CHAPTER - V

GANDHIAN APPROACH TO RURAL INDUSTRIALIZATION

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Logic and Approach to Rural Industrialization

5.3 Review of Ideology Based Approach Practised in India

5.4 Dominant Issues and Major Policy Suggestions

5.5 Gandhi In the Globalised Context

5.6 The Major Challenges

5.7 Development: New Perceptions

5.8 Degradation of human being to the level of a commodity

5.9 Gandhi’s critique of the emerging scenario

5.10 Gandhi’s experiment contemporary relevance

5.11 The efficacy of Satyagraha

5.12 The core of Gandhi's scientific humanism

5.13 Spiritualisation of Politics

5.14 Gandhi and global nonviolent awakening

5.15 Growing violence and dehumanising hunger

5.16 Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

5.17 Gandhi's tackling of direct violence
5.18 Religion and social change

5.19 Gandhi and Globalisation

5.20 Development without justice and compassion?

5.21 Gandhian Concept for the Twenty First Century

5.22 Gandhian Gram Swaraj

5.23 Touchstone for Government

5.24 Gandhi’s View on Swadeshi
CHAPTER - V

GANDHIAN APPROACH TO RURAL INDUSTRIALIZATION

5.1 Introduction

It is a tragedy for India that we have never given a chance to ‘Gandhian Philosophy’. However, Gandhiji’s views on Khadi and Village Industries, were being followed by appointing the Khadi and Village industries Board since 1946. This article is an attempt to characterize the rural industrialization approach evolved in Gandhian Philosophy. It also briefly reviews and analysis our approach to implement this ideology based approach in practice. Some specific policy suggestions are also attempted in light of the most dominant issues experienced by us in the last fifty years.

5.2 Logic and Approach to Rural Industrialization

Adam Smith in the British parliamentary debate had depicted the picture of a prosperous India prior to the colonial period saying that “East India offered a market for the manufacturers of Europe greater and more extensive than both Europe and America put together”. This India was destroyed by British industrialization and its backwash, disintegrating self-assured villages through progressive impoverishment of the peasants and destruction of the artisans.

Gandhi had grasped the history of India very well which he well reflected in his Hind Swaraj where he provided the main constituents of his strategy of India’s reconstruction. Gandhi made it clear that ‘modern civilization’, nourished by British rule, was the real cause of
‘economic distress’. Against that, Gandhi envisaged that the salvation of India was in the revival of its ancient civilization. Under the shadow of ancient civilization, Gandhi wanted to develop a New Social Order which was based on the foundation of non-violence and truth, where economic progress and moral progress go together and the focus is on the development of man. Life and human relations in society, village and nation in the new social order were envisaged not like pyramids with an apex sustained at the bottom but, as an oceanic circle.

To achieve this New Social Order Gandhi’s development model was evolved around “Village Development” and it is so much emphasized that it is truly coined “VILLAGISM”. Gandhi’s emphasis on village reconstruction was negatively viewed as an onslaught on the exploitative tendency inherent in industrialism and dominance by urbanization and positively viewed as an attempt to establish a non-violent social order from which exploitation is completely done away with.

‘Rural Industrialization’ was never the term used by Gandhi. However, two basic components of Gandhian development, self-sufficient villages and decentralization of economic and political powers, gave a very important place to development of Khadi and Village Industries. According to a recent study the Khadi movement was not only a mass mobilization movement against anti-imperialist struggle, it was also a social movement of recognizing women’s capacity as economically and politically active beings without whose support the goal of freedom or Swaraj would be unattainable and meaningless. In fact, Gandhi’s well known concept of ‘Living Wage For Spinners’ originated in his realizing the danger of women being paid low wages even by constructive workers.
Gandhi’s clear rationale behind the choice of Khadi was led by his anxiety of “Work to all”. He believed that Khadi and Village Industries were the only alternative. This is evident from his statement of challenge to rulers to whom he stated that, “If the government could provide full employment to all without the help of Khadi and Village Industries, I shall be prepared to wind-up my constructive programme in this sphere”. He said, “Production of Khadi includes cotton growing, picking, ginning, cleaning, carding, slivering, spinning, sizing, dyeing, preparing the warp and woof, weaving and winding. These, with the exception of dyeing, are essential processes every one of which can be effectively handled in the villages”.

Although ‘Khadi’ is the sun of the village solar system, various other industries, like planets, do have a place in the village solar system and in fact, “Those who do not see Khadi as the centre of village activities, they are welcome to concentrate their efforts on these other industries”, because a village economy can not be complete without essential industries such as hand grinding, hand pounding, soap making, paper making, metal making, tanning, oil processing, etc. Gandhi had anticipated a complimentary relationship between Khadi and Village Industries. He believed that these industries come in as hand made to Khadi. They can not exist without Khadi and Khadi will be robbed of its dignity without them.

Gandhi had not perhaps conceptualized the Khadi and Village Industry except once when he stated that ‘Khadi of my conception’ is that hand spun material which takes the place entirely, in India, of mill cloth……..and indirectly explained what is Khadi. If men and women will not take to hand spinning as a sacred duty, that is, the same person will not do carding, slivering and spinning, there is little hope for
Khadi. Similarly conceptualization of village industries was left to Kumarrappa who provided the conditions to consider the industry as a village industry.

1. Those that produce essential commodities in villages for villages.
2. Using the local raw materials and using simple processes which are within the easy reach of villages.
3. Requiring only such tools and implements which can be acquired within the financial capacity of the villages.
4. With the aid of human or animal power since they are easily available in the villages.
5. Meeting the demand of local or immediate surrounding population.
6. That which does not cause displacement of labour.

These characteristics widened the scope of village industries and at the same time ensured the absence of concentration, violence, exploitation, inequality and anti-nature industrialization.

The question of market, method of production by machine tool or technology and credit etc. which have occupied a major significance in the post-independent period of rural industrialization, did not have a place in the initial stages, but came into the picture during the post independence period and Gandhi’s stand on the issues have undergone change.

The question of a market for Khadi was not significant to Gandhi. In the sense, that Khadi was conceived with a much more ambitious object i.e. to make our villages starvation-proof. He believed that, “This is impossible unless the villages will wear Khadi themselves, sending only the surplus to the cities. The singular secret of Khadi lies
in its salability in the place of its production and use to the manufacturers themselves”. However, finding problems for a market for Khadi, Gandhi in 1946, accepted “Commercial Khadi” as a “go-cart”. He said, “We ourselves are responsible for the creation of this problem, we did not know the science of Khadi, we do not know it fully even now. Therefore, like children, we stumble again and again and thereby learn to work. In order that we may not fall so as never to rise again we made use of a go-cart and are still using it”. In so far as the village industries are concerned Gandhi believed that the question of demand does not arise as the expansion of village industries is related to demand which did exist in the villages. He said, “Given the demand, there is no doubt that most of our wants can be supplied from our villages”.

Gandhi insisted on “Primitive methods” of production in the village industry and explained that, “I suggest the return because there is no other way of giving employment to the millions of villagers who live in idleness”. Mechanization he regarded as evil in view of more hands than required in work. However, in the later periods, Gandhi accepted the role of small equipments, machines, tools and technology, which should not replace labour but reduce the cost and drudgery of labour and increase efficiency of labour. Thus, Gandhian design of rural industrialization was developed in the passage of time.

5.3 Review of Ideology Based Approach Practised in India

There are three basic evidences of accepting Gandhian rural industrial approach in India. First, right from the industrial policy of 1948 till the New Small Enterprise Policy of 1991, we have placed Khadi and Village Industries as the prime instrument of promotion of rural employment and rural economy. There are specific studies which
analyzed the role of village industries as expressed in all the industrial statements. These statements have become the guide lines of the plans relating to K.V.I. As early as 1953 we established an exclusive institution of Khadi and Village Industries Board and later established a Khadi and Village Industries Commission in 1957. It was asked to assume responsibility for initiating, assisting and financing Khadi programmes on a much wider basis, make it a part of the whole development programme of the country and an essential constituent of a planned economy in the making.

The first plan had adopted a complete ‘Gandhian’ perspective in development of KVIC as it was decided to be developed ‘with processing of local raw material for the local market with simple techniques (1951). As an appropriate method of protection a “Common Minimum Programme” was formulated, which was mainly related to reservation of production, restriction on capacity expansion and continuation of research. A multi-institutional approach was developed by establishing a separate institution like the KVIC Board, Hand-loom Board, Handicraft Board and Small Scale Industries Board for their development.

The Second Five Year Plan gave a very strategic place to village industries to generate marketable surplus as consumer goods to support heavy industry development without inflation and also gave a task to liquidate unemployment as quickly as possible. The basic approach for the KVIC was worked out by the panel of economists appropriate to the development of these sectors. The Kurvey Committee of 1955 led to the establishment of KVIC and it also suggested distribution of 2.5 million ambar charkhas—technologically improved hand spinning equipment. The Zaman Committee advocated the decentralization of
Khadi work, recognition of large certified institutions and formation of co-operatives (1959). The Gyanchand Committee appointed to evaluate Khadi, pointed out the vicious cycle of low output, low wages and even falling wages as the central problem. It advocated that the yarn production through the traditional charkha to provide relief to distressed persons should be separated from the economic problem for Khadi production as an employment generation activity. The Nathu Committee in 1962 recommended that the policy of production and sales should be reoriented to effect at least 40% of sales within the district and 80% within the state and export to other states should not exceed 20%. The Ashok Mehta Committee on KVIC in 1968 attempted to evolve a fresh approach to development based on the three basic components of producing salable articles, providing employment to people in backward areas, tribal and inaccessible areas, famine and drought stricken areas and also the backward and less privileged section of the population and to create self-reliance and community spirit among rural people.

Apart from suggesting specific target groups, it also recommended minimum wage for spinners at a level equal to off-season agricultural wages and a seven year programme for progressive improvement of techniques was recommended to achieve viability defined in terms of minimum earning of the artisan without any protection. It also recommended that the Khadi programme of the new model charkha should be developed on a commercial basis, keeping the element of grants and subsidies to the minimum. However, without an ensured market, at a given level of output, it created a problem of unemployment for traditional spinners and weavers, though marginally subsidy element could be reduced.
However, our efforts to implement the recommended approach in various Plans, are the feeble exercises initiated in the Second and Third Plans to integrate Khadi and Village Industries with larger programmes of rural development, came to an abrupt end with an abandonment of the Community Development Programmes and the dismantling of block machinery in most of the states. Programmes like Crash Scheme of Rural Employment and Drought Prone Area Programme were introduced to battle the rising unemployment, they remained and continue to remain land based activities oriented to agriculture. KVIC with its character of skilled based activities and artisans was by and large not drawn in these special employment programmes.

In the policy packaged for KVIC in the Eighth Plan there was nothing notable except, (a) encouragement for modernization and technological up-gradation and (b) to set up a monitoring agency to ensure the genuine credit needs of this sector and also insurance to review all the statuettes, regulations and procedures to ensure that their operation does not militate the interest of the small and village industries. It also stated that it is possible to dovetail the programmes of Khadi and Village Industries, Handlooms, Sericulture and Handicrafts to integrate local areas of development programmes for villages for poverty alleviation through increase in employment. However, no steps are suggested to implement this policy in practice.

We find that during the Second Plan period KVIC was given great significance which went on declining. Its approach changed and the direction of the change was pointing towards sacrificing the ideological character of KVIC envisaged by Gandhiji in the name of a pragmatic approach. The diminished significance of KVIC is reflected in the allocation of the resources in various Plans.
5.4 Dominant Issues and Major Policy Suggestions

Our failure to achieve an impressive dent in our problem of poverty and unemployment alleviation through an ideology based on Gandhian rural industrialization approach we may address these problems and solutions as follows:

1. After almost five decades, we have not been able to resolve the age old problem of adequate earnings for those who choose to work on Khadi. Our attempts to introduce new technology in spinning failed to generate adequate and attractive earnings. A recent study conducted by the Centre for Women’s Development Studies have shown that even in Gujarat the per capita income of a Khadi worker was not only inadequate to cross the poverty line but was consistently lower than any other sector in recent years.

2. The major problem faced by the KVIC is that of a market for their goods.

3. The marketable surplus with KVIC has failed to popularize the new technology of production. In fact, at a given level of output without an adequate market technology leads to unemployment of those who are already engaged in the Khadi industry.

4. All the evidence of performance like that of output, productivity, employment, technology transfer, investment allocation and utilization, preference for workers for alternate occupation, consumer’s presence and even government etc. show the fact that Khadi is declining, while village industries have a better scope and potential.
5. Institutional development to promote marketing and production via ‘Co-operatives’ has failed. Co-operatives provided an opportunity to establish a non-exploitative, self-employed and self-reliant rural community. Hardly 5% of the production of Khadi was accounted for by the co-operatives. Most of the co-operatives in Khadi were found dormant and “displaying the characteristics of ignorance and non-participation”.

6. 70% of KVIC time and energy was being spent on routine administration, leaving little time for its main function. Their cost of operation has gone on increasing as indicated by declining earnings and increasing non-wage cost.

7. Finally, KVIC is expected to alleviate poverty in those areas that are really backward. It is expected to play a greater role in such areas. However, KVIC work is very poorly spread in those states where they are supposed to work most effectively.

There are a large number of Review Committee Reports and even some research studies to provide policy guidance. It is unfortunate that Plan documents have not taken note of such documents. Some broad policy suggestions are:

1. We must accept that village industries have a better scope for development. KVIC should concentrate only on the most potential industries as pointed out in the Eighth Plan. Though there are 96 industries presently within the preview of KVIC, it would be better to concentrate on those 15 industries for which there is enough infrastructure, powerful tools and technology and adequate provision for training as well as a potential market. These industries should be ensured of getting raw materials. The
raw material function alone can enhance the artisans earnings from 5% to 35%.

2. The intervention of voluntary agencies with innovative approaches could certainly help in the promotion of village industries.

3. The marketing of the Khadi product is a crucial issue. If there is a strong intervention of devoted voluntary agencies Khadi production could be sold in the local market.

In Gujarat state, there are institutions which have sold 90% of Khadi amongst tribals who have themselves produced it. Apart from aggressive marketing, taking into account the consumer’s preference, taste, price and other related factors including cost of production, we should try to educate the consumers and cast on them social responsibility. Consumers should be oriented to think of the origin of Khadi, production process, relevance of buying it, ecological significance, etc. The government itself could help in the promotion of Khadi by becoming a bigger buyer than the 5% it now buys mostly in the form of woolen blankets. There are a large number of products the government could buy from KVIC which would help more than blanket subsidies.

The performance of KVIC in the technology development sector is very poor. It is the key to the development of KVIC. The withdrawal of the Department of Science and Technology from KVIC is disappointing and they need to review their relationship. The KVIC should have very strong links with national laboratories, research organizations and manufacturing institutions for transference of technology.
Gandhiji’s approach to rural industrialization was evolved over a period of time. Our success in its implementation was less than desirable. However, it should not lead us to believe that we must get rid of this as a burden of ‘Gandhian Legacy’. We should keep in mind the following words of Pandit Nehru in his famous Gandhigram Speech, “I begin to think more and more of Mahatma Gandhi’s approach. It is odd that I am mentioning his name in this connection: that is to say, I am entirely an admirer of the modern machine and want the best machinery and the best technique. But taking things as they are in India, however rapidly we advance in the machine age and we will do so the fact remains that large numbers of our people are not touched and will not be touched by it for a considerable time. Some other methods will have to be evolved by us for a considerable time. Some of the methods have to be evolved so that they become partners in production even though the production apparatus of theirs may not be efficient as compared to modern techniques, but we must use that; otherwise, it is wasted”. This statement is self-explanatory and in favour of more sincere and sustained efforts to develop rural industries on Gandhian lines.

5.5 Gandhi In the Globalised Context

The fast emerging global socio-political and scientific scenario is an eloquent reminder of the speed with which the forces released by science and technology and aided by human greed has dismantled almost at one stroke all humanity hitherto believed invincible. Nothing is sacrosanct now. The geopolitical compulsions and the mad frenzy of both developed and developing nations, to appropriate for themselves all what they can lay their hands on, reminds us of the haste and anxiety seen among the nocturnal thieves to plunder completely and
decamp with the booty before anyone wakes up in the house. It appears that a kind of colonial instinct also guides modern man in all his activities. Only the label changes, the bottle and the decoction continue to be the same.

5.6 The Major Challenges

It appears that among the major challenges of the twenty-first century will be:

i) Taming the monster of violence and keeping it within limits besides eliminating terrorism.

ii) Ensuring equitable distribution of wealth and natural resources; also to cry a halt to the exploitation and insensitivity shown in preserving balance in nature.

iii) Elimination of poverty and hunger.

iv) Increasing reliance of rulers and politicians on religious fundamentalist elements and forces to capture power and sustain themselves in power by exploiting religious sentiments, and

v) Decline of moral, spiritual and ethical considerations and extending tentacles of consumerism and materialism.

Of all these, the most disturbing is the alarming manner in which violence is spreading like a cancer. The biggest challenge to the present century will be how to tame this monster. Besides eating into the vitals of all what humanity has been able to achieve, it threatens to hold humanity to ransom and is in the driver's seat now. The chilling factor in this sordid and frightening scenario is the speed with which violence has sent shock waves everywhere. Violence is no longer the luxury of the industrialised or developed nations or those kept under long years of colonial rule but it is everywhere. Let us look at what the
National Centre of Education Statistics of the Department of Education in Washington DC pointed out at a news conference:
a) 100,000 children take a gun to school every day (Children's Defence Fund says as many as 135,000)
b) 160,000 will miss school because of fear of injury 320,000 per month, 60,000 per day
c) 2,000 young people attacked before every hour in a working day 282,000 per month, 14,100 per day
d) 900 teachers threatened and nearly 40 attacked per hour 125,000 Threatened each month
e) 8,250 threatened per day 5,200 physically attacked each month 260 per day 37 per hour
f) Every 36 minutes a child is killed or injured by a firearm—over 14,000 per year.
g) 1986-1990—250 hostage incidents using guns in 35 states.

The socio-economic and political scenario all over the world has undergone tremendous changes during the last five decades and a new culture has taken over and the talks about the global village also seem to have landed humanity in a new mess-up in the sense many do not know what all these things are. Traditional values, concerns and strivings seem to have been replaced by a new set of attitudes and lifestyle which are steeped in materialism and consumerism, assiduously propagated by the champions of unlimited material progress and values, and attitudes associated with Gandhi and other visionaries are being reduced to topics for academic discussion. Gandhian scholars, peace activists, development experts, scholars and writers of eminence are busy looking at the legacy of Gandhi, particularly the holistic
vision of Gandhi and the emphasis and the strategies associated with him, against the background of the emerging challenges in various fields in the post-Gandhian period.

5.7 Development: New Perceptions

All of a sudden, economics has pushed all other branches of human endeavour. Religions and ethical values that have been nourishing and sustaining civilisations for centuries are no longer of any significance. Traditional societies are breaking-up, and there is a spread of the cult of violence. Nurturing of unprincipled political order and fostering irrelevant cultural semantics and appearance of militarisation in a new garb and stalking of dehumanising poverty and malnutrition which still affect more than one third of the global community are of no concern to the managers of human destiny now. The general discrimination despite all brave talks and initiatives, the apathy and the kind of cynicism with which morality and ethics are being viewed and abused, the callous indifference shown to Mother Earth and the manner in which nature is being exploited thinking that there is inexhaustible wealth hidden beneath the surface and many similar disturbing and unhealthy trends with which modern civilisation is associated with, have been sending dangerous signals and all those who care for human survival are desperately looking for signals which would send some rays of hope—hope that every thing is not lost and that it is not too late.

And it appears that at one go, humanity has been seized by those who believe that economic growth is the real index of both development and real power. While the power of money was never under-estimated anywhere, never before in human history everything is being measured in terms of per capita income or GNP or the relative
purchasing power or such other material considerations. This preoccupation on the part of the twentieth-century-man, which has created a situation where family ties, inter-personal, cultural, ethical, even religious and social aspects have been relegated to the background, is really sending shock waves all around. No body seems to be worried about the terrific manner in which all aspects that sustain humanity and regulate growth and other issues receive scant attention from those who control our lives. This has become a universal phenomenon and no society or country can feel that the situation is different with them. All what we hear is the talk about sharing of wealth, arms reduction and nuclear non-proliferation by those nations who produce all lethal weapons that could wipe out humanity several times in the event of a war and advocating acceptance of NPT, which several countries like India genuinely feel discriminatory in its present form. The warning and spirited campaigns undertaken by the environmentalists to stop many of the harmful steps by the managers of our destiny receive practically no attention and unfortunately these warnings by and large, remain cries in the wilderness.

5.8 Degradation of human being to the level of a commodity

Another frightening aspect is the sad fact that man is nowhere in the reckoning now. He has been pitiably reduced to the status of a consumer and now he is first and last a consumer. His purchasing power is all that matters. Similarly, the purchasing power of a nation is all what the other nation now cares for. The talk in the world capitals are all centred on the biggest markets in the world and our newspapers devote more than a bulk of their space for market trends, stock markets and bullion rates while a bulk of the remaining space in the newspapers deal with violence of various forms, political gossips, coup attempts,
private lives of celebrities and such other hot items which would ensure a steady interest among the readers. The readers, who are caught in the web of a violent culture and are force-fed by the sweetmeat provided by an enticing consumeristic culture, are also satisfied by the 'kick' they get by reading these items. Why should they waste their time on news and features about culture, art or development? This attitude, unfortunately, seems to be gaining ground. The relevance of Gandhi or for that matter any body else has to be examined against these emerging trends. The galloping horses of humanity, which are at the moment being goaded and whipped to run as fast as they can in order to win the coveted place of material achievements, have to be reigned in by the collective assertion of an awakened humanity which has the right to exist. But then, this will be possible only if we are prepared to ponder over the immense damage being caused to the edifice of humanity. It is not even slow poisoning, it is almost like 'sudden death', to borrow an expression from football.

It is over five decades since Gandhi was assassinated and there are all kinds of discussions both in India and abroad on what Gandhi left for humanity and whether many of his teachings would survive the test of time. What even the passionate critic of Gandhi cannot miss is the string of activities along Gandhian lines one can see in almost all countries of the world now. If not in a very significant measure, there are very few countries in the world where something or the other in the name of Gandhi is not being organised. In short, there is a global nonviolent awakening after Gandhi.

It is widely accepted now that the core of the legacy Gandhi left for humanity, is that he taught us that truth is greater than all worldly possessions, and that slavery, violence, injustice and disparities are
inconsistent with truth. What Gandhi left is not a set of theoretical formulations, on the contrary, a carefully evolved vision of an organically sound and mutually supportive and respecting independent world order. The six decades of Gandhi's public life in three continents, spearheading various movements for a new social and political milieu where all men and women will be treated as brothers and sisters, demonstrated with convincing sincerity a revolutionary zeal for change; change with consent; hitherto un-experimented in national or international politics. Tolerance, consent, reconciliation and a profound faith in the unity of all sentient and non-sentient beings have been the core of the Gandhian vision of a world where harmony among the various segments of God's creation would nurture the essential goodness in each one; both the visible and invisible threads; uniting all humanity into a single entity. Does this sound Utopian? Yes, quite a large number of people still believe that the new social order Gandhi envisioned is too idealistic and an unattainable utopia only fit enough for academic and semantic interpretations.

5.9 Gandhi's critique of the emerging scenario

Gandhi warned humanity of this dangerous situation as early as 1909 when he pointed out in the seminal work 'Hind Swaraj', that unprincipled growth will land humanity on the brink of disaster. Even his own close disciples raised their eyebrows of disagreement when he said this. The evil that we are to fight is within us and that we are ignorant of it is the basic problem. Motif such as give and take, live and let live, love and to be loved have become clichés in the new dictionary compiled by the champions of unlimited growth. This can be possible only if we adopt a holistic vision of life and ensure equality and justice which presupposes the simple truth that each individual is
unique and we should respect his individuality and let him maintain his uniqueness and what applies to an individual should apply to a nation or at a global level.

Gandhi further warned against a series of social and political turmoil, ecological devastation and other human misery that might arise unless modern civilisation takes care of nature and man tries to live in harmony with nature and tries to reduce his wants. Unlimited consumeristic tendencies and callous indifferences to values will not help humanity to progress towards peace, he warned. Hatred of all forms, exploitation in whichever manner it exists, are negation of humanity's basic right to exist. The Gandhian legacy of simple living in conformity with the basic rhythm of life typifies the age-old wisdom of humanity. Gandhi tries to convince humanity that wars never solved any problem. On the contrary, reconciliation should help humanity sort out the various problems. Thus, in Gandhi, as has been pointed out by many thinkers in different parts of the world, we have a world leader who dreamt of a warless world and promoter of a social order where exploitation and injustice will not become the dominant tendencies.

5.10 Gandhi's experiment contemporary relevance

Two of the important factors that brought Gandhi closer to the millions are the genuine inspiration he was able to offer to the freedom-loving citizens and the generation of a feeling among a considerable section of the masses that he was motivated only by the spirit of service and not by any personal or ulterior desires. His South African experiments won him respects from even those who opposed him and those who never met him or knew him.
Tolstoy comments that what Gandhi was doing in South Africa was the most important thing in the world at that time, were a case in point. Gandhi demonstrated that the life of a leader should also be open, capable enough to influence the masses so that they will also emulate the leader unreservedly. Gandhi did both these with remarkable success, which in turn resulted in millions following him like charmed moths. The two settlements that Gandhi started in South Africa, the Phoenix Ashram Settlement and the Tolstoy Farm bear eloquent testimony to the leadership qualities and the visionary nature of Gandhi which in turn generated great understanding, sympathy and enthusiasm among almost all dumb Indians and others in South Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century. His life, both as an initiator of new experiments and as a private individual and lawyer of great promise, were all open. He was against anybody possessing anything more than what the other person had. The members of the settlement ate in the common kitchen, worked in the farm together, their children attended the general school and nobody entertained or desired to accumulate or acquire anything of his own. Not that Gandhi did not have problems in this. It was difficult for him to convince even his own wife and Gandhi was harsh when he detected that his wife had a few things of her own. Gandhi’s children were disappointed and even they nourished an ambition of attending better schools and pursuing their higher education outside South Africa. Gandhi resisted all these attempts and insisted on his children attending the same school where the children of other members of the settlement were studying. He kept account of every pie that was spent. He stopped even charging for his own services as a lawyer. All this, not only endeared him to his followers but inspired them also to follow him as far as possible. This
naturally resulted in a kind of joy and willing participation in the cause he was espousing.

5.11 The efficacy of Satyagraha

Back in India, the first major movement Gandhi launched was in a place called Champaran, near Bodh Gaya, a place associated with Shakyamuni Buddha. Gandhi's visit to this sleepy village, where he launched his first Satyagraha movement, also witnessed joyful participation of the people in large numbers. He proved that people will respond to any genuine call for action provided they are convinced that the issues identified are their own and one who leads the movement should also be a source of love, respect and dedication and in Gandhi his followers found these qualities in abundance.

The Ahmedabad Mill strike, the Salt Satyagraha, the Non-Cooperation Movement—all witnessed large numbers of people jumping into the massive Civil Disobedience Movement sacrificing their wealth and comfort and courting sufferings, injuries and sacrifice.

The songs sung by those who participated in this heroic struggle extolled virtues of unprecedented magnitude. Nothing would deter these people from marching forward. Jails were filled with satyagrahis and schools and factories were also converted into temporary jails having found no room to accommodate the surging and ever growing number of those who were defying the orders of the Government. There were instances of prisoners being sent out of the main land to the Andaman Islands. Facing bullets and even death did not matter. It was the conviction, and that too, unmistakable and a grim determination to march forward like inspired souls to achieve their goal, that characterised their mood and by no means could it be said impulsive. That was the spirit of those heroic days. In this heroic struggle, the
central figures who not only inspired all those who participated, as also those who proved to be the sheet anchor of the resurging fighting for self discovery and articulation of their suppressed voice, were Gandhi and those inspired by Gandhi. This remarkable achievement was possible because Gandhi convincingly demonstrated through his simple life that his identification with the masses was complete.

Gandhi was not a philosopher in the conventional sense of the term. His views, mostly based on his profound understanding of human nature and the insights he developed from the numerous experiments he conducted with scientific precision, have been found to be not a philosopher's articulations but the records of the experience of a visionary who was searching for ways and means to lessen tension and promote harmony in the various spheres of human endeavour. The breathtaking development of the second half of the present century proved that Gandhi was correct as Martin Luther King (JR.) said, "If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. His life, thought and action are inspired by the vision of a humanity evolving towards a world of peace and harmony. We may ignore him at our own risk".

5.12 The core of Gandhi's scientific humanism

By equating Gandhi with any saint or philosopher who couched transcendental truth and spoke in riddles offering a plethora of aphorisms, we will be missing the essential Gandhi. He was a revolutionary in the sense that he aimed at changing certain social and political structures but the means he adopted were not the usual violent methods associated with revolutions. He offered a package of alternatives to humanity. His insistence of nonviolence to violence; persuasion and reconciliation to end hostilities; trusteeship to end economic injustice; improvement of the lot of the depressed sections
by abolishing factors that perpetrate social iniquities; ending man's tyranny on nature by respecting nature as the protector of the human race; limiting one's wants; and developing equal respect for all religions offered humanity the blue-print for a holistic vision. Gandhi convincingly demonstrated through his ashram experiments, the use of an alternative source of energy, appropriate technology etc. In short, an ardent practitioner of truth that he was, Gandhi showed to humanity that there are workable alternatives which will be creative and sustainable. The only thing in this is that we have to muster courage to accept it, for it demands self and collective discipline of various kinds. It is not the gratuitous and condescending offer of a bit of whatever we are willing to part with that is required, but a willing and spontaneous readiness to share with the less privileged fellowmen and women what one has in excess and to work for happily ushering a new order. The Gandhian humanism was not restrictive but transcendental and scientific. To describe it as revivalist, reflects the closed minds of those who try to put all creative and revolutionary ideas and efforts in straight jackets.

It is said in certain quarters that Gandhi was successful only to a limited extent, that too his impact is felt only in a certain cultural context. There is no denying of the fact that Gandhi was deep-rooted in his cultural and religious traditions. The phenomenal success Gandhi registered in far-away South Africa, fighting for human rights and civil liberties in the first two decades of this century and later the adoption of the Gandhian techniques, if not fully, by Nelson Mandela and the subsequent revelations made by the former South African President Mr. De Klerk that he was also influenced by Gandhi in adopting the
path of reconciliation and forgiveness, certainly show that Gandhi had not spent twenty-one years in South Africa in vain.

In the American continent, Martin Luther King's heroic fight for civil liberties on Gandhian lines and his own admission that it was from Gandhi that he learnt his operational tactics, is not an isolated instance of the relevance of Gandhian tactics. The manner in which the Greens, particularly in Germany, adopted Gandhian techniques to arouse human consciousness and how they operationalised their strategy, and the bold assertions made by Petra Kelly about the way they were influenced by Gandhi, also indicate that it is not the cultural traditions of a country or continent that would make the efficacy of a certain philosophy or attitude viable, but it is the willingness and readiness of people to react and respond that matters. One can give quite a few instances from almost all parts of the world to show how in different measures the Gandhian vision and approach is found to be an effective weapon in the hands of freedom fighters and social reformers. Gandhi at no stage claimed that he was trying to teach anything new. In fact, he himself said more than once that he was not involved in any such mission. Truth and nonviolence, he said, are as old as the hills and he was only trying to appreciate and understand the marvel and majesty of both. He said in this connection, "We have to make truth and nonviolence, not matters for mere individual practice, but for practice by groups and communities and nations. That at any rate is my dream. I shall live and die in trying to realise it. My faith helps me to discover new truths every day. Ahimsa is an attribute of the soul, therefore life practised by everybody in all affairs of life".
Dismantling of apartheid - message for the rest of the world to end social discrimination including practice of untouchability in India. There is a surprising similarity between UNESCO's statement in its preamble that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed and Mahatma Gandhi’s assertion that the world either progresses with nonviolence or perishes with violence. Mahatma Gandhi’s heroic work in South Africa for 21 years and over 32 years of work in India have given humanity a blue print of strategies for a peaceful transition of humanity where respect for all forms of life, human dignity, self-respect and tolerance would characterise humanity's progress. The year 1994 bore witness to the efficacy of Gandhi’s strategies and philosophy as could be seen from the manner in which the fight Gandhi began a 100 years ago in South Africa, i.e. in 1903, bearing fruits when the blacks and the whites in South Africa were able to work out a satisfactory solution to peaceful transfer of power which resulted in the holding of elections and Dr. Mandela taking over the reigns of power.

5.13 Spiritualisation of Politics

Gandhi's contribution to the political awakening and freedom movement in different parts of the world and adoption of nonviolent strategies, which help both the opposing groups respect each other's sentiments and accommodating the views of others, has much in common with UNESCO's decision to propagate the message of tolerance for human survival. Asia and the African continent particularly have seen a peaceful transition of power and social change, thanks to Mahatma Gandhi's initiative which included different methods. One important thing that keeps apart Gandhi's teachings and strategies is the utmost importance Gandhi attached to pure means to
attain lasting ends. Gandhi's attempts to make politics value based were part of a new world vision. He emphasised that politics bereft of spiritual and ethical consideration will not sustain humanity.

The unending savagery of ethnic cleansing in erstwhile Yugoslavia, rediscovery of war as a "realistic means" to resolve conflicts, proliferation of sources and targets of violence and the deepening socio-economic divide between and within nations despite the widening of the boundaries of democracy has triggered a new awakening. This is evident in the quest for a new paradigm rooted in Gandhian values and a negation of the virtues of developmentalism, discredited socialism and reformed capitalism.

Bosnia, the most obvious but not the only conflict, haunting post Cold War Europe, serves as an illustration of the search for solutions to the many guises of 'barbarism' which have caused the continent to move away from western intellectual tradition to a deeper study of Mahatma Gandhi, his philosophy and the contemporary relevance of his political 'arts' and 'skills'.

With successive multi-nation peace missions coming a cropper, peace activists, political scientists, social critics and philosophers are at the force, canvassing that nonviolence and Gandhian form of intervention alone hold out hope of political peace.

The most celebrated quote among European peace activists and scholars is, Gandhi's retort on being asked his view of western civilisation, "it would be a good idea".

Extensive research on Gandhi is on in several Western universities. There is a belief that Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolence humbles the arrogance of modern civilisation and values. Pioneering
work to delineate nonviolent ways of intervention for peace and human rights is gaining acceptance. The question 'what is the way to peace' is sought to be answered in Gandhian dictum: "There is no way to peace, peace is the way". Getting this message across is not easy in a milieu where even peace-keeping is militarised and Gandhian social and political values are ignored as archaic. But that is precisely what the whole political revival and intellectual ferment is about.

5.14 Gandhi and global nonviolent awakening

Why is the world turning to Gandhi? The reasons are many. The ideological battle lines of the Cold War between competing social orders have disappeared with the demolition of the Berlin Wall and the demise of socialism. This has resulted in a vacuum, which discourages exploration of alternatives. That the model of development being imposed by elites is removed from popular aspirations, is borne out by the success of the Green movement. The success of the Greens underscores the failure and rejection of the Western model of development against which Gandhi had warned humanity as early as the first decade of the 20th century.

The Green perspectives on development has radicalised politics by creating an awareness of ecological risks and forcing a genuine search for global solutions. Groups inspired by Gandhi are now seeking to widen the relevance of the Mahatma's teachings to encompass issues of peace, human rights, economic equality and democracy. They are convinced that it was the Gandhian critique of industrial economics, which earned the Greens a global constituency. It is a search to communicate and revive a sense of community among peoples.
The growing appeal of this search attests to Gandhism being seen as a wider societal prescription, as a political approach that could overcome not only military and ethnic conflicts, but also address the violence of the confrontation between state and civil society, the economic imbalances created by "development" and the resultant social tensions rooted in cultural antagonisms.

The rationale is that nonviolent resistance has brought deeper changes from the build-up to the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and Macros in the Philippines to the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia and the uprising in East Germany. A Hungarian speaking minority in Slovakia, deprived of education in their language and resorting to 'Civil-disobedience' is cited as an example of ongoing Gandhian struggles.

The market and its instruments such as the EEC, are ill-equipped to deal with aspirations for peace, democracy and human rights because they have reduced these values to economic interests. Hence, the over riding need to socially re-locate these as values in a new political framework, namely Gandhism.

5.15 Growing violence and dehumanising hunger

What would Gandhi have done in the face of widespread violence, hunger, inequality are questions often asked. Communication is critical and yet it seems to be missing despite the technology at hand. This shifts the focus back to Gandhi. As a communicator he would have gone to the people, is one answer. He effortlessly united people across barriers of literacy, language, ethnic identity, class, caste and privilege. Somewhere in this answer could be clues to transgress the social divisions that are threatening the whole world or at least this is the hope inspired by Gandhism.
Such enquiries, however hesitant, bear testimony to the vigour and insight that informs the quest for a new vision being shaped by the mahatma.

Today, Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy is looked as a live experience with potential for transformation leading to a Global Awakening. From the general attitude towards Gandhi as the chief architect of India's nonviolent freedom movement and as someone who interprets nonviolence as a new idiom the international community has been showing signs of analysing Gandhian options very seriously, as the previous century came to a close and many of the overriding political and philosophical positions were either proved to be defective or died their natural death. From Martin Luther King Jr. to Aung San Suu Kyi, the list of freedom fighters, nationalists, Human Rights activists, environmentalists, feminists and the whole, with honour and dignity have shown a remarkable understanding of the growing relevance of the means Gandhi adopted and the vision and legacy bequeathed to humanity.

5.16 Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

It is widely acknowledged now that Gandhi, who through his innovative approaches and daring initiatives, succeeded in initiating a new era in human history, an era which signifies man's immense potentiality to rise above narrow considerations and to strive for ushering in a new level of achievement. The new methods, strategies and ideas Gandhi successfully demonstrated influenced not only the freedom fighters and social reformers of most of the continents but also those who are involved in the serious search for alternatives in their efforts to sustain all what is dear to humanity. The Gandhian vision of holistic development and respect for all forms of life;
nonviolent conflict resolution embedded in the acceptance of nonviolence both as a creed and strategy; were an extension of the ancient Indian concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. The much talked about concept of global human family and humanity's effort to dismantle manmade barriers among nations peoples and the Indian ideals of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam as enshrined in the Vedic and Upanishad wisdom, are almost the same. It is true that Gandhi always began at the micro level, but then, his vision surpassed the exigencies of local or national barriers. Gandhi said, "It is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist… I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service of India includes the service of humanity".

The Gandhian vision of society does not recognise man-made barriers but at the same time as Gandhi often insisted while we should welcome all that is best in other traditions when we allow the winds of other cultures to blow in, we should refuse to be swept off our feet. This indicates that one cannot be internationalist without being a nationalist. Gandhi once said, "My mission is not merely the brotherhood of Indian humanity. My mission is not merely freedom of India, though today it undoubtedly engrosses practically the whole of my life and the whole of my time. The true realization of freedom of India, I hope, would realise and carry on the mission of the brotherhood of man. My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all embracing and I should reject patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress or the exploitation of other nationalities. I want to realise brotherhood or identity not merely with the being called human, but I
want to realise identity with all life, even with such thing as that crawl on earth".

It is this vision of the Mahatma and the ceaseless strivings he undertook through the numerous experiments he conducted which endeared him to millions of his countrymen and others who joyfully threw themselves into the vortex of one of the glorious movements in human history. The nonviolent national struggle for freedom waged under Mahatma Gandhi had the able support of a galaxy of such illustrious men and women of the century like Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Rajagopalachari, Pt.Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel, Sarojini Naidu, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and several thousand others. Gandhi knew no fear and he released his country from fear and inducted into his countrymen fearlessness and offered them brave initiatives for social transformation which saw India taking courageous steps in the dismantling of some of the age-old customs and practices such as untouchability. The manner in which a vast majority of Indians, who were segregated in the name of this dehumanising practice and how they came up in life in the post-independence era, speaks volumes of the impact Gandhi created on the Indian psyche to initiate steps to ensure social justice.

5.17 Gandhi’s tackling of direct violence

The observations made earlier by Dr. Ikeda in his now famous Gandhi Memorial Lecture in New Delhi in 1992 have been considered very significant in our efforts to understand the course of events in the 21st century. In his views, Gandhian heritage forms an important part of humanity's efforts to live in peace. The four important elements related to Gandhi mentioned in the speech are optimism, activism, population and holistic vision. The optimism associated with Gandhi
"is not relativism determined by objective analysis of circumstances. Instead it is an unconditional, indestructible faith in humanity, a faith born of justice, nonviolence and penetrating self-observation". Agreeing fully with this observation of Ikeda, Galtung points out "…. optimism was a basic condition for the astonishing major struggles that Gandhi carried out in only one life time: the battle for home rule (Swaraj): his work to elevate the people in general and particularly the self-reliant, small, coherent communities that he called 'Oceanic circles' (Sarvodaya); his battle to improve the condition of the casteless (to whom Gandhi gave the name harijan or children of God); his work to raise the status of women; his efforts in the name of equality on behalf of Indians in South Africa; his not very successful strivings for peace between Indian Hindus and Muslims; and the most important of all, his devoted support for and development of nonviolence (Satyagraha) as the only valid approach to the attainment of all his other goals". And he successfully attained all those goals inviting Albert Einstein to describe Gandhi as the greatest political genius of our times precisely because of his ability to maintain a subtle balance between the ideal and the practical. This ability found concrete, embodiment in the nonviolent resistance movement. Dr. Ikeda has also raised a very important question about the effectiveness of nonviolence in combating what is called structural violence in the Third World. Can nonviolence work in an imperial structure dominated by centre-periphery relations in which the centre is strong and the periphery weak?

Galtung is convinced that Gandhi answered direct violence with nonviolence defence. He answered structural violence with nonviolent revolution. These methods worked in the Soviet Tsarist-Bolshevik
structure, one of the most brutal of all worlds' empires. The basic formula for the effectiveness of these techniques is two-fold; to strengthen the periphery (that is, the weak) and to weaken the centre (the strong). Gandhi predicted accurately the downfall of political structures based on power and violence such as those of the former Soviet Union and its satellite nations in East Europe. The comments of Gandhi during his visit to Romain Rolland that (Gandhi) had a deep mistrust of the ultimate success of the experiment being carried out there may be remembered in this context. It seems that it is a challenge to nonviolence; assumes significance, as it is widely understood now. For Gandhi, ends and means always had to be consistent and subject to the same ethical principle; violence can only breed violence. Similarly, as can be seen in good relations between the British and the Indians today, nonviolence breeds nonviolence. The structures Gandhi laid at Russia's doors are applicable in the West too, points out Galtung: "The French Revolution, which is usually celebrated as a great liberation, was actually excessively cruel and bloody…. The United States was born in blood. Genocide was conducted against may be 10 million indigenous Americans in the period 1500-1900 who were later confined to reservations, a very vicious form of structural violence. Many Native Americans remain on reservations today with no hope of an end to their misery in sight. The struggle for independence between 1776 and 1812 was mostly violent, as was the cruel and bloody Civil War of 1861-65, the main goal of which was the preservation of the Union; abolition of slavery was only a secondary issue".

As Gandhi proved through his successful campaigns in South Africa and India, the goals of these revolutionary struggles could have been attained nonviolently without encouraging and strengthening the
strains of violence inherent in the people waging them, "What the Soviets had done was no more than a parody, a caricature, a kind of revolution Gandhi initiated; of course, the Soviet system failed. History is sometimes a harsh, but just judge", agrees Galtung.

5.18 Religion and social change

Galtung also makes a very useful analysis of Gandhi’s basic approach to religion and societal change. "Being himself a reformer, Gandhi did not have any difficulty in absorbing the basic teachings of the Buddha whose revolutionary teachings are the core of Buddhism which is a reform movement within the great Hindu tradition. The word 'Hinduism' itself is a most inadequate term for a vast conglomerate of profound philosophies. I see Gandhi's Buddhist inclinations in three directions within this conglomerate", Galtung points out:

First is his instance on Ahimsa (nonviolence) not as a mere ideal but as a practice applied to all forms of life including animals. The importance of vegetarianism, which Gandhi adhered to and propagated with passionate conviction, cannot be lost sight of in developing a nonviolent attitude towards life.

The second is his outright rejection of the vertical caste-system. Shakyamuni’s fierce fight against the dehumanising aspect of social segregation in the name of caste enabled the Indian society, to begin with, to exorcise this centuries-old inhuman practice. Following in the footsteps of the Buddha, Gandhi strongly opposed the verticality of the caste order. He envisioned a horizontal caste system in which all occupations are treated equally in a symbiotic union of diverse elements. Each profession should have dignity; and to the maximum extent possible, the dignity of all should be equal.
Third, in conformity with the Buddhist idea of the Sangha or small community of believers, Gandhi experimented with the developments of small autonomous communities, respecting everyone's needs but not for everybody's greed. Both misery at the bottom and excessive wealth at the top would be eliminated in his communities. It is a big question as to how deep the Gandhian vision made a dent in the otherwise stratified Indian society. These three and other departures from mainstream belief cost Gandhi his life at the hands of an assassin who is described sometimes as a fanatic and orthodox Hindu. Whoever he was, it appears he was someone who did not agree with Gandhi's opposition to verticality of caste system. Dr. Ikeda takes these points further up and believes that perhaps Buddhism and Hinduism refined Gandhi's rare personal traits. "Gandhi was a gradualist, not a radical. He thought good changes take time; they move at a snail's pace. This too is part of his sense of practicality and order, in which I see a reflection of the Buddhist idea of the middle way…. Buddhist wisdom has clearly and accurately perceived the middle way between existence and non-existence; between pain and pleasure; and between the doctrine of eternity, according to which conditioned elements themselves are external and the doctrine of annihilation. His practical approach leads me to believe that Gandhi too perceived this middle way.

Gandhi's views on machinery and large industries invited criticism from many quarters. He is branded anti-progressive on this score. Galtung makes a very interesting observation in this regard. To Gandhi, big cities and big industries were instruments of British imperialism for which Gandhi had no love. 'Is it not possible, however, to humanize citizens and industry? Citizens can become confederations
of relatively autonomous neighbourhoods. Industries can reform in a similar fashion; technologies that degrade neither human users nor the natural environment can be evolved. Large factories and office buildings may give way to more work at home'. Gandhi proposed nonviolence as an alternative to the choice between violence and capitalism. 'Citizens and industries remodeled as I suggest would provide similar alternatives to the choice between industry and cottage industry and agriculture'. "Gandhi certainly perceived the middle way but he did not develop it with regard to villages verses cities. It is the responsibility of the millions of people who were inspired by Gandhi to work out the middle way on the basis of his work and the message he left for posterity", concludes Galtung.

It is generally believed that Gandhi opened a new era by convincingly demonstrating that there is an alternative to the politics of confrontation, violence, manipulation and to the disregard of human sentiments love and compassion in action.

He also showed that in the nonviolent form of protest and fight he was leading there was no room for hate, violence and one should be able to stand up courageously and fight without hating those against whom the fight is directed. He said again and again that his fight was only against the British system which allows imperialism and exploitation and not against the British. The way India and Britain parted company in 1947 speaks volumes of Gandhi's influence on both the rulers in Britain and the Indian nationalists fighting for freedom. It was the first-ever happy parting of ways in recent times between the masters of a colony and the nationalists who were fighting for freedom. Gandhi was the unquestioned leader of the Indian masses who, but for Gandhi, would have resorted to the extreme form of violence in
realizing the goal of freedom. There is no parallel in human history of several hundred millions of freedom-loving people marching towards their cherished goal without shedding blood. It was the triumph of human will over forces of oppression and injustice. It was an indication that human revolution is possible through dynamic leadership and that a true revolution need not be violent.

5.19 Gandhi and Globalisation

What is the relevance of Gandhi in this all pervading materialistic, agnostic and consumerist culture? It is precisely these three tendencies Gandhi fought all his life. It is a fact of history that repudiation of one philosophy at a given time does not mean the death or irrelevance of it. The men and women who moved the world were mostly either crucified, burnt alive, or were branded heretic, or excommunicated. Still independent inquiry and pursuit of truth and to express themselves against injustice were continued in all ages, probably with added vigour. The irreversible fact of history, again, is that the list of such 'rebels' steadily grows despite all attempts to ward off the perceived threat.

Despite all the impressive gains mankind has achieved in the present century through intelligent harnessing of science and technology which brought in unexpected and unimaginable results in various fields, the world today is on the throes of several global crises. Conflicts and tensions of all sorts are increasing, sending shock waves all around. With the disappearance of the Soviet Union as the leader of block-of nations, the world has become unipolar. If anybody believed that the cold war years have ended and humanity could live in peace henceforth, his hopes have been completely belied as could be seen from the various disturbing fighting and raging violence and senseless
killings in various parts of the world. Notwithstanding all high sounding assurances on arms reductions and cuts in military expenditure, we see an alarming escalation in the production of lethal weapons. It is estimated that there is an annual world-wide consumption of 1000 billion dollars on arms alone. Even one-sixth of this huge amount is sufficient enough to remove world hunger in the next six years.

Where have we gone wrong? Have we lost all our concern for our less fortunate brethren? Almost all the planning models we have experimented have strong elitist bias, and connotation of moneymaking and influence building seem to be the basis of all the models we have been experimenting within recent times. This has led to serious consequences in many areas.

The tendency of urbanisation is as old as human civilisation and it is a natural consequence of a changing society. In fact this process was considered a welcome development on grounds of economies of scale reduction of disturbances, and efficient sharing of resources generated through the adoption of urbanisation. With industrialisation, a new element was introduced and people who own means of production gradually usurped the fruits of industrialisation and a new class of people emerged. Impoverisation and marginalisation have increased. Instead of offering vast opportunities to the worker what happened was the growing awareness that jobs are becoming fewer and scarce. A vast majority was denied access to jobs and the gulf between the organised labours also increased. More distressing than any of these is the untold miseries industrialisation has brought which led to the sprouting up of slums; those veritable hells where humanity is crushed beyond any sign of redemption.
Introduction of high technology has inevitably made agriculture, the oldest human profession, into an industrial activity. This rendered many farm hands surplus. Where do the labour forces go? Inevitably, to the urban centres. Bombay is the best example. Out of the total population of the 10.5 million in 2000, six million are leading a subhuman kind of living in these veritable infernos called slums.

5.20 Development without justice and compassion

Energy which is so essential to all industrial processes is increasingly found to be one of the most important variables measuring economic activities. Solar energy in its varied forms, wind-generated electricity, bio-gas, solar collectors, photo-voltaic cells, etc. will inevitably lead to the emergence of a Solar Age beyond its technological meaning. Henderson visualises with the shift in emphasis on the Petroleum Age and the industrial-era, the emergence of a new culture. This culture includes the ecology movements, the women's movement and the peace movement.

An examination of the views and practices of Gandhi and J.C.Kumarappa and the theories of Schumacher, Henderson and Capra, in the light of what is described today as Sustainable Development, a term so in vogue, and heard from almost everybody who has anything to do with preservation of life on earth, would reveal the amazing fact that in Gandhian thought and action, humanity has sufficient tools it needs for sustainable development. As early as 1909, through his little book 'Hind Swaraj', Gandhi drew humanity's attention to what might happen to the globe if a proper check is not imposed in the various strategies and alternatives we examine. Gandhi said, "I must confess that I do not draw a sharp line or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurts the moral well-being of an individual
or a nation is immoral and, therefore, sinful”. This indicates that sustainable development requires both biological and cultural diversity which in turn is inescapably linked to justice and compassion, toward each other and to nature.

"We notice that the mind is a restless bird. The more it gets, the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge in our passions, the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgence. They saw that happiness was largely a mental condition. A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor.” Gandhi had written in his little classic Hind Swaraj that was published when the twentieth century was just being ushered in.

We are fostering a system which has inbuilt iniquities, power, wealth, knowledge and we have a culture/civilization bereft of any trace of compassion. It has all the trappings of Casino Capitalism which has infinite power to entice humanity through its charm.

We go on blaming science and technology but how many of us care to realise that technology by itself has no will. It is the social will which determines. The aeroplane which carries passengers can carry bombs.

Gandhi emphasised credible alternatives which the proponents of the present day corporate values assiduously seek to strengthen. Let us look at some of the principles Gandhi believed are of paramount importance.

1) Against the multiplication of wants, Gandhi suggested limitation of wants.
2) Instead of diffusion of large scale technology, Gandhi was in favour of large scale technology in few sectors co-existing with small scale technology and handicrafts in others.

3) Against mass production, Gandhi favoured production by the masses and small scale production except in a few sectors where mass production is unavoidable.

4) Gandhi was not in favour of centralisation of economic power. He favoured limited state ownership, wide-spread village ownership and trusteeship.

5) Rapid urbanisation did not find favour with Gandhi. He advocated self-governing village republics, self-sufficient in basic needs.

6) Inequality of all types particularly in wages, social justice and in gender reflects where there is denial of natural justice according to Gandhi.

7) As against increasing specialisation, Gandhi favoured universal physical labour.

By no stretch of imagination can anyone say that these are moral prescriptions by an orthodox social reformer. On the contrary, they reflect the profound understanding of a revolutionary thinker, philosopher activist, whose vision in life was steeped in pragmatism, love, compassion and change with consent.

Economic well-being appears to be the sole purpose of life and the manner in which value systems are being trampled upon raises the big question: where are we heading to?

The usherers, drum-beaters and self-styled (self-appointed) custodians of emerging trends, perhaps, are impervious to the following paradoxes:
1. While absolute poverty has decreased globally, relative poverty has increased.

2. More people have become literate. But access to information and technology have become concentrated and centralised.

3. More countries have become democratised but there is greater concentration of power.

4. Communication explosion but growing alienation, family break up, lack of communication at individual level has become rampant.

By 'growth', what is meant today is economic growth and man has all of a sudden been reduced to the level of a commodity whose worth is determined by factors other than what distinguishes them from the best. Moral values, ethics, spirituality, family values, religious insights have all seemed to have lost their place and values in the emerging global scenario. Ethics and morality appear to be out of tune with the ethos of the global village. Globalisation has thrust to the forefront. The death of religion and the deterioration of the nation-state, leading to global integration mostly on the strength of economic prosperity of the industrially rich and developed nations which by and large are in the driver's seat today, have led to a situation where vast iniquities that divided the small minority of have-nots from the huge majority of have-nots. Very few, unfortunately, appear to be conscious of the dangers of blind globalisation in their anxiety to take advantage of its so-called benefits. The economic liberalisation and technological automation threaten to widen even further existing economic, social, political and cultural disparity.
Global justice will be a far cry unless bold initiatives are undertaken to overcome these disparities. The declining in importance of nation-state in favour of global village concept has confounded the situation further since the present unipolar politics and hegemony of the superior currencies not only dictate terms to the poor cousins who are by and large at the receiving end.

A student, a couple of weeks who, when asked at an interview for his views on relevance of Gandhi in the twenty-first century had the courage to look at the examiner and politely tell him: "Sir, I wish you had asked me to tell you why Gandhi is more relevant today."

I hope we will have the wisdom of this teenager in understanding the challenges facing us today.

5.21 Gandhian Concept for the Twenty First Century

The Gandhian concept of political empowerment of people and the role of the state shine in radiating brightness in an age of civilization by weapons of violence that arm the centralized authority in state super powers to hold in ransom the future of mankind. The nonviolent alternative around which the Gandhian concepts are woven has started claiming serious attention of academicians, political thinkers, social activists, reformers and visionaries. The landscape of human civilization has witnessed the dawn and decay of the guiding principles of organization of government and state monarchy, capitalism, socialism, communism and the like. But the basic issue of individual liberty and freedom could not be resolved against the onslaught of centralized bureaucracy. The fundamental tenet of democracy that lies in providing the objective conditions for human beings attaining their best have also been substantially belied. This
calls for a review of the ideologies that have carried the political institutions throughout the human history particularly in the preceding centuries. If we take them one by one we may come to a finding that human reasoning has been somewhat a prisoner of prevailing ideas on the advocacy of stalwart thinkers who ruled the rest. But there had always been a protestant voice, which was lost in the din and bustle of contemporaneous cacophony of ideas but ultimately emerged with a strong appeal because of the truth inherent in it. We may presently see that Mahatma Gandhi raised one such Protestant voice to traditional political institutions and thoughts that received scant attention during his lifetime, but is gradually assuming its legitimate place in the pedestal of thought where our political institutions are destined to mount upon with gradual maturity.

These protestant ideas have much in their content to shape the contour of the freedom and the power of people vis-a-vis the state and that too on a nonviolent transformation.

The basic point of departure of the constitutional patterns conceived by Gandhi over that of others who still dominate the field, is that Gandhian concepts are borne out truth, nonviolence, love for all, while the others are borne out of mind of reasoning. And that makes all the difference.

The utilitarian philosophers of the west enunciated the concept of "greatest good of the greatest number" as the aim of the state policy. This has failed to take a holistic view of the entire human race and ignored man; that is to say, each and every man, as the prime concern of the state. A theoretical measurement of the greatest good for the greatest number is again a thoroughly subjective deduction and consequently lacks the universality of acceptance. As against this,
Gandhi propounded the theory of Sarvodaya which means the rise of all; that too in the fullest measure each man is capable of. This is a departure from traditional thinking clamped upon the society and which held human reasoning within a closed shell. Gandhi released it from that bondage and gave a definitional aim of the state, which leaves no ambiguity. That is what the 21st century has to adopt if closed reasoning has to yield place to universality.

In the next place, the rule of the majority has become a kernel to democracy. The entire world has been fed with the idea that the majority must have its way, but remember, it is not the exclusive majority that has always sought to be championed; even a simple majority is enough. The result is that the tyranny of the majority has gradually perverted into the tyranny of the virtual minority. In a system evolved by a multi party functioning in the political arena, a minority or even a simple caucus can impose itself on the rest. As against this, Gandhi advocated decisions by consensus as the main thrust of democratic functioning. At one time the idea was considered ridiculous, but it is gradually gaining acceptance in situations while the alternative to consensus is grave and serious. Even the United Nations at its Security Council has to decide everything by consensus since a single veto can undo a decision. At the national level, the trend in all the countries is to strike a political consensus amongst all the parties whenever grave national issues are involved. Gandhi wanted this system to enter into our culture as a decision-making process in every public affair so that the minutest may not feel ignored or tyrannized.

The Gandhian concept of consensus does not mean that there should not be any two opinions on an issue or people must have identical thinking about everything. It only means a process for resolution of all
differences, a process which will substitute the worn-out kernel of democracy with a fresh one with a view to richer fruition. He did not stop there; he was quite aware that a very big assemblage, with heterogeneity beyond control, is not a conductive arena where consensus can be reached. As we shall see presently, he advocated a direct democracy or a participatory democracy rather than a representative one, which has become ingrained in our present system.

Even since the Western scholars like John Stuart Mill and others upheld the case of representative as the pillar of statecraft, the concept has gripped the whole world. As power has concentrated more and more on centralized government, the tooth of the representative government has sharpened all the more. The government by representation has, however, a sad commentary everywhere. The representatives after elections hardly represent the people but only themselves. It is common knowledge how the representatives of the people have emerged as a class by themselves each having ambition of his own, each motivated by the power have emerged as a class by themselves each having ambition of his own, each motivated by the power to distribute favours, each lobbying for his own selfish end; and collectively, as a class, the representatives trying to entrench themselves with more privileges, authority and power. In the face of power struggle, the people are relegated to a dumping lot, gradually losing the efficacy of the right to vote a right, no longer a right to make a choice on one's own, but content with the limited choice as left under the political systems. The result is a negation of democracy at the grass-root level, which is conceived in his philosophy of Gram Swaraj. He wanted all adult people male or female of the entire village to be
involved in the decision making process on matters that concerned people at large.

The next question is what should be the quality of "Village Republic' where a participatory democracy of all people of envisioned. Here lies the crux of Gandhism. Where all systems, capitalistic, socialistic or communistic, have inevitably resulted in centralization of power and authority at the apex, the Gandhian concept of Gram Swaraj unleashed a compulsive force in the opposite direction.

He believed in Panchayati Raj, which is certainly not the concept as enshrined in our constitution, however proudly it may bear the nomenclature of a Panchayati Raj. The Gandhian concept of Panchayati Raj is not a concept of decentralization but a pattern of "building from below". The Panchayati system projected in our constitution with the latest amendments is at best to be termed as a system to Panchayat administration of centralized governmental power.

5.22 Gandhian Gram Swaraj

Gandhi mooted the idea of Panchayat Raj with a concept of self-sufficient and self-reliant villages functioning as a Republic. In his dream, every village in India should be characterized by a direct and participating democracy, endowed with all the powers that enable it to function as a government in the true sense of the term. The power and functions, which cannot be effectively discharged at the local level, should alone be transferred to the government at the center. Thus, the policy in India shall take a pyramidal shape having a broad and strong base at the village level and a gradually narrowing one towards the upper hierarchy with delegation only of essential functions where a heavy splash on the water creates the most intense wave at the initial
circle, which gradually fades as the circle expands. This is what Gandhi meant by "building from below". That is one aspect. On the other, a republican village shall be self-sufficient and self-reliant in respect of its basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter, employment, education, health, social security etc. The modality of functioning of the village policy was also embroidered by Mahatma Gandhi in his various writings from which the essence that can be gathered consists in the following precepts, namely:-

1. All adult persons, male or female, of the village shall have a say in the village administration in order to make it truly participatory, as wide as the community.

2. All decisions in the village panchayat shall be on the basis of consensus, which eschew out divisive approaches arising from consideration of party politics, religion, caste, creed, class or culture.

3. "Antodaya" or unto the last, is the philosophy behind distribution of resources so that an equitable distribution of scarce resources can be ensured.

4. All village disputes have to be settled within the four corners of the village and not to be taken outside it so that the curse of litigation may not shatter the rural economy.

5. An approach of villagization to create community assets for the community to be independent of outside resources for further development of the community and to inform all measures for social security in the from of care for the old and infirm, widows and destitute women, orphans and neglected children, handicapped and mentally retarded and the unemployed and the helpless.
5.23 Touchstone for Government

we may not fall back on the concept of government as an institution. What really makes an authority a government? While we spin out the concept of local self-government, we have to bear in mind if the authority at the village level created by the constitution has really assumed the character of a government. What are the essentials for such a government? It has been recognized in the modern parlance of political theory that a government must have three essential powers:

i) Taxing power

ii) ii) Police power and

iii) iii) The power of the eminent domain.

By taxing power it is meant that the authority termed as government should have the right to raise revenue through compulsory exaction to defray the expenses of its obligatory functions. By police power is meant the right to regulate the behavior pattern of the people living within the governmental jurisdiction in such manner that the individual voluntarily sub-judge individual interests for the community interest since "Good of individual is in the good of all". The power of the eminent domain vests the authority termed as government to resort to preceding of acquisition of land, water, sub-soil rights, ambient air, mines, minerals etc. including the power to escheat. It is on these touchstones that one has to determine whether an authority is really clad with governmental power or not.

The 21st century is knocking the door of history. It will usher in a new millennium. It is time that the entire human race comes out of the bondage of traditional thinking and look out to the future with a liberated mind. As we look up at such a prospect, we may find the
precepts of Gandhi holding out a great promise for freedom and empowerment of the people vis-a-vis a totalitarian and centralized state which has usurped all such freedom and power.

5.24 Gandhi’s View on Swadeshi

Gandhi think about swadeshi of the poor of India every time that I draw a thread on the wheel. The poor of India today have lost faith in God, more so than the middle classes or the rich. For a person suffering from the pangs of hunger, and desiring nothing but to fill his belly is his God. To him any one who gives him his bread is his Master. Through him he may even see God. To give alms to such persons, who are sound in all their limbs, is to debase oneself and them. What they need is some kind of occupation, and the occupation that will give employment to millions can only be hand-spinning.

….. I have described my spinning as a penance or sacrament. And, since I believe that where there is pure and active love for the poor there is God also, I see God in every thread that I draw on the spinning-wheel.¹

...The spinning-wheel enables us to identify ourselves with cores. The millionaires imagine that money can bring them anything in the world. But it is not so. At any moment death might come and snuff them out…. Losing one's life…is not the same thing as shedding 'self'. One has to learn to efface self or the ego voluntarily and as a sacrifice in order to find God. The spinning-wheel rules out exclusiveness. It stands for all inclusiveness. It stands for all including the poorest. It, therefore, requires us to be humble and to cast away pride completely.²

Revival of the cottage industry, and not cottage industries, will remove the growing poverty. When once we have revived the one industry, all the other industries will follow…. I would make the
spinning-wheel the foundation on which to build a sound village life. I would make the wheel the centre round which all other activities will revolve.\textsuperscript{3}

5.24.1 Message Of The Charkha

Gandhi … claim for the Charkha the honour of being able to solve the problem of economic distress in a most natural, simple, inexpensive and business like manner….. It is the symbol of the nation's prosperity and, therefore, freedom. It is a symbol not of commercial war but of commercial peace.\textsuperscript{4}

The message of the spinning-wheel is much wider than its circumference. Its message is one of simplicity, service of mankind, living so as not to hurt others, creating an indissoluble bond between the rich and the poor, capital and labour, the prince and the peasant. That larger message is naturally for all.\textsuperscript{5}

The message of the spinning-wheel is, really, to replace the spirit of exploitation by the spirit of service. The dominant not in the West is the note of exploitation. I have no desire that our country should copy that spirit or that note.\textsuperscript{6}

I do feel that it has message for the U.S.A. and the whole world. But it cannot be until India has demonstrated to the world that it has made the spinning-wheel its own, which it has not done today. The fault is not of the wheel. I have not the slightest doubt that the saving of India and of the world lies in the wheel.

If India becomes the slave of-the machine, then, I say, heaven save the world?\textsuperscript{7}

5.24.2 Return To Simplicity

If I preach against the modern artificial life of sensual enjoyment, and ask men and women to go back to the wimple life epitomized in
the Charkha, I do so because I know that, without an intelligent return
to simplicity, there is no escape from our descent to a state lower than
brutality.\textsuperscript{8}

Gandhi believe that no other path but that of non-violence will suit
India. The symbol of that DHARMA for India is the spinning-wheel as it
alone is the friend of the distressed and the giver of plenty for the poor.
The law of love knows no bounds of space or time. My Swaraj, therefore,
takes note of Bhangis, Dublas and the weakest of the weak, and except
the spinning-wheel I know no other thing which befriends all these.\textsuperscript{9}

5.24.3 Wheel Of Life

Take to spinning [to find peace of mind]. The music of the wheel will be
as balm to your soul. I believe that the yarn we spin is capable of
mending the broken warp and woof of our life. The Charkha is the
symbol of non-violence on which all life, if it is to be real life, must be
based.\textsuperscript{10}

Some will recall through the wheel the name of that Prince of
Peace, Ashoka, the founder of an empire, who ultimately gave up the
pomp and circumstance of power to become the undisputed Emperor of
the hearts of men and became the representative of all the then known
faiths. We would call it a legitimate interpretation of the wheel to seek in
it he Wheel of Law ascribed to that living store of mercy and love.

The spinning-wheel thus interpreted adds to its importance in the
life of billions of mankind. to liken it to and to derive it from the Ashoka
disc is to recognize in the insignificant-looking Charkha the necessity of
obeying the ever-moving Wheel of the Divine Law of Love.\textsuperscript{11}

… Spinning has become a part and parcel of the Ashram prayer.
The conception of spinning as sacrifice has been linked with the idea of
God, the reason being that we believe that in the Charkha and what it stands for lies the only hope of salvation of the poor. It is my claim that the universalization of hand-spinning with a full knowledge of all that it stands for alone can bring that [conquest of inertia] in a sub-continent so vast and varied as India. I have compared spinning to the central sun and the other village crafts to the various constellations in the solar system. The former gives light and warmth to the latter and sustains them. Without it they would not be able to exist.

5.24.4 Duty Of Spinning

Just as every one of us must eat and drink and clothe himself, even so everyone of us must spin himself.

I do not know whether I am a Karmayogi or any other Yogi. I know that I cannot live without work. I crave to die with my hand at the spinning-wheel. I one has to establish communion with God through some means, why not through the spinning wheel? Him who worships Me, says the Lord in the Gita, I guide along the right path and see to his needs.

If every woman in India spins, then a silent revolution will certainly be created, of which a Jawaharlal [Nehru] can make full use. Unless steam generated is put to proper use, the engine will not run and the person generating the steam may himself be scalded by it even unto death.

A scientific study of the spinning-wheel will lead on to Sociology. The spinning-wheel will not become a power for the liberation of India in our hands unless we have made a deep study of the various scienceselated to it. It will then not only make India free, but point the way to the whole world.
5.24.5 Livery Of Freedom

…While Khadi is good for the poor as an honourable occupation for earning bread, it has an additional and far greater value as an instrument of winning Swaraj through non-violence means.¹⁸

In 1908, in South Africa, I conceived the idea that, if poverty-stricken India were to be freed from the alien yoke, India must learn to look upon the spinning-wheel and hand-spun yarn as the symbol, not of slavery, but of freedom. It should also mean butter to bread.¹⁹

Khadi to me is the symbol of unity of Indian humanity, of its economic freedom and equality and, therefore, ultimately, in the poetic expression of Jawaharlal Nehru, "the livery of India's freedom." Moreover, Khadi mentality means decentralization of the production and distribution of the necessaries of life. Therefore, the formula so far evolved is, every village to produce all its necessaries and a certain percentage in addition for the requirements of the cities. Heavy industries will needs be centralized and nationalized. But they will occupy the least part of the vast national activity which will mainly be in the villages…..

Since the wanton destruction of this central village industry and the allied handicrafts, intelligence and brightness have fled from the villages, leaving them inane, lusterless, and reduced almost to the state of their ill-kept cattle.

5.24.6 Economic Regeneration

I feel convinced that the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving will make the largest contribution to the economic and the moral regeneration of India. The millions must have a simple industry to supplement agriculture. Spinning was the cottage industry years ago, and if the millions are to be saved from starvation, they must be
enabled to introduce spinning in their homes, and every village must repossess its own weaver.\textsuperscript{20}

It bears not a message of ill-will towards the nations of the earth but of good-will and self-half. It will not need the protection of a navy threatening a world's peace and exploiting its resources, but it needs the religious determination of millions to spin their yarn in their own homes as today they cook their food in their own homes.

I may deserve the curses of posterity for many mistakes of omission and commission, but I am confident of earning its blessing for suggesting a revival of the Charkha. I stake my all on it. For every revolution of the wheel spins peace, good-will and love. And with all that, inasmuch as the loss of it brought about India's slavery. Its voluntary revival with all its implications must mean India's freedom.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{5.24.7 Hope Of Rural Masses}

I have often said that, if the seven lakhs of the villages of India were to be kept alive, and if peace that is at the root of all civilization is to be achieved, we have to make the spinning-wheel the centre of all handicrafts.\textsuperscript{22}

The spinning-wheel represents to me the hope of the masses. The masses lost their freedom, such as it was, with the loss of the Charkha. The Charkha supplemented the agriculture of the villagers and gave it dignity. It was the friend and solace of the widow. It kept the villagers from idleness. For the Charkha included all the anterior and posterior industries-ginning, carding, warping, sizing, dyeing and waving. These in their turn kept the village carpenter and the blacksmith busy.

The Charkha enabled the seven hundred thousand villages to become self-contained. With the exit of the Charkha went the other village industries, such as the oil press. Nothing took the place of these
industries. Therefore, the villages were drained of their varied occupations and their creative talent and what little wealth these brought them…. Hence, if the villages are to come into their own, the most natural thing that suggests itself is the revival of the Charkha and all it means.23

I have no doubt in my mind that the wheel can serve as the instrument of earning one's livelihood and, at the same time, enable the worker to render useful service to his neighbours…. In order to ply the wheel intelligently, he should now all the processes that precede and succeed spinning.24

The conviction dawned upon me even before I came to India that the revival of hand-spinning alone could restore India to its pristine glory. I have since compared the spinning-wheel to the central sun round which the solar system of our village economy revolves. It provides the golden bridge between the rich and the poor.25

The Charkha is not like either the small or large machines of the West. There cores of watches are produced in a few special places. They are sold all over the world. The same tale applies to the sewing machine. These things are symbols of one civilization. The Charkha represents the opposite.

We do not to universalize the Charkha through mass production in one place. Our ideal is to make the Charkha and all its accessories in the locality where the spinners live. Therein lies the value of the spinning-wheel. Anything that goes wrong with it should be put right on the spot and the spinners should be taught how to do so.26

5.24.8 Mill Industry

Our mills cannot today spin enough for our wants, and if they did, they will not keep down prices unless they were compelled. They are
frankly money-makers and will not, therefore, regulate prices according to the needs of the nation. Hand-spinning is therefore designed to put millions of rupees in the hands of the poor villagers. Every agricultural country requires a supplementary industry to enable the peasants to utilize the spare hours. Such industry for India has always been spinning. Is it such a visionary ideal—an attempt to revive an ancient occupation whose destruction has brought on slavery, pauperism and disappearance of the inimitable artistic talent which was once all expressed in the wonderful fabric of India which was the envy of the world?  

Do I seek to destroy the mill-industry, I have often been asked. If I did, I should not have pressed for the abolition of the excise duty. I want the mill-industry to prosper—only I do not want it to prosper at the expense of the country. On the contrary, If the interests of the country demand that the industry should go, I should let it go without the slightest compunction.  

In my opinion, the mill-hands are as much the proprietors of their mills as the share-holders, and when the mill-owner realize that the mill-hand are as much mill-owners as they, there will be no quarrel between them.  

5.24.9 Meaning Of Swadeshi  

Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion. That is, the use of my immediate religious surrounding. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects.
In the domain of politics, I should make use of the indigenous institutions and cure them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting. It is suggested that such Swadeshi, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millennium.....

5.24.10 Religion

...Hinduism has become a conservative religion and, therefore, a mighty force because of the Swadeshi spirit underlying it. It is the most tolerant because it is non-proselytizing and it is as capable of expansion today as it has been found to be in the past. It has succeeded not in driving out, as I think it has been erroneously held, but in absorbing Buddhism. By reason of the Swadeshi spirit, a Hindu refuses to change his religion, not necessarily because he considers it to be the best, but because he knows that he can complement it by introducing reforms. And what I have said about Hinduism is, I suppose, true of the other great faiths of the world, only it is held that it is specially so in the case of Hinduism.

5.24.11 Education

We have laboured under a terrible handicap owing to an almost fatal departure from the Swadeshi spirit. We, the educated classes, have received our education through a foreign tongue. We have, therefore, not reacted upon the masses. We want to represent the masses, but we fail. They recognize us not much more than they recognize the English officers. Their hearts are an open book to neither. Their aspirations are not ours. Hence there is a break. And you witness not, in reality, failure to organize but want of correspondence between the representatives and the represented.
If during the last fifty years we had been educated through the vernaculars, our elders and our servant and our neighbours would have partaken of our knowledge; the discoveries of Bose or a Ray would have been household treasures as are the RAMAYAN and the MAHABHARAT. As it is, so far as the masses are concerned, those great discoveries might as well have been made by foreigners. Had instruction in all the branches of learning been given through the vernaculars, I make bold to say that they would have enriched wonderfully…..

5.24.12 Economic Life

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 were greedy and so was England. The connection between England and India was based clearly upon an error…..

If we follow the Swadeshi doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find out neighbours who can supply our wants and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to proceed, assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation. Then every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages as are not locally producible.

This may all sound nonsensical. Well, India is a country of nonsense. It is nonsensical to parch one's throat with thirst when a kindly Mohammedan is ready to offer pure water to drink. And yet thousands of Hindus would rather die of thirst than drink water from a Mohammedan household. These nonsensical men can also, once they are convinced that
their religion demands that they should wear garments manufactured in India only clothing or eat any other food…

5.24 .13 Religious Discipline

It has often been urged that India cannot adopt Swadeshi, in the economic life at any rate. Those who advance this objection do not look upon Swadeshi, as a rule of life. With them it is a mere patriotic effort— not to be made if it involved any self-denial. Swadeshi, as defined here, is a religious discipline to be undergone in utter disregard of the physical discomfort it may cause to individuals. Under its spell the deprivation of a pin or a needle, because these are not manufactured in India, need cause no terror. A Swadhist will learn to do without hundreds of things which today he considers necessary….

I would urge that Swadeshi is the only doctrine consistent with the law of humility and love. It is arrogance to think of launching out to serve the whole of India when I am hardly able to serve even my own family. It were better to concentrate my effort upon the family and consider that through them I was serving the whole nation and, if you will, the whole of humanity. This is humility and it is love.

The motive will determine the quality of the act. I may serve my family regardless of the sufferings I may cause to theirs. As, for instance, I may accept an employment which enables me to extort money from people. I enrich myself thereby and then satisfy many unlawful demands of the family. Here I am neither serving the family nor the State. Or I may recognize that God has given me hands and feet only to work with for my sustenance and for that of those who may be dependent upon me. I would then at once simplify my life and that of those whom I can directly reach. In this instance, I would have served the family without causing injury to anyone else. Supposing that every one followed this
mode of life, we should have at once an ideal state. All will no reach that state at the same time. But those of us who, realizing its truth, enforce it in practice, will clearly anticipate and accelerate the coming of that happy day.  

5.24.14 Service Of Neighbours

My definition of Swadeshi is well known. I must not serve my distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. It is never vindictive or punitive. It is in no sense narrow, for I buy from every part of the world what is needed for my growth. I refuse to buy from anybody anything, however nice or beautiful, if it interferes with my growth or injures those whom Nature has made my first care.

I buy useful healthy literature from every part of the world. I buy surgical instruments from England, pins and pencils from Austria and watches from Switzerland. But I will not buy and inch of the finest cotton fabric from England or Japan or any other part of the world because it has injured and increasingly injures the million of the inhabitants of India.

I hold it to be sinful for me to refuse to buy the cloth spun and woven by the needy million of India's paupers and to buy foreign cloth although it may be superior in quality to the Indian hand-spun. My Swadeshi, therefore, chiefly centers round the hand-spun Khaddar and extends to everything that can be and is produced in India.

The votary of Swadeshi will, as a first duty, dedicate himself to the service of his immediate neighbours. This involves exclusion or even sacrifice of the interests of the rest, but the exclusion or the sacrifice would be only in appearance. Pure service of our neighbours can never, from its very nature, result in disservice to those who are far away, but rather the contrary.
'As with the individual, so with the universe' is an unfailing principle which we would do well to lay to heart. On the other hand, a man who allows himself to be lured by 'the distant scene', and runs to the ends of the earth for service, is not only foiled in his ambition, but also fails in his duty towards his neighbours.....

I believe in the truth implicitly that a man can serve his neighbours and humanity at the same time, the condition being that the service of the neighbours is in no way selfish or exclusive, i.e., does not in any way involve the exploitation of any other human being. The neighbours will then understand the spirit in which such service is given. They will also know that they will be expected to give their services to their neighbours. Thus considered, it will spread like the proverbial snow-ball gathering strength n geometrical progression, encircling the whole earth. It follows that Swadeshi is that spirit which dictates man to serve his next-door neighbour to the exclusion of any other. The condition that I have already mentioned is that the neighbour, thus served, has, in his turn, to serve his own neighbour. In this sense, Swadeshi is never exclusive. It recognizes the scientific limitation of human capacity for service.  

5.24.15 No Chauvinism

Under this plan of life, in seeming to serve India to the exclusion of every other country, I do not harm any other country. My patriotism is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive in the sense that, in all humility, I confine my attention to the land of my birth, but is inclusive in the sense that my service is not of a competitive or antagonistic nature. SIC UTERE TUO UT ALIENUM NON LAEDAS is not merely a legal maxim, but it is a grand doctrine of life. It is the key to proper practice of ahimsa or love.
I have never considered the exclusion of everything foreign under every conceivable circumstance as a part of Swadeshi. The broad definition of Swadeshi is the use of all home-made things to the exclusion of foreign things, in so far as such use is necessary for the protection of home industry, more especially those industries without which India will become pauperized. In my opinion, therefore, Swadeshi which excludes the use of everything foreign, no matter how beneficial it may be, and irrespective of the fact that it impoverishes nobody, is a narrow interpretation of Swadeshi. 

Even Swadeshi, like any other good thing, can be ridden to death if it is made a fetish. That is a danger that must be guarded against. To reject foreign manufactures, merely because they are foreign and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited would be criminal folly and a negation of the Swadeshi spirit.

A true votary of Swadeshi will never harbour ill-will towards the foreigner; he will not be actuated by antagonism towards anybody on earth. Swadeshism is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest AHIMSA, i.e., love.
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