CHAPTER I
IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF GANDHI'S ALL INDIA MOVEMENTS

The one person who inspired and shaped the course of the Indian freedom movement, uninterruptedly for the longest span of time is, undoubtedly Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi. This is by now a well-established and accepted fact of history that the period between 1920 and 1947 in Indian history is commonly referred to as the Gandhian Era. Although Gandhi returned to India in 1915 yet he entered the national movement on the eve of peace treaties of 1919, after the first world war, when the people of India felt let down and betrayed by the British not honoring their promises of promoting progressive realization of responsible government in India. He was advised to maintain silence on political affairs of India for one year till he fully acquainted himself with social, political and economic situation of India. Gandhi took an all India tour and his participation in problems of the people of Champaran Ahmedabad and Kheda gave him a fair idea of the Indian situation and brought him closer to the people of India.

His tour of the country brought Gandhi face to face with abject poverty, injustice and exploitation to which his countrymen had been subjected by the British. He found Indians inert with low morale, fear-stricken and ignorant. In 1918, he helped in 'war effort', but in 1919 launched an anti-British movement - Rowlatt satyagraha, in protest against a repressive law which was enacted by the Government of India to suppress political crime in the country. The Rowlatt Act was designed to equip the Government of India with the authority to deal with the outbreaks of revolutionary crimes - initiated by terrorist groups in Bengal Maharashtra and Punjab. Gandhi was shocked at the vicious spirit which inspired the new legislation as he wrote,

"To me, the Bills are the aggravated symptoms of the deep - seated disease. They are a striking demonstration of the determination of the civil
service to retain its grip of our necks. There is not the slightest desire to give up an iota of its unlimited powers.5

His appeal to the viceroy against the Rowlatt Bills was ignored. He was approached by few congress leaders and consequently satyagraha sabha was formed of which Gandhi became the leader. The members pledged to defy the Act and court arrest voluntarily. This novel method of agitation appealed to the Indian people. The whole country witnessed a unique mass agitation. The Government retaliated with brutal repressive measures resulting in Jallianwala Bagh massacre and other Punjab atrocities. Gandhi suspended the agitation as he felt that people were not yet conversant with his twin concepts of Truth and Ahimsa - the cardinal principles of satyagraha.

To Gandhi, by this time, his responsibility and role he was to play had become clear. He had the experience of his methods and ideology. As is well accepted that Gandhi shook the Indian masses out of slumber set the example of winning independence for the country without blood shed through non-violence. Many would consider, and with fair reason, Gandhi to be a creative leader. Richard Schmidt has elaborated,

"Creative leadership emerges when a personality becomes a propulsive force for a value or complex of values or in certain circumstances for a systematic program, rallying about himself a group of men a stronger pressure than could emanate from any individual. The program may be directed towards material ends - economic, technical or political - or toward spiritual ends - religious moral, humanitarian, artistic.6

Gandhi undoubtedly is a creative leader who aimed at transforming the society for the freedom of each individual - by propagating higher values of life. As he saw the spark of the divine in each individual, and found that God as Truth is in fact alleviation of the misery of the meanest, therefore, for Gandhi truth does not give
an air of superiority over others but a feeling of relatedness and a sense of identification with fellowbeings.

Gandhi's creativity is apparent from the fact that in order to reach the poor masses, his identification with them was total. He dressed like them, he spoke their language, whatever he said to them was comprehensible to most of them. They considered him to be one of them. For their participation and betterment he changed the whole style of Congress politics. He wanted to clear India of its ills. Thus he presented a programme - a plan of action, which many of his colleagues have called two-fold destructive and constructive. He cleared the society of its evils and then planned to build a new structure. Another factor, which confirms Gandhi as a creative leader is that through constant infectious personal example Gandhi was able to inspire many men and women to undergo privation and suffering in pursuance of non-violent ideal so that the lowly could be emancipated. Another characteristic of Gandhi as a creative leader is that he made an attempt to enrich or alter the existing stock of values in the possession of Indian Society, "by gaining acceptance for an innovation freshly created by the leader or, if, the innovation has been borrowed from another culture by diffusing it in the new area".

He made the creed of non-violence, truth, popularly acceptable to that generation of Indians. He stirred their lives and awakened the inert masses of India. Gandhi has been able to establish his strength as a dynamic leader as "embodied in the followers who gather about him." The striking example is to be found in Gandhi's Satyagrahas and more specifically salt satyagraha movement of 1930-34, when Gandhi was in prison yet his followers - both leaders and masses carried it on most vigorously and rigorously in his absence. In the words of Gokhale Gandhi had in him "the marvellous spiritual power to turn ordinary men around him into heroes and
martyrs.\textsuperscript{8} Gandhi brought a visible and definite change in the life, outlook of people and the freedom struggle.

To carry his plans through undoubtedly, Gandhi had definite views which he has cogently and coherently expressed in his writings and also translated into action about how to steer the movement and make India free, certain interpreters, historians and biographers of Gandhi would term these as ideology.

In this context ideology is understood to be a set of ideas and beliefs held to be self-evident truths worthy of propagation. It is a form of social or political philosophy in which practical elements are as prominent as theoretical ones; it is a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it.\textsuperscript{9}

Gandhi had a vision of exploitation free society which he wanted to attain and called by various names such as Swaraj, Ram Rajya or Sarvodya. Gandhi's was an ideology of non-violent, non-cooperation. The basic principle of non-cooperation is withdraw of support to illegitimate authority. Gandhi was convinced of the fact that the British are able to rule because the Indians pay allegiance\textsuperscript{10} and he tried to make the masses see this truth. The secret of British power lay in the support given to it by the Indians. Swaraj' could be realized if the support were withdrawn. The implementation of this required first dealing with other problems, namely, political awakening, fearlessness of the ruler, creation of feeling of oneness of diverse ethnic, religious and regional identities.

For this the foremost task was to organize the Indian national Congress by giving it a constitution, ideology and mass-base. The implementation of Gandhi's Satyagraha and constructive programme was made possible by the existence of Indian National congress - the institutional organ of the freedom movement. Indian National congress before Gandhi's entry was not, what it is to-day, a country wide organization.
"In retrospect", says Shridharni, "the birth of Congress presents an almost comic picture. A few exceedingly prosperous and urban Indians, with Oxford and Cambridge background together with British tastes in dress, food and accents, gathered together once a year for three days in an outstanding Indian city. Humourists have said these men pleaded the case of India made goods while ramming their hands the pockets of their saville row or Bond street suits. Over and above the speeches, these meetings resulted in several petitions to the Viceroy."

At best it was a very small, select group and the overwhelming illiterate peasantry did not know that the organization existed. The first task Gandhi undertook was to reorganize this organization. No doubt for a while he sanctioned the old congress policy of legitimate means. After the happenings of 1919, he prevailed upon the leaders to rephrase the policy as peaceful and legitimate means’ meaning whereby it would be extra legitimate’ but peaceful means, and later the word ‘legitimate’ was also done away with.

The next step was to renovate the set up. To make the congress National it must be organization of the masses, (i) English was replaced by Hindustani (ii) the membership fee was reduced so that the poor could also join (iii) Congress offices were setup in villages so that the inert millions living in the vast land of Indian villages could be awakened, to participate in the national cause. About people’s response to Gandhi it is said that in these villages, "One hamlet out of three was throughly indoctrinated in the credo of Satyagraha and had congress office of its own by the time of the national Satyagraha."

**Swaraj**

Even before entering the political arena in India, Gandhi had set his goal - Indian Home Rule which he describes in the booklet with the same title or better known as
‘Hind Swaraj’ in 1909. All his life, he struggled to achieve Swaraj which to him signified so many things.

Freedom for Gandhi was grounded on moral autonomy of individual. He saw it as a necessity having roots in individual psyche for he held that awakened individual conscience can sustain the society. It is thus inherent characteristic which is true Swaraj whose social and institutional dimensions depend upon the individual Gandhi maintained,

"The outward freedom, therefore, that we shall attain will be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment."¹⁵

Gandhi believed that if one man gains spiritually the whole world gains with him and if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent. For him Swaraj seems to be "the abandonment of the fear of death,"¹⁶ therefore, a perfect freedom from all bondage.

Swaraj is vitally connected with the capacity for, dispassionate self assessment, ceaseless self-purification and his association with simple minded labourers convinced him that moral advancement and social rejuvenation are interdependent and that individual and national evolution should occur simultaneously. Swaraj is thus incompatible with exploitation in any form¹⁷.

Gandhi held "when you demand Swaraj you donot want Swaraj for yourself alone but for your neighbour too."¹⁸ Gandhi’s vision of Swaraj is not narrow but universal freedom,

"My ambition is much higher than independence through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the earth from the crushing heels of western exploitation in which England is the greatest partner.... India’s coming to her own will mean every nation doing like wise."¹⁹.
Gandhi's goal of transformation of the existing society into his Swaraj was not restricted to India; he was a universalist who hoped and worked for more just world community. To quote him,

"not merely freedom of India, though today it undoubtedly engrosses practically the whole of my life and the whole of my time. But through realization of the freedom of India, I hope to realize and carry on the mission of brotherhood of man"20

Gandhi's Swaraj in a world dedicated to Satya and ahimsa could become the basis of global swaraj, a universal Ramrajya or golden age.

Gandhi points out a logical order of priority in the process of attainment of Swaraj. But exploitation had to be countered first through Swadeshi self-rule in all its dimensions aims at self reliance in which each unit must have its own ground on moral work and lend support to the others. Thus making way for decentralised India of village republics.

"In this structure composed of innumerable villages there will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, showing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units. Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it...21"

In 1937 the meaning of Swaraj finds further elaboration, "It is complete independence of alien control and complete economic independence. So at one end you have political independence at the other the economic. It has two other ends. One of them is moral and social, the corresponding end is Dharma i.e. religion in the highest sense of the term. It includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all. You may recognize it by the name of Truth, not the honesty of expedience

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but the living Truth that pervades everything and will survive all destruction and all transformation. Moral and social uplift may be recognized by the term - we are used to, i.e., non-violence. Let us call this square of Swaraj, which will be out of shape if any of its angles is untrue.22

Thus politically Gandhi's Swaraj is "a state such that we can maintain our separate existence without the presence of the English. If it is to be a partnership, it must be a partnership at will."23 and by 'Swaraj I mean the Government of India by a consent of the people ascertained by the vote of the largest number of the adult population male or female, native born or domiciled who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters.24

The economic dimension of Swaraj also found an expression in Gandhi's writings. Swaraj has but one meaning the eradication of the poverty of India" and "all men and women will have enough clothing... and enough food also. In fact such a state will be free from economic exploitation ensuring economic equality.25

Socially Swaraj implied regard for the interests of all. Swaraj thus won through non-violent struggle and self-purification, would solve the problem of minorities in India. Swaraj can never be achieved by crushing the rights of any community big or small but by ensuring even-handed justice and fair treatment to all even the poorest and the weakest in the land.26 There will be no untouchability, no communal riots, no communal tension and equal status of women in his Swaraj.

One more dimension of Swaraj, Gandhi referred to, is moral, he also calls it spiritual swaraj. As his religion is universal religion not limited to Hinduism, Christianity, Islam or Zorastrism but it is above all and transcends all Gandhi suggests it can be achieved through prayer. "The prayer, you will note, is not exclusive. It is not restricted to one's own caste or community. It is all-inclusive. It comprehends the
whole of humanity. Its realization would thus mean the establishment of the kingdom of Heaven on earth."27 This is description of the ideal Swaraj, closest to Gandhi's heart without which political independence had no meaning for he hoped for deliverance of the enslaved millions of the world through India's independence. His India will be a champion of global interdependence and international cooperation. Subjugation of a nation deadens the morale of the people. No nation will rule over the other.

In a nutshell just as the individual continuously strives for self-purification similarly national Swaraj requires national self-purification. the removal of social abuses, elimination of economic exploitation, transcending religious differences, reconstructing social, economic structures reservation of moral values thus... comprehensive reform of the entire system.

Gandhi while denouncing and castigating imperial rule, also, pointed out the weaknesses of the Indians themselves which they themselves would have to overcome to realize Swaraj. This Swaraj would be true Swaraj which is an expression intrinsic truth of the individual can be realized only with truth and non-violence.

The essence of Swaraj thus is self-reliance or swadeshi as he called it, because in swadeshi lies the collective strength. He explains swadeshi, "dependence upon immediate sources...". This applies to all the requirements of the individual-spiritual, moral, economic, social and political. By Swadeshi, Gandhi did not suggest any romantic rugged individualism but active force for collective effort towards independence as he did not maintain any distinction between ethical self-transformation and endeavour for collective welfare. It is important to point out that the economic dimension of swadeshi for Gandhi is, to produce as much as possible for local consumption and barter rest for necessities. It is this far that Gandhi would go to obtain essential goods but no further than strictly required for consumer
economics which encouraged mass - poverty which is the worst social disease. In its political context swadeshi can be considered patriotism. In moral context it is dharma. In the economic form it is elimination of exploitation and dependence. Socially, it is service of the community.

In the struggle for swaraj Gandhi continuously emphasised on swadeshi through non-cooperation and constructive programme. For swaraj could have no lasting foundation, he held, without the systematic application of swadeshi.

Satya

In principle satya is prior to ahimsa, however, for Gandhi they are interchangeably intertwined. One being the end and the other as the legitimate means. For the pursuit of satya the adoption and practice of ahimsa is immediate requirement.

Individual, and collective transformation integration and transcendence could be achieved through consolidating a close connection between satya and ahimsa - truth and non-violence. His practical idealism enabled him to find flexibility amid constancy and was unconcerned and untrammeled by the dead weight of convention. a ‘Karma Yogi’ Gandhi was not inclined to construct a systematic philosophy instead he discerned at endless possibilities of creating positive conditions of human interaction. "Men are good", he wrote, "but they are poor victims making themselves miserable under the false belief that they are doing good". To overcome this, human beings must question themselves. Satya and ahimsa thus for Gandhi, are the two ultimate universal principles to be used to clarify individual's thinking and conflicting desires. A constant awareness of the supremacy of truth and its practice frees one from dependence and over-assertion or violent appropriation or partial truth.
Gandhi believes that we are all sparks of the divine must, therefore, begin with individual then spread among the masses to transform the entire social order.

As Gandhi always stressed that nothing exists in reality except truth every thing else is illusion. Satya is derived from Sat which means being; the ultimate reality in the Indian tradition is the ultimate goal of all human endeavour for Gandhi. Truth thus is not only the most important and all inclusive principle but also prior to all other human virtues and qualities. To Gandhi, it is the very breath of our life. It is the ability to determine truth for himself that distinguishes man from the brute.

Realist that he is, Gandhi explains that the pursuit of truth is a constant continuous dynamic process, yet there are degrees of comprehension and attainment of the absolute.

While maintaining God as impersonal all-pervading reality he deliberately and distinctly shifted his emphasis from God to Truth as the ultimate to Truth is God - to truth as the objective of the human beings. Satya derived from Sat. Truth alone exists, and if there is God, God must be Truth. God is difficult to define but the definition of Truth is deposited in every human heart. Mahadev Desai, Gandhi's secretary for the longest period wondered if truth could inspire men and conduct movements in the sense in which belief in God could. Gandhi explained to him that he used the word Truth in a wide sense as denoting, the moral law governing the universe. Moreover Gandhi assigns the additional reason for this reformulation of the proverbial axiom, "Truth means existence; the existence of that we know and of that we do not know. The sum total of all existence is absolute truth or the Truth ... the concepts of Truth may differ. But all admit and respect truth. That truth I call God..." Thus Gandhi finds common basis for common quest by the theists and the atheists together. Gandhi's considerations here are not at all spiritual or metaphysical but totally practical. As a result his Truth has to be understood both as an absolute value and a
relative reality of the totality of the things. No human being could ever know the truth in its fullness, yet none could be denied of it completely. \(^{36}\) Gandhi explains to a follower:

"As I proceed in my search for truth it grows upon me that Truth comprehends every thing... what is perceived by a pure heart and intellect is truth for that moment. Cling to it, and it enables one to reach pure Truth... the wonderful implication of the great truth Brahma Satyam Jagabmithya (Brahma is real, all else unreal) has grown on me from day to day. It teaches us patience. It will purge us of harshness and add to our tolerance. It will make us magnify the molehills of our errors into mountains and minimize the mountains of others' into molehills."\(^{37}\)

It is, therefore, that Gandhi insists upon the adoption of Truth as the guiding principle... and is satisfied if we are able to realize part truth by even some of us, for he believes, "that a truth of a few will count and untruth of millions will disappear like chaffe before a whiff of wind.\(^{38}\) The few who observe truth are, "the salt of the earth, it is they who keep the earth together...\(^{39}\) It is the pursuit of few because Gandhi is conscious of the self sacrifices self-discipline that this pursuit demands, the quest of truth involves tapas or self-suffering; even unto death. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest... pursuit of Truth is the true Bhakti (devotion)... there is no place in it for cowardice and defeat."\(^{40}\)

In politics Gandhi pleaded for a truthful programme by truthful parties.\(^{41}\) In regard to the practical application to politics and society of Gandhi's concept of Truth, certain dilemmas and difficulties were raised by Nehru who was Gandhi's most critical follower. "I am not talking", said Nehru, "about the ultimate Truth but rather the right direction in which to go, the right step, the truth for the present whatever it may be."\(^{42}\) He seems to realize that the politician unlike the prophet, unlike the seeker after ultimate Truth has always to think in terms either of compromise or of the choice of evils and he has to choose what he considers the lesser evil lest the creator overwhelms. Gandhi was not absolutely unaware of these difficulties, but he does not consider them
greater than those faced by scientists and explorers. Like them, politicians were also being tested and faced a continual challenge to their integrity and beliefs.

Gandhi's Truth by definition must always triumph. He does concede victory of truth is neither easy nor self-evident at any given moment. However, he insists truth must triumph; by definition, if it does not it is not really truth. It is not merely that truth is certain of eventual victory but also in Gandhian view absolutely essential for survival as untruth is founded in fear and insecurity and no man can be happy or stable in such a state. Gandhi would not accept any failure as final because if is not the inadequacy of truth but the impurity in one's quest. Subtlest element of egoistic dogmatism, even unconscious dishonesty would be ruinous to the politician's cause.

Truth was the sole value in all human activity and the ultimate authority of appeal the 'raison de etre' of all existence. He, in his autobiography writes.

"To see... truth face to face one must love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that can not afford to backout of it in any field of life. That is why my devotion to truth has drawn me into the field of politics."43

Here the meaning of truth for purposes of human action is viewed as justice in the society, through religion and politics which in any way is inseparable for Gandhi.

The significance of Gandhi's concept of truth in the realm of social and political activity is in undermining the external authority in relation to the moral autonomy of the individual "I would reject all authority if it is in conflict with sober reason or the dictates of the heart. Authority sustains and ennobles the weak when it is the handwork of reason but it degrades them when it supplants reason sanctified by the still small voice within."44. The votary of truth must thus pursue truth not only for its sake but also that he can appeal to it as the ultimate anchor of sanctity beyond positive law and of the state and the pressure of mass society.
Ahimsa

Undoubtedly, satya is the highest value for Gandhi, he is commonly identified, in the popular mind with Ahimsa, "Gandhi will be remembered as one of the very few who have set the stamp of an idea on an epoch. That idea is Non-Violence." For Gandhi used the ultimate value in relation to the means hence non-violence is the only means for the attainment of the ultimate end. Before explaining the Gandhian view of relationship of ends and means it is advisable to analyse Gandhi’s concept of Non-violence. Non-violence is an inadequate translation of the word Ahimsa which Gandhi means. Literally Ahimsa means non-killing or injury. But in its broader sense it means renunciation of not only the desire to kill but even the intention to hurt any one. Ahimsa has been an essential belief in Buddhism, Jainism and other religions. All these have a place in shaping Gandhi’s views so have some authors like Tolstoy. It is said non-violence or Ahimsa is a negative term. It would be worthwhile to reproduce in Gandhi’s own words the distinction between negative and positive meanings of ahimsa,

"In its negative form it means not injuring any living being, whether by body or mind. I may not, therefore, hurt the person of any wrong-doer or bear any ill-will to him, and so cause him mental suffering. This statement does not cover suffering caused to the wrong-doer by natural acts of mine which do not proceed from ill-will... Ahimsa requires deliberate self suffering not a deliberate injuring of the supposed wrong-doer... In its positive form, Ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of Ahimsa, I must love my enemy or a stranger to me as I would my wrong doing father or son. This active Ahimsa necessarily includes truth and fearlessness."46

At times Gandhi equated ahimsa with innocence, with reason, with charity, love, humility, fearlessness, selflessness, non-attachment etc. and defended in term similar to the golden rule. "The basic principle on which the practice of non-violence rests is what holds good, rest is that what holds good in respect of one self, equally applies to
the whole universe, all mankind in essence are alike, what is therefore possible for one is possible for everyone."\textsuperscript{47}

Gandhi justifies his choice of non-violence as a higher value, "I have found", he says, "that life persists amidst destruction, only under that law a society would be intelligible and life worth living." Infact he maintains that ahimsa has kept the human beings together, and humanity has to still progress through ahimsa alone.

Gandhi believes that although universally applicable, the excercise had to be examplified by a few votaries who underwent comprehensive self-discipline demonstrating detachment.

Gandhi further elaborates the meaning that non-violence also implies an inability to go on witnessing another's pain. Ahimsa is intended and expected to convert rather than to coerce the wrong doer. but the more positive and dynamic ingredient in Ahimsa is refusal to submit to injustice and infliction of self injury or the ability of self-suffering. "Self injury in one's own person... is the essence of true non-violence".\textsuperscript{48}

In politics and society Ahimsa is based on Gandhi's view the immutable maxim that obedience to government authority is a duty of the citizen as long as the government is based on people's consent, while accepting that those in authority do use force, but those who obey have the choice to submit to force or to resist it. In their mutual relations an attitude of non-violence is inevitably a necessary condition for removal of tension."\textsuperscript{49}

Disregard for non-violence is the sure way to destruction. Gandhi, thus, feels that if freedom is to be of lasting value it must come through peaceful conversion. "True democracy or the swaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means, for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be
to remove all opposition through suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated ahimsa.50

Gandhi believed that a state could be organized on the basis of non-violence. In a non-violent swaraj there can be no encroachment upon just rights and no one can possess unjust right.51

The realist in Gandhi regards the notion of non-violent state on civilian lines. Perfect non-violence while you are inhabiting the body is only a theory like Euclid’s straight line.52

Just as human limitations necessitate elaboration of truth as absolute and relative, similarly Gandhi clearly distinguishes non-violence as creed and policy. To him individually it was a creed, “the very breath of my life”53. Prudently a policy for those who had failed, for those who have not perfected non-violence, here critics have unnecessarily charged him of inconsistency but Gandhi, essentially practical while dealing with practical problems, knew that the ordinary mortals are not capable of paying the price for it since ordinary mortals cannot pay the price for it the few by perfecting it will motivate the masses to adopt it as a policy.

Gandhi was fully conscious that the non-violence with the congress was always a policy never a creed and he was all the time hoping the policy may take the shape of a creed. Gandhi allowed ahimsa as a policy to convince the people of the futility of violence. As a creed non-violence implies (a) rigorous self-purification and ethical discipline and the taking of vows; (b) government which renounces nuclear weapons is potentially capable of displaying Ahimsa to an enormous extent; (c) non-violence generates moral power. Greater the moral power, lesser the need for physical force. (d) That non-violence cannot fail. The apparent failure is that of the user because of
his/her moral inadequacy. (e) The votary of ahimsa never aims at defeating anybody, bringing about the desirable change.

**Satyagraha**

Gandhi’s firm conviction that adherence to Truth and Ahimsa alone can bring permanent positive results or achieve the noble end of India’s freedom found manifestation in satyagraha. The term satyagraha was coined in South Africa in 1906. Etymologically, the term, satyagraha means passion for, or firmness in Truth—in Sanskrit it is satya (= Truth) + agraha (= passion or firmness). Gandhi realized the inadequacy of the phrase ‘passive resistance’ that he employed in earlier campaigns in South Africa. Passive resistance’ was often taken as the last resort of the one who had no power, howsoever, which was incompatible with Gandhi’s abiding conviction that truth generates moral superiority is indisputable, provided the moral force is sufficiently developed to create and stiffen morale which is not common or usual among general run of the people.

This belief formed the basis of Gandhi’s campaign for Swaraj and found expression and application in the twin tools (i) Satyagraha and (ii) Constructive Programme. In his own words,

"Satyagraha is, literally, holding onto Truth, and it means therefore truthforce. Truth is the soul or spirit. It is, therefore, known as soulforce. It excludes the use of violence because man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth and therefore not competent to punish. It is not conceived as a weapon of the weak."

Satyagraha is a doctrine of comprehensive social and political application of Satya and ahimsa. As an ethical imperative connotes truthforce, the luminous power of truth directed towards the promotion of social welfare. At the same time it is a policy of action to confront injustice and hostility through an effective appeal to conscience. Thus to Gandhi, satyagraha is a ceaseless effort to achieve justice.
"Satyagraha", as Gandhi described is, "movement intended to replace methods of violence and a movement based entirely upon truth..."58 Thus a satyagrahi must resist injustice whenever and wherever it occurs. Just as light diminishes darkness by its presence so does a satyagrahi by his suffering, exposes and fights, injustice. As light spells shadows so does satyagrahi eliminate injustice without harming its agent.

Gandhi was convinced that satyagrahi elevates the ethical tone of individuals and institutions and attempts to raise the welfare of all, voluntary fidelity to satya and ahimsa will strengthen the individual to gain sufficient authority from popular support to challenge the entrenched powers. This is what Gandhi had proved by becoming an exemplary satyagrahi - through personal example in South Africa and later in India - in Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad. While satyagraha was the most powerful conceivable source for social zeal, it was also the most hazardous to be used discreetly with wise deliberation. Recognizing this caution, he pressed on the strict preconditions that must govern a satyagrahi. A satyagrahi is required to take the vows of (i) Satya (ii) ahimsa (iii) asteya (iv) aparigraha (v) asvad (vi) brahmcharya (vii) swadeshi (viii) bodily labour (ix) abolition of untouchability (x) tolerance (xi) fearlessness.59

As ideologically, the Gandhian way of life is most exacting, it demands of the agent an uncompromising and all-around purity of words, thoughts and deeds; such an unblemished life of purity is possible only for a seeker of truth in the typically Gandhi:...n sense - relentlessly steadfast who would not abandon his mission. The satyagrahesis were required to observe the following conduct, "(i) Harbour no anger but suffer the anger of the opponent, and refuse to return the assaults of the opponent. (ii) Not to submit to any order given in anger, even though severe punishment be threatened for disobeying. (iii) Refrain from insults and swearing. (iv) Protect opponent from insult, attack, even at the risk of life. (v) Not to resist arrest, the
attachment of property unless holding property as a trustee. (vi) Refuse to surrender any property held in trust at the risk of life. (vii) If taken prisoner, behave in an exemplary manner. (viii) Obey the orders of satyagraha leaders, and resign from the unit in the event of severe disagreement. (ix) Not to expect guarantees for the maintenance of dependents.60

Since a satyagrahi is required to fully assimilate the above prerequisites and develop moral courage and will to fulfill them, the exercise of purest soul force in its purest form brings about instantaneous relief.61

Certain authors have pointed out that Gandhi’s satyagraha moves in stages/steps62 such as (i) Negotiation, Arbitration (ii) Preparation of a group through awareness and public opinion (iii) agitation, mass demonstrations, parade, processions (iv) Issuing of ultimatum (v) Economic boycott and forms of strike such as Picketing, Dharna and strike (vi) Non-cooperation through non-payment of taxes, boycott of schools and other public institutes, ostracism and even voluntary exile (vii) Civil Disobedience of certain general/symbolic or specific laws (viii) and (ix) are interrelated as these are usurping functions of government and parallel government.63

Similarly there are forms of satyagraha which have been categorized. Raghvan Iyer in his philosophical interpretation states three categories. The first is purificatory or penitential consisting of prayers, fasts and pledges. The second category is withdrawal of support to evil which includes modes of non-cooperation such as hartal, boycott, strikes fast and hijrat. The third refusal to obey the illegitimate authority of the state puts various forms of civil disobedience which may manifest in picketing, marches, non-payment of taxes and deliberate defiance of a particular law.64

Satyagraha is not to be used in personal or utilitarian terms nor to take advantage of the antagonist’s weak position. To dispel all apprehensions of the opponent one must demonstrate and establish greater willingness to suffer than to cause suffering.
Coercion in all its forms had to be eliminated from satyagrahi's strategy. Satyagraha, Gandhi was emphatic, properly understood and executed is effective and precise, the length of time involved was variable depending upon the form of satyagraha.

The success or failure of the movement, Gandhi maintained, depended on motives and application. In principle satyagraha is invincible to Gandhi. And satyagrahi is not in a position of inferiority. He is a free man with moral power as Gandhi wrote, "A satyagrahi enjoys a degree of freedom not possible for others, for he becomes a truly fearless person."65

He has conquered fear, crushed irrational anxieties even fear of death. Such a seeker of truth has prepared himself to face deprivation and suffering, detaches himself from bonds of emotion and affection and desire, refuses to be tyrannized and aspires for sublime contentment which does not come easily. "Men of great physical strength are rare, rarer, must be those who derive their strength from truth.

A Satyagrahi will not use harsh words and not be intoxicated, not confuse moral authority with intoxicating power, use free time for community service for ameliorating social conditions. Credibility of the resister ceases the moment a satyagrahi deviates from declared code, gap between intention and conduct earns him the charge of hypocrisy. A satyagrahi will willingly court arrest and does not retaliate. Gandhi's non-resistance, thus is "active resistance in a different plane. Non-resistance to evil does not mean absence of any resistance what so ever but it means not resisting evil with evil but with good. Resistance, therefore, is transferred to a higher and absolutely effective plane."66

Satyagraha, theoretically Gandhi held, was universal in its application and all human beings could participate but not without adequate training and preparation, for to involve unprepared masses was to tempt them to Duragraha. The unremitting
concern for purity of act of civil resistance occasionally made. Gandhi suspend a movement and frustrate his followers.

Constructive Programme

Having thus, elaborated the ideal satyagrahi and the broad characteristics of a satyagrahi, Gandhi goes on to define the training ground for a satyagrahi namely Constructive Programme. Infact, Gandhi envisaged Constructive Programme as the indispensable positive component in the implementation of satyagraha. To Gandhi, Constructive Programme is inseparable from satyagraha; the counter part of Swaraj, as is truth from non-violence and religion from politics. Constructive work and civil Disobedience are the two sides of the same coin. There could be no effective marshalling of millions of people without constructive work and

"handling of civil Disobedience without constructive programme will be like a paralysed hand attempting to lift a spoon."67

Although in the long term, for Gandhi, it became a pre-requisite for Swaraj without which Swaraj would be unsustainable.

"Thirty four years of continuous experimenting in truth and non-violence have convinced me that non-violence cannot be sustained unless it is linked with conscious body-labour and finds expression in our daily contacts with our neighbours. This is the Constructive Programme."68

The Constructive Programme comprised of items such as Khadi, Communal harmony, abolition of untouchability, prohibition, village industries, a new scheme of education, emancipation of women, village sanitation and hygiene, development of provincial languages and the abolition of English, establishment of economic equality, Improvement of peasants, labour and student organisation on non-political basis, uplift of the aboriginal tribes, services and rehabilitation of lepers and improvement of cattle, cow protection.

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The Constructive Programme, thus, aimed at concerted collective work for promotion of common good. While it would generate vast reservoirs of non-violent strength, will also serve as basis of moral authority for political and social programmes. He thought that the judicious combination of non-violent resistance and constructive work will make a comprehensive programme of India's regeneration and reconstruction. Gandhi seems to realize that this would raise two issues (i) the replacement of the then existing institutions and relations by another (ii) the method to resolve the contradictions, conflicts that would arise in the process. He dealt the first by devising Constructive Programme in detail in the contemporary context, and sought to resolve the conflict through satyagraha. Satyagraha and Constructive Programme are thus treated as tools of social control. The Constructive Programme is very thoughtfully planned to establish decentralized socio-politico-economic institutions. Non-violent nature of the programme is manifest in the activities defined above.

Through the implementation of Satyagraha and Constructive Programme by the whole nation Gandhi hoped Swaraj will become a reality. For Swaraj, Gandhi observes,

"will not drop from heaven all of a sudden one fine morning. But it has to be built up brick by brick by corporate self-effort."

But if in the course of this constructive endeavour they meet with opposition from any quarter they resort to satyagraha. Thus constructive workers are to play the double role of builders of the ideal society and a reserve army of non-violent resisters.

Through Constructive Programme Gandhi wanted to innervate the inert people of India. Only a sense of equality could create self-reliance which in return would strengthen them to resist. Gandhi realized that boycott of foreign cloth would be
effective only if Indians became self-reliant. Khadi, based on principle of bread labour
was an effort to make the poorest in India acquire self-employment and self-respect
and inculcating the values necessary for India's regeneration.

While impressing upon the need for implementation of Constructive
Programme during the freedom struggle, Gandhi explained its possible fourfold
impact: "(i) masses gain an idea of exploitation free, social and economic order for
which they are striving. (ii) It generates self-reliance and internal cohesion useful
during non-violent resistance also. (iii) It gives staying power in a long drawn struggle:
so preserving morale. (iv) A bond of trust is created between constructive workers-
cum-civil resisters and the average citizen by conducting this programme in peace
time. This trust proves to be immensely helpful in moments of national crisis." 72

He urged the volunteers to occupy themselves with that neglected work which
brings neither fame nor power to an individual. Those resisters who courted
imprisonment have not completed their obligation to India without surrendering
themselves to Constructive Programme. All political work fell for him within the
Constructive Programme and its merits could be judged only in terms of lasting social
transformation. Constructive work included individual and collective efforts at unity
between diverse religious communities. 73 Gandhi from his South African days had
asserted that his life was devoted to demonstrating unity between the two
communities is the indispensible condition to salvation of India. The removal of
social abuses such as untouchability, exploitation of labour and women, programme
of rural education and reconstruction, decentralization of production and
distribution, schemes for the hygiene, sanitation and diet. The promotion of local
handicrafts and concerted work by all to promote common good.

Through Satyagraha and Constructive Programme with truth and non-violence
as the guiding principles, Gandhi aimed at attaining Swaraj.
His vision of Swaraj made him develop the concept of Sarvodaya or the non-violent society. For Gandhi, self-dependence was a crucial lever for non-violent social transformation, "Self dependence is a necessary ideal so long as it is an aid to spiritual disciplining and one's self respect" and awakening a new impulse in the hidden depths of social life. This conviction and his faith in the collective endeavour for common cause made Gandhi cherish the ideal of Ramrajya-Sarvodaya. In Sarvodaya society power would be diffused and decentralized, morality will be prior to sectional interest, competition will be replaced by concord-as spiritual requirements of a civilized people - which would eventually benefit all humanity. The emphasis, here is on mutual responsibility rather than self-seeking. The focus of social life is not rights of the individual but an active concern with obligations. The votaries of sarvodaya while respecting the innovativeness of technology must renounce soulless mechanization.

Through revolutionary change in the attitude of masses towards consumption, wealth and work, the rising tide of personal expectation and misery could be mitigated. Gandhi had little faith in capability of theorists and their theories for alleviating the misery of toiling masses. It is, therefore, the masses whom he calls upon to engage in 'Bread-labour' and devote themselves to the service of the Daridranarayan. Thus inducting another concept Swadharma. Under all circumstances, Gandhi held, the individual freedom to serve universal welfare must be preserved even though it amounts to defying state authority, only then this society will be assured of the regenerating influence of truth-force - Satyagraha.

Before taking up the historiography of Gandhi's All-India Movements, it should be of interest to briefly mention the issues involved, techniques applied and the consequences of each satyagraha movement.
Rowlatt Act Satyagraha 1919

The year 1919 was a fateful year for Gandhi, India and Britain; Britain won the war, India resentful over the broken promises, Gandhi losing faith in the British sense of justice.

The 1919 reforms demolished all hopes in the Congress of constitutional concessions. The peasants and the industrial workers were restless due to rising prices and appalling conditions under which they were working. The Muslim were in any case angry on the issue of Caliphate. All sections were ready for action. The Government tried to suppress the wave of anger and revolt through the Rowlatt Bills. One of the bills was a measure to deal with situation arising from the expiry of the Defence of India Rules; the second one was aimed at making a permanent change in the criminal law that an intention to publish seditious material, its possession, circulation will be punishable with imprisonment: Gandhi had read about them and described them as "unmistakable symptom of a deep-seated disease in the governing body."

Gandhi was called upon to start a mass movement, strictly in accordance with the rules of Satyagraha. Gandhi first implored the government to withdraw the bills and felt that resistance to the proposed measure can be offered by a handful pledging themselves to Satyagraha. The pledge was drafted by Gandhi on 24th Feb. 1919 at the Sabarmati Ashram and signed by all present.

"Being conscientiously of the opinion that the Rowlatt Bills... are unjust, subversive of the principle of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals on which the safety of the community as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that, in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as a Committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit and we further affirm that in this struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property".
Gandhi to Delhi and Amritsar. The Government however did not allow. Gandhi started for Delhi and Amritsar on 7th April and was served a prohibitory order against entry in Punjab on 10th and was put on a train for Bombay. Huge crowds gathered to receive Gandhi where the police ordered the crowd to disperse and the mounted police blindly cutting its way through the crowds and crushed under their feet many innocent people.

Similar reports of wild disturbances were received from Ahmedabad, rumour about Anusuya Behn's arrest upset many mill hands who resorted to violence attacking police. Gandhi proceeded to Ahmedabad and heard all sorts of disruptive mob activities. With the permission of the Government Gandhi addressed a public meeting on 13th April to appeal to the people to shun violence. He undertook fast for three days and appealed others also to observe fast for a day for self-purification while he was appealing to the public to undo their mistake in Ahmedabad, the situation in Punjab was worsening. The hartal had undoubtedly passed off smoothly. But the news of Gandhi's arrest created great stir resulting in passing the orders of deportation of two prominent leaders Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Kitchlew in Amritsar, killing and injuring unarmed protesting marchers. This was the beginning of still more brutal atrocities. The agitated people burnt several buildings, killed some Europeans including attack on a missionary Doctor Miss Sherwood. Things worsened with the arrival of Brigadier General Dyer in Amritsar on 11th April, who conducted himself as if the city was under the martial law even before it was formally announced on 15th April, on the very next day of his arrival the 12th of April, he ordered indiscriminate arrests and prohibited all public meetings. About the latter many in the city did not know. On April 13th, thousands of innocent people gathered to celebrate Baisakhi a religious festival of both Hindus and Sikhs at Jallianwalla Bagh, a walled park with just one outlet. General Dyer ordered firing without even warning and killed 379 and wounded 27.
thrice the number. This cast a spell of mourning and sorrow all over the country and revealed how helpless the Indians were. Gandhi on his part was more distressed to see that movement started by him lost its cardinal principle—non-violence, and he regretted that he misjudged the capacity of the people and called upon them to observe Satyagraha before they had qualified themselves for it. The failure of Satyagraha was neither the failure of principle, nor the technique nor of the people, it was typical of Gandhi to take the responsibility on himself and owning the error of judgement. He, thus formally, announced on 18th April that the people should stop agitating, "It is not without sorrow I feel compelled to advise the temporary suspension of Civil Disobedience", and publicly owned the Rowlatt Satyagraha as the Himalayan miscalculation on his part. Thereafter with the help of volunteers Gandhi commenced the programme of explaining to the people the meaning and discipline and significance of Satyagraha.

The use of the word suspension in Gandhi's statement of suspension of the movement meant that Satyagraha would be resumed at some later stage. In the meantime the AICC in its meeting on April 12th demanded an inquiry into the Punjab atrocities and reiterated it at Allahabad in June and in October 1919 the Hunter committee was appointed.

Gandhi's suspension of the movement did not in any way affect the general resentment in India against injustice and cruelty of the government. The national protest was voiced by Rabindranath Tagore who renouncing his knighthood and condemning British repression wrote in a letter on 30th May to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, the severity of punishment inflicted upon people is,

"without parallel in the history of civilized governments... Time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliations and I, for my part, wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions by the side of those countrymen who for their so-called insignificance are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings.
and these are the reasons which have painfully compelled me to ask your Excellency with due deference and regret, to relieve me of my title of knighthood, which I had the honour to accept from His Majesty the king at the hand of your predecessor for whose nobleless of heart I still entertain great admiration.  

Reforms

The Montague-Chelmsford bill issued in June 1919 received unfavourable response from all shades of public opinion in India. A strong section of congress was inclined to reject it altogether. In its annual session C.R. Das moved the resolution... this congress reiterates its declaration of the last year that India is fit for full responsible government... and is of the opinion that the reform act is inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing. Gandhi on the other hand, wanted the Congress to give the reforms a trial. Tilak and Gandhi were in favour of giving the reforms a fair trial. But the subsequent developments compelled Gandhi to revise his opinion.

Khilafat Agitation

In the year 1919, the British, after winning the war, offended the religious sentiments of the largest minority in India, on the issue of Caliphate. The Caliph, the Sultan of Turkey, was regarded the religious head of the Muslims of the world. Turkey had fought the war as an ally of Germany against Britain and lost it. Although the British government had been assuring the Indian Muslims that whatever may happen the independence of Turkey and her territorial integrity so far as her Asiatic dominions were concern would be maintained. But the terms of Armistice signed in Sevres dispossessed Turkey of the Ottoman Empire and deprived it of all real authority consequently resulting in abolition of Caliphate. The Muslims of India felt betrayed by the British, a storm of indignation and agitation broke out to force Britain change her policy.

Gandhi who, since his days in South Africa, had felt the need to establish unity between the two major communities found Khilafat agitation a proper moment for
'cementing Hindu-Muslim unity'. In November 1919 All-India Khilafat committee, elected Gandhi its President. At the December session of 1919, the Congress resolved to vigorously support the Khilafat movement. The Congress session was followed by All India Khilafat conference at Amritsar which decided to send a deputation fairly representative of Hindus and Muslims to present a memorandum to the viceroy.

Khilafat continued to be an issue for Gandhi in Non-cooperation movement.

**Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22)**

Mass resentment over the Hunter Committee Report absolving General Dyer of all responsibility of Jallianwala Bagh massacre and just indicting him with an 'error of judgement' and the growing unrest among the Muslims on the Khilafat issue were the immediate determinants forcing Gandhi to withdraw his allegiance to the British Government which he became convinced no longer enjoyed legitimacy.

The Congress had debated the issue of non-cooperation on 30th May 1920 and decided to hold a special session in September 1920 to consider the issue. In the meantime on Aug. 1, 1920, Gandhi gave the call for non-co-operation movement. The programme included triple boycott - boycott of educational institutions, law courts and legislatures. At the same time adoption of Swadeshi was emphasised and constructive work was introduced to: (i) propagate khadi, (ii) work for Hindu-Muslim unity, (iii) end untouchability.

In September, 1920 the special session of Congress at Calcutta, formally adopted the programme and confirmed it in December 1920 at the annual session at Nagpur.

In July 1921, Gandhi passionately advocated the boycott of foreign cloth and its bonfire. The Khilafat conference under Mohammad Ali declared it 'Haram' for the Muslims to serve the British Government. Ali brothers were arrested and sentenced...
to two years imprisonment. Gandhi gave a call to the peasantry for non-payment of taxes. The congress gave a call to boycott the visit of the Prince of Wales who was to inaugurate the working of new reforms. On the arrival of the Prince in Bombay on 17th November 1921 riots broke out in Bombay. Gandhi condemned rioting and undertook fast. The Government declared Congress illegal and arrested all its leaders except Gandhi, yet the boycott of foreign cloth and government educational institutions, lawcourts and legislatures was carried out throughout the country.

National Institutions were providing literary and technical education in all provinces. The ashrams were the centres of spinning and weaving, giving the masses a feeling that they were the participants in the fight. Gandhi's slogan - 'Swaraj within a year' gave an impetus and strength to the movement. The movement reached an unprecedented height in 1921-22.

There were mass struggles like Assam-Bengal Railway strike Midnapore No-Tax and Moplah rebellion. Moplahs, the Muslim peasantry of Malabar, rose against the British, money lenders and landlords who were mostly Hindus. This was a sort of no-tax campaign which took communal turn and caused a lot of bloodshed. As all other leaders were behind the bars, Gandhi was made the sole executive of the Congress and on 1st February 1922 he decided to launch the mass civil disobedience in Bardoli by campaigning the no tax Satyagraha, which he had to defer due to Chauri-Chaura incident in which mobs hacked twenty-two policemen to death and also threw the bodies in the already burning police station. Justifying the postponement of launching the civil disobedience in February 1922, Gandhi wrote to Nehru

"I assure you that if the civil resistance movement had not been suspended, we would have been leading not a non-violent struggle - the foetid smell of violence is still powerful, and it would be unwise to ignore or under-rate it." 78

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Sudden calling off the movement when it was at its zenith caused resentment among the leaders like Moti Lal Nehru, C.R. Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, Subhas Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru. Bose called it a national calamity. Whereas Nehru recalls, "We were angry when we learnt of this stoppage of our struggle at a time when we seemed to be consolidating our position and advancing on all fronts." Immediately Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to six years.

In December 1922 a fresh lead was taken by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru. They thought that the nationalists should end the boycott of Legislative Council, fight for the elections under the new constitution and wreck the constitution from within. But Sardar V. Patel and Dr. Rajendra Prasad opposed it and were called no changers. The former were called pro-changers or the Swarajists. They formed a party within the party, Gandhi tried to unite them and persuaded them to work from the platform of the Congress and gave his blessings. Gandhi was imprisoned for six years, but was released in 1924 on grounds of ill-health, he practically remained out of politics till 1928.

In 1927, Simon Commission was appointed to effect the 1919 reforms. On February 3, 1928, at its arrival the Simon Commission was boycotted by almost all parties on the ground that it was an all white commission without any Indian representative on it. Hartals were held to make the commission realize that it was not welcome. The demonstrations were dealt with harshly by the police by lathicharge etc. Police action against demonstrators became more frequent. In one such incident Lala Lajpat Rai succumbed to his injuries. The year 1928 was full of political activity. In response to Lord Birkenhead's challenge Indians geared up to produce an agreed constitution which is known as Nehru Report. It considered the main constitutional problems facing the country with great acumen. The recommendations were unanimous except in regard to the basis of the constitution, while the majority
favoured the Dominion Status a minority of young leftist leaders preseed for ‘Complete Independence’. But the report adopted a compromise. It accepted the Dominion Status not as a distant goal but as the immediate step. It, however, gave liberty of action to all those groups and parties which made complete independence their goal. Even the Congress passed a tactful resolution, though it approved the Nehru Report but reiterated that the goal of the Congress was complete independence. The Calcutta resolution welcoming the Report, added an ultimatum to the effect that if the British Government failed to accept the Nehru Report in its entirety on or before 31st December, 1929 or rejected it before that date the Congress would organise a campaign of non-violent non-cooperation.81

On October 21, 1928, Lord Irwin announced the holding of the Round Table Conference to discuss the future constitution of India. But failed to assure the Indian leaders that this conference would be held to frame the Indian constitution on Dominion Status. Moreover, the Government did not accept the Nehru Report. The Congress, thus issued an ultimatum to the Viceroy on December 31, 1929, in Lahore and passed the Independence resolution.82 On January 26, 1930 in every village, town and city, people thronged to take the independence pledge.

“We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rules that has caused this fourfold disaster (economic, political, cultural and spiritual) to our country. We recognize, however, that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. We will, therefore, prepare ourselves by withdrawing so far as we can, all voluntary association from the British Government, and will prepare for civil disobedience including nonpayment of taxes... we therefore, hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing ‘Poorna Swaraj’.”83
Civil Disobedience Movement 1930-34

In a state of deadlock with the government how to go about in the pursuit of 'Poorna Swaraj' was the question that faced the country. 'Salt tax' Gandhi's genius struck as an issue for it affected rich and poor, Hindus and Muslims without any distinction. It would not be out of place to say that Gandhi had maintained for long that the salt tax was immoral.\(^\text{84}\)

In strict accordance to the rules of Satyagraha on 2nd March 1930 Gandhi informed the Viceroy of his decision to launch the defying the Salt laws, if the government fails to do justice to the people.\(^\text{85}\) The Congress working committee had already on 31st December 1929 authorised Gandhi to start the civil disobedience. From the Ashram he started the famous Dandi March on 12th of March 1930 with 78 followers\(^\text{86}\) and others joining him on the way. This 200 miles distance to the beach was covered in 24 days and on 6th April Gandhi defied the Salt law by picking up a pinch of illegal salt. As anticipated in Gandhi the poor, the rich, men and women all over the country followed him shaking the government much against its anticipation. The government arrested many leaders including Jawaharlal, Vithal Bhai Patal and others. Gandhi himself was arrested a month later.

The usual typical governmental measures mass-arrests, lathicharges, police excesses and torture were adopted to crush the movement. About 60,000 to 80,000 arrests were made. Webb Miller has given a vivid account of the self- restraint and discipline of the satyagrahis in a raid on Dharsana Salt Factory led by Sarojini Naidu. He writes, "Volunteers went in columns, did not even raise hands against the attacks of lathis".

The success of Civil Disobedience movement had shown that the authority of the Government was eroding. The people had challenged the very legitimacy of the authority and fear of authority was removed from the minds of the people. The
Government of Britain wanted the Indian National Congress to join the negotiations during the Second Round Table Conference. Thus all the Congress leaders were released on January 26th 1931.

**Gandhi-Irwin Pact 1931**

The Government on the recommendations of the Muddiman Committee (1923) and Simon Commission (1928) was making efforts to convene RTC and invite Indian opinion on the proposed constitutional reforms. Consequently the first RTC was held in 1930. The congress abstained from attending it. The absence of the Congress was felt. Efforts began to have the Congress representation culminating in Gandhi - Irwin Pact signed on 4th March 1931. The Pact was a detailed document. In essence it provided that the government would withdraw all ordinances, release all satyagrahis, release all attached properties provided they were not sold to third parties, free use of salt from deposits by the people living in those areas was permitted. Gandhi tried to secure the remittance of the death sentence into life sentence of Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukh Dev but failed.

**Second Round Table Conference 1931**

Gandhi went to attend Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress where he had to face an uphill task of reconciling the interests of all the minorities. Dr. Ambedkar embarassed Gandhi by insisting upon seperate electorates for untouchables. The conference due to lack of agreement on the minorities issue, failed to arrive at any solution to the Indian problem.

**Civil Disobedience 1932-34**

Gandhi returned home on December 28, 1932 and found all important leaders of the Congress in prison under the repressive policies of die-hard conservative Viceroy Lord Wellingdon. Gandhi too was arrested on January 4th 1932.
Communal Award

In August 1932 the Prime Minister issued the Communal Award, announcing separate electorates to the Depressed classes. Gandhi wrote to the Prime Minister.

"In pursuance of my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare and my declaration at the meeting of the minorities committee of the Roundtable conference on 13th November 1931, at St James' Palace, I have to resist your decision with my life".88

Because he felt "In establishment of a separate electorate at all for Depressed classes I sense the injection of a poison that is calculated to destroy Hinduism and do no good whatsoever to 'Depressed classes... I should not be against even over representation of Depressed classes. What I am against is their statutory separation, even in a limited form, from Hindu fold, so long as they choose to belong to it."89

Gandhi went on 'fast unto death' on September 20, 1932. His fast stirred the nation, efforts by different leaders to save his life resulted in signing of Poona Pact on September 26, 1932. The seats for the Depressed classes in General Electorate were almost doubled. The Award provided for 81 seats in Provincial Legislatures but the Pact gave them 148 seats.90 Henceforth the Civil Disobedience Movement was transformed into the acts of Civil Disobedience which continued up to 1934, Gandhi suspended the movement initially for six weeks, later extending the suspension, till its final suspension when Gandhi resigned from the Congress. Gandhi concentrated his attention on Harijan work. During these years 3rd Round Table conference had also taken place and as a result Government of India Act 1935 was passed. Elections were held under the reformed constitution in 1937 in which the Indian National Congress swept the polls.
**World War II**

On September 3, 1939 the Second World War broke out. The same day the Viceroy proclaimed that India was at war with Germany. The Congress felt indignant as it was not taken into confidence before the announcement. True to his creed of non-violence Gandhi was against all war, hence for him there was no question of India's participation in the war. The Congress after asking for the aims of war agreed to offer conditional support, and Gandhi was for unconditional moral support. Though Gandhi wanted India's Independence immediately yet as a true Satyagrahi he did not wish to trun his opponents hour of crisis into his own opportunity. The Congress was in a mood to strike a bargain - which was against the basic tenents of Gandhi's non-violence. In October 1939 the Viceroy reiterated the British Government's promise of granting India the 'Dominion Status' after the War. Following the Wardha Resolution (October 23, 1939), the Congress Ministries resigned in protest against the British imperviousness. The party at its annual session in mid-March 1940 at Ramgarh resolved to launch the Civil Disobedience movement throughout the country at a suitable moment under the leadership of Gandhi and started building pressure on him. At this moment Gandhi was not in a mood to resort to a mass Satyagraha. Therefore, according to Delhi Resolution' of Indian National Congress, Gandhi was absolved of further responsibility for Congress. Gandhi acknowledged it and withdrew. The Congress party had offered conditional support to the Government and in reply to that the British madme the 'August Offer' on 8th August, 1940, which provided for a Constituent Assembly after the war. Disappointed with this attitude the Congress again turned to Gandhi for advice and decided to resort to Non-Cooperation under his leadership on September 17, 1940. Gandhi wrote to the viceroy to acquaint him of his decision.
Gandhi launched the 'Individual Satyagraha on October 17, 1940 to be offered by select few as he did not want to embarrass the British by creating mass agitation. Vinoba Bhave was the first Satyagrahi to court arrest by raising the slogans and violating the ban on freedom of speech. The Individual Satyagraha continued for nearly a year and in early December 1941 the Government released all Satyagrahis.

**Quit India Movement 1942**

At this juncture the British made a last attempt to win the Indian support and sent a socialist leader Sir Stafford Cripps to India in March 1942, but with an unalterable plan to settle the Indian problem. His plan was not negotiable - either to be accepted or to be rejected. Nehru and Azad from Congress had discussions with Cripps. Only once Gandhi met Cripps but not as a representative of the Congress and disapproved of his plan because of his anti-war and anti-partition stand. he thought that Cripps proposals had gone too far where it should not have Indian National Congress rejected its offer because it did not concede independence immediately, left the control of defence of India with the British Government and indirectly envisaged partition of India by giving rights to the provinces to secede if they wished. The Muslim League opposed it because the fundamental proposals were not open to any modifications. The failure of the Cripps mission resulted in Gandhi's conviction that only a free India could help in ending the war and that the British should withdraw immediately.

The movement which Gandhi advised the Congress to take up was "designed to prevent bankruptcy and enable Great Britain to acquire a moral height which must secure victory for her and allies" 93 He directed the Congress Working committee for the Quit India movement on August 4, 1942, and presented an ultimatum to the British "to leave India in God's hands". He was of the view that the British served as a bait to the Japanese, the communal problem was their creation and would disappear once
they had left, even if anarchy or internal warfare follows, but a true India will emerge out of it. The Congress met at Bombay on August 7, 1942 and the resolution was adopted on 8th August 1942. He asked his countrymen,

"Everyone of you should, from now onwards consider yourself a free man or woman and act as if your are free and are no longer under the heel of imperialism".\(^{94}\)

For this he offered them a mantra which each one of them was to imprint on his heart "Do or Die" and asked them to be of firm determination in the effort and that they will not live "to see the country in bondage and slavery".\(^{95}\) He specified the effort was strictly to be non-violent. He had "contemplated an interval between the passing of the Congress resolution and the starting of the struggle."\(^{96}\) He had not made any definite plan except the twelve point programme which was not circulated but found wide circulation later on.\(^{97}\) Gandhi had sent Mira Behn (Miss Slade) for interview with the Viceroy to appraise him of Congress plan but her request was turned down because Gandhi was thinking in terms of rebellion - an open rebellion, as Gandhi called it. On the morning of 9th August, he along with the members of the Congress working committee was arrested. He was put in Aga Khan Palace, Poona. After the arrest of the leaders, the people were leaderless and everyman was his own leader. Congress being declared illegal, secret circulars were issued by local leaders, which included sabotage plans. The Government adopted stern measures under the Defence of India Act. Lathicharge and firing and aerial attacks led to violence on the part of the people. Along with the damage to the railways, post and telegraph offices, the efforts to build Swaraj were also made. At Midnapur (Bengal), Ballia (U.P.), Bhagalpur (Bihar) national governments were established. The demonstrating crowds were gunned down, almost 10,000 people were killed. The movement was crushed in early 1943.
It was the last and bitterest fight for freedom ever waged against the British in India. Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy wrote to the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, "I am engaged here in meeting by far the most serious rebellion since that of 1857, the gravity and extent of which we have concealed from the world for reasons of military and strategic importance."

The intensity of the movement convinced the British that they were not morally justified in keeping India under bondage and that they had to quit. The movement was very short and quick about which even Gandhi wrote to the Additional Secretary of State for India while replying their charges levelled against him in Tottenham's report "Congress Reponsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43",

"No doubt, it would have been 'short and swift', not in the violent sense, as the author has insinuated, but in the non-violent sense, as I know it. The Government made it very short and very swift by their very violent action. Had they given me breathing time, I would have sought an interview with the Viceroy and given every nerve to show the reasonableness of the Congress demand"98 As regards the violence in the movement he wrote, "the resentment began to show itself soon after the publication of my proposal for British withdrawal. It crystallized into the wholesale arrests on 9th August.99

Secrecy had no place in Gandhi's ideology. A Satyagrahi should declare his reasons and action plan very clearly so that they can not be misinterpreted nor would the adversary be at disadvantage because he is not unaware or ignorant.

Issues

Gandhi's Satyagraha movements generated varied criticism academic or otherwise. Some of them are mentioned here. He was criticised for the joining of Khilafat issue with non-cooperation in 1920 for mixing religion with politics, he was equally criticised for starting the Satyagraha movement without fully chalking out the full programme well in advance. Moreover having queered the pitch of nationalism in 1922 his sudden suspension of the non-cooperation movement frustrated the
masses and puzzled the leaders. The movement was suspended. Gandhi’s reticence on the Moplah riots was objected to.

Having accepted Poorna Swaraj in December, 1929, as the main demand of the Congress, Gandhi’s contemporaries were unhappy and bewildred why he did not mention Poorna Swaraj in his Eleven points submitted to the Viceroy on February 1930. Still greater disappointment was expressed over Gandhi’s failure to do any thing to save the lives of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev. Inclusion of clause II of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact shocked most of his associates.

His ‘fast unto death’ over the communal Award again raised different opinions. One of the charges was that it was Gandhi’s usual tactic of coercing his opponents.

The criticism and differences became more apparent and intense on the issue of non violence as a creed- an article of faith or a convenient policy during the World War II.

His last National Satyagraha movement is not only found lacking in direction and programme but is charged with misleading the masses by leading the slogan ‘Do or Die’.

The leftists of those times felt that Gandhi betrayed the cause of workers whereas the business houses on the oterhand held Gandhi responsible for monetary losses to them by boycotting the foreign goods and associating workers in the mass movements.

Besides these Gandhi was found lacking in knowledge of constitutional processes, unaware of international affairs.

It is to examine these popular reactions and impressions it was felt imperative to undertake the present work.
REFERENCES


7. Leaders like Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das and many others who were used to aristocratic life, donned the attire of simple living under Gandhi’s influence.


34. M.K. Gandhi: Delhi Diary, April, 8, 1932, p.61.

35. C.S. Shukla: Conversations with Gandhi, p.36.


38. M.K. Gandhi: Young India, March, 1925.


41. M.K. Gandhi: Young India, 1921, Loyalty to Human institutions.

42. Gandhian Outbook and Technique, Govt. of India 1953, p.12.


60. M.K. Gandhi: CWMG Vol.XLI p.491-93, also in Young Indian 27.2.1930.


69. J. Bandyopadhyay : Social and Political thought of M. Gandhi. p-


75. Later on r. r* items like starting of national educational institutions were added to it.


79. S.C. Bose: The Indian Struggle. p. 186


83. See Appendix - I.


87. Pl. See details of Gandhi. Irwin Pact in Appendix-IV.


91. Gandhis Telegram to Pedrewski Sept. 8, 1939, CWMG LXX p.176, also see Harijan 23.11.1939.


95. Ibid. p.392.


