CHAPTER-III
GANDHIAN THOUGHTS AS PRACTICED
BY THE GREAT GANDHIANS
3.1 VINOBA’S SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

VINOBA’S SAMYA YOGA

Vinoba was a firm believer in the power of words (shabda-shakti), and he excelled in using words-weapons (shabda-chastra). He coined many new words, and, in keeping with the Indian tradition, instead of discarding old words or concepts, he enriched their meaning by grafting new meaning on them. He was also a great votary of Samanvaya i.e. connecting, joining, bringing together, synthesizing different, even opposite, schools or streams of thought. He was a Samanvayacharya par excellence i.e. a master preceptor of synthesis. Brevity, conciseness, precision, exactness and profundity characterized his oral and written expression or communication. Very subtle, fine, sophisticated and deep thinking unfolding different nuances of meaning was his forte. He was a master Sutrakar i.e. a formulator or composer of sutrus i.e. short or concise technical sentences or precepts, or aphorisms.

Vinoba was a very well-read man; in his own words, he had read literally thousands of books; and being a polyglot (who knew as many as 21 languages), he had read books in a wide range of languages. Inspire of his excellent command over written and spoken English, he has rarely written and spoken in English; most of his talks and writings have been in Marathi and Hindi. Nor has he made much use of the Western concepts. His terminology and idiom have been heavily sanskritised, religious and spiritual. In the true tradition of the Indian rishis or sages, he has explained his views ideas...
meaning by making profuse references to Indian mythological figures legends and parables.¹ He has been deeply immersed in the Indian history, culture and civilization; and he has talked to and written for primarily those whose minds and hearts are essentially Indian. All this has naturally determined his idiom and style.²

VINOBÁ’S SOCIAL IDEAS

The Present Day Society

They observe that though the means of comfort have greatly increased, no country in the world is happy today. This signifies that there is something wrong somewhere. The society of today is like a heap of wheat grains. There are some grains - which move to fill up a depression, but their number is small. The other ones remain where they are. But the human society we have to build up would be like water. The tasks of defense and reconstruction of society have got into the clutches of violence and competition. The goddess of defense has taken the form of violence and that of reconstruction the form of competition.

The Distinctive Feature of a Living Society

The distinctive feature of a living society ‘is that the pain experienced at one place is communicated to the other.³ When the sensitivity of a physical body begins to decline, it is presumed that it is moving towards death. The same is exactly with society.

THE AIM CONCERNING SOCIETY

They have to transform the present society into a Sarvodaya one. We have to abolish castes, sects, classes etc. existing in the society of today. The society
of today is based on competition. We wish to build up the future society on cooperation. The society stands today on the foundation of ownership. Tomorrow we have to abolish ownership. There are inequalities in the present society. We have to abolish inequalities. Thus we want to build up new women. We want to do away with the owner-labour distinction. In other words, we desire to make use of both the intelligence and the capacity for manual labour of the two. We want to bring about equality without sacrificing efficiency. The life of society can be built up on competition as well as compassion, but, ultimately, it is only a compassionate social structure which is conducive to good.

EQUALITY, THE DEMAND OF THE AGE

The wage demands the establishment of equality. The age is yearning for equality. When there is such an intense longing, it is bound to come. The only question is of the way to be adopted by it, so that on being established, it may prove to be stable, beneficial, conducive to well-being and satisfying. This way would be that of compassion.

THE MEANING OF EQUALITY

He do not want arithmetical equality, but he do want equity, or such equality as, for instance, the five fingers of the hand have. These five fingers are not equal in dimensions, but they all work in full cooperation and together perform innumerable tasks. They want equality tempered with right discrimination. The attempts made in other countries to bring about equality by force lacked the insight of proper discrimination. That is why the idea of equality in those countries is proving abortive. A mother does not distribute food among her children on the basis of mathematical equality. To the youngest one she gives
only milk to the next one some milk and some bread, and to the grown-ups only bread. In the same way, in society also we will exercise discrimination and take into account the intensity of hunger and the power of digestion of each in the distribution of food. Where equality is brought about by force, all are compelled to conform to the same pattern. We aim at spiritual equality based on proper discrimination. They thus stand for the abolition of all the differences which make for inequality between the different member of the society, such as those between men and women, between the rich and the poor as also between the masters and the servants. Not that we dislike all differences. There are natural differences of various kinds between different individuals. They make for variety, but they do not produce inequality. We have to do the same in regard to society. All differences which make for inequality and disharmony have to be abolished.\footnote{5}

VARNASHRAM

Amongst them the term varnashrams is in vogue, but it contains two ideas—varnas and ashram. They are not identical. Varna is concerned with social order, which may undergo change. The varnas system signifies that everybody should discharge his duties in accordance with the social other prevailing at that time. The ashram system is not so much concerned with society as with individuals. Hence it is applicable to all societies and all times. There may be some outward changes, but its basic form will remain the same. Though other religions have not prescribed anything like the ashram system, of Hinduism, the idea behind it is present in all religions. Individual should regard it his duty to take up the work for which he has been trained, that no other should compete with him in his work, that all should receive adequate equal protection and commensurate wages, that all, who do their allotted work
with, devotion and with a sense of responsibility, should be esteemed equally, and that even/ individual should work and God be pleased with his worship m the form of doing his own appointed task-such in short is the institution of the hereditary occupational groups.⁶

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ASHRAM SYSTEM

If someone were to ask him, “What is the reason of your being proud of Hinduism?” he would say that the Ashram system is for me the top pride of Hinduism. There can be no better scheme for society than this. Life is a continuous adventure. Like the flowing water of a river we must be ever on the move. Stagnation is death. Our ancient Rishis understood the secret of life. They created the fourfold division of life in order to keep man on the move and save him from becoming a contented pig or a repetitive machine. He has been fascinated by this idea of four Ashramas. The last one, namely of a Sannyasi or a homeless wanderer, has always thrilled me.In the modern society all this has changed. We have lost the sense of thrill and adventure. The stream of social service has become dry. People continue to be householders almost to their last breath. We must get out of it and devote ourselves to some selfless service. That will give us a new vision and strength.he feel that we need to revive this ancient division of life in the four well-marked stages.⁷

THE EDUCATION OF MEN AND WOMEN

There are some common and some especial factors in the education of men and women. The common factors outnumber particular factors. Let us first look at the common factors.⁸ The spirit of both men and women is equally pure. In this respect there is no difference between them. This is the first
common factor. The second common factor is about ‘desires’. Both have common desires like those of hunger and greed. They both bear the same relationship to nature. It is not that nature appears to them differently. This is the third common factor. Thus it is clear that the education of men and women greater part is common. The levels of the development of qualities apply to them equally. Taking these things into consideration. I say that they should get the same education and both should be educated together.9

WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

As long as violence is your weapon, the women will have a second place no matter how lofty the principles may be. However, much we may try, they cannot have the first place. If that is to be accorded to them, it is essential that the means of protection must be non-violent.10

WOMEN ARE NOT WEAK

It was later that women were called Abla, powerless in our society. The original term for them is not Abla but Malula that that is great powerful. It is only the female idol that has been accepted as a symbol of Shakti power not the male idol.11

VILLAGES, THEN AND NOW

Men in India have always lived in villages and the village has been held in high esteem. A Vedic for example, says, “May our villages grow and prosper and be strong.” We thus find the village ideal upheld in India from very old times. Every village in those days was a state m itself. It was ruled by a P cinch ay at, that is a village council consisting of five elders representing the five Varnas. The members of the Panchayat worked with one accord like the five fingers of a hand. What the five said was for the people, as the proverb
has it even today, the word of God. The village provided for all its needs, both intellectual and material, locally. It was for all practical purposes a self-contained unit. Every village had its carpenters, cobbler and weavers. They served the peasants in their various ways and received an adequate share in the produce. The share increased or decreased according to increase in the year's production. The artisans were thus members to the village community on the same level as the peasants. The land and the produce was owned and shared by the community as a whole. The things have changed since then and today we find that though the villages still produce all the raw material, they depend for most of their wants on cities.

ADVICE TO VILLAGERS

The small and expensive house in the cities in congested localities are no good. It is much better for you to live in your village huts and enjoy fresh air under the radiant sun. Of course you should improve your existing houses and plan for better ventilation and better sanitation. But do not try to rush to the cities in search for higher standard of living. Which is a higher standard of living? To live a Normal Tie to work for one's own livelihood in open air conditions or to live in cities on the labour of others and then to take physical exercises to improve one's digestion and appetite? I will any day prefer the former.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CITIES AND VILLAGES

he do not want to destroy the industries that already exist in the towns and they certainly should have the right to go on working for the town population and perhaps for export. But the industrial goods should not be forced on any one. The villagers should be free to put barriers against the import of industrial
textiles and food stuffs into the villages. If we wish that the houses be strong, it would not do to have a weak ground-floor. All of our articles of food come from rural areas. The life of the city people is dependent on them. In other words, the peasants of rural areas serve the whole country and then only the life of all is maintained. Hence the city people should think about their benefactors. Just as different organs of the body cooperate with and are sensitive to each other, similarly there should be cooperation and affection between the rural and urban peoples. Since the attainment of Swaraj they (the townspeople) have forgotten the distinction between Swadeshi and foreign articles. They purchase whatever looks cheap, good and attractive.... Such is the picture of the towns. On the other side, the villages have become depleted of all their industries, their petty vocations have been snatched away from them by the cities..... The proper thing for cities to do is to maintain village industries in the village itself, and to establish only such industries in the cities as will stop the influx of foreign goods. If they do this the towns and the villages can work together in concord and raise the prosperity of the country. Just as they declare some forest as ‘reserved’, so the need is to declare some of the industries as ‘reserved for the villages’.  

3.2 Radicalisation of Economic Policy under Tilak, Gandhi and Nehru

As we have seen, the mainstream of the freedom movement was nationalist, middle class and bourgeois. Its economic programme was mainly oriented to promoting the interests of these classes. But the Congress movement had long felt the impact of the rising Social Democratic and Labour movements in Europe. Tilak, Lajpat Rai and others had forged contacts with them in the first decade of the new century. In fact Tilak referring to Dadabhai’s presence at
the Socialist International had presciently written in *Kesari* about the swelling tide of socialism and had predicted that it would emerge triumphant the world over. Subsequently, there was also the impact of the Russian Revolution. Many Nationalists and Servants of India had taken to organising labour and they played not an insignificant part in the formation of the AITUC. Gandhi had his own concept of the labour movement and his distinctive mode of organization and agitation was exemplified by Ahmadabad's Majur Mahajan.\(^{16}\)

Tilak had travelled a long way. The influence of his renewed Labour Party contacts was quite discernible. In fact his manifesto spoke specifically of cooperation with the Labour Party and other British sympathizers. All the other planks of the Jawaharlal's future foreign policy are also present in the preamble to the Programme: World peace, Commonwealth partnership, League of Nations (now United Nations), national freedom for all nations and end to all forms of exploitation of one nation by the other. By the end of the second decade of the twentieth century conditions were ripe for a new thrust in politics. The First World War had quickened public awareness. Gandhi came forward to plant new seeds in a fertile soil. Within two short years, that is, from the passage of the Rowlatt Legislation in early 1919 to the Nagpur Congress of December 1920 Gandhi established his unchallenged supremacy within the Congress.\(^{17}\) This was a veiled criticism of Congress policy as adumbrated by both Gandhi and his own father. But Jawaharlal could not get the Congress to agree to any concrete measures at this stage. The atmosphere at Lahore was one of enthusiasm, reminiscent of the days of 1919-20. The Lahore session neither put its seal of approval on the Bombay AICC resolution nor did it develop it further. It was only at the Karachi session in 1931 that concrete shape was given to the ideas which had been
simmering in the previous ten years — of which the Congress people had a preview in Tilak’s election manifesto of 1920. Within the Congress the transition from Motilal to Jawaharlal signified something more than mere dynastic succession. Apart from a more uncompromising struggle and greater sacrifice, it meant translation of the Congress from the upper class outlook which Motilal typified to a policy closer to social democracy. The mainstream Congressmen accepted Gandhi as a leader who could take India to independence. They had faith neither in Gandhi’s absolute non-violence nor in the negation of industrialism. They accepted Khadi and would occasionally also spin. But they had never agreed whole-heartedly with his concept of Swaraj. Not only Jawaharlal but most Congressmen rejected the *Hind Swaraj Weltanschauung*. They neither subscribed to Gandhi’s philosophy on life nor his concept of the social order. Gandhi was not wholly unaware, of the ambiguity of the intelligentsia’s attitude to his leadership. In 1945 a serious debate opened on economic policy between Gandhi and Nehru. But Gandhi did not push the matters too far. He knew that despite the reverence in which he was held; his economic philosophy was not acceptable to the mainstream Congressmen. His lament in 1946-47, that he was now alone, and that Nehru, Patel and Rajaji, all wanted an industrialised, militarily strong India was futile. He should have known better. The Sardar had abandoned him in 1940 itself. And Rajaji much earlier. Nehru never even pretended that he was in agreement with Gandhi’s economic views. When Congress achieved power it paid lip-service to khadi and village industries, no doubt, but it was the Congress resolution and manifestoes which guided its steps as Government and not Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj*. The Congress Socialist Party was formed in 1934. Its emergence was welcomed by Gandhi. The interaction of Gandhi and
Socialists was an interesting chapter of the last phase of India’s struggle for freedom. The Socialists sent their programme to Gandhi for comment and the latter expressed his views candidly on the major items of the Socialist platform. The proliferating Indian bureaucracy and Indian politicians were not bourgeois in the Western sense. Bureaucracy here did not possess any technical, commercial, financial, industrial or artisan background. It was a Bhadraloka bureaucracy, completely divorced from labour and production. It bred corruption on a fantastic scale and slowed down the expansion of production and productivity. The license-permit-quota raj vitiated the political process, and the power-hungry politicians combined with the bureaucracy and business to establish a get-rich-quick syndrome. Criminals and mafia came to dominate politics. Public morality was the first victim of this conspiracy. The situation is undoubtedly grave. Unless the latent forces of renewal and reform within our society are galvanised and harnessed to the supreme task of creating an ordered state on the basis social justice, I fear, the country might dissolve into petty despotisms and anarchy. Let us not forget that throughout our long story arajaka, anarchy has been our bane, and if we do not wake up betimes it will overtake us again. In that event our freedom itself might be endangered. It is the duty of the selfless and public-spirited young men and women idealist youth to rise to the challenge and salvage the rich heritage left for us by generations of freedom fighters.
3.3 Gandhiji’s Concept of Sarvodaya

Jayaprakash Narayan

THE SARVODAYA SAMAJ

It is not easy to speak about Gandhiji’s concept of Sarvodaya or of his other concepts. Gandhiji’s ideas were at once simple and deep, direct and subtle, clear and vague. Moreover, they went on evolving and developing with his experiments with truths as he called them. It may be recalled that soon after Gandhiji’s death, in the middle of March 1948, the concerned leaders had gathered from all over the country at Sevagram to consider the future course of the Gandhian movement, and, on Vinobaji’s advice, had decided to form a Gandhian brotherhood to be known as Sarvodaya Samaj. Presenting to the Conference the consensus arrived at. Rajendra Babu in a key speech had related how Gandhiji when requested to put down his thoughts in a systematic manner in a sort “of comprehensive textbook”, “had oppressed his inability” saying that he had “only fundamental principles which lie applied to practical problems as they arose and could not write anything like a text-book of general maxims.” This explains the difficulty in distilling Gandhiji’s thought out of his voluminous writings and sayings and his activities of more than half a century -in three continents. Incidentally, it also explains the perennial freshness of Gandhiji’s mind and the not infrequent surprises that he caused to his followers, to whom his actions sometimes appeared to be contradictory and heterodox.
NOT A NEW WORD

The word ‘Sarvodaya’ was not coined by Gandhiji; it occurs frequently in the ancient religious literature of our country. Gandhiji only used the word to represent his entire body of thought. In his autobiography Gandhiji describes how his active-life left him “little time for reading”; and how on that account, he was able to digest what he read. One of the few books that he was able to read and which, to quote his words, “brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was (Ruskin’s) Unto This Last.” He goes on to add: “I translated it later into Gujarati, entitling in Sarvodaya” which he himself rendered into English as the welfare of all.

ANTYODAYA OR UPLIFT OF THE LAST

Vinobaji writing later in the Harijan expressed the view that ‘the proper rendering of Unto This Last would be Antyodaya (Uplift of the Last) rather than Sarvodaya.” But he added that because Gandhiji had preached that in working towards Sarvodaya it was necessary to begin with the last and lowliest, the word Sarvodaya should stand. This is one of the key ideas of Sarvodaya, though it has to be admitted that much remains to be done about its socio-economic methodology. It is well-known how current theories and practices of growth, whether in the West or the East, bypass this question and assume that the benefits of development would in due time percolate down, to use Vinobaji’s expressive term, to the last and lowliest. Here is the heart of the difference between the direction of present planning in this country and the one that Sarvodaya would like to be followed. To return to
Gandhiji, he summed up in the autobiography the teachings of Unto This Last, in other words, the teachings of Sarvodaya, in the following three fundamental principles:

- “That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
- “That a lawyer’s work has’ the same value as the barber’s inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
- “That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living.”

He goes on to write “the first of these I knew. The second I had dimly realised. The third had never occurred to me. Unto This Last made it as clear as daylight for me that the second and the third were contained in the first.” Then he added—and here we have the secret of Gandhiji’s greatness revealed—“I arose with the dawn, ready to reduce these principles to practice.”

3.4 Vinoba and the Gandhian Tradition

VINOBA’S father wanted his son to be either a barrister or a chemist. But Vinoba wished to become a sanyasi—a choice more in line with his mother’s outlook on life. And Vinoba has established his credentials to be recognised as a saint. It is believed by perceptive thinkers like Jainendra Kumar, the Hindi literateur, that the self-image of Vinoba was that of Shankara. Gandhi described Vinoba as a kritayogf. Others have given him the epithet of a samyayogi. There is a general agreement that Vinoba represented “the traditions of India’s great rishis”, or “a saint in line with the traditions of Indian
culture”. Vinoba read Jnaneshwari, a Marathi religious classic at the age of eight years. While in school, he purchased and read Dasboth of Saint Ramdas and Bhagwat of Saint Eknath. He abandoned his college studies, burnt the certificates, and went to Varanasi in order to study Hindu philosophy and Sanskrit. At the age of twelve, he took a vow of life-long celibacy, ate once a day in a free kitchen and slept anywhere. At the age of eighteen in 1913, he bade good-bye to the family life and its pleasures. In 1916, when Vinoba joined Gandhi’s Ashram, Gandhi admitted: “Vinoba has reached spiritual heights which have taken me years of patient labour to attain.”

Farther, the way Vinoba terminated his life during 8 November to 15 November 1982, was a revival of an ancient tradition in India called ‘prayopravesham’, whereby saints when they considered the time appropriate voluntarily leave the body. But this itself was the culmination of the spiritual development of Vinoba over seventy years. Whatever mundane pursuits Vinoba took up during his long life, the prime motive as well as the prime objective was non-mundane. For instance, even a socioeconomic revolutionary movement like Bhoodan was no exception. Said Vinoba Bhave, “I am performing it as a religious object.” As al/matter of fact, Vinoba had no idea about the Bhoodan movement and had little experience of leading such a movement when it was launched in 1951. He had nothing to offer except ‘the message’. And his possessions at that time were just three books, the Gita, the Bible, and the AesopsFables. He also perceived it as a continuation of Dharma Chakra Pravartanam. Unlike Vinoba, Gandhi had no dominating passion or obsessive desire or pet preferences in the early years of his life when Gandhi succumbed to all the weaknesses of flesh and blood. He went through a wide-range of experience and fire ordeals. He faced hurricanes of
lust, and onslaughts of humiliation, raging anger of the mighty and powerful. He knew the pain of denial and stings of deprivation. And he learnt the hard way to use all of them creatively. But Vinoba lived a cloistered, secure, sponsored, sheltered life but suffered self-imposed austerities. This made all the difference in shaping the life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who had his own innate nature, viz. transparent sincerity, disarming honesty and ruthless introspectiveness on the one hand and an irrepressible urge to Actively respond to evil—within and without—and to transform it. His heart was full of angst—not meditation.

Gandhi was different, however. He was as much interested in providing fire and fuel as in the process of cooking the meals and ensuring that the meals are properly cooked. Gandhi was not only a seer who could afford to be aloof. Nor was he only a religious-minded Vaishnavite who could suffer silently and passively. He was also a leader of millions of ordinary men and women who looked towards him with hope and for guidance. So he was a man whose heart was not full of meditation (a la Vinoba) but whose heart was full of angst and therefore he could not say that he was not interested in ‘what was cooking.’ In other words, Gandhi’s sense of responsibility was perennial. That is, Gandhi’s ideas have taken a rebirth. Vinoba is engaged in this process miraculously. This is the beginning of the fundamental social awakening to which Gandhi, like a prophet, used to refer in his lifetime. Second, the concept of Satyagraha. He made a fine distinction between ‘acute’ (SANSKRIT) satyagraha and ‘gentle’ (SANSKRIT) satyagraha. Vinoba thought and believed throughout the course of Bhoodan movement what he was doing during 1951-56 itself was satyagraha. He said:

People ask me about satyagraha. I have only got to say that if I can do anything, it is only as a satyagrahi. I believe even today (May 1952), I am
offering satyagraha. I insist on truth, to create atmosphere for it, to undertake maximum suffering to enter another man’s heart— all this is a form of satyagraha. But if inspite of this, acute Satyagrah would become a necessity, God will surely make you and me offer the same Vinoba thought Bhoodan itself is a training process of satyagraha. He said: “Through Bhoodan we are helping the people to acquire the power of Satyagraha.” He also clarified that the forms of satyagraha in a democratic set-up are bound to differ from the forms evolved by Gandhi prior to 1947. Vinoba believed that it would be a mistake to accept as ideal the satyagraha’s launched during the lifetime of Gandhi. Vinoba categorized these forms of satyagraha as ‘negative’. In short, Vinoba was convinced that there is no scope for the old forms of satyagraha in a democracy. In fact, he ruled the raison of civil disobedience (which Gandhi thought was a part and parcel of constructive work in a democratic free India). In a democracy, the means of propagation of ideas have been opened up, the country is free, and there is freedom of expression which is a condition which did not exist during Gandhi’s lifetime. In other words, in the hands of Vinoba even the basic postulates of satyagraha acquired a highly refined can notation. In the context of democracy, according to him, a particular process of persuasion and dissemination of ideals as such is satyagraha. In other words, process of propagation of a ‘message’ in order to affect change of the heart of the opponents and critics is satyagraha. This is so different from the ‘rough’ satyagraha of Gandhi. The implications of the proposition that Vinoba is the successor of Gandhi are inimical to the evolution of Gandhi’s seminal ideas and to the urgent task of application of these ideas to the Indian situation. It is said that the nature of a thing is the final form of its development. At a particular point of time, we are all inclined to
accept that that which is the ‘latest’ is the ‘final’. If it is conceded that Vinoba is the continuum of Gandhi, it means at this point of time that Vinoba is the final form of development of seminal Gandhi. It follows that (except for those interested in the history of Gandhian thought) for practical purposes it is unnecessary to go direct to Gandhi for understanding Gandhism—to study Vinoba is to study Gandhism as on date. It has been rightly said that nothing is more original than the origin. Even otherwise also as a point of fact, so far no other source of Gandhism is more original for a proper understanding of Gandhism than Gandhi himself. The proposition that Vinoba is a successor of Gandhi hinders a direct understanding of Gandhi. If it is conceded for the sake of argument that Vinoba converted the ‘tinsel’ of Gandhism in ‘gold’, his clarified and refined thought is likely to be relevant only in a really free democratic India (real, as per our Constitution). And he will be a really brave man who dare say that India today is really democratic and really free even as per the stipulations of our Constitution. It would, therefore, be premature to adopt Vinoba’s prescriptions and formulations to the problems which face India today.35 There was another psychological factor which Vinoba seems to have ignored in 1948-53. Through a series of nonviolent struggles undertaken, directed, and guided by Gandhi, along with the constructive programme activities, Gandhi had successfully tried to remove the ‘fear’ of authority—unjust authority—from the mind of Indian people. But he did not have the time to provide the corresponding mechanism of social control—for, fear is a very effective means of social control in a society. Loss of fear, without corresponding checks and balances, leads to a breakdown of other inhibitions which is so essential for a normal society. This is what exactly happened inside of the Indian mind. The evil and unwholesome psychological
effects of partition and the psychological effects of Gandhian struggle reinforced each other and initiated an irreversible process of corruption of consciousness. In 1947 and after a nations-wide movement for the restoration of psychological balance of the mind of India was as much a historical necessity—perhaps even more important—as other programmes.\(^{36}\)

### 3.5 Gandhi-Ambedkar Feud

The approach of Gandhi and Ambedkar for the removal of untouchability was diametrically opposite. Gandhiji firmly believed that untouchability should be removed by change of heart by Hindus. Ambedkar emphatically felt that it cannot be removed only by change of heart. He insisted on safeguards and political rights for his people. The paths of Gandhiji and Ambedkar, while often diverged, ultimately converged, forcing on the Indian conscience the problem of untouchability as an issue of national importance. Whatever the position the untouchables have today in Indian society, it is the result of the genuine efforts made by Gandhiji to change the Hindu heart and the constant attacks made by Ambedkar on Hindus and Hinduism. However, the impact of Gandhiji was which is evident from the fact that when the Constituent Assembly of Independent India made a legal provision on 29 November 1948, nine months after the assassination of Gandhiji, the house resounded with slogans of “Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai” right in the presence of Ambedkar who was present in his capacity as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly. The irony of the moment was lost on those who were present—a legalistic measure was taken in the name of Gandhiji, who had no use for legalism. And only three years before, Ambedkar had ended his book, “What
Congress and Gandhiji have done for untouchables”, with the bitter comment that the untouchables have ground to say, “Good God, is this man Gandhiji our saviour”?

Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer says: “When we consider the stature and achievements of Ambedkar as an intrepid warrior for socio-economic liberation of the lowliest, the lost and the last, especially the dalits and the exploited tribals there is no doubt that without diminishing the tremendous conscientisation of the Hindu community by Gandhiji vis-a-vis untouchability and Harijan debase\ment Bhim Ramji Ambedkar’s ceaseless war on behalf of the Panchama proletariat, in its widest connotation is incomparable. And yet, the irony of history is that as the house passed the provision abolishing untouchability on 29 November 1948, the hallowed walls resounded with shouts of ‘Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai’ although present at the session as Chairman of the Drafting Committee was Ambedkar, an untouchable himself and Commander-in-Chief of the Untouchable Army which waged a war against the reactionary system which sustained the Social Status-Quo Ante’. When the pre-‘independence saga of India comes to be written, only prejudice can assign a higher role in the liberation of the backward most brackets to anyone above Ambedkar. While both Gandhiji and Ambedkar were the symbols of the revolt against the caste, conscious oppressors within the Hindu fold, they chose different paths, strategies, and different ideologies. If Gandhiji was a deliverer of Indians including the weakest sector from the British Raj, Ambedkar was the spearhead of black power against the Varna front. There were many issues on which the two militant giants would not agree to the obvious reason that Gandhiji wanted reforms to end injustice. While Ambedkar demanded rebellion for the annihilation of the caste system Itself, Gandhiji was Vaishya and insisted on
eradication of shudrahood and untouchability. Ambedkar was mahar and indignantly insisted on the abolition of the Varna structure, thereby leveling up all castes into one oceanic unity or human sagar, Ambedkar was historic necessity, a dialectical demand if social democracy was to be India’s desideratum. The fire of this mahar was rare in the Indian public life of his time. In his characteristic forceful manner, Justice Iyer adds to this appraisal a complementary sentence, “To go against Gandhiji, to fight the National Congress, to demand equal share of power for the depressed classes, to draft legislation for womanhood’s equality needed the courage of an iconoclast, and Ambedkar was just that”. Gandhiji softened the Hindu heart, Ambedkar awakened self-respect and interest in politics among the untouchables. During decades proceeding independence, the policies and programmes have been profoundly affected by the difference in views of Gandhiji and Ambedkar on the key questions like what is the ultimate goal—assimilation of the untouchable minority or the establishment of separate but equal status in a reformed version of the traditional social order? If change is in order who should change—the untouchable minority or Hindu majority? Given a commitment to change, how might it best be implemented—through voluntary means or government coercion? Gandhiji’s answers to such questions were rooted in his belief that the caste Hindus were primarily responsible for writing the wrongs done to the untouchables. Meaningful change therefore must arise from a change of heart on the part of the Hindus. Gandhiji suggested that the real method of abolishing the distinction between caste Hindus and Harijans is by caste Hindus performing the
purification ceremony of ridding themselves of untouchability and becoming Harijans themselves. He advised caste Hindus to declare themselves as such and to live also as such. This was according to him, the substantial and organic method of amalgamating the two into one body.39 “My mission is to invite Savannas to wash themselves clean of the guilt of untouchability. I am essentially a lover of peace. I do not want to create dissension. I shall not do a single thing which may be contrary to truth and love”.40 “What does the service of the untouchables or rendering justice to them mean”? Gandhiji asked and he himself answered: “It means nothing less than redeeming a debt which is centuries overdue, and to expiate in some measure the sin we have been guilty of for ages, viz., that of oppressing and insulting our own kith and kin. We have behaved towards these unfortunate brethren of ours nothing better than a man turned monster behaves towards his brother man. And the programme of removal of untouchability that we have set before us is just some little expiation, self-purification, it cannot be prompted by any fear “or favour. If we take up this work, fearing that the so-called untouchables would go over trump card, we have betrayed our ignorance of Hinduism and our gratefulness to those who have served us for ages”. Gandhiji warned: “If we came into power, with the stain of untouchability unaffected, I am positive that the untouchables would be far worse under than Swaraj that they are now, for the simple reason that our weakness and our failings would then be buttressed up by the accession of power. I have always held that self-purification is an indispensable condition of Swaraj. It is as old when I began to think of Swaraj. I have always prized opportunities for doing
this kind of work, and have often put aside so-called public work for work of this nature. I know that those to whom only the exciting thing called, ‘Politics’ has an exclusive appeal will laugh at this kind of thing. But for me it is nearest and dearest”. Gandhi further said: “It is cowardly for anyone to suggest that the Arityajas will be emancipated when the old generation has passed away. Our worth as men consists in doing ‘Tapascharya’ and awakening in our elders compassion and the present sense of Dharma. That and nothing less is our duty. If we boldly translate our words into action, the task can be accomplished quite soon. It is a mean desire to wish to kill an enemy so that one may rule over his kingdom afterwards. Dharma consists in winning him over to our way of thinking and converting him into friend”.

3.6 VINOBA’S CONCEPT OF SARVODAYA

THE BASIS OF SARVODAYA

The spiritual basis of Sarvodaya thought is nothing short of Advaita, non-duality, even more. It is not only to be kept in mind but is also to be realized in this world.

THE PECULIARITIES OF SARVODAYA

The philosophy of Sarvodaya is, on the whole, synthetic, that is it has the potency of bringing all ideologies closer Sarvodaya is not a reaction to any ‘ism’. It is India’s own thought and her own system but not something that cannot be applied to any other time or country. Its external form may vary according to the needs of particular times and places (This non-insistence on a specific form is a fundamental element of Sarvodaya philosophy). But its inner core is eternal. He is formally convinced that the various one-sided
ideologies groping towards their own fullness will ultimately merge in the ocean of Sarvodaya. (Introduction to Jay Prakash Narayan: From Socialism to Sarvodaya) A virtue of Sarvodaya is that the self-interest, the interests of others and the supreme interest become one in it. No contradictions are left. All conflicts, internal or external, are resolved. No revolution is possible now unless it is peaceful, and no peace will be stable without a revolution. Only those will be able to hold out now who are peaceful revolutionaries. The thought which assures is a peaceful revolution. “is called Sarvodaya." In Sarvodaya, the two currents of the heroes and the saints become one. The distinction between them vanishes. The hero becomes a saint and the saint becomes a hero. The preserver of society himself plays the role of a social revolutionary and the enactor of a social revolution preserves it. Sarvodaya is a philosophy of life. That is why it has enough depth. It has economic, political, social and ethical aspects. for the rural area vinobaji work in the past some years with bhoodan, gramdan gramdan gram swarajya in that order has given me and to hundreds of sarvodaya workers through the country the necessary experience and insight to take the initiative and given the programme a concrete shape.

THE NEW IDEAL OF SARVODAYA

Just as formerly we had the ideal of Swaraj to work for, we have now the ideal of Sarvodaya. Without such ideals to inspire his life will not progress. As a matter of fact, this new ideal of Sarvodaya has developed out of the old ideal of Swaraj, because the concept of Swaraj contained within itself the urge for social reform. We have, therefore to take this new mission of Sarvodaya to every village. This is the new mission we have to work for, live for and die for.
THE AIM OF THE SARVODAYA MOVEMENT

We want Kingdom of Kindness. Christ spoke of the Kingdom of God, but the word ‘God’ is beyond us. There is some kindness in the present society also, but what we want is Kingdom of Kindness, we want kindness to be the dominate force in society. We must remember what we are engaged in is a movement for the complete regeneration” of society.

SARVODAYA AND SCIENCE

Many are of the view that Sarvodaya is an out-dated ideology with an aversion for science. But it is totally wrong. I have repeatedly said that it is Sarvodaya alone, and no other ideology, which has claim on science. If other acquires the power of science, it would lead to the annihilation of man. If that power gets linked with Sarvodaya, it would lead total development of humane feelings and to the good of mankind. In Sarvodaya planning, science would be made use of to the greatest extent possible.

SAMYAYOGA, THE BASIS OF SARVODAYA

He propose to speak to you about the basic idea behind the Bhoodan. We call this idea ‘samyayoga’. It consists in accepting the belief that the Spirit is equally immanent in all beings. It is on the foundation of this principle that we want to build up the Sarvodaya society, that is a Society which provides for the full and free development of one and all.

FUTURE OF SARVODAYA

He has not the least doubt that the world “will either have to accept Sarvodaya or annihilation. There is no third alternative, and it is certain that in
this age of “science the world will accept Sarvodaya. It may take time, but that is beside the point. Gandhi made himself by launching a

Campaign to popularize khadi and village industries. Vinoba claimed that sarvodaya was the ideology which thought of all. These ideals led Vinoba to advocate a social structure similar to that of Gandhiji and to insist on the adoption of purest means for its attainment. He suggests decentralisation of education and provision of higher education facilities in every village. Through his bhoodan, sampatidan and gramdan movement he has brought about a revolution of great magnitude in the Indian village.\(^45\)

### 3.7 ISSUES OF AGREEMENT

**Themes of Agreement**

There was a unanimity of opinion between Gandhi and Nehru on the following themes:

- Economic nationalism;
- Distributive justice;
- Creation of integrated human being;
- Commitment to the democratic method; and
- Stand for mixed economy.

**Economic Nationalism**

Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru both were staunch economic nationalists. They wanted to make India economically strong and self-reliant so that political freedom of India could be meaningful. Gandhi’s philosophy of Swadeshi bears testimony to this fact. In Gandhi’s view Swadeshi was a
precondition of Swaraj for India. He held the view that if Indians learnt to use goods produced by immediate neighbours, the chances of exploitation would be minimum and flourishing of cottage, small-scale and indigenous industries would get momentum. With the result India would be in a position to regain her past glory. About the excellent results of Swadeshi Gandhi observed, “It is suggested that such Swadeshi, if reduced to practice will lead to the millennium......” In his opinion the country slipped into poverty because it went off the track of Swadeshi. He wrote, “Much of the deep poverty of the masses is due to the ruinous departure from Swadeshi in the economic and industrial life. If not an article of commerce had been brought from outside India, she would be today a land flowing with milk and honey. But that was not to be. We are greedy and so was England...” Nehru had a passion for freedom, both political and economic. To him nationalism was not enough. As a staunch believer in economic nationalism he said: “Freedom for a nation and a people may be, and is, I believe, always good in the long run, but in the final analysis freedom itself is a means to an end, that end being the raising of the people in question to higher levels......” Freedom to Nehru was meaningless unless freedom from political slavery was accompanied by freedom from economic dependence. On the night India became free Nehru declared, “Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure but very substantially At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. The future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfil the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means the service of millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and
disease and inequality of opportunity.\textsuperscript{46} The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but as long as there are tears and sufferings so long our work will not be over. To the people of India, whose representatives we are, we made an appeal, to join us with faith and confidence in this great adventure. We have built the noble mansion of a free India where all her children may dwell.”

In order to realize the goal of economic freedom and democracy Nehru laid stress on the planned economic development of India. Economic planning for exercising the demons of want, hunger, starvation, disease and dirt was commenced on 1 April 1951. During the planning period of Nehru’s Prime Ministership sincere efforts were made for setting up basis and heavy industries to reduce India’s dependence on other countries for machines and tools. Speaking in Parliament on 15 December 1952, for instance, he said: “........ I have no doubt that we do not raise the people’s level of existence without the development of major industries in the country. In fact, I will go further and say that we cannot even remain a free country without them. Certain things like adequate defense are essential to freedom and these cannot be had unless we develop industry in a major way “Nehru threw himself to the task of making India politically and economically strong. While concluding the \textit{Discovery of India} he wrote, “Man’s dearest possession is life, and since it is given to him to live but once, he must so live as not to be seared with the shame of a cowardly and trivial past, so live as not to be tortured for years without purpose, so live that dying he can say. All my life and my strength were given to the first cause of the world liberation of mankind.” Like a true patriot he liberated his countrymen not from the shackles of slavery but also from the clutches of poverty with all its
concomitant evils. Regarding Nehru’s role in strengthening India, Prof R. Ulyanovsky expresses, “In the economic field, Nehru helped strengthen national independence, set up an industrial base and a strong public sector, and introduce planning on a nation-wide scale”.

**Commitment to the Democratic Method**

Gandhiji had a profound passion for democracy which was different from that of the current conception. Prof Raj Krishna observes, “but it is important to note that he identified democracy with the ‘Swaraj of the masses’ established and sustained by non-violence.” In Gandhi’s concept of Swaraj (Self-rule) more weightage was given to the performance of duties of individuals than to the exercise of rights. Poorna Swaraj meant the same to all irrespective of their position, religion and sect. He said: “Poorna Swaraj...... ‘Poorna’ (complete) because it is as much for the prince as for the peasant, as much for the rich Sand owner as for the landless tiller of the soil, as much for the Hindus as for the Musalmans, as much for Parsis and Christians as for the Jains, Jews and Sikhs......“Gandhi’s Swaraj was based on ahimsa (non-violence) and under such a type of set-up there was no enemy and no place for gambling, drinking and immorality or for class hatred. He opined, “True democracy or Swaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means, for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated Ahimsa.”Nehru reposed his belief in democracy and democratic methods from the time he came
into contact with Mahatma Gandhi. The following statement of Nehru is very much pertinent in this respect. He has a convinced socialist and believer in democracy, and have, at the same time, accepted wholeheartedly the peaceful technique of non-violent action which Mahatma Gandhi has practised so successfully during the past twenty years. Nehru rejected communism on the ground that the system bred the germs of regimentation and led to an encroachment on individual freedom. His plea for socialism was within the orbit of democracy and thus ensured both bread and freedom. As a staunch democrat he remarked: “We have definitely accepted the democratic process. Why have we accepted it? Well, for a variety of reasons. Because we think that in the final analysis it promotes the growth of human beings and of society, because, as we have said in our constitution, we attach great value to individual freedom, because we want the creative and adventurous spirit of man to grow. It is not enough for us merely to produce the material goods of the world. We do want high standards of living but not at the cost of man’s creative spirit, his creative energy, his spirit of adventure, not at the cost of all those fine things of life which have ennobled man through the ages. Democracy is not merely a question of elections.”. He is afraid they who think they have received their light from gandhiji are only satyavadis; they satyagrhis.

**Stand for Mixed Economy**

Gandhi and Nehru had a firm stand for the mixed economy. The Gandhian economic system recognizes the following three sectors of economy

- The self-employed sector;
• The private sector operating the large-scale industry; and
• The state sector, operating the large-scale industry.

In his view the self-employed sector was more conducive to human welfare than the second and the third sector. Under the first sector many cottage and village industries provided material requisites of well-being and opportunities for the expression of creative talent. The sector also encouraged the virtues of truth and non-violence as there was no exploitation of man by man. The private sector operating the large-scale industry was under the ownership and control of the rich. Mahatma Gandhi made an appeal to them to act as a trustee of the wealth and not as its owner otherwise the poor would be forced to snatch away their wealth by violent methods. About the utility of his advice to the rich he said: “This truth has hitherto not been acetic upon, but, if the moneyed classes do not act on it in these times of stress, they will remain the slaves of their riches and passions and consequently of those who overpower them.” During Gandhi’s lifetime certain big and key industries were owned and controlled by the state. He was very much afraid to see concentration of political and economic power into the hands of the state. He would even prefer private ownership to state ownership because the violence of private ownership was less injurious than the violence of the state. Nevertheless he supported the minimum of state ownership of those big, key and large-scale industries which could not be set up and run by individuals. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was a great supporter of the philosophy of mixed economy. In fact it was he who introduced mixed economy for India and threw a flood of light on its vital role in getting
the cooperation of the private and public sector. The famous Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 which Nehru sponsored, was clearly based on the mixed economy\cite{50} philosophy of reserving some key sectors for the state and leaving the rest for the private sector. He said: “we have in our Industrial Policy Resolution laid down a broad approach of what is called a mixed economy which combines public enterprises and private enterprises……” His advocacy of mixed economy for India prior to the beginning of economic planning was intended to have trade relations with the capitalistic and the communistic block and to get the maximum foreign aid from both of them. As India was in tie vicious circle of poverty the rate of saving, investment and capital formation was very low. It was well-nigh difficult to accelerate the tempo of economic development, under such conditions a resort to foreign aid was essential and for that purpose the policy of mixed economy was the only alternative. It is obvious from this discussion that there was much common ground in their thinking. In spite of these points of agreement and resemblance there were many issues of economic policy on which they disagreed and differed from each other. They had expressed their- differences in personal talks or through letters (Appendix-VI) which have now come to be known as Nehru papers. Differences between the two could never loosen their bond of respect and affection. B.R. Nanda rightly remarks, “Despite differences of thought temperament aid style Gandhi and Nehru stood together for more than a quarter of a century. It was one of the longest, most intriguing and fruitful partnerships in the history of nationalism.” Prof S. Abid Hussain also holds the same opinion, “Different in many ways,
they were bound to each other with such silken ties of comradere, love and reverence that the Mahatma could unequivocally designate the young comrade as his political successor.".\textsuperscript{51}

3.8 THE COMPLEMENTARITY OF GANDHI AND NEHRU — ITS RELEVANCE, TODAY AND TOMORROW

It is a great pleasure for him to be with you this morning. He is very happy that so many distinguished scholars and public-spirited citizens have gathered here today. Indeed, the occasion is a very special one. As we celebrate the centenary of the birth of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, this national seminar, very appropriately, seeks to examine and increase public awareness about the complementarity of Gandhi and Nehru and its relevance today and tomorrow. It is also appropriate that the Gandhigram Rural Institute has arranged such a discussion and that this effort has received valuable support from the Government of India. He would like to express his appreciation and gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Shri Devendra Kumar and the Minister of State in the Prime Minister’s Office, Smt. Sheila Dikshit, for their initiatives in this respect.\textsuperscript{52} The subject of this seminar has been determined with considerable deliberation and exactitude. The scope of this subject has been clearly defined. The entire focus is on the complementarily of Gandhi and Nehru and its relevance today and tomorrow. So he feel the effort should be to identify as many aspects as possible of the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru which clearly complement each other and reveal an inner oneness of purpose, and then objectively relate these aspects to the world around as we see it today and as they visualise it tomorrow. In doing so, he feel they should try and perceive the underlying form, as it were, of Gandhi-Nehruvian thought, and reach its core ideas. This
would itself be an exciting and rewarding intellectual task. Much time will be required for it if justice is to be done. Concentration within the precise limits of the subject of the national seminar, would therefore be very essential and would require a level of discipline that only highly trained minds can maintain. He is saying this because every minute of your time is precious and the subject is so significant, both in intellectual and in emotional terms. In his view, there is an inherent unity in the larger purpose suffusing the thought of Mahatma Gandhi - as a saintly revolutionary - and of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru - as a revolutionary architect. This is reflected in the meaningful terms in which they described each other. “Pure as crystal” Bapu had called Jawaharlal Nehru, identifying him also as the “chosen instrument” of God. Prophetically, Mahatma Gandhi had said of Panditji: “After I am gone, he will speak my language”. “When I am no more, he will know how to carry on the work”. Nehru referred to Mahatma Gandhi as, “Perhaps the greatest symbol of the India of the past and may I say so of the India of the future”. The inner light of Gandhian thought and Nehruvian thought came from exactly the same values, which were very deeply and intensely held by both and determined all their individual and combined thought and action. These values not only permeate Gandhian and Nehruvian thought but, in fact, it is adherence to these values which made and shaped the personalities of Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru; the two, together, personify the dynamic materialisation of those values.53

Secularism - a basic tenet of India’s ethos - was powerfully promoted by Bapu and Panditji in almost the same words. Writing in Young India of December 22, 1927 Mahatma. Gandhi said: I do not expect an Indian of my dream to develop one religion that is to be fully Hindu, or fully Christian, or
fully Mussalman; but I want it to be wholly tolerant, with its religions working side by side with one another”. Panditji in a statement at Allahabad on June 5, 1936 said: “There must be the most perfect freedom of faith and observance”. And in a speech at Aligarh on June 24, 1948 he said: “India will be a land, as in the past, of many faiths, equally honoured and respected”. Socialism is another basic tenet in India’s ethos. They are aware of Panditji’s commitment to socialistic principles particularly after his personal experience in 1927. In his Presidential Address to the Indian National Congress in 1936, Panditji said: “I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world’s problems and of India’s problems, lies in socialism”. In a letter to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose dated April 3, 1939, Panditji said: “I am temperamentally and by training an individualist and intellectually a socialist. I hope that socialism does not kill or suppress individuality, indeed I am attracted to it because it will release innumerable individuals from economic and cultural bondage”. Mahatma Gandhi in The Art of Living had said: “I feel that the socialistic state is bound to come into being in India... If socialism means befriending one’s enemies I should be treated as a true socialist... all the socialists should learn socialism from me”. “We shall evolve a truer socialism and a truer communism than the world has yet dreamt of. (Amrit Bazar Patrika, August 3, 1934). Writing in The Harijan July 13, 1947 Gandhi said: “Socialism is a beautiful word... in socialism all the members of the society are equal... this socialism is pure as crystal”. It may be recalled that at the Karachi Session to the Indian National Congress, in March 1931, with Gandhiji’s blessings, the famous resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy was adopted which imparted a socialist orientation to Congress and converted the freedom Movement into a people’s struggle with a wide ranging mass support. Similarly Panditji’s
approach towards agricultural and industrial development came to reflect more and more his resonance with Gandhian philosophy, in a speech on July 27, 1963 he said: “I am all for industry, I am all for steel plants and this and that, but I do say agriculture is far more important than any industry”. In fact Gandhiji’s emphasis on development of agriculture was translated into important promotional programmes by Panditji, using science and technology for increasing the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of Indian agriculture. Profound changes seem to be taking place in the world today. An age of new thinking and new approaches regarding long standing problems, seems to be emerging. After decades of nuclear terror, a saner and safer world seems to be emerging. The voice for Gandhiji and the words of Panditji come to mind. Bapu had said on December 24, 1938: “Peace will never come until the great powers courageously decide to disarm themselves. It seems to me that recent events must force the belief on the Great Powers. I have an implicit faith, a faith that today better than ever, after half a century’s experience that mankind can only be saved through non-violence,” It was Panditji who had said that: “Peace has been said to be invisible: so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this one world that can no longer to be split into isolated fragments”. Thus two legendary figures gigantic in their moral and ethical stature and commitment to human progress, have left us a philosophy and outlook on life which is of inestimable value today and tomorrow. Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru set an ideal as to what any Indian, any politician or world citizen should be. In my view they are the true precursors and early pioneers of a new world civilization - still in the making - based on peace, friendship and cooperation between man and man and nation and nation for all round human progress. He is sure that
public awareness on the complementarily of Gandhi and Nehru and its relevance today and tomorrow.\textsuperscript{57} will be greatly increased by the deliberations in this seminar. he has only touched upon some aspects in an indicative, thematic way, to provoke further and fuller discussion. With these words he has great pleasure in inaugurating the national seminar. He is sure their discussions will be significant.\textsuperscript{58}

\textbf{His works}

Nehru was an author of establish repute. as a writer he was candid pointed and effective. His ‘glimpses of world history.’ Autobiography’, and the ‘discovery of india are notable contributions in the history of political thought.

\textbf{3.9VISION OF SUBHAS}

Louis Fischer felt much intrigued by the strange pro- Subhas feeling found prevailing in the Gandhi Ashram. In his effort to fathom the mind of Gandhi, he made a few provocatively disparaging remarks about ‘Subhas Bose’ for his seeking aid from the Axis Powers. Promptly scotching the adverse comments of the American journalist, the Mahatma said that he considered “\textit{Subhas Bose. . .a patriot of patriots.}” Replying to a few more dragging questions of Fischer, Gandhi said: “He may be misguided.\textsuperscript{59} I think he is misguided. I have often opposed him. Twice I kept him from becoming the president of the Congress. Finally, he did become the president, although my views differed from his. But suppose he had gone to Russia or America to ask for aid to India. Would that have made it better?” “Yes, of course,” Fischer said, “It does make a difference to whom you go.” “I do not want help from anybody to make India free,” Gandhi replied “I want India to save herself. “Throughout history”,
Fischer recalled, “nationalists and individuals have helped foreign countries. Lafayette went from France to assist America in winning independence from Britain. Thousands of Americans and other foreigners died in Spain to save the Spanish Republic.” “Individuals, yes”, Gandhi said, “But America is the ally of England which enslaved us. And I am not certain that democracies will make a better world, when they defeat the fascists. They may become very much like the fascists themselves.” Fischer got a stunning reply from Gandhi, when he asked the Mahatma why he was so impatient to start the Quit India Movement. This he asked after he felt dismayed over the adoption of the Quit India resolution by the Congress Working Committee. The Mahatma replied very cryptically but its implication was stunning, almost explosive, for the American journalist. He parried Fischer, saying: “Go and ask Subhas!” Gandhi, thus, unmistakably revealed a mind that was then working in the same wave-length as that of Subhas.60

### 3.10 Vinoba Carried Forward Gandhiji’s Work

Though adopted, Vinoba did fulfil Gandhiji’s expectations of him as his ‘true son!’ After Gandhiji’s death in 1948, Vinoba tried to apply the Gandhian principle of non-violence to social, economic, religious, and political issues and problems which arose in the post independence period. Vinobaji was not a disciple of Gandhiji in the traditional sense of the term ‘disciple’. Though very much influenced by Gandhiji, Vinoba was an independent thinker. He himself was, conscious of this and expressed his independent attitude in a “humorous way in a meeting of Gandhiji’s great political associates and ordinary followers held at Sewagram in March 1948, immediately after Gandhiji’s assassination.
I happened to be present at the meeting. When pressed by Jawaharlalji and others to address the gathering, Vinobaji stood up and spoke. The very first sentence in his Hindi speech raised a wave of laughter in the audience. His words were:

“Gandhiji Ka pala hua main ek jangali janwar hun! -- I am a wild animal whom Gandhiji had tried to domesticate!”

What Vibobaji did thereafter as a ‘disciple or true son’ of Gandhiji showed that this was not just a harmless joke. There was more to it than that. Vinobaji mostly agreed with Gandhiji in his views, opinions and formulation of policies and programmes, so far as the various aspects of the Gandhian ideology were concerned. But he did differ from Gandhiji in some respects. He many a time hinted at his differences openly and also acted according to his own different lights. As even in a welfare state power was concentrated in the hands of the few, Vinoba considered such a state as an illfare state for attaining real welfare, political power would have to be distribute to each village. Regarding the ideal village, Vinoba said “First dispute in the village should be settled locally in the village. Secondly you must arrange for providing medical help to all those who be out of health.

3.11 Ruskin on Trusteeship

Ruskin believed that commercial transactions should be directed by the motives of social good and of private profit. His approach to industry was not only humanitarian but socialistic also. In Unto This List, he advocated a paternal attitude on the part of merchants and manufacturers towards the men employed by them. The youngman employed in a commercial establishment is withdrawn from his home influence. His employer must become his ‘father’
as he has no other help at hand. Ruskin denounced the idea of exploitation of the poor and the helpless by the wise and the rich persons. In *The Political Economy of Art*, he asserted that the wise and the rich should not crush and starve the poor fools. “They were made that wise people might take care of them. That is the true and plain fact concerning the relations of every strong and wise man to the world about him. He has his strength given him, not that he may crush the weak but that he may support and guide them.” Since the industrialists have acquired wealth and possess organising power, it is their responsibility to guide labour. Ruskin called them, ‘pilots of the power’, and ‘captains of industry’, and desired that they should use their wealth and power in putting away the plague that kills many and in carrying food to those who are hungry. The wealth and wisdom of the rich and the wise should give honourable and peaceful employment to the people around them. He exhorted the wealthy people of England that by the strength of their possessions, they should direct the acts, command the energies, inform the ignorance, and prolong the existence of the whole human race. They should use their wealth, wisdom and sagacity as a Trust for the good of mankind. Ruskin suggested ‘the benevolent mode of spending money’, which is good for the individual, the nation and the world at large. “A rich man ought to be continually examining how he may spend his money for the advantage of others; A person who is entrusted with the management of large quantity of capital should administer it for the profit of all and direct each man to the labour which is most healthy for him and most serviceable to the community. Ruskin wanted the rich men to use their capital and wisdom as a Trust for the good of all. They should give proper employment and opportunities and see that only those things are manufactured which are
serviceable for the community. The poor and the unwise ones are not to be crushed but whatever energies they have, are to be put to tasks, useful for them as well as for the nation.63

3.12 Gandhi on Trusteeship

A theory of trusteeship emerges out of the speeches and writings of Gandhi. It was necessary for Gandhi to put out such a theory as he believed that different persons possessed different capabilities. All persons are born equal and have a right to equal opportunity but ‘all have not the same capacity. It is, in the nature of things, impossible. For instance, all cannot have the same height or colour or degree of intelligence, etc., therefore, in the nature of things, some will have ability to -earn more and others less’. As a result some will be rich and others will be poor. Those who do not possess much have a feeling of jealousy and enemity against the richer ones.64 There is a clear possibility of class war. The owners of wealth ‘will have to make their choice between class war and voluntarily converting themselves into trustees of their wealth’. The owners of property should become the stewards of their property and use it for the good of all. People who possess talents, will use their talents kindly and performing the work of the State. J.B. Kripalani, a close associate of Gandhi, says that Gandhi’s idea of Trusteeship is a very comprehensive concept: “It works in all spheres of life. The parents act as trustees for the children. The Government acts or should act as a trustee of the people. The representatives of the people in a democracy are the trustees of those who have chosen them as members of a legislature”. The word ‘trustee’ suggests that he is not the owner but looks after the interests of others. At the same time, he does not want that the person who has intellect and talent should not earn more. He would not cramp his talents. ‘But the bulk of his greater
earnings must be used for the good of the State, just as the income of all earning sons of the father goes to the common family fund. They would have their earnings only as trustees’. He wants the owners to become the trustees. Most of their wealth is a result of exploitation of the poor workers. They should become trustees in the right of those whom they have exploited. In case the rich do not act as trustees, and do not behave as guardians of the poor, he advised the aggrieved to start ‘non-violent, non-co-operation and civil disobedience as the right and infallible means’. Gandhi expected that the rich will work as guardians of the poor of their own accord as man is essentially good and human nature is never beyond redemption. Further, his theory does not exclude the idea of ‘legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth’. Item 4 in ‘the draft plan’ approved by him mentions: “Thus, under State-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interest of society”.

3.13 Tagore and Gandhi

Rabindranath Tagore was born in 1861, and his birth centenary in May this year is a fit occasion for a reassessment of his works and his contribution to the national cause. For over half a century, as poet and man of letters, he held an honoured place in the world of culture, while the award of the Nobel Prize in 1913 spotlighted his eminence and made him a world figure of no mean standing. It was just about this time—or to be more exact, in 1915—that Gandhi returned to India after a hectic and by no means unsuccessful public career in far-away South Africa. Gandhi’s name had by then become a legend, as much by his queer ways of life and views as by his unconventional methods of political warfare. India, a subject country tied to the apron strings of England, found herself fighting for the freedom of countries in Europe and
Africa. Allied statesmen like Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George were filling the air with the thunder of their eloquence, extolling the virtues of democracy and self-determination. She not free, India was fighting freedom’s battle abroad. For her, it was a time of awakening and disillusionment. It is on record that one of the first things that Gandhi did on arrival in India was to seek Tagore’s guidance and familiarise himself with the Poet’s labours in Bolpur. Gandhi, it will be remembered, was born eight years later than Tagore and survived him seven years when his life was suddenly cut short by a fanatic’s bullet. Both remained fast friends to the end, vying with each other in demonstrations of affection and regard. Gandhi sought his “Gurudev’s” blessings at every crisis, while Tagore’s homage to “Gandhi Maharaj” in prose and verse was unstinted. Yet there were fundamental differences in their outlook and methods of approach to problems of personal and political life. Infact’ as Nehru has pointed out, no two persons could be so different from one another in their make-up and temperament. Tagore, the aristocratic artist turned democrat, with proletarian sympathies, represented essentially the cultural tradition of India, the tradition of accepting life in the fullness thereof and going through it with song and dance. Gandhi, more a man of the people, almost the embodiment of the Indian peasant, represented the other ancient tradition of India, that of renunciation and asceticism. And yet Tagore was primarily the man of thought, Gandhi of concentrated and ceaseless activity. Both, in their different ways, had a world outlook, and both were at the same time wholly Indian. They seemed to represent different but harmonious aspects of India and to complement one another.”Such differences in temperament and outlook are by no means accidental. They can be traced back to their heredity and upbringing Tagore came of a family
of writers and artists, of reformers and saints. One of his brothers was a celebrated artist who may be said to have founded the Bengal school of painting. His father was a devout Brahmo who spent most of his time as a recluse in his rural heritage. Losing his mother at an early age he was brought up by home-teaching in the wisdom of the Upanisads and the lyrical fantasies and dramatic creations of Kalidasa. Gandhi, on the other hand, the son of a Dewan of an Indian state, had his regular schooling in Rajkot, like other boys of his age and finished as an Inner Temple lawyer in England. He studied Thoreau and Tolstoy and Ruskin and imbedded their teachings. He shared his mother’s austere ways and strictly followed her injunctions to avoid flesh and wine, and cultivated a Spartan simplicity of life. I fancy his practical sense and shrewd understanding of men, he inherited from his father who was, by all accounts, a Successful administrator. But Tagore was a humanist and his heart beat in sympathy for oppressed mankind, anywhere and everywhere. In 1938, Japan overran China with fire and sword in the name of “liberation” and the advent of a “new order”. Tagore had learnt of the bombing of Chinese women and children and the desecration of ancient temples and Universities “as a means of saving China for Asia”. And when his Japanese friend, Poet Noguchi, coolly asked him to commend this civilizing mission to the Chinese, he grew indignant and wrote in reply: You are building your conception of an Asia which would be raised on a tower of skulls. I have, as you rightly pointed out, believed in the message of Asia. But I never dreamt that this message could be identified with deeds which brought exultation to the heart of Tamurlane at his terrific efficiency in manslaughter. Now Gandhi’s values, like Tagore’s, were essentially spiritual, but he was no poet or dreamer like him: he was an intensely practical person, not above the strife
but profoundly involved in it, not in terms of conflict but of *ahimsa*. Gandhi was always in the thick of the fight— his non-violent fight. He was with the peasants of Champaran, on the spot, in their fight with the planters; he was with the factory workers in Ahmedabad in their fight with the mill-owners; he personally led the volunteers in the historic Dandi march; he was with the people in the heart of the city during the “great Calcutta killing”, sharing their sufferings and exhorting them to behave; he went on a pilgrimage of mercy to the afflicted areas of East Bengal in quest of peace and goodwill. Where people suffered from the effects of cyclone or flood, he was there, with his healing counsel, day in and day out, in unwearied service. He did not spare himself. He threw himself into the nation’s struggle for freedom, at every level, now with the representatives of Government, now with the leaders of the people, unsparing in his efforts to improve the lot of the masses. And the people trusted him and followed him, as they trusted and followed the Bodhisattva of old. Gandhi’s contention was that to millions of half-starved people who suffer from want of work and wages for half the year after harvest time spinning is a useful occupation, it will put some money into their pockets and save them from idleness and ennui. As the mass of the people take their cue from the so-called upper and middle classes the latter could set a wholesome example. Gandhi’s call gave momentum to this home industry. Indeed, Tagore’s *Swadeshi* and Gandhi’s boycott of 1921 gave such a fillip to the weaving industry that Indian mills have displaced Lancashire and saved many crores for the nation.*Swadeshi* was only one aspect of a comprehensive program of national reconstruction which Gandhi had inaugurated. He aimed at the reform and uplift of Indian life in every sphere. As we have noticed the use of *Swadeshi* goods and the revival of village
Industries improved the economic condition of the country, and the boycott of foreign goods aided the growth of industry on modern lines. Men like Tagore and Gandhi, though their main activities are necessarily confined to the limits of their own country, really belong to the world at large. Tagore in particular, by his extensive travels and contacts, was a kind of unofficial ambassador of India. He had a truly international outlook, serving as a sort of bridge for the exchange of cultures between the East and West. Gandhi, more at home in his homeland, laboured for an India of his dreams which would serve as a model for the rest of the world. His experiments in satyagraha were for all the world to follow. Even his aggressive nationalism, broad-based on truth and non-violence, was singularly free from the taint of narrowness. “I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides, and my windows to be stuffed”, he wrote to Tagore. “I want the culture of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet byans.” The postulates swadeshi, khadi, trusteeship, equality were also rooted in the structure of our society the religious and social faith of people. In an attempt to explain his proposals in the face of criticism based on orthodox economic principals, Gandhi said that the basic objective should not be the greatest good for the greatest numbers but the greatest good of all sarvodaya. Gandhi’s advocacy of the removal of untouchability was also related to the issue of unity of races and fight for swaraj. The three thinkers differed on the idea of nationalism. Whereas Tagore was in favour of abolishing the frontiers of the nations outrightly to establish the oneness of the world Gandhi and Nehru considered the national good also to a great extent and favoured political freedom and economic self-sufficiency and
equality for all national. Gandhi had a different perception of human nature and path of development.

3.14 ONLY SUCCESSFUL CHALLENGER

After the advent of Gandhi as the supreme leader of the Congress in 1920, no other national personality succeeded in challenging his leadership. The moderate leaders of the party, grudgingly though, broke away from it and even the extremist leaders like Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal could not match the rising tide of the popular support for Gandhi. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, a known front-rank leader of the Congress of those days, clashed with Gandhi in the 1920 Nagpur session of the Congress and had to ultimately stray away from the party and the main current of the national movement of India, and tragically this one-time nationalist leader and a stalwart of the Congress reappeared in Indian politics later as the founder of the Muslim League. Whosoever came to confront Gandhi, in the early twenties or later, were simply found wiped out of the orbit of leadership of the Congress politics, and the Mahatma gradually attained the position of an absolutely unchallengeable leader of the organisation. After the failure of the Non-cooperation Movement in 1921, C.R. Dass and Motilal Nehru defied Gandhi to form Swarajya Party and ultimately succeeded in making Gandhi reconcile with their demand for the approval of their programme of ‘council entry’. But this revolt by the Swarajists did not mean any basic defiance of the non-violent ways and means of Gandhi. And, as such, Gandhi soon succeeded to win C.R. and Motilal back into the fold of his leadership. Later, only one or two Congress leaders like Sriniyas Ayenger and Nariman had taken somewhat different steps to disobey Gandhi but only to be blotted out of the Congress politics within no time. It was seen that the control of the Mahatma over the
leadership of the Congress became so paramount that whosoever defied or challenged it had either to surrender to it ultimately or pass into complete oblivion sometime later. In this era of unchallengeable leadership of Gandhi, only one young leader—Subhas Chandra Bose—dared to deviate from the Gandhian ways and means. Subhas often defied his leadership and had to face the combined opposition of the Gandhian leaders but he remained unsubdued and unvanquished. For Gandhi the non-violent way to attain independence for India was an absolutely immutable concept. Regarding his ideological conviction he was so unsparing that he could hardly agree to accommodate any nonconformist in the higher echelons of the party leadership. For his criticism of the Gandhian constructive programme as not wholly adequate to mobilise all sections of the Indian people under the Congress banner, Subhas was dropped out of the Working Committee formed after the Lahore session of the Congress in 1929. For his defiance of the Gandhian advice not to contest for the presidency of the Tripuri Congress of 1939 later for his public protest against a resolution of the Congress Working Committee not to criticize Congress ministers of the various provinces, the twice elected president of the Congress was not only compelled to resign but he was later very harshly expelled from the Congress. This resolution to expel Subhas was known to have been drafted by Gandhi himself. For his refusal to submissively obey Gandhi, Subhas had to face all-out opposition from the Mahatma during 1939-40 but the rebel in him, convinced about the justification of his own politics, stood firm on his own ground. In India, Subhas failed even after launching a vigorous agitation in 1940 for starting an immediate national struggle to shake the foundation of the Gandhian hold over the Congress and the Indian people.
But as a born rebel, convinced of a faith that he had ‘a mission to fulfil’ for the liberation of his motherland, he staked everything to plunge himself into the cauldron of the world war. Ultimately, under the banner of his Azad Hind Revolution, he succeeded in establishing his own independent leadership to create a new history of national emancipation. After World War II, the image of Subhas emerged in India as another maker of the history of Indian freedom along with Gandhi. The Indian people hailed this rebel as another man of destiny of India, besides Gandhi. The Mahatma was great because his greatness was of a different concept of values, and, as it was so, he did not hesitate to acknowledge the historic role of his challenger and hail him as ‘the Netaji’ of the Azad Hind Revolution. Gandhi paid highest tributes to the achievements of this rebel and continued to admire Subhas till the last days of his life.⁷³
Chapter – 3 : Reference

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