CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION TO GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY
Chapter I

Introduction to Gandhian Philosophy

1.1 Truth:

First, an understanding of what Gandhi means by truth is needed. Near the beginning of his search for God, Gandhi thought God is Truth. But over time he saw that through the realities of syadvaad (maybe-ism) and anekantvaad (several end-isms) one person's God as Truth could negate another’s God as Truth. To avoid sponsoring another war of the Titans, so to speak, Gandhi shifted his view of God to “Truth is God.” In “God is Truth”, is not certainly does not mean ‘equal to’ nor does it merely mean, ‘is truthful’. Truth is not a mere attribute of God, but He [sic] is that. He is nothing if He is not that. Truth in Sanskrit means Sat. Sat means is. Therefore Truth is implied in Is. God is nothing else is. Therefore the more truthful we are, the nearer we are to God. We are only to the extent that we are truthful.1 “Truth rules out prejudice, evasion, secrecy and deception as well as exaggeration. Suppression or modification of reality it requires that we should never be afraid of confessing our mistakes or retracing our steps. Truth also implies mutual toleration and avoidance of dogmatism and bitterness; for truth is discerned by man [sic] is always relative and fragmentary. While, therefore, it is a good guide for individual conduct, imposition of that conduct upon others will be an insufferable interference with their freedom of conscience.2

1.1(i) Regard for Truth and Non-violence

The second principle of faith and conduct which forms the basis of Gandhi’s Educational Philosophy is his creed of truth and non-violence. Buddha was an
apostle of Truth and Non-violence; and Gandhi had read *The Light of Asia*, in the second year of his study in England as a student of law. It was, however, by reading Tolstoy’s *The Kingdom of God is within You* that he was awakened to the beauty of non-violence. In 1892, his contacts with Christian friends in South Africa stimulated him to make a comparative study of religions. The idea of a morally integrated individual fighting by force of his soul against injustice took a deep root in his being. He experimented with it in South Africa, during 1908-14 in his fight against Colour Bar. Tax Ban on immigration and against individuality of non-Christian marriages on the political plane. And each time he came out successful. When back to India, he tried similar experiments in Champaign (Bihar) and in Ahmedabad on the economic plane. Education is a non-violent instrument of social change. He attempted experiments at Champaran, at Sabarmati Ashram and at Sewagram, Wardha on the educational plane. The result of these was the Wardha Scheme of Education, generally known as Basic Education. Advocating the scheme, Gandhi said in 1937: “Europe is no example for us. It plans its programs in terms of violence because it believes in violence. I would be the last to minimize achievement of Russia, but the whole structure is based on force and violence. If India has resolved to eschew violence, this system of education becomes an integral part of this discipline she has to go through”. India cannot afford costly education. We are told that England spends millions on education. America also does so, but we forget that all that wealth is obtained through exploitation. They have reduced the art of exploitation to a science and might well give their boys the costly education. We cannot, will not, think in terms of exploitation, and we have no alternative to this plan of education which is based upon non-violence. India has no
colonies to exploit and no capital of her own to draw upon. She cannot give costly education to her children. She must use the best of her economic resources to fulfill its oblation to the people. In the Gandhian philosophy, Truth is the Reality but that is not suddenly realized. It has to be realized through relative truths in the various fields of life. Real education is meant for the highest Truth, i.e., God-realization and since God manifests Himself in innumerable forms, they have to be taken care of through the moral and spiritual means, i.e., non-violence. Dr. Shrimali, speaking about Gandhian ideology, says, that the two basic assumptions of Gandhian philosophy are—

(1) Truth and (2) Non-violence.

Even as in pragmatic philosophy, the only limitations placed on an individual or society are that which prohibit action or curtails or bring to an end growth through experience. In Gandhian philosophy the achievement of the immediate goal of a Sarvodaya Society and the ultimate goal of self-realization with Truth, are subject to the principle of nonviolence. However, unlike pragmatic philosophy, the principle of non-violence is not to be interpreted in its negative sense only, that is, as a prohibition. The principle of non-killing, means “Not to hurt any living thing is, no doubt, a part of Ahimsa. But it is its least expression. The principle of Ahimsa is violated by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. It is violated by our holding on to the worldly needs.”

To Gandhi, Truth and Non-violence (Ahimsa) are “So intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin, or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc... Ahimsa is the means; Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach and so Ahimsa is our supreme duty. “Thus, non-violence is the basic principle by which man is to live his life; by which he is to establish the
Sarvodaya Society; by which he is to achieve realization of God. It is a positive force, it is love. Every act of man is to cherish and further life. Ahimsa “consists in allowing others the maximum of convenience at the maximum inconvenience to us, even at the risk of life.” Non-violence is not a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness. On the contrary, (it is a) more active and real fight against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness.” It imposes upon man two obligations: (1) Man must destroy anything that prevents further growth in Truth through experience. This may mean, in certain instances the taking of a life as duty. For instance, if there is no other way to subdue a man who is bent on murder, one may have to resort to force but not so long as he is capable of rationality, of receiving a witness to Truth. (2) Man must actively encourage all that is good both in society and in the individual. God has innumerable names in various religions and otherwise In hindu scriptures alone, we hear about the thousand names of god but Gandhi particular identified god with the truth. Nonviolence for the society is necessarily different from that for the individual.5

1.1(ii) the strength of the votary of truth

(The following extracts are reproduced from a speech of Gandhiji which appeared under the title “Hindu-Muslim Question”.) A Satyagrahi has 110 powers he can call his own. All the power he may seem to possess is from and of God. He, therefore, moves towards this goal carrying the world’s opinion with him. Without the help of God he is lame, blind, groping. Ever since 1921 he has been reiterating two words, ‘self-purification’ and ‘self-sacrifice’. God will not assist him without this two. The world is touched by sacrifice. It does not then discriminate about the merits of a cause. Not so
God. He is all seeing. He insists on the purity of the cause and on adequate
sacrifice therefore.⁶

1.1(iii) the spirit of truth

His uniform experience has convinced him that there is no other God than
Truth the little fleeting glimpses that he has been able to have of Truth can
hardly convey an idea of the indescribable luster of Truth, a million times more
intense than that of the Sun we daily see with our eyes. In fact, what he has
captured is only the faintest glimmer of that Mighty Effulgence. But this much he
can say with assurance, as a result of all his experiments, that a perfect vision
of Truth can only follow a complete realization of Ahimsa. To see the universal
and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face, one must be able to love the
meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot
afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why his devotion to Truth has
drawn him into the field of politics; and he can say without the slightest
hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing
to do with politics do not know what religion means.⁷

1.2 Ahimsa:

1.2(i) the nonviolent society

He holds that nonviolence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social
virtue to be cultivated like the other virtues. Surely society is largely regulated
by the expression of nonviolence in its mutual dealings. What he asks for is
an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale. All society is
held together by nonviolence, even as the earth is held in her position by
gravitation. But when the law of gravitation was discovered, the discovery
yielded results of which our ancestors had no knowledge. Even so, when
society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of nonviolence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today. But he cannot say in advance what the government based on nonviolence will be like. What is happening today is disregard of the law of nonviolence and enthronement of violence as if it were an eternal law. Society based on nonviolence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary cooperation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence. In India the outlook of life and the style of living together with the society structure are so designed that it does foster nonviolence.\(^8\)

**1.2(ii) Democracy and nonviolence**

Science of nonviolence can alone lead one to pure democracy and violence can't go together. The States those are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian, or if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously nonviolent. Holding the view that, without the recognition of nonviolence on a national scale, there is no such thing as a constitutional or democratic government, he devote his energy to the propagation nonviolence as the law of our life, individual, social, political, national and international. He fancy that he has seen the light' though dimly. Hewrites cautiously for he does not profess to know the whole of the Law. If he knows the success of his experiments he knows also my failures. But the successes are enough to fill him with undying hope.\(^9\) The conclusion is irresistible that for one like him, wedded to nonviolence, constitutional or democratic government is a distant dream so long as nonviolence is not recognized as a living force, an inviolable creed, not a mere policy. While he prates about universal nonviolence, his experiment is confined to India. If it succeeds, the world will accept it without effort. There is however a bit but the
pause does not worry him. His faith is brightest in the midst of impenetrable darkness. The choice in

His opinion lay between honest nonviolence with cooperation as it necessary.\textsuperscript{10}

1.2(iii) Theories of non-violence

There is ample scholarly discussion on the various kinds of non-violence and how non-violence is used in historical and modern situations. This project does not explore this discourse \textit{per se}. Rather. This is an attempt to understand in what ways non-violence is relevant to our relationships. It may be helpful here to briefly highlight some conceptualizations of non-violence, especially those inspired by Gandhi. A different Gandhian conceptualization of non-violence is \textit{Obedience to Truth}. Gandhi embedded mechanisms into ashram and freedom struggle life that ensured compliance with the vows, rules and regulations he set forth for their non-violent pursuits. These surveillance mechanisms served as disciplinary measures and normalized people into obedient subjects. Through micro-surveillance, even over such details as the \textit{desire} to propagate, Gandhi became an engineer of conduct and an orthopedist of individuality. The norm to which he urges others to adhere is what Gandhi calls Truth. A Truth is some piece of knowledge which can be understood and communicated between people.\textsuperscript{11} Since it is ours pursuit to minimize suffering, considering all perspectives leads us to harmlessness and compassion. Living according to the former is to minimize the suffering imposed on others (a passive aspect); the latter maximizes the reduction of existing suffering (an active aspect). By refusing to participate in coercive power relations, we simultaneously dismantle the violence in relations, and promote harmlessness and compassion-two
elements of sharing, which is the root of all civilization. More importantly, by deconstructing violent relations, we empower others to be more internally (and externally) consistent. Through my compassion enable you to be more truthful (just, non-violent) to yourself and thus also to me. It is in my interest to be compassionate It is in my interest not to be self-interested.

Establishment

These theories of non-violence enable us to understand extant circumstances through several lenses. First, the concept of the Enemy is understood as not the person(s) with whom one is engaged Conflict. Rather the “enemy” is the fundamental violent nature of the conflict. It could be the violent nature of the other’s policy structure or behavior (among other things). Thus, the target is not an Individual. Perse but the acceptance of violence as a viable means of relating. Here, all people involved are held responsible for their actions they are not absolved from the consequences but they themselves are not the targeted enemy. Related to the shift in understanding power is a change in what is considered knowledge. Non-violence recognizes that each situation is different and requires particular actions. It also says that each party understands a certain situation differently, and each perspective is equally valid. This does not mean each perspective is equally just. It demands us to consider how other party(s) perceives a conflict, and appreciate why they see it so. No one has the monopoly on knowledge’s shift in the concept of justice emerges from such mutual influencing through sharing of information. What is just in one particular historical moment may not be just in another. Informational, power, and adversarial matrices fluctuate. Nevertheless, an underlying question guides all non-violent action: “for whom will you live?” If only for yourself, then the concept “justice” is meaningless; if
only for others, the concept is equally absurd. Relations are more or less just, depending on how one balances the needs of the self with others' needs. As needs and resources change over time, relations must reflect these changes. Thus, what is just is extremely personal and fluctuates with contexts. This is a radical departure from traditional conceptualizations of justice which conceive it as (mostly) static and universal. Many conventional legal systems enforce such justice through revenge (to destroy the other), retaliation (to harm the other), or punitive (to hinder the other) mechanisms. Within the philosophy of non-violence justice is not enforced *per se* but engendered through (voluntary) mutual non-coercive engagement in pursuit of Truth. Again, this profoundly impacts how people perceive themselves: each individual is no longer a passive victim of an externally determined criterion of what is not/just each is an active creator, and sustainer, of contextual^ just relationships. Each of us is empowered to manifest justice through all our actions and relations. Each becomes an evolving agent of justice. To ensure our needs are met requires performing our duties. Gandhi often said that duties are primary, rights secondary. What good are individual rights when no one performs her/his duty? Only by executing one's duties secures one's rights. Again, this profoundly impacts how an individual perceives herself: she is no longer only a recipient of rights (by birth or national affiliation). She is an active executor of duties, which in turn secure for her (and others) rights and privileges. Living according to harmlessness and compassion also addresses needs/wants. Harmlessness urges the reduction/elimination of (violent) wants; compassion is the pursuit of maximizing needs being met (for all sentient beings).
1.3 Basic Education

Gandhiji kept the ideal of achieving self-realization as the ultimate aim of education. He expected the following:

- **All-round development of the students.** ‘Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart, nor soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education’, said Gandhiji.

- **Cultural education.** Gandhiji said, ‘Culture is the foundation; it should show itself in the smallest details of your conduct and personal behavior. Inner culture must be reflected in your speech, the way in which you treat visitors and guests and behave towards one another and your teachers and elders. Again, ‘True education, is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of the children’. He wanted to base education on indigenous culture because, otherwise, it would make the educated unfit for the service of the community and make them foreigners in their own land. He held the view that the social aim of education does not come in conflict with the individual aim. Man is to serve society and society is to help man. For the attainment of these aims, he had offered concrete methods and techniques as well. This was covered fully in the Basic Education.

- Gandhiji called for a National Education Conference at Wardha on October 1937. Basic education was the outcome of this conference. He wanted to establish a Sarvodaya society in India. Basic Education alone can bring in these desired results.16

- The gist of the Basic Education could be presented as follows:
• Education should be made free and compulsory for the children in the age group of 7 to 14 years.

• Gandhiji wanted to make education self-supporting. He said, ‘My Nai Talim is not dependent, should come from the educational process itself, whatever the criticism may be, I know that the only education is that which is self-supporting’. Again, ‘Nai Talim’. without the self-supporting basis would, therefore, is like a lifeless body’. After the completion of seven years of free and compulsory education, the children should be capable of taking up some meaningful occupation enabling them to stand on their own foot. This will help the children develop confidence and security as well as making them realistic and productive. ‘The child at the age of 14, that is after finishing a seven-year course should be discharged as an earning unit you impart education and simultaneously cut at the root of unemployment’, said Gandhi.

• Education, as Gandhi visualized, was one which is craft-centered. In fact craft was considered as the medium for earning and development i.e., learning through craftwork and later earning through the same. It is relevant to mention that Kothari Commission also stresses the work experience in education. It further lays stress on community learning for community welfare in school and colleges.

  o Gandhi wanted education to revolve around a teacher and not on books. He said, ‘I have always felt that the true text-book for the pupil is his teacher, because children take in much more and with less labour through their ears than through their eyes’. For him, ‘the teacher was to be most respected and most spiritual man in society. He should act as the true model for the student. One does not believe that this can be imparted
through books. It can only be done through the living touch of the teacher’. The type of education that he visualized was based on the tacit assumption of intimate interaction between the teacher and students. Values such as co-operation, discipline, sacrifice, integrity, fearlessness etc., are part of such teacher-student relationship.

- Basic education stressed very much on discipline and not in ultimate freedom. Gandhi said, ‘No training is possible without discipline and restriction’.

- The medium of instruction should be mother-tongue. A foreign language deprives them of the spiritual and social heritage of the nation, and renders them to that extent unfit for the service of the country. The introduction of English language by the British people blocked the development of Indian languages. The foreigners had their own plan of exploitation in this regard. Mother-tongue, being the most simple for any child, is the easiest one to pick-up.

- The higher Education should not be costly one and it should not be at the expense of the poor tax-payers, says Gandhiji. However, still, we could see that only the middle and upper classes are the main beneficiaries of the present education system sponsored out of the money contributed by the poor.¹⁷

**Student**

To the use of the vacation by students, if they approach the work with zeal, they can undoubtedly do many things. He enumerates a few of them:

- Conduct night and day schools with just a short course, well-conceived, to last for the period of the vacation.
• Visit Harijan quarters and clean them, taking the assistance of Harijans if they would give it.

• Taking Harijan children for excursions, showing them sights near their villages and teaching them how to study Nature, and generally interesting them in their surroundings, giving them by the way a working knowledge of geography and history.

• Reading to them simple stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

• Teaching them simple Bhajans

• Cleaning the Harijan boys of all the dirt that they would find about their persons and giving both the grown-ups and the children simple lessons in hygiene.

• Taking a detailed census in selected areas of the condition of Harijans.

• Taking medical aid to the ailing Harijans.\textsuperscript{18}

**Intellectual Development**

During my recent wanderings in Travancore and Madras he found that most of the students and ‘intellectuals’ who came into touch with him were an instance of intellectual dissipation rather than intellectual development. The fault lies in the modern system of education which encourages this vicious tendency, misdirects the mind, and thereby hinders its development instead of helping it. His experiments in Sega on have only confirmed this impression. But they are as yet too incomplete to be cited as evidence. The views on education that he is now going to set forth have been held by him right from the time of the founding of the Phoenix Settlement in South Africa in the year
Life to them is a sorry bungle which they muddle through anyhow. On the other hand, what goes by the name of education in our schools and colleges in the cities today is in reality only intellectual dissipation. Intellectual training is there looked upon as something altogether unrelated to manual or physic work. But since the body must have some sort of physical exercise to keep it in health, they vainly try to attain that end by means of an artificial and otherwise barren system of physical culture which would be ridiculous beyond words if the result was not so tragic. The young man who emerges from this system can in no way compete in physical endurance with an ordinary laborer. The slightest physical exertion gives him a headache; a mild exposure to the sun is enough to cause him giddiness.

1.4 Female Education:

1.4(i) Equality of rights for women

We shall accept equality of rights for women, but he think their education should differ from men’s as their nature and functions do. In progressive countries, women receive the very highest education but, after it is over, they do not have to perform the same duties as men and in our country women have never to compete with men for a livelihood. Whom this message reaches is likely to have had some measure of education. Hewishes, therefore, to consider on thing. That should educated women do for their illiterate sisters? This is a very important issue. Beyond question, if women choose they can attain a far greater measure of success in this field than men can ever do. At present, we do not find many women taking to this work. That is, he believe, not their fault but that of their education. The first thing, therefore, which educated women must do, is to try and see that their sisters
do not fall a victim to it. Modern education fails utterly to prepare women for their distinctive role; this is not questioned by anyone. Hedoes not wish here to examine the shortcomings of modern education or to bother you with the question how they may be overcome. All that he desire is that educated women should make this question their own and that those of them with some experience should dedicate their all to rouse Gujarat over it and focus attention on the right lines [of reform].

1.4(ii) Higher education for women

After primary education, a girl gets another four to five years of secondary education. Expressing his views on the question as to whether in this period she should be taught through English or the mother tongue, Gandhiji said: “I feel that teaching English to them under the circumstances would be like killing them. It will never be possible for hundreds of thousands of women to think or express their thoughts in English; and even if it were possible, it would be undesirable. “If the women for whom we are drawing up this plan are imparted higher education through the mother tongue, they could make their homes as bright and beautiful as gold. Not only that, they could also exert their good influence on their uneducated sisters and thus render valuable service to them as well.”

1.4(iii) Curriculum for girls’ education

Women must learn as part of elementary education at least their own mother tongue, Hindi if it is not their mother tongue, enough Sanskrit to be able to understand the drift of the Bhagavad Gita, elementary arithmetic, elementary composition, elementary music and childcare. Along with this, he thinks they should know well the processes up to the weaving from cotton. When a
woman receives this education she should have an environment that will shape her character and enable her to see clearly the evils in society and to avoid them. He has not mentioned religious education separately as it is acquired by practice and would be covered by general reading. Truly speaking, it is a part of the elevating company of a teacher. This is about girls. The education of a widow or a married woman is of course a different matter. 23

1.4(iv) Gandhi and sex education

In fact, it should be a joint parent-teacher venture. The teacher can play a very important role in imparting sex instruction maintaining all decency and decorum. There need not necessarily be a period of specific hours for sex instruction in school. It can be both formal and informal; teacher can do a lot indirectly or occasionally or occasionally also in this regard. The students should be exposed to better literature so that they may refrain themselves from writing dirty words / phrases. Proper names for eliminative products, genital organs, the sexual acts, menstruation, masturbation etc. should be given soon enough to protect against the use or “gutter-language.” It will help them to have restrained to a great extent as the scientific names are supposed to be free from attitudes of nastiness or excitement. Whenever they are found using such obscene language make them understand that certain words are not to be used in cultured society. 24

1.4(v) Woman and the struggle for swaraj

Similarly, Gandhi assigned to women a distinct and crucial mission in the nationalist quest which was perhaps the most creative and significant aspect of his vision. He remarked that in order to play her full and destined role in
world affairs on the solution of conflicts by non-violent means, women must extend their interests beyond the narrow confines of their homes and family and embrace the whole of humanity. He did not see his advocacy of women’s participation in freedom struggle as contradictory to his basic concept of woman as nurturer and care-taker of the home. On the contrary, participation of women in *Satyagraha* was seen as an extension of her special mission as the caretaker of humanity. He, in fact, envisaged a pertinent link between the struggle for political freedom and the social reforms, as he believed that entry into politics would greatly help in removing many shackles with which they were fettered and getting them a place of equality with men.25

1.4(vi) Education through Mother-tongue

One of the resolutions the was adopted at the All India National Education Conference held at Wardha in 1937, presided over by Gandhi himself, was that education must be imparted through mother-tongue. The education that is imparted through foreign-language makes learning difficult. Besides, mastering foreign language alienates the education people from their family and society. Hence, education through foreign language is self-defeating. It is an admitted fact that one’s mother-tongue is the best medium to express one’s ideas at one’s best and maximum. It quickens the thought-process. Besides, whatever is taught is received well. But learning science and cultures of the foreign countries may not be possible. To create a natural curiosity in children, imparting education through mother-tongue is a must. Otherwise, it chokes the learning spirit in the very beginning. It results in dropouts at the primary stage. Cramming is the only way to learn a lesson. Hence, craft as the basis and mother-tongue.26
1.5. Untouchability

1.5(i) Dalits and Religion

Hindu Dalits (Harijans): Many Dalits continue to debate whether they are 'Hindu' or 'non-Hindu'. Missionaries have initiated several Dalit organizations. In some regions of India and Nepal, missionaries have been successful among the Dalits. Both in Eastern India and Nepal, many Dalits have come under the combined influence of Maoists and the missionaries, even attacking and murdering Hindus. Traditionally, Hindu Dalits or Harijans have been barred from many activities that were seen as central to Vedic religion and Hindu practices of orthodox sects. Among Hindus each community has followed its own variation of Hinduism. The wide variety of practices and beliefs observed in Hinduism makes any clear assessment difficult. However, extremist far-right militia groups such as the RanvirSena, largely run by upper-caste landlords in backward areas of the Indian state of Bihar, oppose equal treatment of Dalits and have resorted to violent means to suppress them. The RanvirSena is considered a terrorist organization. On the other side, extremist groups run by small minority of Dalits such as the "Dalit Panthers Movement" have committed violent acts against Brahmins and middle-caste people. In Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim nation, more than 60% of the 1.4 million Hindu minorities are Dalits.

—Muslim Dalits (Arzal/Muhajir): Muslim society in India can also be separated into several caste-like groups. Descendants of indigenous lower-caste converts are discriminated against by "noble", or "Ashraf, Muslims who can trace their descent to Arab, Iranian, or Central-Asian ancestors. There are several groups in India working to emancipate them from upper-caste Muslim
discrimination. The Dalit Muslims are referred to by the Ashraf and Ajlaf Muslims as Arzal or "ritually degraded". They are also referred to as "Mujahir" in Pakistan and euphemistically called "Bhaiya". They were first recorded in the 1901 census as those "with whom no other Muhammadan would associate, and who are forbidden to enter the mosque or to use the public burial ground". In Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim nation, 80% of the Muslim farmers of Sindh or 24% of the total population are Mojahir. There are estimated to be 6.8 million Mayazurs (bonded laborers) in Punjab and another 7.5 million in Sindh. Although the Pakistani Supreme Court has ruled bonded labour unconstitutional and the National Assembly has passed laws prohibiting it, these laws remain largely unenforced due to the influence of large landlords.

**Sikh Dalits:** Master Tara Singh himself helped uplift the "Sikh Dalits. KP Singh a Dalit activist in UP was himself a Sikh. Kanshi Ram himself was of Sikh background although converted because he found that Sikh society did not respect Dalits and so became a neo-Buddhist. The Mazhabi are one Dalit of the Punjabi Dalits that are treated as outcastes from mainstream Sikh society and not allowed to enter Sikh temples. Jivan Singh, a friend of Guru Gobind Singh was a Dalit.

**Christian Dalits:** Converts to Christianity (facilitated by the influence of missionaries) have retained the caste system in their communities. The Dalit Christians are at the lowest rung of that hierarchy. A 1992 study of Catholics in Tamil Nadu showed that Dalit Christians face segregated churches, cemeteries, services and processions. They also face economic and social hardships due to the discrimination by upper-caste priests and nuns. One famous Dalit activist with the nom-de-plume of BamaFaustina has written
books that provide a first-hand account of the discrimination against them by nuns and priests in South India.

**Dalits and Neo-Buddhism:** In Maharashtra and a few other regions, Dalits have come under the influence of the neo-Buddhist movement initiated by Ambedkar. Some of them have come under the influence of the Neo-Buddhist and Christian Missionaries and have converted away from Hinduism into religions such as Christianity and Buddhism in what they have been told is an "attempt to eliminate the prejudice they face". Activists such as Udit Raj have claimed that such conversion will solve all discrimination problems faced by Dalits.29 such claims have been criticized as "fragile at best". The conversion attempts have also been criticized by Hindu advocacy groups as "unhelpful" as Casteism is a complex dynamic that extends across all religions in India. However, the Constitution of India guarantees religious freedom and their right to choose their religion, although controversies related to mass-conversions have led to laws being passed against them in some states in India. Since then, several Christian converts have reconverted back into Hinduism as the conversions did not award them the financial rewards that the missionaries lured them with.
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2. Ibid, P.82.
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5. Ibid, P. 25.
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19. Dr. Sudharam Joshi, Educational Thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi P. 114.
21. Ibid, P. 244.
22. Ibid, P. 252.
25. Bharti Thakur, Womanin Gandhi’s Mass Movements, P. 29
28. Ibid, P. 76.
29. Ibid, P.78.