CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE EMERGENCE OF MAHATMA GANDHI

All forces and forms of Nature including life are the manifestations of God, the Generator, Operator and Destroyer. Everything in Nature is destined to emerge from the interplay of duality and opposites. The principle of opposites operates at all levels of natural existence viz. creation or Generation, maintenance or Operation and dissolution or Destruction. The entire world is an occult phenomenon of working of opposite principles of regularity and irregularity. In the Hindu philosophy, it is represented by Purusha or pure consciousness, and Sakthi or energy, in Chinese Cosmogony by Yin and Yang, in Babylonian and Egyptian theophany by Tammuz and Ishta. The Jungian psychology recognizes it as Animus or the male and Anima or the female. From the physical perspective it is represented by the positive (+) and the negative (-) forces and fundamental particles. The Bhagavat Gita identifies and elucidates the principles of discipline and pure knowledge as Devas and the principles of indiscipline or chaos and phenomenal ignorance as Asuras. Devas celebrate the glory
of the laws of creation. They follow the natural laws and live a life of
divine heritage in harmony with peace and ease. The Asuras challenge
the laws of creation and natural laws and are prompted by phenomenal
knowledge and ignorance. They live a restless life of disharmony,
arrogance and violence, celebrating their devilish heritage:

The Lord said: Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in
jnana and yoga - Knowledge and action, beneficence, self
restraint, sacrifice, spiritual study, austerity and uprightness.
Nonviolence, truth, slowness to wrath, the spirit of dedication,
serenity, aversion to slander, tenderness to all that lives, freedom
from levity; spiritedness, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, freedom
from ill will and arrogance - these are to be found in one born
with the divine heritage........ pretentiousness, arrogance, self
conceit, wrath, coarseness, ignorance- these are to be found in one
born with the devilish heritage, O Bharata.¹

Man is a mixture of Devas or the divine and Asuras, the Demonic
or the indisciplined principles of creation. The virtuous qualities of
man are ascribed to the Deva principles which represent the divine
heritage and promote vigour, forgiveness fortitude, purity, absence of
hatred and pride. They follow the creative principles of Nature. Hypocrisy, harshness, arrogance, self-conceit, ignorance and wrath are the qualities possessed by the man of devilish heritage who follows the destructive principles. These opposite principles operate incessantly on the biological and physical environments of man.

The identification of the harmony of opposites, the fundamental of natural laws helps to realize how duality is at the basis of creation. As the working of the opposites is fundamental to generation, the evolution and maintenance, the existence of Nature and human civilization is essentially dependent on the balancing and harmonious co-functioning of the opposite forces, tendencies and qualities of all creations. Nature is a manifestation of God. Matter is the lowest form, God the highest. Man's self expansion has to take both aspects external and internal. Here man forgets his kinship with Nature and exploits her beyond limit. Materialism, consumer culture and globalization exert tremendous influence on man's bodily pleasures. This intricate state of affairs is an ill omen standing in the way of balancing the fundamental of natural laws. Mean time the nonliving physical world is set to forces and phenomena operating according to definite physical laws. Natural calamities also take their courses in terrible magnitude.
Simultaneously the living biological world consisting of entities is set to operation on creative intelligence.

Man has identified the milestones awareness of Nature along human antiquity. His distinctive creative intelligence has enabled him to unravel truths and laws behind natural forces and phenomena through his constant yajna in the form of interaction with Nature. He discovered and developed fire, metals, gunpowder, steam engine, electricity, the atomic power, the electronics, biotechnology, genetic engineering and information technology. He could discover the breeding principles, hereditary laws and genetic materials in the biological sphere. He developed the life saving medicines and devices in the medical field. These developments and discoveries have empowered man to achieve rapid progress. Consequently the modern times could witness a new variety of colonial expansions. Asia and the Middle East are being forced to follow western ideology and style of living. The industrial revolution in the preceding centuries witnessed the application of modern and new techniques and skills. Technologies are being developed to exploit natural resources to a maximum level. Trade and economic systems are engineered to move in tune with the Industrial revolution. The financial institutions play controversial roles.
by entering into the economic texture of sovereign republics. The Western political powers assume a conquering political authority. Looting of wealth and sovereignty of other countries and imposition and conversion of their economic order and faith have been a popular mission. The internal pollution of greed is globalised. The political and religious intolerance are coupled with external pollution of uncontrolled and unethical exploitation of natural resources. The destruction of natural environment with toxic industrial wastes and urban sewage is far more terrible than it had been in earlier centuries. Consequently the health, hygiene and sanitary conditions of human living and the survival of fauna and flora have been terribly mutilated.

The creative intelligence of man, however, is subjected to the principle of opposites at various physical and mental realms. The contrasting tendencies of virtues and vices which are inherent in human nature are always at work. The virtues which form a power house of dharma or righteousness strive to find an alternate path. A wise man can be an embodiment of such virtues acting against entanglements and bounds of evil forces. He is satisfied in whatever is obtained unsought from Nature. His wisdom is to be evolved through balancing of the opposites by the discriminating faculty of his
intelligence. This condition supports him to liberate his self rise above the duality and opposite principles of Nature. The Bhagavad Gita states: “He, who is contended with whatever is got unsought, is free from jealousy and has transcended all pairs of opposites (like joy and grief) and is balanced in success and failure -- such a karmayogi through acting is not bound.”² The human intelligence is bound to indulge in the dual paths. It has to face the disciplined and harmonious path of inner development. It also faces the aggressive and possessive path of outer development. The history of human civilization presents a panorama of man's evolution along the dual paths. Materialism, an incarnation of innumerable vices, has always been countered. In critical junctures of encircling gloom of evils there emerged the illuminating forces of dharma. Social and religious reformers and visionaries of every age are active in their mission of reinstating order and righteousness in the society. The Gita says:

_Parithranaya Sadhoonam Vinasaya cha dushkritham_

_Dharma samstapanardhaya Sambhavami yuge yuge_³

Gandhiji interprets this verse: “For whenever Right declines and Wrong prevails, then O Bharata, I come to birth”⁴
Twentieth Century witnessed the emergence of Gandhiji whose words, deeds, philosophy and principles of Nature living and nonviolence influenced a great social and cultural order of the world. He identified the terrible consequences of the domination of vices over virtues. He felt sure how limitation of wants and good behaviour could bring about righteousness. He dared to interpret civilization on broader perspectives. Prof. Malkani remarks:

...civilization to him not only meant the limitation of wants, but also the rejection of the factory system on which it is based and the acceptance of the rural civilization arising out of autonomous and self-sufficient villages. “Rural economy as I have conceived it eschews exploitation altogether, and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have, therefore, to be rural minded before you can be non-violent...” This is the boldest thing he said and remains the hardest to achieve. Industrialism, concentration of production and exploitation leading to war is a chain to be broken if mankind is to be free and happy. The trend of history is yet irresistibly forging and strengthening this chain. But history on its march has reached a critical stage where it must retrace some steps and take a new
direction if it is to avoid a major disaster. Gandhiji had expectations that India would serve, as a sign-post of danger and fix the first few mile stones on the new way to his Good society. India however is sounding the warning but lacks the faith to follow in the foot-steps of the Master.\textsuperscript{5}

Gandhiji's simple style of living was talismanic to identify and interpret a clear view of goodness. "He had a view of the good, a sort of utopia in an age which rejects all Utopias; but more than that he evolved wonderful techniques for establishing his Utopia in a troubled world."\textsuperscript{6} His conceptualization of living in harmony with Nature in this context can be examined in detail. In this regard Gandhiji wanted first to 'set the house in order' by which itself, he considered the people of India would be capacitated to fight against imperial colonialism and win freedom. Gandhiji took "that anything that helped India to get rid of the grinding poverty of her masses would in the same process also establish Swaraj."\textsuperscript{7} After his return to India from South Africa in 1915 with the intention of complete dedication to the cause of National Movement and Community Service, the first step he adopted was to tour the entire length and breadth of the country to have a first hand knowledge of the real socio-sanitary situations in India, especially the
villages. By this time his experiments in dietetics also took a progressive turn:

Gandhiji’s experiments in food, which to begin with were conducted from the point of view of health, now acquired more and more an ethical purpose and were regarded as an aid in achieving self mastery. Did not the rishis, the seers of the Upanishads, live on fruits alone and enjoy complete freedom from impure thoughts? 8

This can be justified in subsequent activities.

Gandhiji was startled to see the unholy, unserenic and unhygienic keeping of the Viswanatha Temple premises at Banaras. He says:

Where one expected an atmosphere of mediation and communion, it was conspicuous by its absence. ... The authorities should be responsible for creating and maintaining about the temple a pure, sweet and serene atmosphere, physical as well as moral. Instead, I found a bazaar where cunning shop keepers were selling sweets and toys of the latest fashion ...
When I reached the temple, I was greeted at the entrance by a striking mass of rotten flowers. .... I searched here for God but failed to find Him.\(^9\)

About his railway journey, he wrote:

The indifference of the railway authorities to the comforts of the third class passengers, combined with the dirty and inconsiderate habits of the passengers themselves, makes third class travelling a trial for a passenger of cleanly ways. These unpleasant habits of the community include throwing of rubbish on the floor of the compartment, smoking at all hours and in all places, betel and tobacco chewing, converting of the whole carriage in to a spittoon, shouting and yelling and using foul language, regardless of the convenience or comfort of fellow passengers.\(^{10}\)

Indeed Gandhiji had been acquainted and habituated to the western ways of strict personal hygiene and sanitation. However as a reformer he had enough experience of personal sufferings and sacrifice
of the unhygienic living of the Indian community, especially the indentured labourers in South Africa. The experience was so intolerable that his reflection goes like this: "It is the reformer who is anxious for the reform, and not society, from which he should expect nothing better than opposition, abhorrence and even mortal persecution." In 1901 Gandhiji attended the annual meeting of the Indian National congress at Calcutta. He was dismayed by the external as well as the internal insanitary environments prevailed there. "There was no limit to insanitation. Pools of water were everywhere. There were only a few latrines and the recollection of their stink still oppresses me.... Some of the delegates did not scruple to use the verandahs outside their rooms for calls of nature at night." He was also greatly shocked by the prevalence of lack of proper discipline and organization, and the observance of untouchability even among the delegates of the Congress.

Gandhiji had earlier experiences of pitiable sanitary awareness and practice prevailed in Indian community, which had brought about contagious diseases. While he was in India in 1896 Plague broke out in Bombay. Gandhiji offered his service to the volunteer committee. He was in the committee for hygiene and sanitation. They examined
latrines and gave instruction for improving cleanliness and hygiene.

Gandhiji said:

The poor people had no objection to their latrines being inspected, and what is more, they carried out the improvements suggested to them. But when we went to inspect the houses of the upper ten, some of them even refused us admission, not to talk of listening to our suggestions. It was our common experience that the latrines of the rich were more unclean.¹³

The committee inspected the untouchables' quarters also. Only one member of the committee was willing to accompany Gandhiji to the untouchables' quarters. They had no latrines, they defecated in the open. However, Gandhiji found that the huts were kept clean and tidy: “The entrances were well swept, the floors were beautifully smeared with cowdung, and the few pots and pans were clean and shining. There was no fear of an outbreak in those quarters.”¹⁴ They also inspected some places of worship, Gandhiji says:

It pained me to see so much uncleanness about a place of worship. One would expect a careful observance of the rules of sanitation and hygiene in a place which is regarded as holy. The
authors of the Smritis, as I knew even then, have laid the greatest emphasis on cleanliness both inward and outward.¹⁵

These are some of the thought provoking instances encountered by Gandhiji.

Gandhiji was immensely impressed and influenced by the magic spell of Ruskin's Un to This Last. He was virtually overwhelmed by the ideals of life conveyed by it: "The book was impossible to lay aside, once I had begun it. It gripped me ... I determined to change my life in accordance with the ideals of the book ... Of the books, the one that brought an instantaneous and practical transformation in life was Un to This Last."¹⁶ The ideals of the book as conceived by Gandhiji are:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.

2. That the lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's in as much as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That life of a labourer ie. the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicrafts man is the life worth living.\textsuperscript{17} Gandhi believed that he discovered some of his deepest convictions reflected in this great work of Ruskin. He admits: “... it so captured me and made me transform my life.”\textsuperscript{18} Gandhi completed the reading of the whole book in his twenty four hours’ journey from Johannesburg to Durban: “I arose with the dawn, ready to induce these principles to practice.”\textsuperscript{19} The book so ‘gripped’ him that he finished it by a nonstop perusal.... The title of the book was taken from the Bible, where the master rebukes his servant who wants less to be given to another: “Friend I do thee no wrong. Didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way. I will give un to this last even as un to thee” Later Gandhi translated this book in to Gujarathi but gave it the title of Sarvodaya, ie. the Good of All – a title that was new and gave it a significance very much his own. In the Bhagavat Gita Ch. XII Shloka – 4, the Yogi is described as “Sarva Bhuta Hite Ratah”, ie, one engaged in the Good of all creatures.\textsuperscript{20}
This epoch making transformation in Gandhiji’s mind and spirit led to the establishment of the Phoenix community settlement in Durban in 1904 and Satyagraha Ashram at Tolstoy Farm in Transvaal in 1910. Gandhiji dedicated himself to the community service and started living a commune’s-like living where every one should labour, drawing the same living wage. It was also proposed that the Indian Opinion may be shifted to a farm. Gandhiji is of high praise to the enlivening and morale boosting effect of manual labour on man. He realized how it is a prominent component of Nature living. Members of the families in the settlement dedicated their spare time in presswork for Indian Opinion. Gandhiji reflects: “There came a time when we deliberately gave up the use of the engine and worked with hand-power only. Those were, to my mind, the days of the highest moral uplift for Phoenix.”

To make a living by manual labour is a vital aspect of Nature living.

This was a time when Gandhiji went through the Jain scriptures, the biblical New Testament and sociological writings of Tolstoy. These were the main sources of his convictions in Ahimsa or non-violence and satyagraha or steadfastness to truth. Thoreau and Mazzini were other two western writers whose sociological views were subjected for
perusal by Gandhiji. Gandhiji joins with Tolstoy in decrying sky scrapers like Eiffel Tower in Paris as man’s edifices of pride and folly. Such creations have nothing to do with simple living and art, but to satisfy man’s false ego of conquering Nature: “I must say a word about Eiffel Tower. I do not know what purpose it serves today. But then I heard it greatly disparaged as well as praised. I remember that Tolstoy was the chief among those who disparaged. He said that the Eiffel Tower was a monument of man’s folly not of his wisdom.”

This was also a period of his conceptualization of Khadi and Charka as the symbol of Swadeshi. He also recognized the ideas of local self sufficiency and Grama Swaraj – village autonomy – and Nature friendly village industry. When Gandhiji returned to India, he established his Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati in 1915. It was decided that the ashram inmates may discard mill woven clothes and use clothes entirely manufactured by their own hands. “....All the members of the ashram resolved to wear hand-woven clothes made from Indian yarn only.” A few handlooms were introduced in the ashram. In the search of cotton yams in the villages Gandhiji could know from direct contact the conditions of life among the weavers, the extend of their production, the handicaps in obtaining raw material, the
ways in which they were being made victims of fraud, and lastly their ever growing debts. Soon it was found that Swadeshi or local made yarn was difficult to obtain. This situation led Gandhiji to the search for spinning wheel, so that he could make his own yarn for his cloth. This culminated in the re-discovery of Charka- the spinning wheel-revival of hand spinning, and propagation of Charka as a symbol of self reliance, self employment, self sustained villages, cottage industry and grama swaraj or village autonomy.

Gandhiji held different discussions and found meanings to Khadi and Charka viz. the symbol of simplicity, interaction between the poor and the rich, co-production between the farmers and the workers, the capitalist and the workers and the symbol of Nature living. He aimed at the alleviation of poverty from the villagers and the revival of Indian economy and spirituality. He had definite plans to promote cottage industry through Khadi and Charka. Gandhiji put forth the following reasons why Khadi and handloom should be adopted as a most suitable cottage industry in India.

1. It provides labour to thousands of unemployed.
2. Thousands of people are skilled to do this job.
3. Learning the skill for this job is quite easy.
4. It requires very little investment.
5. *Charka* can be assembled with minimum materials and effort.
6. People have no dislike for *charka*.
7. It provides earning even at times of depression and famine.
8. It prevents flow of capital outside the country.
9. The money so saved can be used to the benefit of the poor.
10. Even limited success in this effort turns out to be highly beneficial to people of India.
11. It is the most effective means to cultivate the culture of cooperation among people.
12. It gives a Nature friendly employment to the village women of India and boosts their self respect.
13. It helps to restore health.\(^2\)

Gandhi wanted to save man from being slave to machines and reinstate the supremacy of human morality through the manual work of *Khadi*.

Besides Gandhi took *Charka* as the symbol of *Ahimsa* or non-violence. *Charka* is the symbol of non-aggression and it safeguarded
one against exploitation. *Charka* and handloom impart the least environmental hazard and prove as the most environmentally ideal, cottage industry with the highest potentiality to provide employment to millions. Gandhiji said:

Once people understand the potentiality and significance of *charka*, one need not spend single *paisa* for dissemination of it. Assistance from the-well-to do may also not be needed. People will come in search of us. Every village becomes the nerve centre of India. India will cease to be known by the metropolises like Bombay, Calcutta etc. but by the nearly seven lakhs of the villages where 80% of the Indians live. No more problems like Hindu-Muslim difference, untouchability, strikes, strife etc. This is the goal for which the handloom workers, the village people should work, live and die.²⁵

Gandhiji had to resist much opposition from millionaires from his very inception of *Khadi* movement, the sign of *swadeshi* movement. He told them that he would never be an agent for the mills, some thing that would do more harm than good to the country. Gandhiji organized the production of hand spun cloth and worked for means for their distribution and popularization. He said: “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 homes.”25(a) Here also Gandhi was firm and resolute.

Gandhiji was also worried about the plight of the unnatural and unjust cause of the sufferings of Indian women. Through Khadi he wanted to empower them to self employment and liberation from poverty and exploitation: “I swear by this form of swadeshi, because it can provide work to the semi-starved, semi-employed women of India. My idea is to get these women to spin yarn and clothe the people of India with Khadi woven out of it.”26 In simple settings of Nature living, this idea boosted his eco-friendly attitude and with his initiative and effort a resolution was got passed at the Calcutta Congress in 1920 on Hindu-Muslim unity, untouchability and swadeshi as represented by revival and popularization of Khadi. He observes: “…the congress has established a living bond of relationship with the ‘skeletons’ of India through Khadi.”27 Gandhiji believed that anything which helped India to get rid of the grinding poverty of her masses would encourage and promote the process of establishing Swaraj. In this regard he discovered the Khadi movement to be the most natural and effective means and he lived through it. Gandhiji rejoices over the sanitary
boosting effect of *Charka*: “The wheel began merrily to hum in my room, and I may say without exaggeration that its hum had no small share in restoring me to health. I am prepared to admit that its effect was more psychological than physical. But then it only shows how powerfully the physical in man reacts to the psychological.”

He envisaged *Khadi* to be the central sun around which other village industries revolve like so many planets. Even today the *Khadi* and village industries provide the largest of employments to the rural Indians. Lakhs of people are employed in the *Khadi* and village industries. It is a definitely encouraging factor, which promotes the life of the ‘have-nots’ in the Indian villages. It is also a flashing beacon while human relations are threatened by the encircling darkness of industrial economy and consumerism.

As he pointed out as early as 1908 in his Hind Swaraj “civilization is like a mouse gnawing while it is soothing us” As Dr. S. Radhakrisnan once observed, “today man has become a spaceman who can successfully explore space and reach the Moon and the Mars. He also has the capacity to dive deep into the ocean and explore its hidden riches but it is unfortunate that
he has not yet learned to live on this earth as a human being."

Gandhiji was uncompromising in his attitude towards a mass society and suggested "Charka" and the promotion of village industries as solution for freeing the society from the dehumanizing effects of industrialization or mechanization.²⁹

The sociological emergence of Gandhiji faced a strange human situation. The modern man has been caught in the trappings of fast life, and fast death. Man is under constant tension and strain. People value themselves by how much they possess and how far they have climbed up in the ladder of profession and social status. They are proud of palacial concrete mansions and so called social positions. Their public happiness has been questioned by private worries or domestic agonies. The youngsters lack grace and charity and feel frustrated. They roam about in aimless lavishes. The simplicity of womanhood and feminine charm have been squeezed and destroyed. The old and the sick pass away un-nursed and unlamented. Man feels alienated and lonely in the crowds of tumult and confusion. The overcrowded cities are a living death den for the individual spirit. Everywhere people demand
personal conveniences. The possessive attitude dominates everywhere. In Nature there are no similar demands. People seem to be confused about how to relate each other. Most modern families are in total confusion. In the past man worked and supported the woman in the home; she cared for the home and offspring. Now in some cases men are at home and women are out in the world. In some cases men and women work together at home and outside on a common project. In some cases they share equally the responsibility of their offspring. And also there are cases they avoid offspring because they are confused about who would do what. The contemporary scenario is exceptionally strange: “At the individual level, one is caught in the trappings of fast life and consumer culture with the result that one has to live under constant strain and tension. As a result one gets alienated from the family and society. At times he forgets his own identity and does not know where he wants to go.”30 Sex has always been a motivating force in human life and relationships. But it has become a sphere of indulgence like smoking, eating or drinking. The moral sublimity of procreation and love stand distorted. Conjugal love has become commercialized. Prostitution has acquired the status of trade unionism.
The sexual expositions in modern mass media - television, movies, books and magazines promulgate images and attitudes that foster confusion and corruption in the indiscriminating minds. More often some unhealthy and unnatural practices are projected as dignified and normal behaviour. There is much criticism against Deepa Mehta’s ‘Fire’ which tends to glorify unnatural sex relationships and depicts it as a panacea for broken family relations. The general distorted treatment of sex in many films and popular television programmes is infuriating. It is inappropriate and harmful to the impressionable minds of younger generation.

The sociological emergence of Gandhiji into the Indian sanitary scenario is an epoch making enterprise. He interpreted Sociology and health from the spiritual perspective. About human relationships he observes:

Scientists say that the earth we live on exists as an entity, because of the gravitational force that combines its molecules. If a non-living matter is bound by such an attracting force, the living beings should definitely possess an equivalent force among them; and that force is called love. It exists between
parents and children among siblings, between friends. But we should extend that force of love to all creatures of nature. In that process we will perceive God.\(^3\)

Even though Gandhiji was optimistic about the goodness in man he insisted that the real progress of man is dependent on *ahimsa* or non-violence and observance of truth. A healthy personal and social order is possible only through love and tolerance:

Men live and keep their possessions safe only because of mutual love and tolerance. If not, only a few dreaded and daring would have remained on this earth. But that is not what is seen. The well-being of man depends on firm family relations based on love. It is a universal truth applicable to both progressive and conservatives.\(^3\)

Gandhiji had profound faith in man's traditional harmony with Nature:

Our age-long traditions teach us to respect nature and to live in harmony with it. According to them, very much as each human being is looked upon as manifestation of divinity natural wealth, like the thickets of the forest and the springs in the mountains,
the flowing rivers and the singing springs are looked upon as so many reflections and symbols of the benevolent power that rules the Universe. Nature certainly has its own laws and it works in consonance with them. Man, however, seems to violate them and violate them with pride and impertinence.\textsuperscript{33}

Gandhiji identified the gravity of this violating tendency and cautioned against. As it has been universally recognized man has the urgent need to establish a healthy and congenial harmony with nature:

It is harmony—harmony not only between man and man or nation and nation but also harmony between man and nature that should be our guiding principle. It should be our attempt not only not to disturb or try to manipulate nature but to search for a way fitting in with the great process of Nature and making the best of them as Gandhiji maintained. Schumacher refers to the same principle when he observes that nature is always keen on helping us on providing for us if only we will cease to insist on going according to our calculations. It is his firm conviction that if we do not try to extract the maximum from Nature, it will bestow and bestow abundantly on us. This has been very clearly demonstrated by
natural farming as advocated by Fukuoka in Japan or in the many experiments in 'Rishi Kheti' carried on in different parts of our country like U.P, M.P, Gujarat and others, which instead of squeezing the land by using poisonous pesticides and chemical fertilizers look upon the earth as Mother Earth, which has to be preserved and protected with utmost care, respect and kept healthy and happy, ever smiling and sustaining. Thus creating conditions that are congenial for enhanced production and growth and promoting ecological balance.

When Gandhiji entered into the Indian socio-sanitary scenario with the rich resource of experience and sense of Nature living, he earned through his socio-sanitary interventions in South Africa he had to encounter dual forces:

1. The serfdom imposed by British imperialism in India and its escalating exploitation and suppression of the people of the homeland, and increasing outcry and unrest among people of India against foreign rule and demand for Swaraj or self Rule
2. The impoverished, ailing and disorganized Indian common

mass.

The Physical, moral and spiritual misery, ill health and dilemma of
the people of India have been diverse and most intricate. These
included:

a) Poverty, unemployment and famine.

b) Social evils of un-malleable caste hierarchy, untouchability and
bonded and landless labourers of the basic stratum.

c) The highly discriminatory and unscientific division of power
and wealth among the different strata of the community.

d) The dissatisfactory unhygienic and unhealthy habits and
practices, and ignorance and habitual indifference to sanitary
observances in daily life and unnatural and unscientific dietary
and health practices of people.

The moral and spiritual triviality in the community, irrespective of
social strata. His mission was very serious and totally intricate. But he
knew that the total aim of all human acts is attainment of freedom from
sufferings and fear. He proved that a system of living in harmony with
Nature would pave the way for facing all intricacies.
References:


34. Sheshrao Chavan, p101