"Life is an aspiration. Its mission is to strive after perfection which is self-realisation. The ideal must not be lowered because of our weaknesses or imperfections. I am painfully conscious of both in me. The silent cry goes out to Truth to help me to remove these weaknesses and imperfections of mine .... Though I may fail to carry it out to the full in this life, my faith in it shall abide. Every failure brings me nearer the realisation."

M.K. GANDHI
Harijan, 22-6-1935.
Hardly a day passes without the news media focusing our attention on reports of violence and murder from various parts of the country. Violent crimes related to politics and elections and communal rivalry have now become a prominent daily item in our newspapers. School and College campuses, too, turn restive and violent frequently. Violence, it is true, has been a part of human behaviour down the ages, but the extensive cult of violence dominating Indian Society today is, perhaps, unprecedented. A casual glance at our newspapers will convince any one of this alarming truth. Here is a sample of news reports selected at random.

---

**SRIPERUMBUDUR**
**MAY-21**

A bomb explosion claims the life of former Prime minister Rajiv Gandhi during an election tour of the south. The suspected assassin is also wiped out in the explosion.

---

**CHANDIGARH**
**JUNE-15**

110 passengers were killed and over 70 badly injured when an unspecified number of militants attacked the Ferozpur-Ludhiana and the Dhuri-Ludhiana passenger trains.
PATNA
JUNE-23

13 people were burned to death in the Bhojpur district of Bihar by some unidentified miscon- creants. Most of the killed belong to the scheduled caste.

LUCKNOW
JUNE-25

Two Muslim youth, one of them reportedly having an affair with a Hindu girl, were killed by a mob in Shikarpur town, while one of them was ‘stabbed and set on fire’; the other was dragged by a noose around his neck till it tightened and claimed his life.

NEW DELHI
JULY-15

Four robbers, suspected to be terrorists, struck at the Okhla branch of the State Bank of Patiala, killing three persons on the spot and critically injuring two, who died later, before walking away with about two lakh in cash from the bank.
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

SEPTEMBER-13

A demonstration organised by students (sfi) turned violent in front of the secretariat. Eleven police personnel, including a sub-inspector were injured. They also allegedly set fire to a police van which was completely gutted.

CHANDIGARH

SEPTEMBER-13

Eight passengers of a Punjab Roadways bus bound for Faridkot from Pathankot were kidnapped by militants near Khadoor village in Ferozpur district.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

SEPTEMBER-30

The Kerala Assembly was adjourned for the day in less than 90 minutes following uproarious scenes. The cause for the trouble was the assault by a group of people on two CPI(M) members of the house. The ruling UDF and opposition LDF members came close to blows.
Faced with this ugly and cruel reality, one might shrug one's shoulders helplessly. One might wonder how even in this modern age of science with its breathtaking technological achievements, such inhuman tendencies could sway the humans. Science and technology which have unlocked forces of tremendous capabilities and helped man to conquer nature and exploit her resources to the utmost, are now looked upon with fear and anguish. The scientific achievements now threaten to tear asunder the very fabric of human society, for there has been no comparable advance in the moral plane. Genetic engineering, fission and fusion of bombs with destructive potential are staring at mankind. Coping with the present situation has become a tension-filled nerve-wracking affair. Is it possible at all to lead a life of peace and sanity in this grim scenario?

The callous killing of people in increasing numbers and the intensity of violence have been freezing our sensitivity and undermining our precious cultural values of ahimsa and karuna. There has been an erosion of values which are constitutive of Indian culture and civilization. In this pervading darkness, all men, youth in particular, experience internal and external tension. This tension pushes them into paths of disorder, murder, suicide, drugs, liquor and sexual delinquency, ultimately resulting in the total distortion of their personalities.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A.D. 2000 is round the corner and the twentyfirst century with its challenges and opportunities will soon be on us. How are our young
people being equipped to step into the new century? They are the hope of the nation and if they are to cope with the tremendous changes that confront them, they have to be equipped for the task and provided with proper values. In order to perform this function society relies on certain agencies. One of the most important of these agencies is education which is expected to uphold and transmit proper values to the young. The success of this agency is to be judged by the character and quality of the young people coming out of the temples of knowledge. Judged by this standard our educational institutions seem to have failed in a large measure.

The picture that our schools and colleges presents today is one of restless, reckless youth marching up and down the corridors shouting slogans and damaging property. Deprived of proper moral values and devoid of any clear aim in life, they feel frustrated and angry. They are like pilgrims, who fascinated by the inn, forget their destination; they waste their energy in fruitless conflicts and aimless pursuits. They cause disharmony not only in the campuses but also in society at large because they are in the vanguard. Saving our youth from this perilous state has become a pressing need in India today.

This urgent need of building up a new and awakened youth can be met only by bringing about a major change in their character which is the core of personality. In a world addicted to violence, in order to mould a strong and peaceable character, one has to practise acts of non-violence deliberately. Habits of high moral thinking along with simple living tend to reduce internal tensions and lead to the path of integration. A well-integrated and motivated personality becomes a
dynamo of power, radiating energy all around. This study postulates that violence and discord can be warded off by developing harmonious and integrated personalities in our youth. In this regard, a role model who, against all odds, trod the path of non-violence, harmony and integration will be of great value.

1. The development of personality

Personality does not develop in a vacuum. The development of personality is the change from 'what is' to 'what ought to be.' Man's very becoming constitutes the development of his potentialities. In a harmonious personality 'what is' and 'what ought to be' becomes as close as possible, if they do not totally merge. This transformation from actual self to the ideal self is what the development of personality is all about. How is this transformation possible?

Personality develops chiefly by means of actions, since personality is expressed through actions. Nothing affects man more immediately and more effectively than action. A slap in the face elicits a surer reaction than a mouthful of abuses! "What is fundamental in the case of action is that life itself is action and man cares for and takes note of action more than of anything else." If life is considered as action, the personality which forms the fundamental basis of life is also developed by actions that are not mechanical, reflexive and instinctive but deliberate, conscious and voluntary. Since conscious action has its origin in the mind and heart of man, it is the result of many mental processes, the likes and dislikes of the rational faculty and the whole system of values of the person concerned.
From common human experience it is clear that every action has a reaction and the dynamics of this action and reaction initiates an ongoing transformation in the personality. Since action transforms personality much more than other influences, a well planned series of voluntary actions logically lead to a well developed and integrated personality. The present study aims at establishing a correlation between sustained, recordable, voluntary action and transformation of personality through a model who had emphasised and experienced the formative effects of action in the development of his own personality.

Many investigations have been carried out by different psychologists on personality. Most of them, however, have been based mainly on the external observable factors concerning an individual. It seems that adequate thought has not been given by them to the spiritual aspect. Moreover, psychologists on the whole have experimented with the development of personality outside their own selves. It is supremely important, therefore, to have a model personality who has experimented with the visible, recordable and verifiable transformation in his own laboratory, the self.

The models so far developed by different psychologists certainly have a very useful reference value, but most of these models belong to the western world. Any solution aimed at the problems confronting Indian youth preferably should be Indian in nature and approach and in tune with the psyche and the beliefs of the Indian people.

The hallmark of Indian culture is its spiritual quest and extraordinary religious perception. The highest level of spiritual creativity is reached in the concept of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being, Pure
Consciousness, Bliss) which is transliterated at a more popular level into Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram\textsuperscript{14} (Truth, Goodness, Beauty). It is this invisible golden thread which has held together Indian culture despite its seeming contradictions and diversities. The spirit of India has been sustained by a regular succession of outstanding spiritual geniuses.

The capacity to assimilate and synthesise diverse cultures and make them its own has been an amazing characteristic of the Indian ethos. It has over the centuries accepted the Greek, the Islamic and the Christian cultures with open arms and in the process transformed them and clothed them with Indianness to some extent. Thus with a rich ancient cultural heritage the Indian psyche is a unique mixture of wisdom of the ancients and the vibrancy of the moderns. Therefore an Indian model is better suited to the Indian context. Hence the attempts to define the Indian milieu and to find an Indian model.

The suitability of a model increases if the person has come from the ordinary level of humanity with no exceptional talent and has at the same time emerged as a symbol of peace and harmony to the world. In a hundred percent co-ordination with the requirements of such a model is a shy country boy, hailing from a backward country under foreign rule who through his own actions, became one of the greatest figures the world has seen. This figure, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan; "is familiar to such a degree that there is scarcely a peasant or a factory worker who does not consider him to be a friend of human kind.\textsuperscript{15} Thus the search narrows down to a model made of ordinary stuff, but presents in his life the remarkable effect of action in the development of his personality, based to a large extent on the age-old spiritual values that are essentially Indian.
Mahatma Gandhi who was affectionately called Bapu (Father) by the people, marched through life's tortuous ways with firm and undaunted steps radiating his inner peace to others\(^\text{16}\) seemed to be a suitable model for our disturbed youth. Hence the present investigation proposes to hold up the personality of Gandhi as the fit model.

2. **The personality of Gandhi**

Gandhi does not belong to the rare category of the great who seem to come out of nature's workshop more or less as finished products. He was not born great, nor was greatness thrust upon him. There was nothing in Gandhi's early life that had marked him out as a man of destiny; but he worked on himself like a sculptor who works on marble and produces a marvel. He has risen from the ranks of the common man through sheer force of will and constant voluntary action. In this he has exemplified the evolutionary process of transformation possible only for those with determination and commitment.

The study of the life of Gandhi reveals two vastly different aspects of his personality, the shy, timid Mohandas and the universally acclaimed leader, the Mahatma. A vivid picture of the first aspect of his personality may be seen in his Autobiography.

I used to be very shy and avoided all company. My books and my lessons were my sole companions. To be at school at the stroke of the hour and to run back home as soon as the school is closed – that was my daily habit. I literally ran back, because I could not bear to talk to anybody. I was even afraid lest anyone should poke fun at me.\(^\text{17}\)

The other aspect of his personality, that of the Mahatma, is well known.
to the world. Einstein's description of him as "the greatest man of our times" is a testimony of this dimension of Gandhi's personality. Probing deeper into the personality of Gandhi, it becomes clear to us how Mohandas, the ordinary, was transformed into the Mahatma.

There have been many studies on different aspects of the life of Gandhi. The present study has a self-imposed limit: it attempts to analyze how the ordinary man was able to transform his ordinary personality into an exemplary one and become a Mahatma. A close look at his life shows that he had no system to start with. He was driven into action by the force of circumstances and the actions shaped himself slowly. In the beginning it would appear that Gandhi's self expanded horizontally and vertically as it were, acquiring knowledge and gathering information through the senses, outside the arena of his personal life. These were processed in the inner recesses of his conscience (abyssal) and were transmuted by means of fasting, prayer and open confession. The result was the integrated growth of body, mind and spirit, made possible by the deliberate actions based on Satya and Ahimsa. This integrated personality aspired to attain self-realization through an identification with the down-trodden millions, by living like them and for them.

He spoke and worked not for the ruler but the ranker, the tramp of the road. The slave with the sack on his shoulders pricked on with the goad. The man with a too weighty a burden, too weary a load.

He believed that the transformation of his personality would be complete only when it continued to work for the transformation of society. Thus
the Indian society at large was his laboratory. To quote his own words:

I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice, an India in which there shall be no rich class and no poor class of people, an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. This is the India of my dream. 20

The results Gandhi achieved on a massive scale had a higher validity than the experiments of the western psychologists who confined themselves to very small samples of human society. Gandhi's personality has mainly two dimensions. On the one hand, it is the integrated growth of body, mind and spirit—personal dimension and on the other, this integrated self is co-ordinated with his fellow beings through service—social dimension. Thus it is clearly discernible from the life of Gandhi that an ordinary Mohandas was transformed into a Mahatma.

Gandhi was also different from the many seers who have emerged in Indian history. He had a vision geared to action and suited to the particular Indian situation, but at the same time his appeal was universal. He was at once a visionary and a man of action, one who clung to abiding spiritual values while totally involved in politics. There was no dichotomy between his values and actions. Gandhi's life was lived in the open, as on a public platform; his words and actions were reported regularly by the media throughout the world. "There was no wall around Gandhi....His mind and emotions were even more exposed than his body." 21

Much importance is attached to Gandhi's personality because he
was a man who practised what he preached. Gandhi writes: "It is better to allow our lives to speak for us than our words." He taught nothing which he himself was not prepared to practise. The personal example of Gandhi, of leaving no gap between precept and practice, had a great impact on the masses in India. He was a man who practised the Christian precept, 'Love thy neighbour'. He was a man who absorbed the ancient wisdom in the 'Bhagavad Gita'. He was a man who perceived the social harmony and brotherhood preached by the 'Quran'. Gandhi believed: "True knowledge of religion breaks down the barriers between faith and faith." Gandhi thus was in a sense an illustrious example of the cross-fertilisation of cultures and schools of spirituality.

The superstition that fate sways personality like a puppet on strings has been exploded by Gandhi's life and example. Gandhi's life was not built on chances, but it blossomed through deliberate action. Gandhi said: "I have been a willing slave to this most exacting Master for more than half a century. His voice has been increasingly audible as years have rolled by." This wilful action rooted in the voice of his conscience has a tremendous shaping influence in various spheres - social, political, economic, moral and spiritual. He emerged as a great leader in the international field too. Of these manifold facets of Gandhi's personality the investigator focuses only on the formation of character on which the personality hinges.

The development of character is the major factor in Gandhi's transformation into the Mahatma. This development, as is evident from Gandhiji's life, has been a long process lasting practically from the cradle to the grave. In the dark gloom of India's degeneration Gandhi...
emerged as a luminous star in the firmament with a prophetic purity of vision and a unique unconquerable heroism of character.

Gandhi is perhaps the greatest revolutionary India has ever produced. There is hardly a human issue which he has not referred to in his seventy-nine years of purposeful and active living. In the words of Vincent Sheean,

there must have been in his discreet genius a general component, a pulse from the common pulse, a force both vertical and horizontal in its thrust, so that he could communicate more than others and hear a voice that others do not hear.25

"The entire life of Gandhi is a story of becoming what he already was, of becoming himself." 26

Gandhi is a model who had undergone the process of metamorphosis during his formative years. In this process the accent was on forces both horizontal and vertical in its thrust that shaped the inner being (abyssal) of Gandhi during the impressionable years he spent in India, England and South Africa. It was a process that transmuted a young Indian barrister of worldly ambitions into an ardent votary of truth and non-violence.27 His insistence on 'truth' and 'non-violence' as the corner stones of his personality led to the formation of a strong character, which shines as a beacon light of hope for the strife-torn world today. This study, it is hoped, will be of relevance to the disturbed youth in the Indian context, holding up to them a suitable model for the transformation of their character and personality.
REFERENCES

12. Ibid., p. 82.


22. Young India, August 11, 1927, p. 2Fr.


24. Harijan, May 6, 1933, p. 4.

25. VINCENT SHEEAN, Mahatma Gandhi: A Great Life in Brief, Publications Division, Govt. of India, New Delhi, 3rd Reprint, 1982, p. 3.

26. Ibid., p. 12.

PART I

SETTING OF THE STUDY

Theoretical Background
CH. I APPROACHES TO PERSONALITY & DEVELOPMENT

CH. II PERSONALITY OF GANDHI: SALIENT FEATURES

CH. III RESEARCH DESIGN