CHAPTER-V

GREAT THINKERS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION
5.1 HISTORICAL ASPECT OF GANDHIAN THOUGHT

A decentralized mixed economy with the state-controlled public sector, a network of enterprises ensuring productive employment to all the employable and a self-governing village’s community is the core of the Gandhian economic system. A stagnant economy groaning under poverty and deep inequalities was the immediate context of Gandhian economic thought. Traditional, timeless ancient culture was the source of his social philosophy. His economic system evolved as a corollary of his social philosophy. We are aware of the two-fold relativity of a thought. It is related to a situation and it is a reflection of an individual. An individual thinks and thinks about a situation. Gandhi, molded in an ancient tradition, reacted to a historical condition some elements in the Gandhian thought need a little more critical analysis. Trusteeship concept is one such element. Gandhi appealed to the capitalists and landlords to hold the wealth as a trust on behalf of the workers and the peasants who produced that wealth. Capitalism and its political system provides opportunities and legal ways to acquire wealth without actually participating in the production process. It is simply unearned income morally indefensible. Yet the owner holds that the legal sanction implies moral justification. In the circumstances, how can we ensure effectiveness of trusteeship concept as an instrument of social change. We have to resist unjust laws and organise a political struggle to take over the State for enacting morally justifiable legislation. This is what Marx precisely advocated. Validity of eternal value like truth and non-violence, ethical and moral significance of
social service and trusteeship are self-evident. Yet it is a hard task to ensure manifestation of these values and virtues in the day-to-day activity—much more difficult in the individual behaviour. The present rules and the laws that uphold the private interests and the social institutions that safeguard the class interest would always tempt the individual to protect and pursue self-interest. Class conflict and social discontent seems to be unavoidable. Before we conclude, we may refer to the left reappraisal of Gandhi, E.M.S. Namboodiripad write: “Gandhi became the father of the nation precisely because the idealism to which he adhered in the years of anti-imperialist struggle became a practically useful political weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie. He became more or less isolated from the bourgeoisie in the later days of his life, because his idealism did in the post-Independence years become a hindrance to the self-interest of the bourgeoisie”. The situation only calls for a social change. A change that will do away with the unjust laws, evolve new institutions, create conditions congenial for peace and prosperity for one and all without exception, has to be the objective of a social revolutionary.

5.2 Marx the realist and Gandhi the visionary

Karl Marx built up his theory of social change almost with a mathematical precision. He gave a clarion call: “Workers of the World Unite. They have nothing to lose but their chains”. Marx awaited the impending economic crisis and the consequent revolution. He passed away without the realization of this revolution in his own lifetime. Mahatma Gandhi ‘experimented with truth’. A pilgrim of peace, he was a freedom fighter. ‘Do or Die’ was his call. ‘Power to the grassroots’ was his message. In his search for communal harmony,
Gandhi embraced martyrdom with a smile. Humanity hopefully awaits a meeting of Marx and Gandhi to ensure a peaceful social change.  

5.3 Jawaharlal will be My Successor

“Jawaharlal will be my successor”, wrote Gandhiji. “He says that he does not understand my language and that he speaks a language foreign to me. This may or may not be true. But language is no bar to a union of hearts. And I know that when I am gone he will speak my language”. No other words can put the Gandhi-Nehru relationship in better perspective. Nehru’s speech while inaugurating the Khadi Exhibition at the Tripura Congress should be an eye-opener to those who try to dig up the differences. Nehru said, “I call myself a socialist and as such I do believe that large-scale industries have a place in this country. Anything that increased the material well-being of the country is bound to have its repercussions on the people. But we shall never be able to move the India of the rural masses through mere multiplication of big factories. It can only be reached through Khadi and village industries.” When asked about his differences with socialists, Gandhiji said,” There are differences between Jawaharlal and other socialist friends I believe in the conversion of human nature and in striving for it. They do not believe in this. But let me tell you that we are coming nearer to one another. Either they are being drawn to me or I am being drawn to them. As for Jawaharlal, we know that neither of us can do without the other, for there is heart unison between us which no intellectual difference can break”. As the architect of India’s foreign policy Nehru drew much from Gandhian thought. The concept of Non-alignment and Panchsheel are extensions of Gandhiji’s philosophy of non-violence. Nehru’s broadcast to the nation at the martyrdom of Gandhiji speaks volumes of the intimate feelings, respect and affection he had for the father of
the nation. “The light has gone out of our lives”, he mourned. “Yet I am wrong, for the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country and the world will see it. For that light represented the living truth”. Yes, for Nehru, Gandhiji was the soul of nation, the living truth, and for Gandhiji Nehru represented India’s destiny; India’s future. The soul and the destiny of a nation cannot remain apart. They have to complement each other. That precisely has been the essence of the relationship of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.⁴

5.4 Nehru and Gandhism

Nehru partly differed and partly agreed with Gandhi in regard to economic matters. They agreed on economic nationalism, distributive justice, creation of an integrated human being, commitment to the democratic method and stand for mixed economy. There was disagreement between the master and the disciple on the issues of level of consumption, mode of production, constituents of an ideal society and role of the state. As Pt Nehru was a man of national and scientific temperament, he never followed Gandhian economic thought in full. He took from his master what was found sound on the criterion of reason, rational and science. Blind following of the master was allergic to the disciple.⁵

5.5 Looking for future

The history of political conflicts and contradictions between the Mahatma and the Netaji has no relevance for the present and also for the future of India. It is now time, in the changed condition of India, to make an earnest effort for the re-evaluation of the relations between these two makers of the history of
Indian independence. India today needs, and needs very urgently, a new national ideology for her national renewal. The heritage of patriotism of the Mahatma and of the Netaji and the ideological missions of these two men of destiny of India in synthesis should be viewed as the basis of such a new national ideology. In the following chapters an objective attempt has been made to co-relate the personal and political characteristics of these two men of destiny of India and equate their ideological thinking in the perspective of a patriotic search for a new national ideology for rebuilding the future of the Indian people on the basis of the common missions of the Mahatma and the Netaji.

5.6 Two karma yogins

Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose were more than two politicians of common understanding—they were really two Karma yogis of the ideals of the Gita. The Gita was the mother of inspiration to both of them. Gandhi wrote that for him, “The Gita became an infallible guide of my conduct. It became my dictionary of daily reference.” It happened similarly in the case of subhas as well. Subhas memorized Gita from beginning to end and its precepts became the perennial guide to all his actions. A Gita and a Chandi (the scripture of the cult Shakti) were found to be constant companions of subhas. Again, and very interestingly, Gandhi discarded all the known interpretations of the Gita and explained its technique of Karma in his own way. He believed that the absolute virtues of satya and ahimsa (truth and non-violence) should guide all the concepts of Karma of the Gita. He, thus, became a non-violent Karma Yogin. On the other hand, Subhas adopted the well-known interpretations of the Karma concepts of the Gita as made by
ancient sages and seers.\textsuperscript{8} What Vivekananda, Tilak and Aurobindo accepted as the interpretation of the ethics of Karma was also accepted by Subhas as valid. According to this view, if the performer of Karma remains non-attached to the outcome of his Karma and this objective of Karma remains pure and impersonal, the means of Karma need not be hidebound by particular ethics of violence or non-violence. He could not accordingly accept non-violence as the only and absolute means to attain freedom for India. Thus, different interpretations of the same concept of Karma bifurcated the concept of the means of the freedom struggle of Gandhi and Subhas and, in consequence, Gandhi was known to become a Vaishnava Karma yogin and Subhas a Kshatriya Karma yogin. Or, in other words, Gandhi turned to be a non-violent Satyagrahi and Subhas a revolutionary warrior.\textsuperscript{9}

5.7 Not a Contribution, But a Deviation

As has already been stated earlier, Vinobaji was, in many respects, a follower of Gandhiji no doubt, but he was an independent thinker and an activist in his own different way also. That is why so far as non-violent resistance or satyagraha was concerned, he held somewhat different views from those of Gandhiji. It is well known that the concept of Satyagraha as was propounded and practiced by Gandhiji for a long period in South Africa and India considered to be a veritable gift by Gandhiji to the whole of mankind weary of violence and war. It was a novel technique of resisting oppression, securing justice in smaller big matters and training people in establishing a non-violent social order, not only in India, but all throughout the world. Vinobaji agreed with all this, but he disliked to use the term ‘resistance.’ He wanted satyagraha to be a method of non-violent assistance in right thinking. He
believed and said so in gentle terms that the Gandhian type of Satyagraha has become out-of-date in the democratic context which has prevailed in India since independence. But on the other hand, Vinobaji did not endorse the view held by some that satyagraha has no place in a democracy. The occasions for satyagraha in a democracy would be rare and its form will change. Satyagraha, according to Vinobaji, has to be mild, milder and mildest. Bhoodan and Gramdan movement was in his opinion a form of the new type of satyagraha. He was one among those many Sarvodaya workers who held that Vinobaji was wrong in not resorting to the Gandhian type of Satyagraha for solving the land problem especially when Vinobaji had traversed the whole length and breadth of the country for thirteen long years and tried to persuade land owners to part with enough portions of land in their possession to satisfy the needs of the hungry and toiling millions of landless labourers. Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, who came over to Sarvodaya from socialism from 1954 onwards, fully cooperated with Vinobaji for twenty years in trying to make the Bhoodan-Gramdan—Gramswarajya movement a success. But he also got disillusioned soon and most reluctantly, he struck a different path from that of Vinobaji. He resorted to Gandhian type of Satyagraha first in Bihar and then in the whole of the country and brought glory to sarvodaya, so far as preservation of the democratic system in India was concerned. That was quite a different issue, but most of Vinobaji’s followers in the Bhoodan movement left him and joined Jayaprakashji’s movement for Total Revolution. When the Emergency was thrust on the country in 1975, the rift between Vinobaji and Jayaprakashji further widened. Vinobaji chose to remain apparently neutral. In my view, Vinobaji’s attitude right from 1974 up to 1978 was most unGandhian. One cannot imagine Gandhiji adopting a neutral
attitude, when there was a major national crisis in the country! Vinobaji’s views on satyagraha, therefore, are in my opinion, not a contribution to the Gandhian Thought, but a clear deviation from it.

5.8 Vinoba, a Replica of Gandhiji’s Ideals

Sarvodaya, has not been so current a word in the lifetime of Gandhiji himself. It is Vinobaji who made the ideal of Sarvodaya really felt. Gandhiji’s economic programmes become articulate with Vinobaji. Gandhiji used to say: “if I was to gain India and not to grieve then India’s economy should be based on cottage industries and not on heavy industries.” He said, “God forbid, that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner of the West. He feared heavy industries sooner or later breed economic inequality and where there was inequality, there was strife and bitterness.” Gandhiji was so much imbued with village culture that he once said, “To me the rise of Indian cities like Calcutta and Bombay is a matter of sorrow rather than congratulation.” Gandhiji’s heart ached for the poor and downtrodden in the country. To abdicate the wants and poverty from among the villagers, cottage industries of small scale is the first solution. Even in his lifetime he was troubled to see the yawning gulf between the haves and have-nots. This heart revolted in himself to see the gap of plenty and destitute and he burst out: “The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class cannot last one day in free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless the voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing that for the common good. The power that riches give troubled him. He began to search means for diffusing it. Another reason for Vinoba refusing to involve himself in political and to
accored the sarvodaya workers the same advice, was his belief that no revolutionary thought could be propagated through the power of the state.

5.9 Gandhiji and Vinobaji on Sarvodaya

None of the followers or the Satyagrahi of Gandhiji’s fold is so prolific in interpreting his techniques and ideals as Vinobaji. He has such a knack of expounding Gandhiji which makes him a Gandhi survived. Together with Gandhiji, he thinks the priority of economic freedom for India after her political freedom so vital as leave every other thing behind. For him political freedom is meaningless until the economic freedom is achieved. Like Gandhiji Vinobaji gives more emphasis on villages and the cottage industries. Sarvodaya, which means the ‘rise of all’ or ‘welfare of all’ has some preconditions for its innovation. The second thing which usher us into Ramraj or Sarvodaya is the Panchayat Raj system. Saint Vinoba has the conviction that for the advent of Sarvodaya our utmost efforts should be to, establish Gram rajya or the Panchayati form of the government. He says, “The more the power is transferred to the people by the government, the more will it help to propagate Ahimsa and thereby will minimise the state control till at last there will emerge a stateless society.” With Gandhiji he holds that the best government is that which is least administered. The perfect Sarvodaya presupposes the autonomy and independence of the people of the aid from the government and this, in its turn, presupposes the decentralization of economic and political powers on the part of the government. Saint Vinoba’s time division is also important. He suggests the elemental”)” and general basic education of the boys upto the age of eight, years. After the basic education, four years should be earmarked for the post Bunivacli Education and after this the university education upto the age or
eighteen years. The post Buniyadi education should be made the qualifying education for services in government department. The university education is to be allowed to the exceptionally talented boys.\textsuperscript{15} To the end of social equality among the villages, Vinobaji has a plan of Antyodaya or the rise of the last man. By this will be the uplift of the Harijan and the downtrodden. Such people live in villages as well as in towns. In villages there are untouchables landless and poor Harijan and in towns there are scavengers who dwell in dirty surroundings and do deal with dirt and garbage. During his tours in connection with his Bhoodan movements, he wilfully visits the area and finds them in horribly pitiable condition. He finds his Bhoodan Yajna as the panacea of all their troubles through the distribution of land property procured during the Bhoodan and the Sampatti dan movement wants to improve their economic condition and thereby uplift them in social estimation. Both Gandhiji and Vinobaji abhor the idea of family planning. They even castigate the national planners that they have no right to force people for family planning on the plea of the solution of the employment problems. They plead that in a Sarvodaya set up there should hardly be any need of employment in the government and private circles. We need more hands for more work. The more the work is the more the production will be Vinobaji even goes to such a length to declare that the government servants have no right to ask the public who are their actual masters and employers, to breed such and such number of children Gandhiji once said “By better agriculture by a supplementary industry this country is able to support twice as many people as there are today. These greatmen had an instinct to believe that in the Sarvodaya society
there will be least chance of cohabitation and progeny, because it includes Brahmacharay or celibacy.\textsuperscript{16}

**Vinoba and Sevagram**

It was Gandhi who appointed Vinoba as incharge of Wardha Ashrama in 1921, as a branch of Sabarmati Ashrama. Vinoba spent his whole life except 1951 to 1973 Bhudan Yajna. He was moving from Magan wadi, Bajaj wadi, Mahila Ashram, Sevagram and Pawanar. He himself was physically working for 8 hours in spinning, weaving and agriculture. He had abolished every trace of untouchability from his heart. He served the leper and induced one to dedicate completely to the service of leper. He gave importance to spiritual and moral teaching. In Oct. 1940 he was selected as first Satyagrahi of individual civil disobedience due to the fact that he was the right man to change the heart of the enemy through non-violence. Gandhi described him as the ideal satyagrahi. He was a master of action and hero of thought and genius of devotion. His whole life was dedicated to God whom he wanted to see in the smallest particle as also in the poorest and the most down trodden. In Vinoba we have Gandhi's instinct supplemented by almost unbelievable knowledge of the best thought of India through the ages. According to Tukoji Maharaj "Now Vinoba to us is what Bapu was to us then. After Gandhi's death he has become as loving as he." The basic education concept originated from Wardha Ashram in which handicraft work was given priority. Gandhiji started living in Sevagram since 1936. He believed in imparting training to hand, heart and head corresponding to action devotion and knowledge. He insisted value based education, where morality played an important role. In other words humanity was the core of the education. It should need based Vinoba's
discourses dealt with selfless work. Vinoba being a true disciple of Gandhi wanted youth to serve India.

5.10 His love for Gita

He had profound love for Gita. In his opinion Gita is the expression of God. It is a book of spiritual knowledge. He had his originality to interpret Gita. He differed with Tilak’s interpretation. Selfless work is the prime of Gita. Gita was his life. He described Gita as mother. He translated Gita into Marathi and called it Gitai. Which brought fame and name.17.

5.11 Influences on Ruskin

Of the several influences that went to the shaping of mind and spirit of Ruskin, the Bible occupies the central place. The practice of Bible-reading was cultivated by the mother who was herself a devout Christian and further strengthened by an aunt still more evangelical. He was forced by the mother to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart through every syllable, a loud and clear: “and to that discipline—patient, accurate, and resolute—I owe not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature’. She wanted the son to take up clerical, orders and so solemnly “devoted me to God”. “Devoting me to God”, meant, as far as my mother knew herself what she meant, that she would try to send me to College and make a clergyman of me: and I was accordingly bread for “the Church”.18 The very business of Church going on Sundays he did not like, nor did he like the Church: “I found the bottom of the pew so extremely dull a place to keep quiet in., (my best story books being also taken away from me in the morning) that ... the horror of Sunday used even to cast its prescient gloom as far back in the week as
Friday—and all the glory of Monday, with Church seven days removed again, was no equivalent for it”. Sunday was strictly observed as a pious day in the household; that day it was forbidden to play, to draw, to read or write or to amuse in any agreeable manner. It was at about the age of four that he came back from the Church with Rev. Howell’s sermons in his mind and could deliver a sermon of his own: “People be good. If you are good, God will love you. If you are not good, God will not love you. People be good”. The habit that he cultivated then, remained with him for good, and he always preached good. It is to be admitted that he made the best use of his early education and brought useful and practical suggestions on the basis of his close and intimate understanding of the scriptures. In Essay III of Unto This Last, he freely quotes proverbs of Solomon, a Jew merchant, largely engaged in business on the Gold Coast and reported to have made one of the largest fortunes of his time. He uses the sayings of the Bible to support his statements: “I know no previous instance in history of a nation’s establishing a systematic disobedience to the first principles of its professed religion. The writings which we (verbally) esteem as divine, not only denounce the love of money as the source of all evil, and as an idolatory abhorred of the Deity, but declare mammon service to be the accurate and irreconcilable opposite of God’s service: and, whenever they speak of riches absolute, and poverty absolute declare woe to the rich, and blessing to the poor”. Oliver Elton has commented on this aspect of Ruskin: “From the Bible comes much of the best of his language and cadence: “it is never far off in his magic melodies; no other literary influence can be compared with it. Nor any mental influence; for it affected his whole temper towards nature, art, and humanity”. Carlyle never wanted cheaper cotton or swifter railways. He wanted God, Freedom
“The Economical and Mechanical Spirit of the age, faith in mere steel or stone, was one of Carlyle’s red rags. The others were insincerity in Politics and in life, Democracy without Reverence, and philanthropy without sense.” He took keen interest in the welfare of the working classes as his Sartor, Chartism and Past and Present reveal. Moreover, he admired all Ruskin’s works: “He admired all Ruskin’s books; the Stones of Venice, the most solid structure of the group, he named, “Sermons in Stones”; he resented an attack on Sesame and Lilies as if the book had been his own; and passages of the Queen of the Air went into his heart “like arrows.” He never believed in liberty but. “living under the laws enacted by the wise” and disliked the: very idea of “the rights of women”. In his concept of Political Economy, three main ideas strike us most. First, he protests against the doctrine of laissez faire; secondly, he advocates the organization of Labour; thirdly, he advocates emigration as a sufficient remedy for over-population. Further Carlyle attaches great importance to work. To him, he alone is honourable who does his work by sword or plough or pen. His view about the nobility of Labour is considered his most important contribution to improved social well-being. He wanted to see England produce “noble ‘Captains of Industry’ —the heroes these latter days require—through whose united efforts the conditions of the poorer classes should cease to be the crying disgrace of modern civilization.” Ruskin learnt much from the prophet of Chelsea and rightly called him ‘Master. The sympathy between the twee was a result of essential similarity of attitude to the problems of life. Plato is another great man who exerted a great influence on the thinking of John Ruskin. He had started taking interest in Plato as early as 1843, and as time passed, the Dialogues of Plato became a daily companion. During his stay at Venice in
1876 he read and translated some lines of Plato every day as he was not satisfied with Jowett’s translation. He noted: “Must do my Plato; I am never well without that.” Like Plato, Ruskin introduced a strong element of morals in the arts. Plato banished all poets from his Republic but those who were edifying. Plato’s emphasis on music as an instrument of shaping character is taken over by Ruskin. Plato wants his Republic to be based on agriculture and not on industries. He wants his citizens virtuous and his state to aim at the attainment of just and noble sentiments. Justice was dear to them and they loved loyalty and obedience and not liberty and equality. Plato believed that there was a spiritual kingdom and that we should aspire to make our city perfect and direct our lives by the laws given by the philosophers. Ruskin believed in the Kingdom of God whose laws were given by the prophets and we should aspire to be citizens of that Kingdom. He tried to establish a replica with the help of his Guild of St. George and presented guidance through the Fors. The Editors of his works have commented: “He sought to reconstruct society on the Platonic conception of Justice—assigning to each man his due place, and requiring from each man the fulfillment of his duties. To him as to Plato, the health and happiness of all the citizens was the sole end of legislation, and the rule of the wisest was the surest method of securing it.”

5.12 Influences on Gandhi

Three moderns have left a deep impress on my life and captivated me. Raychandbhai by his living contact; Tolstoy by his book, The Kingdom of God is Within You; and Ruskin by his Unto This Last.” Thus Gandhi acknowledged his indebtedness to the great trio in his autobiography. Gandhi read Ruskin’s Unto This Last during a train journey from Johannesburg to Durban in 1904. The book was given to him by a co-worker, H.S.L. Polak whom
Gandhi had taken in full confidence. Gandhi describes the ‘magic spell’ of the book: “The book was impossible to lay aside, once I had begun it. It gripped me. Johannesburg to Durban was a twenty four hours’ journey. The train reached there in the evening. I could not get any sleep that night. I determined to change my life in accordance with the ideals of the book”. No other book, except, indeed, the Oita, had such an influence on the thinking of Gandhi. He translated it later into Gujarati, entitling it Sarvodaya (the welfare of all). A man can sit down to translate a book only when it touches the very chords of his life, when it has entered his very body and soul, when a clear and strong rapport is established between the two. Gandhi decided not only to change his own life according to the teachings of Ruskin but established a farm, The Phoenix, where he tried to put the theory of Ruskin to practice. In Ruskin, Gandhi got the most kindred spirit. Ruskin was concerned with the same problems and provided the solutions which appealed to Gandhi as if the thoughts were of his own. Plato also exerted a great influence on Gandhi through the Dialogues. Gandhi specially liked the sense of justice and truth there. He published his own Defence and Death of Socrates based on translations of Plato. The lives of Hasan and Husain also had a great appeal to him. Thus, Gandhi was a man who kept his windows open for the best ideas to blow in from every direction.

5.13 NO RIVAL OF GANDHI

Subhas never challenged the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in any sense of personal ambition nor did he ever aspire to ascend to any height of glory as any rival of the Mahatma. Subhas had no personal ambition of his own; he was indeed a saint-patriot, as many of his biographers depicted him. His only ambition was to fulfill his mission—the liberation of his motherland. For
months before he left India, he faced unsavory behaviors from his Congress colleagues—even the political attitude of Gandhi towards Subhas then was unsparing. Subhas left India as a man battered in his soul, but as soon as the revolutionary pilgrim plunged himself into the activities in fulfillment of his mission of Germany or in South-East Asia, he fought all about the treatment meted out to him by the party leaders or Gandhi. He did not utter a word against Gandhi or the Congress or any of the Congress leaders in his broadcasts. He raised two INA brigades in the names of his earlier political adversaries—Nehru and Azad. He raised another brigade in the name of Gandhi. He sought Gandhiji’s blessings “in the holy war of liberation of India” and hailed him in the highest esteem by calling him ‘the Father of the Nation’. It was the noblest national homage that was first paid by a rebel to the Mahatma. Subhas was verily an ‘Indian pilgrim’ who in his inner being could hardly entertain any rancor or prejudice against any of the Congress leaders and least of all against the Mahatma. Though he confronted Gandhi many times and differed from the Gandhian ways on many occasions, yet his reverence for the Mahatma always remained the highest.

5.14 Gandhi, Vinoba and Buddha

Respect for life manifested in the form of worship of Nature – rivers, trees and even animals. This in recent times when we came in close contact with materialistic civilization and when the world became smaller, has been named as Vedanta. The experience of unity of life is termed vedanta. Nature is the supreme power according to vedantic saints. To keep check on the greed of man and to maintain the harmonious relationship between ‘Man and Nature’, they preached ‘Ahimsa’ (non-violence). ‘Ahimsa’, as vinoba Bhava-the spiritual heir of Gandhi and the walking saint of India said, “is the way of living and vedanta is a way of thinking.”
Buddha was the first to make this a way of life for the common people. He was in search of the causes of miseries and a way to end these. After hard penances it occurred to him that the root cause of all distress (dukh) was insatiable desire (trishna). In order to achieve permanent peace, happiness and ultimately fulfilment, he preached the ending of desires. There is a basic difference between need and desires. Our needs should be fulfilled, but we should not run after desires, which make man greedy and ultimately the butcher of Nature.

This message in our times has become more relevant for human survival, when human kind is faced with triple problems of war, pollution and poverty, which are interrelated. The root cause of these is human greed and the answer is in man's relationship with Nature, Gandhi has in very simple words put this, ‘Nature has enough to sustain all, but nothing to satisfy the greed of a few’.

5.15 TOLSTOY AND GANDHI

(I) DIVERGENCE FROM TOLSOTY ON PACIFISM AND NATIONALISM

On some matters Gandhi differed from Tolsoty. We shall more clearly when we come to his countenancing some cases of violent killing that Gandhi was not, like Toltoys, a pacifist. He even went so far as to insist that the British Should hand over to Indians control of the army and defense as

Being he essence of a nation's existence and required for responsible government. As for nationalism, Tolstoy had rejected it uncompromisingly, because it called for violence against other nations. Gandhi's rejection of
ordinary nationalism was more subtle. As he wrote in 1935, “My nationalism includes the love of all the nations of the earth irrespective of creed”. 29

5.16 Mao and gandhi

Gandhi’s critique of the Eurocentric bias of modern economic and political science has closely affinity to mao Tse Tung of China and his search for a new methodology and approach appropriate to Chinese (i.e. Asian) conditions.

The following passage from Mao had in fact a Gandhian ring and a Gandhian flavor.

“ There are persons who feel pride, instead of shame, in their ignorance in or scanty knowledge of our own history… ignorant of our own affairs, some people have got only scrap of knowledge about ancient Greece and other foreign countries which with pitiful industry they have picked up bit from the rubbish heap of obsolete foreign books.

“ For several decades, many who studies abroad have had this shortcoming. They come back from Europe, America or Japan, only to talk about the foreign things they have swallowed raw and whole. They play the role of a talking machine and forget their duty of understanding and crating new things… Teacher of students to study the characteristic features of the Chinese economy; teachers of political science do not guide them to study the Chinese revolution”(Mao Tes Tung 1956: 14-15).

Mao had future elaborated the same basic malady of the Chinese intellectuals as follows: 30

“ Generally speaking. Unlike the bourgeois of Europe, America or Japan, the Chinese bourgeois, still in its infancy, has as yet not been and will never be able to provide us with any comprehensive or even preliminary data on social
conditions and this makes it necessary for us to collect them ourselves…

Although my assertion “No investigation, no write to speak” has beenidiculed by some as “narrow empiricism” but even now I do not regret having
said it and what is more I still stick to it “ (Mao Tse Tung 1956: 9).

Thus, Mao like Gandhi, had made it obligatory for his colleagues and co-
works to engage directly in field study and in direct fact-finding. In his view,
holding a fact-finding conference is the simplest, the most reliable method
which has taught me a great real, and which gives me a better education than
any university” (Mao Tse Tung 1956: 8).

In Mao’s or Gandhi method of enquiry the people were to be made
partners in the task of the generation of knowledge about their own economic,
social and political environment. Mao had told Malraux: “We must teach the
masses clearly what we have received from them which has again a
Gandhian ring clearly brought our the role of masses in the generation of
knowledge related to the conditions under which they lived and worked.

It is this rootedness in the “field-view” of the Indian economy rather in
the “book-view” acquired from textbooks having little relevance for the
predominantly agrarian, Asian reality that had made Gandhi or Mao better
economic thinkers than all the scholars put together during the period to which
they belonged.31

5.17 GANDHI AND KRIPALANI

But on the other hand, it may be argued that Kripalani had his own ideas of
developing the national movement and performing the task of nation-building.
He preferred to act as a follower of Mahatma Gandhi and engaged in the
nationalist projects like those of Khadi and Village industries, civil
disobedience, Satyagrah, basic education and so on. Ktiplani was a party builder no doubt. But he acted more as a builder of movements than party machines. As a result he created political forces in the shape of the Congress organization, the KMPP and the PSP and motivated leaders are attached to the party machines built by them over the years. While every other major leader had his own home state or constituency in terms of his community, Kriplani had non. Apart from the fact that his home province, Sind, went away as part of believed that the western type industrialization militated against the traditional labour-intensive pattern of activities in the country, specially the economic or industrial activities. Hence he stood firmly for industrialization in the sense of spread of the labour-intensive or small-scale industries in the framework of a mixed economy so that these would ultimately lay the foundation for an economically as well.

Kriplani was a multi-faceted personality. He reflected many areas of human thought and activity. There were not field where he did no venture. His voluminous literature covered subjects like history, politics law journalism, sociology, economics and on. Like basic education, he defended democracy, liberty, freedom, rights, property, courts and judiciary, Charkha, Khadi, Village industries, village panchayats etc. He strongly condemn communism. He rejected the economic interpretation of history, the theory of class struggle and the method of armed insurrection. The ideology behind the rejection of the communist method by Kriplani was that bad means could never be justified by ostensibly noble ends. Kriplani a staunch supported of Gandhiji, was a confirmed believer in non-violence, class coopertation and decentralization of power, both political and economic. He found no truth in the slogans like“ The proletariat of all countries unite” or “ The poor have
nothing to lose but their chains.” He believed that these slogans had been falsified in every war involving a communist country.  

Kripalani was not only a political leader but also an educationist. He had been a teacher, a professor, a vice-principal and a principal. The action taken against Kripalani by the authorities during his college days, when he had to migrate from college to college, made him a nationalist. Kripalani as an ardent follower of Gandhiji, had already implemented a number of programmed long before the basic education system came into existence. The Gandhi Ashram, Started by him at Varansi during the non-cooperation days, aimed at production of khadi by the student. Kripalani knew the pros and cons of the system of basic education. The new scheme, when it was announced, was opposed by many Indian educationists, including some Vice-Chancellor. Kripalani, while supporting the basic education scheme, rightly criticized those educationists as belonging to an earlier era. According to him, the western system of education was thoroughly bad. He observed that it violated all the know principal of good and scientific education. The basic education scheme was an attempt to replace the Western system of education by a more dynamic one. Kripalani defended the reforms initialed by Gandhiji in many ways. He expounded the ten principles constituting the core of basic education. Kripalani warned the radicals and Marxists, who had no faith in moral philosophy, against using the wardha scheme for their own narrow purposes. The Acharya was of the opinion that the goal of a democratic society and be achieved only when there is mutual understanding and cooperation among and individuals. To him, the basic education scheme was ideal for introducing a common productive activity in the schools. While commenting on the student unrest in some of the universities in India.
Kripalani held that the unrest was mainly due to the defective system of western education in the country. Kripalani had critically examined the various report on education such as the Radhakrishna Commission report and the Kothari Commission report and felt that the suggested reforms had not gone far enough. Though the method of basic education seemed to be simple nature and scientific, there were difficulties regarding implementation. Kripalani felt that the greatest difficulty was to find and train the necessary teachers for translating the scheme into practice. Kripalani thinking and activities in the field of economic reconstruction and modernization of India were not only sound but have also, rightly, influenced the course of events in the country. Kripalani believed that large-scale industrialization of the western type was destructive to the traditional arts and handicrafts in India. He was not against industrialization or mechanization as such. With Mahatma Gandhi he believed that science and technology were undoubtedly desirable and valuable. But he insisted that science and technology or machines have to be used in the service or the toiling millions of India and people elsewhere. He argued that for the sound economy and rapid modernization the economic philosophy and programmes should center round small-scale industries or cottage industries which would be labour-intensive and provide employment and wages to the teeming millions of India and which would enhance the spirit of self-reliance of masses. He believed that this was the foundation for the reconstruction of India and India’s modernization. He insisted that the economic programme of India should be such that it must fully consistent with the moral and political dimensions of India’s life and people.
5.18 The Heritic Gandhian : Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia

Like Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia remained aligned with some political party but where as Nehru, was in power, Lohia remained in the opposition. Infact, he was a born leader of the opposition. But though he was in politics, Lohia was an uncompromising moralist in politic, to him politics is a short term application of religion where as religion is enduring politics. Thus, who would fully subscribe to Gandhian ideas of “goodness politics” or “moral basis of politics.” Thus he practiced his politics with his principles. Only one instance would be enough. He would not careful for the downfall of the Kerala Ministry of his own party as its could not remain upto the mark of policies laid down by the party. In short, opportunism in politics was unknown to Lohia.34

Second most important Gandhian principle that Lohia adopted was of Civil-disobedience. Where as Vinoba and J.P. had almost left in the cold-storage and Jawaharlal and his company in the Government had become pro-establishment, it was left to Dr. Lohia, to keep the flame of Satyagraha burning. Rather, he would like to sharpen the blade of Satyagraha through introducing “Ghero” also. But he never advocated violence. His formula was that if we cannot resist Tyranny or oppression immediately, it will grown in its sweep and intensity. He protested against all injustices whether it in against the rape of Tibet and Czexoslovakia, firing on people in Kerala, extravagance in public life the personality cult in Nehru family, continuance of English etc. He had a comprehensive vision. Though he was a socialist, he was not a Marxist, his contribution in social life is also crucial. It was he who had advocated the theory of special opportunities to the weaker section and reservation in jobs for women minorities, SCs, STs and O.B.C. But he had organized a powerful campaign against castism. He was great champion
against apartheid and discrimination against color. He was an ardent advocate of Indian languages like Gandhi and unlike Nehru who had a great fascination for English. He was as ardent an advocate of Hindi as Gandhi. In parliament, his advocacy for Hindi was next to none and at far with P.D. Tandon. Lohia also believed in decentralization for power and so he advocated four polar democracy. He was an agnostic but he had a great love for Indian culture and so he included holding of a national Ramayan Mela at Chitrakoot because he thought that Ramayan is the guiding light to our culture. Not only this, he wrote about Ram, about Ram Krishna and Shiva, enlighening their great characteristics of personality which can become a beacon light for all of us. As a true social democrat, Lohia did not like to separate the problem of bread and individual liberty. One without the other was meaningless. He seldom theorized. Like Gandhi, he had concrete formula to wipe out poverty and inequality. He had advocated the income of one person should not be more than 10 times from other.\textsuperscript{35} He advise his workers to work at the grassroots and work with the poor, peasants and workers. His patriotism knew no bounds. He participated in 1942 movement as a revolutionary, he led the famous Satyagraha in Goa to liberate it from foreign domination. He could not tolerate the rape of Tibet and he said that either there should be a free Tibet or we should get our ancient Kailash and Mansarovar, he said with invincible argument. He was a true lover of culture so he had pleaded to give cultural name to the then, North Eastern Frontier Agency as “Urhawium”. Lohia though he was in politics, had no personal grievances against anybody. His support or opposition was always based on some principle. It was never a matter of convenience. His sevenfold revolution is Gandhism in extension. He opposed inequality between men and women,
between black and white, between person born in different castes, he was
against war and favoured a world-government. He also advocated a
confederation between India and Pakistan. In him, there was a synthesis of
compassion and anguish against exploitation and oppression of the
oppressed and the depressed. This is like the union of fire and water, Agni
and Soma. We all know that Gandhi during his last days had become
dissatisfied with the ways of working of the Congress leader. He wanted to
create a platform to work for the welfare of the masses according to his idea,
had realized the dedication of these young socialist force and so Gandhi
had offered to work as the Secretary of those leaders like Lohia, and J.P.
promised they accept his theory of non-violence. Lohiaji had been to meet the
Mahatma on 29th January 1948 only a day before his martyrdom. However, it
could not materialize or else these would have been a new axis in Indian
public and political life. After Gandhi, Dr. Lohia proved to be the greatest
crusader against injustices.36

5.19 Religious

A comparative study of the religious ideas of four eminent contemporary
Indian thinkers, namely, Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda,
Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan has been made in this
work. Though their backgrounds are different but all of them belong to what is
generally called as the period of Indian Renaissance. All these thinkers have
taken up the various issues in the philosophy of religion. They were not only
well versed in the ancient lore of Hinduism, but also in the Western tradition
and Christian thought. In their philosophical and religious ideas, we find a
happy blend of all what is best in the Eastern and the Western traditions. They
were the products of the Renaissance and at the same time they themselves
contributed for the growth and progress of the spirit of Renaissance and much for the enrichment of contemporary Indian tradition. There are many similarities between them. On some issues they might have had some distinct opinions of their own. Yet all of them are theist and idealists, and had great appreciation for the ancient Indian tradition.

In general they have accepted the four paths of Karma, Bhakti, Jnana and Yoga which lead to the realization of the ultimate reality. But some of them gave importance to one of them; for example, Raja Rammohan Roy gave importance to knowledge and devotion. Swami Vivekananda gave equal importance to all the four paths, but he felt that the path of Karma was important. It is because of the need of enormous dynamism and action for the upliftment of India. Mahatma Gandhi gave emportance to Bhakti and Karma. Though a man of devotion he spent his life with full of hectic activity and dynamism. Dr. Radhakrishnan gave importance to Jnana, the path of knowledge, though he held equal preference for the other three. Raja Rammohan Roy was influenced by Vedanta and Upanisads; Swami Vivekananda was also influenced by Vedanta but he was not much critical about popular Hinduism. Mahatma Gandhi gave importance mainly to Bhakti. Radhakrishnan believed in the path of Advaita Vedanta. All these four thinkers, true to Indian tradition, were equally reverent to other traditions. This ultimate aim of Indian philosophy and religion is the attainment of Moksa (liberation). Dharma, Artha, Kama are called as Tri-vargas. Through them one has to attain Moksa which is called as Apavarga. Except few thinkers like Jawaharlal Nehru and M.N. Roy, all other philosophers generally accept the concept of Moksha; and according to them, the highest aim of any individual should be the attainment of Moksa.
Contemporary Indian philosophy is basically idealistic and is based on the philosophy of Vedanta. Though there are different interpretations on some of the concepts of Vedanta, all of them accepted the Vedanta tradition. Empiricism is not a popular philosophic system in India in the present times as well as in the past. The challenges of empiricism and materialism are there but not significant. Empiricism is equally an important and vital philosophic system; but it could not get a hold in contemporary Indian thought. There are many critics who consider that contemporary Indian religious thought is mainly interpretative but not creative. There is some truth. The contemporary Indian thinker is a defender of the tradition in the broad sense. He considers the scriptures to be sacred and valid and remarks that sometimes it is due to our incapacity that we are not in a position to understand the true meaning of scriptures. It is wrong to think that the Vedantic tradition is not creative like the method of the Purvapaksa which doubts a particular judgment and tries to give an alternative answer. Through the system, questions are raised about a statement and attempts are made to give a reasonable answer. In contemporary Indian religious situation, there is no scope, at present, to place a new viewpoint, according to some scholars. If this argument is accepted, we have to say that contemporary religious thought tries to interpret the age-old tenets in the new light. Another fact is that a discerning historian of religion finds that the new discoveries are made in science. If people are scientific and rational in their temperament and if they reject all that is irrational in our religions and belief system, they have to reject many tenets in many religions. But the modern man is using science where it is necessary with scientific temperament and when it comes to religion they give importance to faith than reason. If science is taken seriously and applied to religion, many of the major
religions will lose many of their followers. But we find that science and faith are living together without a hindrance. Some criticize the contemporary Indian thought as interpretative and not creative. These critics say that the contemporary Indian thinkers just wanted to interpret the Vedantic scriptures to defend their views. Generally, these scriptures use verse language which gives scope for different interpretations whether it is Quran or Bible or Bhagavad Gita. This gives scope for different schools of thought in every religion. In Vedanta also we have many schools like Advaita, Visistadvaita or Dvaita, mainly propounded by Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva based on the Prasthanatrayi-Brahma Sutra, Upanisads and the Gita. This flexibility of interpretation has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that one can defend one’s position by interpreting the verse in a way suitable to one. The disadvantage is that one might be blamed as instable and is not on a firm-ground. Another problem is the question of what is truth? How can we know it? If we can know, is it through intellect or intuition? Is the intellect capable of knowing everything or are there any limitations to our intellectual or intuitional knowledge? Religious traditions give importance to intuition and consider it as one of the important sources of knowledge. How far the challenge of the empiricist is valid? In the history of many religious traditions, we find some men and women whom we call as mystics and Rsis. 39

5.20 J.P NARAYANA

In spite of differences in personality traits he was convinced about the following core ideas and concerns of Gandhi: (a) open-mindedness and catholicity, (b) spirit of exploration to search for an alternative to violent change, (c) importance of people-oriented struggle as means of sharpening their awareness, (d) somewhat secularized version of Gandhian ethics of
ends and means with reference to public life, (e) the concept of dual strategy of change and of parallel polity.

(a) Catholicity

Gandhi’s methodology had both pragmatic and idealist aspects, while his philosophy was purely idealist. Gandhi was not bound to any particular “ism” or “ideology” as such, though he was committed to ideals of practicing Truth and Nonviolence. JP Began as a Marxist: he saw in Marxism a panacea for the evils of capitalism. But he moved toward it because his was a commitment primarily to freedom and equality and fraternity. In vain did he move in and move out of the major social and political movements in India in search of a movement in which all these three would be reconciled. But he later realized that “no single ideology is in itself adequate to be adopted as a basis of programme of social change and reconstruction. Further, no single set of institutions, particularly those connected with political power can also be relied upon for this purpose.” JP also realized that “the questions facing me and Bihar cannot be found within the framework of any single ideology….. There is all the evidence in history…. To show that ideological systems have a way of changing their basic character when faced with social realities and political tasks of revolution-making and post-revolutionary reconstruction…. His political philosophy seems to be: Given certain value commitments and certain goals, problem solving and social reconstruction are various scientific tasks….. value commitments should not be confused own ideological commitments… Once the goal is fixed and values defined, it is a question for science to determine how the goal and the values are kept clearly in view, these means can be altered by experience.”.40
(b) Exploration and Experimentation

Seen in a perspective, the tone and texture of the evolution of JP’s thinking (however zig-zag), his basic impulses and temper and his approaches to national issues of reconstruction and reform have a flavor of Gandhism. In this sense, the distance which JP traversed ideologically – from Sarvodaya to ‘Total Revolution’ – is nil. There is a lot of movement, search and exploration but there is not much displacement, as it were. Take, for instance, Jayaprakash Narayan’s spirit of restless exploration and to be content with being a simple path-finder. Very few nationalist-minded political thinkers in modern India (from Rammohan Roy to M.N. Roy) were involved in such a sincere, life-long, painful process of unrewarding search for a proper idiom of thought and action which could lead to total social change as Jayaprakash Narayan, who as a unique political explorer chose to keep on travelling hopefully. For he was too much of a romanticist and an idealist to be satisfied with what he found at the end of each leg of his ideological odyssey. In this respect JP’s quest is similar to Gandhi’s. JP who fixed his sights lower than those of Gandhi, conducted only clinical tests in regard to contemporary revolutionary ideologies in the context of national liberation and national reconstruction. Gandhi had conducted successful pilot and extraordinary wide-range experiments with Truth in the ghettoes of modern civilization – in racist South Africa and in colonial India. He left behind a rich heritage. It is the raw material for building a philosophy and ideology and a strategy for a counter-civilization based on love and nonviolence. 41 Gandhi accepted certain values which he considered as old as the hills. Gandhi only tried to give them from both in personal and private and collective and public life. Gandhi’s heritage comprises certain seminal ideas such as Trusteeship. Basic
Education, Satyagraha and some unique conventions and institutions such as morality-oriented politics, and the concept polity and Gram Swarajya.

(c) Politics and Ethics

Gandhi had declared that his purpose was to relate religion (Dharma) to politics, in fact purify it. He rejected the view that in politics everything is “fair” as long as it serve the end. In pursuance of this proclaimed objective, he ensured that the national movement is conducted strictly in accordance with certain norms. By doing so, he laid the foundations of a political tradition in which politics and morality are correlative rather than competitive. Even the Congress leaders and the Congress factions tried to resolve their differences on the basis of certain minimum norms. They did not transgress the limits prescribed by such norms. The Congress carried its opposition to the British within this policy frame. This tradition of an ethically-oriented politics came to an end, as it were, in 1967 when a new type of “cold Machiavellianism” was introduced into the entire political process. By 1973, the traditions of the national movement in this regard were thrown to winds. Political corruption regard throughout the country. JP in 1973-74 reacted to this situation in a manner which makes it clear that he sought to revive the traditions of the national movement under Gandhi. When he saw large-scale corruption, he raised it as a major national issue. The Bihar Movement had a historical significance in this sense. It made corruption in high places and in the system a national issue- the issue of issues. It also undermined the psychological and the electoral basis of the monopolistic hold of the Congress party on the Indian parliamentary system; and the myth of the invincibility of the Congress party was exploded.⁴²
Chapter – 5 : Reference

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