GANDHII ON STATE AND GOVERNMENT

Gandhi's views of state and government were based on the fundamental principles of his philosophy, i.e., truth and non-violence and his personal experiences which he gathered while confronted with various problems of society. His mental make-up, his mission in life and the moral and spiritual excellence that he sought to achieve, left a deep mark on his attitude towards the state and government which distinguishes him as a political thinker from several western political thinkers as he did not write any political treatise. His concept of state or society, therefore, can be understood by going through the whole gamut of his writings and speeches delivered on different occasions.

However, a cursory glance at his ideas may make one feel that there run two seemingly contradictory currents of thought in his approach to the state. One carries him close to the western philosophical anarchists who repudiate the very institution of state and seek a stateless society. Another unites him with those who find in state a powerful instrument of promoting human welfare and happiness.

This situation raises the question: did Gandhi hold conflicting sets of ideas about state and government? The answer to this question requires a careful and thorough examination of his ideas in situational contexts since his
observations were made in different circumstances. Being a practical man engaged in raising the level of humanity, Gandhi considered every question from two angles — the ideal and the practical; the former representing perfection and the latter signifying the level from which man or society has to be raised. One is the polestar, the guide or criterion for judging human progress and the other is the starting point of man's journey towards the ideal. There cannot be any uniform level for all men or all societies in their journey towards the ideal. Some may be more advanced and capable of taking long strides while others less developed and so requiring help or even crutches. It is on that account Gandhi stated varied roles of the state in different situations and at different levels of human progress.

In his ideal society, state has no place. It is both superfluous and inimical to human progress. It is here, his views are in accord with the western anarchists who viewed state as the symbol of violence, force and as such a hindrance to individual freedom and growth of human personality.

In the development of such ideas Gandhi was influenced by the ideas of Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), John Ruskin (1819-1900), and Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) and possibly by Godwin, Fourier or Proudhon whose ideas were floating in the intellectual atmosphere of the west at that time. To all of them, state was a suspect. To both,
Gandhi and Thoreau, government appeared to be undesirable if and when individuals acquired perfect self-rule or self-control. To both, the voice of the enlightened conscience of the individual was superior to the dictates of the laws of the state. Thoreau appealed to the citizens to have the courage to rise in revolt against laws which appeared immoral to them. Similarly, Gandhi stated before the magistrate of Champaran that he had disregarded the order served upon him not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the higher law of being the voice of conscience.¹ On another occasion, he stated that whether he was in the minority of one or in an overwhelming majority, he had to go along the course that God had shown to him.²

However, Gandhi was a different kind of anarchist. He was opposed to the use of revolutionary violence or organized force which certain anarchists advocated. Their approach was diametrically opposed to his faith in nonviolence. He had developed his own technique of bringing about change in society or fighting tyranny by non-violent means. At the opening ceremony of the Benares Hindu University, he had explained that there was a separate

class of anarchists which was not suitable to India and their anarchism had no room in India if India had to conquer the conqueror. In fact, Gandhi's ideal of a stateless society logically follows from his view of non-violence and his passion for individual freedom. For him, non-violence is an antithesis of any kind of imposition, coercion or force and since state acts through coercion, it cannot be reconciled to his view of non-violence. Consequently, he quite often describes his stateless society as a non-violent society. Again, to him, state is not only based upon power and violence but it also represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. For him, individual has a soul, while state is a soulless machine and as a result, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence. Accordingly, state is a symbol of violence and force and in an ideal society, there is no room for such an institution which is based on violence, force and compulsions. From this follows his ideal of enlightened anarchy. In fact, in such a society state becomes superfluous and undesirable as every individual in it has attained so much control over himself that he is never a


Gandhi writes, "Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy".
hindrance to his neighbour. For it is a self-regulated society in which there does not remain any need of an external authority to regulate the conduct of individuals. It is a society free from exploitation, inequality, class-domination, class conflict, communal disturbance, strikes, and any kind of violence.

Further, Gandhi was fully convinced that no progress of mankind was possible without individual freedom. Gandhi was sure that if the individual ceased to count, then there was hardly left in society anything worth striving for. In its absence man would become an automation and society would be ruined. Consequently, according to him no society could possibly be built on the denial of individual freedom. For, individual is an entity in itself and must have the greatest possible freedom to develop his personality in the way which seems best suited to him. Anything, therefore, that involves violence and force, is a negation of progress and growth. Therefore, because of state's involvement in violence and arrest of manifestation of the inner or moral-self of the individual, state is undoubtedly a hindrance and not a help to the moral progress of individual and the society as a whole. Therefore, Gandhi indicates that if the government does not comply with the interest of the individual, then he has the moral right to withdraw the support immediately.


However, Gandhi is not in favour of unrestricted individualism or individual freedom at the risk or cost of progress of society. He was sure that with right education and treatment individual will adjust his freedom to the needs of society as man being a social being has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Accordingly, willing submission and social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society can enrich both the individual and society.

This implies that self-discipline is the condition of individual freedom and well-being of society. This is most important for the success of democracy. So, in his view, all those who are ambitious to serve democracy should qualify themselves by satisfying first this acid test.

Anyhow, his conviction is that in a democratic state, people should be satisfied with drawing the government's attention to mistakes, if there is any. Similarly, they can remove the government in case it betrays the masses. But at the same time, they should not obstruct it by agitating against it as it also derives its strength, vigour and power from the individuals. Therefore, to Gandhi, both individual liberty and inter-dependence are essential for life in society and individual freedom is further limited by social will, which has also a paramount place in democracy.

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Further, in connection with rights and duties of citizens in democracy Gandhi, initially, accords that there is no need to cling with the rights while it is necessary for them to know their duties as the rights are disguised in the performance of their duties. As, a democratic state is meant for the people, its success depends upon the performance of their duties. That is why Gandhi emphasises that the citizens must be ready, when needed, for the better performance of their duties. To him, the action is the duty and the fruit is the right.

Again, Gandhi does not want to crush the rights of one’s neighbours since without the respect of one’s neighbours' rights, the evolution of democracy is not possible. Therefore, Gandhi's suggestion is to hear the reasonable voice of one’s opponents and must always keep an open mind and be ever ready to find that what one has believed to be truth, in fact, is untruth. Accordingly, this openness of mind can strengthen the truth in people and remove the dross from it.

Gandhi also denounced state on the ground that it takes away the moral value of the individual action. In this connection, state cannot make man moral since it always acts through compulsions and pressures while morality to Gandhi consists in the performance of self-imposed duties. For him, no action, which is not voluntary

11. See also Collected Works, Vol.XXV, pp.564, 573.
can be called moral. Consequently progress, for him, can be judged in terms of moral advancement alone. His denunciation of the western civilization as satanic in the 'Hind Swaraj' follows from the conviction that the existence of Railways, Hospitals, or Law Courts, for him, are no substitute for moral advancement.

In fact, Gandhi holds that state has justification only when individuals are not able to resolve their conflicts without the help of an external coercive authority. Its power or authority must be in proportion to the role it has to perform, which must vary from one society to another depending upon the progress and spiritual enlightenment of the individuals in any society. However, its claim of absolute sovereignty as propounded by Hobbes, Austin and Hegel, cannot be reconciled to his fundamental belief in the primacy of the spirit which all individuals possess. For him, the inner moral conscience of the individuals is superior to the organized might of the state, from which follows his faith in the sovereignty of the people on moral authority as against the organized power system of the legal sovereign.

Furthermore, to Gandhi, political power or state is not an end in itself but one of the means to enable the people to better their condition in every department of life, and to secure the greatest good of all. It is not so sacred as to justify all its deeds. State can be

helpful to hinder the hindrances but not for the realization of an ideal society. To him, state existed due to human weaknesses and these are the causes of its continuance. Finally, he does not believe in the withering away of the state but wants to minimize its role and interference in the affairs of the people.

**PRACTICAL STATE:** As already noted that an ideal society envisaged by Gandhi, is unrealizable since it essentially demands a situation of perfection which can be realized only when all people become perfect and acquire complete self-control (swaraj) and perform willingly their social obligations and self-imposed duties without the operation of the state. He admits that like Euclid's straight line, it remains an ideal which cannot be attained completely because of human imperfection. He believed that no government can succeed in becoming entirely non-violent, because it represents all the people. He also clarified that he did not conceive of such a golden age. But, he did believe in the possibility of pre-dominantly non-violent structure of society. Thus, it seems that his ideal indicates the direction rather than destination, since imperfection of individuals who constitute society convinced him to search for a more practical social order. He admits the existence of the institution of the state but he provides it a limited role in society. Like Henry David Thoreau, his preference is for the state which governs
Thus, Gandhi accepts state as an indispensable entity and contents himself with his pre-dominantly non-violent state. In other words, state is accepted only as a means to promote the good of the people. It has to carry out the will of the people\(^\text{14}\) and can be a means for securing the greatest good and happiness of all citizens. In this respect, the people are expected to owe loyalty to it only so long as it performs its duties and responsibilities properly and democratically and refrains from oppressing them. The people have not only the right but also duty to resist the authority of the state when it is abused or misused. They have the power to change their government whenever it tries to be dictatorial. This involves a democratic structure of the government in which an individual enjoys maximum freedom of thought, expression and participates in decision-making and decision-implementation processes. Similarly, the people are fully competent to retain political power in their hands to reduce the interference of state as minimum as possible and to establish self-government to avoid coercive control.\(^\text{15}\)

\(^\text{13. Ibid. Gandhi says "..... the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that Government is best which governs the least".}\)

\(^\text{14. Gandhi, 31.3.1946, Vol.I, p.64. Gandhi says that the state is there "to carry out the will of the people, not to dictate to them or force them to do its will".}\)

However, Gandhi's suspicion against organized power should not be interpreted to mean a rejection of all norms of social control. On the other hand, Gandhi does believe in the state as an entity in which government and law become part and parcel of the life of the common man, and he has a share of things in real sense. Again, Gandhi admits that in a democratic state the will of an individual has to be governed and limited by social will which is the state. He argues that if every individual unnecessarily tries to take the law in his own hands, then there will be no state; rather it will become anarchy, i.e., absence of social law or state.

Anyhow, Gandhi seems to build up a democratic structure from below — the self-government (the real swaraj) by awakening into the masses a sense of their power and dignity. He reminds the people that they constitute the real power of the nation; they are the real masters of their own affairs. It means Gandhi's social-political order is not power-oriented, but power is an inescapable fact in the functioning of state.

However, he is fully conscious of the fact that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The only remedy to this dichotomy, to him, is the dispersal of power. To be favours decentralized structure of government. State, in his view, must be democratic not


only in form but in practice too, providing the maximum opportunity to its citizens for their physical and mental growth, the freedom to develop their personality to the fullest extent and the maximum opportunity to participate in decision-making and implementation processes.

**DEMONSTRACY**: As a form of government, democracy is nearest to Gandhi's view of a non-violent society, for it uses minimum of violence in the discharge of its duties and responsibilities. Under it, external control or imposition which for Gandhi, is a form of violence, is reduced to the minimum since in democracy decisions are made, sanctioned and even implemented by those to whom they are addressed. It reduces the gap between the rulers and the ruled by providing the people with ample opportunities to change their rulers whenever they are not satisfied with their performance. However, Gandhi was not satisfied with the western mechanism of democracy or with the functioning of contemporary democratic governments in the west because of their adherence to violence, since for him non-violence is the basic requirement of democracy. In other words, violence and democracy are incompatible. To him, it is only on the basis of unadulterated ahimsa or non-violence that genuine democracy can be built up. He said, "I hold that democracy cannot be evolved by forcible methods. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within."18 It was his firm belief that true

democracy or the 'Swaraj' of the masses could never come through untruthful and violent methods, for the simple reason that the "natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the 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". As a result, non-violence is the only way to bring man closer to man and happiness. For him, malpractice is also one of the species of violence. It is evident from his statement when he observes that if the people of India want to evolve the true type of democracy there should be no compromise with either violence or untruth.

Regarding the role of military and police, Gandhi wants democratic government, initially to refrain from using coercive or military authority in the discharge of its functions. Rather, it should rely on public opinion for the implementation of any policy or programme.

Gandhi divides power in two different groups; first is obtained by the fear of punishment while the other by acts of love. Power based on love, believes Gandhi, is a

20. Ibid.
thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from the fear of punishment. Military power, on the other hand, is primarily based on force and thus it is not suitable for democracy. Similarly, military interferes in free growth of the mind and can also smother the soul of man resulting in 'a poor democracy'. Besides, a nation has to spend so much on military and police that a poor country like India can afford it only at the cost of its economic and social development. So be warned, "If free India has to sustain the present military expenditure, it will bring no relief to the famishing millions". Gandhi, therefore, lays stress on moral force for the smooth functioning of a democratic government.

However, the elimination of military or police depends upon the moral stature of the people and their rulers in a country. But he is perfectly right when he argues that a true democracy rests on public opinion. Our dependence on military or police is surely a sign of an imperfect democracy. Thus, Gandhi was fully convinced that a democratic government was a distant dream so long as non-violence

23. *Collected Works*, May 1967, Vol. XIX, p. 563. Gandhi said, "Power does not consist in the ability to inflict capital punishment upon the subjects, but in the will and ability to protect the subjects against the world", p. 552.


25. Ibid.


was not recognized as a living force, an inviolable creed, not a mere policy.  

is other objection to the functioning of the was British Parliamentary system/that it was not independent in taking its decisions as it had to work under the pressure and compulsions of different groups and individuals inside and outside the Parliament. Similarly, he was afraid of the dictatorship or monopoly of the Cabinet. He was equally critical of the selfish and hypocritical nature of the members who primarily kept in view their own interests alone. Further, he also doubted the finality of the decisions of parliament as these were changed frequently without any logic or merely to hold the strings of power in its hands.

Besides, he was sceptical about its suitability to the conditions in India where the overwhelming majority of the people were living in the villages.

However, Gandhi's criticism of parliamentary form of government was partly due to lack of full understanding of the working of the cabinet system and partly due to the


29. Collected works, October 1970, Vol. XL, p. 220. Gandhi said, "what is good for one nation situated in one condition is not necessarily good enough for another differently situated. One man's food is often another man's poison. Physical geography of a country has a pre-dominant share in determining its culture. A fur coat may be necessity for the dweller in the polar regions, it will smother those living in the equatorial regions".
fact that parliamentary system itself was still taking shape in England when Gandhi wrote and even British political scientists and observers were not fully aware of its working.

Nevertheless, as already stated, Gandhi does not denounce democracy as an ideal. In fact, what he rejects, is the defective mechanism of western democracy which allows exploitation and denial of justice to the poor in society. Undoubtedly, in his corporate capacity he was working for the attainment of parliamentary Swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people. He recognized the merits of the institutions of the parliamentary government.

Highlighting the functions of the legislatures, he maintained that they are the representatives of the people which have to carry out truth and non-violence there. So he argued, "The legislatures of to-day are different from the old. We do not want to destroy them, we want to destroy the system which they are created to work". Similarly, in 1946, he writes in Sarojan that legislatures can be useful if these carry out the popular will in general to benefit the masses. However, he feels that if entry into the legislature becomes a matter of personal ambition rather than a service of the masses, its value will be reduced.

procedure is good only where its representatives are willing to conform to the will of the people.

Equality is another characteristic of Gandhi's view of democracy. He emphasises that in democracy, the necessaries of life are to be enjoyed by all; the princes, the moneyed men and the poor. Complete self-government (Poorna Swaran), according to him, is an impossibility until and unless all the ordinary amenities of life that a rich man enjoys, are made available to the poor also. But equality does not mean that all must be provided with palaces, for, these are not essential for happiness. Equality signifies equal freedom for all in spite of different caste, colour and creed. It means equalization of status. To him, there is no difference between the son of a weaver, an agriculturist or of a school master.

Economic equality is also one of the major goals of his view of democracy. He states that economic equality is the master-key to non-violent democracy or independence. It involves abolition of the eternal conflict between capital and labour. He is opposed to a system in which the bulk of the nation's wealth is


34. Gandhi's Correspondence with Government 1942-44, Op. Cit., p. 174. Gandhi said, "In the democracy which I have envisaged a democracy established by Non-Violence there will be equal freedom for all." (Gandhi's speech on 7th August, 1942, before the A.I.C.C., in Hindustani.)

concentrated in the hands of a few rich persons while the rest of the society remains below the poverty line.\textsuperscript{36}

He, therefore, wants the government to intervene in order to provide opportunities to all.\textsuperscript{37}

For, in his view, in democracy every individual must have the fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with equal use as by his neighbours, but no one is entitled to the arbitrary use of the gains from the talents, since he is a part of the nation or the social structure surrounding him. So he can use his talents not for self only but for the social structure of which he is but a part, and on whose sufferance he lives.\textsuperscript{38}

Giving the example of the French, he says that they had a noble motto in 'Liberty', 'Equality' and 'Fraternity'. But it is a heritage not for the French only but for all mankind. What the French did not realize, he adds, is open to the people of all countries to attain. So, he advises the princes, landlords and the rich merchants to take the lead in this direction.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{36} H.K. Gandhi, \textit{Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place} (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, December 1968), p.26. Gandhi points out, "A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land."


\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid.} Gandhi says, "It is for them to take the lead and not for have-nots, who have nothing to share with anybody except their pauperism and abjectness."
the contrast between the rich and the poor is a painful sight as the poor villagers produce the food but they have to go hungry; they produce milk but their children go without it.\(^4\) Thus, his insistence on equitable distribution seems to be essential in order to reduce the gulf between the classes and the masses and to make democracy a success. It can also remove the exploitation carried on by the rich city-dwellers of rural masses. In an economic order in which a large majority of the people have to depend upon some rich persons for their livelihood, they cannot exercise their political rights. They will be subject to any kind of exploitation which is a form of violence. Freedom from want, therefore, is the first pre-requisite for the success of a non-violent democratic society. For so long as all are not provided with necessities of life, power cannot be shared by all which is the sine qua non of democracy.

However, economic equality does not taboo everything above and beyond the bare necessities. But these must come after the essential requirements of the poor are satisfied. In simple words, first things must come first.\(^4\)

Another question which calls for discussion is whether Gandhi accepted the majority-minority principle which is the fundamental principle of modern democracy. For, it is held in some quarters that Gandhi had no faith

\(^4\) [Harilal, 31.3.1946, Vol.X, p.63.]

\(^4\) Ibid.
in rule by the majority. However, if it is examined in contextual framework, one finds that he believes, like most of the advocates of modern democracy, that there are certain fundamental rights which must be kept beyond the control of majority, since they are the bases of the existence of individual freedom without which no form of democratic government can exist. For example, Gandhi believes that in matters of conscience the 'Law of Majority has no place'. This was said in the context of religion and it is, now, an admitted principle of modern democracy that the normal rule of majority decision is not applicable to matters pertaining to the religion of an individual or a minority. It is on that account Gandhi stood for a secular state. In the democracy as viewed by Gandhi, every individual has complete liberty to follow and propagate his religion without, of course, showing any disrespect to any other religion. To him, democracy is not possible without religious tolerance because intolerance betrays want of faith in one's own cause.

It shows that secularism as a concept is integrally related to the democratic set-up of the country. Gandhi advocated secularism at a time when the forces of social reaction tried to thwart the course of national development on democratic lines. His emphasis on the secular character of the democratic set-up reflected the opinion of the advanced section of the nation. His faith in this principle, helps in accelerating the pace of national democratic development.

Moreover, Gandhi will not allow majority to crush the minority or suppress the opinion even of a solitary individual. Basically, he wants the rule of majority only to the extent it can be regarded as an expression of the collective social will. He is not prepared to put up with the coercion on the part of the majority. Instead, he wants the minority to be brought round by gentle persuasion and reasonable argument. In no situation does he want the people to act like sheep. In matters, involving questions of principle, he upholds the right of the minority to act differently from the majority, as in his opinion, this is the only way individual liberty of expression and action can be protected.

So, he wants majority to be very considerate towards the opinion of minority. Besides, he attaches the highest importance to quality irrespective almost of quantity since the members are irresistible when they act as one man under exact discipline. They can be a

46. Collected works, Vol.XXI, p.541. Gandhi says, "Let us not push the mandate theory to ridiculous extremes and become slaves to resolutions of majorities. That would be a revival of brute force in a more virulent form".
47. Ibid. Gandhi says, "It will be the duty of the majority to see to it that minorities receive a proper hearing and are not otherwise exposed to insults. Swaraj will be an absurdity if individuals have to surrender their judgement to the majority".
destroying force when each pulls his own way or when no one knows which way to pull. In the midst of suspicion, discord, antagonistic interests, superstition, fear, distrust and the like, there is no safety in numbers but there may be danger in them. 49

Gandhi, infact, is aware of certain glaring shortcomings of modern democracy and he is in search of their remedies. However, he would not like the minority to take undue advantage of liberty and jeopardise the rights and interests of the majority. So, he is also not ready to be cowed down by minority under certain circumstances.

Again, being a believer in the multi-faceted nature of truth, he recognized the value of every opinion or thought-current. 50 Thus, to Gandhi, the minority, in a democratic government, must have as much right as majority and the weakest in the society should have same opportunities and claims as the strongest or most developed men and women. He rejects the suppression and exploitation of the minority by the majority on the ground that there is no guarantee that the majority is always right. Moreover, it is possible that the majority may not look after the interests of the minority. No doubt, he admits that " in ordinary

49. Ibid.
50. Collected Works, March 1967, Vol. XXIII, p.453. Gandhi observes, " I have repeatedly observed that no school of thought can claim a monopoly of right judgement. We are all liable to err and are often obliged to revise our judgments".
matters, the principle of majority rule is, by and large, justice as the world understands justice, but the purest justice can consist only in the welfare of all".51

Another important principle of parliamentary democracy is the party system since it is virtually impossible without it to organize a large number of voters, that the universal adult franchise and direct election involves. At times, Gandhi can be cited as having denounced the political parties and even party spirit prevailing in the modern democratic mechanism. And, his statement given before his death has been interpreted as an indictment on party system since he advised the Congress Party to dissolve itself and convert itself into a "Lok Leva Sangh". But possibly there was another motive behind this advice. He wanted that Congressmen who had made sacrifices for the attainment of independence must not entangle themselves in power-politics, but should be available for the building up of a new society in India. Therefore, it is difficult to assume that he envisages a democratic political order in which political parties will not exist.

However, it does not mean that he approves of all the evils and ills that prevail in the modern party system.


Gandhi says, "It is only a government that fully protects the weakest among its subjects, and safeguards all his rights, which may be described as perfectly democratic. Such a government does not mean the rule of the majority, but protection of the interests of even the smallest limb of the realm".
He does not want a party to keep political power as its only end, as, to him, political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life.\textsuperscript{52} Moreover, to him, service to the people is the sole aim of all collective actions. No, any group or party, according to him, can serve the people even without aiming at capturing the political power or government. He was sure that one can serve the country even by remaining outside the government.\textsuperscript{53}

Again, Gandhi will not like individual freedom to be curbed by political parties. However, he is not against discipline. He wants an individual to accept a decision since it emerges after free and full discussion. Even then, individual has the choice of leaving the party in case the decision is against his conscience. Otherwise, he is expected to co-operate with the party in the implementation of a decision which is against his conscience. For example, Gandhi himself remained a leader of the party which took several crucial decisions by majority vote. As a matter of fact, he will not like the minority to sabotage the majority decision in the name of conscience. Nor does he like the members of the party to work at cross-purposes as it has been happening in India. In fact, Gandhi is not against any

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Collected Works}, Vol. XLVII, p. Cit., p. 91.

organization as every collective action demands an organization but as a votary of non-violence, he is, certainly, not in favour of such an organization which is based on force and untruth.\(^5^4\)

However, Gandhi is not in favour of existence of political parties at all levels of political and social actions, especially, at the grass root level which we will take up in the following chapter.

Gandhi noticed another evil of modern democracy. This is the dominating role that money plays in the elections. But in his opinion no organization can properly serve the masses if it relies on money for gaining power.\(^5^5\)

As a result, his whole plan is based on decentralization which can provide individuals the opportunity to participate in the management of their own affairs and a feeling of self-government. Further, he evolves, no doubt, a decentralized democracy for the whole world, but most suited to the genius of the developing countries like India where more than 80 percent of the population lives in the rural areas. Moreover, his scheme of democratic decentralization is incompatible with force, violence and centralization as discussed earlier. It cannot be imposed


from without but has to grow from within, where the spirit of democracy is far more important and rather essential than its mechanism or external framework. Again its success depends upon the character of the people. In other words it can be realized in a society whose members are self-controlled and pure at their heart and who have been able to subdue the irrational elements by the help of the spiritual or moral elements present in man. Similarly, economic and political democracies are inseparable and that, economic democracy can reach the millions in the rural areas through mass efforts, i.e., by the people themselves. Accordingly, the source of power lies in the people, not in the government. This source is to be captured by love and sincerity displayed through constructive work which is possible only under decentralized order.

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