi and Gujarati version of Young India, and contributed many articles regularly. He was proud to say that many readers of his publications were the farmers and workers who really made India.

The price of 'Young India' was one anna per copy. He sustained no loss in running it. But when he was jailed the circulation dropped down to 3,000. Under heavy pressure of work he had to write a lot and had to work late at night or in the early hours of the morning. He often wrote on a running train. Some of his famous statements or editorials bore the mark "on the train". When his right hand got tired, he wrote with the left. Curiously enough, his left hand writing was more legible. Even while convalescing he wrote three to four articles every week.

Gandhi was first jailed in India for his bold articles printed in Young India. He never submitted to any gagging order issued by the Government. When he was not allowed to express his deepest thoughts, he stopped writing. He was confident that he could any day persuade his readers to copy his editorials for him and circulate the news. He knew his paper could be suppressed but not its message so long as he lived. By not caring for the aid of printing room and compositor's tick, the hand written paper, he assured, could be a heroic remedy for heroic times.

Issue after issue of the 'Young India' bore good testimony to the Mahatma's journalistic genius which manifested in his appeals to the government to do what was 'just and righteous'. His writings were not meant to evoke hatred and contempt. Gandhi believed in healthy journalism and avoided malicious techniques of communication. He wrote, "My writing come not be poisonous. They must be free from anger, for it is my special conviction that we cannot truly attain our goal by promoting ill-will against the rulers or anyone else. My writing cannot be free from hatred towards any individual because it is my firm belief that it is love that sustains the earth.

Gandhi, fully devoted his time for propagating Khadi during the three years from 1924. 'Young India' greatly helped him in this mission.¹⁹ In 1926 Viceroy Lord Reeding returned to England and Lord Irvin came to India. This was not published in 'Young India'. Gandhi published a letter on whether it is good to kill mad dogs which was one and a half page lengthy. This continued in following four issues. The selection of items in the magazine was remarkable. There was a regular column named 'letter to the editor'. This gives enough space to the readers to respond on various issues. They got the views of Gandhi as reply to these letters which were published in the weekly. Gandhi continued his writing even when he was ill. Major decisions of Gandhi were revealed through his weeklies.

Several times the Britishers raided the office of 'Young India'. But, Gandhi

remained fearless. The authorities could not find any document which was illegal or antinational, Gandhi considered that fearlessness and freedom of expression are the base of value based journalism. 'Gandhi's Autobiography', 'Satyagraha in South Africa', 'From Yervada Mandir' and 'Anasakthiyoga' are first published in his weeklies. This also helped increase the circulation of the publications.

(iii) Navajivan

Navajivan (1919 – 1913) was a Gujarati weekly edited by Gandhiji and published from Ahmmedabad. It had occasional biweekly issues. Navajivan was first published on 7th September, 1919. It was the time of protest against Rowlatt Act. So it was not easy to get permission for a new weekly. So Gandhi bought the 'Navajivan Anasatya' weekly of Indulal Yajnik. It had only 600 copies of circulation before Gandhiji became the editor. It is increased to 2500 copies after Gandhi's arrival. The second issue got 5000 copies and the third got 6000 copies. It was published from a small press. When circulation increased, a large press becomes a necessity. Other printing units are not ready to print the weekly from their press because of they feared the authorities. So Gandhi and Anasuya Behn collected Rs. 6000 and started a new press. This was today's 'Navajivan Mudranalaya.'

Many asked Gandhi Why he hesitated to start a daily in English language. He replied: "I want to communicate with the farmers and weavers, who lived in huts in remote villages. The message of satyagraha must reach them. For that, the language must be understandable to them."²⁰ Navajivan like all other publications of Gandhi was a part of our struggle for freedom.

In 1930, the government abolished the printing of Navajivan. In 1931 it was re-started. But the Government intervened again. In 1933, Gandhi put an end to both the papers. After that Navajivan Trust and Navajivan Publishing house started. The copy-right of all of the works of Mahatma is to this publishing house. "Navajivan was read in the farthest corners of India, sometimes in groups.

Gandhi's articles were reproduced in almost all the newspapers in India.”²¹

The name 'Navajivan' meant the renewal of the country and the magazine. The renewal of Gujarati language and literature also was the aim of Gandhiji. It brings a new energy to the life of the people also. Politics was the most important topic in the weekly. Gandhi tried to increase the moral standard and courage of the readers continuously. He tried to purify them. To make them complete human beings was his primary aim. Gandhi knew that it is inevitable for 'Sampoorana Swaraj' which was proclaimed by him at Godhra on November 1917. In the first issue itself Gandhi wrote about this 'dharmic renewal': "I practiced some dharmic values in my life after continuous and hard effort. It is my duty to inform others, this happiness and culture."²² Gandhi tried to inspire all the Indians through his weekly. Gandhi never tried to write these things as a philosopher in volume of books. He gave his message in simple language for common people in the village. He took his own approach to social and political problems. Thus he conveyed to common people in a simple way. Gandhi put forward some conditions for the publication of Navajivan. He informed it through the weekly to the readers. This is based on the Gandhian journalistic values. The conditions are (1) The weekly take any advertisement for money. (2) It will not continue in loss (3) Navajivan is not a business. To increase the circulation, the standard of the weekly does not decrease.²³

When Navajivan got a subscription of 9000, Gandhi wrote: "I don't want to make it 2000. If it becomes 50000, I will not show extreme happiness."²⁴ There was not enough printing facility for Navajivan in that time. The number of persons worked in the weekly are also low in number. But in content wise the magazine was in frontline. Gandhi said to the readers that they should not evaluate the weekly by reading only one issue. He published translated articles from other languages like Bengali. Many famous persons wrote in it and Gandhi regularly communicated with them. He gave ample importance to the feedback from the

readers.

Navajivan was running at a loss at one stage . Then the price of one copy was 16 paise. 8 paise had to be spent on the raw paper alone. But Gandhi was not willing to decrease the quality of the paper. He insisted on using good quality paper. He decreased the size and the number of pages. Number of pages was decreased to 12 from 16. In Bombai and Ahmedabad Navajivan sold on five paise instead of four for single copy. Gandhi informed the readers that, if he increased the number of copies, the loss will also increase. So in that stage, Gandhi and the readers struggled not to increase the circulation. When Navajivan was started, eight pages were promised but, the circumstances having permitted, sixteen pages were given. Gandhi did not avoid any subject because of lack of space. He concised articles with greater effort and attempted to include all of them. Gandhi was against to write lengthy articles in newspapers and weeklies. He criticized the publication of large articles in newspapers. He observed that the writer failed to communicate his ideas to the readers in such lengthy writing. Some times the ideas become not easily understandable. Gandhi insisted on that the articles in the Navajivan must be short and matter-of-fact. His thrust was on social issues. The main aim of the magazine was service.

While continuing publication, Navajivan become profitable. Gandhi could increase pages up to 16 without any loss. But he was not profit motive also. Navajivan continued the publishing with the help of editor Gandhi, his co-workers and readers with a fully service mentality. At the same time he was very calculative and keenly observing the economic side of the paper. His Gujarati Beniya tradition of traders was considered as one of its causes by observers. Gandhi wrote: "These two weeklies ('Navajivan' and 'Young India') enabled me freely to ventilate my views and to put heart into the people. Thus I feel that both the journals rendered good service to the people in this hour of trial, and did their humble bit towards lightening the tyranny of the martial law."²⁵ Gandhi was jailed in 1922 for writing

articles against the government in his weeklies. He was accused sedition. Even then he was not go behind from his journalistic attempts. Another example for Gandhi's deep- rooted commitment is that on communal harmony. He devoted one full issue of his weekly for this. At the same time, we can see that he devoted his full life for communal harmony and unity.

(iv) Harijan

'Harijan' (1933-1956) is the English weekly journal founded by Mahatma Gandhi and published under the auspices of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Poona and from 1942 by the Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad. The weekly suspended publication in 1940 during the 'Individual satyagraha'; resumed in January 1942, but again stopped during the 'Quit India' Struggle. The main aim of starting 'Harijan' was to teach the masses about Gandhi's ideas of satyagraha, non-violence and nonviolent resistance.²⁶ 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 writing from Gandhi's pen. There was not a day when he was not writing on some issue or the other in his weeklies. Gandhiji started Harijan on 11th February, 1933. It was a continuation of the 'Navajivan'. The very word 'Harijan' means the people of God. Gandhi called the downtrodden and marginalised people, 'Harijan'. His aim was the upliftment of the poor, helpless millions. This name had been suggested by a reader of 'Navajivan' in response to Gandhi's call through the weekly. Names such as untouchables, defused class, scheduled caste, last born... etc., were not acceptable to him. Gandhi earnestly desired that the weekly should be circulated all over India. G.D. Birla sponsored the English weekly. R.V. Shasti was its first editor. The growth of the weekly was quite fast. It soon became a self-supporting venture. Gradually Gandhi started Harijan in various other languages. Its Hindi edition was named 'Harijan-bandhu'. It got Gandhi's special attention and supervision, because it was the most widely read edition. Gandhi wrote articles for

the Harijan regularly in a simple, vivid language. He gave his own version to deep issues. Mahadev Desai, K.G. Mashruwala, Jawaharlal Nehru, R.R. Diwakar, C. Rajagopalachari, Kaka Kalekar and many other freedom fighters wrote regularly in the weekly.

The main aim of the publication was to remove untouchability from the society. Attempts like temple-entry were supported wholeheartedly by Gandhi. He said, 'Untouchability is a wound in the body of Hindu religion. It must be remedied by all.'²⁷ 'Harijan' also helped Gandhi to propagate the constructive programme. Harijan weekly was a news source to many of the major newspapers and news agencies at that time. Every week Gandhi had to say something important to his readers. Most of the newspapers both in India and abroad made it front page news item. Harijan was published on all Fridays with news, small write ups, informative pieces, local informations, translated articles etc. The annual subscription rate of the weekly was Rs.4/- This also helped to attain good circulation.

During the time of Communal Award amendment of law Gandhi stopped the publication. This was as a protest to the Government. This was in 1940. After six years Harijan was re-started its publication and continued upto 1949. Gandhi's publications are the part of history today. But it was very helpful to the study of history of India's freedom struggle. When Gandhi started 'Harijan', he asked Dr. B.R. Ambedkar for a message. Dr. Ambedkar not responded positively. He replied that the caste Hindus not accept his message. Gandhi included this write up of Ambedkar in the first issue of English Harijan.²⁸

There are no such journals which are influential like 'Harijan' in the world among small publications. Gandhi wrote: "Harijan service is a duty the caste Hindus owe to themselves."²⁹ It is a fact that untouchability in India was decreased very much as a result of these type of message. He could win the people of India by

advocating the principles of truth and non-violence which are the guiding principles in all his activities.

Once Gandhiji wrote a letter to Sir Edward Benthall, Managing Director of the Titaghur Paper mills, asking him to give paper free of cost for the Hindi edition of the Harijan. Sir Benthall was not ready to make a gift of the paper but promised to give advertisements in the paper so that Gandhiji could buy enough paper for the newspaper. Gandhiji said that the 'Harijan' would mention that the paper was a gift from Titaghur paper mills and that itself would be a good advertisement. Benthall was not agreeable to such a mere acknowledgement. He insisted on a direct advertisement. But the 'Harijan' had decided not to take advertisements for pecuniary benefits. This policy of keeping away from advertisements was unwavering and was zealously adhered to. Gandhiji had set ideas on the functions to be performed by the press. In his autobiography, Gandhiji had defined the objectives of journalism as follows: "One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feelings and give expression to them; another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; and the third is fearlessly to espouse popular defects". Gandhiji exerted a powerful influence on the promoters of newspapers and frequently induced them to be fearless. He earnestly wanted frank opinions on his personal views to be expressed. "His appeal to the editors of newspapers was that they should not surrender their conscience at any cost."³⁰ Knowing full well, the power of the pen, Gandhiji exploited the situation by starting Harijan for the service of the nation. Gandhi's faith in the Indian masses was unshakeable and people's confidence in him had remained profound and abiding.

The most remarkable service Gandhi rendered to India or rather to Hinduism, as a religious reformer, was his stern opposition to the rigid caste system and unsociability. Before him, though many religious reformers had attacked it, none of them had so successfully revolutionized the attitude of India's

intelligentsia towards untouchability as Gandhi.³¹ For this aim 'Harijan' helped Gandhi very much. He wrote in 'Harijan': "Harijan service will be always after my heart and will be the breath of life for me, more precious than the daily bread, but I cannot live without Harijan service for one single minute."³² Gandhi's work influenced the legal system of the country. This is in fact, the power of the pen also. In 1933 the state of Baroda passed a law named 'the Caste Tyranny Removal System.'³³ Travancore followed this example, opening all the temples for Harijans.³⁴ Now, untouchability is forbidden by Article 17 of the Indian constitution.³⁵ Gandhi realized far before that 1/6th of Indian population was Harijan. He visualized the upliftment of India in their upliftment.

In that time, the voice of Mahatma Gandhi, was the voice of India. Harijan was not a news paper in the usual sense of the term. It was more a views paper, conveying to an eager world what the Mahatma thought on a wide range of subjects. He answered the questions of his readers about various subjects through the weekly. Once there was an occasion which 'Harijan' refused to publish Gandhi's own article. Gandhi revealed the truth that Manu is sleeping near him at night, in a write up. Two editors resigned after getting this write up for not to publish it. The trustees of Harijan also hesitate to publish this. Gandhi became disappointed. After Gandhi's death, his disciples attempted to keep the Harijan going. Commendable as the effort was, it had its great short coming, for Harijan without Gandhiji was like a body without the soul. Men like Mashruwala most faithful Gandhians, tried hard to keep the journal going but they must have known from the very beginning that they had set for themselves an impossible task. It became more and more apparent as the weeks rolled by until ennui possessed the editors and the journal had its natural 'death'.

Article 2. Topics of Gandhiji's Journalistic writing

We know that Gandhi was a versatile genius. Journalism was one of his

tools for social transformation. He covered a wide range of subjects in his weeklies. He responded to anything which he considered as relevant – some times it was international, some other times it was purely local and negligible to others. Gandhi had an extraordinary soul force. He always analyse things with the help of this. He keenly heard the inner voice and became firm in his principles. So he could wrote on various subjects and interrelate things logically.

When Gandhi wrote on a subject he was giving importance to truth. He never considered to his past words. Here we can see an inconsistency of approaches. Gandhi's consistency was to truth and not to his past words. Also he was growing in his thinking as an extra ordinary practical philosopher. He explained this as a growth from truth to truth. Gandhiji was interested in going to the root of every problem. So he was not trivialising matters. He did not like peripheral approach.³⁶ Most of Gandhi's writings had a personal touch. This personal touch was peculiar in nature.

The phrases, quotations and sayings of Gandhi was apt. Now for example, let us see what Gandhiji says about Tagore: One day a public worker told Gandhiji, "Bapuji, this Ravindranath writes well but he does not take part in the struggle. If he loves the country, why does he not do anything?" Gandhiji replied in one sentence: "A cow does a cow's work and a horse does a horse's work".

The topic which most Gandhi wrote on was naturally politics. At the same time he wrote on philosophy, sociology, art of teaching, economics, guide to health etc. Satyagraha, village development, equality, khadi, propagation of Hindi, naithalim (education through mother tongue), casteless society, removal of untouchability, upliftment of women, service to Harijans, self- realization, village cleanliness, rural reconstruction, detachment, village industries etc. were his thrust areas. He touched almost all subjects under the sky with a humane touch. He made remarkable observations on various topics. For example, he was nursing

a leprosy patient called Purchuri Shastri in his Ashram. The observations on leprosy which Gandhi got are written by him. These observations have been confirmed by modern medical science after decades.

Gandhi knew that every media was useful to man but had to be used wisely. If it was used carelessly the media could enslave us. He selected topics carefully for his writings. His prudent and guided approach was quite enlightening. Gandhi always welcomed criticism on his writings. He often published such public responses in his journals. Behind all his writings and statements, stood the indomitable power of his personality and his committed action for the good of humanity. His spiritual insights ethical valuations and philanthropic enterprises could and will still immensely inspire and illuminate the people of this millennium. Gandhi tried to reform the society and make it free from corruption. He fought against exploitation of all type. His social commitment and love of nature is extraordinary. His truthfulness and courage is unique. He is absolutely fearless. He had no vested interests in taking topics. He was very much concerned about the 'Daridranarayanans' and downtrodden people in the society. His dharmic approach was seen in his selection of topics also. He welcomed the wind of every where to his room. In this age of market-economy, we are realizing the importance of Gandhiji's approach more and more.

(i) Gandhiji's Unique Style of Writing

Gandhi's writing was in graphic and picturesque. He always adhered to the simple style. His thoughts, words and deeds were inextricably connected. He wrote small write-ups many a time. He strictly followed his own axiom; 'small is beautiful' in his writing too. His clarity of thinking is unique.

Gandhi wrote: "I must say that, beyond occasionally exposing me to laughter, my constitutional shyness has been no disadvantage whatever. In fact I can see that, on the contrary, it has been all to my advantage. My hesitancy in

speech, which was once an annoyance, is now a pleasure. Its greatest benefit has been that it has taught me the economy of words". He considered this helped him in his discernment of truth.³⁷ In writing also Gandhi followed this principle of economy of words.

Gandhi was not in the habit of diary writing. His writing was not based on documents. The style was not that of academic documentation or professional journalism. His major writings including Autobiography is based on his memory. "I write just as the spirit moves me at the time of writing. I do not claim to know definitely that all conscious thought and action on my part is directed by the Spirit. But on an examination of the greatest steps that I have taken in my life, as also of those that may be regarded as the least, I think it will not be improper to say that all of them were directed by the Spirit", Gandhi wrote.³⁸ "Writing is itself one of the experiments with truth."³⁹ Gandhi was an voracious writer. His writing was spontaneous also. He was using words as a great teacher, not as a professional journalist. He never exaggerate things. He used several similes and examples. His approach was related to Indian tradition. He used terms from our legends and puranas. This was helpful to understand his principles easily. For example, the word 'Ramarajya' was very much related to our Indian culture. The influence of Bible also helped him to use good language. He keeps nonviolence in language also. He avoids harsh words, even in provocative situations.

Gandhi could implement satyagraha with the help of his publications. He knew the method, attitude and various styles of using language. He was not having a literary style, like that of Pandit Nehru. Gandhi's language was not flowery or ornamental. Gandhiji's publications helped for the perpetuation of his ideas. He was absolutely true to himself when he said: 'My life is my message.' Gandhi did an extensive mass education which he imparted nearly for half a century. His approach was psychological. Experts say that he knew the techniques of mass psychology. His cleverness and sense of humour also make the writing

attractive to the reader. Even his seriousness was tempered with a touch of humour. Critical examination of Gandhian literature, thought and philosophy reveal these peculiarities of Gandhi's language.

(ii) Gandhiji's Peculiar Language

Gandhiji used powerful language when it was necessary. For example he used the slogan 'Quit India'. He knew the power of each word. At the same time his words are understandable to the reader in first reading. His language is simple and readable. His sentences are short. The flow of language is notable. He wrote in a straight forward manner. At the same time the way of tight writing was extraordinary. His natural language was written with the tune of a speech. At the same time it was published after well edited. For example, he said: "the path of truth is as narrow as it is straight". Here a great idea is expressed with few simple words. One can not easily express such an idea with the help of much lesser words than this.

Gandhi knew how to communicate his thoughts in a small space. He wrote with different angles to express various thoughts according to situations. He never used cleache expressions. He gave importance to ideas; no to indirect and feature style literature his language was layman language with an aristocratic treatment. He knew the apt meaning of each word. His sentences were direct. He hate complex sentences. Gandhi knew that the tool of the journalists and writers is language. He insisted on that the language of newspapers must be moderate. But some times Gandhi used violent and harsh words. Gandhi considered the mother of parliament as a sterile women and a prostitute. He explained its cause also "Both these are harsh terms, but exactly fit the case"⁴⁰

Gandhi was an ardent lover of Hindi. He insisted that basic education must be through the Mother Tongue. At the same time he did not dislike English. He wrote: Our best thoughts are expressed in English; our best newspapers are

printed in English'.⁴¹ At the same time he wanted Indians to preserve their languages. He was very keen in the case of languages. It may sound strange but it is quite true that the Father of the Indian Nation, who was staunchly in favour of using Indian languages, has enriched the English language to a great extent. Gandhiji has contributed richly to world thought. But the way in which he has expressed his thoughts for the world is his particular contribution to English literature. Gandhi's writing underlining the beauty of his expressions.

Gandhi was a man of ardent spiritual life. Any one who reads his writing will easily admit that he was a man of extraordinary interior life. When using language Gandhi heard the voice from within. He listened to the words which are related to his philosophic stand. At the same time he paid special attention to the minute peculiarities of languages. "Languages proclaim that women are half of man and by party of reasoning man is half of woman. They are not two separate entities, but halves of one. The English language goes further and calls woman the better half of man."⁴² But he avoid mere fashionable use of foreign languages and expressions. The journalistic scholars and media experts also appreciating Gandhi's approach.⁴³

More important than the style was the content of his writing. The subject matter he chose was down to the ground. Gandhiji was able to divert the attention of the rising journalists and authors from cities to villages. He impressed on them the fact that India lives in her villages; that the journalist's or author's job was to write about village and villagers. Thus he was able to put the villages of India on the wider and lively canvas of Indian writing. The Gandhian era of writing, a golden era came into existence.

Gandhi's humor sense enriches his writings. When Gandhi was invited to Delhi by Mountbatten before he became the viceroy. Gandhi wrote the reply to Mountbatten just after getting the letter. He gave it to one of his followers and

said, 'this must post only after two days. That young man does not consider that I was eagerly waiting for his invitation'. After that he laughed.⁴⁴ Humour sense and good handwriting are considered as a boon to journalists and writers all over the world.

Bhagawat Gita, Holy Bible, The Light of Asia, etc., developed Gandhi's good language. Tolotoy's 'The Kingdom of God is Within You' and Ruskin's 'Unto This Last' also influenced him very much. The deep truthfulness and ethics increased the glitterness of Gandhi's language. During the three year long stay in London, Gandhi confronted the social and revolutionary theories prevalent in Europe; he came into contact with a lot of western literature as well as with people interested in Indian religious traditions. He read for the first time Bhagavad Gita in English translation – 'The Song Celestial' by Sir Edwin Arnold. He read Madame Blavatsky's 'Key to Theosophy'. He followed Kropotkims' 'Mutual Aid' which was then appearing serially in a London journal. He met socialists and humanitarians like Edward Carpenter, and theosophists like Annie Besant. He conversed cordially with many Christians and Quakers. All these things helped Gandhi to develop his influential language.

As Louis Fischer rightly pointed out, Gandhis' mind and emotions were even more exposed than his body.⁴⁵ He made himself accessible to all. The accessibility was complete as well as creative in journalistic sense.

Article 3. Repercussions of Gandhji's Journalistic Approach

Mahatma Gandhi was a great journalist, not only because he was great in so many ways and his greatness was total but because he had a great journalist's special gifts of courage and bravery. Gandhi was one of the most fearless of journalists. His life was an epic struggle for freedom and equality and though national freedom came in the last years of his life, he had been ceaselessly exercising his freedom before it came, fighting the many restrictions imposed by

the British regime from time to time. He also fought for the freedom of the press. "For a man who knew no fear, this might seem natural, but he was also the most independent journalist possible, independent of the Government, independent of business, independent of party. In his case there was no question of the usual external or internal pressures on the press."⁴⁶

Gandhi was arrested and jailed twice for writing in his journals. 'Young India' was suspended when Gandhi was prosecuted for his articles and sentenced in the famous trial of 1922. After two years in prison, 'Young India' was revived and Gandhi resumed editing it. The circulation had fallen by them from 21500 to 3000. But it sealed new heights before long.

The journalist in Gandhi aimed at making the Indians capable for attaining swaraj. With this objective in view he tried to increase the moral and spiritual strength of the people. Gradually the peoples power of discrimination between moral and immoral things increased and they got strength to stand by the right and resist the evil in the minds increased. On 13th March 1922 Gandhi wrote an article in Young India. It infuriated the government and Gandhi was accused sedition. He was arrested and jailed. This was Gandhi's first imprisonment in India. The Editor, Mr. M.K. Gandhi and the publisher, Mr. Desai of 'Young India' were produced before the court in person. Another charge was brought against them. They were accused of forcing some advocates of Alahabad court to sign on the satyagraha pledge. This was the first allegation of contempt of court alleged against him.

The Thalidomide case in England related to 'Sunday Times' was a similar case. The main accusation was that the paper gave its opinion on an issue which was in front of the court for consideration. . But Gandhi had the strong conviction that the papers had the right to discuss any issues which had public interest. His commitment was not to court, but to truth. He explained this in 'Young India'.⁴⁷

Though the Thalidomide case came for consideration after Gandhi wrote his view and the court was influenced by his words. In India the contempt of court law was amended in 2005. The principle of Truth as defence was included in the law. The sanctity of truth came to be accepted both in journalism and in law.

In 1928 also Gandhi was jailed for writings on Navajivan and 'Young India'. When Gandhi was jailed Barrister George Joseph took the charge of the editor of 'Young India' in 1930. The government turned against to the two publications. It was discontinued. In 1931 it restarted. But both 'Navajivan' and 'Young India' were stopped in January 1933.

Gandhi's arrest on 10th March 1922 was on a charge of rousing the people against the British government. The accusation was based on three articles ('Tampering with laity', 'A puzzle and its solution' and 'Shaking the manes') which he wrote in 'Young India', whose publisher Shankarlal Banker also underwent trial before C.N. Broomfield, the District and sessions Judge of Ahmedabad. Gandhi was sentenced to six years imprisonment. It proved a blessing in disguise. The life in the Yervada prison near Poona gave him time for rest, reading and writing.

Here we can see that Gandhi stood firmly by what he wrote. He never deviated from or side-tracked his convictions. He took full responsibility for what he wrote. He was against all kinds of repression of the press. Gandhi wrote about this in 1910 while explaining his stand against the Press Act. He considered the existence of a free public press to be one of the first essentials of a healthy and progressive society and indispensable to the proper development, political and moral, of civilized people; and further that the extension and maintenance of freedom in all departments of public life is the surest guarantee of popular progress and contentment and of mutual trust between the government and the people. He wants that the press in this country should enjoy the utmost liberty of expression, subject to the legal restraints of the ordinary law and penalties should

be imposed only after proper trial and conviction.⁴⁸

He continued, “We read newspaper. But are you sure that you read the real thoughts of the editor? I think not. Independent views of writers are not published. What is published is otherwise and therefore, one can say that it is advisable to read the opposite into the words that appear in the newspapers. To my newspaper writer brethren I say, ‘Say openly whatever you have to say’ that is our duty.”⁴⁹

Article 4. Gandhian Views on Journalistic Ethics

Gandhi considered the primary duty of journalists is to write truth. To find out truth and reveal it for the benefit of public is considered as the base of journalistic ethics. It is the primary duty of the media. Gandhi considered journalism as a way to serve people. Service was the essence of this journalism. He gave a humane face to journalism. Today journalism becomes a profession. Gandhi never considered it as mere profession. He insisted on certain ethical codes. To him each written word was sacred. Gandhi advised that the journalists must be honest. He considered honesty as the best policy. “Honesty has never been so much proved to be the best policy as it is now for those who do not or cannot back their dishonesty with gunpowder and poison gas.”⁵⁰ Gandhi continued, where there is honest effort, it will be realised that what appear to be different truths are like the countless and apparently different leaves of the same tree.”⁵¹ He insisted on the objectivity of writing. He always adhered to objectivity in his writings. While upholding moral standards and ethics, Gandhi considered the reliability and public accountability of the publication is its most valuable asset. An organization earns and maintains a strong reputation to a great extent, through a consistent implementation of ethical standards, which influence its position with the public and within the publishing house.

Checking, rechecking, fairness, transparency, ethics, lawfulness etc are the principles of media justice. Gandhi gave ample respect to all these principles. He

was not only considering the goodwill of the society but also the betterment of the individual. He propagated the duty of media in thinking reasonably and acting according to that. He empowered the thought process of the individual and the society. He never took partisan approach. Always stand with truth. He believed that truth will finally triumph however it must be tried to close. His definition of 'dharma' was the non-violent pursuit of truth.

Gandhi considered the necessity of experiments and reflection to understand and meet the needs of the times. Being a man of action he didn't formulate theories or didn't write any long systematic treatise on journalistic ethics. But he expressed his views in some context or other on almost all important aspects of life. He wrote on various topics in his editorials. Even the brief statements given to the press were also very penetrating. Gandhi laid stress on the need for action – Karmayoga – for renewing the society. Strength lies in action and action is duty done.

Gandhi was a man of ethical journalism. He did not give any strict code of conduct for journalism. But he declared that there must not be any clash of interests in fulfilling the duties of journalists. The writings and reports must be unbiased and unprejudiced. Gandhi never considered the press as a venture based on commercial interests. He insisted that journalism must be value based. All other type of journalism must be resisted by the people. Newspaper is not a product for marketing. It is an important media for communication. Gandhi's approach to journalism was not aimed at covering news. It was different from today's practices he provided ideas and ideologies for the national cause. His primary aim was to offer new ideas to the people. That was a kind of campaigning journalism. Even then he stuck to truth with all its sacredness. The honesty, simplicity and truth which he upheld in his life were reflected in his writings. Gandhi was not in a run for mass circulation. He stood certain principles which he believed to be right. Those principles and codes are as relevant today as they were

in his times. Gandhi liked direct communication. He stood for uncontrolled press freedom. Both in life and in journalism he was a man of self restraint and self-control. Today, the Indian Press Council calls for self- control and self- restraint on the part of journals and journalists.

Gandhi respected the right to reply, right to information and the responsibility to correct. He never insisted on his stand firmly. Whenever he thought that his stand was not correct, he immediately corrected that. Satyagraha is also a method of correction and purification. But today the media is not ready to correct its mistakes. In Gandhi's Autobiography and in his writings we can see so many occasions which he correct his own mistakes. Gandhi had no vested interest in his journalism. Today newspapers are found to be guided by selfish interests, personal and business interests rule the medial today. Gandhi was an advocate of uncontrolled press. He believed that for that if the press freedom was restrictedly limited by those in power not only the journalists but also the entire public should fight against that. "Were I to describe the worries and hardships of journalists, I should fill a volume as big as the 'Mahabharata'. People some times praise me and some times swear at me as well; sometimes they defend that authorities and occasionally denounce them too. It is for journalists to separate the gram from the chaff in all this. It is the journalist's duty to throw light on every matter of public concern. However, not to admit in one's paper a single adjective which does not serve the people's cause is the most effective means of securing the repeal of the press act," Gandhi wrote.⁵²

Gandhi was a man of practical journalism and worked as such for over about twenty years. But he never compromised on ethics and principles. Today the journalistic field has become an arena of cut-throat competition. This competition drives many people to deviate from the path of time honoured conventions and values. Gandhi wrote, "It was a hard struggle, but I found in the field of journalism as in many others that the strictest honesty and fair dealing

was undoubtedly the best policy. Any shorter cut is longer at least by double the length sought to be saved. The rule I would like my fellow journalists to observe is never to publish any news without having it checked by some one connected with me and having authority.”⁵³ Journalistic work is an unending quest for truth. Amidst the journalistic gold rush to commercialise news, some publications have always been committed to in-depth inquiry and truthful reportage. Hype may get visibility, but it clouds the reader's minds. Hype may sell, but it's not news. So good publications must guard themselves from the onslaught of commercial enticement.

The media has the power to change the conscience of the society for the better or for the worse. Media influences the society in taking decisions and making choices. It can empower the society in a positive way. In gaining this objective, media ethics and social considerations play a vital role. If public opinion desired suppression, the press would on its own initiative exclude news and opinion disliked by the public. “Editors can signify their disapproval of the gag by either publishing the offending statements and risking prosecution or even confiscation of the press or by stopping publication of their papers altogether by way of protest.”⁵⁴

(i) Journalism and Advertisements

Gandhi was against publishing advertisements in journalistic publications. He didn't publish any kind of advertisements in his own journals. “From the very start I set my face against taking advertisements in these journals. (in 'Navajivan' and 'Young India') I do not think that they have lost anything thereby.”⁵⁵ Gandhi considered that it had in no small measure helped them to maintain their independence. Again he considered advertisement as an indirect tax. Indian opinion published some advertisements in its starting stage. But later, it avoided all kinds of advertisements. Gandhi felt that the journal was in a hunger for

advertisement. So he took this firm stand.

As we saw, Gandhi considered journalism as service. This is the cause of his resistance to advertisements. He also said that if a product is good, all newspapers must write about that product without any payment. Once Gandhi wrote about a pump set in this way in his publication.⁵⁶

Today, we can not think about a newspaper refusing to publish advertisements. But the relevance of Gandhi's attitude towards advertisements is more now than ever before. We are living in a consumeristic society. Advertisements misguide the common consumer. An ordinary person has become so dependent on them that he cannot take decisions on many things without their guidance. Gandhi foresaw this danger. The citizens of every country are today having degraded themselves as consumers of certain products. They are consumers of newspapers also. Readers are not considered as subscribers, but as customers. as newspaper had become mere product for sale. Its power as Fourth Estate in a democratic country like ours is decreasing. The advertisement revenue of newspapers is directly proportional to its circulation. Then the media is aiming at circulation alone. This is not good for a healthy media environment.

Some advertisements lead to cultural degradation. Women are exploited in several advertisements. This will lead to the destruction of the cultural standard of a society. The advertisements are also doing damage to language. The language used in many advertisements is deceptively ambiguous, not pure. Gradually it will degrade the society. Gandhi was against to all kinds of addictions. The advertisements are meant for marketing a product. This also tends the customer for continuous buying. The customer become brand addicted. This was against to Gandhi's principles. He was basically a man of 'anasakthi'. Unfortunately today, we are forced to view even illegal advertisements in the media.

Another problem related to advertisements is that it will create unnecessary

wants. This will increase the wants. The advertiser forces the customer to increase his wants. This is against to the Gandhian theory of limitation of wants. Today, the advertisers increasing the market without considering the purchasing power of the people with the help of the media. On the other hand the newspaper houses selling their space for money. This kind of space marketing also led to unhealthy competition between newspapers.

Gandhi believed that advertisements will not help the increase of the quality of the product. The producers spent a lot of money for advertising. So naturally it will make a decrease in the amount spent for maintaining the quality of the product. The magic of advertising does not help the consumer in increasing the standard of consumption.⁵⁷ Finally, the advertisements create different tastes in various persons. This will led to the destruction of interpersonal relations and family relations. This will also make adverse effect in the society. Gandhi was a man of ardent 'dharmic' believes. So he protests all kind of adharmic tendencies in the society. Attract the customers indirectly, change their lifestyle and change their socio-economic back grounds and even their level of maturity as buyers are not good. The sole aim of advertising is sales promotion. Even if it is considered as a good aim, the means for that is not good. Advertising is an artificial way for increasing needs. Gandhi's economic philosophy is need based and not greed based. Also he insisted on that both ends and means must be pure.

The latest studies in the media field have confirmed the wisdom in Gandhi's approach. Sandeep Lakhina, C.O.O., South Asia at Stardom Worldwide recently wrote about this – "Today, content is king, and advertisements are boring. And the world of marketing communications is in flur. Marketters, agency folks, brand custodians etc.... across the globe have been obsessed with the new world of communications.⁵⁸ The consumption of newspapers is based on the speed of communication, strength of the content, approaches to various issues, and the brand loyalty of the reader; not on the volume of advertisements.

The globalised market today not promoting the media which stands for investigative journalism. They advocate for entertainment and trivialisation of issues and news. They want the people must be led according to tendencies of the market. For this, advertisement is the tool. One deep study of Gandhi's approach to advertisements will easily reveal that he had foreseen this danger far before. Today the media is, unfortunately, ignoring the social wellness aspect of it. It is also observed that some companies and establishments are given excessive news coverage in the newspaper / magazines because they had issued advertisements to that print media. Sometimes, adverse reports are published of those companies which do not give advertisements to the newspapers or magazines. This is another problem aroused when median give more importance to advertisements. The Press Council of India gave guidelines on this in 1996. The guideline continues, the no newspaper owner, editor or anybody connected with a newspaper should use his relations with the newspapers to promote his other business interests. These guidelines are come from the Gandhian influence.

(ii) Patriotism

Gandhi, as a man and as a journalist was absolutely patriotic. He himself admitted it many times. He loved India, not only because it was his birth place, but also he found the inborn and everlasting goodness of this country. He was impartial in his evaluation. At the same time he was a global citizen. He as an internationalist welcomes the goodness from everywhere. He wrote in 'Young India', "It is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e, when people belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man".⁵⁹ He continues "My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all-embracing and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress of the exploitation of other nationalities. The conception of my patriotism

is nothing if it is not always, in every case, without exception, consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large.”⁶⁰

Gandhi used journalism as one of the tools for national reawakening. The strength and content of swaraj depended on the growth of national consciousness and aspirations. The Indian nationalism should mean the development of the national strength of India. Gandhi wrote, “the fight for swaraj means not mere political awakening but an all-round awakening social, educational, moral economic and political.”⁶¹ Gandhi gave primary importance to the propagation of constructive programme both in his life and in his journals. His topics were the rural upliftment, self sufficiency of the villages, education, sanitation, nutrition, promotion of women, communal amity, care for lepers, economic equality and so on. All these topics are selected from his patriotic approach, social commitment and concern for national development. Gandhi knew that journalism is a kind of mass education. Education is an elementary right and it is necessary for the development of individuals. He believed, ‘Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.’⁶²

Today, the patriotic feeling among journalists is lessening than that of the pre-independent period. Almost all of our national leaders are taking journalism as a way to serve country. They had their own dailies to express their own patriotic vision. For them patriotism is almost same as humanity. Gandhi himself says, “I am human and humane. There is no cultural isolation for me.”⁶³ At the same time, we know that Gandhi was a man who was ready to sacrifice his life for Mother India. He was serving the country unto his last breath with extra ordinary courage. The fight against atrocities, social evils and injustices is a symbol of patriotism. So each journalist is getting an occasion to show patriotism when he stands and writes about these evils. The conception of Gandhi’s patriotism is nothing if it is not always, in every case without exception, consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large.

Gandhi served almost 50 years as a political leader in India. His journalistic experiments are also go hand in hand with his political life. We can see patriotism even in the names of his publication – 'Young India', 'Indian opinion' etc. In the introductory issue of Navajivan declares that by that name the editor aims the re-birth of the mind of the reader and the country. Journalists must realize that Gandhi was as patriotic as to write, “Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, and the province for the country, and so a country has to be free in order that it may die if necessary for the benefit of the world.”⁶⁴

(iii) Unbiased and Impartial Approach

As a journalist, Gandhi’s approach was unbiased and impartial. He had no prejudices or vested interests. Always he stood for justice. For Gandhi, all men are brothers and God is the father of all. Accordingly, all have a basic right for equality, human fraternity and freedom as the children of God. That is why as early as in 1893, Gandhi fought against the violations of the basic human rights. To him all men are equal. This was the foundation of his unbiased and impartial journalistic approach.

Gandhi explained his ardent stand in 'Hind Swaraj' about this, “The same fact is differently interpreted by different newspapers, according to the party in whose interests they are edited. One party magnified its own importance while the other party minimises it. One news paper would consider a great Englishman to be a paragon of honesty, another would consider him dishonest. What must be the condition of the people whose newspapers are of this type.”⁶⁵

Gandhi fully agreed with C.P. Scott’s journalistic view, that 'Facts are sacred and comment is free'. He never wrote anything before making sure that it is true. He knew that most of the readers considered newspapers as their Bible. So

newspaper editors must be truthful. At the same time he saw the people changing their views frequently. In Gandhi's own words, 'these views swing like the pendulum of a clock and are never steadfast' (ibid, p.33). But the firm and truthful stand of a newspaper or a journalist must not be changed. If the stand was incorrect it must be corrected. Truth must only be replaced by a greater truth. Here Gandhi underlined the importance of the credibility of a newspaper. A newspaper which forfeits its credibility will not survive. Even in this age of internet editions, the credibility of the newspaper house is calculated seriously by the reader. As life, journalism is an enterprise based on give and take principles. So truthfulness must be the guiding principle in the functioning of this most potent media. So Gandhi's unbiased stand in his writing should serve as a model for every creative journalist.

The public has the right to be informed of different opinions and visions. Journalism must function like a meaningful dialogue, not as a monologue. Various shades of opinions must be discussed with mutual respect. Otherwise, tyrannical and intolerant approaches will tarnish the very image of journalism. Besides it will cause a threat to the sacred Press Freedom itself. To be precise, the press must be impartial and unbiased because it is not a client in any dispute. But today, in practice almost all newspapers are guilty of taking a partisan attitude in all issues, social or political. Even non-party free newspapers are take sides to inflame passion. This will serve only to ruin the democratic institutions including the unrestricted news culture. Furthermore, such an approach will prevent the newspapers from fighting the evils and injustices in the society. Most of the media owners have vested interests and back-door relations with the ruling class and administrative barons. It is high time that people realised the danger and fought against the menace with tooth and nail.

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