Chapter - 4

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE THIRD WORLD
4.1 : Ideologies and Rights :

It is true that the Universal Declaration was adopted in the United Nations without a dissenting voice, and that nearly all nations continue to give formal acknowledgement to the principles of human rights. It is too often forgotten, however, that the declaration was not unanimously adopted by the countries represented in the United Nations at the time; not only the Soviet bloc but South Africa and Saudi Arabia abstained; and there is good reason to doubt that the new states of the Third World would now ratify the document, if given the opportunity to do so. The fact is that the Universal Declaration is plainly a western document in a member of crucial respects. It calls for freedom of conscience or religion and freedom of expression; it includes a right to own property and to free choice of employment; above all, it recognizes popular sovereignty and a right to political participation. Not only are these principles not acted on in the great majority of non-Western societies today; in many cases they do not serve even as a model or ideal.

The affinities of Third World regimes are generally clearly drawn from Marxist-Leninist roots or from some adaption of capitalism,
although the latter orientation is not generally proclaimed as such. It is sometimes contended that the term fascist covers one or another form of authoritarian rules. Some Third World governments that possess a capitalist attitude toward development disguise it for public relations reasons beneath a socialist rhetoric. Some Western ideologues prefer to call these left regimes communist rather than socialist.

The human rights records of both socialism and capitalism are so poor in the Third World at this point that it is quite unconvincing to insist that one approach is generically preferable to other. This conclusion is so uncomfortable because it seems clear that only socialism has the capacity to deal with mass poverty in the short run, and surely economic deprivation is a key element of human rights. However, the transition costs of moving to socialism have turned out to be so heavy, the absence of any tradition of checks and balance or pluralist politics and the culture have made the administration of power in socialist states so totalitarian, and the effectiveness of control has been so great as to make popular control over a socialist state so difficult to exert that a given Third World Society is better off "Socialist".¹

Surely, capitalism is not attractive, in general, from a human rights viewpoint for a Third World country. Its capital-intensive approach to development does not generally improve the relative or absolute poverty of the masses. The productive process, oriented around profits and foreign exchange earnings, tends to satisfy the cravings of the rich rather than the needs of the poor. In addition, when the masses are poor and excluded from the gains of the economy, as is the case in Third World capitalist economies, then a structural tendency to repress exists. There is no way to assure long-term stability in such a societal setting excepted by intimidating and repressing those who are victimized by it.

Thus, while socialism cannot be preferred, given its record, capitalism is recipe for doom unless the country is exceptionally endowed with resources, including skills and leadership abilities, and even then, as the case of Iran illustrates, the results of a capitalist orientation may be national disaster.

Even without the development crunch we would expect to encounter widespread repression in the Third World. Indeed, the integration of society by the bureaucratic state is self coercive to a degree. In the circumstances of many Third World countries, lacking a
recent tradition of political competition, the mere structure of state power creates a strong disposition toward repression, especially given the diversity of antagonistic ethnic elements contained within many Third World state boundaries. And yet, the whole point of the socialism/capitalism debate is the contention that some forms of repression are better than others in terms of the stakes, as well as the identity and proportion of winners and losers.

Simone Weil notes, "What is surprising is not that oppression should make its appearance only after higher forms of economy have been reached, but that it should always accompany them".  

In many African and Asian countries the challenge of state-building after formal independence unleashed dangerous ethnic antagonisms, combined with the drive of ruling groups to build strong states capable of standing on their own, helped produce an authoritarian fix in many countries. This fix was virtually inevitable in those states where one ethnic group captured all or most state power at the expense of others. Thus, even without the developmental crunch

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some strong reason for the spread of authoritarian rule exist.

Finally, there is structural bias towards repressive rule associated with leadership. The struggle to be primary leader in the intense political life of most Third World states seems to emphasize a commitment to nonmoderate forms of competition. The personality type that prevails in such competition tends to be acutely sensitive to the threat of displacement by others who might be equally unscrupulous. Hence, there is little tolerance of oppositional activities or dissent. The leader may carry such intolerance to pathological extremes, but it is a pathology that is partially induced by the nature of the power chase in Third World polities.

The specific identity of a national political system can only be provisionally established by whether it is classified as "socialist" or "capitalist". Such labels may be more or less descriptive of actual patterns of organization and underlying approach to governance. Many governments in the Third World have evolved distinctive economic programs, allowing private economic initiative in some sectors, while reserving others for state ownership. Others have opted for hybrid ideological and political approaches. The declaration of Nigeria's
Olusegun Obasanjo that "No African country is about to embrace communism any more than we are willing to embrace capitalism" is also part of the picture. Regardless of their internal development strategy, most Third World governments seek to project an international image of nonalignment so as to safeguard their political independence and discourage meddling by the great powers.

In the development debate going on in the Third World there was a widespread tendency as formal Western liberalism that is a dispensable political luxury for most Third World societies, and to claim that the only test of satisfactory government performance is a materialistic one. On the one side are the claims of official technocrats that growth measured in terms of GNP is what counts, and on the other side are the claims of disenfranchised intellectuals that satisfaction of basic needs is the proper measure. An extension of this argument contends that human rights in the noneconomic sense are limited in their applicability to the liberal democracies of the advanced industrial countries in the North. The argument is sometimes coupled with the assertion that Third World countries have always been authoritarian, that repression is virtually predetermined by political culture, or that

conditions are not yet ripe for the introduction of more moderate governing strategies. A recent leader of Bolivia, General Juan Pereda Asbun, announced that he would rule over "a Bolivian style democracy in which the armed forces ratified the popular decisions". He justified this assertion by saying that a poor country, filled with illiterate peasants, could not "have the same kind of democracy as that experienced by industrialized countries."

In the nonliberal societies of the Third World, the very idea of 'rights' is an alien incorporation that remains in some degree suspect. To the extent that rights are understood in the liberal sense as claims of individuals against the community and as essentially prior to the duties required of individuals by the community, they tend to be regarded as corrosive of fundamental social and political bonds. Governments and political leaders tend to view the notion of rights as disruptive of national loyalties and a challenge to the basis of their authority. For the mass of the people on the other hand, the individualism implicit in the liberal notion of rights often appears destructive of traditional forms of community such as family, tribe and

religion.

The weakness of human rights in the Third World has both political and cultural causes. Many Third World states have only recently emerged from colonial status and suffer from severe problems of political integration. In many cases liberal constitutions bequeathed by the departing colonial power were swept away by military juntas or strongmen intent on consolidating central authority in the face of regional, tribal or factional dissension; and the signal party has become the typical political instrument for creating and maintaining loyalty to that authority. Central economic planning has tended to be preferred to free-enterprise capitalism in part for similar reasons and in part in response to a variety of ideological and cultural pressures.

Recently, in the context of the Third World, there has been talk of a 'trade off' between civil and political rights and a right to development. It is argued that unlike the Western world the right to development should have priority over all other rights. However such an approach may amount to a callous disregard of the truth that the various components of internationally recognised human rights constitute one indivisible whole.
4.2 : Basic Needs and Development :

The fact is that Western countries have reached such a high level of socio-economic, legal development that they can concentrate their efforts on the observance and respect for civil and political rights alone. In the countries of the Third World, however, very different socio and economic environments prevail. In Asia, for instance, some 40 per cent of the population live below the poverty line. In rural Asia some 80 percent have no access to safe water; 47 per cent in urban areas and 87 per cent in rural areas have no sanitary facilities. Hence millions of people are trapped in a vicious circle of poverty, malnutrition and disease. Indeed, no amount of writing can capture the magnitude and complexity of human rights problems in the Third World.

The right to food, derived fundamentally from the core right to life, has been repeatedly endorsed by the United Nations and international conferences, yet it remains an insult to humanity that the developed states spend vast sums of money on agricultural subsidies, and further vast sums storage of food to mountain ‘food shortages’.
On the other hand, many of the human rights which feature in the Western lists are rights which are, indeed, associated with the Western experience of modernization but which might impede that process elsewhere. The experience of development in the Third World Countries over the past three or four decades has been such as to question the applicability of western models. In particular, the idea that the benefits of growth in a modernizing sector of an economy would 'trickle down' to the rest of that economy has lost ground to the 'dual-economy' notion according to which a modernizing sector and a traditional sector can exist in comparative isolation from one another. Furthermore, there is less confidence in the market model of development, more talk of the provision of public goods. In both these respects, it is argued, basic need doctrine may be appropriate to future development than the Western idea of human rights, whose currency allowed the situation in the Third World to become as it now is.

The satisfaction of human rights claims does not purport to challenge the legitimacy of statist modes of organization, and in fact is endorsed by governments of all ideological persuasions. Therefore, human rights can in principle, be realized in any state whether rich or
poor, whether organized along socialist or capitalist lines. Recently, specialists in human rights, sensitive to ideological dualism in our world, have been striving to identify a set of core rights that reflect the professed values of both socialism and capitalism as operative global ideologies and avoid giving priority to what one, but not the other, ideology regards as important. Such a search for what is mutually compatible does not mean identifying the lowest common denominator acceptable to both ideologies. As "human rights" were formulated initially as a dimension of liberal, capitalist ideology, what has been required is the elimination of those aspects of human rights that pertain only to capitalism (e.g. right to property) while adding those rights have been protected heretofore only in socialist conceptions (e.g. rights to basic human needs).

Not only must the conception of human rights be broadened to take account of socialist perspectives, it must also be deepened to include international structural issues. It is possible to draw some preliminary conclusions:


1. Human rights as focus of normative concern do not extend their reach to the wider structures of repression allegedly inherent in state power or flowing from irreconcilable claims for security and self-determination, nor do they extend to the internal effects of imperialism or of authoritarian personality types to prevail in struggles for political leadership at the state level;

2. Human rights, as a set of limits on the exercise of state power, possess historical origins associated with Western liberal ideology, including the ethos of laissez faire capitalism, and, as such, generate an appeal that is often suspect in the Third World, although decreasingly so;

3. Reformulations of human rights are seeking to achieve sufficient universality of tone and content to engender respect and legitimacy in all parts of the world, regardless of cultural heritage or ideological orientation;

4. An acceptable reformulation of human rights in these universal terms will necessarily be eclectic, and will include a synthesis of the equity preoccupations of socialist systems with the liberty preoccupation of capitalist systems.
5. Nevertheless, the ideological situation is not symmetrical in the Third World, as the objective conditions of mass poverty, aroused expectations, and resource constraints make the adoption of a socialist programme of development a virtual necessity except in a few isolated "special cases" (Israel, Kuwait, Taiwan, Venezuela) where affluence or external capital accumulation makes it possible that both the material and nonmaterial elements of fundamental human rights can be realized; in general, capitalist systems of development seem incapable of a positive performance across the board of human rights concerns, although their performance relative to each other can be compared:

6. Furthermore, neocolonialist patterns associated with superpower diplomacy, multinational corporations, and international financial institutions reinforce repressive tendencies in Third World capitalist countries to a significantly greater extent than do certain analogous international patterns associated with "socialist imperialism":

7. No clear lines of normative preference can be persuasively drawn. On the domestic scene, transition and termination costs of socialist forms of development may seem, on balance, more severe
for the population as a whole, than do the maintenance costs of capitalist forms; in the end, we are left with the requirement of assessing, at a given point in time, the foreseeable costs of alternative paths of development in the concrete circumstances of each country.:

In 1974 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Declaration on the need to establish a new international economic order designed to redress the inequalities and injustices between the richer and poorer nations of the world. The realization of such a new order, involving active assistance to developing countries, was seen as 'an essential element for the effective promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms', in particular of economic, social and cultural rights in developing countries

The new approach sees the right of development as a positive benefit right - a (have-not) member of the international community of states shall be entitled, when facing development problems and a

shortage of resources to corresponding assistance as a matter of an
obligation on the part of (have) members of the international economic
community. The Secretary-General of the United Nations on the other
hand claims a general consensus for a much broader conception of the
right to development embracing:

i) Recognition that the realization of human potentialities in
harmony with the community was the central purpose of
development; consequently the human person must be seen as
the subject and not the object of development as a process
requiring the satisfaction of both material and non-material basic
needs.

ii) Respects for the entire range of fundamental human rights
specified in the International Bill of Human Rights and for the
principles of equality and non-discrimination as fundamental to
the development process.

iii) The achievement of a degree of individual and collective self-
reliance must be an integral part of the development process-each
individual must be able to participate fully in shaping his own

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The right to development is often claimed as one of the third generation of solidarity (the first generation being the traditional liberal-democratic civil and political rights and the second generation the economic, social and cultural rights), a group embracing the right to peace, the right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment and the right to enjoy the common heritage of mankind. The distinctive characteristic of all these rights is that they are essentially not rights that can be enjoyed by individuals as members of a particular community, and therefore claimable from each person's own state, but claims made on behalf of the peoples in particular states or in all states against both the Governments and the peoples of other states and of the international community of states. It is an open question as to whether it is possible to establish meaningful rights of this character.

The right of development should be treated not as an attractive but practically irrelevant piece of political window-dressing, but as a real opportunity for giving international effect to the objective put

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*See United Nations Economic and Social Council (E/CN$/1334) 2 January 1979, Commission on Human Rights, 35th Session, Report of the Secretary-General.*
forward by the Norwegian Agency of International Development that 'Our development co-operation work must not strengthen the forces of political repression nor those which stand in the way of social justice ... both political freedom and social justice must be developed to the full'. The mode of implementation will need to provide encouragement for both rich and poor countries to enter into agreements which promote economic development as part of the broader human perspectives outlined by the United Nations Secretary-General. What is required is a general code of practice for all development agreements which all state authorities and all international agencies would bind themselves to give effect to. That skeleton code of practice would then need to be made flesh by spelling out specific commitments for the particular development and particular state concerned. It would be unrealistic to expect dramatic results from the implementation of proposals on these lines, but by requiring states seeking material aid to take steps to fulfil their subjects non-material rights they might lead at least some states to recognize the practical truth that 'all human rights and fundamental freedom are indivisible and interdependent'.

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But the most interesting and most difficult problems arise where what is claimed is not a collective right derivative from and consonant with an individual right, but a collective right neither dependent on nor subordinate to a prior -existing individual right. The most formidable claimants of such rights are 'peoples'. It is readily apparent that the notion of 'a right of peoples' is difficult to handle, precisely because unlike individuals peoples are not readily identifiable. Any assertion of claim to be 'a people' is liable to give rise to dispute incapable of being settled either objectively or by general consent. Since it is fruitless to seek to establish what constitutes a people the only procedure open to us is to examine the specific rights claims made on behalf of peoples; in particular the right of self-determination and the associated rights of development and to a new international economic order.

In the developing countries, the experience of the development decades have shown that planned economic development, which has been imposed from above, left out majority of the people benefitting from economic development. Not only that, in some cases, development simply by-passed large sections of the population. This was a surprising experience because it went against the historical evidence of the developed world from which the models of development were extracted. It was trickled down and artificially stimulated, both in time and
instrument, that so-called development decades were short-lived and were followed by a prolonged phase of recession and decline in growth rate, high degree of concentration of economic power in fewer lards and environment of acute poverty. Though the search for new strategies of development has not yielded any definite new model, it is now universally recognised that only that model can have a chance to succeed which will have development end planning originate from below along with some planning from the top as well. This recognition assumes a high degree of decentralisation of economic and political power and functions. The failure lay in not achieving large and persisting growth as much as in the non-mobilisation of human resources which itself acted as a check on development.

It was within such a framework that gandhi evolvd his concept of swarai or self rule. To Gandhi, Swaraj meant self-determination in a polity or national independence. Gandhi sought to establish a linkage between self government and national self-dependence. Gandhi attempted to provide a moral justificationn of freedom. He was thinking in terms of positive freedom whereby an individual or a nation did not isolate themselves from the environment.

The Cocoyoc Declaration of 1975, an important expression of
recent Third World outlook, can be treated as a reflection of the Gandhian ethic to human rights: Development should not be limited to the satisfaction of basic needs. There are other needs, other goals, and other values. Development includes freedom of expression and impression, the right to give and receive ideas and stimulus. There is a deep social need to participate in shaping the basis of one's own existence, and to make some contribution to the fashioning of the world's future. Above all, development includes the right to work, by which we mean not simply having a job but finding self-realization in work, the right not to be alienated through production processes that use human beings simply as tools.  

4.3: Gandhian Relevance to Development and Human Rights:

The Gandhian doctrine of Development has a programmatic appeal that is not found in the Western lists of human rights. The idea of hierarchy of basic needs, from physiological to psychological with each level in the hierarchy requiring to be met before progress to the

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next level, seems to provide the strating point for a detailed development strategy: first provide food and shelter, then security and so on up to the Maslow's list of human rights.

For gandhi, the basic value commitments that the process of self development implies are Non-violence, harmony, swadeshi and service. The goal of self development is the forging of a complete identity with satya or truth. Since there are many perspectives from which reality of life can be approached, a basic commitment to respecting the integrity of others, that is nonviolence, is the sine qua non. It also implies that, in so far as there is a basic unity in existence, the value of harmony as personal, social and cosmic ideal must be accepted. Gandhian concepts, thus, supplement to the human rights rather than to subtract anything from it.

The implications of the Gandhian ideas to human rights, to an extent, may be found in Fouad Ajami's contention that "flawed concepts of human rights" allow the United States to be a human rights champion while at the same time opposing "the New International Economic Order and Third World demands for a fairer distribution of
global wealth. Ajami also criticizes Third World leaders "... speak the language of egalitarianism abroad, while they defend systems of acute inequalities within their own boundaries". He regards militarized politics at home as almost invariably leading to severe denials of humane politics, a characterization, he contends, that holds for "leftist Ethiopian soldiers as well as for 'rightist' Brazilian officers".

In the spirit of the Algiers Declaration, yet with less partisanship, Ajami's approach to human rights seeks to attribute responsibility for human rights decline to an interlocked series of domestic and international factors. Against this background Ajami affirms an eclectic conception of human rights that seeks to encompass principal sensitivities involving liberty, equity, and survival, without enumerating a long shopping list of human rights issues. Ajami emphasizes four sets of concerns.

1. The right to survive: hence the concern with the war system and nuclear weaponry.

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2. The right not be subjected to torture.

3. The condemnation of apartheid: it is accepted that other societies violate racial equality but that South Africa's blatant, officially sanctioned and codified racism is particularly intolerable.

4. The right to food.\textsuperscript{14}

The philosophy behind the policy of development with a greater emphasis on industrialization in the Third World countries has promoted a mass of poverty where malnutrition, hunger and paucity of shelter are the outcome. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) estimated that thousands of children die every day for lack of food in a world where food production and supply far outstrip the subsistence demand.\textsuperscript{15}

The Western model of development has also given rise to a minority elite which lives luxuriously in the third world countries and

\textsuperscript{14} ibid. pp. 26, 28-29.

thus dividing the various countries into dual societies of rich and poor. The dynamics of the developmental process and compulsions of international relations between rich and poor countries helps bring to power authoritarian people who rule the state by a police mentality and create institutions of law and order by which they themselves involve in neutralizing or suppressing their own citizens or, to use a contemporary euphemism, making people disappear.

The extraction of every increasing non-renewable resources, in the name of betterment for the rich and more development for the poor countries, does not reach to the very limits of our planet. The existing economic world order has, in fact, proved meaningless, if not for the affluent countries, at least for the Third World. Increasing strategic shortages on the horizon are compelling important changes in the methods of production and nature of consumption.

The present formula of adequate world supplies derives from a persistently high price in oil fields. Other problems like topsoil erosion, poisonous rain and deforestation are likely to cause a far more serious effect than that of the oil shortages. Some environmentalists' fear is, thus, very natural that these effects may pose a threat to human existence and of our civilization.
The impact of heavy industrialization on the international economic system is tremendous. Its effects on the world monetary system and international liquidity are apparent. Most of the Third World countries are already heavily burdened by foreign debt. There is no major relief of this debt in sight and as much as 100 per cent of exports of these countries are already morgaged to the payment of interest on this debt. The prevailing circumstances have created a natural tendency to increase even more debt apart from the total debt already due.

There have been only a few mechanisms to reverse this trend of over-debt. Hence, some confrontation between the large developing countries in Latin America and the rich North appears to be inevitable. A country like Argentina, for example, has already started moving towards such a potential confrontation. The large banks of the rich North have, thus, proved vulnerable. An increase of high interest rate, continuing recession in the European countries, and the fall in the price of raw materials cannot make an adjustment towards some kind of an equilibrium any easier. All these factors are responsible to lead to a growing instability of the present international monetary system.

In the Third World countries, poverty stares into our face. A Visit
to any big city in these countries, e.g., Calcutta, Delhi, Karachi, Khartoum, Cairo, Lagos, Mexicocity, or Nairobi introduces to the visitors begging and starving children in very large numbers, as also mutilated bodies, dying old people, and people living on the streets without any of shelter, food or medicine. But, unfortunately, the government of these countries talk in terms of boasting of their growth in GNP, new industries, high-technologies, and greater and better higher education and research. This has become a hard fact that poverty is on the increase both in terms of absolute numbers and also in terms of proportions of total population.

At the same time, growth in poverty, deterioration in the quality of life, instability in the international monetary system, depletion of non-renewable global resources and the disappearances of people have been rationalised by policies of economic growth and development in the Third World. The economists and scientists who belong from the elite class most often ignore the existence of these facts and rather support the production of weapons of mass destruction and thus also the western model and its fanciful devices.

The crisis of development is essentially one of maldistribution among and within nations. The gross world product has been going up from an average 881 dollars in 1970 to an annual per capita rate of about three per cent. Calculating this statistics, real goods per head would double every 23 years. Nathan Keyfitz puts it as "to dispose of twice as much wealth as one's parents, four time as much as one's grand parents surely cannot be regarded as unsatisfactory." When of course this rate can be sustained and the total products evenly divided up, both the assumptions, however, are highly unrealistic on all possible grounds.

Yet, to change the pattern of economic and financial relations with foreign powers, is not an easy job for a Third World country. Only a hard political will can achieve success in this area, while cultural dependence has much more decisive and lasting effects. It is so that once a foreign scale of values has been assimilated even autonomous decision-making and the administrative and economic capacity to carry out the decision cannot prevent a country from imitating life-styles, technology and institutional models taken from the developed countries.

Most of the present ideological controversies deal with the choice of the historical models of the foreign countries to be picked up and replicated. Some of us will prefer Japan, others China, still others soeak of the Brazilian miracle oblivious of the social and political costs of the Brazilian growth performance. The advertisement effect of the Western consumption pattern centred on private motor-car has spread not only to Japan and Latin America but somewhat more unexpectedly to Eastern Europe. The industry model of Stalin did not entirely lose its appeal. People saw the model as if it were possible to solve complex and always unique problems of designing one's future by relying on other people's solutions. History only offers anti-models to be carefully studied and over-come. Cultural and historical contexts are never the same.

In the Third World countries, inequality breeds environmental disruption at both ends of the social spectrum. Rich people's extravagant patterns of consumption imply a considerable waste of resources and they are accountable, directly or indirectly, for most of the environmental pollution. On the other side, poor people have no

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other choice except overusing their scarce resources and thereby destroying them.

The cultural dependence, inequality and environmental degradation are the three major facts, close to each-other, of the development strategies based on the concepts of self-reliance as opposed to dependence, on egalitarianism which gives utmost priority to the satisfaction of basic needs of the general population and in particular of its poorest strata and on environmental prudence; resources ought to be resorted in such a way as to keep open the development prospects for the coming generations.

Under these circumstances, it is important to review the development strategy of the Third World and the reasons for its meagre impact and also look for alternative models for development. In India, Gandhi has proposed a decentralised, village-oriented economic model keeping in view the predominantly agrarian and rural character of Indian Society. Apparently, many Third World countries fall in the same category. Hence, it may be worthwhile to examine the suitability of what may be called the Gandhian development model to tackle the persistent development problems of the Third World.
Gandhi postulates a self-reliant, need oriented and environmentally-sound development aimed at the fullest realization of the human personality. His development ethics is the central piece of development theory. Gandhi combined ethics with economics: "I must confess that I do not draw any distinction between ethics and economics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful. Thus the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral.\textsuperscript{20} In the eyes of gandhi, while a political economy of development can be built around a development ethics, development economics has little more to offer than arrogance. It is presumptuous to think that a narrow conceived economic calculus can offer guidance for eventful societal choice. Gandhi believes that "The economics that disregard moral and sentimental considerations are like wax works that being life like, still lack the life of the living flesh".\textsuperscript{21}

Gandhian economy is distilled from the self-contained and self-


sufficient Indian village community of the ancient past and then projected into future with no time bound for its realization. In the process Gandhi endows this scheme with a highly moral content. Economic agents in this society are not maximising satisfaction in isolation from one another by seeking the largest bundle of goods. Instead each one has realized and incorporated in his conduct the truism extracted by the sages after due deliberation, namely that happiness was largely a mental condition. This did not depend upon the size of the bundle of the goods one possessed. Instead there was an advantage certainty from the point of view of happiness in reducing the bundle of every one to the irreducible minimum of his primary needs. While everyone in the society realizes this, there is no difficulty in implementing this law of distribution of primaries.

Gandhi felt no difficulty in the implementation of this law of distribution of primaries. Society produces only such goods and services which are directly or indirectly related to the satisfaction of primary needs of its members. Any surplus produced in the process is accredited to the society for the common good of all. Gandhi views that the

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23. Harijan, 3 September, 1934.
primary needs were derived from the necessary minimum material conditions of living and largely relate to food, clothing and shelter. Services and occupations in the society subserve these wants. Already there is a social division of labour between agriculture and cottage industry. Within agricultural subdivision, each family is given as much land as it could work from its own labour, however, should remain a property of the community. The instruments and tools of a cottage industry should belong to the family traditionally engaged in it. Since owners are also the labourers, individual private property does not form a basis for exploitation.

Since every individual in the Gandhian scheme assiduously observes non-violence, exploitation as an economic manifestation of violence is ruled out. Every family follows its hereditary occupation and within a family everyone does his ‘bread-labour’ in the sense that ‘everyone had to labour with his body for his food and clothing.’ For Gandhi, the division between ‘productive’ and ‘unproductive’ labour in the classical economist’s sense does not exist.

The Gandhian Concepts of human rights finds expression in his

direct involvement in the search and struggle for finding practical solutions to the problems of poverty, ignorance and inequality. His fight against the supremacy of the white over the coloured people in South Africa is too well known to need mention. He took up the question of the inhuman and appalling conditions of living and work of the ‘ryots’ in the indigo plantations owned by Britishers in Champaran in Bihar. He secured an amicable settlement of an industrial dispute between the textile labourers and mill-owners of Ahmedabad by identifying himself with the labourers and undertaking a fast on their behalf. From 1919 onwards, he launched his non-violent struggle for Indian Independence and initiated three nationwide satyagrah campaigns nearly every ten years after that. It should be noted how Gandhi was all the time actively engaged in some phase or the other of his movement for solving the social, economic and political problems.

Gandhi refused to believe that society is governed by laws of growth which are beyond the ability of any individual to alter.25 At the heart of all his personal and social action lay an insistence that

individual will and reason can effect social and political change.\textsuperscript{26} Gandhi developed his concept of truth in an effort to undermine external authority and to reaffirm the moral autonomy and authority of the individual as an agent and active performer in the arena of politics and social life. At any rate Gandhi firmly believed in the perfectibility of the individual and of the flow through effect to society:

I do not agree that our ideologies, ethical standards and values are altogether a product of our material environment without any absolute basis outside it. On the contrary as we are so our environment becomes.\textsuperscript{27}

Gandhi was aware of the practical aspects presented by the reverse of this argument, for example, the alienation of the individual through feelings of powerlessness caused by massive centralisation in modern society. He was very concerned with increased power of states which seem to lead to a corresponding decrease in civil liberties:

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I look upon an increase in the power of the state with the greatest fear because, although while apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress.\(^{28}\)

Gandhi was also aware of the problems of individual rights. In his view if a person loses his freedom "he becomes an automation and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man\(^ {29}\) Gandhi believed in almost unlimited nature of individual ability; he saw the individual as the subject rather than the object of history, and he firmly believed that the relationship between the individual and society was one of the parts determining the whole. Therefore, the Gandhian concept of human rights, unlike any other historical or modern school of rights, is more relevant to the Third World countries as well as to the world at large.

Gandhi was clear about the role of individual in society and favoured a change as according to the need and essence of individuals of the strictures of the state. Gandhi would argue that the normal

\(^{28}\) Modern Review, October 1935.

\(^{29}\) Harijan, 1st February 1942.
expectations of society can be overlooked without going to the length of retiring from the social state. Gandhi was worried about the human survival in future which has come to be true on the world level at large and on the Third World level in particular. Further human survival is everywhere in question for one or other reasons. Gandhi ascertained that the authenticity of existence can run counter to the playing of socially defined roles. The question of whether one is acting in such "bad faith" depends on whether the role is played blindly or knowingly and willingly. Because Gandhi maintains that the individual moulds themselves to fit in with society, he can claim that by acts of will one can go against socially determined modes of behaviours.

Gandhi's social philosophy encompassed both an enriched society and free individuals. Changes in social conditions are dependent upon changes in the hearts of men and women which begin, obviously, at the individual level. This does not happen through the inevitability of progressive historical change - persons must consciously, individually as well as eventually collectively, endeavour to bring about changes in their own lives and surroundings. He claimed that not only did people changes society but that they had to take an active stance to ensure

that this occurred. The responsibility for the state of society rests personally with each individual. When talking of the change to a more ideal social system where there is "none low, none high", Gandhi asserts:

we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as a game to be seized, the further it must from us. Socialism begins with the first convert. 31

Gandhi was not a theoretician. In line with his idealism that individuals could change themselves and their society he merely explored, on an adhoc basis within the rules of satyagraha, individual and social paths that had consistency with the goals sought. The focus on the individual and his/her responsibility for changing the world through changing the self is aptly conveyed in Gandhi's conviction that nonviolence and methods of solving disputes nonviolently are contagious if conducted in the right spirit. "The more you develop it in your being the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and

by and by might oversweep the world.\textsuperscript{32} And further:

Nonviolence is like radium in its action. An infinitesimal quantity of it embedded in a malignant growth acts continuously, silently and ceaselessly till it has transformed the whole mass of the diseased tissue into a healthy one. Similarly even a little of true nonviolence acts in a silent subtle, unseen way and leavens the whole society.\textsuperscript{33}

It must be noted, however, that Gandhi was not an advocate of mere self-reform trusting that the benefits would eventually filter through to society at large. Gandhi himself led large mass movements that were concerned with social issue. Satyagraha means fighting injustices. Self-reformation cannot come about in isolation, selflessness is a key to its attainment. Reformation of society and the self are inextricably linked - reform yourself and you have started to reform the world, reform the world nonviolently and you will have reformed yourself. This interplay between the individual and society can be seen when Gandhi speaks of the attainment of swaraj (independence) for India. He announces that once you stop regarding yourself as a slave

\textsuperscript{32}. Harijan, 21 January 1939.

\textsuperscript{33}. Ibid, 12 November 1938.
you cease to be one. You will have changed your self-conception and through the measures of boycotting the institutions of former rulers will have started changing society; thus "... if we become free, India is free. ... It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves. It is, therefore, in the plam of our hands... such Swaraj has to be experienced each for himself.34

For Gandhian interpretation of the relationship between society and the individual, society does not make the individual. The individual makes themself, and makes their society. They can choose their modes of behaviour. Styagraha, according to Gandhi, is a science and consequently crosses cultural barriers. Nonviolence too is universal, being "the law of our species", "the great Eternal Law governing man" and as a law " must hold good for all".35


35. Harijan, 22 February 1942.