Chapter III
Gandhain Ideas of Modernisation

3.0 Introduction:

Gandhian personal life style was simple, sustainable, need based and comfortable. Gandhi was in favour of sustainable utilisation and opposed to exploitation of natural resources for undue economic gains. He does not want India to follow western culture blindly. He was in favour of technology and machinery which has minimum effect on environment and is used for well being s of humankind.

This chapter is concerned with approaches to life. Western Materialism is based on maximum production and maximum consumption. This attitude to life leads to consumerism. The consumerism demands mass Production which consumes raw material and non renewable energy in huge quantity destroying natural resources and creating heaps of uncontrollable waste. This is waste is difficult to dispose of adding back to environmental degradation. The consumerism and mass productions goes hand in hand. It increases wants, greed and lust and leads to luxurious life. Gandhi pointed out that man should try to live comfortable life rather than luxurious life to prevent vicious circle of consumerism and mass production.

3.1 Mass production:

According to Gandhi there should not be mass production but production by masses. He was against exploitive huge machinery and technology which displaces labour. Gandhiji opined that highly populated country like India should not imitate western culture. Small country like England and big country like America with sparse population can afford urbanisation but not big country like India with teeming population and with ancient rural tradition as hands are more (Young India 25-7-1929, CWMG, 41:220)

Mass production also leads to expulsion of labourer due to automation which will lead to unemployment, poverty, conflicts and crimes like theft. This is Socio-economic effect. Consumerism (Harijan 18-8-1946; CWMG, 85:133-134) While discussing consumerism, we have tried to analyse basic principles, its effects on human life and on our scarce natural resources. Our insatiable desires to have more
and more have accelerated the process of depletion of natural resources. In this chapter, we have tried to analyse Gandhian approach more exactly, 'containment of lust', and 'wants to a limit.' M.K. Gandhi once said: "The Earth provides enough to satisfy everyone's needs but not any one's greed." (Gandhi, 1998) We shall find that Gandhian call to containment of wants is relevant in the rapidly depleting natural resources, biodiversity and eco-system. There are two well known approaches to life. One is embodied in the well-known dictum of the German Professor William Roscher, "Every advance in culture made by man finds expression in an increase in the number and in the keenness of his rational wants." (Roscher, 1979) Another approach in the Indian spiritual ideal is watchful restraint. The nature sets limits. It requires a person to contain himself within its capacity. The emphasis on self-control and limitation of wants is essential. Automated and mechanised industry knows no such limitation. The Indian ancient culture could not accept the notion the increase in the number of human wants and their satisfaction. Before explaining Gandhian concept of attitude to life, it is necessary to explain the western modern life style, more exactly consumerism." He opposed and criticised huge modern machinery which displaces the labour. (Hind Swaraj, 1922; letter to Giriraj dated 4-12-1929; CWMG 41:511-12) He was in favour of intermediate technology that is in between primitive and modern. Now term used is appropriate technologies like are micro irrigation for agriculture that is drip and sprinkler irrigation system recommended for water conservation. Gandhiji appreciated the machinery like Singer Sewing Machine which is simple, energy saver and with human face (www.facebook.com). Gandhiji was in favour of such type of technology and machinery that is intermediate technology. It means introduction of any technology should not create deprivation. (Gandhiji wrote to Sir Danial Hamilton in letter dated 15-2-1922 from Bardoli; CWMG 22:401-02) This is the holistic approach of Gandhian environmental philosophy.

It is now responsibility of technologist, scientist and environmentalist to invent and produce environmental friendly technology. The students of environmental science and technology must be involved to invent such type of machinery and technology.
3.2 Atomisation and Modernisation:

It is observed that the use of Automatic and heavy duty machinery has increased to the great extent to produce more and more for maximum consumption. This exploits Natural resources creating huge uncontrollable waste which degrades environment. To counter the effect production consumptions should be mean and lean to have green environment.

Saptarshi (1993) aptly pointed out that increase in quantity of bore wells in Karjat Tahasil, Ahamednagar have created scarcity in drinking water. Increase in number of bore wells resulted into increase in depth where water quality id not potable. Further it is not cost beneficial. Against this back drop Gandhian idea is conservation and sustainable use of water and proper water management. This is primary requirement. Digging wells at superficial level and control over number of wells and other water harvesting is necessary to solve water problem. The effective water management is done in Hiware Bazar. The use of appropriate technology to prevent carbon emission is necessary. The main resources of carbon are industries and vehicle. Carbon emission can be checked by industries using suitable technology and providing for carbon sinks. A carbon footprint has historically been defined as "the total set of Green House Gases (GHG) emissions caused by an organization, event, product or person.

Following few efforts made to reduce carbon prints at Government and industrial level

Airports Authority of India has decided to open a direct route between Mumbai and Delhi from 26-7-12 to improve fuel efficiency and reduce carbon footprint. Hence, instead of taking a roundabout route through Ahmadabad, Jaipur and Udaipur, a flight from Mumbai to Delhi will now take a straight path, which will save time and burn less fuel. Every flight is likely to save 1,000 kg (1 tonne) of carbon emissions. (Chinmayi Shalya, TNN 26-7-12 ) To reduce the carbon foot prints suggestion made are use public transportation, carpool, walk, or bike whenever possible to avoid using your car. It will reduce your carbon footprint. (Agencies, Mysore 5-1-2009) Mysore district administration and directorate of urban land transport (DULT) in consultation with Regional transport offices are on a mission to promote bicycling in Mysore. The steps are being taken to prevent footprints to some extent by reduction in vehicular pollution. (Lawrence Milton, TNN 13-7-2012) These
are ways to reduce the carbon footprints by individuals that is recycle and reuse of products like waste products can be composted, use of CFL bulbs and tubes, carpooling instead of individual driving, saving water and electricity and growing and maintaining trees and buy locally. (green.wikia.com/wiki)

According to Sahu (2009) the launching of satyagraha movement was for restoring democratic rights to India. But in broader sense it becomes a movement against exploitation of earth’s resources. He further said that Gandhi understood unsustainability of modern civilisation based on multiplication of wants. Gandhi launched first satyagraha in 1906 based on truth non violence stressing simplicity of life for entire mankind and European community understood the facts through Brundtland commission in 1987. Gandhiji was aware about global congestion due to vehicles and mention it to an American correspondence that in India cars will be too many resulting into lack of space to walk.

3.3 Disposal of Waste Generation:

Modern technology and machinery are exploitive and produce goods in bulk. The maximum production entails maximum consumption and in the process it generates uncontrollable waste. In any production there bound to be residual waste. It can be disposed of easily. But it is expensive and difficult to dispose of uncontrollable waste. The waste can be generated at various stages that are manufacturing, storage, transportation and at users’ level. The waste contains various type of material and fleet transportation increases carbon foot prints adding to global warming and environmental degradation. This is because place of production and place of consumption are miles away. Hence Gandhi empathised on production and sale in localised area. According to him material produced must be sold within the preview of 5 km.. The concept of Swadeshi means serving neighbouring villages rather than remote village. In discussion with Shrikrishnadas Jaju on 10-10-1944 Gandhi explained that it is necessary to serve the village first, then the neighbourhood, then the district and thereafter the province. This can reduce wastage and carbon footprints (CWMG, 78:171.) Gandhi also pointed out that individual should give importance to environmental problems and not to profits.
3.4 Theory of Consumerism: Meaning, Nature and Principle:

The effect of environmental degradation is well felt globally. According to Gandhi change in life style is due to acceptance of modern civilisation which has given rise to consumerism. The consumerism demands large scale production with the help of heavy duty machineries exploiting natural resources. In the process it produces huge uncontrollable waste. This degrades environment.

The theory of consumerism is an ‘ism’ based on "maximum utilisation and utmost consumption of available resources both natural and man made." It is a craze against preservation or gradual use of available resources. We know that natural resources such as air, water, soil, minerals are scare. They are not to last for all the times to come. But in consumerism, this hard reality is not kept into account. The hard realities of the preserving environment are ignored due to lust and greed to have more and more. The negligence, in a long-run, may prove hazardous for the human beings on this earth. Scientists, economists, executors and environmentalist are warning us against the rapidly diminishing reserves of minerals, decreasing areas of forests, flora and fauna, global warming, depletion of ozone layer and other alarming dangers. But despite their warnings, rampant use of natural resources continued. It is a great predicament for humanity.

The first principle of consumerism is human lust to have more and more of everything in the form of money, fun, material pleasure, and luxury. Consumerism in other words, is based on the multiplication of human wants. In consumerism, one can not distinguish real needs from artificial ones. Each new need ought to be satisfied at any cost. The second principle of consumerism is not simply to satisfy the needs but a status symbol that signifies life style of consumer. Consumerist society is success oriented. It is to be achieved by hook or by crook. Consumerism means the proliferation of images and things. Thirdly, consumerism can become a dominant trend only when it succeeds in creating a new middle class having sufficient leisure, time and purchasing capacity. Fourthly, the ethos of consumerism appears to be egalitarian. It denies distinctions between elite culture and non-elite culture. It generates uniform life styles and expectations so everyone can participate in it. Yet, the very logic of consumerism makes one perpetually anxious and insecure. Life is equated ‘to have and not to have’. It, therefore, implies lagging behind. (Pathak, 1995)

Thus, consumerism aims at having more and more of everything. This is the
stage where distinction between real and unreal is blurred. It is here, we find the validity of Gandhian spiritual, ethical and moral teachings which get the utmost significance. The reckless exploitation of natural resources will endanger the coming generation on this earth. During that period of Gandhi, the exploitation of natural resources was on rising trend. He thought that the unplanned and inefficient management will damage environment of the earth due to rapacious greed of the humanity. He had in his mind that optimal resource utilisation will alter environment of the earth.

3.5 Problems of consumerism:
The problems of consumerism are as follow:

i) Multiplicity of needs and wants:

The human needs are proliferated. Needs are ever increasing. (CWMG, 48:159) This has given rise large scale production with the help of heavy duty machineries (Hind swaraj 1922) exploiting natural resources. In the process it produces huge uncontrollable waste. (CWMG, 48:159, 166,224,225, 245) This degrades environment. (CWMG11:453) Gandhi warned man against this situation. Gandhi said, "The mind is a restless bird; the more it gets the more it wants and still it remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions, the more it becomes unbridled. (CWMG, 10:139)

Gandhi advocated solution of this problem in the form voluntarily reduce our wants to a genuine level. Professor J.K. Vféhta, a distinguished economist has suggested a process of ailing wants. The wants can be killed by wants only. Hence, stronger wants must be employed to kill the weaker wants. And when such a battle is fought in the human mind, and the inferior wants get ultimately killed and one is left with superior wants only. The setter among them can, in their term, be employed to kill their wants. In this way, we can ultimately reach a stage in which only the most superior (in other words most genuine) wants would be left to satisfy and it is only when this stage is reached that we can with impunity satisfy the wants. (Mehta, 1962): Gandhi explains that man must set limits to his indulgence which will help to conserve the natural resources for him and generations to come. (Gandhi, 1938) Mahatma Gandhi was a staunch critic of unchecked industrialisation and modern civilisation. He viewed his contemporary western civilisation which dehumanises the
individual and puts premium on body comforts for acquiring of all the luxuries of life with money. In doing so he fails miserably. This is man's insatiable greed for gaining earthy material. Gandhi was actually warning us against consumerism and related consequences of which we are facing today.

ii) Cravings and lust:

The cravings and lust are tormenting elements of human soul. The lust to satisfy desire, become insatiable. He regarded human senses to be controlled. Inclination to human senses, arises out of desire. Lust to satisfy desire, becomes insatiable. If desire is thwarted, one becomes angry and mad. He, in this process, loses his memory, behaves in a disorderly manner and comes to an ignoble end. (CWMG, 13:231)

When a man's senses rove at will, he is like rudderless ship, which is at the mercy of gale and is broken into pieces on the rocks. Thus, according to Gandhi, one who abandons all desires, is free from pride and selfishness and behaves as one apart, finds peace. (CWMG, 13:231)

iii) Asteya: Propensity to accumulate:

Asteya has been important part of Gandhian philosophy. Asteya means avoid getting more than your requirement. He advocated holding property more than necessity is theft and hence cause of violence. This is true in modern society when we observe struggle and corrupt practices in land dealing in both urban and rural areas. It is thus, the principle of ‘Asteya’ has its own concern about caring others and avoiding abuse of environment. Similar to asteya is aparigraha (non-possession).

It is the propensity to accumulate commodities cramp the soul and degenerate into the morbid desire to make a fetish of external goods of life. Gandhi called it as asteya (Non-stealing) Non-stealing does not mean merely not to steal. But stealing means to keep or take anything which is not needed. The stealing is fraught with violence. (Bapu-ke-Aashirvad, November 24, 1944) It means legitimate use of earth’s ecological assets. We are not always aware of our real needs, and most of us improperly multiply our wants and thus, unconsciously, make thieves of ourselves. One who follows the observance of Non-stealing will bring about a progressive reduction of his own wants. Much of the distressing poverty in this world has risen out of the breaches of the principle of non-stealing. (Gandhi, 1932) Similar to asteya, aparigraha (Non-possession) means one should not hoard anything that we do not need today. It means non-possessive attitude of Eco materials.
The less you possess, the less you want, the better you are. It is not for your enjoyment of this life but for enjoyment of your fellow beings. It is service to which you dedicate yourself, body, soul and mind. (Tendulkar, 1960) When you dispossess yourself of everything you have, you really possess all the treasures of the world. In other words, you really get all that is in reality necessary for you. (Gandhi, 1949) Man by virtue of his ever unsatisfied desire for more and more has made a hell of this planet. Increasing ecological imbalance, environmental degradation, vanishing flora and fauna, unhampered population explosion and deteriorating human values, all are the outcome of the greed of the modern Homo-Sapien. (SWMG. 6:145)

iv) Human desires to overpower the nature:

This will alienate the man from nature. This has created imbalance between man and his environment. The professor E.F. Schumacher says “crisis of resources, crisis of ecology and very deep human crisis of alienation and disorientation from nature will engulf the world” These crisis occurred because every body strives hard to have more and more. (Schumacher, E.F., (1978): “Future is manageable”, Impex India, New Delhi, p.30)

He further added that an attitude of life seeks fulfilment in the single minded pursuit of wealth. The materialism does not fit into this world because it has principle. But the environment in which it is placed is strictly limited. The environment is trying to tell us that certain stresses are becoming excessive. As some problems are being solved then new problems arise. According to Professor Barry Commener the new problems are not the consequences of incidental failure but of technological success. In this way, the findings of Professor Schumacher and a host of other technologists and ecologists were choked emphatically by Gandhi nearly fifty years ago. The consumerism leads to mass production, use of automated heavy duty machinery, procurement of raw material in large quantity, use of excessive energy, bulk production, transportation, storage and creation of huge wastage leads to environmental degradation. This displaces labour causing unemployment, poverty and may lead to crime like theft. (CWMG, 41:511-12)

3.6 Gandhian Solution:

1. Gandhiji said that mind is like restless bird; more it gets more it wants and still it will remain unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions, more unbridled they
became. Gandhi’s solution to this problem is to voluntarily reduce our wants to a genuine level. Gandhi advocated “We should set limit to our indulgence. Our forefather knew that if we set our hearts after such things we would be slaves and loose our moral fibre. They realised that our real happiness and health consisted in a proper use of hand and feet.” (Hind Swaraj 1922,) If this is followed then it can possible to conserve lot of natural resources which will be sufficient for generations to come. Gandhiji was staunch critics of unchecked industrialisation and modern civilization which dehumanises the individual and puts premium on body comforts and acquire all luxuries of life that money can buy and fails measurably in doing so. This is due to man’s unending greed for earthy material. Gandhiji said that the true test of civilisation is the people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life. Gandhi appealed students to deliberately and with fill knowledge reduce their wants. (Navajivan 29-2-1920; CWMG, 17:57)

2. The cravings and lust which are tormenting elements of human soul. One has to renounce his cravings and desires, his contentment from within himself is said to be Samthistha or Sthitiprajana. He called such person “unruffled in adversity” and unaffected by worldly desire. Thus according to Gandhiji “one who abandons all desire is free from the pride and selfishness and behaves as one part finds peace.” (CWMG, 13:231)

3. Third problem is the propensity to accumulate commodities cramp the soul and degenerate into the morbid desire to make a fetish of external goods of life. It gives rise to monopolies. The accumulation is condemnable because it is not possible to be practiced by all. Gandhiji proposed that the nature produces enough for our day to day needs and if only everybody takes enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world. He did not want to dispossess any body. It is then departing from the rule of Ahimsa. (SWMG, 6:145) Gandhi opined “We do not have any right to any thing until millions of the people are clothed and fed better. So, we have to adjust our wants and even undergo voluntary starvation to feed under fed millions. Man due to his thrust for accumulation made hell of this planet. This has effect on increasing ecological imbalance, environmental degradation, vanishing flora and fauna, unhampered population explosion and deteriorating human values. All are the outcome of the greed of modern homo-sapiens. Moreover, according to Gandhiji to accumulate more than requirement is sort of a theft. The concept of Asteya (Non-stealing) and Aparigraha (Non-possession) is to be observed strictly for conservation
of natural resources. (Bapu-ke-Aashirvad, Nov. 25, 1944) The less you possess, the less you want, the better you are. It is not for your enjoyment of this life but for enjoyment of your fellow beings. (Tendulkar,1960)

4. Man is over powering the nature. This will alienate the man from nature. Gandhi explained “The phenomenon of exploitation of natural resources through alienation. He was of the opinion that the more man over powered the nature more he will be alienated from the nature. But alienation of man from nature also paved the way of alienation. His true self is what man can discover through the search of truth following the path of non-violence. Human must know that natural recourses are finite and not infinite. (CWMG, 14:63) The fine truth at the bottom of this principle is that Nature provides just enough and no more for our daily need. (CWMG 36:400)

Gandhi has full view of man, his spiritual, cultural and social aspect as much as his economic need. This led him to advice that man must adjust himself to nature and not the other way round. Man would not permit imbalance to be created between him and his environment. Gandhian solution is that human element should be a part or nature and not apart from nature. (IASSI Quarterly, Vol. 16 No. 1, July-September 1997)

Gandhi regards cravings and lusts to be tormenting elements of human soul. One who renounces all the cravings and desires his contentment from within himself, is said to be a Samadhistha or Sthitprajana. He regarded such persons "unruffled in adversity" and unaffected by worldly desires. He regarded human senses to be controlled. Inclination to human senses, arises desire. Lust to satisfy desire, becomes insatiable. If desire is thwarted, one becomes angry and mad. He, in this process, loses his memory, behaves in a disorderly manner and comes to an ignoble end.

Man by virtue of his ever unsatisfied desire to have more and more has created the problems like ecological imbalance, environmental degradation, vanishing flora and fauna, unhampered population explosion and deteriorating human values. All are the outcome of the greed of the modern Homo-Sepia. Gandhi without consciously attempting to explained the phenomena of exploitation of natural resources through alienation. He was of the opinion that man will be the alienated more if he tries to over power the nature more and more. The focussed relationship between man and his natural environment would end exploitation. But this alienation of man from nature has paved the way of alienation from himself also. Man has to discover this through the search of truth following the path of non-violence. Gandhi has full view of man, his spiritual, cultural and social aspects as much as his economic needs. He
advocated that man must adjust himself to nature and not the other way round. This will prevent imbalance created between man and his environment.

Professor E.F. Schumacher gives the world a timely warning of the three crises engulfing the world. They are: the crisis of resources, the crisis of ecology and a very deep human crisis of alienation and disorientation. E.F. Schumacher says that this crisis occurred because everybody strives hard to have more and more. He further added: "An attitude of life which seeks fulfilment in the single minded pursuit of wealth in short, materialism does not fit into this world, because it contains within itself no longer principle, while the environment in which it is placed is strictly limited. The environment is trying to tell us that certain stresses are becoming excessive. Some problems are being solved and new problems arise as a result of first solution. (Schumacher, 1978)

As Professor Barry Commener emphasises, the new problems are not the consequences of incidental failure but of technological success. In this way, the findings of Professor Schumacher and a host of other technologists and ecologists were choked emphatically by Gandhi nearly fifty years ago. Gandhi, regarded the ideal of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them to be a delusion and a snare "According to him, unlimited lust for physical needs degenerates into "Physical and intellectual voluptuousness". He detested desire and called them as "animal appetites." Once, he said, "If modern civilisation stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it satanic."

(Young India, 17-3-27) Gandhi regarded that western materialism has a limit. Material enjoyment and accomplishment can not and do not give us sublime peace and pleasure. There comes a moment when a man gets perturbed or enchanted with the aggrandisement and consumption-culture. There comes the need of moral enlightenment which gives solace to the tormented soul. It was Gandhi who proved to be prophetic and path-finder. In western world, we today find inclination towards religiosity, adhyatama, and meditation. People from all the concerns of the world have throng to India to get calm, tranquillity and mental peace. It shows that materialism and consumerism have their limitations. (SWMG, 6:327)

**3.7 Philosophy of simple living and high thinking:**

Gandhi had conviction in simple living and high thinking. Man falls from ideals, when his wants multiply. Man's happiness really lies in contentment.
Discontentment makes a man slave of his desires. Once Gandhi said, "The less you possess, the less you want, the better you are. The secret of happy life lies in renunciation. Renunciation is life. Indulgence spells death." (Harijan, 24.2.1946)

One of the major problems of industrialisation is that it tends to emphasis consumerism to the exclusion of moral and human values. And consumerism drowns millions of human beings into a flood of materialistic lust. It is this lust which has created the great divide between the have and have not. It is this lust which has made millions the slaves of a few, who control economic and political power. Gandhi saw a direct link between materialism, exploitation and war. In case of developed and developing countries, developed countries consisting of about one-fifth of the world population consume twenty times more goods and services than the rest of the world does. And the rest of the world, increase in population is so vast that it will need several earths to reach the standard of living of industrialised countries. All the same, there is competition between the rich and poor countries to acquire more wealth in order to satisfy their growing demands and such competition ultimately leads to violent conflict which results some times in devastating wars. Gandhi, therefore, ardently advocated simplicity in our style of life and a change in the standards of values.

3.8 Service to Humanity:

Gandhi's approach to civilisation was ethical and moral. Therefore, he criticised modern civilisation. According to Gandhi, the propelling force of modern civilisation is the hunger for wealth and greedy pursuit of worldly pleasures. This desire places the pursuit of self-interest at the centre of man's existence which creates conflict between different groups and renders the search for morality and spirituality insignificant in social life. Since Gandhi emphasised human value. Hence, he rejected the western culture enslaved by temptation of money and of the luxuries that money can buy. Gandhi's approach to economic development was not based on spirituality and service to humanity and not on consumerist tendencies. There can be no rest for me so long as there is a single person in India lacking the necessaries of life.

Swami Vivekananda introduced the concept to Nar-Narayan that is to serve the man to find the god. Gandhi echoes the feelings of Vivekanand: "Since God is more often found in the lowliest of his creatures than in the high and mighty, I am
trying to reach the status of lowest one. Hence, my passion for the suppressed classes Gandhi extremely concern for the poor is found when he says, "Recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless man whom you have seen and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him to control over his own life and destiny." (Mishra, 1998):

Thus, Gandhi through the gospel of 'service of humanity and the poor' has contradicted the very basis of consumerism of western civilisation. Consumerism is based on cut-throat competition, alienation from the society, self-centredness, bereft from humanistic passions and social concerns, one mindedness (self-aggrandisement and maximum consumption of available materials and resources). But Gandhian humanistic and serviceable philosophy set aside all these consumerist tendencies.

3.9 Modern Economic Development:

Modern economic development is heavily based on industrialisation and urbanisation. Gandhi did not consider large scale of industrialisation, mechanisation or urbanisation as indices of a true or desirable civilisation. The modern civilisation of the west is satanic. Gandhi opposed industrialisation and urbanisation as it gives rise to consumerist tendencies. Industrialisation leads to heavy mechanisation. Gandhi did not oppose machinery. He opposed the destructive and inhuman nature of machinery. He was in favour of humanizing machines. All machines are acceptable to Gandhi as long as they operate and function as servants and not as masters of man and the benefit of the whole society. Gandhi used to look at the ground realities and felt that sophisticated or high-tech is not just possible or feasible in India because of the availability of abundant unemployed labour force. He wrote in 1934. "Mechanisation is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as in India. Here also we find that the supreme consideration for Gandhi is not satisfaction or realisation of human needs and desires, but the total humanity, particularly the depressed, neglected, the poor and the suffering humanity. He used to think that machines are for the service of humanity not for "tending to make atrophied the limbs of man." (Mishra, 1998):
3.10 Optimum Exploitation of Nature:

In western civilisation, consumerism is on rise-and-rise. Therefore, western industries exploit the nature on a large scale to provide maximum comfort and luxuries for western civilization. Large scale industries which exploit natural resources on a large scale prove ultimately harmful not only to man and society at large but also to nature and also to non-renewable resources. The experience of last few years shown that there is a change in global climate, ozone depletion, acid rains, water pollution combined with deforestation, soil erosion, mass extinction of species due to environmental destructive industrial and agricultural practices. Large scale industries not only exhaust our natural resources and emit toxic chemicals into water and atmosphere; they also cause unemployment and poverty. According to Gandhi, no civilisation is worthwhile unless it saves nature and provides full opportunity for the fullest development of human tendencies. He therefore says, "Nature produces enough for our wants and if everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world."

Gandhi distinguished between happiness and material comfort. He believed that consumerism can not promote happiness. The consumerist character did not only have a philosophical and moral overtone. It takes into serious consideration the resultant environmental problems. In his ever growing zeal of conquering nature through, improved-technology, big machines, unchecked industrialisation, urbanisation and modern civilisation man forgets that unchecked exploitation of natural resources leads to environmental problems. The stock of non-renewable natural resources is always limited. The arbitrary use of natural resources results in ecological imbalance, all kinds of environmental pollution and loss of bio-diversity. The Mahatma's foresight led him to conclude that nature was becoming a victim of human greed and same if being experienced by man at present. He wrote Hind Swaraj, 1908 and realised the fundamental weakness of the world's socio-economic system. Increase of material comforts, it may not be conducive to moral growth. (Mathurs, 1994) Gandhi had warned that an exclusive emphasis on materialism and rush material comforts will spell ruin for mankind. He was opposed the affluence as it always leaves behind millions non-affluent. Moreover, planning for affluence breed competition, inequalities and violence, de-capacitates individuals and small group for social services and non-violent actions. What is true for the individual is true for
groups and nations. The real civilization means deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants and not in the multiplication of wants. This will promotes real happiness and contentment and increase the capacity to service.

The process of multiplication of wants gone out of proportion to our surroundings with increasing velocity which will have effect on biosphere and reduce man to dust. (Lean, 1978) Scholars and thinkers in industrially advanced country are slowly realising that consumptions should be severely regulated. Materialism should not be the common philosophy but the common enemy. (Lean, 1978) Many western thinkers, like Gandhi, are advocating restraint consumption. Prof. Gunnar Myrdal observed: “We shall invite catastrophic developments unless we are prepared how to enforce various restraints on and deflections of production and consumption, and, indeed, our ways of life.” (Myrdal, 1975) Gandhi disapproves expansive conspicuous public consumption. Consumption should be need determined. Gandhian Society will be "need satisfying society." He used to say that our wants must be restrained to the basic needs of the commonest people. According to Gandhi no one should suffer for want of food and clothing. This ideal can be universally realised only if the means of production of elementary necessities of life remain in the control of the masses. (Mathurs, 1994)

Gandhi made efforts to educate the consumer as well. He laid emphasis that the consumer also owes responsibility towards society. While buying articles of consumption, the consumer should take into account several consideration, e.g. where the articles come from; what conditions do the workers work and live; what proportion of final price do they get as wages; how is the rest of money distributed; how is the article produced; how does the industries fit into the natural economy and what relation does it have with other nation.

3.11 Fulfilment of Wants: Keynes versus Gandhi:

In an interesting article entitled, "when pursuit of surplus Ends" published in the spring 1999 issue of the Indian International Centre Quarterly, Professor Hans W. Singer, the world renowned economist, shows how Lord Keynes had developed ideas on want satisfaction which, according to him, were similar to the well-known postulate of want limitation developed by Mahatma Gandhi. Speculating on the future after one hundred years, Keynes visualised the possibility of satisfying all reasonable
or essential wants and thereafter of enjoying leisure and facilities for cultivating the arts and other aspects of life. This viewpoint is reiterated in the preface to Lord Keynes's book 'Essays in Persuasion.' According to him, the day is not far off when the routine problem of making a living which takes most of our time, will take a back seat where it belongs and that the arena of the heart and head will be occupied, or reoccupied, by our real problems the problem of life and of human relations, of creation and behaviour, and relation.

Professor Singer regards this stand as similar to the well known Gandhian view that the purpose of society is to satisfy basic needs and that there are more important goals than the limitless accumulation of capital and economy. Gandhi opined that the multiplication of wants is taking the world towards brink of disaster. (Young India, 17-3-1927)

But the process of attainment of this goal of life as visualised by the two great thinkers is different. The continuation of economic growth according to Keynes, would usher in a stage when all reasonable material wants would be satisfied. In other words, the point of saturation is reached automatically. Hence, there was no need for deliberate want limitation. Gandhi, on the other hand, felt that this saturation point would not be reached automatically even at higher and higher level of income. He pointed out: "The mind is a restless bird, the more it gets the more it wants and still remain unsatisfied. Therefore, the idea of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them seems to be a delusion". (Gandhi, 1938). He, therefore, made a plea for "deliberate want limitation".

Keynes was a great economist but Gandhi is not, atleast not in the traditional sense. However, with respect to want saturation, economists today would agree more with Gandhi than with Keynes. Given a rising income, Keynes would be right if the number or nature of commodities remain more or less the same. Rising income and consumption would then lead to decreasing marginal utility of the given set of commodities. This process may continue until a stage is reached when the want for a given set of commodities might get completely saturated. Perhaps Keynes has this situation in mind when he predicted his concept of 'saturation of wants.1 It is, however, known that economic growth implies an increase not only in the output of existing commodities but also in the production of new commodities. The producers in advanced countries are busy with developing new products or new model of the existing products and creating demand for them through intensive advertisement.
Product development in the case of consumer durables has become an instrument for the survival of firms. Take the case of the United States, for example, where every family has got all martial goods like cars, telephones, refrigerators, etc. The producers, however, go on making modifications in the existing models. The consumers are then persuaded through advertisement to discard the old models buy the new ones. Thus wants keep on multiplying. The question of saturation does not arise in a world where materialism has become the opium of people's mind.

3.12 Opinion Expressed by thinkers:

1. The opinion express by Mr. Al Gore in captioned topic “The Wastefulness of Consumerism - Brought to You by Al Gore” Al Gore is now beyond politics, having attained philosopher king status as champion of the environment. He is currently focused on most comfortable life to live. Despite dropping out of politics, Al Gore talks about conservation and counter to consumerism and wealth building. Be thankful there is someone gutsy enough to go against the tide, and to represent a voice that needs to be heard.” - Dr. Phil Domenico. (Natural News, August 10, 2008)

2. Mr. Amitabh Shukla on July 2, 2009 in world economy expressed his opinion on consumerism: Consumerism is becoming the hallmark of most world economies. It is spreading from develop country to developing country. Consumerism refers to the consumption of goods at a higher rate. The economy is judged by the production and selling of goods. The gross national product is the sum total of goods and services produced for a specific period at a specific time. The more goods produced and consumed by society the higher the growth rate of the economy. The prosperity of a nation is judged by the per capita income of individuals residing in it. The economy is considered to be” doing well” if the purchasing power of the people is high. In consumer society, people replace their goods with newer ones. They Consumerism is appreciated in Western economies since a person’s standard of living is valued by his or her material possessions. There are certain positive effects of consumerism such as:

   Increase production, services will result in more employment opportunities, more comfortable and better life style and higher economy growth rate.

But there are always certain pitfalls to a given situation in a society.

   Craving for goods is high. The wants and desires of the people increase.
Material wealth is the deciding factor about whether a society is highly developed. Spiritual values are underplayed. This may not be suitable to a person from the East, who generally is appreciative of spiritual values. The manufacturer becomes over dependent on labour saving devices. The psychological health also can get affected if desire remains unsatisfied. This may lead to depression. Jealousy and envy can result to crime. The entry of cheaper goods is imported from other goods affecting the growth of locally based manufacturing industries.

Consumerism has also resulted in ecological imbalances. The natural habitat is being destroyed affecting the weather. Global warming, industrial pollution will result in health problems. People lifestyles have also changed in the sense they are more lavish, full of material comforts rather than focusing on simplicity. The Eastern spiritualism and philosophy has always laid emphasis on simplicity. Gandhian principles and values favour a non-materialistic approach to life. Even well known sage Jiddu Krishnamurthi has also eulogized simplicity in one’s lifestyles and thinking.

The United States is known for its material growth, prosperity and consumer economy. But presently, the economy is reeling under the pressure of recession. People who have lost their jobs are finding it difficult to meet both their ends. In the East, India is also progressing towards materialism and going against its ancient philosophical approach towards materialism, which favours a simple, non-materialistic life. (www.verdant.net/society.htm) Above views endorses Gandhian philosophy on consumerism.

3.13 Remark:

Thus, Gandhian views about consumption were prophetic. He knew that problems were within man, not outside. To quote Gandhi, "The world will live in peace only when the individual composing it make up their mind to do so." A way of life that depletes available natural resources will generate problems for the present and future generations. Therefore, to get the secured future and the maximum welfare of the maximum people, the need of the hour is to check our 'lust' and 'cravings'. For this purpose, we shall have to follow a non-violent way of life to economic activities. This concept is to be widened while dealing with living nature and finite resources of the earth. There is a need of unending commitment to ensure that man will survive
without falling into a state of worthless existence. Today, we are face to face a crisis of survival. Gandhian path and philosophy have answers to all the worries and anxieties of the modern world to some extent. The philosophy of Gandhi has been summarised beautifully by professor Schumacher in the following lines:

"Towards smallness rather than gigantism; towards simplification rather than growing complexity; towards capital saving rather than labour saving; and towards non-violence in a rather generalised sense."

The continuing multiplication of want associated with the spread of materialistic philosophy of life has brought the world to the brink of a major disaster. This is reflected in the ecological crisis, the ramifications of which are becoming clearer. Natural resources are being depleted at a faster rate. An economy based on the foundation of endless wants, lust, greed and propensity to accumulate would therefore not last long. It is in this context, that Gandhian doctrine of want limitation (which should be better understood as want regulation or moderation) becomes extremely significant for the survival of mankind. Thus, basic cause for multiplication of wants is change is lifestyle which has given rise to consumerism and mass productions. This exploits natural resources creating huge uncontrollable waste and expels labour creating unemployment, poverty and gives rise to crime. It is a vicious circle. Gandhian solution is to curb the wants and try to live simple and comfortable life. He also advised to accept at times voluntary poverty.

Résumé:

Consumerism is western materialism based on maximum production and maximum consumption which affects the human life and natural resources. It is our insatiable desire to have more and more, accelerated the process of depletion of natural resources. Hence Gandhian call to containment of wants is relevant in rapidly depleting natural resources, bio-diversity and eco-system.

In the next chapter Agenda-21 and Gandhian Philosophy is compared. It is striking to note that most of the issues covered by Gandhian philosophy form integrated part of Agenda 21 of Rio summit which gives blue print of sustainable development for 21st century. It means Gandhian philosophy acceptable to world forum.