CHAPTER III

Gandhi’s Political Philosophy

Introduction

Political philosophy is the study of human social organization. It deals with the nature of people in the society. Political philosophy tries to present the consequences in relation to the fundamental cosmological, ontological and epistemological issues. They articulate the views of human nature. This helps in linking the cosmological with the political. Political philosophy investigates political implications of particular argument. It strives to make the sense of what we do and what prescribes and what we ought to do. Political philosophy seeks a rationale for politics and public administration, which examines the practice of governance. It always strives to answer the following questions like: What is the ideal form of government? Is it aristocracy, monarchy, theocracy, democracy or mixture of the different systems or else absolutely no government at all (anarchy)? And which economic system is the best? Mainly capitalistic one, a socialistic one, or by chance a mix of the two? At what point in history did people agree upon the ‘need’ for the government? How did they live before the investiture of government -- i.e., in the ‘state of nature’? Are human beings are intrinsically good or bad, or neither? Do the problems of
society owe mostly due to the man's fallen nature or due to the bad social organization and administration, or due to something else? What corrective agency does the world most need? More religion and spirituality? Wiser, abler rulers? Fewer laws and regulations? By what criteria can a society be judged good? By its wealth? By the way in which it treats its poorest members? By the richness of its art and culture? By the ease with which individual ties are formed? Are we ‘our brother’s keeper’? Do we have any accountability to those less providential than ourselves? Like this there will be many questions considered by the political philosophers. While dealing with the political philosophy of Gandhi, we have to remember certain characters of Gandhi. First of all, in the scholastic sense he was not a system builder. He did not systemize his political philosophy. All his preachings and writings were pouring from his deep feelings and sincere realization of the truth. Devoid of argument, it can be agreed that he was not dedicated to any exclusive school of philosophy. His speech and writings are the responses from particular circumstances. Gandhi even at the fag end of his life spoke to himself that he had never stopped to grow and therefore, he had been learning from ‘Experiment with Truth’, as he named his Autobiography. Thus Gandhi had revised his opinions from time to time though his conceptual framework remained the same. He had not altered from his basics. Gandhi never claimed as an original thinker, his political philosophy got the roots from different philosophical systems of both Eastern and Western. Though he had inherited many philosophical backgrounds, he did not agree with any one of them. He had picked up many traditional concepts from his immediate forerunners as well as from the earliest texts. We can find a theoretical structure, common to a philosopher when we look into all of his writings. Furthermore, his conceptual formulations and practical pursuits are identical through which he can be recognized as a philosopher in the Indian sense. Gandhi unlike other philosophers and political thinkers of the world, was not only a man
of destiny of the nation but also was the man of the millennium. This chapter is allocated to
discuss about Gandhian political philosophy of State, its nature and functions, Politics and its
Power, man’s nature and his role in society and also about his concept of means and ends in
politics, philosophy of satyagraha, Concept of Rights and Duties, Liberty, Equality, Law and
Justice, concept of Democracy, concept of Swaraj and Non-violent State.

**Politics and Political power**

Politics is the organized dispute about power and its use, involving choice among the competing
values, ideas, persons, interests and demands. Political power means the capacity to regulate
national life through genuinely elected national representatives. The term politics was used for
first time by Aristotle in a broader sense so as to cover the ideal polis (the city-state), the
structure of family, the control of slaves and property, causes and prevention of revolutions,
forms of government and education etc. It implies that politics act as a peacemaker by offering
solution to conflicts and also to the parties. It is a continuous process of development by which
certain groups make decisions and maintain the state activities. Politics is the means to create a
more organized and peaceful society, by providing methods to resolve the conflicts that naturally
occurs among men, by means of civil discussion and rational compromise. It stems the need for
violence in tense situations and ultimately tries to avoid the degradation of community into utter
chaos. Gandhi said that, “to me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling
people to better their conditions in every department of life. Political power means the capacity
to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to
become self-regulated, no representation become necessary. There is then a state of enlightened
anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is
never a hindrance to his neighbor.” sixty-six According to him politics is the game to attain power, to regain power and to retain power. It is a fact that there is no scope for morality and value in the western concept of politics, because till today politics remain as the power politics. The present condition is affirmative towards Gandhian philosophy of moral values and its relevance in politics, whereas from the very beginning, starting from Gandhi, politics was all pervading and hence, his war of Indian Independence had to be fought with the twin weapons of Truth and Non-violence, which ultimately became a movement and he called it as satyagraha. Arnold Brecht described Gandhi’s understanding of politics as “Scientific Value Relativism.” sixty-seven Because Gandhi conceived politics as a moral problem of value. It is the need of the hour is to revolutionize politics by ethics. “Unless the moral and spiritual qualities of the people are appropriate, the best of political system and constitutions will not work.” sixty-eight He thought that the politics is the one of means to open the door of service to public and not for misusing the power for one’s selfish purpose.

Gandhi was basically religious as well as the ethical personality. He maintained highest moral standards in politics. As the most crucial strategist in politics he evolved the political methods and campaigned the movements to capture the state’s power through the prolonged mass movement. Gandhi declared on politics that, “For me there is no politics without religion-not the religion of the superstitious and the blind, religion that hates and fights, but the universal religion of toleration. Politics without morality is a thing to avoided.” sixty-nine In addition to that he said, “For me politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt, ever to be shunned. Politics concern nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who

---

66. Gandhi, M. K., Young India, 02.07.1931, p. 162.
69. Gandhi, M. K., Young India, 27.11.1924, p. 391.
is religiously inclined, in other words a seeker after God and truth. Therefore, in politics also we have to establish the Kingdom of Heaven.”\textsuperscript{70} Gandhi said that he did not divide life into watertight compartments. The life of a nation like that of individuals is an indivisible whole. Politics comprises the whole of socio-economic and moral factors of the state, which aimed at promoting the public life. It has the power to activate the state through those representatives which is gained from the individuals of the state in a collective way.

Gandhi has described about the nature of power, that is “Possession of power makes men blind and deaf; they cannot see things which are under their very nose and cannot hear things which invade their ears. There is thus no knowing what power-intoxicated government may not do. So...patriotic men ought to be prepared for death, imprisonment and similar eventualities.”\textsuperscript{71} He said that the power can be gained through the service to the people and also through the majority of votes. According to Gandhi power is of two kinds, the first one is captured through the fear of punishment, another one is gaining through love, kindness and tolerance. He described “Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by arts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment.”\textsuperscript{72} Gandhi opposed the power concentration in a few or single hand. He thought that the concentration of political power leads to the exploitation, inequality and promote the hierarchal society. So equal power possession in the hands of public is necessary to make true democracy. He said that “When people come into possession of political power, the interference with the freedom of the people is reduced to a minimum. In other words, a nation that runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without such State interference is truly

\textsuperscript{70} Gandhi, M. K., \textit{Young India}, 18.06.1925, p. 214.
\textsuperscript{71} Gandhi, M. K., \textit{Young India}, 13.10.1921, p. 327.
\textsuperscript{72} Gandhi, M. K., \textit{Young India}, 08.01.1925, p. 15.
democratic. Where such a condition is absent, the form of government is democratic in name.73 In his Sarvodaya political order, there is no space for politics of Power. Rather it is the base for politics of cooperation. Sarvodaya is the realization of the happiness and elevation of all. There are two techniques for stabilization of power of the people (i) constant propaganda, publicity and (ii) Decentralization of power. The aim is to change the heart of the people. Sarvodaya opposes the ideas of egoism and wealth. There is no scope for class struggle in Sarvodaya. Social good, rationality and communal harmony are basic principles of Sarvodaya. Therefore, Sarvodaya accepts the universalization of self-government. Thus, the political philosophy of Sarvodaya is a powerful intellectual attempt to build the plan of political and social reconstruction on the basis of metaphysical idealism.

Gandhi was considered as the combination of prophet and a politician by several political theorists as well as the activists around the world in a highest caliber. Within himself Gandhi united the feature of the Philosopher and politician. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, one of the crucial admirer and detractor of Gandhi, once he said that Gandhi had to play the roles of a world teacher as well as the Supreme leader of the Indian National Liberation Movement. In a tone of censuring he additionally said, often his former role is the role of a world teacher became so prominent that he had to compromise with his other role. The points of Netaji’s may or may not agreeable but it appears that in the context of national liberation movement there is truth in it. But when we go in the depth of Gandhi's Philosophy, we can realize that there is no dichotomy in Gandhi's perception. It can be said that Gandhi considered politics as an instrument for strengthening human beings in social, economic, moral and spiritual fields. Gandhi himself admitted this to his South African friend that his bent of mind was religious and not political. In

1924 Romain Rolland in his biography of Gandhi had commented that Gandhi might have chosen a religious life rather than a politician if Tilak would not have died. To Gandhi politics was his religion. He was against politicizing the religion. He spiritualized religion but he was basically a universal man and never sought his own salvation secluded from the world. For him politics encircled like the coil of a snake. He must wrestle with the snake and there is no respite. He could have kept away from politics, if food and work could be provided to the hungry unemployed people of India. He strongly felt that it is a necessary condition to involve himself into politics for the eradication of exploitation and subjugation in spheres of socio-economic and political fields and thereby moral degradation of the people unless he involved himself in politics.

In this perspective Gandhi confronted with the coil of a snake. No matter how much tough, the task might be, we have to come out from it by wrestling with the snake. This can be successfully performed if we can alleviate the present state of politics to Dharmic politics. The term Dharmic, Gandhi meant that it should be away from humiliating influences and sectarianism. This politics should give privilege to all. Gandhi was not prepared to accept any fixed dogma or mechanical way either for politics or for religion.

Gandhi had a vision of changing the socially, morally degenerate and alienated persons in a manner where individuals can enjoy their freedom in the spirit of unselfishness. To understand Gandhi's politics it is also necessary to know Gandhi's concern for the cleavage between state and civil society. Gandhi opposed the Western Civilization because, it had been hedonistic nature in practice, in the sense of self-centered pleasure, pragmatic in the sense of immediate material benefit and individualistic in the sense of egocentric in the respect of sovereign individual oriented. There by the community life is fast diminishing and civil society could not
prepare any method or system to control it. He found British parliament had become a sterile woman, where naked display of self interest or party interest (or power only) had been manifested. He blamed disease lying with the western civilization itself. Gandhi found that the whole business of politics had been running to a wrong path on a hoax. Generally it is believed that, Gandhi was a man with a great belief on God. For him Truth is God in the fields of life and politics should also be a search for truth and this will lead to the raising common conscience of the people. Every individual must be free from twinges of starvation, should prevent exploitation and domination. Then he would be in a position to work for his own development through the performance of duties. An universal morality would create an atmosphere for healthy political life. To Gandhi self-transformation is necessary to the individuals and also we should be ready to accept this as a perpetual process. Gandhi was forceful in saying that politics bereft of religion is a death trap which kills the soul. It is the condition of our time that the spiritualization of politics, Gandhi meant this is not excluding today’s world experiences but something larger than our day to day life. In a spiritualized political method the people based on communities and individuals have ability to resist the corrupting powers on the process of self-realization in political aspect. The process of spiritualization of politics is not just an Utopia far from realities of political life. Many great philosophers right from Plato could not resolve the dichotomy between reality and ideal. In the vision of Gandhi, we should into disbelieve the ability of commoner to rise above the passion and self-interest and we can develop a modus operandi by which a new kind of politics might emerge as Gandhi visualized.

**Nature and Functions of the State**

State has been viewed differently by different political philosophers. There are different notions on state that have emerged during the course of evolution of political philosophy. Those are
known as Ethical notions of state, The Legal Notion of State, The Power Notion of the State and State as a Natural Institution, State as a Divine Institution and also The Totalitarian Notion of State. According to the Ethical notion of the state, state is the necessary agent for the ethical and intellectual. It is more than the material element. Plato and Aristotle regarded the state as representing the highest form of human life and looked upon it as an institution which made the virtuous life possible. The ethical notion of state was further developed by Hegel, Kant, Rousseau and Green. The legal notion says that, “It was formed for making, interpreting, and enforcing law. It creates laws and norms in order to regulate human behavior. It has coercive power in the case of violation of laws. The legal notion regards the state the state as a legal person having a distinctive personality and will of its own.” Bodin, Hobbes, Bentham and Austin described the state as a legal structure. The power notion of state advocated that it must have power to manage the people’s demands and resolve the contradictions in society. Machiavelli was the main exponent of this power notion. State as a Natural Institution says that man became civilized only in state prior to man. It regards state as a natural institution and the state came into existence for the purpose of good life of the society. The notion of State as a Divine Institution, which is created by God and monarch is the representative of God. It also says that, “the King was representative of god will take care of the subjects as a father takes care of the children. He could rule according to his own will. He alone was capable of deciding good from bad. His word was considered to be law.” The medieval thinkers considered the state as a divine institution. It is very much supportive to the monarchy. After that some liberal thinkers thought about state. They said that the state is only man made, which is not a divine institution. State is not an end, it is only the means. The laws formed by the state opposed the human liberty

75 ibid, p. 66.
and the state is an evil. According to Marxism the state is essentially a class structure. One class dominating over other class in it.

**Origin**

There are many theories regarding to the origin of state, they are social contract theory, the theory of divine origin, the theory of force, the patriarchal theory, the matriarchal theory, the evolutionary theory, the kingship theory and the priesthood theory. Out of these theories there are four major theories. According to the social contract theory, consent is the basis of government. Because people have agreed to be ruled that governments which are entitled to rule. Social contract theorists envisage a transition from a state of nature to a state of government. Individuals come together and form contracts which serve their interests and these contracts establish rule. Social contract is a set of culturally based upon norms that help in maintaining the social solidarity. The elements of the social contract are not explained or concretely agreed upon - they just become norms. In 'social contract' people give up freedom to some extent because it is good for the society as a whole. The divine origin theory is one of the earliest theories. The main principles of Divine origin theories are:

1) The state was the creation of God.

2) The king who ruled the state is the direct representative of God on Earth. In Indian tradition the idea of divine origin is evidenced in Manu’s order of Law. In the ShantiParva of the Mahabharata and also in the Ramayana, the king Ram was considered as lord Ram. In Christianity the evidence of Divine Origin is found indirectly and also to some extent in Jewish
tradition. The theory of divine origin is based on two premises, since the king is the agent of the
god on earth, to obey the king is to obey god and the disobedience to king would lead to
harassment. Therefore the authority of the king has divine sanctions and the obedience to the
king was obligatory. Thus god is the source of all powers of the king.

3) The king was the agent of god on Earth and so he was responsible to god and not responsible
to the people therefore the king was above all laws. The natural consequences of this theory are a
dictatorial form of government. Because the king was not responsible to the people and above all
laws and the people could not question the ruler, so the people were enduringly conquered before
the king’s power. In this process, the people’s political awareness was blunted forever by the
ruler or king.

According to the force theory, the state is the result of the subjugation of the weaker by
the stronger. The theory of force explains the origin of the state in terms of force which is based
on analysis of human nature; it also holds that the state is a product of the use of force by strong
against the weak. This theory reveals that the prime nature of human beings desire is to capture
and concentrate on more and more power in their hands. In the early hours of human history, the
basic power ravenous instincts of humans manifested itself in incessant conflict. It was a
common practice in primitive society that presents a picture of kinfolk martial events which was
continually engaged in disputes with one another. The stronger tribes assaulted, captured and
imprisoned the weaker tribes. This led to the expansion of clans which came to be known as
tribes and the authority of tribal chief came to be established over a particular territory. This
marked the emergence of political territory. It may be assumed that this territory in course of
time developed into a society. The evolutionary theory of state origin is known as historical
theory and it says that the state came into existence along with natural development. The state is
a product of the history, which means, J.W. Burgess says, it is a steady and incessant
development of human society out of imperfect beginning through crude but developing forms of
manifestation towards a perfect and universal organization on mankind. According to this theory
we cannot find the beginning time and cause. The above mentioned theories of the state revealed
about the creation of state in the human society and questioned, is there any person or cause that
leads the state to start, whether it is pre-existed before the individual or manmade and is there
any specific force or God.

**Characteristics of the State**

State as a political as well as a social organization must possess some characters as its nature.
The eminent scholar Samuel Finer describes the following five essential characteristics of the
state:

1. They are territorially defined populations and each recognizes a common paramount organ of
the government.

2. This organ is served by specialized personnel; a civil service, to carry out the decisions and a
military service to back these by force where ever necessary and to protect the association from
similarly constituted associations.

3. The state is recognized by other similarly constituted states as independent on its territorially
defined—and hence confined—population, that is, on its subjects. This recognition constitutes
what we would today call its international sovereignty.

4. Ideally at least, but to a larger extent in practice also, the population forms a community of
feeling based on self-consciousness of a common nationality.
5. Ideally at least and to a large extent in practice, the population forms a community in the sense that its members mutually participate in distributing and sharing the duties and benefits.

According to Gandhi the state must be non-violent without coercive force. It will ensure the individual freedom and autonomy. In Gandhian model of state, both political and economic power should be decentralized at all levels.

Elements of the State

According to Kautilya, to carry out its functions, the state should have well developed lawmaking apparatus, because ‘a chariot cannot run on a single wheel’. According to him, the state contained the seven organs or component parts: (1) The king (2) Ministers (3) Country (4) Capital city (5) Treasury (6) Army and (7) Allies. To carry out different responsibilities of the state it is necessary to incumbent upon all these seven elements. Kautilya contended that it was the king’s duty to eliminate the defects of the constituent rudiments and keep them in a state of readiness. These rudiments were inter-related and inter-dependent. In the normal circumstances, the king was the most important component, but the importance of different constituents varied with the circumstances. For example, in times of war, the army became most important and in times of enemy attack, the fortified capital city assumed primary importance. Allies were not exactly constituted as a part of the government, but the friendly powers always ready to help the king, they were considerably significant. The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications:

(a) A permanent population (people)

(b) A definite territory
(c) Government (political authority) and

(d) Power to enter into relations with the other states (diplomat recognition or sovereignty).

**Population**

State is a socio-economic and political institution of human beings living together as a community, in which the population of a state consists all of the people without any kind of variations like superior or inferior approaches. It consists of nationals and foreigners. It is pointed out by the doctrine that there is no condition like requirement of a population and also the requirement of nationality. There is no need of culture, language, race and tradition along with the homogeneous population of a state. Indeed, it is even rare, except for Micro-States, to find a State with a homogeneous people. It does not require by the International law that the minimum number of inhabitants constituting a State. The Micro-States with the smallest number of nationals can be found in Nauru and in Monaco. This figure can be even lower if we take into account that theoretically Pitcairn with fifty two populations has the right to opt for nationhood by virtue of its right to autonomy. Due to the limited number of inhabitants it is not possible to the global society to give the reservations to the Micro-States. It is a fact that in these states the inhabitants were outnumbered by foreign people.

**Territory**

The geographical area which is owned, controlled and maintained by certain governments or state is considered as the territory of that country. The state is liable to exercise such states sovereignty and its functions of socio-economic, political and legal community of human beings of the given territory. Consequently, the eminent professors of Law gave the definition of the
territory. The territory clearly includes and refers to the state’s as well as the individual’s land
territory, internal waters and territorial sea (straits) through which state claims for sovereignty
and the air space above this territory. It is required that the State must consist of a certain
coherent territory effectively governed and the territory of a State need not be exactly fixed by
definite frontiers.

**Government**

The government is the executive branch of the state and has the role to administer the state
uniformly in the following features: political, economic, social, cultural, use of natural resources,
environmental protection, national defense and security and foreign affairs. Form of state
depends upon the constitution drafted, generally structure of state can be divided into: unitary
state and federal state, this probably affects the government in exercising limit on its power.
Government’s control gives rise to fraud, suppression of Truth, intensification of the black
market and artificial scarcity. Above all, it unmans the people and deprives them of various
schemes, it undoes the teaching of self-help. I look upon a more centralization in the power of
the State with the greatest fear because, by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to
human beings by destroying individuality. Among many transgression of the British rule in
India, history will look upon the Act depriving a whole nation of arms as the blackest. So it is
better to find the general work of mankind that is being carried on from day to day and by the
mass of people acting as if by instinct. If they were unconsciously brutal, the world would end in
no time. When the mind of the common people is unnaturally influenced by evil personalities it
leads to violence. The people will forget their commitment and start violence and other brutal
activities because that is their own nature. The government with evil nature has no room for good
men and women except in its prisons. Gandhi said that, By Swaraj I mean the government of
India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native-born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters. “Real Swaraj will come, not by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.”

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is said to be the excellence of having absolute and independent authority over a territory. It can be found in a power to rule and make law that rests on a political fact for which no legal explanation can be provided. The definition of ‘the Sovereignty’ is quite similar to ‘the Independence’ and mostly they used together. State’s sovereignty signifies the competence, independence and legal equality of states. The international law permitted each state to decide and act without any interruption from other sovereign countries. The concept of sovereign is ever inclusive and consists of all activities of certain nation. It includes the choice of socio-economic, political, cultural systems and the formulation of foreign policy. It is a fact that the freedom of the sovereign country and its extent level cannot be isolated but it can depend upon the development in the international law and international relations.

Functions of the State

76. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 29.01.1925, p. 41.
State as a political and social organization, must perform its functions. The functions seem to be one of the factors of defining the statehood. It has two major kinds as the compulsory functions and voluntary functions. The compulsory functions further classified as:

1) Defense against foreign attack
2) Internal peace and security
3) Protection of Rights of Citizens
4) Justice.

The Voluntary functions of the state are classified as:

1) Education
2) Health
3) Production of the old, poor, and invalid
4) Arrangement of public welfare services
5) Social and economic improvement
6) Encouraging trade and industry
7) Organization of the labour
8) Proper use of the national resources of the country
9) Arrangement of the recreation.

It is a fact that guarantee for the welfare of the people was the state’s goal and this required finances, the king had a legitimate right to realize a share of the agricultural produce. This was the revenue he received for extending protection to the subjects. It was condemned the tax in higher extension and revenue was to be realized just as a ‘bee gleans nectar from flowers’. The king was also supposed to correct his subjects’ defects in such a manner that they suffered no harm. In Mahabharata Bhishma compared this to a washerman washing clothes and removing
dirt without affecting the texture and color of the fabric. The Mahabharata has other equivalent statements like the king should collect the taxes from the people who can have enough money to pay and he should use that income for the welfare of the people, just like the circulation happening in the natural mechanism among the sun, oceans, rivers and tanks.

Gandhi wanted the state to be free from its violent elements and sought to inculcate fearlessness in the minds of people. In his concept of Swaraj, there is decentralization of political power and India was to be a confederation of thousands of self-governing and self-reliant villages: innumerable circles of village republics. But these village republics were not to be hierarchically organized; instead they would be ‘oceanic circle’ of structure in organization. In the ocean, all waves maintain similar levels and no one dominates over others; similarly, to prevent oppression, in the Gandhian concept of Swaraj, Ramrajya or the kingdom of God ought to be established first in our own souls, then only it can be extended to the villages. Swadeshi—the use of homemade materials in the industry and the refuse of foreign goods was a means to attain Swaraj. It is not possible for a modern State which is based on force of non-violence to oppose the forces of chaos, whether peripheral or domestic. A man cannot serve God and Mammon, nor be 'temperate and furious' at the same time. It is the claim of the time that the State must be based on non-violence because there is a scope for non-violent resistance against the tribulations of the world by armed force. The State of Ashoka's was such. The example can be repeated. But the situation does not become weak even if it is exposed that Ashoka’s State was not based on non-violence. It has to be examined basing on its merits. On one occasion Gandhi said that, “there can be no non-violence offered by the militarily strong. Thus, Russia in order to express non-violence has to discard all her power of doing violence. What is true is that if those, who were at one time strong in armed might, change their mind, they will be better able
to demonstrate their non-violence to the world and, therefore, also to their opponents.\textsuperscript{77} According to Gandhi the state has to be democratic based on non-violence and without much interference of individual freedom. He said that “The state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but the state is a soul-less machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.”\textsuperscript{78} To him violence is the biggest obstacle to the natural development of individual and social life of the state. Gandhi opposed the increasing power of the state; because it leads the state as coercive. He said that, “I look upon on increase in the power of the state with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress.”\textsuperscript{79} Gandhi described his ideal state as per his following words, “If national life becomes as perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal State, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that Government is best which governs the least.”\textsuperscript{80} Gandhi emphasized that the state should be less power concentration in its hand and intended to promote the individuals freedom, protecting all kinds of equality in the society.

**Gandhi’s Concept of Man**

It is the pre-condition that the socio-economic and political theories must begin with the clear cut vision on psychology of man, because the psychology of man influences human conduct and his

\textsuperscript{77} Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 12.05.1946, p128.  
\textsuperscript{80} Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 02.07.1937, p162.
aims in society. The great political philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes and Rousseau have recognized this psychological nature of man. The quest for the definition of man is the main concern for the political and social philosophers of the world. Majority of political thinkers differ in ensuring the powers that are essential to people. This means, the realities are demonstrable but cannot be decisively established, the values and choices commended may be protected or uncertain in terms of ethical doctrines and ordinary experiences. They must be for each individual to test for himself. Man first of all should look into his nature as if out of himself, before he finds it in himself. Man denies himself while he attributes to God or Nature. On the other hand man may states that truth related to God or Nature, concerns towards himself also.

There are two theoretical contradictions between the Augustinianism and Pelagianism about the relationship between the man and God. The first one located God in the place of man and the later located man in the place of God. The objection on divinity of man is always going together with the humanization of God in the willingness of human beings what they likely to be, but it never become real. The denial of God often leads to the deification of man. In world view man was considered as an essential forming of an integral part of a larger and conceptual world. It is conceptual order that implies the locus of norms and values that shapes man’s ideas, customs and instructions.

According to Gandhi, human beings are essentially moral and spiritual beings sanctified with the divine gift of reasoning or thinking. The union with God is the main concern of the spiritual aspect of man. He considered that giving birth to all great cultures of the world as human achievement. The necessary activities of the world are selected or stimulated to act by the moral aspect of man for the good of others or to the common good. This must be based on the courageous sacrifice and selflessness at every stage of life. The rational character of man is the
special faculty of human being over other beings by which we can think about the nature and
infinities of God or Truth and also think over the meaning of life, its insinuations and creative
application of universal values such as good, right and justice in certain circumstances. From this
standpoint, “Gandhi would have agreed with Mohammed’s distinction between angels, men and
animals. Angels have intellect, but no sensual nature. Animals have a sensual nature but no
intellect. Man has both an intellect and a sensual nature. He is less than an animal when he
subordinates his intelligence to his sensual nature, but greater than the angels when he
subordinates his animal passions to his reason. The primary agent of ‘universal welfare’ or
‘universal uplift’ then is the self consciously individual. He or she is the key and the keystone to
all considerations of spiritual, moral and material progress. The individual who has taken a vow
can become a radiant center point among multitudinous other center points in ever-expanding
circles of humanity. The vast potential of Truth-force lies in the bosom of the unconditional
person, heroically determined to serve the family of man within the microcosm of his own
community or village. The latter is critical since Gandhi makes it eminently clear that the
individual can only realize his true nature within the context of the expanding concentric circles
of life: the family, the community, the nation, the world. Self-actualization can only occur in the
midst of society, not apart from it.”

Man according to Gandhi is a homo-duplex divided self. In the western philosophy we find similar conceptions of Man in the deontological philosophy. For example Kant made differentiation between two men found within every individual. The first one is instrumental, it is directly visible and finds in an efficient way. The next is the free-will and values of human beings, the world of reason, which leads to recognition of moral imperatives. The first man acts out inclinations, the second; in pursuit of what is right. Gandhi calls the first as the ego or the small self and the second as the Self (the bigger Self). Such a man

is in perpetual conflict between different orders of desires, quite akin to Freud’s distinction between identification and super-ego which are in perpetual conflict between instinctual urges and socially introduced morality. Now, Gandhi claimed that what distinguishes man from other animals is their ability to form higher order desires, and changing their first order desires a process which Gandhi calls as self-realization. Such a man is motivated to act by the soul-force, constantly seeking to purify himself and to transcend the lower order of desires in the pursuit of the higher ones, is a seeker of the Truth – a Satyagrahi. Thus the Gandhian Man is a moral-ethical being and a multidimensional personality pursuing its own Self-realization (homo humanis). Self is being realized and is distinct from the ego (or, the Small Self). The process of self-realization (which is central to Gandhian economics) is a process of the growth and expansion of the Self and correspondingly a shrinking of the ego, a process through which ultimately the ego consciousness totally yields to Self, God or Truth consciousness. The homo economics in conventional economics. It suffers from a limited consciousness. He is only aware of his ego and is motivated to act by the utilitarian principles of pleasure. It is governed by maximizing behaviour, regardless of altruistic views and ultimately determined by the maximization of use value or utility. In other words, morality only exists if it is in our rational self-interest and the so-called altruism is nothing but the result of calculated maximization of some kind of a utility index. Man is always under constant fear of not being sufficient of what he needs. The meaning of the homo economics decreases the anxiety-ridden chase for pleasure. The conventional economics which emphasize on self-interest and maximization are the prime-movers of human action. They strip the homo economics off the Gandhi’s concept of self and maintain that the only interest is ego-type self-interest. From the Gandhian perspective, the homo economics is at a very low level of human development. In his construction Gandhi ennobled
man by endowing him with a higher self (synonymous with Truth, Perfection, and above all God) and by making him capable of its realization. Conflict between ego-centered motivation (i.e., maximization) and Self-interested motivation commitment to Truth takes the centre stage.

**Means and Ends**

The problem of means and ends has the important role in Indian philosophy. The ultimate end of the individual and society is varied with one another. Someone may feel spiritual perfection or love or money or power or fame is as his own. Most of the world’s political and socio-economic thinkers have been concerned with the desirable or necessary aims of certain system, whether it is political, social and economic etc. If we want to achieve the ends in any field, we must follow certain means as a path leading process. So means and ends are closely related and defended with one another, Gandhi described this as, “The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.”

Gandhi believed that, to achieve the truthful and positive end, man should take the truthful and positive means because to him means do not serve ends, rather means create ends. It is summing up by the following way as the means are the ends in the making. While means are creating the ends, they have two inspiring insinuations. First, it is not possible to any one who describes a just, non-violent end by using the unjust and violent means to attain it, the selection of means should be based on what end in character we need. It is the vision that prevents actions based on the philosophical concept of the ends justify the means is the concept that seems to permeate current U.S. law making. Indeed, the ends being formed by present government rules with regard to some drugs are very different than the legitimately affirmed aims.

---

A second implication is that, each and every action creates the next action and the earlier one leads to the later one, thus the precise description on end is not possible while one firmly striving for the attainment of pure truth and justice. Each action will always keep in touch with the last and moving progressively closer to truth and justice. Through actively engaging with fellow activists and the opponent, one can understand what must be done, a step at a time, to create the most just and truthful end. The method of non-violence becoming more active by bringing the internal changes in the minds of the opponents. It is the parallel process simultaneously stimulating both the activist and the opponent in attaining truth and justice. However, the method is not self-propelling; and is using normally in the context of an inactive, inert or intentionally destructive force and there is a need of tremendous power. The campaigners have to continually re-examine the opponent's understandings and regulate the agenda so that it is more than reactive to the opponent's change. Each change must lead to the chance of moving further.

The insidious argument said that the ends justify the means, Gandhi replied to this argument as they say that means are after all means. I would say that means are after all everything. Further he said as the means, so the end. Certainly, the Creator has given us limited power over means, none over end. Gandhi used some means to achieve certain ends, like non-violence (Ahimsa) to attain truth (Satya). It is fact violence and non-violence is the two means to achieve the same end. As a result these should be differentiated in respect of quality and essence. Violent means can lead to the coercive and immoral ends; it will be evil and illusory in its essence and quality. Gandhi said that violence breeds violence. Pure goals can never justify impure or violent action. It means after all just means and as the means, so the end. If we are
more conscious on means we are bound of reach the end earlier or later. The non-violent means can lead to the peaceful good ends.

Gandhi used soul-force or truth-force (Satyagraha) in various forms like civil-disobedience, non-cooperation and fasting to achieve his political ends like self-rule (Swaraj), trusteeship to attain his economic end of self-reliance (Swadesi). Gandhi suggested decentralization in both political and economic spheres of the national life to create equality in society. His moral principles are considered as means and he has incorporated the moral and religious principles in politics and socio-economic thoughts. For the future purpose of creating Sarvodaya society (welfare of all) he preached the above mentioned means to achieve the unexploited egalitarian society. Gandhi emphasized the purity of means in every walk of life. In Gandhian thought, means and ends are considered as constituting continuous process and organic whole. According to him man can choose the right means, but he cannot command the results. Both means and ends are equally important. By nature non-violent means justifies the peaceful ends.

**Concept of Non-violent State**

According to Gandhi, non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like other virtues. To him non-violence was the basic precept in his political activities; he cultivated all the political techniques purely based on non-violence. He used non-violence to achieve his political aims. He says that the society is mostly directed by the expression of non-violence in its reciprocated dealings. The state must be built on non-violence otherwise it will be inconsistent with the natural development of people. Gandhi has the opinion that, the stateless
society is the means to the non-violent state, it should have minimum interference in individual’s autonomy and non-coercive.

He explained the practicability of Ahimsa-the non-violence and placed it as an effective weapon for direct action, was unique in itself. Through the ages, non-violence is existing in worldly life in various types both in theory and practice. It was conceived as a personal virtue or a value, especially to be practiced by Rishis, Saints or Incarnations, Messengers of God and that too in social and religious fields but, it was Gandhi, who, perhaps for the first time in the entire human history, declaring it to be a social virtue or as a value also, called upon humanity to cultivate it like other virtues or values in routines. In his own words: “Non-violence is not a cloistered virtue confined only to the Rishis and the Cave-dwellers. It is capable of being practiced by the millions, not with full knowledge of all its implication, but because it is the law of our species. It distinguishes man from the brute. But man has not shed the brute in him. He has to strive to do so. This striving applies to the practice of non-violence (in all walks of life including political), and not merely to the belief in it.” 83 Further he stated: “Surely society is largely regulated by the expression of non-violence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale.” 84 By the way of giving new dimension and more extension to the concept of non-violence Gandhi stated that the purest non-violence is characterized in upholding the propensity towards the advantages of both spiritual physical unto to each and everyone with altruistic and pure thought. The whole world realizes that the non-violence (Ahimsa) is the basis in his political philosophy. He led his compatriot to the freedom movements of their homeland, India, and guaranteed liberation from the centuries back age old fetters of slavery and elucidated the meaning and purpose in a comprehensive and

---

84. Ibid.
the way of universal wellbeing, explained a unique, evergreen and exemplary path to the populace of the whole world to attain freedom and protected justice at all levels even in democracy. Gandhi’s ideal State is to be non-violent. According to him a state embodied with violence in a concentrated and organized form, becoming non-violent State is a contradiction in its terms. Ultimately, when non-violence is the governing principle of society, we can not consider it as a State. It can only be considered as a non-violent and stateless society. And that peaceful society is the ideal egalitarian for Gandhi.

In that non-violent social order everyone would understand automatically to scrutinize their social responsibilities without the operation of the government. The need of law enforcement arises if people are in deficiency. The important insinuation of Gandhi’s concept of self-rule is rested in the fact of the imbibed strength of non-violence and the fewer needs of the government. According to Gandhi the endeavor to achieve self-rule is self-rule itself. It is a developing ideal and is better than the best. He calls it as indefinable. In the background of the freedom movement of India he said that self-rule did not mean simply political sovereignty but many other things. In Western method of parliamentary government, self-rule is accepted for the time being only. In Gandhi’s ideal world there is no space for the armed and other violent force, yet in the actual state due to the ethical slenderness of its people there is a provision for it. It is said that the non-violent state is the realistic possibility and is the greatest model of Gandhi. Failure to recognize the levels in Gandhi’s thought results in such confused statements as this: “It is indeed clear that Gandhi held essential ideals in common with anarchists, that he was willing, as they are not, to accept a degree of state organization and control. He believed that government to be best which governs least, and yet he held that ‘there are certain things which cannot be done without political power’, even though there are ‘numerous other things which do not at all
depend upon political power’....It would, of course, be incorrect to suppose that Gandhi thought of retaining the state as some intermediate step in a determined progress towards anarchical society.”

85 Gandhi’s real state granted the appeal for utilizing the armed and the police to deal with anti-social rudiments and protect the country. His approach admits the weakness not of the principle of Ahimsa or of Satyagraha, but of the persons who follow it. Whatsoever the political institution Gandhi accepted, he did it through the transitional device, which is to go beyond by better ones. No institutional device is final. They must evolve with the evolution of individuals. In actual practice, it would be a combination. So he said that a government stands for all the people of that state, so it is not possible to the government completely to become as non-violent. He anticipated that the state’s rule would predispose towards militarism of a customized character. Gandhi suggested that, India should decentralize many things if it wants to develop a non-violent way because adequate force is necessary for the sustenance of centralization. It is an eternal fact that the centralization as a system it is inconsistent with non-violent structure of society.

Non-violent Police

According to Gandhi in order to save people and their property the police force may be necessary even in a non-violent state. At the same time that force should be organized with the believers of non-violence. He also said that, I can imagine the state without police force but we should try to realize it in our day today life. In this non-violent state police and public can call them for help and through their mutual understanding and co-operation they can easily reconcile the internal problems of the state. The violent quarrels rich and poor, the capital and labour and the community based on conflicts and these consequents of strikes, protests and condemnation all

will be resolved by the non-violent security force. In such a protected society there is no scope for any kind of communal disturbances.

**Non-violent Army**

A non-violent army will not act like armed men, in times of peace and disturbances. Their responsibilities join the community together, carryout peace mis-information, engaging in activities that would bring and keep them in contact with each particular person in their parish or division. This non-violent militant force is always ready to act in any emergency and also in problematic situations. They will be sincere and dedicative in protecting people and peace. It is the condition of our time to bring the peace in our soil that the Truth-force (Satyagraha) brigades should be established in every village and every block of buildings in the cities. In non-violent bodies the soul-force must mean all and the physique must get second place. It is not easy to find such people in our time. That is why the non-violent force must be small if it has to be efficient. There are two ways to avoid the attack from outside. Yield to possession, but non-cooperate with the invader and prefer demise to submission. The next way would be non-violent resistance by the people who have been taught in the non-violent method. The unanticipated spectacle of never-ending rows upon human beings and simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an invader must ultimately thaw him and his soldiery cluster. It is the power of non-violence if a nation or group of people upholds the non-violence as its ultimate law or rule, it is not that nation or group of people subjected to slavery even by the atom bomb. Before universal disarmament commences some nations have to be disarmed and predict the biggest dangers. In such circumstances the level of non-violence in the state will be gladly comes and of course risen so elevated to command the worldwide admiration.
Non-violent Economy

It is said that Economic equality is the one of the basic tenets of non-violent freedom in the society. The state which is based on non-violent system of government is impossible with the extensive gap between the wealthy and poor. An aggressive and blood-spattered rebellion is certain on one day unless there is a charitable abdication of riches and the rich distribute their wealth for the common good. All have not the same capacity. It does not mean that cramping the talent. It is a kind of equalizing the status of humanity according to their capacities and capabilities.

Philosophy of Satyagraha

By analyzing human history it is inferred that great men have always been struggled against the existing social evils and human suffering. Gandhi seems to be one among such great men in human history. It is an eternal fact that when the history produces the great men, the great personalities act as the agents of the history. Gandhi acted in response to the challenge of the given historical state of affairs and understands the chronological requirements of his period and in his own way, he strived to actualize the wants and ambitions of the populace. Hegel describes the nature of great man as: “The great man of the age is the one who can put into words the will of his age, tell his age what its will is, and accomplish it. What he does is the heart and essence of his age, he actualizes his age.”

Gandhi said that the word Satya (Truth), is derived from Sat, which means being. And nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. Truth (Satya) entails love, and firmness (Agraha) engenders and as a result serve up as an opposite for force. So Gandhi started to describe the national freedom struggle as Satyagraha, and also the force which comes

out from Truth and Love or Non-violence and used the expression of passive resistance. He formulated the features of Satyagraha as:

I. Sat - This entails sincerity, truthfulness, and justice: Truth.

A) The opinions and beliefs of the individuals signify the fraction of truth.

B) It is the condition that shares the truth cooperatively so as to realize its extent level.

C) This entails a longing to communicate and a determination to do so, which revolves the needs of rising and refining relevant ability of communication.

D) Dedication to realize the truth is the probable way that we can not classify ourselves or others.

II. Ahimsa - rebuttal to impose injury and harm on others.

A) Ahimsa is described as our dedication to communication and sharing of our love and truth. The violence closed the medium of communication.

B) Ahimsa has been considered as the main teaching of the major religions of the world.

C) Ahimsa is an expression of our conscious humankind that is manifested and respected.

D) The practice of Ahimsa imposed us to have the genuine love on our opponent.

III. Tapasya – willingness for self-sacrifice.
A) Whoever follows the vows of satyagraha called as satyagrahi. He is always ready to sacrifice for common the cause with willingness. It is the voluntary suffering or sacrifice to convert the opponents towards Truth.

B) The satyagrahi must always provide a face-saving "way out" for the opponents. The goal is to find out a wider panorama of truth and justice and it is not a victory against opponent.

According to Gandhi in general, the technique of non-violent action is called as Satyagraha. It is also known as the Truth-force and in its extent of understanding it is the force of love produced through the adherence to Truth. In this day the concept of non-violence is getting mere alternative option over the atom bombs and army force. Non-violence was the word for a special, wider concept namely for Gandhi such as a way of life based on love and compassion. In Gandhi’s expressions, Satyagraha is the Truth-Force. It is the result of nonviolence. Gandhi said that, “Satyagraha can be adopted by anybody. Gandhi said that Satyagraha was like a banyan tree which had innumerable branches. Satya and ahimsa together made its parent trunk from which all the innumerable branches shoot out.”

Essentially satyagraha is the weapon of the strong not of the cowardice, it never admits violence under any circumstances and it ever insists upon truth. Satyagraha has also been considered as a weapon of soul force to resist any kind of oppression. Whereas Gandhi looked upon satyagraha as a way of life, during the independence movement of India, Satyagraha was used as a method to resist the authority of the state and to attain various things for the general wellbeing of the people.

---

The non-violence and the peace making method of Satyagraha are considered as the supreme and the most unique contribution of India to the contemporary world. According to Gandhi satyagraha is the surest method to achieve the political, social and economical aims. He said that “My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of Satyagraha. It is not, claimed that all the laws of Satyagraha have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of Satyagraha. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.”

Gandhi described that the prime purpose of satyagraha is to eliminate the evil not the evil doer and also the transformation the opponent. In our socio-economic political scenario, there is a terrible need to wean the person away from the influence of prosperity, lavishness and authority. First of all the South African political struggle and Gandhi’s role as a revolt against the practice of apartheid has significant role in his thought process. Then the non-violent national movements in India against the colonialism influenced his political ideals. Truth and non-violence forms the bedrock of Gandhian Philosophy. The most noteworthy characteristic of his life is that without practice of any concept, he never preached to other. Despite his conscious devotion in religion and God, he is essentially a man of action. He thought that the service to the humanity is the best and possible means to realize the God. Gandhian philosophy of satyagraha is based on the Truth and Non-violence, the twin concepts of Gandhism. They seem to be the basic tenets of Gandhian concept of satyagraha.

Gandhi’s Concept of Truth

The realization of Truth or Satya was the ultimate aim of Gandhi, thereby he dedicated his whole life for discovering Truth. He tirelessly tried to attain this end by gathering knowledge from his own blunders and conducting own experiments with Truth. In that way Gandhi named his autobiography as ‘The Story of My Experiments with Truth’. Gandhi pointed out that the most significant struggle was: conquering the evil spirit, doubts and insecurities of his personal. He explained the concept of Truth in two stages: the first stage is God is Truth. In the second stage he changed his statement as Truth is God. Consequently it is said to be the Truth in Gandhi’s philosophy as God and Truth only will tolerate; the rest of things all will be swept away before the tide of occasion. The Truth and untruth of the perception of the same reality may differ between the one individual to other but it is not necessary to bother about the seeker of Truth. These two are often co-exist; good and evil often are found together. Gandhi said that “Use truth as your anvil, non-violence as your hammer and anything that does not stand the test when it is brought to the anvil of truth and hammered with ahimsa, reject as non-Hindu.”89 In addition to that he said “Truth and ahimsa demand that no human being may debar himself from serving any other human being, no matter how sinful he may be.”90 If we eagerly want the Truth for the life magnificence and honesty will automatically added in our life. By extending Truth in the society it is not possible that error can become as truth at the same time truth also can not turned into error even though nobody sees it. Truth must consists of humbleness otherwise that will be an egotistical picture. To Gandhi, the search of Truth must be engaged with self-suffering, occasionally even unto death. There were sequences of experimentation with truth in Gandhi’s


90. ibid, p. 374.
life. Therefore that is liable to say that the conception of Truth is the fundamental to his life and works. I do not claim that the principles I have pointed out exhaust his conception; but I believe that they constitute its basic elements.

**Gandhi’s Concept of Non-Violence**

The principle of non-violence is a relative but not a complete or a constant principle to Gandhi. He never tried to suggest the complete non-violence, since he realized the fact that either human life or human organizations cannot continue to exist on the basis of pure non-violence. Gandhi observes: “Strictly speaking no activity and no industry is possible without a certain amount of violence, no matter how little. Even the very process of living is not possible without a certain level of violence. What we have to do is to minimize it to the greatest extent possible.”

However he is of the opinion that we can reduce violence to the utmost extent because obliteration is redundant and avoidable. He suggested that we should commit to least violence that is inevitable for the survival of human life. Violence, when it is inevitable, must be working in an ethical spirit, that is, for the sake of creating a more appropriate surroundings for the enlargement of non-violence. Gandhi defined non-violence as abstaining from “causing pain to, or killing any life out of anger, or for a selfish purpose, or with the intention of injuring it.”

Gandhi’s concept of non-violence had two considerations:

(a). Non-violence in thought and

(b). Non-violence in action.

He is not ready to negotiate the first one but he is flexible in the case of second. According to Gandhi there are five simple axioms in his concept of non-violence. They are:

---

1. “Non-violence implies as complete self-purification as is humanly possible.

2. Man for man the strength of non-violence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the non-violent person to inflict violence.

3. Non-violence is without exception superior to violence, i.e., the power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater that he could have if he was violent.

4. There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence. The end of violence is surest defeat.

5. The ultimate end of non-violence is surest victory –if such a term may be used of non-violence. In reality where there is no sense of defeat, there is no sense of victory.”

Through these axioms Gandhi described the nature of non-violence and violence and its necessity to uphold one’s life individually and socially. His practice of non-violence requires immense moral courage. It has no room for cowardice or weakness. It is the highest asset of the courageous. True non-violence, for Gandhi, assumes the tenure of pure bravery. Gandhi asserts: “I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advice violence.” He justified the use of violence by those who do not know how to defend themselves or honour their families in a non-violent way. He regards that physical violence accompanied by mental good-will, is better than physical non-violence accompanied by mental violence. Therefore, the theory of non-violence to Gandhi contains some constituents of violence than vulnerable capitulation to wickedness.

According to Gandhi violence means “a violent intention behind a thought, word, or deed, that is, an intention to harm.” In order to save sub-human life, Gandhi is not ready to forfeit human life, Gandhi said: “I am not able to accept in its entirety the doctrine of non-killing


94. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 11.08.1920, p. 3.

of animals. Who devour or cause hurt to man. I will never sacrifice a man’s life in order to save theirs.”

Gandhi argues: “If non-violence fails to defend the honour of a women, it is not at all non-violence.”

Gandhi thought that self-preservation is woman’s instantaneous duty when she is assaulted. In that moment it’s not necessary to think in terms of violence or non-violence. In order to protect her respect, she must oppose the wickedness with the extent of strength. He categorically declared that he is prepared to sacrifice non-violence for the sake of truth. Gandhi was not allike with Tolstoy and other anti-violence thinkers. He was not a complete pacifist because he believed that some kind of violence is a necessary feature of human life.

It is an erroneous belief that the violence and non-violence are contrary, one can abandon the other. In reality, they are the apparatus of social change in our present life. It is not historical to assume that violence attains nothing since it needs more accomplishments for its recognition. Above all Gandhi declared that, in prolonged practice, non-violence is probably to be more creative than violence. As per the Gandhi’s conviction, non-violence is not a negative virtue. It is not only mere abstention from violence or hurting. It is a positive state of love or doing good to others even to the evil-doer. It will not support the evil activities. It opposed the evil actions without abhorrence or harm to the individual. Therefore he said that hate the sin, but not the sinner is the fundamental principle of non-violence. It is not possible to equate the Gandhi’s concept of non-violence with inaction or non-action. It is neither resignation from fighting against wickedness nor a mere submission to the will of the evil-doer. It is an active condemnation of untruth, without violence, anger or malice. It is an active fight against all

97. ibid, p. 7.
wickedness or putting one’s soul against the will of the tyrant to win over him by love. Non-violence in its positive sense implies sacrificing one’s own life for the sake of truth. Thus, the philosophy of non-violence aimed at reconstructing, remoulding and reshaping the human nature. Gandhi believed that man is a part of God or the same divine spark resides in all people. Hence every man is potentially divine in his nature. Human beings are basically same and they share general derivation and general fortune. While the same strength of mind or divinity exists in all men, the opportunity of transforming the meanest of men cannot be ruled out. Gandhi holds that if one attains his objective then it is probable for all men to achieve it. Therefore, it is concluded that the violence refuses or minimize the possibilities of human perfection in worldly life by demolishing the man instead the non-violent means convert the opponent towards meaningful life.

**Forms of Satyagraha**

Satyagraha as a socio-economic and political weapon, Gandhi insisted that, it is based on truth and non-violence. This soul-force takes various forms depending upon the circumstances. Satyagraha is a means of resistance and conflict. It has different forms. They are:

- Civil Disobedience
- Non-Cooperation
- No Destruction
- Hunger strike (fasting)
- Hartal (striking work)
- Hijrat (immigration) are some of the forms.

The principles, conditions and qualifications of Satyagraha are relevant to all these forms.
Civil Disobedience

Civil Disobedience is one of the forms of opposition available to the public which is established on the basis of majority rule. One among few others, like legitimate public demonstrations, purposeful corruption of law for the sake of court precedents, violent, specifically military resistance, etc. Civil Disobedience is a form of democratic opposition. Civil disobedience is certainly on the bases of social model, which is generally called- after Henrih Bergson and Karl Popper- “the open society”. According to this type, societal organizations are measured as the outcomes of social creativity. They argued in terms of strength for consumption of human ambitions and objectives. The idea of civil disobedience was taken from Thoreau. It is a protest against unjust laws explains the validity of civil disobedience as a political tool. Gandhi said that “when you have faild to bring the error home to the lawgiver by way of petition and like the only remedies open to you if you do not wish to submit to error, are to compel him to yield to you either by physical force or by suffering in your person, by inviting the penalty for the breach of his laws. Hence, satyagraha largely appears to the public as civil disobedience or civil resistance.”

98 It is a form of non-violent revolt against unfair laws of the state. The thought of civil-disobedience is based on the standard that human being is greater to all the social organizations he has created. The individual has a spirit and conscience, whereas the institutions are soulless machines. Therefore, the voice of conscience is a matter of duty for man. According to Gandhi “Civil disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen. He dare not give it up without ceasing to be a man. Civil disobedience is never followed by anarchy. Criminal disobedience can lead to it. Every state puts down criminal disobedience by force. It perishes if it does not.”

99 It is further described as “the civil resister violates the unjust laws of the state in order to bend the

98 Gandhi, M. K., Young India, 01.14.1940.
99 Gandhi, M. K., Young India, 05.01.1922, p. 5.
government to the will of the people. It includes hartal (agitation), picketing, peaceful marches, no-tax campaigns, breach of laws and ordinances, courting arrests, boycott of legislative bodies, resignation of titles and non-cooperation with government and so on.”

Gandhi distinguishes between forced and willful disobedience of the laws.

**Non-Cooperation**

Another form of Gandhian concept of satyagraha is Non-Cooperation. This form was widely used by Gandhi in India’s political struggle against British. Non-cooperation as a method of political action Gandhi said that “Non-violent non-cooperation as a method whereby we cultivate the fresh public opinion and get it enforced when there is complete freedom of opinion, that of the majority must prevail.”

Non-cooperation is an expression of one’s anguish rather than anger. Non-cooperation stands for withdrawal of cooperation from all evil practices of individuals and institutions. It is a prelude to cooperation on honourable terms. It is an attempt to awaken the masses to a sense of their dignity and power. It is a protest against an unwitting and unwilling participation. It includes strikes, hartal (agitation), boycott of offices, meetings and processions etc. When non-cooperation alone does not work, satyagraha becomes assertive and takes recourse to direct action. According to Gandhi non-cooperation is the very active principle against social and political evils. He said that “Non-co-operation is not a passive state, it is an intensively active state, more active than physical resistance or violence. Passive resistance is a misnomer. Non-co-operation in the sense used by me must be non-violent and therefore, neither punitive nor based on malice, ill-will or hatred.” This is may be sometimes uncomfortable to his point of view. He said, “Satyagraha movement is not started with the

---

intention of embarrassing a government while ordinary political agitation is often started with that object. And yet, if a satyagrahi finds his activities resulting in embarrassing the government, he will not hesitate to face it.”

**Fasting**

Another significant and novel form of satyagraha developed by Gandhi in politics is fasting. This weapon is very much dependent upon the soul-force of the person yielding it. According to Gandhi, Fasting is a potent weapon in the Satyagraha armoury. It is one of the important and most efficacious weapons used in Satyagraha movement. Self-suffering or self-sacrificing of a blameless person is the most powerful weapon to convert or change the heart of the opponent. “Fasting is a potent weapon in the Satyagraha armoury. It cannot be taken by every one. Mere physical capacity to take it is no qualification for it. It is of no use without a living faith in God. It should never be a mechanical effort or a mere limitation. It must come from the depth of one's soul. It is, therefore, always rare.”

It is accepted as a plea to the good sense of the person, or to evoke the best in him against whom it is intentional. It is said to be the most powerful technique in armoury of Satyagraha that the fasting unto death. Through his practical experience with fasting, Gandhi frequently cautioned people that it could be used only with greatest diplomacy because fasting unto death often leads to violence. Gandhi observes: “Fasting unto death is an integral part of Satyagraha programme, and it is the greatest and most effective weapon in its armoury under given circumstances.”

Gandhi pointed out the nature and qualification of the practitioner of fasting such as “It cannot be taken by every one. Mere physical capacity to take it is no qualification for it. It is of no use without a living faith in God.

---

It should never be a mechanical effort or a mere limitation. It must come from the depth of one's soul. It is, therefore, always rare. This is the very potential and not an easy task. The faith in god or truth is more important than the physical ability. Gandhi himself used this weapon in the field of politics very successfully.

**Salient Features of Satyagraha**

i. The essential principle of Satyagraha is not to obliterate or wound the adversary, but to convert or win him by love, compassion, endurance and self-suffering.

ii. It is based on the metaphysical conviction that the oppressor may have power over the body and material assets of a Satyagrahi, but not greater than his spirit. Hence the soul can remain unconquered and unconquerable even when the body is imprisoned.

iii. Satyagraha, as a means of social action, is based on a strong moral substance. Self-suffering is its unique temperament which differentiates it from all other forms of violent techniques of action. Self-suffering is considerably better and influential than the law of the Jungle for converting the adversary and breaches his ears to the voice of reason.

iv. In a comparison a single Satyagrahi’s self-sacrifice is thousand times more powerful and reasonable than the million non-Satyagrahi’s self-sacrifice in war like killing activities.

v. Satyagraha abstains from evil activities stimulate and encourage everyone in peace making through love, compassion, benevolence and doing good to others even our opponents.

vi. Satyagraha considered as the method for reconstructing, remoulding, and reshaping human nature through moralize human activities.

---

vii. It is not possible to compare the Non-violent non-cooperation with inaction or non-action. It is a vigorous denunciation of untruth, without violence, annoyance or hatred. It is a tireless struggle against all evil or pitting of one's soul against the will of the tyrant to win him by love.

viii. The concept of Satyagraha has the wider scope in its application in the social movements where there is no hate or anger and violence.

ix. The most important characteristics of Satyagraha lies in making awareness and consciousness among the masses, educating about the socio-economic and political condition of the time, preserving the unity apart from diversities among the masses, converting them as the fearless soldiers, establish the common platform and strong organization and then give direction to them to non-violent struggle against the evils.

x. The multi-class or non-class character of Satyagraha movement is distinct from other methods which mainly consist of the same class.

Thus the fundamental aspiration of the Satyagraha movement is to make conscious awareness on the socio-economic and political oppression, exploitation and domination. It tries to provide suitable general front to organize the masses for the common causes then concert this as a strong organization against the exploiters and dominators. In the theoretical as well as the practical nature, Gandhi’s philosophy of Satyagraha has essential necessity for a revolution with the non-violent means. Satyagraha opens all the possible ways to one’s realization in the social life. It is not possible to adjust with evil activities where the revolt will automatically taken place against the exploitative and dominative social order. Gandhi, as a man of practical affairs, envisaged this possibility and rightly predicted that.
Concept of Democracy

The best definition given by the then American President Abraham Lincoln, on democracy is ‘the government of the people, for the people and by the people’. As per the Lincoln’s word, this is a best form of government where there is less interference in the autonomy of each and every individual, where people’s power rest on the individual and each one realizes he or she is the real master of one’s self. Therefore people are independent in a democracy but in a parliamentary democratic system, the party system has an imperative role yet Gandhi was extremely critical of the parliamentary democracy and he called the British Parliament as a ‘sterile women and a prostitute’ in his monumental book ‘Hind Swaraj’. Although for him good government is no substitute for self-government. In this system people are connected with the system directly as well as indirectly at every level; it offers utmost opportunity to the people for their advancement or growth. Above all people can decide the mode of their welfare. And it is for this reason that today a gigantic fraction of the world happens to be under democratic system of government.

The stateless democracy desired by Mahatma Gandhi completely based upon non-violence, more or less supports the system of the day on one hand and he desired to work incessantly for enhancement in it in the anticipation of the domain of Ahimsa. It is an essential improvement because democracy is an artificial institution and all the artificial institutions are not out of risk; according to time and space it is a subject to improvement. Democracy cannot be an exception. Mahatma Gandhi said that “There is no human institution but has its dangers. The greater the institution, the greater the chances of abuse. Democracy is a great institution and, therefore, it is liable to be greatly abused. The remedy, therefore, is not avoidance of democracy but reduction of possibility of abuse to a minimum.”107 In the system of democracy there are much more possibilities for abuse. The conflicts in various bases and other quarrels also have the

107. Gandhi, M. K., Young India, 07.05.1931.
inevitable scope in it. Here the question is: how can one be free and liberal from the conflicts in a
democratic system? In my understanding through the non-violence the ripeness of the organ of
democracy or the democratic organizations have full scope to make democracy as healthy one. If
democracy is healthy there will be less possibilities of conflicts in it. This is the first thing that
can be proclaimed openly. Democracy is an unfeasible thing to anticipate the power sharing by
all, but let not democracy degenerate into mobocracy. It is possible for even an outsider, a
labourer to earn sufficient for their lives while they have been sharing in self-government. But
they have to feel for others life, moving with others in social life and see others settlements and
circumstances where they live like packed. It is possible for us to make others lives happy or mar
others lives.

While discussing about Gandhi’s concept of democracy automatically the question arises
before us and that is how Gandhian way of democratic institutions can gain maturity? To answer
this question, the understanding and analysis about Gandhi’s conception on the basic tenets of
democracy is obligatory of which representation and public views are of greatest importance.
Representation and public views are part and parcel of the democratic government. Both have
their imperative character in making good democratic government. He said that “Public opinion
alone can keep a society pure and healthy.” Gandhi considered that the public opinion is the
necessary condition to maintain the society as pure and healthy and also he thought that the state
should have ruling hand with the public opinion, he believed that “A popular State can never act
in advance of public opinion. If it goes against it, it will be destroyed.” That is why Gandhi
preached it exclusively before the world. Basing on the representation Gandhi uttered that “I
hold it to be an utter delusion to believe that a large number of delegates are in any way a help to

the better conduct of business, or that it safeguards the principle of democracy. Fifteen hundred delegates, jealous of the interests of the people, broadminded and truthful, would any day be better safeguard for a democracy than six thousand irresponsible men chosen anyhow. To safeguard democracy the people must have a keen sense of independence, self-respect and their oneness, and should insist on choosing, as their representatives, only such persons as are good and true.”

It is fairly obvious in the above mentioned statement of Gandhi that the following two tangible points to be relevant to the representation, together with their significance in the system of democracy.

- It is enormously essential that the people’s consciousness for democracy and the role of representatives in this system.

- The carefulness in selecting the representatives for conduction of the democratic government.

According to Gandhi the number of delegates is not significant, rather than he expected the representatives should work for the maximum possible way for the welfare of the people. Then it is not a matter if they are few in numeral, because people’s interest is the main spirit of a democracy.

Secondly, it is the controlling factor of the nation and the government that fit in public opinion. That is to say, the healthy system is only possible through the healthy opinions of the public and the denial is quite difficult by the state. Gandhi supported this in his own words as ‘A popular state can never act in advance of public opinion; if it goes against it, it will be destroyed.’

---

It is a fact that the success of the democracy depends upon strong criticism which should be well informed, impartial and matured that is the spine of public life. The deficiency of critical analysis leads to failure of the realization of democracy and its feature. Therefore, there is always a need to make the people conscious. The public expects making the people in the government familiarized in this regard. Even then, if the government does not work in accordance with the ambitions of people then it must be aware of their power. So it can be said that without the wish of public opinion any nation or government cannot exist. One may question that how can we generate the healthy and matured public opinion? Gandhi answered that right education is the only probable way to bring the highly matured public opinion. That is why Gandhi had accentuated on right and true education. He indicated that public opinion will go to reverse order if right education is not given. It will be the intolerable circumstance in the absence of right education. To quote Mahatma Gandhi himself: “Healthy public opinion has an influence, of which we have not realized the full significance…Public opinion becomes intolerable when it becomes violent and aggressive.”

The future of democracy depends upon our capability to deal with the multiface social problems and this capability can be attained through the communal events aimed at the good of all. This denotes the sharing of reciprocal responsibilities for regulation and welfare of the individual as well as for common inter-dependence. Since democracy visualizes a dynamic society, where public will be the part of decision-making authority in its ruling process, critical thinking and decision-making are the two vital qualities of the members of a democratic society. The upcoming of democracy depends on our accomplishments in getting along. Now and then people illustrate bold lines when they think to be like themselves. People should affirm their own individual and group identities, respect and appreciate the identities of others. If people come face-to-face with the pessimistic results of

111. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 07.05.1931, p.103.
injustice and abhorrence, they have to examine their own lives. To understand this properly, primarily we should maintain tolerance.

For the successful functioning of democracy, public representation is one of the necessary conditions; Gandhi conceived as, “The very essence of democracy is that every person represents all the varied interests which compose the nation. It is true that it does not exclude and should not exclude special representation of special interests, but such representation is not its test. It is a sign of its imperfection.”¹¹² In one occasion he said, I grasp it to be a complete illusion to believe that a huge number of delegates is in any way of help to the better behavior of business or it preserves the principle of democracy. One thousand and five hundred delegates, envious of the interests of the public, tolerant and honest, would any day be a better preserve for democracy for democracy than six thousand reckless men selected anyhow. Gandhi said that “People in a democracy should be satisfied with drawing the Government's attention to mistakes, if any. They could remove the Government if they wished to. But they should not obstruct them by agitating against them. Ours is not a foreign Government having a mighty army and navy to support them. They have to derive their strength from the people.”¹¹³ There are three imperatives that peoples own; the enthusiastic sense of liberty, self-respect and unity to preserve the democratic system. They should be firm on selecting their representatives only such persons who ever good and true. It is said that hardly any people represent the spirit of contradiction with a true democracy. I is believed that it is not possible to get balanced development by aggressive method for democracy. The spirit of democracy comes from the inclusiveness and not from the ever exclusiveness.

In democratic governance, the principle of majority plays the key role; the scale of the establishment of democracy is the decision of the majority. In such a situation whatever majority decides, should it be accepted? Gandhi said that to some extent the decision of large amount of people should be definitely taken for approved; one should yield to the majority in matters of details. The individual’s liberty should be carefully protected in democracy. If the liberty of the person is not protected or if it is violated then, Gandhi believed that “Minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority.”114 Despite the principle of majority applied in democracy of the day, Gandhi wished for the society, which is free from exploitation with the co-operation of majority and minority. For the establishment of his ideal society he suggested that “Let us not push the mandate theory to ridiculous extreme and become slaves to resolution of majorities. That would be a revival of brute force in a more virulent form. If rights of minorities are to be respected, the majority must tolerate and respect their opinion and action…It will be the duty of the majority to see to that the minorities receive a proper hearing and are not otherwise exposed to insult.”115 Further he thought that “Claiming the right of free opinion and free action as we do, we must extend the same to others. The rule of majority, when it becomes coercive, is as intolerant as that of a bureaucratic minority. We must patiently try to bring round the minority to our view by gentle persuasion and argument.”116 To determine the aforementioned propositions of Gandhi, it is essential that before any legislation, well planned, it should be patiently deliberated that democracy demands patient instructions before legislation.

114. Gandhi, M. K., Young India, 02.03.1922, p. 129.
115. Gandhi, M. K., Young India, 08.12.1921, p. 403.
116. Gandhi, M. K., Young India, 26.01.1922, p.54.
Rights and Responsibilities

In a civil society each and every individual is the basic unit, we can say that the society builds on individuals. In a democracy the individual has the most important role because it is the governance of the people, for the people by the people. In this type of democratic government, the individuals have equal rights and duties. The rights and responsibilities of the people have major role in defining one’s personality. We have various levels of responsibilities in our day today life. Individual responsibility and civil involvement with others are the traits that grow with the opportunities to share the mutual tasks in a democracy. According to Gandhi “In true democracy every man and woman has to think for himself or herself. How this real revolution can be brought about I do not know except that every reform, like charity must begin at home.”\textsuperscript{117} These responsibilities should be accomplished in an arranged manner for the wellbeing of the cluster. The work should include individual independence and individual rights while accommodating the responsibility to uphold the group orderliness. Gandhi was preoccupied with individual honesty and the blame of a person. He had great regard in making the collective discipline and the moral compromises for the sake of nation. He asserted that each citizen of the state must be responsible for his actions and there is not even a single possibility to avoid or reduce the responsibilities.

The equality in access of rights by all is the necessary condition to enjoy the freedom in democracy. Gandhi’s denotation of freedom comes from inter-dependence on the socio-economic, political and moral spheres. There is a condition in sharing’s the democratic values that is the absence of the discrimination in any basis. Every individual should be ready to perform his duties so as to obtain rights. There by Gandhi considered that rights are always

\textsuperscript{117} Gandhi, M. K., Harijan, 14.07.1946, p. 220.
derived from the duties, the later is the source of the former. If someone discharges his duties, rights are not far from him. Further he said that if anybody is striving for rights without performing the duties it is not accepted. He has explained as “If instead of insisting on rights everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind. I venture to suggest that Rights that do not flow directly from duty well performed are not worth having.” Equality is placed at the highest state in a democracy; but rights also cannot be the exception of it. If there are no equal rights for each and everyone, there is no possibility of proportionate progress and in such a state no democracy can survive for a long. It is a well-known fact. So, before having a desire to acquire rights, everyone should be ready to perform his/her duties. It is the best way even to strengthen the edifice of democracy as well as to run it on the path of Ahimsa-the non-violence shown by Mahatma Gandhi. However, in his view it was incorrect to say that an isolated individual had no wider significance. For Gandhi it was the citizen’s sense of moral responsibility for his own actions that ultimately determined the character of the state. People were responsible for one another and if one of them turned delinquent, the rest could not disown their equal responsibility for his behavior. Even as a wrongdoer must search his conscience, the others must probe theirs. Gandhi pointed out “In democracy, the individual will is government and limited by the social will which is the State, which is government by and for democracy. If every individual takes the law into his own hands, there is no State. It becomes anarchy, i.e., absence of social law or State, that way lies destruction of liberty. Therefore, you should subdue your anger and let the State secure justice.” It is the deliberate and sore working process that bring out the merging sense of humanity, thus the ethical foundation in the society is a necessary collective responsibility.

118. Gandhi, M. K., 06.07.1947, P. 217
According to Gandhi every individual is responsible for the actions of his government. The citizen is a party to its actions and partly responsible for their results. It is not possible for the citizen to conceal behind the frontage of collective responsibility, it does not replace individual’s responsibility.

**Justice and Punishment**

No democracy can be excluded from conflicts because it is the man made institution. How democracy to be free from offenses? It may be small or big committed by an individual, no matter if generally this term is used for a legal crime. If the commitment of crime is there, there must be provision for punishment. But the question is how much the punishment will be? And what type of punishment will be given in the democratic system to accord justice to all concerned? As per answering these questions Gandhi holds his own views and his commitment for non-violence as we can assume it from his important following remark on redemption: “I do not seek redemption from the consequences of my sin; I seek to be redeemed from sin itself or rather from the very thought of sin. Until I have attained that end, I shall be content to be restless.”

There is no doubt that the human nature with peccadillo deliberately or accidentally has to meet the worldly life. Living without sin is impossible for human beings. So it is unavoidable condition that one should encounter the consequences of sin if he committed a sin. Therefore by committing crime, the provision of punishment is a must. But it must be of such a nature that could accord a chance to the offender to reform or revise him in the future. It has more scope in Gandhian philosophy. It leads to the matured state of democratic institutions with healthy and strong democracy. Mahatma Gandhi is of the firm opinion that, if there is a

---

possibility to reform the human being, he must not be deprived of that opportunity. That is why he is in support for abolishing the provision of capital punishment altogether.

Now, I draw the conclusion from the above analysis that democracy is not the exception of drawbacks—though temporary in nature, smaller or bigger—in the same manner the other walks of human life can be made free to a large scale, if not completely to some extent through its mature and healthy organs or institutions. In this regard there is a need to awaken the masses and making the system responsible in practice as much as possible. There must be possibilities and provisions for reforms at all levels. In fact, reforms are the signs of development. An institution like democracy depends on reforms much more in comparison to others, because its responsibilities are greater than any other political institution to achieve its goal, if not fully, to the maximum possible extent. So, Mahatma Gandhi’s suggestions to create democracy which is matured and healthy in valuable a thought; through that, definitely there will be possibilities of growth and gaining strength. And no doubt that the deep rooted or strengthened democracy, accord well to all; it can grant considerable relief from all kinds of conflicts to the people.

Decentralization

Decentralization is a concept of power sharing at all levels. It has various forms and dimensions like political, economic and administrative due to the pre-condition of centralized power structure. It is the essential part of the democratic system of government. Very similar to this conception, Bertrand Russell pointed about Gandhi’s concept of decentralization: In those parts of the world in which industrialism is still young, the possibility of avoiding the horrors we have experienced still exists. India, for example is traditionally a land of village communities. It would be a tragedy if this traditional way of life with all its evils were to be suddenly and
violently exchanged for the greater evils of industrialism and they would apply to people whose standard of living is already low. Therefore, one has to understand the magnitude of those ‘horrors’ of which Russell speaks, before one can truly appreciate Gandhi's idea of decentralization. According to Gandhi, men should do their actual living and working in communities. They permit genuine self-government and the assumption of personal responsibilities, federated into larger units in such a way that the temptation to abuse great power should not arise. The larger a democracy grows, the lesser becomes the rule of the people and the smaller is the way of individuals and localized groups in dealing with their own destinies. Political decentralization prevents massive concentrations of political power in the hands of too few; rather, to distribute it in the hands of many. Gandhian political order takes the form of a direct, participatory democracy, operating in a tier structure from the base of village-level tier upwards through the district and state levels ultimately to the national and international levels. Decentralization is one of the fundamental basic principles in Gandhian political philosophy.

Values of Democracy

Basically democracy has very deep and welfare oriented values. These are:

Life: It is the basic right and fundamental possession of the individual.

Liberty: It is the freedom of the individual. It reflects on the personal as well as socio-economic and political freedom of the person. This includes the freedom with regard to groups, own beliefs, ideas and opinions. The democratic system provides the right to express their opinions in public to the people.

Personal Freedom: There should not be any restriction or control by the government as far as the individual’s personal freedom is concerned.
Political Freedom: It is the right of the person to participate in political process and activities of the country.

Economic Freedom: It is the right that ensure the activities of buying, selling and trading of private property and the right to employment without any interference from any angle.

The Pursuit of Happiness: It is said to be the individual’s right to be happy in his own way without any interference of others.

Common Good: It is the right of the individual participating towards the welfare of the community or Working together for the benefit of all.

Justice: It compels the people and institutions to treat fairly in fulfilling the obligations of society. It restricts the individual or institution in favor of one over other.

Equality: It is the fundamental value in democracy. It says that each and everyone have the right to enjoy the Political, Legal, Social and Economic Equality. Everyone has the right to the same dealing without any kind of variations such as race, caste, class, gender, religion, heritage, language and ethnicity.

Diversity: There may be dissimilarities in the country based on culture, attire, language, tradition and religion. They can be tolerated and celebrated as strength.

Truth: Both government and the people should not lie. The government should reveal the information to the people about their grievances and demands.

Popular Sovereignty: The government is not apart from the people. All the powers of the government are deriving from the people only. So they are the ultimate authority over the government.
**Patriotism:** It is the kind of feeling or love or devotion of the country and its values. The people may show it by words or actions.

**Concept of Swaraj**

The term ‘Swaraj’ initially used by Dadabhai Naoroji and Balgangadhar Tilak in political scenario for attaining the national Independence. The idea of 'Swaraj' or self-rule is one of the philosophical principles of Gandhian teachings, which stimulate man in conquering complete individuality and also reorganization of the society. Gandhi holds that self-rule or 'Swaraj' was nothing but self-determination of the individual while taking decisions without depending upon others. Gandhi used this term Swaraj with a definite meaning and significance. He wrote Swaraj as “a scared word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which independence often means.”

Gandhi said that swaraj is an all satisfying goal for all time. The major ingredients of swaraj are;

(A) Decentralized participatory democracy

(B) The spiritualization of politics and economics.

The other words for swaraj are integration of politics and economics with the principles of truth (Satya) and non-violence (Ahimsa). The idea of 'Swaraj' first dwells in the individuals and will be manifested in his actions. Then an individual will be free to become what he desires; similarly, the 'Swaraj' of people decide their target. Therefore, his idea of 'Swaraj' though has a political meaning; it is grounded in the individual. According to Gandhi, an individual with simplicity and without selfishness can guide others. He said that this is nothing but assimilation of individual’s self-rule into communal self-reliance. The word 'Swaraj' is different from

---

independence. The meaning of the concept independence may be the free will of doing anything with his desires. But the concept of Swaraj is based on the self-discipline of the individual. It is the moral autonomy of the individual, which depends upon the self-purification of one’s own, which brings the power to make one’s claims practically. Gandhi wrote that how the sense of Swaraj is based upon the change in the people. He also affirmed that it is a Vedic word, which signifies self-rule and self-restraint. Gandhi made the transformation of the concept of Swaraj in two ways; it is a way of inner thinking and it is a way of outer action. Swaraj can not be a gift, given by somebody. It is the product of our own awareness and self-effort. Thus, recognizing our weaknesses is the precondition to understand the external threat to our freedom. Then we can eliminate our weaknesses through understanding. As a result the individual or the Government cannot be controlled if we were not weak. Gandhi made the deep analysis on the concept of Swaraj anticipated to highlight the national freedom or collective self-rule on the basis of individual self-rule. While there was the concept of Swaraj before Gandhi's appearance in the Indian freedom movement, he insisted on individual Swaraj because after independence he found that the real Swaraj has not been achieved.

Gandhi contrasted with state government. He favored the self-government. It is a fact that his Swaraj is meant for self-government. This idea is based on the spiritual thinking that anything authentic and real can come only from within. In the moral understanding that is to say that all good comes from within, nothing can be forced from exterior. Anything forced from exterior overseas the human nature and cannot be called moral. Explaining his idea of self-government Gandhi said. “Self-government means continuous efforts to be independent of the government control whether it is foreign or whether it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if
people look up for the regulation of every detail of life.”122 Even though Gandhi had realized himself that it is neither possible fully to eradicate the state nor possible to stop the use of force in practical life. For that reason, he thought that the state and the government may exist and yet their powers should be abridged to minimum. He held that, “I admit that there are certain things which cannot be done without political power, but there are numerous other things which do not all depend upon the political power. That is why a thinker like Thoreau said that, that government is best which governs the least. This means that when people come into possession of political power the interference with the freedom of the people is reduced to a minimum. In other words, a nation that runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without much state interference is truly democratic. Where such condition is absent the form of government is democratic in name.”123 Swaraj, which is based on non-violence, is not necessary to know about the rights but the people should know about their duties. Here the duties can be merely as duties but they are considered as the corresponding rights. Which are flowing from the recital of one’s duties, they are considered as the true rights. Therefore rights of true nationality accumulate people who serve the nation to which they belong. And they alone can do justice to the rights that accumulate with them. But the result of these rights in practice is destructive to the exerciser and society. At that same time to the observer of the truth and non-violence becomes prestigious and it brings rights. If the people acquired rights as a consequence of the recital of duty, they must exercise the rights only for the service of society never for self purpose. The meaning of people’s Swaraj is the self-rule of the individual in its extent level of socioeconomic, political and moral spheres. Such self-rule comes only by the fulfillment of the individual’s duties

clubbed with the national feelings. Here there is no way to think about one’s rights because the rights automatically join with the duties for better performance. Gandhi pointed out the nature of the Swaraj which is based on non-violence. No one can be the enemy of anyone in it. Everyone should contribute his own proportion for the common good. There will not be any restriction to anybody to read, write and their knowledge keep on growing from day by day. Disease and malady will be reduced to its minimum level when there is self-rule and self-reliance. The public employment will be ensured by its core concepts of Kadhi and trusteeship: the system of economic power sharing. The rich can use their properties wisely and usefully for the good of the society and cannot spend them for their increasing needs and worldly enjoyments. In such a moral based society or a government there is no place to social evils of betting, drinking and immorality. In the system of non-violent Swaraj the justice and rights will be protected at that same time no one can violate over others rights and cannot utilize unjust rights over others. It is a well organized state of equality, justice, self-rule, self-reliance and individual autonomy based on morality.

**Dimensions of Swaraj**

Gandhi used the term swaraj both at the individual and national levels. The individual swaraj means rule over one’s self. Control over one’s lust is the main condition for individual swaraj. In national level Gandhi meant that national self-rule in the fields of social, political, economic and moral. Society is nothing but the collection of the individuals so the individuals have major role to succeed as good. He said that, “At the individual level swaraj is vitally connected with the capacity for dispassionate self-assessment, ceaseless self-purification and growing swadeshi or
Therefore Gandhi has suggested individual self-rule before the national self-rule, because each and every individual is the constituent parts of the whole nation. As per the Gandhian vision, individual swaraj leads to the national swaraj. According to Gandhi control of one’s lust is necessary to individual swaraj, no man can rule over himself without smashing the lust within him. Gandhi thought that by educating the masses it will be possible to accomplish self-rule, he says, “Real swaraj will come, not by the acquisition of authority but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.” At the national level Swaraj means national self-rule. Gandhi makes clear definition on Indian swaraj, that is totally indigenous and shuns all invitations of other countries. He has described it as Ramraj, i.e., sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. Gandhi wrote that, “By Swaraj I mean the government of India by the consent of people as ascertained by the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native-born or domiciled, who have contributed. To the service of the state and who have taken the trouble of having registered their names as voters.” In addition to this he said that, “The Swaraj of our dreams recognizes no race or religious distinctions. Nor it is to be the monopoly of the lettered persons nor yet of moneyed men. Swaraj is for all, including the farmer, but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the striving, toiling millions.” In Gandhian vision of Swaraj, there is no place for any kind of disparities; he says no swaraj is possible without the removal of untouchability. The national swaraj ensures the equality, freedom of the people.

---

126. ibid. p. 41.
127. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 05.01.1930.
Gandhian concept of swaraj has various dimensions depending upon various fields of national life. These are like political, social, economic and moral swaraj. In the field of politics swaraj means just like an individual is fit to eat, to drink and to breath. The nation must possess the strength to rule over itself. He observed that “By political independence I do not mean an imitation of British House of Commons or the Soviet rule of Russia or the Fascist rule if Italy or the Nazi of Germany. They have systems suited to their genius. We must have ours suited to ours.”

Therefore Gandhi suggested decentralization of political power to all. He says that mere transfer of political power is not swaraj, we must establish our own style of governing body with well disciplined representatives and non-violent moral based principles. According to Gandhi economic swaraj means self-sufficient individual, village and national economic freedom and also that means decentralized economic power to all. By his teachings of swaraj he wanted to eradicate the sect of haves and have nots and try to establish economy based on self-reliance. That’s why Gandhi preached khadi, spinning wheel and trusteeship for self-depended economic power. Gandhi has wished-for our own tradition, culture and moral principles instead of western coercion culture and machinery principles.

**Village Swaraj**

Gram Swaraj or village self-rule is an essential thought in Gandhi's thinking. The villages and the villagers are the centres of Gandhi's thinking. As far as India's social and political institutions were concerned, he dreamt for this kind of social and political institutions for India. With all his ideas, Gram Swaraj should be understood and viewed within the context of the twin beacons of Truth and nonviolence. In 1942 Gandhi wrote, the basic tenet of Gram Swaraj. Every village should be its own republic and then there should be both independence and inter-dependence.

---

Independence should be with its vital wants and needs, at that same time there should be inter-dependence among the villages for other needs and desires. Each village should be fundamentally self-sufficient, making stipulation for all necessities of life - foodstuff, clothes, clean water, hygiene, accommodation and education etc, including the government and self-defence and all socially useful facilities required by a community. For example: a theatre and a public hall. For complete nation, full independence would mean that each village of India must be a republic with full powers. These may be revolutionary ideas. Nehru and other most of the Congress leaders could not understand the ideas of village republics and its needs. So they were not inspired. Though for Gandhi, independence of India in its real sense is a complete transformation of Indian society and polity. Nehru thought that it is not more than the political independence of India from English Imperialism. Nehru was acknowledged as Gandhi's political successor, but he was an orthodox democratic socialist. Of course, Nehru wanted to make India a modern, industrialized and democratic socialist nation or state. He believed that centralized, large-scale, heavy industries were essential if India has to develop, increase its wealth and become a modern nation. He did not see the virtue of small is beautiful. He had no thought of devolving significant governmental powers to individual villages and clusters of villages. It is perhaps not that Nehru did not agree with Gandhi's concept of Gram Swaraj, but he never seriously considered it. Nehru sympathized and agreed with some elements of Gandhi's programmes such as abolition of untouchability but Gram Swaraj was never in his agenda. There is a philosophical gulf between Gandhi and almost all of India's pinnacle political leaders. During the independence the Gram Swaraj was not integrated into India's constitution. India's socio-economic and political institutions were to be generally top down rather than bottom up. According to Gandhi political as well as economic life should be centered on villages
prearranged as innumerable oceanic circles as he visualized them, not as a pyramid with the millions of villagers at the bottom supporting elite at the apex. On the other hand, the Indian patriots like Nehru and the other elite were quite comfortable with their positions at the top. According to Gandhi, Independence must begin at the bottom. Therefore, the villages of India, each and everyone should be a republic or all Panchayats must have full powers, where self-reliance of the every village will prevail so that they will manage their affairs to the extent of defending against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Ultimately, it is the individual who will be the unit.

Thus every village’s first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow useful crops, excluding ganja, tobacco, opium etc. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks ensuring clean supply. This can be done through controlled wells and tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis. There will be no sectarianism like castes such as we have today with their graded Untouchability. Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation. The register will be maintained by the village.

Gandhi was an activist, he worked for the upliftment of society. In the field of politics he understood the issues with special consideration based on Indian nature of socio-economic and politics. Thus he defined politics as the best means to regulate the national life and also he concluded that its power should decentralize in equitable manner. To him the wellbeing of every
individual is the end. He found various forms of satyagraha and non-violence are the best means to attain the ends. He formulated the significant theories in politics in order to attain his ultimate end of welfare of all. He thought that the state in concentrated form of power structure is more coercive than individual. So he suggested the political power decentralization in the democratic form of governance. Because decentralized democracy gives the scope to the public participation and representation. It ensures the liberty and autonomy to the individual, village and nation in its extensive application of the welfare world will be attainable.