CHAPTER 6

GANDHIAN CONCEPT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

6.1.0.0 Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi as a visionary of India, had a very clear perception of its villages and made an emphatic assertion that “India lives in her seven and half lakhs of villages”. He further believed that India will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts not in palaces. He held this conviction by saying that “If village perishes, India will perish too”. He found that the progress of the country lies in the development of majority of its rural villages, develop rural economy, industry and rural skills. Gandhiji found the only way of bringing hope of good living to the rural people is by making the village the central place in the economic programme. Rural development as outlined by Gandhiji contained self-sufficiency, inter-dependence for other wants and development of Village Industries. He wanted to bring about rural reconstruction with sound scientific and spiritual values. Through his 18-point Constructive Programme, Gandhiji successfully implemented his rural reconstruction activities in Sevagram Centre near Wardha in 1935.

2 Ibid. p.8.
6.2.0.0 Gandhian Dream of Indian Villages

Gandhiji’s ideal village belongs to the pre-British period, when Indian villages were the small republics undisturbed by the periodical visitations of barbarious hordes. This republican character of the villages was destroyed by the British rule. Therefore, in Gandhian plan of rural reconstruction, the ancient republican village without any kind of exploitation served as a model unit. Gandhiji aimed at the attainment of Village Swaraj and said in 1942,

My idea of Village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants and get inter-dependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every villages’ first concern will be to grow its own food crop and cotton for its cloth. It could have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow useful money crops, thus excluding ganga, tobacco, opium and the like. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own water works ensuring clean water supply.

Gandhiji fully understood the consequence of western type of industrialization in India. He was conscious of the fact that far industrialization would destroy the Indian society by eliminating our decentralized rural industries.

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4 Pyarelal, Op. cit., p.21
and further leads to improvement. The once self-sufficient and self-contained rural villages have been drained progressively. He wanted to reverse this trend and bring about a rural reconstruction based on sound scientific and spiritual values. He said,

my ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world. There will be neither plague nor cholera nor small pox, none will be idle, no one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour...... It is possible to envisage railways, post and telegraphs and the like.\(^5\)

Gandhian strategy of rural reconstruction was based on village swaraj and swadeshi movement. The basic principle of village swaraj as outlined by Gandhiji are trusteeship, swadeshi, full employment, bread labour, self-sufficiency, decentralisation, equality, Nai Talim etc. Thus the idea of ideal village of Gandhian dream was a comprehensive one, encompassing the economic, social, political and educational dimensions.

Gandhiji gave emphasis on truth and non-violence in every aspect of human life and said, “the swaraj of my opinion will come only when all us are

\(^5\) ibid. p.13.
firmly persuaded that our swaraj has got to be won, worked and maintained through truth and ahimsa alone\(^6\).

Gandhian holistic ideas such as Trusteeship, Swadeshi, Self-sufficiency, Bread Labour, and Village Swaraj are briefly described as follows:

### 6.2.1.0 Trusteeship

According to Gandhiji, trusteeship is a way of life rather than just a method to achieve a particular end. According to his holistic approach, "everything on this earth belongs to God and is from God. Therefore, it was for this people as a whole not for a particular individual. Everybody on this earth has a natural right to at least the basic necessities of life, just like the birds and the beasts have. If somehow, an individual had more than his proportionate share, he was a trustee of that portion for God's people"\(^7\)

As land belongs to God and thus belongs to the community and therefore should be used for the welfare of the community. By peaceful non-violent persuasion, the hearts of landowners should be changed to accept the trusteeship idea. If this is not accepted by them, the poor should organise non-violent non-co-operation and civil disobedience struggle against them. He believed that the rich cannot accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor.

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He said

The moment the cultivators of the soil realise their power, the Zamindari evil will be sterilized. What can the poor Zamindar do when they say that they will not simply work the land unless they are paid enough to feed and clothe and educate themselves and their children. In reality the toiler is the owner of what he produces. If the toilers intelligently combine, they will become an irresistible power.

6.2.2.0 Swadeshi

Swadeshi is the moral principle underlying a decentralized self-sufficient economic structure. According to Gandhiji, “Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restrict us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote”

In economic terms, a strict adherence to Swadeshi doctrine paves the way to decentralized self-sufficient economy. The buyers and sellers having a concern for each other, jointly work for the development of their local areas using local resources. Gandhiji emphasised, “every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit exchanging only such necessary commodities to other villages where they are not locally producible”.

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9 Shashi Prabha Sharma, *Gandhian Holistic Economics*, Concept Publishing Co., New Delhi, 1992, p.120.
10 Ibid.
The spirit of Swadeshi guiding man’s economic behaviour leads to natural love and preference for local products and an attitude of service to the immediate neighbours. The consumers, for their requirements must buy from the local producers and thus support the local farmers, artisans such as weavers, carpenters, cobblers, potters etc. Adherence to the principle of Swadeshi leads to a natural economic order and harmony¹¹.

The decentralised economic units would thus facilitate the best possible use of local raw materials, talents and manpower, promote occupational equilibrium, ecological balance and co-operative living. The village would be able to produce whatever is required, with the help of local resources and would be intended with whatever has been produced in closer surroundings¹².

Gandhiji was profoundly moved by the poverty and miserable conditions of the masses due to the centralisation of the economic power in the hands of the capitalist class. He enunciated the theory of trusteeship in order to bring about the required change in a non-violent way.

6.2.3.0 Self-sufficiency

Gandhiji insisted on the self-sufficiency of Indian villages. Self-sufficiency was advocated by him as a basic principle of life because dependence brings in

¹¹ Ibid. p.122.
¹² Ibid. p.123.
exploitation which is the essence of violence. The poor is exploited by the rich, the village by the city and the undeveloped country by the developed ones due to lack of self-sufficiency.\(^{13}\)

He suggested that villages should be self-sufficient i.e. they should produce their own food, clothing and other articles needed for meeting their basic needs. He insisted on the promotion of village or cottage industries and handicrafts because they can provide employment, necessary to meet the basic needs of the villagers and also facilitate village self-sufficiency.\(^{14}\)

Gandhiji said that it was not the British rule but the modern civilization nourished by their rule, which was the real cause of economic, distress i.e., poverty and unemployment. He further said, “if the British rule were replaced tomorrow by the Indian rule based on modern methods, India would be no better.”\(^ {15}\) Against this, he envisaged India’s salvation in the revival of its ancient civilization which prescribes for man the path of duty and observance of morality.\(^ {16}\)

Gandhiji’s self-sufficient and non-violent village society could only be built on the basis of co-operation and not on conflict. According to him as far as


\(^{16}\) Ibid. p.43.
possible, every activity in the village will be conducted on co-operative basis. Even in the field of agriculture, Gandhiji recommended co-operative farming which would save labour, capital, tools and provide employment to all adult villagers and increase production also. He said, “we must attempt to prevent further fragmentation of land and encourage people to take to co-operative farming”. He noted that when dependence becomes necessary in order to help society to maintain good order it is no longer dependence but it becomes co-operation\textsuperscript{17}.

He also favoured spinners co-operatives and co-operative cattle farming for promoting the national interest.

\textit{6.2.4.0 Bread Labour}

Influenced by Ruskin and Tolstoy, Gandhiji developed his idea of Bread Labour. According to him each man must do physical labour to earn his bread. He called this as Bread Labour and said, “God has given everyone the capacity to work and earn more than his daily bread and whatsoever is ready to use that capacity is sure to find work”\textsuperscript{18}

He was of the opinion that intellectual labour is for one’s own satisfaction and one should not demand payment for it.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid. p.49.
The needs of the body should be supplied by the work of the body.\(^\text{19}\) He said, "one who does not work will not have the right to his bread. Even Lawyers, Engineers, Scientists, Professors, Poets and Playwrights will have to perform physical labour apart from their intellectual labour to earn their upkeep, they will not demand any payment or compensation for their intellectual labour, it serves only to satisfy intellectual or the soul."\(^\text{20}\)

Where there is recognition to the theory of Bread Labour, there is no scope for unemployment. It guarantees sufficient food, clothing and shelter to everyone. Further, there would be no diseases in the society because the physical labour will keep men healthy. The people will eat to live rather than live to eat. The food would be simple, nutritious and tasty when one eat one's food after sweating. Thus the dignity of labour will form the economic basis of the new society.\(^\text{21}\)

6.2.5.0 Grama Swaraj

Gandhiji used the term ‘Swaraj’ with a definite meaning and significance i.e. self rule and self restraint. He defined swaraj in terms of individual and nation. Swaraj of people means the sum total of the self-rule of the individuals. In terms of national swaraj, it is the sum total of all activities which go up to build

\(^{19}\) Ibid. p.484
an ideal state based on moral force. The people of such state are conscious of their moral strength in its collectivity. Gandhiji tried to identify the concept of swaraj state with the Ramraj, the ideal state of Shri Rama.\(^2\)

While propagating his Swaraj vision, he wanted to create a non-violent, non-exploitative and non-competitive social order. He opined:

Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual, always ready to perish for the circle of villages till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majority of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units. Therefore, the outermost circumstance will not yield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and will derive its own strength from it.\(^3\)

The basic theme of Gandhiji’s economic theory was village self-sufficiency or Gram Swaraj. It meant that every village should be self-sufficient in two basic requirements – food and clothing. Every member of the family will play the charka and spin yarn. The village weaver will play the loom and produce the cloth necessary for the village. Similarly, the village should produce its own rice, vegetables etc. Food and clothing will not have to be

\(^2\) Ibid. p.42
imported into the village from outside. Necessarily, it meant a particular lifestyle —the lifestyle of plain living and high thinking”.

The Ramraj or the Enlightened Anarchy of Gndhiji’s dream was to be realised in three stages. In the initial stage, the goal was Swaraj i.e. to achieve independence for India. In the second stage, the objective was to bring about a predominantly non-violent state through the evolution of Village Republics, i.e., Grama Swaraj. In the final stage the purpose was to achieve Ramraj, i.e., the Kingdom of God on this Earth which would be the totally non-violent and purely democratic stateless society. Swaraj, Grama Swaraj and Ramraj are thus the three significant milestones in the process of achievement of the ideal social order of Gandhiji’s vision. Since the ultimate ideal of Ramraj is difficult to realise, Gandhiji said in its absence the only realisable alternative and immediate ideal was that of Grama Swaraj.  

6.3.0.0 Constructive Programme

In 1935, Gandhiji started his rural reconstruction activities in Sevagram to implement his idea of Constructive Programme which included items such as the use of Khadi, promotion of Village Industries, Basic and Adult Education, Rural Sanitation, upliftment of the Backward Classes, the welfare of Women,

24 Ibid. p.51
Education in Health and Hygiene, Prohibition and propagation of the Mother Tongue.\textsuperscript{25}

He incorporated all these activities under his 18-point Constructive Programme and consider it as the truthful and non-violent way of winning 'poorna swaraj'. Constructive Programme is not a fragmented approach. It is an attempt to develop society at the grassroots level with the resources that are available locally. He said,

Thirty four years of continuous experience and experiment in truth and non-violence have convinced me that non-violence cannot be sustained unless it is linked to conscious body labour and finds expression in our daily contact with our neighbours. This is the constructive programme. It is not an end, it is an indispensable means and therefore is almost convertible with the end. The power of non-violent resistance can only come from honest working of the constructive programme.\textsuperscript{26}

The Constructive Programme may otherwise and more fittingly be called construction of Poorna Swaraj or complete independence by truthful and non-

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violent means. The 18-point Constructive Programmes included the following items:

1. Communal unity
2. Removal of untouchability
3. Prohibition
4. Khadi
5. Other Village industries
6. Village sanitation
7. New or basic education
8. Adult education
9. Women
10. Education in health and hygiene
11. Provincial languages
12. National language
13. Economic equality
14. Kisans
15. Labour
16. Adivasis
17. Lepers

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6. Students

Let us discuss all these items one by one.

6.3.1.0 Communal Unity

Everybody is agreed about the significance of communal unity, which means an unbreakable heart unity. Thus it has a wider significance than political unity. For the attainment of communal unity, every social worker should aim at developing and encouraging the bond of love and regard among the Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian and Jew members and cultivate a unity based on such mutual love and regard.

"In such a happy state of things there would be no disgraceful cry at the stations such as 'Hindu-water' and 'Muslim water' or 'Hindu tea' or Muslim tea'. There would be no separate rooms or pots for Hindus and non-Hindus in schools and colleges, no communal schools, colleges and hospitals."28

Gandhiji found that social stability of the country cannot be achieved without the social unity between these communities. He pleaded and laboured for the Hindu Muslim unity to consolidate corporate strength for better purposes in India. For this Gandhiji recommended the following measures.29

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28 Ibid. p.8
i) The Hindu-Muslim unity can be achieved by educating the people in a sense of common citizenship.

ii) They should enjoy equal rights which flow from duties duly performed.

iii) Hindus as well as Muslims must follow tolerance regarding the communal matters. Both of them must respect the sentiments of each of their community.

iv) They must reconcile themselves to the new environment of living together as free and equal citizens.

Gandhiji advocated non-violent means to regulate the relations between these two communities. All disputes between these two communities should be referred either to Court or to arbitration. The non-violent means to resolve the conflict between the communities is pre-requisite for national existence and unity. The corporate energy of the communities ought to be directed to achieve higher national goals instead of allowing it to dissipate in fratricidal quarrels.

The leaders of the two communities have to play an important role in bringing about the harmony between the two communities. If they are united, the masses will naturally follow them. It is the duty of the leaders to refer the unresolved disputes to the Panchayat. The panchayat should consist of the persons from the two communities who have an unimpeachable integrity and whose decisions are binding on both the communities. If public opinion is
cultivated in favour of the decisions of such panchayats, the people will not dare to question such decision and accept them willingly.  

6.3.2.0 Removal of Untouchability

Untouchability is a social evil and should not be looked upon as a mere political necessity. The socio-economic evils associated with this system must be abolished. According to Gandhiji, there should be perfect social equality among the people in the society. No social superiority should be entertained by any individual or by a section of the society on the ground of birth or knowledge or religion or any other consideration. Gandhiji fought against social superiority in any form and carried on his crusade against the doctrine of racial superiority in South Africa and evil practices of untouchability in India.  

He has the opinion that no one is born as untouchable and unequal. The practice of untouchability is a sin against God as the Harijans and non-Harijans are the children of the same God. He found untouchability as the worst evil effect of Hinduism and worked for their temple entry for religious equality.

In 1932, Gandhiji introduced Harijan Sevak Sangh, a non-political association for their self-improvement. He suggested their economic self-reliance through the adoption of spinning and weaving. He advocated non-violent

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30 Ibid. p.62.
methods to be adopted by them for their self-employment and for proper
realisation of their rights.

Gandhiji was not in favour of representation to the Harijans in all
administrative bodies. He recommended representation under two conditions.

i) If the Harijans are purposely kept out by the influential castes, they should
be given representation.

ii) It is the duty of the represented communities to provide representation to
those communities which are unrepresented or inadequately represented. 32

Gandhiji wanted the caste Hindus to sacrifice and struggle for the all-
round development of the Harijans and wished that they should be assured of
decent standard of living as respectable equal citizens of the country. 33 For this,
cleanliness, good habits, thrift, industry and moral courage are to be inculcated
among them. The awakened Harijans should make serious attempts for self-

improvement in all walks of life. In Gandhian concept of swaraj, none should be
high or low but all are to be equal citizens and this Swaraj society is free from any
social exploitation and domination.

6.3.3.0 Prohibition

Gandhiji considered drinks, intoxicating drugs and gambling as the social evils which eat into the very vitals of the social system and its values. He suggested the various measures to be undertaken to implement prohibition by the Government, Social Organizations and Social Workers.

He realised the fact that the drinks and drugs harden the heart of man and endanger it with cruelty and is the root cause of many a social evil. The moral loss is greater than the financial loss; the physical disease may harm body but the drinks and drugs sap both the body and the soul.

According to Gandhiji, for eradicating the drink evil, the Government should adopt the following measures.34

i) It is the moral duty of the Government to introduce prohibition even if it comes to loss huge resources from the sale of liquor. People can save their money if prohibition is introduced and can use their savings for constructive and creative purposes. The Government must implement prohibition throughout the country with the zeal of the social reformers and should convert every liquor shop into refreshment shop and concert rooms.

34 Ibid. p.64.
ii) The factory owners should create humane conditions for the workers by opening refreshment and recreation rooms so that the workers can comfortably relax. Thus the factory owners have social responsibility towards their workers to prevent the latter from evil habits and to channelise their energies for constructive work.

iii) The social workers have a great role in fulfilling the idea of prohibition. Gandhiji suggested the social workers to visit the homes of the addicts and dissuade them from drinking habit. The liquor shop owners should be requested to close down their business and to take up some other occupation. The social workers should carry on picketing before liquor shops to persuade the addicts and shop owners. Public opinion should be cultivated against liquor business and drinking habit.

Besides the Social Workers, Doctors, Women especially housewives and students should also have the responsibility to save the country from this evil effect.

6.3.4.0 Khadi

Khadi mentality means decentralization of production and distribution of the necessaries of life. Khadi has to play an important role in the village economy of India. It can give the poor at least three things: cloth, work and self-confidence to articulate themselves.
Gandhiji considered Khadi as an inevitable means for the all-round development of the Nation. He said in 1921, “Just as we cannot live without breathing and without eating, so it is impossible for us to attain economic independence and banish pauperism from this ancient land without reviving home-spinning. I hold the spinning wheel to be as much as a necessity in every household as the hearth. No other scheme that can be devised will ever solve the problem of the deepening poverty of the people.”

In 1934 Gandhiji wrote in Harijan, “Khadi is the sun of the village solar system. The planets are the various industries which can support Khadi in return for the heat and substance they derive from it. Without it, the other industries cannot grow ... and also without the revival of the other industries, khadi could not make further progress. For, villagers to be able to occupy their spare time profitably, the village life must be touched at all points.”

According to Gandhiji, Khadi alone can solve a number of economic and other problems of India as shown below.

i) Under Khadi economy, the capital is under the control of the labour and supremacy of man over machinery can be established.

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36 Ibid. p.39.
ii) Each village can be self-sufficient through the welfare of these villages, India will also prosper.

iii) The villagers can take up all the stages of Khadi production for earning wages which can supplement their meagre resources.

iv) Spinning wheel give employment opportunities to village carpenters, Blacksmiths, Weavers and can create self-sufficiency in all villages in India. Khadi alone can give encouragement to other village industries.

v) Spinning is an honourable and leisurely occupation for the women of India. With the popularization of spinning wheel, women need not go out of their houses for earning their bread.

vi) Khadi industry has great organizing potentialities in India. Millions of people are involved in production, distribution and consumption of Khadi.

vii) Spinning is easy to learn and requires no outlay of capital. The farmers can easily learn and operate the spinning wheel and can spin during their leisure hours to supplement their meagre resources.

viii) Khadi is the only industry which can absorb largest number of people and can provide employment to the unemployed at any time of the year without much difficulty.
ix) Khadi industry provides work to the people during famine period. The state should be purchase the products of Khadi during the famine. It is an insurance against the adversity of famine conditions.

x) The spinning wheel provides the people food, cloth and make them self-sufficient.

6.3.5.0 Other Village Industries

According to Gandhiji village economy cannot be completed without the essential village industries such as hand-grinding, hand pounding, soap-making, paper-making, match-making, tanning, oil-pressing etc. The village industries give employment to millions of people and provide an outlet for the creative skill and resourcefulness of the people.

Large scale industries will eliminate the spinning wheel and the handloom, and through the large-scale industries, the wealth will be concentrated in the hands of a few. On the contrary, the village industries will lead to distribution of national income among the millions of people in thousands of villages.

Under Village Industries Scheme, the individuals are to engage themselves in home industries in their homes and cottages. While the production

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is to be carried out individually, the sharing of raw materials and marketing of finished goods are to be carried out collectively on a corporate basis. The All India Village Industries Association can guide such co-operative societies which are to be affiliated to or recognized by it. It should encourage and expand the existing village industries and revive certain dying or dead Village industries wherever it is possible and desirable. It should prescribe the minimum living wages for the workers engaged in the village industries.  

6.3.6 Village Sanitation

The ideal village envisaged by Gandhiji could be constructed on the basis of the principles of public hygiene and sanitation. The houses which are to be built with locally available material will have sufficient light and ventilation. Each house or a cottage shall have a courtyard to grow vegetables for domestic consumption and to house cattle. The village streets and lanes will be kept clean. Each village shall have its own waterworks to ensure clean water supply.

The constructive workers shall make the villages models of cleanliness by teaching the villagers to maintain cleanliness in and around the village, including public wells, tanks and rivers.

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40 Ibid. p.66.
Gandhiji’s idea was not confined only to the removal of garbage from the lanes and streets of the villages but also to put the same to the productive use. If the garbages are scientifically converted into manure, the villages can not only make use of productive manure to grow more food but also keep the villages clean from dust, dirt and bad smell.

6.3.7.0 New or Basic Education (Nai Talim)

Gandhiji developed the idea of Nai Talim, for the ‘all round drawing of the best in child and man, body, mind and spirit’.

According to him literacy in itself is no education, it is not the end of education.

His philosophy of education was based on his experiments with physical, literary and moral training at the Tolstoy Farm in South Africa. The vocational training was given through carpentry, shoe-making, gardening etc. Literacy classes as well as spiritual training were conducted by him and others. He realized that the spirit of the children could not be trained through books alone. He was convinced that it is the life and character of the teacher which moulds the moral life of the students. He drew his conclusions and inferences from the experiences which he gained at the Tolstoy Farm and followed it in India.

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Thus the Gandhian scheme of education is meant to bring about a silent socio-economic and political revolution through the medium of village handicrafts. It removes unemployment through the vocational training and provides economic and social security to the people. It teaches dignity of labour and achieves class harmony. It checks the gradual decline of village economy and reconstructs village industries with new perspectives. The new education ensures smooth transformation of the present village economy without imported machinery and technical skill. The economic destiny of the country will not be placed in the hands of specialized talents but will be placed in the hands of skilled masses. The education aims at mass production by masses. Decentralized production paves the way for decentralized political system. This education which encourages sense of dignity of labour, self-reliance, useful literary knowledge, moral uprightness, social awareness and responsibility stimulates healthy political awakening among the students. Such students will give new meaning and purpose to the political system.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{6.3.8.0 Adult Education}

According to Gandhiji, adult education should not end with bare acquaintance with the alphabet. The literary education of illiterate adults should go hand in hand with the spread of the knowledge which is useful to the villagers.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid. p.83.
in their daily life. During the transitory stage towards complete literacy, the social workers shall engage themselves in adult education of the illiterate people. This will lead to the eradication of illiteracy from the country.

Arithmetic, Geography, History and other subjects should be taught with a special reference to the village life and the village needs. If the adult education were to be village need-based education, the villagers would definitely take interest in it and would certainly view it as a useful treasure and pass it on to the others. Gandhiji opined that the villagers have no use for books which give them nothing of daily life.45

6.3.9.0 Women

Gandhiji believed that the same soul resides in both man and woman and both of them have equal opportunities to develop their personality. They are inseparable pair; and one cannot live without the other.

According to Gandhiji:

In a plan of life based on non-violence, woman has as much right to shape her own destiny as man has to shape his. But as every right in a non-violent society proceeds from the previous performance of a duty, it follows that rules of social conduct must be framed by mutual co-operation and consultation. They can never be imposed from outside. Man have not realized this truth in its fullness in their behaviour towards women. They have

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45 Ibid. p.27.
considered themselves to be lords and masters of women instead of considering them as their friends and co-workers. 46

Though both man and woman posses equal mental abilities, they differ in certain respects. Woman posses greater degree of non-violence than man. As a mother, she exhibits greater degree of suffering, sacrifice and love. She is the mistress of the house, keeper and distributor of the bread in the house and takes greater interest in the management of the house. After completing her house work, she can take up some constructive activities.

Gandhiji appreciated the active role of women in the non-violent struggle for independence to India. They must also participate in all the nation building activities. In a non-violent society, moral strength is more important than physical strength. The women reveal powers of endurance, sacrifice, love and non-violence in greater measure than men.

As the future of the country is to be shaped by her children, the women should teach her children simplicity, faithfulness, non-violence, truth, fearlessness, dignity of labour and self-reliance. Such children will shape the destiny of the country on sound moral lines.

6.3.10.0 Education in Health and Hygiene

According to Gandhiji it is the duty of the social workers to explain the simple rules of health and hygiene to the villagers. The way of life of the social workers should be a living message to others in health and hygiene. They should maintain good health by following the rules of health and nature cure. They have to make attempts to get purified water for the villagers.

Gandhiji considered the fundamental laws of health and hygiene are as follows:

Think the purest thoughts and banish all idle and impure thoughts. Breathe the freshest air day and night. Establish a balance between bodily and mental work. Stand erect, sit erect and be neat and clean in every one of your acts, and let these be an expression of your inner condition. Eat to live for service of fellow men. Do not live for indulging yourselves. Hence your food must be just enough to keep your mind and body in good order. Man becomes what he eats. Your water, food and air must be clean and you will not be satisfied with mere personal cleanliness, but you will infect your surroundings with the same three-fold cleanliness that you will desire for yourselves.

Gandhiji emphasized:

To maintain public sanitation and hygiene in the villages, the social workers should take up brooms, pick axes and baskets to

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clean the public places, including tanks and wells. If they take up these implements with the same pride and dignity as they do with the pens, the problem of finance would not arise in maintaining cleanliness and hygiene in the villages. If they engage themselves in public cleanliness as self-appointed sweepers, the villagers will voluntarily join the movement for cleanliness in their villages and will definitely learn the lessons in public hygiene. 49

6.3.11.0 Provincial Languages

Gandhiji was in favour of regional languages as media of instruction at all stages of education. The social workers have to carry on the fight for establishing the supremacy of the regional languages at all levels of education and administration.

Gandhiji recognized English as the language of international commerce and diplomacy and appreciated the English literature which has rich literary treasure and which gives an insight into the western culture and thought. 50 But he recommended it would be taught as one of the subjects and gave importance to the regional languages as it is the language of the rural masses.

According to him, mother tongue is a natural means to develop the mind of the child. It is a mere superstition to believe that a particular language is incapable of expression of scientific ideas. He explained this point by giving the

49 S.H. Patil, op. cit., p.69
50 Ibid. p.76
examples of Russia and Japan which have achieved all their scientific progress without English as their medium. Hence the Indian languages are to be properly developed, and the useful English books should be translated into regional languages for the sake of majority of the Nation.

6.3.12.0 National Language

According to Gandhiji, the national language of India should be Hindi and he put forward the following arguments in favour of Hindi as national language.

i) It is spoken by the single largest group of people who are spread over a number of states in North India and understood by many in the South.

ii) It is easy enough to learn Hindi to the people of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Bengal. Within a few months, they can have sufficient command over this language.

iii) Though the Dravidian languages are different from Sanskrit, they have profusely borrowed words from Sanskrit vocabulary which has also enriched Hindi language.

iv) Hindustani is spoken by the Hindus and the Muslims in the Northern India. While the learned Hindus have Sanskritized Hindi which cannot be easily understood by the Muslims. The Muslims of Lucknow have Persionized it, which has become unintelligible to the Hindus. Thus the Sanskritized and
Personized Hindi represents two expressions of the same language.

Simple Hindi (Hindustani) is to be favoured.

v) The religious, commercial political and social activities can be carried out throughout India through Hindi medium.

vi) It is easy for the officials to learn this language.51

6.3.13.0 Economic Equality

Economic equality means that everyone shall have sufficient and nutritious food to eat, proper shelter to live in, adequate khadi to wear, timely medical relief and necessary facilities for education. It also implies abolition of the eternal conflict between the capital and the labour by the levelling down of the rich in whom bulk of the Nation's wealth is concentrated and the levelling up of the poor. For this, the constructive workers shall strive to level down the few rich and level up the semi-starved millions through trusteeship system. It does not mean that everyone would literally have the same amount but it means that everyone should have enough for one's needs.52

The ultimate aim of Gandhian concept of economic equality is equal pay for all. The Bhangi, the doctor, the lawyer, the teachers etc. would get the same wages for an honest day's work.

Gandhiji suggested the following measures to bring about the economic equality in the society.

(i) There are only two alternatives to bring about the desired economic equality—violent means and non-violent means. The economic equality realized through violent means will have to be sustained by further violence. But when it is brought about through non-violent means, it can be preserved by non-violent means which visualizes the plan of trusteeship.

(ii) The trusteeship which brings about economic equality has to be popularized. There should be sustained non-violent education of the people towards its realization. When there is change in the outlook of the people towards the progressive common sharing of the wealth of the society, the economic equality is guaranteed.

(iii) If the rich do not heed to the appeal of the people for establishing trusteeship, the people can resort to peaceful satyagraha of non-cooperation and civil disobedience.

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6.3.14.0 Kisans

Kisans form the bulk of India's population and are the backbone of this rural country. Majority of the India's population depend on agriculture and associated occupations such as cattle farming, dairying, poultry, piggery etc. Hence Gandhiji insisted on the social workers to render effective service in the village. In order to do this, they must acquire sufficient theoretical as well as practical knowledge about agriculture. According to him, the agriculture of a village should be planned in such a manner that each village shall be self-sufficient in its food requirements. If geographical conditions permit, the farmers should cultivate cotton required for the village.

Gandhiji was in favour of farmer's organisations but which are to be directed to redress the grievances of the peasants. But it should not be used for low-level competitions for political gains of certain individuals.

6.3.15.0 Labour

According to Gandhiji,

He who tills the land should own the land. The land owners should not think that the possession of land gives them any superiority over the tenants and the landless labourers. They should recognize that the tenants and the landless labourers possess the same soul which they possess. The land owners
whose agricultural income is surplus should act as trustees for the benefit of the agricultural labourers and others. 54

The land owners should not take more than their needs and should lead a simple life. They should engage themselves in the upliftment of the poorer sections of the village and should become partners in the peaceful evolution of socio-economic change.

The landless should not use violent methods to dispossess the lands of landlords while the landlords should not exploit the landless. There should be a Village Committee to look into grievances of the tenants and the landlords in each village.

The landless labourers should get sufficient wages to provide their primary requirements such as food, clothing and shelter. To them, their labour is the capital. This capital should be given due recognition in the society. When the importance is given to the living capital, the working conditions, hours of leisure and standard of living are automatically taken care of. The social workers should build model unions for the labourers and organize them on non-violent basis, but should be kept away from party politics.

6.3.16.0 Adivasies

Under his 18-point Constructive Programme, Gandhiji included the welfare of Adivasies also. He said,

Though they are the sixteenth number in this programme, they are not the least in point of importance. Our country is so vast and the races so varied that, the best of us cannot know all there is to know of men and their condition. As one discovers this for oneself, one realises how difficult it is to make good our claim to be one nation, unless every unit has a living consciousness of being one with every other.\(^\text{55}\)

Gandhiji identified the adivasies themselves as the original inhabitants. They have been segregated from the rest of the community for many generations. He found it is the bounded duty of the advanced community to contribute their mite for the all-round development of the adivasi communities in India. He gave instructions to the constructive workers for the upliftment of Adivasies also.

6.3.17.0 Lepers

According to Gandhiji, service to the lepers is service to the suffering humanity. He said, "India is perhaps a home of lepers next only to Central Africa. Yet they are as much a part of society as the tallest among us. But the tall absorb our attention though they are least in need of it. The lot of the lepers who

are much in need of attention is studied neglect. I am tempted to call it heartless which it certainly is, in terms of non-violence. 56

He visualised in swaraj state, no suffering man should go uncared. In this regard he said, "If India was pulsating with new life, if we were all in earnest about winning independence in the quickest manner possible by truthful and non-violent means, there would not be a leper or beggar in India uncared for and unaccounted for." 57 For this, the social workers with a missionary zeal should take up the Projects for their welfare

6.3.18.0 Students

Gandhiji wished that the students should possess the following qualities:

i) The students must have initiative, they must not be imitators.

ii) They must possess freedom. However, they must exercise freedom with restraint and humility.

iii) They should have purity of heart which ensures the purity in personal life.

iv) They are brahmacharis; They must maintain self-control in thought, word and action and should preserve the vital energy.

v) They should cultivate the sense of service to the community

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
vi) They must develop sense of dignity of labour.\textsuperscript{58}

Gandhiji wished that the students should wear Khadi clothes and engage themselves in constructive programme. They will study the literature about spinning with all its economic, social, moral and political implications. During their vacation, they must conduct day and night schools for the illiterates. They could clean the Harijan Quarters, their children and give simple lessons in hygiene both to the young and the grown up.

According to Gandhiji students must not take part in party politics. The students are to study, they are researchers but not politicians. It is not possible for the student to be active politicians and to be real students simultaneously. They can study the programmes and ideologies of the various political parties and listen to their point of view. They should have freedom of opinion and can openly sympathize with any party which they like. But they should not support political strikes and demonstrations.\textsuperscript{59}

6.4.0.0 IRDP: A Gandhian Critique

Gandhiji was very much critical of Economic Plans\textsuperscript{60}. He was not interested in planning as a system of development and it was natural that he should have disapproved of the system of planned economy. His conception or

\textsuperscript{58} S. H. Patil, \textit{Op. cit.}, p.82

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid. pp.57-58.

vision of development was altogether different from the planned development which has taken place in India over the past 40 years. The Planners had rejected the Gandhian vision before independence itself and the masses have been regularly misled during the course of planned development by giving lip-service to certain Gandhian concepts and terms.\(^61\)

Gandhiji remarked that “It is like a foolish person who tried to ford a turbulent river after calculating the average by finding out the depth at the bank and the mid-stream, and got drowned in the process”\(^62\). His main point was that in National Planning, we should try to locate the felt needs of the each segment of the population, particularly the weakest category, and try to improve their economic standards in the direct fashion, without depending on the figures of per capita incomes which always prove to be illusory.

The Gandhian programmes and ideals can be materialized only outside the framework of the National or Central ‘Five Year Plans’, as the centralized organization is inherently incapable of implementing his ideals\(^63\). It was only during the Sixth Five Year Plan, Gandhian Economic Planning took importance. The Janata Party, with Prime Minister Morarji Desai has taken a solemn pledge, “to fulfill the task that Mahatma Gandhi begin”. The Gandhian values of

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Anyodaya and austerity have been accepted as the goals of the Government. But the Government lost its power very soon and their goals remained as dreams.

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is an integrated effort of rural development based on the Gandhian vision of Anyodaya which refers to “the upliftment of the last man in the row”. It has the principle of raising the standard of living of the downtrodden in the rural areas\(^6\).

The present study itself proved scientifically that the selection of beneficiaries under the IRDP was against its basic principle of Antyodaya. The real beneficiaries according to the Antyodaya would be poorest of the poor people. But in actual practice, they are almost excluded from getting the benefits of the scheme. Thus the real beneficiaries of the programme, who have no stable income base, remains as poor without any productive assets or income generating activities.

6.5.0.0 Conclusion

We have seen in the former part of the present Chapter that Gandhiji was very keen to bring about maximum regional self-sufficiency in regard to food, clothing and shelter in rural areas. To solve rural poverty, he emphasized not only agriculture but also cottage and small scale industries. He focused his attention on

non-agricultural aspect of the rural economy also. He wanted diversified economic activities in the villages and thus stood for all round development of rural India. In this context, we can remember what Shriman Narayan emphasized: “Gandhiji’s sublime vision gives us a rare insight into the future of mankind! Gandhiji belongs to the future and not the past. He is not dead, his message is eternal and shall live as long as sun shines in the vast open skies”\textsuperscript{65}.