

CHAPTER – VIII

GANDHIJI'S DIRECTIVES ON JOURNALISM & CONCLUSION

The Noble ideals put forward by Gandhiji and exercised in his journalistic experiments still hold good, nay it is more relevant than in his own times. Whatever the challenge we confront, one can be sure that the Gandhian way is real, live option, an option that informs and illuminates. In the case of journalism also it is true. But we would be doing him great injustice if we don't interpret, in contemporary terms, what he spelt out in the context of his times. He would have wanted us to experiment and find our own way without compromising our fundamental beliefs.

For example, see a guideline given by Gandhiji: "Every editor and printer of a newspaper should regard it as a sin to obey an immoral law. If at the present time, when the people have shed fear and are committing civil disobedience of immoral laws, editors of newspapers show weakness, they are bound to harm the cause of the country."¹ These words are ever relevant. Such a guideline is not given by expert journalists or journalism teachers even now.

Gandhian perspective of economic growth is directly related to his negation of all sorts of paid advertisements. Gandhi considered that wealth created and generated must contribute, first and foremost to a larger social purpose and common good. By this, we do not negate the principles of profit and commerce. But we underline the need to use a part of the wealth created to better the quality of life of those whose voice remain unheard. Observing the rush to consumerism that is so evident today, Mahatma Gandhi would also most likely remind us that a modicum of austerity would not be out of place.

Gandhi was a unique journalist in many ways. There was not a person in his time who did journalistic work as he did both qualitatively and quantitatively. The basic values put forward by him is more relevant today than ever before. They will lead us to a better tomorrow if only we practise them. Gandhi believed that 'life is a struggle for truth and justice'. As an exceptional journalist he was absolutely altruistic in nature. A man who experimented with his own life and those of his family members – all in search of truth. He was a journalist without a craze for publicity nor ambition for material benefits! This was Gandhiji. Modern education, free exchange of information, spiritual power.... etc. are peculiarities of this great journalist. Today we are discussing about the intervention of foreign newspapers to India. Then we shall surely remember the 'half naked Fakir' who foresightedly preached and practiced swadeshi in his life.

Gandhi had a vision of the future world an ideal world based on non violence, equitable distribution and equality in social status. He believed that the world of tomorrow will be, must be, a society rooted in non-violence. ² Though these may remain only as our goals, these are good guidelines to a better bright tomorrow.

Gandhi knew that knowledge is power. Collecting knowledge, news and information and convey it to the people is the duty of newspapers. This is a step to empower people. So all barriers against to know and to inform must be destructed or removed. Then only a free society will emerge. As a result the media field will also become empowered. In such a situation the media will enlighten all spheres and planes of human life. The change of mind of millions as well as the physical changes will occur. In such a kind of journalism, there is no scope for circulation war or commercial interests. Truth will become the strength of the paper. Such a newspaper will try to find solutions to the problems of the society. That paper will be the voice of the voice-

less. Moral force of journalism will stand above all. Then journalists become the true well wishers and representative of the society. (In Gandhian terms, a real satyagrahi). He will lead the society to a better tomorrow with his knowledge, work and life.

Article 1. Contemporary Relevance of Gandhiji

Ours is an age of modernisation, commercialisation and technological advancement. The rapid speed in every field and the complexity of life accelerate the waves of consumerism. Printing and publishing also have changed according to the market values. In this media-market, modernized minds of journalists seek practical victories. In this mad craze they forget ethical requirements, humanitarian view points and even press laws. Here lies the contemporary relevance of Mahatma Gandhi as a journalist.

Journalism is an intellectual work. The most important role of the intellectuals is to give more and more new ideas and vision to the society. Gandhi, the journalist was such a visionary. Today most of the journalists are professionals. Their approach is peripheral. The lack of genuine deep thinking decreases the discriminating power of the journalists. Journalists are seeking for easy solutions and formulae. They are answering 'yes' to all unnecessary orders. The knowledge power of journalists is also decreasing. There is a saying that 'journalist is a person who knows everything of something and something of everything'. But in practice, it is not so. Gandhi was a person who touches huge variety of topics in his publications. Many of them are deep observations. Such a stand is admirable. We will admire when we search Gandhiji's journalistic approach in his writings. He lived far before the advent of Alternative Journalism, neo journalism, developmental journalism and investigative journalism. But he had the intuition to do pioneer work on each of these specializations, with his

versatile genius. As a journalist he read the minds of millions in the world. This makes him relevant even today.

Gandhi was a man of peace. But he triggered off the process of transformation, questioning, independent thinking in a conservative society. A good journalist is an on looker, an amateur and a disturber of the status quo. He will always stand for the changes in positive directions. Gandhiji stood for international ideas, universal approach and contemporary responses. It is an integral part of life and so wholistic in nature.

Gandhiji's newspapers are not complete newspapers in the modern sense of the term. But even then he advised the journalists not to write anything without evidence. Do not tarnish any one's fame or do not glorify any one unnecessarily. Journalism must be for social progress and common good. Otherwise it will be harmful to the society. Thus Gandhiji gave a human face to journalism. A good journalist must be empathetic, loving and merciful to the society. He must foresee things and convey his ideas for the betterment of the society.

As we have already noticed, Gandhian approach is wholistic in nature. Society, culture and situations are changed now. If the society accepts to Gandhian values, then only pure Gandhian newspapers will come out. But still, we can imbibe the Gandhian ideals in our day to day journalistic work and policy making.

It is an age of explosion of news and views. So every media person will tend to be in confusion. There also every one of Gandhi's balanced approaches will definitely help us to be more creative. Gandhiji spent two days of each week in silence - Monday and Wednesday. In these days he wrote articles for his papers. He believed that abstaining from speaking brought him inner peace. This influence was drawn from the Hindu Principles of 'mauna' (silence) and 'santi'

(peace). On such days he communicated with others by writing on paper. For three and a half years, from the age of 37, Gandhi refused to read newspapers, claiming that the tumultuous state of world affairs caused him more confusion rather than his own inner unrest. This kind of self-imposed restrictions will help us also to be more enlightened in the journalistic experiments.

Studies shows that, in Europe there will come a situation of giving newspapers free of cost may be, within ten years. The advertisement revenue will be large enough to meet all expenditures. This will sound the death bell of Press Freedom. Here we see the foresight and contemporary relevance of Gandhiji.

We shall also look seriously into the language of Gandhi as a journalist. His words are powerful and truthful. His descriptions are reasonable. He used powerful metaphors. He narrated the British parliament as a 'sterile woman' and a 'prostitute.'³ Gandhi himself wrote about his language. "I have not been as mindful of grammar as I should like to be. I have not become a writer to serve the cause of the language, but I have had to carry on my work as journalist with the sort of language I know. Language is a great instrument in my work. If a newspaper editor remains indifferent to language, he becomes an offender."⁴ Here we can see the importance given by Gandhi to language. It is a relevant advice even today.

Article 2. Moral lessons

(1) Gandhi considered newspaper as means of serving people. He never thought of profit making. "I do not believe in publishing newspapers indefinitely at a loss or by means of advertisements. I announced that it (Young India) would be given up if it proved a loss and that if there were profits, they would be utilized for some public purpose", Gandhi wrote.⁵

[2) Gandhi taught us fearlessness in journalism. He always stands for Press Freedom and fought against governmental laws which curtail this freedom. Unveiling the portrait of S. Kasthuriranga Iyengar, the late Editor of the Hindu, on 22nd March 1925 at the newspapers Chennai office, Gandhijibroadly indicated the basic tenets of true journalism thus: “Journalism to be useful and serviceable to the country will take its definite place only when it becomes unselfish and when it devotes its best for the service of the country, and whatever happens to the editors or to the journal itself, editors would express the views of the country irrespective of consequences.”⁶

(3) Gandhi always stands for ethical journalism. He taught us that what was ethically wrong would never be true in any other way. We must follow ethical principles in journalism taking inspiration from Gandhian ideology. Objectivity, accuracy and fact writing were the basics of Gandhian approach to journalism. Gandhi, as an ardent votary of Truth, always placed emphasis on truthful experiments.

(4) Self-control and regulation was the basis of Gandhian way. It also helps us to foster self-criticism and to encourage adherence to both codified and uncodified ethics and standards. Gandhi hated all restrictions from outside to press which curtail freedom of the press. At the same time he insisted on certain self-imposed restrictions. That made Gandhi an editor with a difference. The Gandhian impact on contemporary Indian writing is brought out in the last three articles of this study. The problems based on the liberty of the press faced by Indian journalists today can be solved in the light of Gandhiji’s guidelines.

(5) Gandhiji’s commitment to Truth is admirable to any journalist. Truth is considered as one of the highest qualities of the

journalistic profession. Unswerving adherence to truth gave Gandhi, the courage in face of adversity, pursuit of public causes and objectivity in presentation. He was totally committed to the sacred pursuit of and the heroic effort to state the truth. Gandhiji was fully aware of the fact that the pursuit of the truth and the articulation of it was the most delicate, hazardous, exacting and with full of tasks. He was totally committed to the cause of the pursuit of truth, information and enlightenment.

(6) Gandhiji's language was journalistic in nature. It was graphic and picturesque and easily understandable. Simple words and common similes also helped him to communicate with the common man. Even today the newspapers find it difficult to find a style of expression simple enough to reach the unsophisticated mind. Gandhi seldom used ornamental language. He had the efficiency to communicate great lessons in simple words and direct sentences. This is notable to any journalist because language is his tool.

(7) Gandhi was a journalist who always sided with and fought for justice. He fought against injustice throughout his life. His pen was also a mighty weapon against all sorts of injustice. Even in his South African days, he proved his mettle as a truthful journalist.. His letters to the editors of South African dailies can serve as a valuable lesson to all journalists even today on how to fight injustice in any country or any public machinery where the laws are discriminatory, without giving offence to the perpetrators themselves. Gandhiji's only aim as a journalist was to achieve illuminating candor in print and strip away cant.

(8) Gandhi always stood for the down-trodden millions in his life. He called them as 'Daridra Narayanas'. This vision is almost unknown or unaware to today's professional journalists. Gandhi believed in the upliftment of all. (Sarvodaya). His famous 'talisman'

was very important especially for developmental journalists. Gandhi never believed in the 'maximum' good for the maximum number which common journalists and media owners now believe in. He was not a follower of utilitarianism.

(9) Gandhi opposed all sorts of commercialisation of the media. Today media is a big business. Though we cannot easily follow Gandhian values in this situation, we can take firm stands against limitless and harmful commercialization and consumer culture. Unnecessary competition must be avoided. At the same time he can purposefully give a human touch to journalism.

(10) Gandhi's stand against advertisements are becoming more and more relevant today. Now-a-days the advertisement section of the newspaper decides many editorial matters. This is not good for the society. Also the advertisement culture prevailing in the society is also harmful. So intelligent steps against this from the side of journalists is an urgent need of the hour.

(11) Gandhi believed in the theory that 'small is beautiful'. Gandhi's journals are small in nature than that of the major newspapers of today. But the power of small newspapers is not so small. Their influence is notable. This is encouraging to small newspapers. Media expert Dr. Sebastian Paul underlines this: "Large scale newspapers saw the readers only as consumers or customers. But the small papers can see human being as human being." ⁷

(12) As we have observed in the former chapters, sensationalism and trivialisation are two of the major curses to contemporary-journalism. Gandhi never believed such modes of journalism. He considered the media as a mirror placed in front of the society. But today it is like a magnifying glass in practice. Gandhi was

in the path of truth. He believed that 'the path of Truth is as narrow as it is straight'.⁸

(13) Over-politicisation is a regular practice in our media. Gandhi was a full time political activist. But at the same time he avoided over-politicisation and blind political partisan approach from his journals. He believed that politics is one of the major planes of life. But he never gave over importance to politics. But now dailies which are 'independent' are also becoming over politicised and becoming partisan in nature. Here we have a lesson to imbibe from Gandhi.

(14) We often see biased approaches in newspapers. This is due to personal, political, religious, social and such interests. Gandhi was unbiased and he had no such vested interests. Every journalist must try to be unbiased in nature. Every report must be factual. At the same time journalists can give his views freely. The newspapers can give their views through editorial column. Don't misguide the reader by giving views as news or vice-versa. When handling major issues journalists must give both versions. This will help the reader to get a well-balanced, self-attained views. Gandhi's stand in this regard resembles us the well-known approach of C.P. Scott that 'Facts are sacred and comment is free'.

(15) The Credibility of the newspapers is losing now. This is only because they deviate from journalistic principles such as, truth and lacking of proper investigation. Gandhi always made sure that whatever he wrote was true to fact. He never took anything for granted. As for instance, Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in January 1915. In 1917 he got a call from the Indigo farmers of Champaran in Bihar that they were being subjected to the same forms of indignity and exploitation as the indentured laborers in South Africa had been. Gandhi rushed to Champaran and conducted an investigation and wrote a detailed report. It was a master piece of

journalism at its truest and noblest sense. Now it is the time of arm-chair journalism. Most of the reporters and investigative journalists are misguided by some who purposefully concoct stories. Gandhi's mind for intense search for truth is another great lesson to us.

(16) Gandhi gave a positive approach to journalism. He was upholding truth against untruth and non-violence against violence. He never used information for any kind of destructive purposes. Knowledge was used for the sake of the well-being of human being and nature. He led people from bad habits to perfect nature. Each new information even from nature cure to international politics was freely flowed through his journals. He give a positive outlook with this. He lived with a vision not only for his contemporary citizens but also for generations to come. This saintly (like a 'rishi') mind is not easily attainable to a common journalist. But it is inevitable for a good journalist. All events are repetitions in history. But news must be new. Here lies importance of approach and outlook. Gandhi selected the outlook of positive, progressive nature. To him, this was a search of the minds of millions. That is why he can conquer the minds of millions without arms. One who got victory over minds is the best communicator. It is an ever relevant principle. Gandhi, the communicator gave peace also to the mind. This was his another specialty as journalist.

Article 3. Suggestions and Recommendations

There are so many things to be done for correcting the contemporary aberrations in the field of journalism. They have to be met at governmental, professional, academic, social and individual levels.

1. The Government should reinforce the Press Council by giving more power to that body. The suggestions given by the press council must be given due consideration and implemented on a time bound basis.
2. It is an age of 'information super highway'. Technological advancement made the flow of information easier than ever before. So the media should develop a Global Information Infrastructure. As a part of this, we should develop a National Information Infrastructure and to pass the news in a fast manner.
3. The success of a newspaper lies in authentic reporting, collective decision making, strategic planning, fruitful coordination and aggressive marketing. All these fields must be supervised by efficient editors with a vigilant eye. Such a newspaper could make wonders in the society and transform the same.
4. The newspapers and journals should expose the evil forces in the society. At the same time they should not lose sight of national integration and communal harmony. They should keep media ethics strictly while reporting communal riots and terrorist activities.
5. The Right to Information Act (2005) must be widely used by the journalists. So many governmental malpractices will come to limelight if the journalists and the public use this Act effectively.
6. In the academic level, occasions to study journalism must be increased. Efficient and experienced teachers must be appointed. Gandhian views on journalism must be included in the curriculum.
7. Journalists and their professional bodies must try to resist sensationalism and trivialisation of news both in individual level and collective level.

8. The judiciary must be more vigilant in dealing with the aberrations of the fourth estate. Maximum penalties should be imposed on those who violate the regulations.
9. The media owners should take firm steps to ensure qualitative journalism. They should be guided by ethical standards. They can appoint some commissions or in-house councils to check the situation regularly. Certain code of conduct must also be insisted upon.
10. Never give over importance to advertisements by burying Press Freedom and editorial supremacy. The power of the paper is its editorial content. So the managements should ensure the upperhand of the editorial wing.
11. The media consciousness of the public must be increased. For this, media seminars and workshop must be conducted widely by governmental and non-governmental organizations. Then the public could choose qualitative newspapers and journals. As a result all papers will increase their standard and it will purify the field.
12. In a consumeristic society, consumer is the king. So if the reader become vigilant, they can easily resist over-politicisation, politically biased approaches, unethical practices and increasing advertisement culture.
13. There are very many non governmental organizations in our country. They can easily start small scale newspapers and journals. Thus they can attract sectarian readership. Thus those organizations can function as a corrective force.
14. Training classes must be arranged by the Public Relations Department and Field Publicity Wing of the State and Central Governments on media awareness. This will increase media literacy. They can give proper guidance to common people on the matter of media.

15. The newspaper must give more space for the reactions of the people. Columns like 'letter to the editor' must be allotted enough space. This will help to encourage the 'response' part of communication.
16. The world is changing fast. The communication field also is changing with a tremendous pace. Accordingly, the governmental and non-governmental agencies will have to undertake more and more studies, researches and discussions in the field for promoting qualitative journalism.
17. For independent growth and development of journalism and mass communication, the ministry of communication should conduct courses at various levels including doctorate. The courses in the universities in the various fields of communication must be promoted. The ministry level courses will include twinning programmes with various countries.
18. The government may start small newspapers or magazines in every region that function on a self generating basis. Necessary initial funds may be provided by the government. Such news publications must give more importance to developmental issues in the local level. Such pure localisation is not possible to large scale papers.
19. The publications of the government departments must ensure quality both content-wise and product-wise. The present trend in the market is in favour of quality products and the same is true with the circulation of newspapers, too.
20. There are over 200 small scale regular periodicals in Kerala. Except a few, all of them are finding it difficult to make both ends meet. Government may consider this matter seriously and provide grants –in-aid to overcome the present crisis. Sufficient grants may be earmarked for their publishing.
21. Instructions may be given to all heads of educational institutions to provide assistance to conduct journalism and communication seminars and workshops in their respective

institutions. This will led to attain general awareness on ideal journalism to the public generally and the student community especially.

22. Financial assistance may be provided for conducting seminars, workshops and journalism camps for rural and urban communities. It can be done through various programmes, discussions and meetings sponsored by the State and Central Governments, voluntary organizations and various other agencies.
23. The Government may support publications promoting social welfare and harmony by providing newsprint at subsidised rates and by giving publicity through the public relations department.
24. The newspaper houses must avoid unnecessary competition, prize-wax and incentive schemes. Now newspapers are enticing the readers with gifts rather than improving the quality of their journals. It shows the low levels to which they have descended. This must be avoided.
25. The schemes initiated by the newspapers to protect environment ('Seed' programme of Mathrubhumi, 'Maram oru Varam' of Malayala Manorama, etc.), to ensure health standards of readers various insurance schemes etc must be promoted. They are beneficial to the readers.
26. The government may conduct a National Eligibility Test for the journalists and those who intend to come to this field. Those who fulfill certain minimum requirements of general educational qualifications, professional qualifications or have membership of professional bodies or have sufficient practical experience etc can be admitted to the NET. The successful candidates may be declared eligible for appointment in Governmental agencies.
27. The journalists and media persons have different social, economic, cultural and educational backgrounds. So regular refresher courses and contact classes may be conducted to

ensure requisite standards and uniformity. This must be conducted either by the Government or by the media houses.

28. The journalists are advised to follow the foot-steps of Mahatma Gandhi, who himself was an ideal journalist. It is a pity that there is hardly any newspaper institution that strictly adheres to the guidelines given by Gandhiji.
29. The Public Relations Department (P.R.D) of the government may give adequate importance for the propagation of meaningful journalism through documentary films, T.V. advertisements, interviews with eminent journalists and so on.
30. The Gandhian alternative in journalism must be propagated. Journalism must develop a Gandhian outlook to eradicate the contemporary aberrations in the field.
31. Newspaper editors must be ready to correct errors which may occur in reporting as soon as they came to know of them. Columns for self-corrections are most welcome.
32. The Government and other organizations must give awards to journalists and journals which abide by Gandhian journalistic integrity. This will encourage them to follow the best traditions in the field.
33. It is unjust to print inaccurate information without proper investigation. It is an unpardonable sin to spoil someone's reputation both personal and professional with insinuations and unsubstantiated comments. The journalists and the media owners must be vigilant. Not to tarnish anyone's image, for it is irreparable. The Government should make more stringent laws against such defaming practices with severe punishment for the breach of such law.
34. Media must not encourage controversies or fabricate false stories with a view to increase circulation. The welfare of the society must be the main motto of the media.

Conclusion

It is unwise to close our eyes against the fact that the media has become an integral part of life in the world today. Importance of the media is increasing day by day. As the famous journalist B.G. Varghese opined, the media is not the fourth estate any more, it is the first estate, although his statement is tinged with an element of exaggeration. At any rate, the media exerts a powerful influence is an irrefutable fact.⁹ The main reason for its omnipotence is that its intervention, welcome or unwarranted encompasses almost all walks of life, public or private.

Unfortunately, the social role and responsibility of the media have not been subjected to a serious study or survey. In this study the researcher has made a sincere effort to find out certain remedial for the aberrations such as sensationalism, trivialisation, over-politicisation, commercialisation, unethical practices and over-dependence on advertisements. Diverse aspects of the media activity such as reporting, editorialising, commentary, prejudices, rivalry, language manipulation as also issues like media independence and the dangers of dependence on advertisements even for survival and above all the incursion of the foreign media are dealt with in some detail with utmost sincerity and on open mind.

The media, both print and electronic will have to do a lot of homework to gain credibility and respect from the intellectual segment of the society. The formidable and numerous problems faced and the remedial measures required, constitute the keynote of this research work.

Any honest search in those directions will lead inevitably to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. (Oct. 2, 1869 – Jan. 30, 1948) He was not a journalist who took journalism as a career. It was a part of his

overall experiments with Truth or God. He practised what he preached. As Luis Fischer wrote, “A conversation with him was a voyage of discovery; he dared to go any where without a chart.”¹⁰ Gandhi’s journalism was also similar to a voyage. One thing unique about him was that he could coordinate and consolidate all his activities into a harmonious blend. His approach was wholistic. It was rooted in Indian culture and traditions. He never took a professional approach in journalism, but never passed a day when he didn’t express his vision or ideas in black and white.

Newspapers are often run on the lines of an industry and the profession is losing much of its charm and utility. Journalism is not scholarship; at its best, it is literature or history in a hurry. It underlies action and reaction too. A journalist must have the capacity to understand, to react, to communicate, and Gandhi possessed all these qualities in abundance and was for half a century the greatest one-man-medium of mass communication. He was a good journalist who possessed the alchemist’s touch. Not many journals of the day can claim the stamps of truthfulness and self-imposed responsibility, the hallmarks of Gandhian journalism.

Gandhi was independent and had little need to compromise with commercial considerations. In several cases, he owned the press where he produced the papers which he edited and as editor he always insisted on good management. He did not want to be connected with any paper that was not self-supporting. It would not entertain advertisements because they were deceptive and amounted to an indirect tax on the reader, who had to pay for them as consumers of goods. He not only edited his papers but wrote for them incessantly. They are small papers according to modern standards, mostly weekly editions, but they were the greatest weeklies that have ever been

published as they fearlessly upheld truth and were wholly free from prejudices and favouritism.

In this present commercialized situation, the Gandhian journalistic values must serve as eye-openers. There are Gandhian remedies for today's journalistic ailments. The journalistic field being highly competitive today, many unhealthy practices are rampant in the field now. Gandhi preached and practiced truthfulness and even took a self-sacrificing approach to journalism. Before independence, all the motto of the main papers championed the cause of the country's freedom. They provided fuel to the freedom movement. At the same time, they waged a war against the inequalities that cankered Indian social life. They stood for justice. Profit was not their main motive. But now everything has changed. Major papers become huge industries and the approach to time – honoured values have undergone a deep change.

Today the social commitment of the media is on the wane and journalism is becoming a mere census of events. Everything is being dragged into controversies by the media. In an unholy hurry to add spice to news they stir up quarrels and rivalry among the people who constitute our multilingual and multi-racial society. By sensationalising news they are doing irreparable damage to the unity and solidarity of our motherland. The Press is sometimes caught in the lure of monetary benefits and forgets that its primary duty is to inform the people right things at the right time in right proportion. The duty of the Press to help the democratic process still remains a far cry owing to corruption. News and comments are mixed up. It is not easy to separate them even to the alert reader. The collective credibility is loosing as a result of the malpractices of sensationalism and trivialisation of news items. To attract advertisements the media

houses do not hesitate to stoop low. In such a dismal atmosphere we are once again persuaded to turn to Gandhi's guidance and ideals.

Now, it is not easy to separate sponsored news, professional news and real news. Even the Press Council of India, member Paranjay Guha Thakurta is worried about the flow of advertisements: "If a newspaper is really a product, at least say what its ingredients are. Write that it's a sponsored feature when giving an advertorial". An advertisement culture is prevailing in the field. As a result the social commitment is diluted. Globalisation and liberalization are the straws that break the camel's back. Multinational companies used the media to change the mind-set of the people. They loot the resources of the country. They use advertisements for selling their products and making profit. Unhealthy competition seen in every field is highly detrimental to social well-being, which will ultimately strike at the very root of the freedom of the Press and of expression as a whole.

Gandhi never over politicised things as the present day media does. He was keen to guide the society and even the government by giving a sense of direction to them. Issue after issue of 'Young India' and 'Navajivan' carried glints as exhortations to the government to do what was "just and righteous." He fought against the social evil of untouchability while spearheading political agitations and satyagraha. He condemned power politics and advocated enlightened politics in its place.

Today the market forces decide everything in the journalistic field. Ethics gives way to economics. The media field is highly commercial in nature. Here again Gandhian legacy should be a beacon light to all budding journalists. Profit motive should be subordinated to ethical values. Gandhiji's fearlessness and truthfulness in reporting and publishing news even at the cost of his own personal interest are worth emulating. "If I were appointed

dictator for a day in the place of the Viceroy, I would stop all newspapers.”¹¹ Gandhi’s moral anger exploded at a prayer meeting in New Delhi in 1946. We can only say that there was no politician more human and no human being more political than Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhi looked upon journalism as a means to serve the people. His journalistic experiments were aimed at the welfare of the common man. Today the media shuns the grass root level reporting. Data based rural reporting and social auditing by the media can reduce corruption in the local bodies. This will become very much helpful to the poor and marginalized segments in the society. The media density in Kerala is very high. But even in this State media is slow and hesitant in standing by the interests of the lower strata. There are 999 Gramapanchayats in the State. On an average one crore rupees per year is budgeted for developmental activities in each panchayat in the State. But unfortunately, the major part of this allocation does not reach the grass-root level. Owing to the emergence of citizen journalism such acts of injustice get public attention. It is becoming an effective tool of social empowerment and holds out a ray of hope for the future.

Gandhi viewed journalism very seriously. His approach was unbiased. He was growing through writing. He wrote about it in his auto-biography: “Indian opinion’ was a part of my life. Week after week I poured out my soul in its columns and expounded the principles and practice of satyagraha as I understood it. During 10 years, that is until 1914, excepting the intervals of my enforced rest in prison there was hardly an issue of Indian opinion without an article from me. I cannot recall a word in these articles set down without thought or deliberation or a word of conscious exaggeration, or anything merely to please. 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”¹²

In 'Young India', Gandhi once gave a glimpse of the exacting code he had set up for himself. "To be true to my faith, I may not write in anger or malice. I may not write idly. I may not write merely to excite passion. The reader can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise from week to week in the choice of topics and my vocabulary. It is a training for me. It enables me to seek into myself and to make discoveries of my weaknesses. Often my vanity dictates a smart expression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is a terrible ordeal but a fine exercise to remove these weeds."¹³

Now we shall briefly discuss Gandhi's peculiar style of language. He was a natural writer in Gujarati but he had good felicity in the English language too. There was not only character but strength of personality in whatever he wrote. To read him was to learn how to use words correctly, with scrupulous regard for their exact meaning. He scorned ornamentation and avoided rhetorical devices. Yet, there was eloquence in all that he wrote, compelling clarity and persuasiveness. There was something biblical in the solemn, little sentences and those grave words which breathed and burned and sang. He coined memorable phrases as a journalist – "Satanic Government" and "lionine violence" were two of them. There were memorable outbursts of lyrical, literary feeling as in his controversy with Tagore and in his indignant expostulations to the British. He had the true journalistic sense of drama and even the headlines he gave his articles made history – "Disaffection a virtue," "Tampering with Loyalty" and "Shaking the Manes." He had to face prosecution for his innovations. One of the greatest headlines of all times was "The Story of My Experiments with Truth". In short, there was grace in whatever he wrote; there was also masculinity. He was as wise and simple as Solomon; he was as artless as Thoreau; always he had the power of kings and prophets.¹⁴

The newspaper gets its soul from truthfulness, bravery, eagerness to do good things, respect to opposition and service mentality. It is an accepted fact, Gandhi had all these qualities. So Gandhian journalism is replete with life and soul. Let us be clear in our minds that to confine Mahatma Gandhi to India and to view him as merely as a great Indian National leader is to undermine his greatness. Gandhi belonged to the whole world, the humanity at large and even to the generations to come. Gandhi was one of the greatest activists, who fought for change from outside the traditional halls of power, who was bound to an abstract vision for which he would pay any price including his life. The world that revered few men had revered Gandhi. Although Gandhi died believing his lone voice was unheard – he was mistaken; the power of his message would endure to move men and nations for all times to come. This is true in the case of his contribution to journalism also.

Gandhi was a journalist who went to jail for writing Truth. Today the world seems to echo Gandhi's firm conviction that truth must be protected legally. Time testifies that truth will triumph. Gandhi believed that the media must always be ready to impose self-restrictions. This view has come to be widely accepted now. Today the modern media and telecommunication intrude into people's private life, causing great damage to human dignity. Gandhi foresaw such a danger and condemned that practice. He never tolerated any deviation from principles and journalistic ethics. He believed that it was the responsibility of every person associated with the media to act responsibly with a sense of duty towards the society and the nation. In an ideal set-up journalists are vigilant watchdogs of civil liberties, morality and truth. Gabriel Marcuse said that the best profession in the world is journalism. Gandhi never said so. But he illustrated it through life-long experiments in journalism. These experiments will

certainly guide many resourceful people in future to escape from the present journalistic aberrations. The researcher is absolutely confident that such missions will be enthroned in the fullness of time, in its rightful position of excellence and eminence.

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