CHAPTER 1
Introduction

1.1 Title: Human Security and Gandhian Satyagraha

1.2 Statement of the problem

In the realm of political thought and its evolution, a human-centric discourse, with a focus on the individual and his social existence could be found to have constituted a dominant theme at various stages. This is best exemplified by “the very old political philosophy of liberalism, which places people and the individual at its epicenter and prescribes some necessary conditions, such as freedom and equality, for people to be secure.”¹ The emerging paradigm of human security might be appreciated in the light of this long philosophical and human centric tradition. Fundamentally, human security challenges the traditional state-centric view that the state is and should be the primary object, or referent, of security. Traditionally, the issue of security has always been interpreted as “security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of a nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation states than to people.”¹¹ In other words, security has always been synonymous with what is termed as state security. It is more of a defensive concept, associated with the state and its territory and arms to defend the same. The effect of this territorial or militaristic interpretation of security has been that the legitimate concerns of
ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives in terms of protection from the threat of hunger, disease, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards were relegated to the background. Those who argue for the adoption of a human security agenda believe that there has to be a shift in emphasis with regard to the whole issue of security, from perceived military threats to the nation state, to predominantly protecting individual citizens and groups from threats that may endanger their basic survival so that they may be secure in the conduct of their daily lives.

The end of the Cold War is often seen as the moment where human security gained real recognition. With the relaxation of ideological hostilities between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the early 1990s, efforts could be made to rethink the security paradigm and to address the root causes of global insecurity. At the same time, owing to increasing levels of global interdependence, many threats to human survival started becoming increasingly transnational in their origins and their effects. Consequently, with the end of the Cold War, the classical formulation of security as strictly implying the use of force by states to counter military centric defence threats such as threats to their territorial integrity and domestic political order from other states, increasingly came in for a lot of scrutiny from scholars and policy makers alike. It began to be argued that today’s security threats went beyond our traditional understanding of defence threats, to include threats like poverty, economic inequality, diseases, human rights abuses, environmental pollution, natural disasters, etc. Subsequently, this human-centric perspective within the security paradigm found concrete expression in the term
'human security' which had its origins in policy statements emanating from the United Nations in the mid-1990s and in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s *Human Development Report* of 1994.

Against the above background, attempts have been made to theorize and implement the concept and agenda of human security. In the process, there have emerged two major schools of thought – The Narrow School (*Freedom from Fear*) and the Broad School (*Freedom from Want*) centering on the scope of human security.

(a) The Narrow School (*Freedom from Fear*): The *Freedom from Fear* approach constituting the Narrow School of thought focuses on threats of violence, often called "freedom from fear". It focuses on the threat of political violence including war and other forms of direct violence to individuals and communities, by the state or any other organized political actor. This approach is also called "Humanitarian" or "Safety of Peoples" approach. Emergency assistance, conflict prevention and resolution, peace building as well as humanitarian intervention and assistance during natural and man-made disasters are the main concerns of this approach. The *Freedom from Fear* approach is visible in the Canadian foreign policy framework. Infact, the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) launched the Human Security Program which is now known as the Glyn Berry Program for Peace and Security. The Program is named in honour of Glyn R. Berry, the senior Canadian diplomat who was killed in a terrorist attack in Afghanistan in January 2006. The Program is a part of DFAIT's Global Peace and
Security Fund (GPSF). On the ground, Canada has been a critical player in the efforts to ban landmines. Among other things, the Canadian initiative on human security encompasses a citizen-focused approach to democracy building, mediation capacity-building and conflict prevention. Such a citizen-focused democracy building approach is aimed at encouraging the development of political systems that are more inclusive of marginalized groups (such as women, minorities and indigenous populations), are more accountable to citizens (for example through transparency enhancing projects) and offer citizens a variety of viable choices in determining who should hold power and to what purposes it should be used. At the same time, the freedom from fear school lays stress upon building the capacities of those who advocate for, and defend human rights. Besides Canada, another country that has notably incorporated elements of the freedom from fear concept of human security in its official foreign policy is Norway.

(b) The Broad School (Freedom from Want): The Freedom from Want approach constituting the Broad School of thought argues that human security means more than a concern with the threat of direct violence. It expands its focus beyond violence with an emphasis on development. Human Security is not only “freedom from fear” but also “freedom from want”. The broad school focuses on threats arising from underdevelopment and hence addresses the root of human insecurity. In this context, the conceptualization of human security in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)’s Human Development Report of 1994 is categorized as one of the broad definitions of the concept of human security. Significantly, the report contains a chapter on human security titled
New dimensions of human security. Essentially, the Human Development Report of 1994 has urged that the concept of security must change in two ways - from an exclusive stress on territorial security to a much greater stress on people's security and secondly, from security through armaments to security through sustainable human development.

As a corollary, the UNDP Report puts forward the idea of human security and points out two of its main aspects. Accordingly, human security means, firstly, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression and secondly, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life-whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. As a matter of fact, human security is a people-centered doctrine concerned with how people live and breathe in societies, how freely they exercises their many choices, how much access they have to market and social opportunities and whether they live in conflict or in peace.

Furthermore, the Report divided the threats to human security under seven broad categories. According to the Report, the more localized threats can be understood in relation to the seven values of human security. These are summarized below:

- **Threats to economic security**: These include lack of productive and remunerative employment and absence of publicly financed safety nets
• **Threats to food security:** These threats arise due to lack of an 'entitlement' to basic food resulting from insufficient access to assets, work and assured incomes

• **Threats to health security:** Such threats are seen in the form of infectious and parasitic diseases, respiratory infections, diseases of the circulatory system and cancers on the one hand and lack of safe water, air pollution and lack of access to health care facilities on the other

• **Threats to environmental security:** These threats include declining water availability, water pollution, declining arable land, deforestation, desertification, air pollution, natural disasters

• **Threats to personal security:** These threats are observed in the form of violent crime, drug trafficking, violence and abuse of children and women

• **Threats to community security:** Such threats are manifested in the form of breakdown of the family, collapse of traditional languages and cultures, ethnic discrimination and strife, genocide and ethnic cleansing

• **Threats to political security:** Manifestations of such threats include government repression, systematic human rights violations, militarization
Ensuring human security requires a seven-pronged approach to address the above threats. At one level, human security raises the issue of sustainable human development whereby the actions of the present generation to improve living conditions are geared in a way that is mindful of the needs of future generations even as they are guided by ecological considerations. Going back to the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994, the latter describes sustainable human development in the following words: "Sustainable human development addresses both intragenerational and intergenerational equity-enabling all generations present and future, to make the best use of their potential capabilities. It brings human numbers into balance with the coping capacities of societies and the carrying capacities of nature. It accelerates economic growth and translates it into improvements in human lives, without destroying the natural capital needed to protect the opportunities of future generations. It also recognizes that not much can be achieved without a dramatic improvement in the status of women and the opening of all economic opportunities to women. And sustainable human development empowers people-enabling them to design and participate in the processes and events that shape their lives." The Freedom from Want perspective forms a cornerstone of the Japanese foreign policy too. The Commission on Human Security was established in January 2001 through the initiative of the Government of Japan and in response to the UN Secretary-General's call at the 2000 Millennium Summit for a world free of want and free of fear. On May 1, 2003, the co-chairs of the Commission on Human Security, Mrs. Sadako Ogata and Prof. Amartya Sen presented the report of the Commission to then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan. The report of the Commission proposes that in the world today in which
globalization is progressing and given the reality that there are many cases where states are unable to adequately ensure the security of their citizens, various comprehensive measures should be taken in response to both conflict and development. Specifically, focusing on individuals and communities, the report emphasized the necessity of protection and empowerment of individuals. The proposals contained in the report included, among other things, protecting people in violent conflict, establishing human security transition funds for post-conflict situations, encouraging fair trade and markets to benefit the extreme poor, working to provide minimum living standards everywhere, and empowering all people with universal basic education.

Amartya Sen speaks of concerted promotion of security of daily life in the context of a persistent neglect of social and economic institutions (such as schools, hospitals, etc.) on a chronic basis. He recommends a better understanding of the failure of governance even as there has to be a greater determination to make provisions for the vital necessities of human life. Development is not only about the growth of GNP per head, but also about the expansion of human freedom and dignity. Economist Partha Dasgupta opines that the right way to judge the economic performance of a country (or for that matter, any economic unit be it household, village, district, state, country or the world as a whole) is to study movements in its productive base. An economy’s productive base is composed of its institutional and capital assets. Significantly, Dasgupta points out that the capital assets encompass not only manufactured capital (roads, buildings, machines) but also human capital (education, skills and health). In the ultimate analysis, in both the approaches to
human security as discussed above, namely, the *freedom from fear* and *freedom from want*, the security referent could be found to be uniform. In contrast to the traditional conception of security, where the referent of security is the state, the concept of human security takes individuals and their communities as its point of reference. Moreover, the overarching values of human security appear to be common to both the approaches: the safety and well-being of the individual in physical terms - it is concerned with how people live and breathe in society, how freely they exercise their many choices in social, economic and political spheres, and whether they live in conflict or in peace. Significantly, human security is concerned with sustainable human development - development, which is pro-people and generates growth but distributes its benefits equitably and across generations, regenerates the environment rather than destroying it and empowers people rather than marginalizing them. It also means enabling all individuals to enlarge their human capabilities to the fullest and to put those capabilities to the best use in all fields - economic, social, cultural and political. Strengthening peoples' abilities to act on their own behalf and on behalf of their communities is instrumental to human security.

In 1999, the UN Secretary General said, "Human Security, in its broadest sense, touches on the respect for the human rights of an individual and his or her personal dignity.... ensuring that the average person-the individual the UN puts at the center of everything that it does-has the basic necessities...health, education and the possibility of living life to the fullest...human security also touches on the question of peace, which is more than the absence of war...we should be focusing on the security of the individual..."
within the state, not on state security per se...” Accordingly, human security, when interpreted in broader terms, addresses the issue of positive peace or broad peace which involves not only the absence of direct and manifest violence in the society but more importantly goes deeper to consider those structures in the society, polity and economy which perpetuate violence and human deprivation. At the same time, the human security paradigm advocates the prevalence of a situation in which access to basic survival needs on the part of all individuals is assured in a way that ensures sustainable human development marked by an equitable distribution of benefits across generations even as people’s abilities to act on their own behalf and on behalf of their communities are strengthened enabling them to become stakeholders in their own processes of development.

**Co-relation between Traditional/State and Human security:**

Human security is neither an alternative to, nor divorced from, national or state security. It only treats state security or security of territory as no more than co-equal to individual security. In fact, from a human security perspective, the security of states is not an end in itself but only a means of providing security for people.

The distinction between state and human security could be analysed in terms of the following areas:

*Focus:* State security focuses on other states with aggressive or adversarial designs. States have built powerful security structures to defend themselves. Human security is people-
centred. It shifts from focusing on external aggression to protecting people from a range of threats. Human security broadens the focus from the security of borders to the lives of people and communities inside and across those borders.

**Threats:** State security has meant countering the threat of external aggression or internal rebellion with an armed force. Human security includes protection of citizens from threats to their daily survival stemming from economic insecurity, food insecurity, health insecurity, environmental degradation as well as incidents of crime and direct violence.

**Actors:** As per the traditional approach to security focusing on territorial security, the entire responsibility for ensuring security is vested on the state.

Human security on the other hand, involves a much broader spectrum of actors and institutions involving nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society groups. The state also is considered to be one of the actors but not the sole actor.

However, in the ultimate analysis, both human security and state security are mutually reinforcing and dependent on each other. Without human security, state security cannot be attained and vice versa.
Conceptualising Gandhian Non-violence-Satyagraha vis-s-vis the human security framework:

One of the key concepts that embodies the operational dynamics of human security in terms of addressing both the narrow and broad agendas, is Gandhian non-violence. An overall analysis of the Gandhian line of thinking and discourse vis-à-vis the scheme of non-violent socio-economic reconstruction with satyagraha as the means, would reveal that the praxis addresses some fundamental issues and concerns pertaining to human existence. Fundamentally, in the Gandhian scheme of non-violence, the centrepiece of social regeneration is viewed to be the individual as a member of the community. A non-violent society is committed to sarvodaya, the growth or uplift of all its citizens. Gandhi said, “Sarvodaya is for the udaya—rise—of sarva—all”. In Gandhi’s view, everyone’s social obligation entailed seva or service. Such service was on behalf of welfare of all. Thus, we find, that in terms of its referent and values, human security bears striking resemblance to the Gandhian notion of non-violence even as the latter focuses on the dynamics of “ideal” human existence both at the individual and collective levels, thereby addressing the concerns of both the narrow and broad schools of human security. As a matter of fact, Gandhi was echoing similar sentiments when he visualised a peaceful, non-exploitative social system based on a federation of self-contained and self-sustaining village communities shaped along non-violent lines, wherein each individual becomes an able stakeholder in his or her own process of development, as a member of the larger community. Now speaking of non-violence itself, it is seen that non-violence as a principle found concrete strategic and ideological expression at the hands of M.K.Gandhi or more
popularly, Mahatma Gandhi, who coverted non-violence from being merely an individual virtue into a something of a veritable mass weapon to counter injustice and to bring about fundamental changes in the socio-economic and political order. Gandhi said, "The attainment of freedom, whether for a man, a nation or the world, must be in exact proportion to the attainment of non-violence by each." \textsuperscript{xv} Gandhian non-violence encompasses the idea of broad peace, emphasising the absence of both direct and structural violence across faultlines. The struggle against violence, direct or structural, (perpetuation of exploitation through structures embedded in the socio-cultural environment) would be by non-violence. While uncompromisingly condemning injustice, the votary of non-violence knows that the oppressor and oppressed alike are victims of an unjust system. Against such an appreciation of the root causes of violence and its perpetuation in the society, the individual and through him the community assumes centre stage in the Gandhian scheme things. As a corollary, the principle of Gandhian non-violence would permit a fuller and richer life to the individual in relation to the community at large even as it would eliminate possibilities of exploitation of one group by another, of future generations by the present generation. Simultaneously, one of the key concerns of Gandhian non-violence is that of empowering and mobilising the community by building up its capacity for non-violent social action thereby raising people’s ability to act on their own behalf and on behalf of others in various spheres- social, economic, political and ecological. As a corollary, Gandhi’s scheme of human development is based on a holistic approach aimed at the security of the individual leading to the security of the community at large.
Gandhi sought to operationalise his ideology of non-violence through the instrument of satyagraha as a means of socio-economic reconstruction. Gandhi maintained that satyagraha was a law of universal application. “Beginning with the family, its use can be extended to every other circle.” Essentially, satyagraha is based on engaging the “other” and relates oneself to the “other” so that the community itself becomes an extension of the individual. In the process there prevails “peace with the other.” As against the zero-sum game of conflict where the clash between both persons and underlying principles is sought to be resolved by each side trying to maximise benefits and minimise losses, satyagraha follows the sum-sum game which produces only gains for the parties involved based on “conversion of hearts”. Altogether, Gandhi elaborated and employed a wide range of methods, from the most negative and limited to the most positive and comprehensive, in his various campaigns of satyagraha. These ranged from non-violent methods of direct agitation like non-cooperation and civil disobedience as well as purificatory devices (namely, pledges, prayer and fasts) to a wide range of ‘constructive programmes’. Accordingly, satyagraha was based on a double dynamics. Gandhi said “The satyagraha struggle in British India had two aspects, non-violent non-cooperation with the Government and cooperation among the people themselves. Both these aspects should constantly be kept in mind. The constructive programme that I have set before you necessitates cooperation among all sections.” (Harijan, 21-01-1939) Significantly, Gandhi was of the view that Satyagraha in order to work on the ground has to be constantly backed by constructive work. Gandhi envisaged the Constructive Programme as
the indispensable positive component in the systematic practice of *satyagraha*. According to Gandhi, political freedom would not be meaningful to the individual citizen without the attainment of economic, social and moral freedom.

In 1941, Gandhi wrote a booklet titled "*Constructive Programme: Its Meaning And Place*" stressing, in the Indian context, individual and collective efforts on behalf of communal unity, removal of social abuses such as untouchability, programmes of "basic education," adult education, promotion of *khadi* and local handicraft, economic equality and decentralisation of production and distribution, schemes for the improvement of health, sanitation and diet, and, in general, concerted work by all to promote the common good. Fundamentally centering around capacity-building through participatory principles, the booklet on Constructive Programme was to many a blueprint of India’s socio-economic and political regeneration based on the moral, material and social fulfilment of the community by way of sustained action on a voluntary basis even as groups and communities are creatively empowered to secure their all round development. Thus, on the one hand, *satyagraha* is a method of directly combating injustice, untruth, aggression and exploitation at various levels of human existence, in a creative way and constructive way, aimed at addressing issues of imbalances in human relationships, with a stress on conflict transformation. On the other hand, the component of constructive programme has enormous implications for groups and communities even as they are able to make consistent efforts towards achieving for themselves ecologically desirable and sustainable socio-economic security. At the same time, participation in the constructive programmes
generates a high level of social capital among the people themselves, with each individual viewing the other as an active change-agent in the overall process of nation building starting from the very grassroots level.

In the light of the above discussion, it could be concluded that in the ultimate analysis the concept of human security, in more ways than one, would seem to reflect the fundamental essence and spirit of the Gandhian concept of non-violence. Subsequently, *satyagraha* as a means to implement the principle of non-violence itself simultaneously becomes a means to achieve and realize the very crux of the human security paradigm involving the dimensions of both “freedom from want” and “freedom from fear”.

Based on this fundamental proposition, the research work undertaken carried out empirical investigations to find out the actual possibility of Gandhian *satyagraha* becoming a means to achieve human security. In this context, some very micro-level experiments in the field of Gandhian activism are noticed in the State of Assam and the region as a whole. Such initiatives have emerged from a number of individual Gandhian activists who have been sincerely engaged in promoting the Gandhian principles of peace and non-violence in the region by way of their determined efforts. Mention may be made here of Ravindra Upadhyaya of Tamulpur Anchalik Gramdan Sangh (TAGS) at Kumarikata in the Baksa District of Assam; Hembhai of Shanti Sadhana Ashram at Guwahati, Assam; Harishbhai working at Gohpur, Assam; and Natwar Thakkar of Nagaland Gandhi Ashram. Besides the provincial unit of the Kasturba Gandhi National
Memorial Trust in Assam has also been carrying out a range of activities along Gandhian lines in the region since independence, in its own ways. These individuals and organisations have been working at a micro level on behalf of some of the most vulnerable and marginalized sections of the society, though on a very limited scale. However, not much academic work, based on empirical research, has been undertaken with regard to their initiatives so far. Accordingly, in my research work, I have focussed on some of these micro-level models of Gandhian social action. It will not be out of place to mention here that the technique of non-violent resistance has been used on different occasions by different groups and communities across the world. As a matter of fact, a number of popular non-violent resistance movements have been witnessed over the last fifty years in various parts of the world where common people have organized along non-violent lines to resist oppressive regimes and institutionalised discrimination, even as, more often than not, elements of Gandhian methods of direct agitation were resorted to. Notable among these are the people- power anti-regime movements in Philippines, Chile and Haiti in the 1980s and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa led by Nelson Mandela, not to mention the American civil rights movement of Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1960s. More recently, Aung San Suu Kyi from Burma has been able to sustain a non-violent protest against the military junta of her country. Significantly, an important international initiative stemming from the peace movement has been that of the Peace Brigade International (PBI), founded in 1981. It was partly inspired by the work of the Gandhian Shanti Sena in post-independence India. The PBI sends unarmed volunteers to protect people who are threatened with repression and train people in techniques of non-violent resistance and
conflict resolution. It has intervened in trouble spots in central America, the Caribbean, the Balkans, Palestine, Sri Lanka and South Africa. Of late, non-violence as a wider concept is increasingly ground in a host of countries, most prominently in the Scandinavian countries like Norway. With regard to India, the philosophy and practice of non-violence bears special relevance, particularly in the context of a conflict-ridden region like North East India. As a matter of fact, speaking of the State of Assam in North East India, over the past three decades, both politics and civil society in Assam have witnessed a protracted phase of violent conflict. Owing to a variety of interrelated reasons, social, economic and political, the relatively stable socio-political order in Assam suddenly turned into a cauldron of unrest marked by a growth of cleavages prominently based on language, ethnicity and wealth. Over the years, the failure of governance on various fronts has further threatened to jeopardize the survival, daily life and dignity of the vulnerable sections of the society. In the process, the threats to human security have increased manifold. Against this background, it becomes all the more necessary to focus on the issue of addressing the quagmire of increasing human insecurity in the region vis-à-vis the framework of Gandhian satyagraha as a means.

1.3 Objectives

The main objectives of my research work are as follows:

(i) To try and analyse the functioning and impact of Gandhian initiatives in terms of their implications for policy formulation in the larger context of a paradigm of human security, Gandhian non-violence and satyagraha in holistic terms.
(ii) To collect data on various activities carried out by different Gandhian institutes across Assam with special reference to Tamulpur Anchalik Gramdan Sangh TAGS, Kumarikata, Sarania Ashram, Guwahati and Shanti Sadhana Ashram, Guwahati, and to document the same.

1.4 Hypotheses

The hypotheses of my research work are the following:

(i) Gandhian *satyagraha* as a means of achieving human security could be effective in terms of capacity-building and generation of minimum gainful economic opportunities at the grassroots.

(ii) Civil society initiatives at the grassroots could go a long way in demonstrating the effectiveness of Gandhian *satyagraha* vis-a-vis the human security paradigm and accordingly influence the process of policy formulation at the governmental level.

1.5 Methodology

This study is an exploratory one with an emphasis on primary data based on empirical investigation supplemented by secondary data collected from various sources including books, "The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi", encyclopedia, reports, documents, booklets, journal articles and websites. For the purpose of empirical investigation, three case studies centering on certain Gandhian initiatives, individual and otherwise, within the
State of Assam, have been taken up. These case studies include certain very micro-level experiments in the field of Gandhian satyagraha. On the whole, the three case studies are intended to give an insight into the dynamics of human security vis-à-vis the broad framework of Gandhian satyagraha as implemented on the ground. The three case studies are as follows:

(i) **Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust (Assam Branch) or the Sarania Ashram**: The Assam branch of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust is situated on a small hillock on the Sarania hills in the city of Guwahati in the Kamrup (Metro) District of the State of Assam. As such, the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust (Assam Branch), is also popularly known as the “Sarania Ashram.” The Sarania Ashram houses the Provincial Trust Office and the Assam Provincial Kasturba Gram Sevika Vidyalaya. I have selected this organization in view of the fact that it is a pioneering organization in the realm of Gandhian activism in the region, having been in existence for over sixty years now and started by a set of people like Hema Prabha Das, Amal Prova Das and Gopinath Bordoloi, among others, all of whom were directly associated with Mahatma Gandhi and Acharya Vinoba Bhave. The Sarania Ashram was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi himself on January 9, 1946 during his visit to Assam. Amal Prova Das was the initial Pratinidhi (representative) of the Kasturba Trust in Assam and the Sarania Ashram functioned under her able leadership for eight years until 1955 when she passed on the mantle of the office of the Pratinidhi to Shakuntala Choudhury who served as the Pratinidhi for twenty long years (1955-1975). This veteran Gandhian activist is also
presently a Trustee of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust at the national level. Shakuntala Choudhury led the organization through some major socio-political upheavals in the history of the region such as the language riots in Assam in 1960 and the Chinese aggression on India’s border in 1962. Subsequently, Hema Kakoti and later Swarna Devi became Pratinidhis, both being veteran activists from the Sarania Ashram. Presently, Kusum Bora Mokashi is serving as the Pratinidhi of the Kasturba Trust in Assam. Essentially a women-led organization, driven by the spirit of non-violent social action, the Sarania Ashram has been extending its service to some of the very marginalized groups and communities in the region with an emphasis on the welfare of women and children in rural and remote areas, even as the organisation seeks to mobilize the womenfolk to act as ‘change-agents’ in the society. The Assam Provincial Kasturba Gram Sevika Vidyalaya (school cum training centre) at the Sarania Ashram is engaged in the task of providing training to the would be volunteers or sevikas (female social workers) who, after receiving such training, set off to serve in different parts of Assam based on the scheme of Gandhian constructive work and social action. The vidyalaya has churned out several batches of such trained sevikas over the years, with the first batch completing the prescribed course in June, 1947. Six decades on, the Sarania Ashram’s mission continues unabated even as its sevikas have been working on behalf of some very marginalized groups and communities who find themselves to be at the periphery of socio-economic development.

(ii) Tamulpur Anchalik Gramdan Sangh (TAGS): The Tamulpur Anchalik Gramdan Sangh or TAGS is a Gandhian voluntary organisation located at Kumarikata in
the Baksa District of Assam. Founded by Ravindra Upadhyaya, the organisation, under his leadership, has been carrying out a variety of constructive activities based on Gandhian principles for over forty years now since its inception in 1962. The organization is based in a once militancy-ridden area. It has therefore had a first-hand experience of working in situations of conflict. As an organization committed to the Gandhian concept of Constructive Programme, TAGS has been carrying out a host of training and production related activities including khadi production, muga silk production, honey and mustard oil production, among others, presenting a window of opportunity to many a youth to earn a living. Significantly, the Khadi Gramudyog Training Centre at TAGS, Kumarikata is contributing in a great way in terms of capacity building and skill formation among the youths for self-employment. A special feature of Kumarikata is the formation of the Mahila Shanti Sena (Women Peace Corps) composed of local women folk with the prime objective of neighbourhood peace building and dispute resolution. I have already carried out a limited study on TAGS earlier which is why I am interested in a more detailed investigation of the same.

Accordingly, I have selected the Tamulpur Anchalik Gramdan Sangh (TAGS) as a case for empirical investigantion for my research work.

(iii) Shanti Sadhana Ashram: The Shanti Sadhana Ashram is a Gandhian voluntary organization headed by Hembhai and headquartered at the Basistha (Shantivan) area in the city of Guwahati in the Kamrup (Metro) District of the State of Assam.
Registered in 1966, the significance of this organisation stems from the fact that the organization has been offering its services in the fields of health, education, skill formation, and income generation as well as community development over two decades now, inspired as it is by the Gandhian concept of a non-violent socio-economic order. It has also undertaken peace work from time to time. The Ashram has in total 13 branches covering 6 districts of Assam. For my purpose I have decided to take up the main centre of the organization located at Basistha, Guwahati. At present the centre houses one women’s training hall/centre cum hostel and carries out training and production related activities in terms of khadi wear, mushroom spawn production, steel fabrication, food preservation cum processing, among others. Significantly, the Ashram has particularly focused on providing market linkages in terms of enabling its volunteers, trainees and other workers to have direct access to the market for selling their products. Accordingly, it is seen that the Shanti Sadhana Ashram directly addresses some core human security issues.

- The methodology that has been adopted with regard to each case study is discussed below:

Firstly, with regard to the Sarania Ashram, altogether, 22 sevikas or volunteers, both trainees and fulltime sevikas, from different age groups were interviewed at the Ashram premises at Guwahati. They hailed from different parts of the State. The fulltime sevikas were found to be serving in different Gram Seva Kendras (Village Service Centres) situated in different parts of the State, engaged as they were in different types of
constructive programmes, ranging from production related work to health and educational programmes to organizing peace work during times of direct conflict. They all had varied years of field experience behind them. For generating data, a combination of the interview and observational methods of data collection was made use of. The questions were administered through an open-ended and partially structured schedule.

At the same time, certain key functionaries of the organization including Shakuntala Choudhury, Hema Kakoti, both former Pratinidhis of the Kasturba Trust in Assam and Kusum Bora Mokashi, the present Pratinidhi of the Trust in Assam, were interviewed. Besides, a long time sevika of the organization, named Hiran Chandra, who served at the Hong Kasturba Centre situated in the State of Arunachal Pradesh, earlier known as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), was also interviewed at her residence at Jamugurihat in the District of Sonitpur in Assam.

Secondly, with regard to the Tamulpur Anchalik Gramdan Sangh (TAGS), my empirical investigation was based on the multi-stage sampling method. The population of my research work was divided into three categories.

The first category included workers within the premises of TAGS at Kumarikata.

The second category included the members of the Mahila Shanti Sena (Women Peace Corps).
The third category included the residents of Bahbari village of which Kumarikata is a mauza.

For generating data at every level, a combination of the interview and observational methods of data collection was made use of. The questions were administered through an open-ended and partially structured schedule for the first and second categories.

As for the first category, i.e., workers at TAGS, Kumarikata, there are 64 workers in all. The break up is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Khadi Gram Udyog Vidyalaya</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Khadi Gram Udyog</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Casual (Khadi / Mustard oil production unit/Carpentry/Bee-keeping, Sericulture grainage project)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Core Group Support (D.S.T.)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Women Technology Work (D.S.T.)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Casual (Project Specific)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Action Aid project</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Out of the total 64 workers, I interviewed 30 workers to ascertain their views.

As for the *second* category, i.e., the members of the Mahila Shanti Sena (Women Peace Corps), I interviewed a representative sample of 24 women from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds. They included both married and unmarried women.

As for the *third* category, i.e., residents of Bahbari village, the total population of the village, according to the 2001 Census of India Report, GOI, stands at 4188 with a total of 751 households. The residents of Bahbari village, which is a mixed population village can be classified into the following categories:

a) Assamese (tribal)
b) Assamese (non-tribal)
c) Bengalis
d) Adivasis
e) Nepalis
f) Immigrant Muslims

Based on the voters list for 2008 pertaining to Bahbari village under the Tamulpur Legislative Assembly Constituency, I covered 30 households, i.e., a sample of 4% of the total 751 households, on the basis of purposive sampling to assess the general opinion that people in the vicinity have with regard to TAGS. This is presented below:
Community Households

a) Assamese (tribal) 7 = (4 Rabha households + 3 Bodo households)
b) Assamese (non-tribal) 7 = (This category includes 2 Koch Rajbongshi households)
c) Bengali 4
d) Tea Garden Community 5
e) Nepali 3
f) Immigrant Muslim 4

Total = 30 households

I have also taken into account the male-female ratio as well tried to include respondents from both the younger and older generations.

A detailed interview was also carried out with Ravindra Upadhyaya, the founder of TAGS.

Thirdly, with regard to the Shanti Sadhana Ashram at Guwahati, the empirical investigation was based on the multi-stage sampling method. The population of my research work was divided into two categories.

The first category included workers within the premises of the Shanti Sadhana Ashram at Guwahati. The second category included the residents of the Shantivan-Basistha area, where the Shanti Sadhana Ashram is located.
For generating data at every level, a combination of the interview and observational methods of data collection was adopted. The questions were administered through an open-ended and partially structured schedule for the first and second categories.

As for the first category, i.e., workers and volunteers within the premises of the Shanti Sadhana Ashram at Guwahati, the Ashram is staffed by 22 persons. Of them, I interviewed 20 workers and volunteers engaged in various fields, including Handloom and Handicraft (Training Centre), Mushroom Spawn, Food Processing and Food products, Ayurvedic Medicinal Products, Steel Fabrication, Horticulture, Floriculture and Organic Farming. The interviewees included both male and female workers and volunteers who were either trainees or full-time and hailed from different parts of Assam. With regard to the Handloom and Handicraft (Training Centre) a sizeable section (8 out of the 10 workers interviewed) hailed from very economically deprived sections and included women from both tribal and non-tribal communities.

As for the second category, i.e., residents of the Shantivan-Basistha area, a total of 36 households were covered, on the basis of purposive sampling, within a radius of 2.5 kms from the premises of the Shanti Sadhana Ashram at Guwahati, covering the Shantivan-Basistha area along with the adjoining areas of Barpathar, Bakrapara, Ganesh Nagar and Bongoan. All these areas fall under the Beltola Mauza. Based on the Voters List for 2008, covering the Shantivan-Basitha area, under the Dispur Legislative Assembly
Constituency, there are approximately 1200 households within the aforesaid radius of 2.5 kms, out of which I selected a sample of 3%, i.e., 36 households on the basis of purposive sampling to assess the general opinion that people in the vicinity have with regard to the Shanti Sadhana Ashram.

I have also taken into account the male-female ratio as well tried to include respondents from both the younger and older generations.

A detailed interview was also carried out with Hembhai, the founder of the Shanti Sadhana Ashram.

• The research work also includes certain narratives based on certain conversations that took place on different occasions between this researcher and certain personalities from the civil society who have been directly associated with the philosophy and practice of Gandhian non-violence in their lifetime. The method adopted to elicit information was that of Narrative Interview based on a two-way interactive conversation process between the researcher and the “informant”, with the philosophy and practice of Gandhian non-violence constituting the central theme on each occasion. The conversations took place at different locations. The means adopted was that of the open-ended question-response mode of interviewing, aimed at sharing and transfer of knowledge. This was followed by transcription and a thematic analysis of each of the narratives secured. The narrator or the “informant” was encouraged to narrate in his or her own “spontaneous language”\textsuperscript{xxix}.
significant events and experiences based on his or her own life as well as to express his or her own views and opinions.

1.6 Review of Literature of Contextual Relevance

For the purpose of my research work, I have referred to different types of relevant literature. These are listed below:

1. First and foremost, I have referred to several volumes of “The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi”, brought out by the Publications Divisions of the Government of India containing Gandhi’s original writings in the form of letters and speeches which Gandhi wrote and delivered on many different occasions during the course of his life. These writings help the reader to have a first hand understanding of many different relevant issues and matters in the realm of Gandhian thought, encompassing the grand theme of Gandhian non-violence to the specifics associated with it. For the purpose of my research work, I have referred to volumes XV, XXVI, XXX, LIX, LXXIV, LXXV and LXXVIII of the printed edition and volumes 29, 48, 76, 81, 85, and 95 of the electronic version (CD ROM).

2. The book titled “The Moral and Political thought of Mahatma Gandhi” and authored by Raghavan N. Iyer, presents a lucid and systematic analysis of Gandhian philosophy even as it draws upon Gandhi’s original writings on various
issues including human nature and perfectibility, absolute and relative truth, non-violence and its relation with truth, satyagraha, its meaning, scope and significance and the issue of means and ends in politics. The principle of non-violence through satyagraha is critically analysed at different levels by the author.

3. The book titled “Debating Gandhi-A Reader” and edited by A.Raghuramaraju, puts together different interpretations of Gandhi’s views on a host of issues. The reader comes across differing views on the impact of traditional ideas and western influences on Gandhi; the way Gandhi approached the issue of modernity; his views on modern science and influence over contemporary environmental movements; his idea of truth; his views on women and his treatment of the caste system vis-à-vis Babasaheb Ambedkar, among other things.

4. The book titled, “Gandhi’s Khadi- A History of Contention and Conciliation” and authored by Rahul Ramagundam, focusses on how the fabric of khadi was transformed from being merely a commodity to that of a political symbol. The book looks into how khadi became almost an ideology for a movement even as it was a massive exercise at the organisational level, in terms of forging networks and promoting activism thereby heralding real freedom to the millions of poor and marginalised Indians.
5. M.K.Gandhi’s “An Autobiography or The Story of my experiments with truth” and translated from the Gujarati edition by Mahadev Desai presents a comprehensive account of the life of Mahatma Gandhi while helping the reader to have a clear understanding of Gandhi’s deepest beliefs, his idea of satyagraha and its formation even as it acquaints the reader with various incidents from Gandhi’s life which had had a deep impact upon him in evolving his views on non-violence.

6. In the booklet titled, “From Yeravda Mandir” written by M.K.Gandhi and translated from the Gujarati edition by Valji Govindji Desai, the reader comes across Gandhi’s own views on a range of topics such as truth, ahimsa, fearlessness, removal of untouchability, bread labour, tolerance, humility and swadeshi to mention a few.


8. Thomas Weber’s book “The Shanti Sena- Philosophy, History and Action”, probes into various dimensions of the Shanti Sena(Peace Brigade/Corps) even as it discusses the genesis of the concept of the Shanti Sena (Peace Brigade/Corps);
the ideological basis of the Shanti Sena; and peacekeeping and the Shanti Sena with reference to the Nagaland Peace Mission and the Chambal Valley Peace Mission, among others. With reference to the ideological basis of the Shanti Sena, the reader comes across Vinoba Bhave’s view of satyagraha, of society and of peacekeeping as well as Jayaprakash Narayan’s views on the same. The book also examines the Shanti Sena campaign in the post-Vinoba and Jayaprakash Narayan phase.

9. B.R.Nanda, in his book titled “Mahatma Gandhi” has presented a biographical account of Mahatma Gandhi, dwelling on certain epochs in his life culminating in his “discovery of satyagraha” and its usage for the first time. Significantly, the book deals with Gandhi’s idea of “rural economics” and his experimentation with the same.

10. The book titled “A Study of Gandhi’s Basic Education” by Henry Fagg examines Gandhi’s concept of Basic Education in terms of its overall formulation, influences on Gandhi in devising the scheme and the economic, moral and social implications of the scheme of Basic Education. Fagg also looks into the criticisms levelled against the scheme of Basic Education.

11. Bidyut Chakrabarty in his book titled “Social and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi” has analysed the concept of satyagraha in some detail, among
other things. The book includes some of Gandhi’s original comments outlining the holistic framework of *satyagraha*. Moreover, the book covers certain critiques of the social and political ideas of Gandhi provided by M.N. Roy, Rabindranath Tagore and B.R. Ambedkar.

12. The book titled “Gandhi- in his time and ours” and authored by David Hardiman, gives an account of the Gandhian satyagraha and ahimsa and goes on to highlight on Gandhian activism in India after independence in the context of the Bhoodan and Gramdan Movements and the JP Movement among others, even as Gandhi’s continuing global legacy is examined.

13. The book by Thomas Vettickal, titled “Gandhian Sarvodaya- Realizing a Realistic Utopia”, examines the Gandhian concept of *sarvodaya* in a holistic manner and discusses issues like “ethical economics,” trusteeship, appropriate technology, *swadeshi*, *khadi* and the *charkha* (spinning wheel) within an overall framework of the Gandhian *sarvodaya* social order and its feasibility.

14. In his book titled “Gandhian Theory of Social Reconstruction”, the author Parmeshwari Dayal discusses certain basic elements of Gandhian philosophy including truth and non-violence; ends and means; Constructive Programme; civil disobedience even as the framework of a Non-violent society is sought to be presented in the book.
15. In the book titled “Gandhian Model of Development and World Peace”, edited by R.P. Misra, the reader comes across a host of issues including the place of technology, public health, poverty and empowerment, communal harmony, planning, national integration and education looked at from the Gandhian perspective.


17. “Gandhian Satyagraha—an Analytical and Critical Approach” by Ajay Shanker Rai deals with such issues as sources of satyagraha, contradictions in different forms of satyagraha, even as the author seeks to critically examine the concept of satyagraha.

18. The edited series, “Thoughts of Mahatma”, Volumes 1, 2 and 4, by K.S. Bharati, the reader can get an idea of the evolution of non-violence and satyagraha in both spatial and temporal terms.

the technique of *satyagraha* adopted by Gandhi as an instrument of conflict resolution, describing the various strategies to carry it out.

20. The book titled “Gandhian Protest”, authored by B. Arun Kumar presents a conceptual analysis of protest and discusses different protest theories of the West while highlighting the conceptual framework and practice of *satyagraha*. In the chapter “Protest Theories of the West” the reader comes across different theories of protest developed by thinkers like William Godwin, Henry David Thoreau, Albert Camus and Georges Sorel.

21. The book titled, “Peace and Conflicts Studies” by David P. Barash and Charles P. Webel has dwelt on the concept of non-violence both in theory and practice, as it was followed by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

22. The book titled, “Gandhian Satyagraha—an Analytical and Critical Approach” by Ajai Shanker Rai explores the meaning and objectives of *satyagraha* and examines the techniques and elements of *satyagraha* among other things.

23. R.C. Majumdar’s, “History of the Freedom Movement in India”, Vol.III, in its initial chapter, focuses on Gandhi’s concept of a non-violent man and how
*satyagraha* differs from passive resistance. It also gives an account of the background of Gandhi’s *satyagraha* movement.

24. The book titled “Contemporary Security Studies” and edited by Alan Collins, introduces the readers to the fast evolving field of security studies. The book is divided into three sections: differing approaches to the study of security; broadening and deepening of security; and a range of traditional and non-traditional issues that have emerged on the security agenda.


26. In the book titled “Human Security in South Asia- Gender, Energy, Migration and Globalisation”, edited by P R Chari and Sonika Gupta, it has been argued that there is a need to develop a theoretical perspective on human security and looks into the issue of human security in the context of the South Asian region. Significantly in the essay entitled, “Evolving a Theoretical
Perspective on Human Security: The South Asian Context by A.K.M Abdus Sabur, it is argued that the overarching emphasis on national security as against human security in the South Asian region has severely deteriorated the security concerns, transforming the region into the poorest and most deprived region in the world. The book also examines the gender issue in the context of gender equity, economic globalisation and human security in the context of the South Asian region. The issue of good governance has also been touched upon.

27. In the book titled “Active Social Capital - Tracing the Roots of Development and Democracy”, the author Anirudha Krishna has examined various definitions of social capital ranging from those of Brehm and Rahn to Stole and Rochon.


29. The book titled “Social Movements in India – Studies in Peasants, Backward Classes, Sectarian, Tribal and Women’s Movements” edited by M.S.A. Rao, looks into such areas as the genesis of social movements, the conceptual problems of social movements including ideology and identity, collective mobilization, organization and leadership, social consequences and
change. The book focuses on peasant movements, backward class movements, religious and sectarian movements, tribal movements and women’s movements.

30. The book titled “From Government to Governance-A Brief Survey of the Indian Experience” by Kuldeep Mathur explores, against the backdrop of the issue of governance, some fundamental dimensions with regard to the involvement of the civil society in terms of filling the gaps in the efforts of the government in such areas as health and education. In the chapter, “Partnerships with Civil Society,” the author has mentioned that organised voluntary action has a long history in India, with Gandhi’s ‘constructive work’ activities having an influence in the growth of voluntary agencies in the country.

References:


iii Ibid, p.22.


Ibid, p.23.


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Hardiman, David, Gandhi in his time and ours, (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2009), pp.249-250

http://www2.lse.ac.uk/methodologyInstitute/pdf/QualPapers/Bauer-NARRATISS.pdf accessed on 16-10-09.