CHAPTER V

MAN AND SOCIETY
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Society is the whole in which the individual is the unit. Man is essentially and basically a social creature; he cannot exist apart from society. Man makes a society bright and beautiful, so the life of an individual is inconceivable apart from a society. Gandhi viewed man in his concreteness, both as an individual and as a member of social group. For him society is the summation of individuals and man is never apart from society. An attempt has been made to discuss Gandhi's concept of 'Man and Society' in this chapter.

Man arose through the evolutionary process a million years ago, from the animal world. History of social evolution reveals that man tries to shape and reshape society which, in its turn again transforms and re-transforms him. By the adjustment with the existing environment man has been able to prove himself as a potential and significant being in the universe. Hobbes seeks to determine man in terms of a social drive of a self-centred nature. "He cannot be happy in isolation and has also to fulfill many obligations towards the society he lives in. But no society is static; it changes according to nature of challenges it has to meet with from time to time."¹

¹ S.P. Ruhela, Human Values and Education, P.51
Origin of Society:

Man is a social being. He is born in a society. In the absence of society, his existence is impossible. But it is not possible to say when and how society originated. According to Aristotle, man has a natural tendency to live together. He is not happy if he lives alone. The extraneous circumstances which are responsible for be getting pleasure cannot be achieved by one man without being assisted by his fellowmen. The social nature of man is responsible for creation of society.

The word 'society' in common parlance is used in several meanings, like a group of women is called a 'women's society', it is also used for some specific institutions like Brahma Society (samaj), Arya Society (samaj) etc. But the popular meaning of the word does not serve the purpose of its study.

When many people live together for the same purpose, it is called society. It is an organised living of many individuals and a purpose is in behind such organisation. Society is specifically a territorially distinct organization, made up of a single species (e.g. men), specifically homo-sapiens (man) and his society is distinguished from non-homo-sapiens, of lower animals. Society is a web of different types of social relationships includes behaviour, customs, modes of operation, authority, assistance and other types of relations.
Man has always belonged to some society and cannot exist without society. His emotional development, intellectual maturity, material comfort etc. cannot be thought without society. But what should we really mean by the term 'society'? Why society exists helps us to understand what it is? To answer this question we must start with two basic observations about the nature of individuals:

1. At birth human organism is helpless to meet its own needs. Others must protect and care for it or it will die. It also needs others from whom it can learn how to do the things necessary to live.

2. Human organism is not genetically programmed, that is, its specific behaviour is not provided by some set of inherited instincts. Instead, all human being must go through a prolonged, complex learning process. We become human by this learning process, and this, in turn, requires persistent association with other human beings.

Human survival can only be accomplished if human beings act collectively. Co-operation can accomplish things no one person could manage alone. From the earliest period of human existence, providing food and shelter, individuals required co-operation with one another. By co-operative activity among humans learning from one another, skills are acquired; knowledge is accumulated; techniques and tools are developed; and all are transmitted to the next generation. It seems that human life
must have been carried on in social groups, however small and primitive, from the very beginning of human existence.

From this there is a basic lesson to be learned that: out of their struggle with nature, human beings provided for their biological survival and they produced a social life. The answer to our question- why is there society? is: society is produced by the co-operative activity of human beings and the human organism becomes human only in a society. Neither the fully human organism-the person-nor society comes from nature readymade; neither, that is, is genetically produced.

Society includes certain important elements which are-

Every society has its own individuals and organisation involving relatively sustained ties of interaction among its members. Disorganised people cannot be said to be constituting a society. Society is a form of organisation, where the members are dependent upon each other for the fulfilment of their needs. The daily life of all the members of society is facilitated by some very much important usages and customs. They are the determinants of the actions of individual members of society, in respect of dietary habits, marriage, festivals, education, rituals behaviour etc.
The organisation of society consists of the modes of action or procedures like marriage, inheritance, education, religious beliefs, political parties, etc., which play an important part in society.

In every society some individuals and classes are given authority on the basis of some specific conditions. This authority is indicative of the social relationship of the people which regulates or controls the related individuals or classes in such a way that one evinces a sense of respect, faith and subordination towards the other.

The life of society depends upon mutual assistance. Human civilization and culture develop because of this assistance. Assistance gives birth to the individual, nourishes and develops him.

The society is constituted by many groups like family and neighbourhood and other groups are voluntarily constituted like trade unions, labour union etc. which are very important for the development of social life. Besides groups, human societies are also divided into various classes according to heritage, wealth, social status etc.

An individual cannot develop in the society, if there are no liberties to balance the restrictions. Human society is dynamic. Thus, in society the individual must be given liberty in respect of many kinds of changes. In all the civilized societies of the world people have the
freedom to get education, choose a desired profession, marry, to think independently and express their thoughts in an appropriate manner.

Besides these, different sociologists and anthropologists have offered the different definitions of the term 'Society'---

Emil Durkheim (1858-1917), one of the greatest names found the sociology, argued that society is a reality suigeneris, a "thing" apart from, individuals. As a reality external to the individual, it needed its own separate mode of study. That for Durkheim, was sociology. "It is not realized that there can be no sociology unless society exists, and that societies, cannot exist if there are only individuals."²

Giddings emphasises upon its organisational aspect. According to him "Society is the union itself, the organisation, the sum of formal relations in which associating, individuals are found together". Society is not merely a collection of individual human beings. Its members are bound to each other by some formal relations which are based upon the family, race, class and other institution. Hence society is an organised group of individual.

Maclver and Page give the definition as "Society is a system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings

and divisions, of controls of human behaviour and of liberties."³ George Simmel, one of the founders of modern sociology, defined a society to be "a number of individuals connected by interaction."⁴ An anthropologist, Ralph Linton, defined society as "any group of people who have lived and worked together long enough to get themselves organised and to think of themselves a social unit with well-defined limits."⁵ According to Gladys Bryson, "society deals with life of human being in groups."⁶

Man is a rational social being whose life is inconceivable apart from society. Without individual a society is utopia because, man depends on society, for his protection, comfort, education, nurture, equipment etc. "He cannot be happy in isolation and has also to fulfill many obligations towards the society he lives in. But no society is static; it changes according to nature of challenges it has to meet with from time to time."⁷

Society is an organism of which men are the different parts. Except his physical wishes, man has a desire for the wellbeing of the society. Such a desire transcends the boundaries of ego and proceeds towards the infinite. The relation between individual and society is an intimate and close one. The existence and development of both individual

⁴. Quoted from Ely Chinoy, Society, P.24 George Simmel, Sociology, trans By Kurl H.Wolff, P.10
⁵. Ibid.
⁶. Ibid., P.24, Gladys Bryson, Man and Society
⁷. S.P.Ruhcla, Human Values and Education, P.51
and society depend on each other. The life of society is longer than that of the individual, while the individuals may come and go, it goes on continually. In the absence of individuals society has no existence, because individuals constitute society which makes individuals cultured. The child learns everything from society. His self or ego develops in society by which he is called a human being. There are different theories concerning the interrelationship between individual and society:

**Social Contract theory:**

Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau are the chief exponents of this theory. According to them before the existence of any society men lived in a pre-social state, called the state of nature. Though by the virtue of a contract among themselves, society came into existence, but their views are different.

Thomas Hobbes in his famous book 'Leviathan' (1651) maintained that society was conceived to protect man from his irresponsible and animal as well as egoistic tendencies. Society is a means for the protection of men against the consequences of their own untramelled nature."8 His view was that society was a result of some kind of contract entered upon by individuals who saw that it was not possible for them to have everything for selves and that some kind of

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8. Hobbes 'Leviathan, Ch, XIII & XVII.
understanding with others was essential for a happier and more peaceful life.

According to Hobbes, man, in the state of nature, was de facto and de jure free from the restriction of any authority. Every man has a right to total liberty. The notions of right or wrong, just or unjust, and good or evil are very much subjective and consequently conflicting. Life in the state of nature is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." In such a state of nature characterized by barbarism and insecurity, man, being a creature of passions and reason, loves peace and security in life. Hobbes wrote, "... reason suggesteth convenient. Articles of Peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement. These articles are they which otherwise are called the Laws of Nature." According to Hobbes, the Law of Nature means the general universal law suggested by reason in conformity with the self-interest and specially with common interest. In short, for the common security and peaceful life, every man surrendered his natural rights to an authority who was not a party in the contract. Men authorised the sovereign to frame civil laws. Just as natural laws cannot be repealed, so also the civil laws must be obeyed. Hobbes saw no limitation in the power of the sovereign. But it was also his opinion that if the sovereign acted contrary to the objective of the contract the individuals had the right to revolt against such a civil authority.

10. J.C. Hall, Rousseau: An Introduction to his Political Philosophy, P.24
11. Quoted, M. Lessnoff, P.52
Following Hobbes, John Locke maintained that man, in the state of nature, was in a miserable condition as there was no competent authority. But his view of human nature was different from that of Hobbes. According to Hobbes, man is originally self-centred, egoistic and pleasure-seeker. For Locke, on the contrary, man is peace-loving, altruistic and endowed with good will. Man has the conception of right and wrong and his freedom is not tantamount to licence. So in Locke's opinion, the state of nature was not a state of war of every man against every other man. The state of nature was governed by natural laws and was broadly a peaceful condition disturbed occasionally only due to the absence of a competent interpreter of it.\textsuperscript{12} For preserving the durable peace and security of life and property, men formed the contract. According to Locke, the power of the authority is not absolute and can be resisted if it steps beyond the boundary limit of the contract. As Gettell remarked, for Locke "the surrender of rights was to the community and not to any particular man or group of men. The people therefore remained sovereign."\textsuperscript{13} Thus the modern democratic idea dawned on Locke's mind. So the social contract advanced by Locke is a reply to that of Hobbes on the one hand and a means to curtail the absolute royal power on the other. Locke sought a justification of revolution against autocratic authority. He saw that "absolute monarchy is actually in consistent with civil society."\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., P.60
\textsuperscript{13} R.G.Gettell, Political Science, P.115
\textsuperscript{14} M.Lessnoff, op.cit., P.63
Rousseau's view on the state of nature is opposite to that of Hobbes. According to Rousseau, the state of nature was a condition where primitive simplicity, mutual good-will and freedom prevailed. When men formed the contract, his freedom was curtailed considerably. The formation of a civil society, in Rousseau's opinion, was an accident and a mistake on the part of the individuals. He wondered how men surrendered their natural liberty to the civil authority. Rousseau declared, "Man was born free; and everywhere he is in chains." Man exchanged his natural liberty for the civil liberty. In due course of time, competition among the people produced in equality among them. Civil Society ought to be ruled by a sovereign body in conformity with the natural law. The aim of forming such a civil society is to preserve equality without which justice is a contradictory term. Rousseau saw a wide gap between the 'liberty of moderns' and the 'liberty of ancients'. He found the 'general will' as a means for narrowing down the gap. Social laws should be renewed and sustained by the general will with a view to serving common interest.

Critics of social contract often point out that it is unhistorical and illogical. But it is to be noted that the contract was not formed once for all at a particular point of time and space. It is to be conceived as a process of evolution and it is still evolving. Hobbes pleaded for nearly the absolute power of the sovereign. His theory of social contract has more affinity with modern authoritarianism and dictatorship, while Locke's and

15. Ibid., P.2
16. Ibid., P.81
Rousseau's are related to the modern constitutional democracy and the rule of the absolute general will respectively. Here Gandhi's concept of the relation between man and society has a closer connection to that of Locke and Rousseau. Rousseau's 'general will' is found in Gandhi's concept of sarvodaya.

**Organic Theory of Society:**

Society is like as an organism whose structure and functioning resemble those of the human being. A number of Social Philosophers described society as an organism. According to this theory the relation between individual and society is organic and not mechanical. The individuals are like the cells of the organism and associations and institutions etc. are its arteries. Most elaborate statement of such organic relation between individual and society is found in the words of Herbert Spencer. According to him society is a living organism like human body. Human body is made up of innumerable cells. The members of society are the cells of society. The cells cannot exist without the organism, and the organism cannot exist without the cells. Similarly, man cannot exist without society, and society cannot exist without individuals. According to Spencer, social structure can be compared to an animal body whose system of nutrition has its counterpart in society in the industrial and agricultural system, the circulatory system with the heart, arteries, and veins, corresponds to the communication and transport systems of nation, the nervous system to the government, and so on.
But to consider the relation between individual and society as the relation between the cell and the body is very defective. There are clear differences between them. The individual has his independent existence and all his actions are not controlled by society. An individual being is mainly guided by his free will. On the other hand the cells have no independent existence. The function is to work only for the maintenance of the whole organism. As a conscious being, individual can think and contemplate by himself. But the cells of the body do not have any consciousness of their own, and no individual cell exists apart from the body. Again, a man can exist without society. If a man is expelled from society, he may live without it. But a cell disengaged from the living organism immediately decays. Thus it is incorrect to consider society as an organism of individual.

**Group Mind Theory:**

The society is not only a group of individual. It is the mutual relationship of individuals like between father and son, sister and brother, husband and wife etc. Even when they live apart, these relationships continued. In the same way, the relations of co-operation and conflict that exist between the different member of society are internal. Some thinkers conceive of society as a mind. In other words, the mental relations of the members of the group combine to give existence to the group mind.
But all these theories about the relationship between individual and society cannot be acceptable. The first two theories contradict each other. In Social contract theory, there is no synthesis between society and individual and on the other hand in the Organic theory there is no different between the two. All these theories bear witness to the intimate relation between society and individual.

Thus we can say that there is an inseparable relation between the two. Individuals are part and parcel of society. Man outside society is no longer a man and society without man is absurd. The existence and development of both depend on each other.

Karl Marx, the prophet of communism, holds that the history of social evolution shows different forms of society-from simple primitive community to slave-owning society, from the slave-owning to feudalism, from feudalism to capitalism, from capitalism to socialism, from socialism to communism and so on.17 This social movement, which reveals the different economic and political conditions of transition from one system to another, is based on the dialectical process pregnant with conflicts and contradictions in each social form. The class struggle is the inherent social force, which is almost common with all forms of society. This force is the prime mover of the social development. In the capitalistic system of society, the very few capitalists who possess the means of production in their hands, exploit the larger group of labourers. The

17. V.G.Afanasyev, Marxist Philosophy, PP.209-224
capitalists collect the national wealth in the forms of surplus value and profits, while labourers are reduced to the status of animals. The root cause of this exploitation is the existence of the institution of private property. Capitalism can be dismantled only when the institution of private property is eliminated. By negating the capitalistic system of society, the new and more advanced forms of society can be restructured. As the Law of Negation of Negation is endless,\textsuperscript{18} Communism itself is not the end of the dialectical process. So Marx visualized the classless and stateless society, where inequality and exploitation would be eliminated completely.

\textit{Gandhi's Concept of Man and Society:}

From the Indian perspective, man is not an object like other material objects. Man is not an animal or thing. He is not to be viewed or understood by the same categories as one looks at material reality. Here Indian thought affirms a non-Darwinian view of man. Because man is not like matter. He is a vibrant, living being. He occupies time and space; at the same time he transcends them.

Gandhi regarded every individual as a part of the nation or the social structure surrounding him. So the individual should use his talents not for himself but for the society. A free individual has to enjoy

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., P.112
his freedom within the boundaries of social responsibility. As Gandhi observed, "It is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane..... each wants to profit at the expense of and rise on the ruin of the other."\textsuperscript{19} Despite his supreme consideration for individual, Gandhi did not believe in the unrestricted individualism. He felt that the individual good would lay in the good of the society and at the same time he regarded that the society should respect the freedom of the individual.

Gandhi was influenced by the prophetic words of the Bible, 'Thou shalt have thy neighbour as thyself ', which shaped his concept of social responsibility. He considered social responsibility as nothing but an extension of neighbourly relations of individuals on a wider canvas of human society. Society is just like a larger family.

For Gandhi, mere changes in the social structure would not alter the minds of the people. Hence his first concern is the moral regeneration of the individual as an antecedent to socio-political transformation. That is why, he rejected the Marxian view point of influence of environment on man and said, "I do not agree that our ideologies, ethical standards and values are altogether a product of our material environment without any absolute basis outside it. On the contrary as we are, so our environment becomes."\textsuperscript{20} Gandhi rejected the view that human nature is a mere social construct. According to him,

\begin{flushleft}\textsuperscript{19} Young India, 8-5-1935
\textsuperscript{20} Quoted in Buddhadev Bhattacharyya, Evolution of the Political Philosophy of Gandhi, P.120\end{flushleft}
institutions are only the inward expressions of the people. However he recognised the influence of environment on man's character and for that reason he wanted to change the environment as it was given. He wrote, "...... the rulers, if they are bad, are so, not necessarily or wholly by reason of birth, but largely because of their environment.....if they are dominated by their environment, they do not surely deserve to be killed, but should be changed by a change of environment."21 He accepted that certain changes in the social structure can bring changes in human nature but these changes cannot totally abolish the evil. To be free from evil, one must suppress it at its source. For the elimination of evil, the individual should be reformed from within. Gandhi, therefore, adhered to the moral regeneration of human nature as the antecedent to any social transformation.

Gandhi's attitude towards man is absolutely humanistic which is truly international in spirit and overcomes all barriers of caste, religion and culture. He viewed man in his concreteness, both as an individual and as a member of social group. So far as the status of the human individual is concerned in society, Gandhi emphasised the development of the individual from a rigorous moral point of view. Though the individual is the compound of both good and evil, Gandhi believed in the basic goodness of man and hold to the good and to reject the evil.

21. Harijan, 21-9-1934
The concept of man in relation to the society, as Gandhi formulates it, has no parallel in the history of thought. Indeed, for him the relationship between the individual and the society is: they are twin-born and twin-developed. According to Gandhi, the freedom of individual and the opportunity to develop his potentialities whether, mental or spiritual must be the first concern of the society. This is clear when he says that "the swaraj of the people is the sum total of the swaraj (self-rule) of the individuals." 22 This means that it is the individual who goes to make the society and the welfare of the latter depends upon the welfare of the former. If individual swaraj is attained then peace and prosperity will naturally follow. But this does not mean that the individual is free to behave as he likes because a man who strives for individual swaraj cannot place himself above society. The individual must put himself in tune with the larger interest of the society. Thus according to Gandhi we must not forget that man is essentially a social being, though we should have individual freedom. Gandhi's own words in this regard are: "I value individual freedom but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirement of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learn to strive the mean between individual freedom and social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society enriches both the individual and the

22. Harijan, 23-5-1939
society of which one is a member.\textsuperscript{23} Everyone should learn to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. The individual must strive for swaraj and in doing so he must remain a dutiful member of the society and a responsible member of the state. Gandhi believes a perfect synchronization between man and society in the fundamental requisite to the march of man and society as a living and dynamic force of civilization.

Gandhi himself a follower of Advaita; believes in the absolute oneness of man as of God. According to the Upanisads man has no-existence independent of God.\textsuperscript{24} Man is compound of body and self or soul and the self is identical with Brahman. Man and God are not separate in Gandhi's view. Man's self or soul is nothing but Brahman, so man is a part of the one Ultimate Reality. Man is limited and finite because of his ignorance. God is the master (Prabhu); man is the servant (dasa).\textsuperscript{25} According to Gandhi man is a "spark of the divine fire", a part of God. If one wants to serve God, he must serve man. Man is the centre of the world, thus a person must work in that centre, expanding like finite into the infinite through the service of man. Gandhi's is like Tegore's views on man and service. Also man is the sole maker of his destiny and so must rely on his reason and conscience.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{23} Harijan, December 1, 1927
\textsuperscript{24} See Paul Deussen, The System of Vedanta.
\textsuperscript{25} See Romain Rolland, Mahatma Gandhi, Delhi
\textsuperscript{26} S.Radhakrishnan, Mahatma Gandhi 100 years, P.308

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Gandhi believed that society is the summation of individual. The good of the society can be possible only if the individuals are good. If the individual is not good or dutiful the family, society, institution or state cannot remain good. The individual is the architect of the society and the image of the society is reflected in the individual. Gandhi does not feel the need of entering into the problem regarding the origin of society, he would be prepared to accept any rational conjecture about class-formation.

Gandhi derives a moral from the origin of society which becomes the ethical basis of society. The origin of society lies in man's realisation that complete selfishness has no place in life. That means the formation of society is to avoid violence. Gandhi has been able to find out that the very basis of society consists in Non-violence and self-sacrifice. In a society there cannot remain any opposition between 'individual good' and 'social good'. If the very origin of society lies in self-sacrifice, then there has to be a harmony between our personal consideration and the good of society.

By 'work' every man relates with every other member of society and serves the end of satisfying not only his personal needs but also the needs of others. Thus, this 'work' becomes the basis of social organization. Even the modern Sociologists also admit work as 'Labour', which is the basis of social organisation. But they have developed their theories in terms of 'struggle', whereas Gandhi, although starting from the
same point of work or labour, develops his theory in terms of love and cooperation. Gandhi believes that there should be an inner arrangement inside a society for enabling every member to do his share of work for the betterment of the society. Lokamanya Tilak, tried heart and soul to remove the prejudices and superstitions of our society. He observes, "all our activities must tend to the betterment of our homes, in other words the reform of our society........There are a hundred and one terrible superstitions and dirty habits in our country, masquerading as religion. But has the Government done anything about it? It must be of our job to teach our men and women our own religion and its true meaning."  

Gandhi believes that the ancient classification of Hindu society into four Varnas had been made in that spirit.

Varnāśramadharma is one of the basic tenets of Hinduism which could be traced back to the most ancient Hindu scriptures, The Vedas. Hinduism laid down four asramas or stages of life- (1) the life of Brahmachari (continent student), (2) the life of Grihaslha (householder), (3) the life of a vanaprastha (who has retired to forest) and (4) the life of sannyasi (who has renounced the world) - through which every Hindu has to pass to fulfil the purpose of his life. In modern India these asramas are rejected by all the castes of Hindu society because they are not suitable to the needs of the modern society. But Gandhi wanted to revive these

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27. As quoted in Lokamanya Tilak, Father of Indian Unrest and Maker of Modern India, by D.V. Tahmankan, P.21
28. The word 'Varnasramadharma' is the combination of three words-varna, Asrama and dharma. 'Varna' refers to the birth of a man in one of the four Varnas of Hindu society. 'Asrama' denotes the four stages of life. 'Dharma' means duty.
asramas and said, "it can be revived only if the law of Varna, with which it is intimately interlinked, is revived." 29 Hinduism divided the whole society into four varnas in an hierarchical order: (1) Brahmana (who teaches the knowledge of Brahman or spiritual truth), (2) Kshatrya (who performs the function of protecting the people), (3) Vaisya (who pursues wealth producing occupations for the welfare of the community); and (4) Sudra (who performs labour to the above three varnas in the spirit of service). According to Gandhi, varna, though determined by birth, can be retained only by observing its obligations. A Sudra can become a Brahman by virtue of his good conduct and learning. Similarly a Brahmin may fall to the level of a non-Brahmin, if he fails to practise the duties his varna, Gandhi observed, "Varna thus conceived is no man-made institution but the law of life universally governing the human family. Fulfilment of the varna would make life livable, would spread peace and content, end all clashes and conflicts, put an end to starvation and pauperization, solve the problem of population and even end disease and suffering." 30

To Gandhi all varnas are equal, as "the community depends no less on one varna than on another." 31 In the Vedic society these different social classes performed their respective duties. With a view to

29. Harijan, 28-9-1934
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
the well-being of the society. Yet these social classes at first did not form a rigid and unalterable social stratification but later on became a rigid hereditary varna system in Hindu society. Gandhi accepted the varna system but said, "In my opinion there is no such thing as inherited or acquired superiority...... I believe implicitly that all men are born equal" and continued "I consider that it is unmanly for any person to claim superiority over a fellow-being." But in his opinion, this natural stratification of society is required for its effective maintenance. The original four varnas may be considered as the division of labour in the modern concept. Gandhi believed that class wars and civil strife can be avoided if one fulfils the law of one's being by doing in a spirit of duty and service that to which one is born. Varna, according to him, means the pre-determination of the choice of man's profession. The varna division defines duties but not privileges. Varna has nothing to do with caste. Varna is class, not caste. According to Gandhi varna prescribes duties and obligations only, it does not confer any privileges on any varna or individual.

Gandhi believes that through the proper understanding and full realization of these divisions, a strong and moral society can be built. He believes that the ancient classification of Hindu society into four Varnas had been made in that spirit. "I believe that every man is born in the world with certain definite limitations which he cannot overcome.

32. M.K.Gandhi, Hindu Dharma, P-321
33. Young India, 24-11-1927
From a careful observation of those limitations the law of varna was deduced. It established certain spheres of action for certain people with certain tendencies. This avoided all unworthy competition. Whilst recognising limitations the law of varna admit of no distinctions of high and low. On the one hand it granted to each the fruits of his labour and on the other it prevented him from pressing upon his neighbour. This great law has degraded and fallen into disrepute. But any conviction is that an ideal social order will only be evolved when the implications of this law are fully understood and given effect to."

The Gita has also propounded the doctrine of Svadharma infused with the Karma-Theory, and Svadharma becomes the proper karma of an individual leading to a higher ethical character in the next birth and ultimately to moksa. No work that falls to one's lot according to varna is impure, bad or sinful. The very aim of the Gita seems to perpetuate the varna social relationship as an allurement to Moksa, "Better to do the duty of one's caste, though bad and ill performed and brought with evil than undertake the business of another, however good it may be; another's duty brings danger to the man who meddles with it. Perfection from the business of his caste."  

34. B.S.Sharma, Gandhi as a Political Thinker, P.121 Quoted from Contemporary Indian Philosophy B.K.Lal. P.141
36. The Gita, iii, 35; Cf. The Gita, XVIII, 47-48
Gandhi never isolates man from society because he finds no distinction between man and man. Gandhi laid stress on the spiritual nature of man. To him all men are divine, so all men are equal. This serves as the fundamental principle of the essence of man from Gandhian perspectives. He wants a radical change in the society from the point of view of this fundamental principle of the essence of man. As Gandhi embraces everyone in the society as his, constant divine partner in the total efflorescence of man, he shows an altogether radical and different avenue of conquering social maladies like fanaticism, superstitions, hatred, ill-will, anger, fear, falsehood and so on by honouring the inner divine essence of man. The essence of the spirit or soul is freedom. The freedom of the individual and the opportunity to develop his potentialities must be the first corner of the society. According to Hinduism, said Gandhi, an individual must be free to do what he considers to be best for self-realization. Such individual freedom is perfect only in a completely non-violent society. In an environment of actual freedom, even the weakest member must rise to his moral height.

Gandhi rejects inhibition of individual's freedom which is very clear, when he says that 'the swaraj of a people means the sum total of the Swaraj (Self-rule) of individuals,' implying both self-control and self-sacrifice. According to Gandhi freedom of man is the surest means of

37. Gandhi,: Hindu Dharma, P.406
38. Gandhi,: Sarvodaya, P.67
39. Harijan: 5-5-46, P.116
40. Ibid: 23-5-39, P.64
freedom of the society but that freedom of man must be hard earned through sincere and steadfast involvement in doing good to the society. In the ideal society of Gandhi's concept there should be equality of status of all men-none high, none low, no difference between the son of a weaver, of an agriculturist and of a school master.  

My idea of society is that while we are born equal, meaning that we have a right to equal opportunity, all have not the same capacity. It is, in the nature of things, impossible. For instance, all cannot have the same height or colour or degree of intelligence, etc; therefore in the nature of things, some will have ability to earn more and other less. People with talents will have more, and they will utilize their talents for this purpose. If they utilize their talents kindly, they will be performing the work of the state.

The concept of bread-labour is another important device to introduce social equality among people for Gandhi. Gandhi wants every man to be treated as equal and by 'Bread-Labour' he means that in order to live man must work. Bread labour is a kind of social service; while, intelligent bread labour is the highest form of social service. A person who labours for the general good of all service the society well. Such bread labour is not different from social service. Gandhi was guided by this theory as, everyone should contribute towards earning his or her

41. Ibid: 15-1-38, P.146
42. Young India, 26-11-1931
43. Harijan, 1-6-35,
bread. He wanted that the poor people should stand on their own feet. It is stated in the Gita that those who eat without any sacrifice eats stolen food and they are thieves. He eats but sin who cooks for himself; a meal of what remains after sacrifice has been offered in ordained to be the food of the good. Similarly, the injunction of the Bible is 'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread.' Gandhi feels that reason and common sense also command the principle of bread labour. Thus if a rich man is able to get good without doing any work, he will have to take some physical exercise, at any rate, to induce hunger. Besides this, Gandhi recommends specially spinning and scavenging also. According to Gandhi, "there is no easier and better productive work for millions than spinning."

All these signify that one has no right to eat without any labour in any form. As Gandhi said "God created man to work for his food and said those who ate without work were thieves." The famous Trusteeship doctrine constitutes the corner-stone of Gandhian economy, based on an ideal view of man and society, while we are born equal and have right to equal opportunity, all men do not have the same capacity. He was very hopeful about the worthiness of his

44. Gita, Chapter III, Sl.13
45. Manusmrti, 3.118
46. From Yeravada mandir, P.35
47. Harijan 2-12-39
theory of Trusteeship, because it changes the whole economic conflicts between the capital and the labour, avoids all bloody revolutions.

Gandhi fought successfully to remove the dark blot of untouchability from Hinduism, which is particular superstition of the Hindu people. This system was an evil and against the spirit of our society, the symbol of our degeneration. The 'untouchables' are always treated contemptuously by the traditional Hindus. But all human beings are the creatures of God and so all are equal. Therefore, no one can be treated on this earth as an untouchable. To treat some people as inferior is a sin. There is no high and low among the people. Gandhi put it, "there is no warrant for untouchability by birth in Hinduism." To remove this great barrier, the Hindus must first purify their own souls. It is only through love or ahimsa that such prejudice can be obliterated. In this context Marx also advocates classless society that brings equal opportunity to all. As Gandhi was keen to remove the practice of untouchability, so Marx was keenly interested to removing the miseries of the downtrodden people. But Marx did not hesitate to adopt violent means for bringing about change while Gandhi only clung to the non-violent procedure.

Thus we can conclude that Gandhi's attitude towards man is not personalistic but absolutely humanistic, overcomes all barriers of caste, religion and culture. As regarding caste-predjudice, Lokamanya

49. M.K.Gandhi, My Philosophy of Life, P.162
Tilak says that good and bad qualities are found in all the communities. Man should cultivate wisdom to remove the prejudices of caste-distinctions. Because originally, caste-distinctions were made on the basis of division of labour, for the well-being of the society and not for the degradation of the national unity. "Caste-distinctions were originally planned on the principle of division of labour. They were meant for better organisation and not for disorganisation as now."  

Tagore has also criticised this traditional caste system of India. He is aware of the value of the principles on the basis of which the caste system of ancient India was formed. Caste system originally was meant for the establishment of social unity among people, which aimed at harmonious existence of man. But unfortunately in the course of time, this caste system become too rigid and exclusive. As Dr. Radhakrishnan say, "the institution of caste served a purpose till not long ago, but to-day it is a positive hindrance to the spiritual faith within and social progress outside....... The caste system failed to recognise the flow of life, the mobility of mind, and the mutability of characteristics."  

Man is never apart from society, nor society is dissociated for a single moment from man. For Gandhi, society is like a family having close interdependence among its member. An individual acquires his place in society through his free moral action and service and love are the

50. S.L.karondikar, Lokamanya Bal Gangashar Tilak, P.627
51. S.Radhakrishnan, The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore, P.114
ways to bring peaceful change in society. As an incomparable socio-
humanist, Gandhi eliminates the barrier between man and man by paying
highest honour and attention to creativity which acts as a positive force
being guided by the principles of non-violence. He believes in the
illimitable power of man who knows how to create a society based on
truth beauty and Goodness.

Gandhi's ideal society known as 'Sarvodaya Samaj' means
"the betterment of all", based on non-violence and aiming at maximum
independence for the citizens which will be based on principle of village
autonomy; instead of centralization there will be decentralization. In his
ideal society, the people will be self-disciplined and everyone will
perform duties not by force but by persuasion, all will have the desired
freedom. There will be no violence but proper adjustment among the
people; their will be love for their duties. Gandhi favoured the system of
Panchayati Raj and Cottage industry with Swadeshi as the principle. In his
society, there will be no inferiority or superiority of professions and there
will be no hatred or class consciousness. The wealthy will be trustees of
the surplus wealth. Everybody will do some manual work and contribute
to national production. In Gandhi's ideal of the realization of moksa as the
ultimate end by serving society through love and non-violence, one's role
in society is that of a trustee.

Gandhi wanted to have an ideal society, because his ideal
was a practical out that of introducing certain reforms in social and
political problems. Gandhi does not feel the need of entering into the problem regarding the origin of society. He has found out that the very basis of society consists non-violence and self-sacrifice. If the very origin of society lies in self-sacrifice, then there has to be a harmony between our personal considerations and the good of the society.

Though Gandhi wanted an all round transformation of society in the political, economic, social and moral fields however, there are many defects in his theory because Gandhi's total vision and conception of Indian society was much too idealist and Utopian and had no relation to the hard realities of contemporary life in India and world. The critics believe that Gandhian philosophy is not practicable and will not enable us to take fullest advantage of modern scientific discoveries, but instead it will take us back to the primitive ages.

But it is very much true that such transformation of both individual and society is possible only through the spiritual and religious power of man. In Gandhi's philosophy stress is always laid on the individual as the starting point of social regeneration.

Gandhi's philosophy provides permanent solution to many of our existing problems where it requires proper training as patience. Gandhi's entire philosophical thought systems are completely 'normative'.

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To Gandhi the problem of the group is essentially the problem of the individual. The reason for this emphasis is that man is above all the soul, and the progress of society depends on the soul-force of the average individual. He is the source, the centre and the purpose of all economic, political and social life. Again he is the foundation, the end and subject-matter of all institutions through which social life is carried on. Man is asked to be moral and honest not at the cost of society, not by withdrawing himself from society but by striving always for the well-being of society, which is the supreme consideration in Gandhi’s philosophy.