CHAPTER – 3

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIALISM 
AND JAY PRAKASH

If anybody makes an effort to locate the main theme of JP’s thought, he or she can not avoid the temptation to point out at his concept of socialism. As a matter of fact he was primarily and essentially a socialist thinker and an activist. “Mahatma Gandhi regarded him as the greatest Indian authority on socialism.”

In the field of Indian Socialism, he is the most well known and recognized personality. “Gandhi once remarked, “what Jay Prakash knows about Marxism, nobody knows.” But before going to discuss JP’s socialism, we should try to understand what socialism means.

3.1 MEANING OF SOCIALISM

The word ‘Socialism’ comes from the Greek word ‘Socius’ meaning Society. Therefore, naturally Socialism is concerned with society or collective life. It may be regarded as the product of the injustice of the capitalist (social) system. It can be regarded as a revolt against the exploitation of man by man. It is a protest against the building of an economic and social system on the incentive of profit, not service. It is a challenge to competition, which had degraded the working man and his family, starved many to keep a few in luxury, separated society into two classes, haves and have nots.

In the contemporary world, we can find much controversy as regard to the proper meaning of the term socialism. Therefore it is quite difficult to give a
definition of Socialism to be accepted by all. Since early 19th century, we can find different schools of socialism, different from each other as regards their aims and methods. The meaning and contents of socialism varies from time to time and from place to place. To Marxists and the Syndicalists socialism was fundamentally an economic movement. To the communists socialism is something which is already achieved in Soviet Russia, where as to others socialism conveys a political meaning. They aim to introduce greater equality in social conditions and to realize it through the actions of the law of the state.

In simple language socialism can be regarded as a movement against the inequality existing in the present social order. It is a plan for a new social order based on justice, equality, free from exploitation of man by man, a co-operative commonwealth of mankind. Though socialists differ among themselves on a number of points, there are certain basic principles, on which every socialist agrees. These are—

(i) Socialism wants to establish the importance of the society over the individual.
(ii) It wants to abolish competition.
(iii) It wants to abolish private enterprise.
(iv) It wants to establish a proper system of distribution.

3.2 EVOLUTION OF SOCIALISM

If we study the evolution of Socialism we find that it originated in the ‘Republic’ of Plato, as its ruling class had no property of its own and shared all things in common. "Plato outlines a new socio-economic order based on
Some people trace its origin to the Bible, particularly the old Testament. “Some link Socialism with the early Christians, who rejected the concept of ‘Mine’ and ‘Thine’ and practiced socialism in their every day lives. During the middle ages various sects and movements attacked wealth and commerce considering them to be wicked. During the Renaissance and Reformation, there was a revival of protest against inequality based on wealth.”

Socialism in its present form originated in the late 18th century and early 19th century as a protest against the prevailing factory system, which creates gulf of difference between the rich and the poor. “Socialism arose as a reaction against the social and economic conditions generated in Europe by the growth of industrial capitalism. The birth of socialist ideas was closely linked to the development of a new but growing class of industrial workers, who suffered the poverty and degradation that were so often a feature of early industrialization. The character of early socialism was influenced by the harsh and often inhuman conditions in which the industrial working class lived and worked.”

In the sense of a struggle for greater equality socialism is as old as the civil society, as old as the separation of men into classes, old as the distinction of rich and poor. As has already been mentioned that the lineage of socialism can be traced back to Plato, and also to Moses and even to the New Testament. Moses can be regarded a socialist as he aimed at preventing the growing inequality amongst the Jews. Some find socialism in the “New Testament’ where Lord Jesus Christ
tells his disciples “If thou will be perfect, go and sell what thou hast and give it to the poor.”

But these ideas do not convey the meaning that socialism is equal distribution of national wealth, but it means a detachment from wealth and pleasure. As a matter of fact, socialism is not merely humanitarianism, altruism, and sympathy for the poor, but the organization of society for a definite end:

In the modern times, the word socialism was first used in Print in 1803 in Italy. Socialism as the word was first used, meant collective regulation, regulation of man’s affairs on a co-operative basis, with the happiness and welfare of all as the end in view. The word socialism was first used in the ‘Cooperative Magazine’ published in the year 1827 where it was mentioned that the people who thought that capitals should be held by society, instead by certain individuals for the common good were labeled as socialist or communist. The term ‘socialist’ derives from the Latin ‘sociare,’ meaning to combine or to share. “The actual word, ‘socialism’ appeared in the debates among the followers of Saint Simon and Robert Owen.” “...and by the 1840s the term was familiar in a range of industrialized countries, notably France, Belgium and the German states.” It first appeared in 1832 in France in a paper ‘Le Globe,’ and denoted Simon’s doctrine of a collectively planned society. It appeared in the “Poor Man’s Guardian” in 1833. In 1835, a Society, which received the name of the Association of all classes of all nations, was founded under the auspices of Robert Owen and the words ‘Socialists’ and ‘Socialism’ became current during the discussions which arose there. The term was soon borrowed from England by a distinguished French writer Reybaud, in his work ‘Reformation moderne’ in which he discussed the theories of saint Simon,
Fourier, and Owen. Owen had before his eyes the evils of industrialization, Saint Simon had before him the history of the abuses of an idle and privileged feudalism. Saint Simon saw that a new industrial world had arisen, while the old feudal and clergy classes still ruled. His aim was to substitute feudal aristocracy by a working aristocracy of merit.

Saint Simon, Robert Owen and Fourier were popularly known as utopian socialists. They stood for the betterment of the existing inequalities and insisted that it was the duty of every good man to promote happiness and well-being of the whole society. They condemned competition as a means of living. "...Charles Fourier (1772-1837) in France and Robert Owen in Britain advocated the establishment of utopian communities based upon co-operation and love, rather than competition and greed."9

However, the utopian socialists failed to formulate a science through which their schemes could be realized. But their meaningful criticism of the existing (capitalistic) society demonstrated that the existing system was faulty and that, steps should be taken to do away with the sufferings of the vast masses. Thus, long before Karl Marx, the Utopian Socialists sowed the seeds of socialism. He had only to till the ground and water it so that it may flourish and give fruits to the future generations.

During the next stage of development of socialism, we see the influence of chiefly German and also Russian thinkers. Karl Marx, the German used the term Communism to denote his own theories in contradiction to the term ‘Socialism’. Marx and his collaborator Fredrick Engels, gave expression to their doctrines in their celebrated ‘Communist Manifesto’ (1848) and criticized the Socialism...
preached and advocated by the earlier Socialists. Later, the Socialism of Owen and Saint Simon School came to be known as Utopian Socialism and the one who drew its inspiration from Karl Marx as Scientific Socialism or merely socialism.

Therefore, in the present comprehensive and systematic form, the origin of socialism principally owes to the work of Karl Marx. He, with Engels is regarded as the founder of the 'Scientific Socialism,' Marx was chiefly guided by the 'Dialectics' of the German Philosopher Hegel in understanding the movement of history. Dialectics is the art of resolving the conflict between two opposing theories and arrive at a new one without disproving any one of the two. While Hegel conceived dialectics in the reign of abstract thought, Marx applied it to material things. "In Hegel's theory of history the driving force was a self-developing spiritual principle that embodied itself, successively in historic notions, in Marx it was a self-developing system of productive forces, that embodies itself in the basic patterns of economic distribution and social classes," Marx conceived that in the ultimate analysis all changes – social, political, moral and legal – are determined by the economic forces. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. Thus, according to Marx, what men think is greatly determined by the conditions he lives in and the conditions in which he lives are the 'economic conditions', which is characterized as the powers of production.

Marxian socialism is revolutionary and militant. He believed that the collapse of the bourgeoise system is inevitable, but it is not going to happen automatically, but a revolutionary situation is to be produced, where in the struggle between the bourgeoise and the proletariat will take place. He said, "The history of
all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle." Marx preaches class
struggle and violence for the liquidation of bourgeois property. He said, "let the
ruling classes tremble at the communistic revolution. The proletarians have
nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win." According to Marx,
the working class is to be constantly taught and trained to achieve their great
historical mission. Thus viewed Marx transmitted socialism into proletarian
revolution. Andrew Heywod writes in one place, "Marx and Engels, on the other
hand, envisaged a 'Proletarian revolution' in which the class-conscious working
masses would rise up to overthrow capitalism.

The first successful socialist revolution took place in 1917, when a
dedicated and disciplined group of revolutionaries, led by Lenin and the
Bolsheviks, captured power in Russia. Apparently it can be said that Marx
condemned all appeals to humanitarianism, goodness, justice, cooperation, service
and sacrifice and substituted for them struggle, conquest, spoilation and
dictatorship.

However, Marx did observe that revolution may not necessarily take the
same course in all countries and under all conditions. He realized the fact that the
peculiar circumstances at different places must be considered and declared this at
the Hague congress of the I.W.M.A. in 1872. To quote Marx, "We know that
special regard must be paid to the institutions, customs, and traditions of various
lands, and we do not deny that there are certain countries, such as the United
States and England, in which workers may have to secure their ends by peaceful
means...."
Marx's most important prediction was that capitalism was destined to be overthrown by a proletarian revolution. This would not be merely a political revolution that would remove the governing elite or overthrow the state machine, but a social revolution that would establish a new mode of production and lead to the achievement of full communism.

3.3 TYPES OF SOCIALISM

Marxian Socialism was reviewed and modified according to different situations prevailing in different countries. Different groups of socialist and thinkers emerged later on in different countries. As a result different concepts of socialism came into existence.

3.3.1 Evolutionary and Revolutionary Socialism

Evolutionary Socialism admits an attitude of compromise between capitalism and socialism, so that the capitalist system is allowed to continue with some changes here and there in the socialist direction. On the other hand revolutionary socialism makes a direct attack on the prevailing contradictions of the social order. Marxists are from this group of socialism.

Evolutionary socialism accepts Marx as the source of their inspiration but they have introduced certain new ideas in the Marxian theory. They believe that the change from capitalism to socialism should be gradual and non-violent. They rely on democratic method, parliamentary method, and economic planning on the other hand, revolutionary socialists believe in the inevitability of a violent revolution as a pre-condition for establishing dictatorship of the proletariat.
3.3.2 Democratic Socialism

Again another term is used in the field of socialism, i.e. democratic socialism, in which socialist principles and policies are enforced through democratic means and processes. According to American political dictionary, it is an economic system established by a democratic nation in which the people through their government take over ownership and direction of basic industries, banking, communication, transportation and other segments of the economy. According to Oxford Junior Encyclopaedia, it implies a peaceful transformation of the economic order.

In 1872 Marx is said to have stated that socialism could be achieved through democratic means in England, Holland and America. Although the economic and political theory of democratic socialism has been borrowed mainly from England, so far as India is concerned, some indigenous thinkers and writers prepared the intellectual background for this ideology. “Indian culture from Vedas, the Upanishads and Buddhism to the times of Ram Mohan Roy and Gandhi has emphasized the aspect of tolerance of contrary and contradictory opinions. The ideal intellectual tolerance of the view of opponents is a democratic heritage. Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha felt that the Hindu Sannyasis who had renounced the attachment to wealth and power were true socialists.”

After independence in India, the Congress Socialist Party, became committed to the ideal of democratic socialism. Ashoka Mehta in his book named ‘Democratic Socialism,’ rejected the idealist theory of the state and totalitarianism. He felt that socialism was not antithetical to culture. According to him, the planned economies of Russian communism led to centralization. But democratic socialism
advocates certain absolute concepts and criteria of ethics. The basic principles of democratic socialism are –

(1) It puts great emphasis on the importance of the larger interests of society as a whole against the narrow and selfish interests of the individuals. But it does not mean that the interests of the individual are completely ignored. It believes in individual freedom and equality, but, the principles of freedom and equality should be characterized and properly balanced.

(2) It puts emphasis on co-operation and not on competition. According to the democratic socialists free competition is injurious. Robert Owen supported co-operation and not class war. According to him, there should be voluntary associations based on the principle of mutual help.

(3) It puts emphasis on the principle of equality. It believes in providing equal opportunities to all. Democratic socialists stand for passing legislation, which gives equal opportunities to all for advancement in life. They do not stand for absolute equality because the same is impossible to achieve. However, they want to see that all are benefited by the fruits of labour and it is to be ensured that the employer or anybody else can not take away it.

(4) It does not approve of the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few persons. Democratic socialists advocates taxation of the rich at a higher rate for the leveling of inequalities of wealth. It stands for the nationalization of the important means of production and not all the means of production.

(5) According to the Democratic socialists different kinds of rights such as civil, political and economic should be given to the citizens.
(6) It stands for broadening the base of democracy i.e., from political field, democracy should be extended to social and economic fields.

(7) It stands for suppression of anti-social activities such as artificial scarcities created by the private producers to raise the prices of the commodities. Intervention by the state is justified only to provide justice to all the people.

(8) It stands for equality of opportunities. It is against the ownership of land, factories and other means of production by a few at the cost of the community. That means it is not against all forms of private property but only against privately owned property which becomes the means of exploitation. It allows the ownership of small plots of land, houses and other limited property as they can not be put to any anti-social use.

Democratic socialism believes in democratic methods and processes. They advocate peaceful methods for the establishment of a new social order not through the bullet but through the ballot box. Their object is to capture power and implement their programme. Some other methods and activities such as organization, propaganda, agitation, struggle and constructive work also are included in the programmes of democratic socialism.

3.3.3 Fabianism

Fabianism is one of the forms of socialism which grew in country like England, aiming at the welfare of society through slow, evolutionary and democratic methods. This socialism was possible only in a country like England. It could not originate in a backward country in which there is no middle class and the
people are illiterate. The Fabian society was formed in England in Jan 1884. Some of the founders were George Bernard Shaw, Graham Wallas, Annie Basant, Sidney Webb etc.

3.3.4 Syndicalism

As a reaction against the evolutionary socialism, in France, emerged a revolutionary school known as Syndicalism. It is the vision of a new stateless and classless society with the trade union as its base. It originated in France in the second half of the 19th century. According to this school of thought, Gradualism and constitutionalism were absurdities against their belief in the eternal hostility between capitalism and working class. They believed that techniques of strike, sabotage, label and boycott will overthrow capitalism and socialism will emerge out of the ashes of these techniques.

3.3.5 Guild Socialism

Another School known as Guild Socialism takes a middle position between Fabianism and Syndicalism. In the first and second decades of the 20th century, few English Intellectuals propounded this theory.

3.3.6 Collectivism

As a form of socialism, collectivism arose as a reaction against extreme individualism of the 19th century. The principles of collectivism can be found in the works of Edward Bernstein in Germany, Jean Juares in France, Karl Branting in Sweden and Eduard Anseel in Belgium. It is a theory for, social development, a
programme of economic reform and a theory of general welfare. It is not as extreme as revolutionary socialism, communism, syndicalism or anarchism. It wants to employ the state for the promotion of the common good. It does not want to abolish the state altogether but stands for removing the evils of capitalism, private property and competition. It does not regard the state as an evil but a positive good, which can be used to serve the common good.

3.3.7 Anarchism

Anarchism holds that every form of govt. is evil and tyranny. Anarchists want a free association of individuals, without armed forces, courts, prisons or written law. It is "a political doctrine advocating the abolition of organized authority." They hold that every form of government is evil and tyranny. "According to Kropotkin, anarchism is a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government – harmony in such a society being obtained not by submission to law or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs – aspirations of a civilized being." For the establishment of an anarchist society there are schools of anarchist thought, one advocating the use of violence and other advocating a evolutionary and peaceful process. Anarchist like Tolstoy stands for peaceful methods like the methods of education, example and persuasion. Anarchists suggesting revolutionary method suggest that the existing institutions of the state, capitalism and religion can not be eliminated without force.
3.3.8 Communism

The Russian Revolution of 1917 gave rise to another powerful socialist school which is known as communism. This school believes that unless capitalism is completely overthrown, the world will never be secured. It is a social theory according to which society should be classless, private property should be abolished, land and factories should be collectively owned and controlled. Marxian Socialism as understood in Russia is known as communism.

In this way different schools of Socialistic thought emerged due to difference of opinions among the socialists of the world. The collapse of communism in Eastern European Countries specially in erstwhile Russia, has given birth to doubts in the minds of some people that whether socialism has a future as a distinctive ideology. "Michael Harrington ... proclaims that socialism is the hope of human freedom and justice under the precededent conditions of life that humanity will face in the twenty first century." Andrew Hey Wood again writes that, interest in ideas such as community, duty and responsibility, provides evidence of the desire for 'new thinking' within socialism.

3.3.9 Gandhian Socialism

Gandhi’s socialistic ideas are not the result of his studies from the writings of Marx. These are also not derived as a result of dislike of capitalistic system. So as to say, these are not the outcome of Gandhi’s reactions against the prevailing faulty socio-economic set up like Saint Simon. Robert Owen and Fourier. Gandhian Socialism was the result of the predominantly religious bent of his mind.
In other words, Gandhi did not derive his concept of socialism from his studies of the writings of Marx, but it was a product of his religious outlook of mind. He was the child of Indian culture. According to him, "true socialism or communism did not come as a result of misuse of capital, but it is rather implicit in the verse of Ishopnishad." In Bhagawat Puran also there is the idea of the basic principles of socialism—i.e., an equitable sharing of the blessings of God—where Narada tells Yudhisthira that "one is entitled to take as much as is sufficient for fulfilling up his stomach, he who takes more than this, is guilty of the theft and deserves to be punished." "Gita also proclaims that we may not own anything beyond our strict requirements but should share equally with all God's creatures the means of subsistence." Gandhi believed, "If we retained possession only of what we needed, no one would be in want and all would live in contentment." He emphasized on non-violence for bringing about economic equality. He said, "I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point of view by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred." Gandhi again said, "...I can not bring about economic equality of my conceptions, if I am the owner of fifty motor cars or even of ten bighas of land. For that, I have to reduce myself to the level of the poorest of the poor."

According to Gandhi, so long there is distinction between the rich and the poor, socialism is not possible. However economic equality does not mean that every one should posses the same amount. It only signifies that, every body should have enough for his or her needs.

According to Gandhi, at the root of the problem of equal distribution of wealth lies the principle of Trusteeship. The aim of trusteeship is to solve the
problem arising out of the unequal distribution of the wealth. The theory of trusteeship holds that any superfluous wealth should be kept in trust.

The theory of trusteeship is very close to the ancient Hindu Ideal. According to the traditional Hindu view, property is possessed by its possessors for the common use and benefit of common wealth. Anyone if wants to have more without needing it, commits theft and deserves punishment. According to Srimad Bhagawat Gita, those who desire salvation should act like trustee.

Ishopanishad too proclaims enjoyment through renunciation. According to the theory of trusteeship the rich are to be convinced that, the wealth they possess is the fruit of the labour of the people rather than the product of their efforts. Wealth is a social product. To the rich man he said, "Earn your crores by all means. But understand that your wealth is not yours, it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs and use the remainder for society."

This way Gandhi wanted to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. To Gandhi, capital is not evil, but its wrong use must be considered as evil. "The evil lies not in possession as such but in possessiveness. If today all the owners are forcibly dispossessed of all their possessions, the possessive instinct would still remain."

According to Gandhi this is the root cause of conflict and hence he wanted to end it through trusteeship. The most important principle of trusteeship is conversion of the wealthy. He believes in the goodness of human nature. The capitalist is also a human being. He can be transformed. He is to be made conscious that he should regard himself as Trustee for those on whom he depend for increase of his capital.
Shri Shankar Rao Deo, a distinguished follower of Gandhi, raised a question to Gandhi in Feb. 1942, "Why first earn crores and then use for society?" Gandhi answered that as in today's society, "the means of earning crores are bound to be impure, and one who earns crores by impure means cannot be expected to follow the Mantra, Tena Tyaktena Bhujithah, because in the very process of earning crores by impure means the man's character is bound to be tainted or vitiated." Therefore Gandhi requests and emphasizes the observance of purity of means and he thought if purity of means is observed, crores could not be accumulated at all and then spending for the society would not be difficult. Good deeds produce good results. Therefore Gandhi says, "If one take care of means, the end will take care of itself." As is the means so is the end.

3.3.10 Gandian Socialism and Marxian Socialism

The term 'socialism' is basically associated with Karl Marx. A comparative study of Marxian and Gandhian Socialism will be helpful for understanding the basic difference between Marxian Socialism and Indian Socialism as propounded by Gandhi and JP. Vinoba Bhave once said, "The study of Marx, the great Thinker (Mahamuni), and Gandhi – the great soul (Mahatma) is indeed fascinating." The following are the basic points of agreement and disagreement between these two thinkers.

(1) Both were extremely concerned for the exploited depressed, resourceless, and the dumb, the ignorant, the starving and the submerged humanity.

(2) Both dreamt of a new social order in which common men and women will enjoy full human rights without hindrance or oppression.
(3) Both of them were path finders of humanity, only difference is that Marx supports violence, whereas Gandhi, supports non-violence in thoughts, words and deeds.

(4) Gandhi stands for inner purification and conversion, whereas Marx tried to bring about change in the outer structure of life.

(5) Gandhi aimed at revolution by agreement, but Marx aimed at revolution by violence.

So far as difference between Gandhian and Marxian approach is concerned, it is in their attitude towards life and universe.

(1) To Marx the basic principle is matter. The basic principle of Gandhi is life. The universe is the manifestation of life. Marx speaks of matter, Gandhi speak of God. "Marx held that life had its origin, sustenance and its dissolution in matter and not vice versa. What is imagined as spirit or soul is, in fact the development of material forces. There is no spiritual principle but matter. From the smallest cell to the highly developed human being it is all the amalgamation of matter. Matter is real and it is the force that brings about changes in the social set up." According to Gandhi, "When all life is one and the whole universe including myself is the manifestation of God, how may I regard anyone to be my enemy, a wicked being, one whom I am free to hate? ...The fact is that ....the universe is the manifestation of God, and that apart from Him I am nothing ...I accept non-violence as the supreme Dharma (law) of my life...."
With regard to religion there is an extreme difference between Gandhian and Marxian Socialism. The Marxists are the born enemies of religion and they held that religion is the opium of the masses. On the other hand, religion played a tremendous influence on Gandhi during his formative period.

Marx supports class struggle. On the other hand Gandhi supports love and Ahimsa. Marx supports conflict and antagonism, Gandhi supports co-operation and collaboration.

3.4 JP’s Reaction to Gandhism and Marxism

Earlier JP rejected Gandhian Social philosophy as “impracticable” He observed “Gandhism may be a well intentioned doctrine. I personally think it is. But even with the best of intentions, it is ... a dangerous doctrine. It is dangerous because it hushes up real issues and sets out to remove the ills of society by pious wishes. It thus deceives the masses and encourage the upper classes to continue their domination.” He argued that Gandhi’s Ram Rajya gives an opportunity to the princes, (land lords), to exploit the paupers and exhibit their so-called high-minded philanthropy through trusteeship. Gandhi gave the land lords and millionaire their right to private property in trust for their tenants and use it for their welfare. But he never explained how it would happen. It may be possible for religious teachers like Gandhi, but not for blood-sucking landlords and capitalists who felt strengthened by Gandhijis philosophy. Therefore Marxian Socialism and Soviet Union, continued to be the basis of JP’s view on new Socio-economic order. But in the forties, after his imprisonment in the special camp jail at Deoli in
Rajasthan he realized the necessity of a democratic polity with moral values. Hence, he changed his perception of Soviet Union as a ‘model’ where in the name of dictatorship of the proletariat a single party was monopolizing power denying freedom to the people. Socialism wants to establish a classless society but, in Russia it makes the state all powerful by establishing dictatorship of the proletariat. JP explained that according to Marx and Lenin, dictatorship of the proletariat was not a socialist society, at all, rather, it was a ‘transitional phase,’ under certain conditions, between capitalism and socialism. This dictatorship of the proletariat may be necessary under certain circumstances but it is not the dictatorship of the party as found in Soviet Russia, which is a denial of Marxism. The true dictatorship of the proletariat, after the transitional period is over, must disappear in course of time. Again he said that, “dictatorship of the proletariat in Marxist theory does not mean the dictatorship of a single party such as the Communist Party in Russia. It means the dictatorship of a class, the working class, or in industrially backward countries such as India and Post Czarist Russia, is a combination of the toiling masses such as workers, peasants, and the lower middle class....”33 JP advocated the theory of violence through Azad Dastas and also class struggle. But gradually he realized that democratic or peaceful method alone can solve the problems of establishing socialism in India. “The overall requirement for socialism to be achieved is the existence of a well organized powerful socialist party, supported mainly by workers' and peasants' organizations and organizations of youth (volunteer, student, etc.) of the city.”34 He thought CSP would be able to fulfil this task. But gradually he realized that Marxism and its interpretation of history could not be true to all times and circumstances,
particularly in the industrially backward countries of Asia. Hence he asked the Asian Socialists to find their 'own road to socialism' and their own pattern of industrialization. Such rethinking of Marxism brought him near to Gandhi. According to him, the European Socialism was mainly based on the industrialized society, but the Asian countries are rural and agrarian by nature with a very low industrial capitalist development. Though in Russia and China communism was established it was not true socialism in the true sense of the term, which could not establish brotherhood of the equal and the free. In his own words, "but the socialism they have built up is a far cry from the brotherhood of the equal and the free which to me is the essence of true socialism."35

This way rethinking of Marxism led him to Gandhism more and more and the assassination of Gandhi had a deep effect on JP. He was terribly shocked in the event of Gandhi’s death and began to feel more and more attracted towards his teachings.

In his 'Ideological Problems of Socialism' JP analysed the Soviet System of nationalization of industries and the economic structure developed as a result of that, and came to the conclusion that mere nationalization can not produce socialism. In Russia it produced, “Centralisation, bureaucratization, lack of industrial democracy, in short lack of popular control over the economic process"36 Hence he suggested that, the Asian Socialist should not only depend on the support of the working class to establish socialism, but they must have the support of the peasantry, by satisfying their elemental urges. At the same time he said that the method should be democratic which would include, large mass
movement, mass action of non-violent character, unconstitutional but at the same time peaceful.

JP made it clear that democratic method was not opposed to Marxism, rather democracy and socialism were inseparable. Freedom and equality, could be achieved only in socialism based on and achieved through democratic means. He, for the first time raised the issue of place of ethics in politics and underlined the importance of Gandhian ideal of purity of means. "According to him only good means could enable the socialists to reach the goal of a good society or socialism." Constructive work and positive service can only help in establishing a democratic socialist society. He began to think that there was much similarity between Gandhism and Socialism. His conception was also changed after reading Erich Fromm's book. 'The Fear of Freedom' in which Fromm was able to place the individual at the centre of things without denouncing Marxism and at the same time prescribing for 'Democratic Socialism.' With the passage of time his fascination for Gandhian thought went on increasing and ultimately he embraced Gandhian plan of Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya Raj is a fellowship for the good of all. It seeks neither power nor pelf but only love and good will. It is a human common wealth, a society based on truth and non-violence. He hoped that, a joint effort by the socialists and Gandhians could be the basis for a new social order in India. He was attracted towards Gandhism mainly for Gandhi's emphasis on decentralization in administration and commitment to certain ethical values in politics. As a matter of fact he drew attention mainly to three aspects of Gandhism. These are, (a) insistence on moral values, (b) its contribution to revolutionary technology in the
shape of Satyagraha or civil disobedience and (c) its concept of political and economic decentralization.

He described Sarvodaya plan for economic development of India as "no wishy-washy sentimentalism, but a concrete programme of basic social revolution."\(^{38}\)

JP again observed that the task of social reconstruction can not succeed under the inspiration of a materialist philosophy. However, he was clear in his view that there was nothing in materialism which can lead men towards goodness. He realized that he no longer believes in 'Dialectical Materialism' the Goddess whom he had worshipped for so many years. In an article entitled 'Incentives to Goodness' published in the journal 'Freedom First' M.R. Masani (ed.), J.P. wrote, "...man must go beyond material to find the incentives to goodness."\(^{39}\) According to him, the task of social reconstruction can not succeed under the inspiration of a materialist philosophy. He of course did not want to imply that all those who professed a materialist philosophy were necessarily vicious or that all non-materialists were necessarily good. The break with dialectical materialism, however, did not mean the abandonment of socialism, but only its synthesis with Gandhism. JP was confident that the goals of socialism could be realized more effectively as well as much faster by following the Gandhian path, which was clearly expressed in his address to the First Asian Socialist conference held in Rangoon in 1953, which was published in the form of a pamphlet entitled 'The Ideological Problems of Socialism.'

Therefore JP strongly pleaded that Gandhism should be fully utilized to develop a sound ideology for socialism in India. According to him both
communism practised in the Soviet Union, and Socialism as practised in some of the western countries were facing failures. Communism had ended up in state capitalism and dictatorship and socialism had become only a parliamentary or legalistic creed. Since both the methods of violence and parliamentary action had failed, Gandhism is the third alternative, i.e. revolution by a non violent mass action.

3.5 JP'S CONCEPT OF SOCIALISM

JP was one of the pioneers of the Socialist movement in India. He took initiative in the foundation of the Indian Socialist Party on May 17, 1934, i.e., Congress Socialist Party (henceforth will be mentioned as C.S.P.). Some attempts have been made by Scholars to divide JP’s Socialist ideology and commitment into three or more broad phases, viz., —

(i) Marxian Socialist Phase upto 1945-46.

(ii) Democratic Socialist phase during 1946-54.

(iii) Gandhian phase since then —

But as a matter of fact “his life is a continuous process of development with overlapping tendencies…”40 It can be seen that, he began his political life first as a Gandhian non-co-operator. At his young age JP joined the non-co-operation movement following Gandhi’s call for Swaraj. But his active involvement in the freedom struggle began when he returned from the United States in 1927. While he was in USA (for seven years i.e. from 1922 to 1929) JP came in contact with the revolutionary philosophy of Marx, Engels, and Lenin mainly through a Polish Jew,
Abraham Landy, a member of the Communist Party. His conversion to Marxism was possible through the influence of Landy and Manuel Gomez, the famous Mexican Marxist. He found an answer to the problems of freedom and socio-economic progress of India in Marxism. Marxian Science of revolution impressed him so much that he though it to be the surer and quicker way for freedom of a country and freedom of the general people than Gandhian techniques of civil disobedience and non-co-operation.

Overthrow of Czar and the establishment of communism in Russia, further strengthened his faith in Marxism and theory of Marxian Revolution. According to JP, Marxism stands for equality and brotherhood, without which freedom was meaningless. Freedom to him was not only political freedom, i.e., mainly liberation from a colonial power, nor a change of the existing foreign govt. To him, it means something more than that. He said that freedom as a matter of fact includes the liberation of mankind from every form of injustice, exploitation and inequality.

"It was not enough for the country to attain freedom. Freedom had to reach the lowliest, and include freedom from hunger, poverty and ignorance. Socialism, which advocated equal distribution of available wealth, must be brought in to give real freedom to the people." He said, "Freedom, with the passing of the years, transcended the mere freedom of my country and embraced freedom of man everywhere and from every sort of trammel, above all — it meant freedom of the human personality, freedom of the mind, freedom of the spirit..., I shall not see it compromised for bread, for power, for security, for property, for the glory of the state or for anything else."
This way JP's socio-philosophical thought started with the ideas pertaining to freedom, moved him towards socialism. He was by that time convinced that only Socialism (Marxism) can give real freedom to the humanity. He optimistically admitted that though earlier he had sympathy for the poor, it was Marxism which ultimately awakened him with real sympathy for them. His living style in the USA, i.e., earning his own expenses and the cost of his studies (while learning) also strengthened his sympathy for the poor. During that time his thinking was that, Marx transformed the tears of the workers into hopes, and he was not at all satisfied with the path followed by Gandhi at the time of freedom movement in India (i.e., his stand on the question of equality and the techniques of achieving it).

Therefore, with the urge of his mind for freedom of humanity, JP undertook the Marxian Ideology for attaining his goal. According to him, Socialism is so wide a subject that it can not be covered in a short chapter of a book. He explained his own conception of socialism in his article 'Ideological Problems of Socialism.' In his book 'Why socialism' he advanced his arguments for adopting socialism for India. He made an analysis of the socio-economic conditions of India, which can be discussed as –

(a) **Inequality in the Society:** JP noticed that "The first thing that strikes us is the strange and painful fact of inequalities.... Inequality of rank of culture, of opportunity, a most disconcertingly unequal distribution of the good things of life, ignorance for the overwhelming many. Comfort, luxury, culture, position, power for the select few." He considered this fact of inequalities with all its brood of social consequences, to be the central problem of our society. Some thinkers and reformers in all ages have tried
to solve this problem of our society. Charity, Philanthropy utopia appeals to the more fortunate to be kind to the less fortunate, denunciation of the rich and exaltation of poverty and curtailment of wants, are the most common reactions to this evil fact of inequalities.

(b) Unequal Distribution of Wealth: JP does not admit that inequality is due to difference in caliber and he argues on this question. He says, what about the wealth of those who acquire it by inheritance? Therefore he is of the opinion that wealth is distributed unequally.

(c) Accumulation and Concentration of Wealth and Exploitation: JP explained that the poverty of Indian people is due to the fact that the means of production, i.e., tools, materials, land etc., are not in their hands. The people do not work for them, they no longer have free access to nature in many cases they are not the masters of their tools, they are not able to keep all they produce for themselves. They have to pay for most of them and more they pay for them, the less their own share of the produce and the greater their poverty. A sizable section of them has not even the means to pay for them, there is nothing that they can do except to sell their labour to others. If the means of production were freely available to each individual there would have been no poverty. According to JP, wealth is accumulated in the hands of those who own the means of production by virtue of their exploitation of others labour. Therefore, “The root cause of inequalities of wealth lies in the fact that the gifts of nature which yields wealth to men, and the instruments of production have come to be privately owned by
people for their own benefit."\textsuperscript{44} The surplus wealth is accumulated in the hands of some people through the ages.

Dictionary meaning of socialism is that, it is a political and economic theory, according to which the means of production, distribution, should be owned and controlled by the people. Every one should be given an equal opportunity to develop his talents, and wealth of the community should be fairly distributed. Therefore the basic principle of socialism is to socialization of the means of production. Hence, any attempt at a socialist reconstruction of society must start with the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production.

While discussing the problem of establishing a socialist state in India, JP pointed out that there is only one theory of socialism — Marxism, which is a system of social reconstruction of inequalities. JP had deep faith in Dialectical Materialism and agreed with the Marxian proposition that individual and social institutions are influenced by material forces. "\textit{He also agreed with the Marxian economic interpretation of history and held that all the political institutions of a society are nothing but the reflection of a given set of economic conditions. ...and men's idea of good and bad are also determined by the economic conditions under which they live.}\textsuperscript{45} According to JP the process of socialism can be applied to both agriculture and industry.

In the field of agriculture, he suggested that the present system of landlordism must be brought to an end and there should be redistribution of land. No one shall have land if he is not staying in village and actually tills his land. Land should be there for the tiller only. The unit of agricultural economy will be village.
Each village Panchayat will function as a co-operative of farmers and will conduct all farming functions including buying, selling and borrowing etc.

JP also put forward his argument regarding establishing 'Socialist Industry.' According to him "both large and small-scale industry must be democratically managed and controlled. It means all industries under socialization process will be owned by the govt. but representatives of trade unions from top to bottom must have an appropriate place in the decision making process. Small-scale industries can be managed by producers co-operatives. Besides there can be municipal or commercial ownership over small industries in a particular locality."\(^6\)

Therefore, it can be noticed that JP's "Socialism in economic sphere includes abolition of capitalism and land lordism, socialization of the means of production by abolishing private property rights, co-operative farming run by gram panchayats, collective farming, large-scale industries owned by the state with workers participation and small-scale industries organized into producers co-operatives."\(^7\)

### 3.5.1 Ideological problem of Socialism

While considering socialism as an economic and social theory, JP dealt with the ideological problem of socialism also. According to him, though, socialism was established in Russia, i.e., industries have been nationalized, agriculture has been collectivized, the motive of private profit has been removed from the economic system, the social structure, or super structure that has been built upon, this foundation does not produce the picture of socialism in the real
sense of the term. The achievement of power in Russia, by a single party, led to a bitter struggle for power inside the party itself. Though the party came to power with very noble ideals with the aim to create a society in which even the state has ceased to exist, there are no classes, there is no money, no wages — i.e., the ultimate picture of communist society which the communist party of Soviet Russia always had dreamt of. But in the achievement of that dream they failed completely. JP observed that every Socialist Party throughout the world, must have faced the problem of demoralization of the party, and the corruption of the ideals in the midst of this struggle for power. In pointing out the answer to this serious problem JP said that (a) the philosophy of Marxism is based on amoralism. “In Marxism any means are good means provided they serve the ends of the social revolution. Thus Marxism, as a philosophy of action is amoral, a philosophy that does not take into account, the question of good or evil. He also pointed out that (b) this serious problem of the demoralization of the party and the struggle for power is due to another source, which is a universal source, i.e., “the weakness of human nature, the weakness of the individual man everywhere, his ambition, his selfishness, his stupidity, his hate, his fear,” etc. According to JP, if we are engaged in shaping only the environment, in which the individual men lives — the social, economic and political environment, to the extent of neglecting the individual, our attempt at Social reconstruction will fail. He referred to Lord Buddha. Lord Buddha also looked at the problem of human misery and arrived at the conclusion that human misery is due to human desire. Buddha developed a system of self-culture, a system for the culture of the individual for the making, moulding and shaping of individual human. So that he may be free from misery by
controlling his passion, his desire. The aim of Buddha was common man's 'mukti,' from miseries. His discovery of Four Noble Truths and the great 'Eight Fold Path' of the ethical life are the essential philosophical contributions for the liberation of mankind from the miseries of life. But JP said that, though this was a noble effort, it was an one sided effort, when Lord Buddha, said that misery come from desire, he did not consider, the misery, that was the product of social institutions, of social environment. JP added, similarly, "if we merely create a socialist environment, and leave the question of the individual, our effort will be a very partial effort at constructing a new social order, because the same individual will be functioning in that social environment and if he is not an individual who is in tune with the aims of that society, who has not been trained, who has not learned to subdue and subjugate his personal desires and ambitions to the social good,"\textsuperscript{50} then also the effort will be fruitless.

3.5.2 Socialism and Indian Culture

According to Jay Prakash Narayan, socialism is not opposed to the dominant values which have been the part and parcel of Indian culture. Indian culture has given high status to the ideals of emancipation of the individual from the bondage of the lower ego, covetousness, dualities and acquisitiveness. "Its ideal is freedom realized by the conquest of cupidity, stupidity, anger and aversion. It has never sanctioned a false immersion in the petty satisfactions of the narrow self propelled by Adhyasa and Avidya. Sharing of 'Samvibhaga' has been one of the dominant values of Indian culture, and hence it is ridiculous to condemns Socialism as an importation from the materialistic and hedonistic west. The
organized economic doctrine of Socialism, no doubt have been formulated in the west but its fundamental idealism is a part of the dominant concepts of Indian culture also.”51

From the above discussion, Socialism may essentially be regarded as a question of ethics and morals.

3.5.3 Political aspects of JP's Socialism

JP's concept of socialism has a political aspect also. Politically his socialism stands for democratic Socialism. After realizing the fallacies in the Soviet model of socialism, he reinterpreted Marxism remembering Marx's saying that a violent revolution is not always necessary for achieving socialism. Sometimes depending on the situation, one peaceful path can also be adopted, where democratic conditions prevail. In his writing, 'My Picture of Socialism,' JP emphasizes that the socialist movement in India must evolve its own picture of socialism. Indian situation claims that there can be no socialism without democracy. Under democratic socialism, emphasis should be, on decentralization of political and economic power and adoption of peaceful means. He observed, "My picture of socialist India is the picture of an economic and political democracy in which man will neither be slave to capitalism, nor to a party or the state. Men will be free. He will have to serve society, which will provide him with employment and the means of livelihood, but within limits he will be free to choose his vocation, express his opinion freely and rise to his moral stature."52 In another place he writes, "I believe that socialism which Marx pictured was the socialism which we are trying to describe by the term democratic socialism, only that
socialism can bring about the emancipation of toilers and no other." According to him "the objectives of socialism were not merely nationalization of some industries or redistribution of land to the tiller, but also emancipation of exploitation and poverty; provision of equal opportunities to all, for self-development, full development of the material and moral resources of society and utilization of these resources in accordance with the needs and wishes of society as a whole, rather than in accordance with the dictates of profit...."

JP's concept of democratic socialism after 1948, came nearer to Gandhian doctrine and emphasized the importance of means. According to him social reconstruction must be based on ethical means. He admitted that he was re-discovering Gandhi at his later life.

3.5.4 Method and Technique of Struggle

Regarding technique of struggle JP argues that as we are going to establish a democratic society we should follow the democratic means. But democratic methods are not always available. They are not available in dictatorships. They are not available in a country where there is a civil war going on. However by democratic methods he does not mean only parliamentary and constitutional methods but, also includes non-violent mass movements and other measures of a non-violent character, which may be unconstitutional, yet peaceful. JP hopes that, if we work with the sanction of the people, behind us, if we can make contact with the hearts of the people, it is not impossible to move the masses into such peaceful activity. This technique of peaceful activity was experimented during the national struggle by Gandhi, and it proved successful. Therefore, JP was convinced that
under proper conditions and proper leadership this technique can succeed and he suggested to use this technique of peaceful struggle against the state, the capitalists and other exploiters as a method of achieving socialism. However JP admitted that, in the sphere of technique as in other spheres also, the last word has not been said. He himself observed, "we are all going through the stages of experimentation and it is worthwhile that, we experiment in this sphere of technique also." 55 He cited another example in matter of technique. The technique followed by Vinoba Bhave in ‘land gift movement’ is an entirely new technique. Vinoba Bhave said, "Yes, land must be redistributed, land must belong to the tiller, land lordism must go. But, let us do this by the method of love." 56 Vinoba Bhave, with some members of socialist party went from village to village, asking people to give away land for the benefit of the landless people, by making a moral appeal to them, saying that as a matter of fact, no one should have exclusive rights in land. Because land is not created by man, every one should have a share in it. This way Vinoba Bhave could create a climate in the whole country in favour of redistribution of land.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Gandhi dreamt at the establishment of a country with new social order based on the principles of truth and non-violence, in which the exploitation of man by man will disappear in all its forms where inequality will be replaced by equality, there will be cooperation instead of competition, good will and love instead of hatred.

According to Gandhi, welfare of all can be secured only if the interests of all are properly secured and protected. In the present society, there is antagonism in
all fields, (between the land lord and tenant, between the labour and the capital). Present society needs an immediate change in the values of life. Materialism is not enough, it is a vicious circle, the more we indulge in it, the more larger it is.

Gandhiji did not equate civilization with material gain. He believed that, true civilization consisted in the voluntary submission of wants.

JP also emphasized the need of voluntary submission of interest to the larger interest of the society. Men may be forced in various ways to subordinate their interests to the interests of others, but as force is needed, to do so, socialism would be limited, even distorted, may be even denied. In his words, “...I would like to define a socialist society as one in which the individual is prepared voluntarily to subordinate his own interest to the larger interest of society. The key word in this definition is the word ‘voluntary.’ Men may be forced in various ways to subordinate their interest to the interest of others, but as force is needed to do so, socialism would be limited, even distorted, may be even denied. Equality, freedom and fellowship can never become realities unless the moral evolution of the individual has been such that he is voluntarily, prepared to limit his wants and his freedom in the interest of his fellow human beings.”

A socialist society cannot be build up if every individual wants and hankers after more and more for himself, unless the individual adopts a way of life, based on self control. Therefore, according to JP, construction of a socialist society is fundamentally construction of a new type of human being. He observed, “All of us agree that socialism is a way of life, an attitude of mind, a certain ethical behaviour. What is not so universally recognised is that such a way of life, attitude, behaviour can not be imposed from above by dictat of the govt. or by merely
nationalizing industry and abolishing capitalism. Construction of a socialist society is fundamentally construction of a new type of human being...”58 Hence a mass movement of human reconstruction is urgently needed. Therefore, the aim of socialist movement is the creation of a society of free and equal people, a society based on certain values of human and social life, values which can never be sacrificed for the name of a theory or the party etc.

In the words of Ignazio Silone, “on a group of theories one can found a school, but on a group of values one can found a culture, a civilization, a new way of living together among men. Socialism is not just a school of thought; but a new culture, a new civilization.”59

For a moral life and growth of human personality, disciplining of the bodily appetite is essential. The socialist way of life is a way of sharing together the good things which may be available by common effort. If the sharing is practised willingly or voluntarily, there will be less tension and coercion in society and socialism will be established. A problem arises in the society, unless members of society learn to keep their wants under control, willing sharing may be difficult and there would be two divisions. “(1) Comprising those who are trying to discipline others and (2) comprising all the rest,”60 and such a division would raise certain questions, who would discipline the discipliners, rule the rulers.... JP, hopes that the solution will be that every member of society practices self discipline and the values of socialism, and shares willingly and co-operates with his fellow men. This led JP very close to the problem of Sarvodaya and Socialism. The main theme of JP’s concept of socialism is that equality which is the ultimate goal of socialism does not consist in taking from the rich and distributing to the poor. “Wealth can
be distributed by law, but shared only voluntarily. Distribution of wealth may be an uncertain step towards socialism, but sharing of wealth is real and full socialism."61

JP described Sarvodaya as the higher form of socialism and hoped that one day the two would become one. He wrote, “…but, I feel confident that if the world were ever to reach the port of peace and freedom and brotherhood, socialism must eventually merge into Sarvodaya.”62

Communists of the Marxist line believed that self realization of man or rediscovery of human being would be possible only on the basis of reestablishment of a society on the basis of common ownership of property. But JP and all other Gandhians came to the conclusion that self-realisation is not a purely objective lesson (like Marxist) but the objective conditions are to be realized by a man with higher degree of self education leading to self control. Only material incentive would result in nothing. In the economic field, the solution is based on
(1) Communitarian pattern of ownership of village community like organisation,
(2) Alternative to class war is offered in Sarvodaya and Bhoodan or Gramdan,
(3) Alternative to power politics is offered in ‘Lokniti,’ instead of ‘Rajniti,’
(4) Alternative to oppressive state machinery is offered in the form of self-governing village community like units.
References


9. Ibid. p.104.


12. Ibid, p. 120.


19. Ibid. p. 60.

20. Ibid, p.60.


22. Harijan 31-3-1946, p. 64.


24. Harijan 1-2-1942, p. 20.


27. Ibid.


34. Ibid.

35. Ibid, p. 150-151.


37. Ibid, p. 113-114.


39. Ibid, p. 121.


41. Remembering Our Leader (ed.). Children Book Trust, New Delhi, p. 151.


44. Ibid, p. 75.


47. Ibid, p. 394.


54. Ibid, p. 57, Portion of his “My Picture of Socialism”


56. Ibid, p. 146.


61. Ibid, p.163.