CHAPTER 3
ECOLOGY AND GANDHI

The term ecology comes from the Greek word oikos [house] and, significantly, has the same Greek root as the word economics from aikonomous [household] manager. Earnest Hackel, the German biologist who coined the word ecology in 1868 viewed ecology as a body of knowledge concerning the economy of nature, highlighting its roots in economics and evolutionary theory. According to him ecology as a study of all those complex interrelations referred to by Darwin as the conditions of the struggle for existence. Ecologists like to look at the environment as an ecosystem of interlocking relationships and exchanges that constitute the web of life. For the social scientists, ecology means the harmonious interrelationship of all kind of living beings and non-living matters and the disequilibrium of one particular factor resulted in its negative consequential impact upon other, and thus lead to instability, crisis and disorder. For the sociologists, the most important ecological concepts are diversity and dominance, competition and cooperation, succession and adaptation, evolution and expansion and carrying capacity and the balance of nature. Taking into the contemporary crisis, human ecology is the most fundamental factor of ecology.¹

In the early decades of twentieth century, American cities were passing through a period of great turbulence due to the effects of rapid industrialization and urbanization. The urban world, with its fierce competition for territory and survival, appeared to mirror the very life world studied by the plant ecologist. In their search for the principles of order, the human ecologists started looking at the process of city

development in terms of the process of succession, which involved an orderly sequence of invasions and displacements leading to a climax or equilibrium state. In their hands, human ecology became synonymous with the ecology of space. In this context, in 1936, Park, the environmental scientist, identified the problematic of human ecology as the investigation of the process by which biotic balance and social equilibrium are maintained by the interaction of the three factors constituting what he termed the 'social complex', population, technological culture, non-material culture [custom and belief] with natural resources of the habitat. Essentially, the same factors reappear as four variables, such as, population, organization, environment and technology.

The environmental destruction is far more serious and wide spread in eastern Europe and Soviet Union. These countries are the site of some of the world’s worst pollution. Lakes and rivers are dead or dying. Water is so contaminated in some areas that it is undrinkable. Chemical run off and sewage and waste water dumping have created serious ground water contamination. Lignite [brown coal] the major source of energy for industry and homes in some of these nations, is responsible for heavy concentration of sulfur dioxide and dust in the air that has caused serious respiratory problems and additional health damage. The haze-covered cities are an environmental disaster. According to the world watch estimates, the Soviet Union alone accounts for a fifth each of global carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide emissions, the former are implicated in global warning; the later are the principal ingredient of acid rain. As a result, environment and politics are becoming an explosive mix and the source of action and instability in the region.²

In non western nations, a million people suffer acute poisoning and twenty thousand persons die every year from pesticides. Pesticides are a major source of environmental and health problems in the highly developed states as well. The ecology of the natural environment and resources of the non western nations are being destroyed and contaminated at a frightening rate. Acute damage is being done by the large scale destruction of rain forests and the intensive use of marginal lands and by the unbalancers that result from the population pressures and the practices of multinational firms and national elites. Desertification now threatens one-third of the earth's land surface. Poverty, hunger, starvation, famine and death are endemic throughout much of the world. In this context, Allan Schnaiberg's idea of the "treadmill of production" [1980] which emerges from a dialectical relationship between economic growth and ecological structures, points to the need for focusing on production institutions as the primary determinates of economic expansion and for incorporating a conflict dimension in environmental analysis. Crisis tendencies and profit generation constitute the core of the societal development, which is dominated by the capital accumulation process.  

Vaclav Havel, the President of Czechoslovakia, has identified "the omnipresent dictatorship of consumption, production, advertising, commerce and consumer culture" as the common enemy. Nancy Anderson, the new England Environmental Education and Activist, blames uncontrolled greed for the frightening global environmental degradation and for overpowering our sense of responsibility to future generations. Gandhi, aware of both the fatal attraction and the destructive potential of 

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wanton materialism, saw it as constituting the gravest threat to human freedom, survival and environmental security. He therefore opted for a simple, non-exploitative and ecologically sustained social order. Such a decentralized social order, based on truth and non-violence, is to be governed by the metaphysically determined optimum levels of wants, technology and resources uses fitted to the requirements of the human scale. In the interim, he demanded that the rich become trustees of the poor in order to serve justice, to mitigate the negative impacts of the differential of wealth and power, and to avoid class conflicts. His radical vision of social order is based on the following statement. "Only if the means of production of the elementary necessaries of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as gods air and water are or ought to be, they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for exploitation of others. Their monopolization by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of the destitution that we witness today not only in this unhappy land but also in the other parts of world too". From this point of view, while there is a little disagreement that over population aggravates environmental and other problems, the attempt to eradicate the root causes of social instability, inequality and poverty are bound to be far more effective in the long run than the impressive but partially effective approaches to population control.4

The rational management of the world's natural capital is a necessary condition for achieving economic growth and sustainable improvements in the standard of living of the population. This natural heritage or capital is of fundamental importance of

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achieving changing production patterns with equity. The region has already entered upon a stage in which the indiscriminate and abusive exploitation of the existing resources will soon be reflected in serious checks on development. The relation between growth, equity and environmental sustainability are extremely complex. On the one hand, transformation of natural resources into goods is essential for growth and the raising of living standards. Thus, for example, the expansion of water supply is what makes it possible to maintain the growth of human settlements. On the other hand, however, economic development processes affect the quality of the environment. As example of this is air and water pollution, which reduces the capacity of ecosystems to provide the community with vital goods and services.

The United Nations conference in the context of ecological sustainability offers a unique opportunity to systematically tackle the problem of attaining environmentally sustainable development. The priority issues are in conformity with Gandhian harmonious life. The issues are: [1] to achieve a dynamic balance between all forms of capital involved in the effort to secure sustainable development. Laying the foundation for sustainable development is an issue that goes beyond the mere rational management of natural capital. [2] It is necessary to recognize and appraise the effect of the economic policies on natural capital in order to ensure that the efforts to change production patterns with equity also meet the requirement for sustainability. [3] Technological progress helps economies to grow, but it must be guided towards the reduction of negative impacts or the generation of positive impacts on natural capital. [4] People and communities are the basic objective of development, and sustainable development is incompatible with poverty, so achievement of sustainable development means overcoming poverty and development in a decentralized regional basis. Gandhi
pointed out if economic power and political will be concentrated then it will be resulted in monopolization, abusal and at last dictatorial absolutism. So in order to check these tendencies of dehumanization both powers has to be decentralized and distributed both population-wise and place/region wise. In the analysis of organic and particularistic approach and interpretation it is also well argued that for total development or all around development, all parts of the organic whole has to be taken into consideration. In this context, Gandhian conception of man centred approach, man and society or self and society approach he goes beyond the emancipation and free expression of the parts [individuals] which contribute, in the long run, to total development. This approach of regional development and equitable distribution and development is felt very close to Gandhiji.\textsuperscript{5} \[5\] It is essential to take into account of the institutional aspects of sustainable development. There must be a suitable structure of incentives, legislation and measures for the management and organization of productive activities. This structure must facilitate and fulfill the specific tasks of public and private sectors, as well as participation by the population as a whole. \[6\] New financing instruments must be suitably adopted to the realities of the region, including the long period of stagnation of the 1980s.

NON-VIOLENT MORAL ORDER AND GANDHIAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A fresh look at Hind Swaraj [1909] can then, only frustrate and intellectual approach that seeks either to lay bare the structure of Gandhian thought as a means to reducing Gandhi to a formulae or to sharpen one's understanding of the forces that

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\footnote{Roy (Rameshray), \textit{Self and Society: A Study in Gandhian Thought}, Sage Publication, New Delhi/London in collaboration with United Nations University, Tokyo, 1985, pp. 175-77.}
\end{footnotesize}
have created or sustain modern civilization in its present form. The sensibility underlying Hind Swaraj has its roots not in the intellectual but in the moral. What is this moral sensibility and what is its source? In this context, Gandhi himself says: in answer to the Indian School of Violence and its prototype in South Africa. I came in contact with every known Indian anarchist in London. Their bravery impressed me, but I felt their zeal was misguided. I feel that violence was no remedy for India’s ills, and that her civilization required the use of a different and higher weapons for self protection.\textsuperscript{6} While Gandhi was responding in Hind Swaraj specifically to violence as a method of attaining Swaraj or self rule, he saw violence rooted in modern civilization. As long as modern civilization continued to shape man’s destiny, violence, he believed, would be the natural consequence. He, therefore, directed his moral sensibility to exposing what he considered the cancerous elements growing in the womb of modern civilization producing contradictions that would ultimately bring its downfall. It [modern industrial] civilization predicated a world view that treats a social life as a mechanism which goes wrong not because its central organizing principles has gone wrong, but because some of its parts have either worn out or become wayward to throw the whole mechanism in disarray. He offers a concrete proposal for reordering society that promises to do away with the ills associated with modern civilization. The cornerstone of his proposal is provided by his conception of the uniqueness of being human. Rejecting all attempts to reduce the uniqueness of being human to biological, psychological or sociological considerations, he sees the destiny of man to lie in his ethico religious quest for self transformation.

But this quest for self knowledge, far from being pursued in the isolation of Himalayan cave, occurs in the world of here and now and provide the basis for man's relationship with the outer world that is characterized by an organismic vision emphasizing inseparable unity, harmony and non-injury.

The moral sensibility that lies behind Gandhi is to constitute an integral component of his world view, where he goes beyond the relationship between man and man or rather say all factors of production. In case of capitalistic welfare theoreticians and scientists and also Marxian thinkers, they only talked about the harmonious relationship between all factors of production to end exploitation of man against man, put to an end of all kind of dehumanized tendencies in the process of production. The sole objective was to maintain social integration and social harmony by maintaining harmonious relationship between man and man, owner and owned. It is found that both the Western traditions viz. Marxism or liberalism never put a slightest heed for the nature and availability of natural resources and how it affects the total humankind, in case of disequilibrium and scarcity. But in contrast, Gandhi not only thought on the above lines, being influenced by humanism, but also extended his thought beyond individual species to lower living animals and their relationship to maintain a harmonious ecosystem. In this context, at present the environmentalists of today do not merely claim that they are following the example of Gandhi, they also argue that the Mahatma himself foresaw the ecological crisis of modern industrial society.7

To give a moral foundation to Hind Swaraj and justify how one individual self is directly or indirectly related with each other in terms of cosmic order, he emphasized

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7 Singh (Ramjee), Gandhi and Twenty First Century, Peace Publication, New Delhi, 1994. "In the context of Gandhi and Environmental Challenges".
self-realization as the true orientation of a person and there should not be a wall of separation between one part of man and another and between man and the outer world. Self enclosure which is the hallmark of individual must yield to self disclosure. The process of self disclosure assumes that beyond all phenomenal things there is self, self that is the vehicle of truth, in his view, has to be discovered. This implies a genuine knowledge of self and entails a transforming act upon the self. To know in this sense is not only to reflect and comprehend but also to shape and create. To know oneself is to perfect oneself. Self knowledge does not depend upon the knowledge of the phenomenal world, nor does it imply turning totally inward ignoring the claims of the phenomenal world. The search for the transcendental centre must be pursued in the world of here and now. Projecting an organismic vision of the world, Gandhi recognizes the essential unity of existence. Gandhi recognizes the essential uprightness of the many positions that are possible for defining reality. The rejection of exclusivism also implies that one must abstain from imposing one’s way on others in order to preserve their integrity. Such an outlook leads necessarily to the adoption of ahimsa as the basic principle of interaction with society and nature. Gandhi in this sense goes beyond ecology which is confined to environment pollution to social environment where the concept of reciprocity, mutuality and the concept of self with other could be flourished and maintained.

Self transformation as an inner experience, underlies inwardness. However, it externalizes itself because the central thrust of self transformation lies in seeking dialogues with other wherein self really gives itself and wherein it is really received. This makes it necessary to seek liberation not through conquest but through harmonizing oneself with an ever enlarging network of relationship which requires
going beyond self centredness and anthropocentrism. Harmony in this sense, becomes not only a personal aspiration but also a social goal and a cosmic ideal. The necessity of harmonizing oneself with the other on an enlarging circle of relationship is only the other name of integration. He therefore insists on choosing a concrete path of making it possible for the value commitment to be universally manifested. Such a concrete path offers itself in the principle of Swadeshi, that is concern for immediate neighbourhood. Only by proceeding from wherever we are, geographically, spiritually or emotionally — can we make the integral effort needed for the progress and peace of the whole of humanity. 8

Gandhi’s moral foundation has its root in all the religions which primary objective is not promotion of bodily welfare for its own sake. As he says: “Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and all other religions teach that we should remain passive about worldly pursuits and active about godly pursuits, that we should set a limit to our worldly ambition and that our religious ambitions should be illimitable. Our activity should be directed towards later channel”. 9 Why did Gandhiji abandon the luxurious life which he could afford easily and identify himself with the less polluting [or polluting within a manageable limits] poor people? In this as he influenced by all the great religions of the world; it would be necessary to highlight the essence of the religion. Taoism says, he who knows he has enough is rich. Give me neither poverty nor riches; poverty is my pride; nothing in excess; excess and deficiencies are equally at fault. Whosoever in this world overcomes his selfish cravings, his sorrows fall away


from him, like drops of water from lotus flower. That persons who lives completely from desire, without longing attains peace, are said by Judaism, Islam, Greeks, Confucius, Buddhist and Hinduism respectively.10

The environmentalists of today do not merely claim that they are following the example of Gandhi, they also argue that the Mahatma himself foresaw the ecological crisis of modern industrial society. The question whether, Gandhi was indeed an early environmentalist is usually answered in the affirmative by his admirers, but rarely with supporting evidence. In his work Hind Swaraj [1909], a distinguished number of Gandhians have claimed that, it gives an alternative perspective on development while explaining how the current mode of development is exploitative of man by man and of nature by man. The book Hind Swaraj, of course was written while Gandhi was in South Africa. On his return to India in 1914, Gandhi began immediately to acquaint himself at first hand with economic and social conditions in the village. Through his travels in Indian countryside, and the organization of those early satyagrahas among the peasants of Champaran and Kheda in 1917 and 1918, Gandhi was to come face to face with colonialism as a system of economic exploitation; not merely, as had been his experience in South Africa, as a system of racial discrimination. In his reservation against wholesale industrialization of India which is based on the principles of selfishness and competitiveness of modern industrial capitalistic society, he said, God forbid that India should ever take to industrialization after the manner of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island Kingdom [England] is today keeping

the world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 million took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts.\textsuperscript{11}

Two years earlier, Gandhi had claimed that to make India like England and USA is to find some other races and places of the earth for exploitation. As it appeared that the western nations had already divided all the known races outside Europe for exploitation and there are no new worlds to discover, he pointedly asked: What can be the fate of India trying to age the west?\textsuperscript{12} For, in the last two decades, we have attempted precisely to make India like England and America, without the access to resources and markets enjoyed by those two nations when they began to industrialize, India has had perforce to rely on the exploitation of its own people and environment. The natural resources of the countryside have been increasingly channelled to meet the needs of the urban-industrial sector. The diversion of forests, water, etc. to the elite has accelerated process of environmental degradation even as it has deprived rural and tribal communities of their traditional rights of access and use. Meanwhile, the modern sector has moved aggressively into the remaining resources frontiers of India, the North East and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In 1946, he had expressed, “the blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built. We are sitting in this fine pandal under ablaze of electric lights, but we do not know we are burning these lights at the expense of the poor villagers”.\textsuperscript{13}

From this diagnosis of the ills of industrialism flawed Gandhi’s preferred solution wherein economic development would be centred on the village. He wished

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Young India}, 20th December 1928.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Young India}, 7th October 1926.
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Harijan}, 11 May 1935.
above all, to see that, 'the blood that is today inflating the arteries of the cities run once again in the blood vessels of the villages'. Pre-eminent here was the decentralization of political and economic power, so that villages could resume control over their own affairs. When he was accused of turning his back on the great scientific inventions, including electricity, Gandhi remarked: if we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. But then, the village communities or the state would own power houses, just as they have their grazing pastures.  

Gandhiji thought, India being predominately an agricultural country, there is a need for bio-industrial, rather than purely industrial, development. To be precise, the pattern of development has to be eco development. Such development will be a development based on the principles of environmental harmony, economic efficiency, resources including energy conservation, local self-reliance and equity with social justice. Equity has an ethical content because once brought into the realm of reality, equity would involve sacrifice on the part of haves in favour of have-nots. Gandhiji says in this context, "A certain degree of physical harmony with comfort is necessary, but above a certain level, it becomes hindrance instead of a help. Therefore, the ideal of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them seems to be a delusion and a snare. Man falls from the pursuit of the ideal of plain living and high thinking the moment he wants to multiply his daily wants. Man's happiness really lies in

14 Harijan, 22nd June, 1935.
contentment. When anything assumes the strength of a creed, it becomes self-sustained and derives the needed support from within".15

Today, while we should not isolate and become freaks in the international arena, one of our major problems is the creeping dominance of western cultural overview. Speaking environmentally, many industrial countries will, in time to come, prove to be ecologically security rises, because they will not easily give up their present day unsustainable life styles. Behind such development is the keynesian economics; and it has failed, because it is unsustainable. In his essay, the economic possibilities for our grand children, Lord Keynes said in 1930, “For at least another hundred years we must pretend to everyone that fair is foul and foul is fair. For, foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice, usury and precaution must be our gods for a little longer still. For, only they can lead us out of the tunnel of economic necessity and into daylight”. There is now need for rethinking on social, economic, environmental and cultural fronts, so as to translate sustainable development into reality. Transformation of individuals is very necessary as Gandhiji had envisioned. In this sense, Gandhiji said, his dreams about the village republic with all round development and ecologically stable, in 1937 at Wardha, in terms of rural reconstruction programme. “It will have cottages with sufficient light and ventilation, built of a material obtainable within a radius of five miles of it. The cottages will have courtyards enabling householders to plant vegetables for domestic use and to house their cattle. The village lanes and streets will be free of all avoidable dust. It will have wells accordingly to its needs and accessible to all. It will have houses of worship for all, also a common meeting place, a village

common for grazing its cattle, a cooperative dairy, primary and secondary schools in which industrial, i.e., vocational education will be the central fact, and it will have panchayats for settling disputes. It will produce its own grains, vegetables and fruits and its own khadi. This is roughly my idea of a model village."  

There are many elements in this picture that would fit nicely into the utopia of environmentalist. Local self-reliance, a clean and hygienic environment, the collective management and use of those gifts of nature so necessary for human life, water and pasture. But Gandhi himself had an uncanny knack of combining a utopian vision with practical means. Notable in this connection is the attention he paid to the crucial problem of soil fertility. He visioned rapid mechanization of agriculture for quick returns would prove to be a disastrous, short sighted policy. It would result in the virtual depletion of the soil. He was enthusiastic supporter of organic manure, which enriched the soil, improved village hygiene through the effective disposal of waste, saved foreign exchange and enhanced crop yields. As it is experimented and evidenced that, the organic manure not only yield the above results but also simultaneously check pollution and resources exhaustion caused by modern chemical techniques. Gandhiji greatly admired the work of Albert Howard, who had pioneered methods of organic agriculture at his Institute of Plant Industry in Indore.  

Gandhi’s philosophical critique of modern civilization also has profound implications for the way we live and relate to the environment today. For him,  

16 Harijan, 9th January 1937.  
17 Harijan, 25th August 1946.  
18 Harijan, 17th and 24th August 1935.
the most distinguished characteristic of capital oriented mode of production and civilization, where the tradition culture and ethics are missing, is based on multiplication and enhancement of want, desires and expectation. For him, modern civilization was grounded in a fatally flawed theory of man. Unlike ancient civilization which was soul or spirit centred, the modern is body centred and in that sense materialistic. For Gandhi, the body had two basic characteristics. First, it was distinct, self enclosed and separated from the only capable of preserving its integrity by maintaining its separateness from other bodies. As such, it was the ontological basis of the human sense of particularity, and the source of the illusion that each individual was an independent and self-centred ego only externally and continentally related to others and constantly concerned to preserve its identity by keeping the invasive others, at a safe distance. Second, the body was the seat of senses, and thus wants and desired. By their very nature, desire recurred with rhythmic regularity and were never satiated. They were also interrelated and one desire always gave rise to others. Qua sensual and desiring being, man was necessarily propelled by his inherently limitless desires and was always restless and dissatisfied. The body centred or materialistic view of man thus attributed two basic properties to him and regarded them as natural and legitimate, namely, selfishness and an infinite multiplicity of wants. A culture based on such a flawed view necessarily suffered from the following interrelated limitations. First, it lacked moral and spiritual depth. Second, since it had no guiding principles to decide what desires deserved to be

satisfied and within what limits, it led to a way of life devoid of meaning and purpose. Third, it dehumanized man and had a profound anti-human bias. Fourth, it perverted the human psyche and was suffused with the spirit of violence. Finally, it reduced wisdom to knowledge and latter to a form of power only useful as an instrument of control over nature and other men. It thereby not only perverted pursuit of truth but also lacked a system of knowledge capable of critically evaluating its basic assumptions and objectives.  

Gandhiji criticized the modern civilization because, for him, the most fundamental characteristics of it is an indefinite multiplicity of wants, whereas ancient civilizations were marked by an imperative restriction upon and a strict regulating of these wants. In uncharacteristically in temperate tones, he spoke of his “whole heartedly detesting this mad desire to destroy distance and time to increase animal appetites and go to the end of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilization stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it satanic. Gandhiji being influenced by the writers like Rousseau, Carlyle, Ruskin, Tolstoy and Thoreau stated like the above which is very much in conformity with the above writers against the unidimensional way of development and modernity.  

At the individual level, Gandhi’s code of voluntary simplicity offers a sustainable alternative to modern life styles. One of his best known aphorisms that the world has enough for everybody’s need, but not enough for everybody’s greed is, in effect, an exquisitely phrased one line environmental ethic. This was an ethics he

20 Young India, 7th October 1926 and 12th November 1931.

21 Young India, 17th March 1927.
himself practiced; for resources recycling and the minimization of wants, were integral to his life.

Under Gandhian path of economic development and ecological sustainability, people must believe that resources of the earth have to be protected and sustained not only for humankind, but also for other species and not only for this generation, but also for generations to follow. To manage and sustain resources of the earth, the approach must not be centred around any one species like the human being, but should encompass the entire life support system. Thus, people will have to work with nature, and aim at not wasting resources unnecessarily, not interfering with other species. Gandhi believed that, the earth has a finite area, both for purposes of colonization of species and utilization of resources. Furthermore, he believes that increasing population growth, production and consumption stress and also strain the natural processes. These processes in essence, renew and maintain the life support system such as air, water, soil, forests and biodiversity. It is essential that overloading the system with environmental degradation and depletion of resources is prevented by working with nature. The aim is to reduce unnecessary use and waste of resources including energy and not cause permanent extinction of other species. Therefore for short term gains, long term environmental and economic costs must be avoided. The world environmental literature, in conformity with Gandhiji highlighted the following principles to have a development based on sustainability.

a) the physical, chemical and biological assets of the earth constitute its capital.

The capital should not be in deficit on account of the conventional economic activities of humanity. It has to be conserved.
b) The human race must practice population control and owe responsibility for whatever damage occurs during development, and restore degraded ecosystems and protect those that are endangered on other counts. This is because the earth system is the only habitat for living species including the human race. Protection of all life is our primary duty.

c) There should be a limit to the present day requirement system and change the life system of affluent countries because these lead to over-extraction and over-consumption of resources. Equally important is the improvement of the life style of the poor, because subsistence life styles also lead to pollution and eco-degradation of a different, albeit mostly manageable kind.

d) Market economy must include both the present and future costs of pollution and eco degradation so that these are not passed on to the society at large and to the environment as a whole. Using the polluter pays principle, these costs must be met by the manufacturer and or country concerned for not using environmentally friendly technology. And progressively replacement of environmentally harmful goods by environmentally friendly ones must take place.

e) Serious attempts have to be made to evolve and encourage the use of technologies that lead to more output from minimum amount of resources inputs, i.e., to produce more goods and services from less and less natural resources. Such technologies should produce a minimum amount of pollution and use of minimal amount of energy.
f) There is a need to replace the present dirty technologies by those technologies and production systems of goods which, as far as possible, encourage efficient resource use and avoid resources waste, ecodegradation and pollution. Such technologies need to be rewarded and awarded.

To bridge the gap between rich and poor, Gandhiji said, "the rich have a superfluous store of things which they do not need and which are, therefore, neglected and wasted; while millions starve and are frozen to death for want of them. If each retained possessions only of what he needed, none would be in want and all would live in contentment. For protection of biodiversity and sustainability the environmental scientist Ehrlich and Ehrlich in 1992 have given four crucial reasons, which are very closely related with Gandhian way of emancipation values of total humanity for the future generations.

a) Ethics: Homosapiens has a responsibility to act as a conscientious steward towards the other organisms that share the earth with humanity. This is not necessarily altruistic but moral environmental existentialism as it contributes to sustainable development.

b) Aesthetic Value: landscape variation influences cultural developments and provides components and or situations for gardening, recreation, the visual arts, and ecotourism.

c) Economic Values [Goods]: Humanity has advanced through the development of technologies to utilize many components of biodiversity. These component give rise to marketable products which have an economic
value. Agriculture for example, depends on largely on ecosystem components which have been domesticated to produce food and fiber. In that sense, agriculture, industry and ecosystem should be closely land harmoniously related with each other for desired results.

d) Ecosystem Service: The persistence of humanity is dependent on a variety of factors amongst the most vital of which are the maintenance of a favourable atmosphere composition, i.e. biogeochemical cycling, soil genesis and maintenance, water cycling and pest control.22

By supporting Gandhian way of development, the ecological activists in India are quite against the construction of big power projects such as hydel, nuclear, thermal, dams, mining projects, prawn farms, luxury hotels, gold courses and air strips. They oppose large projects and dams construction in India due to the following important grounds:

a) The decline of irrigational science, giving way to civil engineering has led to the emergence of crucial environmental questions; vast areas of land gets submerged under the reservoirs of the dams. It is calculated that big river valley projects have swallowed 0.5 m. hac of forest land between 1951 and 1976, roughly one-tenth of the area which has benefited from irrigation. For proper land and water management, adequate forest cover is a must. Instead of proper afforestation, further deforestation is taking place. In the connection of building of big dams and its consequential effects Rothe

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[1978], a French Seismologist remarks by building dams to control the energy of rivers, he brings about stresses whose energy can be suddenly and disastrously released. All large reservoirs must, to some extent, be considered potential source of induced activity. All over the world major earthquakes have occurred in some large reservoirs. So also in India. The Machu dam disaster of August 1979, which killed several hundred people and destroyed Morvi town and nearby villages is the biggest tragedy caused by dams in India; bringing to light the technological faults of the engineers and use of substandard material by the contractors. Reports of use of substandard materials which have caused damage to dams come from Bargi, Bana, Somasila, Hirakund, Kaddam, Dantiwada, Aran, Pachna and many others. Big projects and dams also caused water borne diseases like malaria, fluorsis and schistossomiasis.

b) Rehabilitation of the outees is one of the least satisfactory aspects of reservoir projects. Most dams are constructed in remote hilly areas, mostly inhabited by tribals and other weaker sections of the society. The landless labourers, marginal farmers share croppers, tenant cultivators, artisans, cattle grazers, fisher-folk and the like, who depend on the region's natural resources, are not compensated for their loss.

c) It violated the basic concept of egalitarian society which is based on non-violence and proper distribution of material wealth by concentrating land in the hand of few landlords. After four decades of independence, the
Gandhian ecological activists argued there is no significant reduction so far as the extent of land concentration in the hand of few is concerned.\textsuperscript{23}

d) Along with the flora, there is the inevitable loss of precious fauna. A dam across the river creates a huge man made lake. As a result, there is a considerable loss of agricultural land, coastal erosion of top soil, forest wildlife and permanent construction of houses, roads, temples, schools, hospitals, archaeological sites and the like. At the same time down stream, there is considerable loss of silt and reduction of fertility of soil due to impoundment. In the reservoir there is considerable loss of water due to seepage and also over use of water. The change of the micro-climate of the area, resulting in a moist ecosystem, offers ideal conditions for pest infestation and consequently huge loss of agricultural output. The over crowding of dam outees in poorly facilitated area, bad sanitation and the use of poor quality of water also lead to various types of diseases.

e) In the reservoir, lacustrine conditions help the growth of particular varieties of fishes. There is also loss of fish life in the down stream of dam and with the sea immediately beyond its estuary. The construction of dams in technologically backward countries, in inappropriate places like seismic prone zones, due to political and cost effective reasons. Overtapping during floods, construction on faulty foundation and erroneous design and with inferior materials by unscrupulous contractors, the pilot project syndrome, i.e, the extrapolation of big dams from small dams sabotage and lack of

cooperation among the concerned departments usually result in huge loss of life and property due to failure of big dams.\textsuperscript{24}

Environmentalists and Gandhian social activists like Sunderlal Bahuguna, Medhapatekar and many others are attacked for opposing nuclear, thermal and large hydro electric projects. Hydro electricity is considered to be least pollutant. In substitution they not only demanded people service oriented small dams, minor irrigation projects which are not only cost effective and less prone to ecological insecurity and other socio economic problems, but also the cheapest form of creating, conserving alternative source of energy. He strongly argued the cheapest form of alternative energy is energy saved. Efforts should be directed towards curbing wasteful energy use on luxurious items by the pampered few. We have the know-how for energy from petroleum, gas, earth's crust, biomass, solar, tidal waves, animal excreta and wind. For creating and expanding the Gandhian way of energy creation, the President of Gandhian Sarvodaya Society, in Sri Lanka could be able to draw the attention of the whole world. In this context, Dr A.T. Aryaratne, the President of Gandhian Sarvodaya Society in Sri Lanka received the President award [India] for promoting Gandhian ideals in Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{25}

The Studies of different big dams and projects and their consequential effects shows that, if affected in a greater degree to the tribal people, their displacement, disintegration of community life and at least their natural love and relation with the natural ecosystem. The studies by Chandrasekhariah and Joshi in 1965 and 1983

\textsuperscript{24} Baboo (Balgovind), "Development and Displacement: The case of Large Dams in India", \textit{Man and Development}, December 1991, pp.34-46.

\textsuperscript{25} Singh (Satyajit K.), Ibid., pp. 570-72.
respectively fill these gaps to some considerable extent. Both the studies are the result of collective efforts and are sociological in nature, but different in their approach and emphasis. Joshi et al, have studied 19 villages in Gujarat which would be affected by the completion of the Narmada project. These are predominately tribal villages, which were characterized by a fair degree of homogeneity before 1960 but are now undergoing differentiation while the construction work is in progress. This is indicative of extraneous factors having divisive roles. Chandrasekhariah has all these problems in mind while talking about the non-tribal people of the Tungavadra water spread area who have already been rehabilitated in different colonies.26

Nuclear energy is dangerous. In the thermal power stations, pollution can be reduced to the bare minimum with the help of electrostatic precipitators and other gadgets to trap sulfur dioxide and other poisonous gases. In these context, the Gandhian ecologist and social activist argued in terms of decentralized small scale irrigation schemes, minor irrigation, well irrigation, surface irrigation scheme, small hydel schemes, small dams. Alternative sources of energy creation such as energy from petroleum, gas, biomass, solar, tidal waves, animal excreta and wind has to be created. It is also estimated by the Planning Commission that it costs Rs.2,800 to provide irrigation to one hectare of land through major and medium irrigation schemes in comparison to Rs 840 for an equal area by ground water. It is also pointed out that the outlay of minor schemes have been less but the potential realized is more. Kanwar [1988] observed that the cost of ground water development are hardly one fourth of surface water development in the 7th Plan. Again a study by the Afro-Asian Rural

Construction Organization [1982] talking about irrigation concludes, "the investment cost of unit irrigated area for major and minor irrigation projects was 118 per cent more than for minor irrigation.

Another Gandhian alternative conception of sustainable development and preservation of ecology is the small hydel schemes. The success story of China in this field is an oft quoted one advocating its implementation in a big way in India. Small hydel schemes require a drop of about 10 meters only, they require less capital, there are lower distribution costs and transmission losses are almost negligible. Moreover, as production is small, it meets local requirements and plays an important role in the overall development of the people of the rural areas. The Chinese experiment has demonstrated the important role such as hydel units can play in overall development and direction towards the realization of social justice. Cada and Zodroga [1982] and the Hangzhov Regional Centre [Asia Pacific's] for small hydro power elaborate on the vital role small scale hydroelectric power can play for developing countries. In India, there are innumerable sites on fast flowing hill streams and river slopes where small hydel schemes can be implemented by constructing a small dam. In some cases turbines can be fitted in the river bed to generate electricity. All that a small hill village would require is 0.1 mw of electricity. The great advantage is that these can be operated by the local people without much bureaucratic or technical help. However, if we look at the small capital outlay, shorter gestation period, socio economic development, environmental costs, loss of social and cultural heritage and the menace of displacement, the differences can be more than substituted. The voluntary sector has installed a few micro hydel units successfully at Chamoli, Gopeswar and Buddhakedar where the lives and the livelihood of the local people have changed for
the better. The argument of the Gandhian ecological activists for the small dams in contradiction to the bigger one also based on the same logic and ethics. Vanvasi Sewa Ashram in Mirzapur has constructed some 750 small dams, each costing about Rs 60,000 and irrigating about 40 acres of land. Similarly at Sukhomanjari village, 35 km north of Chandigar, small dams have greatly improved agricultural productivity and the ecosystem.

The neglect of these small projects is perhaps because they directly benefit the weaker section and run contrary to status quo interests. The stakes in the case of small projects are not high for the contractors, engineers, politicians and bureaucrats. Gandhian ecological movements against the construction of large projects and big dams, though faced many hurdles including state power supported by money muscles, Mafia and people who are intoxicated by the capitalistic bourgeois exploitative establishments. Inspite of all these hurdles, there have been some success stories. The Chipko movement in India, which challenged the commercial exploitation of the Himalayan forests in the 1970s, is one such story. Its slogan was “what do the forests bear? Soil, water and pure air, and they are the basis of life”. This slogan is well known all over the world. The movement was spread through foot marches, folk songs and folk gathering through the stories of Ramayan and Srimad Bhagwat. Women, who still are not completely under the influence of material civilization, were in the forefront of the movement. Similarly, in Gandhmardan, Orissa, the tribal people launched a movement against bauxite mining which would have destroyed the rich

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natural forest. This forest contains some rare medicinal herbs. They could save the forest.

In Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, where a large number of forest people are being displaced due to Sardar Sarovar dam, the people are resisting. Baba Amte, the veteran Gandhian patriarch, is camping in the submergence area. All these movements are inspired by Gandhi's non-violent satyagraha. To fight against anti-people and ecologically deplorable projects and dams, the Gandhian activists realized that Gandhian alternative way of opposition against injustice and living with the harmony of nature is felt very essential in the techno-managerial capitalistic development world. In this sense, the great Gandhian ecological activist Sunderlal Bahuguna said, we should use the earth's natural resources in such a way that the sources are not exhausted. This is possible if we depend more on renewable resources, use less things, i.e., things based on need than greed, then the whole world will survive from the crisis. He justified how the forest people, the indigenous communities in contradiction to the modern civilization which is based on greed; inspite of onslaughts of the aggressive development, still exist. When a few years back we discussed the problems of development and survival with Ivan Illich, in his Gandhi like hut in a tribal village of Mexico, he said, “Perhaps the Eskimos can show us the way”, meaning thereby the people living in harmony with the nature. ²⁸ Again, he stated to bring about a permanent solution of the crisis of ecology; the humanitarian scientists representing knowledge [gyan], social activists having faith in non-violence and representing action [karma] and compassionate literary men, artists, journalists, who take the message to

the hearts of the people and make the suffering silent majority representing devotion [bhakti] should come forward on a common platform and from their local groups to launch a movement for the revival of Gandhian culture based on nature. Though they constitute only a small minority, this creative minority will succeed in bringing about a change.

Gandhiji's vision not only confined to the harmonious relationship between man and man, man and other lower beings, but also it extended to man and nature relationship to maintain an emancipatory ecologically and politically stable society. The modern ecopolitical theorists also concerned to challenge the conservative, liberal capitalistic and socialistic ideologies and ultimately aimed at to transform the existing power relations, such as those based on class, gender, race, nationality and domination of any particularized factor over the rest. Their most fundamental thrust is to ensure an equitable transition towards an ecologically sound and sustainable society. The theoreticians and social scientists influenced by the emancipatory thinkers and personalities like Gandhiji because they pointed out the similarities and differences between the two dominating ideologies such as liberalism and Marxism. The emancipatory personalities and thinkers have noted that while social relations between humans are theoretically different under capitalism and socialism, the relationship between humans and the rest of the nature appears to be essentially the same. This has also proved historically. In that respect, an American emancipatory ecopolitical thinker remarked:

A crucial failure in modern political thought and political practice has been an inability or unwillingness even to begin the critical evaluation
and control of our society's technical constitution. The silence of liberalism on this issue is matched by an equally obvious neglect in Marxist theory. Both persuasions have enthusiastically sought freedom in sheer material plenitude. 29

Indeed, the environmental degradation and its international nature has lent force to the broader claim by the emancipatory thinkers and theoreticians that the modern ecological crisis is the quintessential crisis of industrialism rather than just western capitalism. Industrialism encompasses the state capitalism of communist nations as well as the largely privately controlled capitalism which is based on market forces, and known as market capitalism of western nations, both are seen by the emancipatory and known as market capitalism of western nations, both are seen by the emancipatory theorists as resting upon the ideologies of growth and technological optimism. This ecological critique is therefore concerned to emphasize the shared expansionary ethos of both west and east. In the Soviet Union, this ethos was, until recently encapsulated in the programme of the Soviet communist Party approved in 1961 at the twenty second party congress which stated that "communism elevates man to a tremendous level of supremacy over the nature and makes possible a greater and fuller use of its inherited forces. 30 One could just as easily substitute western capitalism for communism in this confident assertion of modern humanity's technological mastery over nature.


To be sure, it was classical liberalism underpinned by Laissez faire economics and defended in the writings of John Locks and Adam Smith, rather than communism that originally underscored the fundamental direction of modern bourgeois political economy by basing it on cornucopian assumptions and an expanding economy. As Susan Leeson has argued in terms of the disequilibrium relationship between man’s destination in terms of production and enjoyment and its logical consequential outcomes—

Lockean thought legitimated virtually endless accumulation of material goods; helped equate the process of accumulation with liberty and pursuit of happiness; helped implant the idea that with ingenuity man can go beyond the fixed laws of nature, adhering only to whatever temporary laws he established for himself in the process of pursuing happiness. This also based on the principle that the “common” is served best through each man’s pursuit of private gain, because there will be always enough for those who are willing to work.31

Within this Lockean tradition, the non human world was seen in purely instrumental terms, that is, as no more than a means to human ends. After all, according to Locke, the earth had given to humans for the support and the comfort of well being, and by mixing of human labour with nature was an act of appropriation that created something valuable, i.e. property out of something otherwise valueless [the earth] in its state of “natural grace”.

Although some emancipatory theorists, such as John Rodman, have noted and discussed these by ways in liberal thought, the general tendency has been to look to other political traditions for the ideals and principles that would underpin and ecologically sustainable post-liberal society. Indeed, the classical liberal defenders of individualism and laissez faire economics are seen by emancipatory ecopolitical theorists as apologists for the very dynamic that has led to the tragedy of the ‘commons’. And as the survivalists had shown, the logical sequence of this dynamic is authoritarianism from above rather than self limitation from below. Moreover, the emancipatory theorists largely accept the democratic socialist critique of liberalism that the exercise of both economic and political freedom largely illusory to the mass of ordinary working people, the unemployed and the peoples of developing countries. In this sense it could be well argued that Mahatma Gandhi’s concept of Sarvodaya and antodaya, protection of third world countries from the exploitative domination of first world countries who are more or less guided by either the ideology of liberal democracies or totalitarianism is in conformity with the emancipatory ecopolitical total survival theorists. The exercise of inalienable rights of the individual heralded by liberalism, notably property rights which confer the right of exclusive use and disposal of land, labour and capital together with freedom of contract and market incentives, is seen as the leading to the concentration of the ownership of production [capital] and a system of power relations that negates the otherwise laudable liberal goal of free autonomous development for each individual. Gandhiji like emancipatory theorists as well as democratic socialists does not consider it an acceptable solution merely to rely on the redistributive largesse of the welfare state to iron out excessive inequalities, since this only brings the dispossessed into the market as passive consumers rather than
self-determining producers [their only area of effective choice being how to spend their limited welfare checks]. So in order to make the masses who are exploited and dominated by a few capitalistic owners, the emancipatory theoreticians argument of popular participation and self-management is very close with Gandhian concept of individual autonomy, concept of self in the oceanic circle analysis.32

This combined ecological and social critique of liberalism has led emancipatory theorists to reject the philosophy of possessive individualism and turn toward alternative political theories that are more consonant with an ecological perspective or at the very least, respectful of "ecological limits", and are better able to foster some kind of democratic, cooperative and communitarian way of organizing social and economic life. The orthodox Marxist alternative, while seen by many emancipatory theorists to be theoretically preferable to liberal political philosophy in seeking collective economic decision making and a fairer distribution of society's stock of wealth, was found to be ultimately wedded to the same expansionary ethos and anthropocentric framework as liberalism. Moreover, as the evidence of ecological degradation in Eastern Europe mounts, Communism in practice is being increasingly regarded as an unmitigated disaster from the point of view of ecological sustainability. Like Locke, Marx saw economic activity, the act of producing via the appropriation of nature, as essential to human freedom. And like Locke, Marx regarded the non human world as no more than the ground of human activity, acquiring value if and when it became transformed by human labour or its extension — technology. But

Marx differed from Locke in one fundamental ground that is, his total rejection of the institution of private property on the grounds that it gave rise to class domination and the appropriation of surplus value from the worker.\textsuperscript{33}

In contradiction of both the democratic liberal tradition and Marxists as well regarding the disequilibrium and imbalance relationship between man and nature, Gandhi who influenced by vedic traditions thought of for the same, in terms of a higher organic, dynamic, living and continuing relation between the two. The concepts like Dharitrimalata, Vasudaivkutumbakam, ahimsa parmodharma which has sufficient space for non-killing, the lower species, anasakta and aparigraha, has higher moral, ethical and normative order is a close confirmation with non-exploitation of the people by people but also any lower being and at least earth's natural properties by man. Gandhi’s concept of mother Earth, though much older has its deep rooted philosophical base with the concept of goddess Earth [Gaia] in Greek philosophy. It was not only to rid India into a foreignation, but in its wake, it was to rid India of the blatant loot and plunder of India's resources which left its ugly scars on the landscape which prompted him to say; we cannot have ecological movement designed to prevent violence against nature, unless the principles of non-violence became central to the ethos of human culture. More importantly he also said that since at present man has no power to create life, therefore, he has no right to destroy life. Many national and international leaders all over the world in Africa, Europe and USA followed him. In

this context, Martin Luther King said, Jesus Christ gave the motivation and Gandhi showed the method.\textsuperscript{34}

Gandhiji’s advocacy and practice of yoga which has its due place in Indian tradition and culture to discipline mind against any kind of perversion and sensual attraction and finally establishment of union of human spirit \textit{(jivatma)} with the eternal spirit symbolized the holy trinity, \textit{Brahma, Vishnu} and \textit{Mahesh} have a direct relevance to environment and the ethics of resources use. The practice of \textit{hat yoga} [physical practice] and ethical code of conduct [\textit{raj yoga}], yamas which are essentially moral commandments or ethical guide lines which deal with underlying principles governing our relationship with other living beings, other species in the biosphere and our surroundings. Gandhiji’s conception of mutualistic interaction means plants depending on animals for dispersal of pollen and seeds. Whenever one species depends upon another, sustainable use requires maintenance of mutualistic relationship. Thus, extensive spraying of fruit trees with insecticides is incompatible with pollination of flowers and, hence, production of fruit. Gandhian aesthetic life in terms of creation of a natural ecology which is related very much with human psyche has a sufficient space to think of nature and man relationship. An important component of human life involves viewing and interacting with other species. A substantial body of evidence shows that the need to interact with other species in deeply rooted in human psyche. People spend large sums of money to have flowers in their homes, to travel to see unusual organisms and to have views of nature from their windows. Interaction with animals and plants is proving to be the most effective methods of dealing with some

illness, recovery from operations and physical disabilities. Some countries derive considerable foreign income from “ecotourism” which depends on the existence of a rich array of plant and animal species in their natural habitat.35

Bringing Gandhian trusteeship to bridge the gap between exploiter and exploited and finally create a socio economic situation where the dignity of each and every individual will be well protected, the present intergenerational equity says that humans as a species holds the natural and cultural environment of earth in common both, with other members of the present generation and with other generations, past and future.36 Each generation is both a trustee or custodian of the planet for future generations and the beneficiary of previous generations stewardship. In terms of certain obligation for our legacy and the rights to use the legacy, Edmund Burke observed that human community as a partnership among all generations “as the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living but between those who are non-living, those who are dead and those who are yet to be born”. The purpose of the partnership is to protect the welfare of every generation and to do so each generation must recognize that it is the part of the natural system with special responsibilities as well as rights. This moral commandments and ethical norms of excessive use of material, natural resources with thinking the future generation pointed out the close relationship and harmony with not only man and man of the same time but also different time and


36 Gandhi (M.G.), Gandhian Aesthetics, Vikas Bharati, Chandigarh, 1969, pp. 72-98.
nature and man as well. Gandhiji’s conceptualization of primacy of duty resulted in creation of rights also in conformity with the close relationship between man and nature. 37

The implications of what Gandhiji said regarding nature and man relationship in terms of ecology is very vast. At least six civilizations in the past have fallen just because they did not nurture nature from which humanity draws its sustenance. This has been true of the early agricultural based urban civilizations like the Mediterranean European, Mesopotamian, Nile, Indus and Hoang Ho Valleys and the Mayan. All these evolved between 6000 to 8000 years ago, reached their zenith and contributed substantially to art, literature, science, music and to over all human development. However, they faded on account of their almost total disrespect for the nature. The lesson from the fall of these civilizations is loud and clear. Forest precede civilizations, deserts follow them, so said Francois Renee Chateaubriant. Gandhiji said in this context, civilization is a mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality means to attain mastery over mind and our passions. Morality is not only confined to human and non-human beings but also towards nature, who are less fortunate, is indeed one of the root causes of environmental problems. Gandhiji has categorically stated:

"I refuse to buy from anybody anything, however, nice or beautiful, if it interferes with my growth or injures those whom nature has made my first care." 38

SOCIAL ECOLOGY AND GANDHISM

Gandhiji also provided sufficient space to maintain an ideal social order based on harmony and integration between the individual self with the social self and the development of individual is not in contradiction with the society. It is generally found in the capitalistic liberal democracies, the basic principle is individual initiative, enterprise and skill, the development of the sociality and the development of isolated fragmented individuality contradicts with each other. Gandhi conceives of the relationship between the individual and society as analogous to that between the drops and the ocean. The drops even while they can claim individuality, cannot survive without the ocean and the ocean will lose its identity without the drops. There is no question of primacy and precedence, so far as the relationship between individual and society is concerned. As Tu Wei Ming points out:

"Ideally the dangers of self isolation and social coercion can be conquered if the fundamental change has been made in the dichotomous way of perceiving the relationship between the self and society. In a practical sense, the source of such a change is located neither in the self nor in the society exclusively. It has to be sought in both; and indeed in between". 39

The authentic person in Gandhian perspective is an integral part of sociality. The dichotomy between the individual and the society is therefore false. The essential

39 Tu (Wei Ming), Humanity and Self Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought, Berkeley, Asian Humanities Press, 1979, p. 23.
unity of all things the stress on the meanness of reality and the insistence on respecting the integrity of others — all these point to the interrelatedness of individual and society. In seeking such an identity the self extends itself beyond its physical boundaries and transforms itself in sociality for attaining authenticity. In this conception, society is not conceived as something out there but as an extended self. The process of self disclosure is thus transformed into the process of codisclosure. The extension of self as the basis for identification with others implies interdependence. All societies, whether atomistic or organic, emphasize interdependence. But in many cases, it usually takes the form of functional interdependence restricted to the exchange of goods and services. The human cementry of oneness and the use value of oneness converted into exchange value and capitalistic market principle eroded the concept of oneness. The market culture and its operation resulted in equality and becomes a breeding ground for conflict between groups and individuals. Anthony Giddens the great contemporary sociological theorist is right by justifying the emergence of series theory against group theory and communitarism with the development of post capitalistic societies. The individual in advanced capitalistic societies are concerned for his individual self, ever neglecting the blood related relatives which resulted in social disintegration, disharmony, frustration, isolationism and many other such type of tendencies which directly contradict the very basis of individualism. The interdependence of Gandhi's conception, therefore, further implies that the value of social harmony could be created with the process of integration of oneself with others and society which necessarily means strengthening the bonds of human relatedness. True self transformation consists, in Gandhi's view, not in detaching oneself from the world of human relations but in making sincere attempts to harmonize ones
relationships with others. It is in view of these considerations that Gandhi puts so much emphasis on individual autonomy [swaraj], swadeshi, i.e., commitment to one's own country, locality, self duty [swadharma], self-reliance [swabalamban] where the individual could be able to seek his best self without outside interference, domination or exploitation, he says:

Swadeshi is that spirit in us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, as far religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion. That is my immediate response to use my religious surroundings. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects. In the domain of politics, I should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics, I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve these industries by making efficient and complete where they might be found wanting.\textsuperscript{40} Gandhiji further said, the vital consideration is not so much the choice of one or another profession as the achieving of self realization. In facing the problem of a career, a man should emphasize above all, spiritual aspects of life. With this uppermost in his thoughts, he should trust his own potentialities, discover how he can best meet the peculiar

needs of the local community in which he finds himself and apply himself to meeting those needs to the utmost of his ability.\textsuperscript{41}

Needless to say that, Gandhi's conception of the self is no different from Maritan's concept of the person. When the person is defined in terms of seeking authentic selfhood, the very concept of self incorporates sociality. Authentic selfhood is impossible without sociality, without the self extending itself to cover the other and making the other very important for its own development. In this perspective self and society are not separate entities. The separation between self and society dissolves if the self is considered as a continuance, an extension of its physical existence to the embodiment of the universe as a whole. Self and society therefore are not static concepts denoting two irreconcilable entities but are two mutually dependent aspects of the same dynamic process. Gandhi's importance in political philosophy is not because of his conceptualization of individual is prior to society, but he is the most active component of society and corporate growth is dependent entirely on individual growth. Gandhiji visualizes a social order which must realize the ideal of a non-competitive, classless egalitarian society without going through the travail of class war. Such social order would, as he believed, avoid the alternatives of unrestricted and predatory individualism, on the one hand, and totalitarian regimentation of society in regard to the life, activities and even thinking of the people, on the other. A social order is a system of elements, each of which is defined by its relation to all the other elements. The elements are individuals or groups and their interaction is governed by a principle of order, the idea or the rule according to which the elements are arranged.

Gandhi eschewed all idea of superordination subordination, conflict and exploitation and preferred a social order that reflected interdependence, cooperation and harmony. He recognized the importance of division of labour for the social order, but wanted to take the elements of conflict and exploitation out of the division of labour. He found this possible only in a social order based on *varna vyavastha*, i.e., arrangement based on *varna* that is occupational divisions.

Varna, based as they are, on a division of functions, presuppose differences in kinds of responsibility but not in degrees of responsibilities and most recognize that capacities and corresponding vocations are hereditary because they follow from the doctrine of progenetive rebirth, every man's son is by nativity qualified and predestined to assume his father's character and take his place in the world. For Gandhi, the choice of occupation must be based on the search for self realization. Quoting Max Mueller that India considers life as only one thing - duty - whereas others thought of enjoyment cum duty. Gandhi says that *varna* is nothing more than an indication of the duty that had been handed down to each one of us by our forefathers.42

Speaking of the differences between caste and class Gandhi says: Man being a social animal he has to devise some method of social organization. We in India, evolved caste as the concept of class to Europeans. Neither has the solidarity or naturalness of the family which perhaps is a good ordained institution. Its caste has produced certain evils, class has not been productive of anything less. If class helps to conserve certain social virtues, caste does the same in equal, if not greater, degree. The beauty of the caste system is that it does not base itself upon distinctions of wealth.

possessions... caste is but an extension of the principle of family. Gandhi contests the argument of scientists in the west that heredity counts for nothing and it is the environment that shapes man's personality. Even if the importance of environment is recognized, Gandhi says, it is easy to prove that the milieu can be conserved and developed more through caste than through class. The spirit behind caste is not one of arrogant superiority; it is the classification of different systems of self culture. It is the best possible adjustment of social stability and progress. Just as the spirit of the family is inclusive of those who love each other and are wedded to each other by ties of blood and relation, caste also tries to include families of a particular way of purity of life than economic standard of life. Caste does not connote superiority or inferiority. It simply recognizes different outlooks and corresponding modes of life.\textsuperscript{43} Gandhi concedes that the caste system has been corrupted and has produced many evils. But so have other social arrangements and social order. It does not therefore follow that it should be abolished root and branch. Nor does he accept that since caste emphasizes heredity as the basis of occupations, it should be discarded. The hereditary principles even followed in the class based social order. But Gandhi does not advocate the retention of the varna vyavastha simply on the fact that other arrangements are faulty. In his view, varna vyavastha is natural and affords greater opportunities than other arrangements for self-realization and social harmony. In Gandhi's words:

I believe that every man is born in the world with certain natural tendencies and certain limitations which he cannot overcome. Out of the careful observation of the two the law of varna is deduced. It establishes certain spheres of action of certain

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi}, XIX, p. 174-75.
people with certain tendencies. This avoided unworthy competitions. While recognizing limitations the law of varna admitted of no distinction of high or low on the other hand it guaranteed to each the fruits of his labour and prevented him from pressing upon his neighbours. This great law has been degraded and has fallen into disrepute. But my contention is that an ideal social order will only be evolved when the implication of the law are fully understood and given effect to.\textsuperscript{44}

The varna vyavastha symbolizes the four fold division of the social order and all these divisions are members of one body. Therefore, the question of which one is superior and inferior does not arise. The moment the question of superiority and inferiority arises, the social order is bound to go into pieces. It is in Gandhi’s view the canker of superiority and inferiority that is at the root of the various ills of our time, especially class wars and civil strife. And therefore, Gandhi argues that class wars and civil strifes can be ended only by observing the law of varna. For, it ordains that everyone shall fulfill the law of one’s being by doing in a spirit of duty and service that to which one is born.\textsuperscript{45}

As Gandhi sees it, a social order based on the varna vyavastha is oriented towards enabling the individual to work for self realization. As he placed in social roles, he must perform these roles not for entrenching himself more and more into materiality but for launching his spiritual quest and advancing on the path towards self realization. This requires not withdrawal from the worldly duties, but performing them well so that the others that are dependent on the intimately interlinked with him in the

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., LIX, p. 320.

chain of mutual dependence and reciprocity may not suffer. This can be assured only when the notion of self-aggrandizement is abandoned and one's role is seen as constituting a tiny but very important part of the innumerable functions that subserve the whole, the entire social order. So, precisely speaking Gandhian concept of varna vyavastha means specialization in doing certain things efficiently and the principle of heredity implies accumulated skill and experience in following one's calling and therefore performing one's duties in a manner that yields maximum result.

Gandhiji's varnashrama is not a system of water tight compartments. A Brahmin is not only a teacher but he is predominantly that. But a Brahmin who refused to labour will be voted down as an idiot. The Rishis who lived in the forests, cut and fetched wood, tended cattle and even fought. But their pursuit in life was preeminently search after truth. Similarly, a Rajput without learning was good for nothing, no matter how will he wielded the sword. And a Vaishya, without divine knowledge sufficient for his own growth, will be a veritable monster eating into the vitals or society as many modern vaishyas, whether of the east or west have become. According to Gita, they are incarnations of sin who live only for themselves. Regarding untouchability and caste, he draws a sharp distinction between untouchability and varna or caste. The former has no scientific basis. It cannot be supported by reason. It denies man the privilege of service to fellow beings and deprives the untouchables in distress of the right of receiving service from their kind. The caste system has, in my opinion, a scientific basis. It does not prevent a Brahmin from serving his sudra brother. Brahmins who regard themselves as superior being
born to look down upon the other castes, are not a Brahmins. If he first, he is so by right of service.\textsuperscript{46}

Gandhiji remarked, I do regard varnashrama as a healthy division of work based on birth. The present idea of caste are a perversion of the original. There is no question of superiority or inferiority but it is purely based on duty. I have indeed stated that varna is based on birth. But I have also said that it is possible for a shudra, for instance, to become a vaishya and likewise ... he who performs the duty of a Brahmin will easily become one in the next incarnation.\textsuperscript{47} Gandhi believed that, a person born of Brahmin parents will be called a Brahmin, but if his life fails to reveal the attributes of a Brahmin when he comes of age, he cannot be called as Brahmin. On the other hand, one who is born not of the Brahmin but reveals in his conduct the attributes of a Brahmin will be regarded as the same, i.e., Brahmin. About casteism, he said, I do not believe casteism in modern sense. It is an excrescence and a handicap in progress. ... a sort of hierarchy has been evolved in the caste system.\textsuperscript{48} Thus, caste, so far as it connotes distinction in status is an evil. He saw the untouchability aspect of this division as the worst. He pointed out in this context, I have always regarded caste as an excrescence. It is true that it has been handed down to us from generations, but so are many evil practices even to this day. Love of the people brought the problem of untouchability early into my life. My mother said, “you must not touch this boy, he is untouchable”, I questioned back, and from that day my revolt began.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Young India,} 12th March 1925.

\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Young India,} 23rd April 1925 [In bringing out a distinction between caste and varna].


\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
Gandhi shared the confusions and reservations of his predecessors. Like them, he abhorred the practice of untouchability; in fact, his condemnation of it was much stronger. Initially he took the view that it had nothing to do with caste system itself. Later he changed his view. He thought that the caste system legitimized and nurtured it and had to be abolished as well. Like, untouchability the caste system was a regrettable corruption of the allegedly excellent system of varnas. For Gandhi, the ancient Hindus were wise and prescient enough to realize that a social system or social structure cannot be stable unless properly planned and articulated into open and non-exclusive occupational groups. It was a great pity that such a sane social order had degenerated into the system of closed and hierarchical castes. Later in life Gandhi began to entertain doubts about the varna system itself. However, he could not see how social confusion and chaos could be avoided without a suitable modern version of it. Gandhi argued to change or rather say reform the concept of untouchability from within the Hindu framework.\(^{(50)}\) Gandhi’s concept of varna is more close to duty, function, dignity of labour both manual and mental to maintain an open non-hierarchical social order than its contradictions as understood, misunderstood and misinterpreted by votaries of dalits. The recent revision of socialists and capitalists to take the ecological factor into account for survival of the total human kind are very close to Gandhian values of decentralized participatory democracy, ecological responsibility, social justice and dispersal of political and economic power through creation of local based voluntary leadership and village community consciousness about their surroundings. Both the ecosocialists and ecoliberals differ

from each other so far as the use and implementation of these values and ethics to preserve ecology. The ecosocialists tend to emphasize the evils of the market economy which is based on desire than need and resulted in excessive commodification of life neglecting and paying a slightest heed towards nature at the sametime ecocapitalists criticized the former due to its centralized planning and where the scope of popular participation in the process of social life is denied. Gandhiji goes beyond the contradictions faced by both the dominant ideologies and advocated the concept of village republic, community interdependent mutuality where nobody is so possessive with either matter or wealth to dominate over others.\textsuperscript{51}

Gandhiji by criticizing both the then ideological paradigms supported village economics based on agro based ecosystems. The perception of a village in India covers the growing of food in a particular ecological regime, the way the villages conserve the soil and water, constructs his dwellings and lives in it, the way he uses animals, the way he organically fertilizes the soil, the way he treats the adjoining forests for extraction of fodder, fuel and at least total identification of nature and natural settings. Supporting an agro based and ecologically sustainable village community based on mutual interdependence which is a total contradiction of capitalistic development and disequilibrium, disharmony with the man-man, man-productive system and at last man and nature relationship. In this connection, Gandhiji said, I do visualize electricity, ship building, iron works, machine making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. But the order of dependence will be reserved. Hitherto industrialization has so planned to destroy the villages and village

\textsuperscript{51} Eckersley (Robyn), \textit{Environmentalism and Political Theory}, UCL Press, 1982, pp. 140-41.
crafts. In the state of the future, it will subserve the village and their crafts. Nothing will be allowed to be produced by the cities that can be equally well produced by the villages. The proper function of the cities is to serve as clearing houses for village products.\textsuperscript{52}

Gandhiji thought the disequilibrium between labour and capital in one hand concentration of capital in one place, i.e., cities, metropolis and in few hands, i.e., capitalists resulted not only exploiting natural resources based on the principle of greed than need but also destroyed the community life by social mobility, migration, displacement, breakdown of family, competition etc. This is well defined by sociologist, Anthony Giddens, that the capitalistic mode of productive relations and its late capitalistic tendencies not only destroyed the communitarian ethics but also equally eroded the sanctity and social solidarity of both village and city life equally. Therefore, based on the innate knowledge of the ground realities, Gandhiji advocated a different model of development based on rural and village community. Unfortunately, so far the voluntary organizations and government have paid only lip service to this model of development. \textit{Vana Mahotsava} [festival of tree planting] started by K.M. Munshi, wasteland development started in 1985 and the rational ecodevelopment and afforestation Board [Ministry of Environment and Forests]. However, there is no doubt that rural development programme aimed at improving bio-mass based economy in the villages through panchayatiraj is the right course for unusually large rural sector in India.

\textsuperscript{52} Khoshoo (T. N.), \textit{Mahatma Gandhi: An Apostle of Applied Human Ecology}, TERI, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 36-37.
Gandhiji said, as an economic reform than a theorist, independence must begin at the bottom. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self sustained and capable of managing its affairs. The greater the power of the Panchayats the better for the people. It is the function of the panchayat to teach honesty, industry and settle disputes, and if they have to settle them . . . If we would see our dream of panchayatiraj, i.e. true democracy realized, we would regard the humblest and lowest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land. This presupposes that all are pure or will become pure if they are not . . . And purity must go hand in hand with wisdom. But unfortunately, at present due to environmental degradation particularly of soil and land at subsistence level, a village cannot support people. They have to leave their hearths and homes and become ecological refugees. They reach the nearest mega city and all such cities have in fact, become twin cities; the mega cities per se, and the associated slum cities where ecological refugees live. In slums, these refugees have their own economic and social problems which are hardly supportive of a healthy society.

POLITICAL ECOLOGY LAND GANDHISM

Gandhi stood for the establishment of a stateless democracy based on truth and non-violence. The basis of Gandhian state is the active cooperation of the people based on decentralized administrative efficiency through autonomous participatory people. Rejecting both the liberal state where the fundamental principle is individual self-interest and socialist state which is based on violence and excessive centralized planning and dictatorship of the political party, he advocated an ideal social order

53 Khoshoo (T.N.), Ibid., pp. 40-41.
based on sarvodaya both material and spiritual. The need for maintenance of a viable political order being the primary over naked individual selfish interest Gandhi said, the private interest of individual and groups must be curbed to some extent in order to sustain order.

Gandhi, like Plato, would like the political order to rest on harmony and depend on its sustenance on morality than on sanctions. Drawing heavily on the traditional Indian thinking, he considers the morality as an instrument of establishing and supporting the rule of dharma. Treating society as a moral order, he puts emphasis on the necessity of preserving and upholding the net of interdependency, through cooperation of individuals occupying various stations in life. Gandhi, however, does not consider political power either in the hands of philosopher and king like Plato or any group of individuals who attain a special status in terms of material or non-material standards of life. The development of the true self constitutes, for Gandhi, the bedrock of morality and the individuals identification with the social whole in an attitude of yajña.54

Gandhiji did not regard political power as divine punishment imposed on man due to his fall. Nor did he regard political institutions as the revelation of some universal reason, nor as a bourgeois institution nor an agency of exploitation of labour by the capitalists. Attaching due weightage to individuality and its total identification with sociality through autonomous participatory, representative democracy based on non-violent ethics and morality, he justified absence of conflict between individual interests in terms of lower to higher level and any conflict between the individual

54 Ray (Ramashray), *Gandhi Sounding in Political Philosophy*, Chanakya Publications, Delhi, 1984, pp. 82-85.
interest and the interest of the society. Order for him, means nothing more than providing appropriate opportunities for self development; it cannot be allowed to assume the responsibility of deciding how self development should proceed, let alone what it consists of. The development of true individuality allows every individual to see the necessity of the rule of dharma and adhere to it in his personal and public life. It is only on this basis that the power of the state can be minimized and its tendency to aggrandize its power curbed. The willing acceptance of constraints and the capacity of each individual to resist abuse of power after the solid foundation for democracy and the solution between the conflict of freedom and order.\textsuperscript{55}

The rule of dharma, true participatory democracy could be promoted by the preservation of the interdependency of the social order, action based on detachment, vibrant citizenry committed to dharma and endowed with the will to protect and preserve it, are the necessary ingredients of a good political order, Ramarajya in Gandhi's words. The institutional base for the smooth working of democracy must be based on the principles of a micro-variability and micro vitality. The former refers to the plurality and diversity of local communities and protecting and preserving against homogeneity — inducing march of industrialization and urbanization. Homogenization promotes centralization taking away the making of many vital decisions from those whose life they greatly affect. That is why he lays so much emphasis on village republics as the primary unity of political system which will act smoothly in village environment. He stated in this connection, "a dynamic democracy can grow only out of meaningful relationships and spontaneous organizations that spring among people,

\textsuperscript{55}Prabhu (R.K.),\textit{ Gandhi, Democracy : Real and Deceptive}, Ahmedabad, Navjivan, 1961, pp. 4-6.
when they come together at local level to solve their basic problems by cooperation among themselves. In such a community, achievement of self-sufficiency and security by neighbourly cooperation endangers a strange sense of local strength and solidarity, and the individuals sense of responsibility to community and concern for its welfare are at their highest.\textsuperscript{56}

Thus, Gandhi rejects the organization of political order based on the principle of pyramidal principle with the apex all too strong and powerful. He opted instead for an organizational principle which puts the local community at the centre of the political system and assigns secondary roles to larger aggregates. As Gandhi observes, "in this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never ascending circles. Life 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, sharing 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. No one will be the first and none will be the last.\textsuperscript{57}

Gandhi, in order to make a stable political order thought that, the individual which is the primary unity should be guided by some ethico-moral and humanitarian principles like satya, dharma, swadharma, swarajya and sarbadharma sambaba, i.e., synthesis of all religions. It is found that, perhaps, the western and eastern democratic

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57 Ibid., pp. 508-81.
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and socialistic system could not be able to cope up with societal environments like social patterns of living standard, culture, religious tension, ethnic conflict role conflict and gap between material culture and spiritual non-material culture which resulted in particularization of value in place of generalization and humanization. The economic environment also put a substantial pressure on the political order maintaining agency, i.e., system which resulted in political instability and disorder. So to bring a comparison between both eastern and western political system on the one hand and Gandhian socio-political order on the other, it is found that, giving due place to both individuality and higher social collectivity, he tried to put an end of the conflict/contradiction between the environment and the political order. 58

It is in this perspective to make political order more ethical and religious based, he insisted on the inseparability of religion and politics. As he stated, “I have been experimenting with myself and friends by introducing religion into politics and now I believe they cannot be divorced. Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not Hinduism which I prize most highly, but the religion which transcends Hinduism — the basic truth which underlies all the religions of the world. It is the struggle for truth, for self expression. I call it the truth force — the permanent element in human nature, constantly struggling to find itself to know its maker. 59

The realm of politics is a realm of action — vita activa — given the responsibility of moulding both man and society for realizing the ideal ends of life and preventing a regression into nature. As such, the realm of politics cannot operate on


59 Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, XXIII, p. 196.
principles derived from its own functioning or from the givens of nature and society. It must draw its motivating ideals from the transcendental, i.e., religious and make them the guiding principles of its operation. And Gandhi devoted his life as Saran observes:

"To the cause of combating the deadly and satanic possibilities which cannot but be realized when the Regnum is allowed to pursue its own devices. To deny the sacredotium and assert the autonomy of human action with all its paradoxes and self contradictions, left unredeemed, is to establish what is now called power politics. It is against this that Gandhi sought to proclaim and establish "goodness politics" as Aldous Huxley named it". 60

Gandhi's reaction against both the capitalistic liberal democracies and socialistic state system was due to their pyramidal hierarchical authority structure where the individual self and autonomy is total subservient to the highest authority through top to bottom relationship and concentration, centralization of power in the hand of socialist party [in case of statism of socialist system]. Gandhi's concept of decentralization of authority structure to materialize the model of drop and oceanic circle where both individual and the greater social collectivity depend mutually to each other and the growth and progress totally depend upon the other and autonomous in their respective field without losing their identity. There is no concept of hierarchical authority structure. His swaraj not only challenged the British empire in India but also

the rule of state and corporate bureaucracies, large scale organizations that in the words of Max Weber created iron cogs that reduced humans to cogs in the machinery of impersonal authority. The recent trends of post modern capitalistic society to introduce non-governmental organizations, voluntary organizations in the name of civil society and protection of multiculturalism and their respective autonomy is a close approximation with Gandhian village community life through decentralization and panchayatiraj. The concept of welfare state and more power in the hands of the state to maintain legal and international order and transfer of power to the hands of the local people so far as socio-economic transformation is concerned, is also somehow very close to Gandhian concept of panchayatiraj, gram swaraj and active participation of the local people in the process of self-governance.61

Gandhi’s answers to the monopoly claims of state sovereignty and to the market driven commodification were swaraj, individual and group self rule, and stewardship of nature as well as of property and wealth. The present day NGOs were important voices and actors in recent international conferences on human rights in Vienna, on the environment in Rio de Janeiro, in Cairo on population, in Copenhagen on social development and in Beijing on women. They are quite close to Gandhian way of political decentralization through voluntary action oriented programmes but also equally helpful for promotion of the Gandhian concept of civil society. Lloyd I.

Rudolph’s concept of post modern Gandhi, taking into account the civil society and state also a mere justification of Gandhi in recent times.\(^6\)²