CHAPTER IV

Gandhi’s Practice of Ethics vs Present Practices
The spirit of Gandhian viewpoint is shaped by his firm faith in and commitment to truth and non-violence. For him, the substance of truth is morality, and non-violence is its essential part. Ahimsa or non-violence is a positive principle, which includes compassion and care. Truth finds expression through ahimsa; both are meant to be practiced. He said, ‘it is not enough for thought to be based on truth, the life must express it’. And that is what he did. After Jesus Christ, there are scarcely those like him who lived what they preached, and lived to such rightness, in spite of being engrossed so much in politics. This is what lends reliability and respect for Gandhi and his beliefs. Though he saw in non-violence a powerful weapon for the empowerment of the weak and destitute, he refused to call it as a weapon of the weak. On the contrary, non-violence was the weapon of the ethically strong and brave, according to him. He strove to get justice to the underprivileged and make them stand on their own feet with solemnity. He believed that journalism can be the effective tool to bring about the change that is needed for the upliftment of the society but on the other hand it can act negatively when we don’t understand its importance and value.

The media, collectively, gets a bad name when journalists lose the trust of those whom they set out to serve. Gandhi, the father of nation, warned: ‘…….just as an unchained torrent of water submerges the whole countryside and devastates crops; even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy……’ (Thakurta, 2012: P-9). He did not believe in a centralized state and power. Power both political and economic had to be decentralized and distributed, to be meaningful to the people. His principle of self-restraint on wants is a key to environmental; sustainability, and also integrated with his fight against inequality. The legacy of Gandhi is still alive. He has been a motivation for numerous mass movements for social justice and environment protection.

Gandhi’s contribution to religious thought is not less important. Gandhi’s contribution lies in providing a resolution to a difficult modern dilemma. On the one hand, in spite of a long history, religion has failed to make human beings civilized enough. On the other hand, science and technological progress also failed in making
human beings rational enough to raise all human beings to a position of dignity, happiness, and moral responsibility. Though, he discarded neither, but put conditions on both. He accepted religion in so far as it left us with an ordinary legacy of ethical values, which needs to be followed. He accepted science and technology only to the extent that they did not deprive human beings of their dignity and livelihood. For him, spirit of religion is principles. His religiosity was unique, for he was a rationalist among believers and a believer amid rationalists. He emphasized both reasoning and faith in one self and moral value in a creating unity. He eschewed all sectarianism in religion. ‘Tolerance’ is not what really captures Gandhi’s approach to other religions. He not only advanced from patience to equal respect for all religions, but even beyond that by insisting on sharing the best from all religions. He sincerely put this faith early in life to practice. He believed that no religion was perfect, and that one had to learn from all of them. His religion was merely one of truth and non-violence, devoid of any need of rituals and priests.

Spirit is a harmony which covers all its diversity. From this point of view, there is something important about Gandhian thought which can be said to make up a Gandhian perspective. We can use this perspective or approach to understand many facets of our individual as well as social or collective life, such as politics, economics, environmental issues, and education, and derive lessons or guidance for action. This is what Gandhi himself did. His thought was essentially a guide for action on a variety of fronts, in advancing the cause of justice, peace, and freedom.

To say that there is spirit in Gandhian thought which characterizes all his thinking and action in different situations and contexts does not mean, in any way, that he was dogmatic, inflexible, or rigid sectarian. Far from it, it was an essential character of his approach to slum dogma and rigidity in thought. Gandhi denied that there is anything called Gandhism. Gandhi believed that it is sincerity, sympathy and charity that touch the heart more than anything else (Sharma, 1991: P-128). He allowed enough flexibility in his approach to the point that he could even be seen as inconsistent, when narrowly viewed. His inconsistencies were at a superficial level, partly arising from the extreme complexities of the problem being dealt with. He always said that he learnt from
mistakes. It was part of his constant search for truth, to which he was committed all his life, both in thought and action. He, therefore, permitted neither rigidity nor doctrine as Sushri Radha Bhatt mentions, “Gandhi was a very simple man but what made him Mahatma is the fact that he always learnt from his mistakes and never deviated from high moral standards he had set. He was flexible to adopt creative and positive things which were ultimately in the interest of a common man”.

Given this flexibility and freedom in courageously pursuing the path of truth, what is the essence of Gandhian perspective? Primacy of ethics dominated his entire life. He sought nothing short of moral development for all, and through it their spiritual development, while first following himself what he preached. Rather, his percepts followed from his practice and experience. This gave him great credibility all over the world, and allowed him to reform his society and polity. His ethics were as much relevant to society and its institutions as to individuals. He subjected these institutions and even whole civilizations to stern evaluation, applying his principles of ethics. We do not have to labor hard to know what Gandhi’s essential principles of ethics were, for he declared them often truth and nonviolence. He would reduce them again to one basic word, truth. Relentless pursuit of truth is the one principle in which were integrated all his strands of thought and applications to life’s problem as Gandhi mentioned “the press is called the fourth estate. It is definitely a power but to misuse that power is criminal. I am a journalist myself and would appeal to fellow journalists to realize their responsibility and to carry work with no idea other than that of upholding the truth” (Gandhi, The Harijan: 1947).

He emphasized nonviolence in his approach to all problems, but he assured that it followed from truth, the basic principle. This does not mean that he gave secondary importance to nonviolence. For him, both constituted a single principle basically while truth was its abstract aspect, nonviolence was its practical or applied aspect as he said, “Ahimsa is the means and Truth is the end. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later. We should not lose faith but should forever repeat the mantra- Truth exists, it alone exists. It is the only God; there is but one way of reaching it and that is ahimsa” (Collected Work of Mahatma Gandhi, 1994: P-114: 59). Truth for
Gandhi was not a purely transcendental principle, unrelated to life. On the contrary, he looked upon life as a continuous experiment with truth, which was experiential, and not just for mystics, but for all humanity. In this sense, truth was not esoteric, but was something with mass appeal. He even subtitled his autobiography as ‘The story of my experiments with Truth’. This experimentation was not confined only to his personal life, but was also extended to all his public actions, including his *Satyagraha* movements in South Africa and India. The inherent strength of truth lies latent until it is embodied in the actions as well as thoughts of a human being. Truth finds its expression in action.

According to Gandhi human destiny was a continuous search for truth, both in private or personal affairs and in collective or public actions. One may say that pursuit of happiness is the goal of every human being, and Gandhi does not disagree. He said, “The key to happiness lies in the worship of truth, which is the giver of all things” (Gandhi, 1979: P-426). There is greater security in truth than in falsehood, greater joy in helping others than in selfishness, and greater comfort and peace in justice than in injustice. The path of truth may not be easy. It could be the most challenging, but, nevertheless, is the most satisfying in Gandhi’s view. Gandhi, however, emphasized that the pursuit of truth should be accompanied by firmness of purpose and humility (Gandhi, 1983: P-408). According to him, “there is no scope for vanity in it and the only means of reaching it is through ahimsa”. (Gandhi, 1982: P-39)

What is truth? Gandhi said, “Truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles”. Substance of truth is morality. For Gandhi, truth was the relative truth of truthfulness in word and deed, and the absolute truth which can be described as the ultimate reality. He said that the ultimate truth was God (as God was also truth) and morality, the moral laws and code its basis (Murphy, 1991: P-23). He found the Sanskrit equivalent of truth, *Satya*, as being more expressive and evocative. *Satya*, he derived from the verb ‘*sat*’ (to exist). Therefore, *Satya* alone exists and falsehood cannot survive. Truth can find acceptance by all and is universal. That is how pursuit of truth leads to knowledge. Gandhi’s conception of truth, however, transcends ontological truth while being inclusive of it. One’s statements corresponding to facts as they exist or to events as they actually took place are surely a fundamental aspect of truth, but the
meaning of truth went beyond that for Gandhi and covered moral truth as well. In its moral aspects of non-violence, honesty, simplicity, self-control, righteousness, equity, and justice, it also leads to happiness of individuals, society, and even of the world at large. Truth is the very foundation of our lives, without which it would not be worth living. This is so, not only in the epistemological aspect of truth as in the acquisition of knowledge, but also in the moral aspects. Knowledge cannot be itself true unless or, at least, honestly believed to be true. Similarly life would have no meaning unless, at least, the large bulk of us follow some moral principles, honesty, selflessness, justice, and righteousness. They have provided a basis for our very existence and survival and, therefore, constitute satya. In the Gandhian perspective, there is a unity in the moral aspects of truth. One could also reverse it and say that it is only truth and honesty which can lead a man to see what really is. Interpreting Gandhi and the message of his life is that, it is not enough for thought to be based upon truth; the life of the thinker must express it, must represent it visibly in his actions as shown to the world.

4.1 Objectivity and Truth Telling

Objectivity is defined as neutral coverage of an event by taking into consideration different shades of opinion. Klaidman and Beauchamp indicate that ‘bias in journalism is a distorted and unfair judgment or disposition caused by the values of a reporter, editor, or institution. Bias is not necessarily ideological, partisan, or manifest over an extended period, and it need not be introduced intentionally’ (Klaidman & Beauchamp, 1987: P-61).

Although objectivity was expected to contain these elements, contemporary journalists no longer consider that objectivity is possible, but they are expected to approach the ideal of neutrality and impartial reporting by balancing diverse points of view by presenting all sides fairly, and by maintaining a clear distinction between news reporting and editorial opinion. Journalists seek to tell us things which are true. However, our ability to discover the whole truth about any matter is severely circumscribed by our

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24 It is the adjective of Epistemology. Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope knowledge.
own intelligence, perspicacity, time and resources. This is no less true for the reporter. In
the western tradition, a number of practices have evolved to provide structural safeguards
to the pursuit of truthfulness in the reporting of facts. They can be summarized as:

i) the striving for accuracy and, ii) the search for objectivity, with the concomitant
removal of bias through getting both sides of the story (Sanders, 2003: P-41). Objective
journalists are accountable to their audiences, to the highest ethical and professional
standards of objective journalism and finally to their employers. They never assume that
employers, not themselves, bear the ultimate responsibility for their behavior. Structural
bias is journalistic news values, work routines, organizational resources, and news
organization dependencies on other institutions. Adherent bias is journalist’s political
orientations subverting news organization impartiality in conflict coverage. Thus, nearly
hundred years back, Gandhi noticed that lack of balance or loss of objectivity would be a
feature in the new journalism and advised the journalists then to practice objectivity in
the face of difficulties. He said, “Newspapers are meant primarily to educate people, and
apprise them of current trends in the history of the world. This is responsible work. Yet
we see that readers cannot always depend on the information supplied by newspapers.
Often, facts are found to be quite the opposite of what has been reported. If newspapers
editors and staff realized that it was their duty to educate the people, they would wait to
check the veracity of news they print. It is true that, often, they have to work under
difficult condition; they should examine the mass information they receive and then infer
hurriedly, within the limited time at their disposal, the true facts in each case. And, yet, I
feel that it is better not to publish a particular piece of news until its truth has been
definitely established”. (Gandhi, Vol. VI, 1994:310)

Gandhi distinguished between absolute truth (or God) and relative truths. With
regard to absolute values of truth and non-violence, Gandhi avoided both ‘unlimited
relativism of values’ and ‘narrow intolerant absolutism’. We have to constantly move
closer to absolute truth as our relentless goal, but we live in a world of relative truths,

25 Any theory that holds that truth or moral or aesthetic value is absolute and universal and not relative to
individual or social differences
where there could be conflicts and confusions between various principles and points of viewing truth. He said, “If we had attained the full vision of truth, we could no longer be mere seekers, but would become one with God, for Truth is God” (Gandhi, 1994: P-166). The distinction between absolute truth and relative truths was not meant to defend expediency or convenience, but to emphasize our proneness to commit mistakes and go wrong, even while being honest of purpose and unselfish. This distinction served him to point to the need for humility both in thought and action, and that for dialogue, discussion and accommodation of others’ points of view. This was important both in the pursuit of knowledge and conflict resolution.

A problem had to be seen in all its aspects and dimensions, taking into view different standpoints. Gandhi clarified that, “tolerance obviously does not disturb the distinction between right and wrong, and good and evil” (Gandhi, 1994: P-167). A standpoint based purely on selfishness and dishonesty cannot stand scrutiny and cannot represent even a relative truth. Gandhi made it clear, ‘In the march towards truth, anger, selfishness, hatred etc, naturally give way, for otherwise truth would be impossible to attain. He put this in to actual practice not only in politics but also in his legal profession. It is clear, therefore, that his distinction between absolute truth and relative truths was not expediency or for being honest only ‘as far as convenient’. His insistence on the commitment to truth was absolute and total. He clearly said, “To degrade or cheapen an ideal for our convenience is to practice untruth and lower ourselves” (Gandhi, 1994: P-80).

Gandhi was clear that truth was not necessarily the same as what the majority of people believed in, or what the law of the land provided. He could see that both criteria, while not irrelevant, do not necessarily point to either ontological or moral truth. He insisted on certain openness of our mind, in the sense of being receptive to new ideas and perceptions, to be subjected to reasoning and scrutiny, but not in the sense of being forever non-committal. Pursuit of truth was individual in the sense that one had to be receptive to the inner voice and to unprejudiced and unselfish reasoning. And when one finds that truth, and if it differs from the truth as believed in by a majority, or as provided by law, it is the duty of such an individual to disseminate his/her own perception of truth,
to be prepared for debate and even act to correct the law through nonviolent methods. Satya led him to ahimsa as its practical or applied principle, not just because truth led to action and action had to be non-violent, but also because truth meant ahimsa. At times, he said that satya is basic and ahimsa followed from it, but often, he said that they are two sides of the same coin. He never doubled their inseparability, and more often felt that ahimsa was the means to attain satya. Ahimsa, for him, was not a mere negative concept of just avoiding violence, but a positive virtue of kindness, compassion, and care. Feminists regard abstract ethical virtues of truth, righteousness, honesty, and the likes as borne out of a male perspective, while kindness, care, and the likes are feminine virtues. Gandhi reconciled both ‘male and female virtues into a composite and harmonious unity’ in his principle of Satya-Ahimsa. Since, he was an action-oriented person, ahimsa in practice could be said to have been more important, as guided by truth. His insistence on ahimsa was derived from his basic principle that the end is determined by the nature of the means used, and that the end cannot justify the means.

There was an organic unity between the means and ends in his philosophy, and he believed that only ahimsa can bring about peace and justice ultimately, and not violence. He believed in nonviolence, kindness, and love (even for his opponents), because it worked as well, apart from the innate goodness of the principle. The world cannot begin without kindness and consideration. Family, a vital and primary unit of human sociality works because of it. A child cannot grow into a healthy and confident adult without the loving care of its mother. A person can be more efficient only if she is kind and considerate, she be a teacher, a doctor, or even a shopkeeper. Kindness gives us peace of mind, wins friends, admiration, respect, and even success in career and life itself. Kindness and generosity cannot be of a patronizing type in order to be effective, but has to be combined with humility. Non-violence is the basis of all social and human relations. There was no suspicion that he expected the principle of ahimsa to not only cover relations between human beings, but also between human beings on the one hand and animal life and nature-at-large on the other.

He explained the concept of ahimsa thus: Ahimsa is not the simple thing it has been made to appear. Not to hurt any living being is no doubt a part of ahimsa. But it is
its least expression. The principle of *Ahimsa* is hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill of anybody. It is also violated by our holding on to what the world needs (Gandhi, 1994: P-58). Gandhi was probably the first to point out the relevance of non-violence in public and political life, to resist oppression and injustice. He insisted that non-violence is a weapon to change the heart, and believed in no enemy. In his *satyagraha* movements, there was no hatred. He asked, ‘If God resides in every heart, then who dare hate whom? (Gandhi, 1981: P-454). His approach was one of converting the other party through trusting, reasoning, and love. Non-violence is not a mere tactic, to be given up in preference to violence if the former fails. Non-violence is not only the more noble way; it is also more effective, swifter, and much less costly in terms of human lives and suffering. It is a weapon of the civilized and not of the brute. He emphasized the moral superiority of non-violence over violence, by stating that Violence is the weapon of the weak; non-violence that of the strong’ (Gandhi, 1982: P-447).

Non-violence out of cowardice is not real non-violence; he would even prefer violence to cowardice. He asserted, ‘That which looks for mercy from an opponent is not non-violence’ (Gandhi, 1982: P-450). He instilled the courage to die among his followers participating in *satyagraha* movements. There was no question of fearing the opponent. He said, ‘The root cause of most of our misunderstandings lies in distrust, and the root cause of this distrust lies mostly in fear’ (Gandhi, 1981: P-436). It is violence which is rooted in fear not non-violence, in Gandhian view. The courage for non-violence as a weapon against injustice comes from *satya* or moral strength, Based on *satya*, a non-violent struggle believes in frankness of mind, eagerness to understand opponents’ standpoint, and in a spirit of adjustment and even cooperation. Such cooperation should not be out of fear, but based on the conviction that in certain respects the opponents’ view may be right and has to be accommodated. This was the Gandhian approach to conflict resolution. But even non-violence is not to be used to achieve personal ends or for narrow selfish purposes. For example, Gandhi may not have approved of an indefinite fast on the part of a person as a protest over failure to get promotion in one’s service or in getting selected for a particular post, even if there may have been injustice. Normal legal means
have to be used for such purposes. *Satyagraha* comes in as a weapon where wider ends of social justice are involved. Non-violence basically meant commitment to humanism, peace, and universal brotherhood.

Gandhi’s advocacy of non-violence was not absolute in the sense of being applicable under all circumstances. This was so both in case of an individual’s private life and a country’s public life. He conceded that there might arose conflicts within the practice of *ahimsa*, which can be settled only through viewing things in a bigger perspective of truth, so as to avoid larger violence. There could be extreme or explosive situations where as a non-violent approach may not be obviously effective, such as in cases of a rapist making a sexual assault, a suicide bomber about to kill innocent people, and mosquitoes causing disease. Gandhi conceded that in such intense situations violence might have to be used to counter violence (Allen 2008: P- 46). Gandhi felt that absolute non-violence might not be possible, even in some normal situations. For example, though he liked to eat vegetarian food, he did not like to insist on it for others if they were accustomed to eating meat all their life, and particularly if enough vegetarian food was difficult to come by in the regions where such people lived. He clarified that his belief in the sacredness of subhuman life did not mean being kinder to this life in preference to human life (Gandhi, 1984: P- 231). He nevertheless expected human beings to be kind and considerate both in principle and practice. A scrutiny of scattered writings of Gandhi on eating meat would suggest that he would approve it, if it is for survival, but not if it is for mere fancy or pleasure when good vegetarian food is available and is less expensive.

Similarly in public life too, Gandhi could sense that non-violent *satyagraha* would not always work, as for example, in countering or humanizing Hitler. He helped the British in their war efforts during the World War I. He approved the idea that free India would have armed forces as a prevention to guard against violence. He is reported to have agreed with the Government of India in deciding to send troops to Kashmir to repel invasion from Pakistan’s side. But violence was to be resorted to under only exceptional or extreme situations, after honestly satisfying oneself that non-violent strategies would not work at all in such situations. Even when resorted to, violence had to be under full control. He bitterly resented the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima.
and Nagasaki, during the World War II, by the Americans. According to Gandhi, even a war cannot abstain from morals both in motives and methods. Gandhi and its predicted consequence had to be that it avoided larger violence. He would not approve of war as an instrument of domination or to settle disputes. We may briefly summarize the Gandhian perspective as based on truth and non-violence, and hence compassionate, open to reasoning, yet emotionally committed, holistic, activist, and partial to the weakest.

Gandhi asserted the right of the deprived and the victims of injustice to peacefully resist injustice and tyranny. Used for a cause, such nonviolent resistance proved to be formidable, first against racial injustice in South Africa and then against colonialism in India. The uniqueness of the Gandhian approach to satyagraha, in fighting injustice or in conflict resolution, is the absence of any ill-will against the opponent. Injustice is separated from the perpetrator of injustice, who is looked upon as a human being and treated with compassion. As Narayan Desai observes, this principle or the method protects and enhances the dignity of both (sides)’ (Desai, 2009: P-514).

Gandhi’s emphasis was on the openness of mind, tolerance for discussion and dialogue, and spirit of accommodation are of immense value in running a democracy, and Satyagraha was to be resorted to only when the opponent was too obstinate for dialogue. Even when satyagraha was resorted to, Gandhi insisted on willingness for dialogue with an open mind, and what is more, on loving and not hating the opponent.

Gandhi applied his philosophy of truth and non-violence in the field of economics too. True economics, on the other hand, stands for social justice; it promotes the good of all equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life. (Gandhi, 1959: P-31-32) Gandhi made a powerful attack on modern civilization and industrialism, which in his perspective could well be applied to modern economic growth. This was done through a small book of about 30,000 words, titled Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule, published in 1909. Gandhi announced some two decades later that he did not have to change his views on it. His problem with modern civilization or economic growth was that it is propelled by continuous and unsalable ‘hunger for wealth and greedy pursuit of worldly pleasures’. This led inevitably to violence and inequalities,
since the struggle for limited resources could not satisfy everybody and some were deprived and impoverished. Gandhi was not alone in criticizing modern technological civilization. Almost reiterating Hind Swaraj, Gandhi felt that the whole process was selfish, immoral, and defeated the very purpose of human life, which is self-development and self-realization.

As an alternative to this kind of civilization and economic growth, Gandhi proposed an ethically acceptable and humane path. It would be geared to meeting needs rather than multiplying wants and meeting them in a ceaseless race. The humane economy would be addressed to developing human personality in a holistic way (instead of focusing on material possession), promoting human creativity, and helping the realization of human potential. In such an economy, or rather society, there will be no deprivation of some to the benefit of others, and equality would be promoted. For this purpose, he advocated production by the masses, in place of mass production, to the extent that some industries and services would have to be on large scale, they would be run on no-profit basis by the state or a philanthropic minded private enterprise.

The question that arise at this point is Can Gandhian ethics be practiced under the prevalent economic system of capitalism, which functions on the basis of selfishness and unlimited multiplication of wants? Gandhi would have put this question on its head and asked, ‘Can capitalism survive without moderating selfishness and curbing the unlimited multiplication of wants?’ The need for Gandhi’s economic ethics arises precisely because there are real problems in our economic system. His ethics is practical and does not deny the role of basic economic instincts of self-interest. He said, ‘no person in the world has found it possible to maintain something which is a source of constant economic loss (Gandhi, 1981: P-276). But he did challenge the basic tenets of mainstream economics. Gandhi insisted that everyone must have a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of one’s children, and adequate medical relief (Gandhi, 1981: P-27).

Economic development, including industrialization, is believed to be making it possible to generate enough surpluses with which such minimum needs can be met.
Gandhi however wanted to ensure that meeting such minimum needs is built into the very process of economic development and organization. He was not opposed to industrialization as such, as some mistakenly believe. How could he be when he used modern means of transport and communication? He only wanted industrialization, in particular, and economic development, in general, to have a human face, without reducing humans to robots or depriving them of their livelihood and employment or making some filthy rich and some abjectly poor. Gandhi said, ‘I am not against machinery as such but I am firmly opposed to it when it masters us’ (Gandhi, Volume 64: P-118).

Gandhi was one of those who were deeply aware of the social dimension of technology and of the fact that technological advancement does not take place in a social vacuum. This awareness led him to develop an ethics of technology, technological advancement, and industrialization. He wanted all these to be constantly subjected to ethical evaluation, monitoring, and correction. He accepted technology when it was emancipator, relieving drudgery, improving skills and productivity, and raising human dignity, freedom, and creativity. He was sensitive to the fact that technology can lead to increase in inequity, when it favored only a few at the cost of others. He used to often cite Singer’s sewing machine as an example of desirable machinery, as it increased human comfort and productivity without depriving others of employment and livelihood. He similarly welcomed improvements in the technology of surgery and medical relief, as also in sanitation. Technological advancement, for him, was not to be an end in itself and self-driven. It had to be driven by considerations of dignity and freedom for humanity at large, without harming any.

Gandhi’s idea of trusteeship was an innovative way of reconciling the psychological need for incentive or reward for skills and entrepreneurship on the one hand and the social need to take care of the deprived on the other. Gandhi in the beginning echoed such conservatism in his concept of trusteeship which was defense of property that applied equally to the industrial capitalist (Copley, 1996: P-55). The enterprising and better-skilled people need an incentive or reward for their work, which the society values higher, in the form of higher income and wealth. It gives them some
sense of achievement and pride, but this does not mean that they need to keep all of their earnings to themselves. Gandhi felt that they should consider themselves as trustees for the income and wealth which is a surplus after meeting their basic needs, minimum comforts to maintain their skills, and reinvestment requirements, and spend it on the less fortunate in society who need these resources to end their deprivation. They can spend their surplus wealth directly for such purposes or give it to charitable trusts who can utilize this surplus wealth to meet the needs of the poor.

Gandhi’s principle of social service is useful both in reducing economic inequality and helping environment. It is not enough to share one’s wealth with the poor and for collective causes, it is equally necessary to give one’s time and labor too, Voluntary service or Shram-daan is also useful for economic development in creating rural, and economic assets and for protecting them such as in constructing and renovating tanks, wells, canals, bunds, soil, and water conservation measures, aorestation, and regenerating gumals or village pastures. His idea of social service even extended towards satyagrahis supporting the victims of social or economic injustice when the latter wanted to resist oppression and exploitation. However, unlike some self-styled revolutionaries, Gandhi’s emphasis on constructive activities on the part of satyagrahis was a conspicuous feature of his teaching, and was not confined to merely offering resistance.

Gandhi’s constructive programmes had a holistic view of economic development. Besides having livelihood concerns, particularly about the weak, the constructive programmes valued the principle of economic equality, and the governing principle of decentralization. They aimed at benefiting the producers and consumers most, in contrast to the ways of modern economy which allow and encourage a huge disparity between the producers’ price and consumers’ price. By catering to local needs as much as possible, the economic activities minimized unnecessary transport costs, thus saving on fuel too. The constructive programmes also had the moral aims of human development, including schooling and eradication of illiteracy, character building, promoting communal harmony, providing health services, teaching cleanliness, encouraging mutual cooperation, improving the status of women, avoiding alcohol, and so on.
Issue of Young India 17 March 1931 and 16 April 1931 clearly indicate Gandhi’s views on strategies to fight inequality:

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian\(^{26}\) one. It gives no quarter to capitalism but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.

2. It does not recognize any rights of private ownership of property except in so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.

3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.

4. Thus under State regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use wealth for self satisfaction or in disregard of the interests of society.

5. Lust as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that would be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.

6. Under the Gandhian economic order, the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.

Gandhi himself applied his basic perspective to several fields, not only to politics, including governance, and economics, which were his focus of interest, but also to others such as treatment of nature, including animal life, education, social relations, religion, science, technology, and culture. In education, he stressed character building as its main aim; in social relations, love, empathy, and respect for the other; in religion, tolerance, openness, and freedom from dogma; in science and technology, humaneness; and, in culture openness combined with refusal to be blown off the feet. Gandhi believed that Great men are always above their time. If time passes, the

\(^{26}\) A social philosophy advocating the removal of inequalities among people
relevance of their thought becomes more important (Sharma, 1991: P-123). What is common to all his applications is the insistence on moral values, also summarized in his concepts of truth and non-violence. A highly skilled technocrat or even an intellect would be considered as uneducated if such a person has no moral integrity. A most powerful political leader would be worthless if he does not have faith in truth, non-violence, and organic unity between means and ends. A wealthy man’s wealth would be useless if he does not lead a simple life and use his surplus wealth for the welfare of others. And set high ethical standard in any walk of life.

4.2 Gandhi’s Management of Newspapers in India

In India, Gandhi proved that a newspaper doesn’t need to depend on advertisements if its content is concerned to the masses. He also shared his views with the proprietors of the Young India. The Young India got tremendous popularity and started making profit. When a correspondent suggested that because of profit making, the price of the Young India and the Navjivan could be reduced on cheap paper.

Gandhi was the view of that the profit of the paper run by him would be distributed for all India work and to the promulgation of Hindi. He never wanted to waste money. He always insured that the money was spent on worthy cause as he admitted that he would not spend an anna if it was unnecessary but if it was required he would spend a crore of rupees (Bhattacharya, 1984: P-108). Gandhi used to plan week for the management of the matters for the Young India or the Navjivan and he gave instruction to Sri Krishnadas in this context on March 12, 1922,

“The correspondence, reports etc. should come to you for disposal. Unless it is too much for you, all articles must finally pass through your hands. I have several names as Satis Babu, Rajagopalachari, you, Swaih Kalka, Devdas. It would be better now if Satis Babu gave you the permission to sign articles. The room should be entirely at your disposal. You should lock the verandah door from inside. Fix up the whole office there. Hordikar and the bulletin staff should be there for work but under your permission”.
The *Harijan* started its publication and Gandhi discussed about the management of the newspaper so that it can become self-supporting in the letter written to Sri G D Birla on January 25, 1933,

“Here is the estimate for the proposed English edition of *Harijan Sevak*. As you can see, it is a very moderate sum. I proposed to bring out, to start with, 10,000 copies. Then if mere is not that demand, we might slow down. My policy, as you know, is that I shall not handle the paper except to make it self-supporting. If it does not become self-supporting, I should conclude that there is inefficient management or editing or that there is no public demand for such a paper”.

And after the reviewing the expenditure of English *Harijan*, he wrote a another letter on March 9, 1933 to Sri Birla mentioning the his desire refunding the balance they had saved, “The English *Harijan* has become self-supporting already. The subscription received to date from street sales and annual subscribers leave a balance without the aid of the Rs. 1,044 from the Central Board. This money, can therefore, be refunded. My enquiry is merely with a view to saving commission on money order, draft or cheque”. Gandhi could not published journal regularly in time throughout his life because of his scrupulous care for details. Gandhi led with examples and took particular pains to get things done in time.

Gandhi had such a great managerial skills that the newspapers he was associated with never got delayed for about half century and the papers also got published when Gandhi was on tour. Gandhi was a great man manager and he had a great instinct to get whatever was required from his colleagues. More so he knew about the qualities and capacities of his employees to get things done. He was very particular and punctual about his work and demanded the same from his associates.

Gandhi constantly gave his views on copyright and under the caption ‘copyright’, Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan* of July 13, 1940,
“It is strange that what I would not do in response to the advice of a correspondent I have to do almost immediately after the refusal through, I feel, for a very cogent reason. Since my main article will henceforth be written in Gujarati, I would not like their unauthorized translations appearing in the Press. I have suffered much from mistranslations when I used to write profusely in Gujarati and had no time myself to produce simultaneous English translations. I have arranged this time for such translation in English and Hindustani. I would therefore ask editors and publishers kindly to regard English and Hindustani translation rights as reserved. I have no doubt that my request will be respected”.

There was a popular belief that Gandhi was against all types of machines but it was not correct and following note published in the Harijan of June 22, 1935, by Sri Mahadev Desai, secretary to Gandhi, would give an idea of his attitudes towards machinery,

“A socialist holding a brief for machinery asked Gandhi if the village industries movement was not meant to oust all machinery. ‘Is not this wheel a machine?’ was the counter-question that Gandhi, who was then spinning, gave in reply. ‘I do not mean this machine, but I mean bigger machinery.’ ‘Do you mean Singer’s sewing machine? That, too, is protected by the village industries movement, and for that matter any machinery which does not deprive masses of men of the opportunity to labor, but which helps the individual and adds to his efficiency, and which a man can handle at will without being its slave.’ If we could have electricity in every home, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. But then the village communities or the State would own power houses, just as they have their grazing pastures. But where there is no electricity and no machinery, what are idle hands to do? Will you give them work, or would you have their owners cut them down for want of work?” ‘But even you as a socialist would not be in favor of an indiscriminate use of machinery. Take printing presses. They will go on. Heavy machinery would be needed. But there is no machinery for the cure of idleness, but this,’ said Gandhi, pointing to his spinning wheel can work it whilst I am
In his early years, and Gandhi was taking help of the typewriter and in his letters to Mrs Nazar and Khan of June 3, 1902, he wrote, “Soon after reaching Bombay, I invested, in a typewriter, Rs. 200. The machine has been wholly used for public work”. On November 17, 1908, from London, he wrote to the Manager of the Empire Typewriting Company, “With reference to the ‘Empire’ hired by me, I shall keep it for a month as from the 12th instant. I understand that the monthly terms are 15. You have already received 7/6 and I now enclose cheque for the balance. I shall thank you to let me have the receipt”.

It seems that in the later period Gandhi was unenthusiastic to typewriters as he wrote in letter dated May 27, 1927, to Mr. Richard Gregg,

“Because of my dislike of typewriters, if I could possibly write with my own hand, I would inflict an illegible hand in preference to having my letters typed or typing them myself. The typewriter is a cover for indifference and laziness. And the inroads that the typewriter is making have all but to destroy magnificent art of calligraphy. I wonder if you have seen old handwritten manuscript when people used to pour forth their very soul into their work”.

Gandhi didn’t like to waste anything as mentioned earlier. He tried to use even the used envelopes, unused portion of letters, wrappers on packets and he would keep notes to instruct or to keep accounts on such scraps. The scraps that have been preserved show his mastery of details and his clear instructions on writing, editing, printing etc. Krishnadas tells one incident in this context,

“Entering Mahatmaji’s room at mid-day, I found him smiling all by himself in a gleeful mood. As soon as I entered, he said, ‘Krishnadas, so many telegrams come to me daily, and yet not knowing what to do with the forms, I used to tear them. It gives me pain and I was thinking on what use they could be put to. At last I have hit upon a plan.’ He then directed me to
prepare envelopes from the telegraph forms received by us every day. I have begun to make those covers, and he has been using them for the purpose of his letters. He has given them the name of ‘Patent Envelope’. He finds so much genuine pleasure in using such covers that he would not touch envelopes of far superior quality even when they would be placed before him”. (Bhattacharya, 1984: P-115)

Sri K G Mashruwala mentioned small things that he learnt from Gandhi especially his intensity to the detailing of the smallest of the things that we do in our day-to-day life,

“This was perhaps when I met for the first time in Champaran in 1917. He asked me to copy out a passage from the Indian Year Book on a sheet of foolscap paper. As the paper was larger than I needed I folded it up, made a crease by passing my fingers over it, and began to tear it along the crease. Gandhi stopped me, and asked me to cut it with a knife. ‘When you tear along a crease with your hands,’ he said, ‘fibers appear along the edges. They jar upon the eye. You should make it a rule always to divide the paper with a paper-cutter or an ordinary knife.’ Once he showed me how to open up the flap of an envelope, the gum of which had got stuck. He introduced a fountain pen into a slight opening under the flap, and quickly rolled it round the edge. He said: ‘Do you see how it opens up without injuring the paper? This is a method which everyone should know.’ ‘He was displeased if he saw a letter placed in an envelope with irregular folding. He said: ‘When you fold your letter you must see that the edges coincide properly and the fold is regular. An irregular folding creates a bad impression upon the receiver about you. It looks slovenly”. (Bhattacharya, 1984)

4.3 Gandhi’s Views on Advertisement

Initially Gandhi relied on advertisements to run the journals and newspapers but gradually he was changing his mind regarding the acceptance of advertisements. However, earlier when Gandhi was supporting advertisements still he tried to minimize the interference of the external force as Mr. B.G. Kher, the then Indian High Commis-
sioner in the United Kingdom, in a meeting of the ‘Friends of India’ Club, at Dundee, on October 7, 1953, spoke about the weeklies edited by Gandhi, and remarked, “They were unique in that they were entirely without a single advertisement and thus, free from reliance on external commercial support for their circulation”. (Bhattacharya, 1984: P-116)

Advertisements were mostly from resident merchants, for sale of their products. The advertising rates were: Single Column 2s 6d per inch; Double Column 5s per inch; repeat half charges. One inch single column, for one year, would cost £2 10s. The Indian Opinion further intimated, “Liberal discount for standing advertisements for long periods. For further particulars: write to the Manager”.

Advertisements were diverse in character, from dried fish to cheap washing soap. Sometimes advertisements were secured from parties in India keen on selling goods in South Africa. But slowly Gandhi was changing his mind regarding acceptance of advertisements in the paper from practical and ideological points of view.

Gandhi spoke about his different approach in policy in his book *Satyagraha* in South Africa. He had realized that some for the best men, his co-workers, were attached only for securing advertisements. Their services to the community, which could otherwise have been even more extensive, were thus restricted. Then there was the problem of deciding as to which advertisements should be accepted or rejected. Sometimes an advertisement could not be refused, even if the management so desired, as the advertiser, an important person, had to be obliged. Years later, in 1916, when he, from India, sent his son Shri Manilal to edit the Gujarati edition of the Indian Opinion, Gandhi wrote, “I have never desired to take advertisements”. (Bhattacharya, 1984: P-117)

Having seen the outstanding payments for advertisements published, concerned much excess of time and energy. The most striking of all was the spirit of work which dominated his whole performances in running the paper. If the Indian society in South Africa did not experience the need for the paper, better close it. The paper was for them
to voice their grievances against exploiting laws. It was by no means a business mission to earn money. If there were sufficient subscribers, there was no necessity of advertisement at all.

Slowly Gandhi was restricting the space and scope for advertisements. Those of comfort goods or relating to entertainment were closed long ahead of the Satyagraha movement. By the time of the movement the number of active workforce for the paper dwindled and so, perforce, advertisements were closed altogether. Gandhi explained that the supplementary columns thus saved would be dedicated for the improved coverage of the Satyagraha movement. He requested to the readers to support the journal generously and see that it sustains for the service of the society.

If necessity mainly obligated Gandhi to impede securing advertisements for the Indian Opinion, it was, in the case of the Young India, a planned move. He had already reached its final opinion on advertising after weighing the good and bad points. Bad points far out-weighed the good ones. In the opening issue of the Young India October 8, 1919, Gandhi wrote, “The proprietors of the Young India have decided to give up advertisements. I know that they have not been, entirely, if at all, converted to my view that a newspaper ought to be conducted without advertisements. But they are willing to let me make the experiment”.

It was an experiment for the owners. However so far as Gandhi was worried, it was a decision which he arrived at after years of work in the field of journalism. He appealed to his readers to make the venture a success and make the Young India free from the curse of advertisements. He continued, “The Gujarati Navjivan has already demonstrated the possibility of conducting a newspaper without advertisements soiling its pages”. (Bhattacharya, 1984: P-118)

Why was Gandhi in opposition of advertisement? Primarily his concern was for social service. If a product is good, why should the producer spend money to publicize that product? The entire journals should support the usefulness of such product for the advantage of the society. For Khadi, Gandhi would use all the means to publicize it. He
would even advise any media for advertising its use etc. The following question and answers that appeared in the *Harijan* of June 1, 1940, shows his approach on the subject.

“Q. ‘Do you approve of the policy that is being followed by the Charkha Sangh in some place, of pushing the sale of Khadi by the use, for instance, of loud speakers, popular gramophone records and the like? Don’t you think that advertising, apart from supplying the necessary information about the marketing of Khadi is undignified and incompatible with the Khadi spirit?’”

“A. ‘I see nothing wrong or undignified in making use of loud speakers, etc., to popularize khadi. Through these means, too, one does no more than give the prices and other information about Khadi. It will be certainly undignified and worse if false information is given whether with or without the use of loud speakers and the like’”.

Articles useful to the rural people hardly get, even now, much space. Advertisements in newspapers up to thirties were mostly on imported goods, Cigarettes were the key item, soap coming close to it. Representatives of newspapers had to run around to secure advertisements from the parties. Since the Second World War, the parties, government or non-government became aware of the importance of advertising. Gandhi was in the favor of the economic theory that advertisements cost money, thus increasing the product price. That was indirect taxation. India’s poor people could not afford it.

Advertising is a great national loss when a significant part of national wealth deviates for this doubtful rivalry among manufacturers. Mr. John Kenneth Galbraith, in his book affluent Society, suggested that this wealth could be better used for the poorer sections of the population. The competition among advertisers drives up the price of the product and the general public suffer. It creates a new demand by stimulating desire with no corresponding opening channels for people to earn more. Wrote Gandhi in the Young India of August 10, 1919,
“What financial gain it would be to the country if there was for each province only one advertisement medium not a newspaper containing innocent, unvarnished notices of things useful for the public. But for our criminal indifference, we would decline to pay the huge indirect taxation by way of mischievous advertisements”.

It also, through psychological approach, forces people to purchase things which, otherwise, they would not. Probing and manipulating the desires of consumers for goods is helped by psychologists, called by the advertising consultants of America as the analysis of motivation. They have found a profitable expert advice as it helps in boosting sales. Psychologists have turned into oracles of American business as they are successfully probing the minds of buyers. They are trying to show that sales of goods are governed by the libido.

In the editorial of the Young India of October 8, 1919, Gandhi said, “Some readers who are interested in the purity of the paper sent me a most interesting extract from a well known newspaper. I have refused to soil the pages of Navjivan by reproducing it. Anyone turning advertisement of leading magazines can verify the truth of my criticism”.

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines obscenity as ‘indecency or lewdness (especially of language)’ indecency and obscenity are more or less synonyms and are used for the same purpose. To quote the Dictionary: ‘Indecency’ is ‘quality savoring of obscenity’.

The Geneva Conference of 1923 on the Suppression of the Circulation of and Traffic in, Obscene Publications could not suitably describe the word ‘obscene’. In India there is no statutory definition of the word while the Obscene Publication Act 1925 was enacted to provide effect to the Geneva Convention recommendation of 1923. Gandhi’s protest had some effect in the sense that Government’s attention was drawn to this critical problem. The Act, with others, set down that whoever, ‘Advertise or makes known by any means whatsoever that any person is engaged or is ready to engage in any act which is an offence under this Section or that any such obscene object can be
procured from or through any person shall be punished with imprisonment’. (Bhattacharya, 1984: P-123)

Even as late as 1940, in a case in Calcutta the observation was made that picture of a nude women was not per se ‘obscene’, when it would shock or offend the taste of a decent man. If such a picture does not excite the sensuality or impure thoughts to a common man, they are outside the purview of the provisions of the Penal Code. It was observed, “For the purpose of deciding whether a picture is obscene or not, one has to consider to a great extent the surrounding circumstances, the pose, the posture, the suggestive element in the picture, the person into whose hands it is likely to fall etc”. (Bhattacharya, 1984: P-123)

Since the difference in thoughts between the conservative attitude on sex prevalent in India and the influence of English judicial decisions in British Indian Courts, the offenders, still if they were brought to court, which was one in thousands on the most optimistic estimate, would go scot free. In few cases they can take shelter in the exception clause of the Act which lay down, “This Section does not extend to any book, pamphlet, writing, drawing or painting kept or used bona fide for religious purpose represented on or in any temple, or none any car used for the conveyance of idols, or kept or used for any religious purpose”. (Bhattacharya, 1984: P-124)

Under the heading ‘Indecent Advertisements,’ Gandhi wrote, in the Young India of June 25, 1927, about the various advertisements publishing indecent content citing examples of the same,

“I glance upon advertisement sheets of newspapers. They are sometimes painfully instructive. I see often in respectable papers advertisements of lewd nature. The headlines are deceptive. In one case the heading was ‘Book relating to Yoga.’ Looking at the contents of the advertisement, I discovered hardly one book, out of ten, having any reference to yoga; all the rest had reference to sex suggesting that young men and women any indulge in sexual pleasures without coming to grief, promising to divulge secret
remedies. I came upon worse things which I do not propose to copy in these pages”.

He was hurt to see the editors not reluctant to derive an income from advertisements which are obviously intended to spread the evils they should shun. Below the heading ‘Advertisement Lewdness in the Young India of October 31, 1929, he said that immoral advertising pictures were used by sellers for foreign clothes. He received some specimens from a correspondent, and was told that more indecent pictures could also be made available. One such picture was marked ‘Vilas Jivan’ Gandhi commented, “The unscrupulous ways adopted for enticing simple folk by foreign cloth ought to disgust decent men”.

There are various types of advertisements which mislead simple people. These are generally in cases of medicines and drugs for ailments which would need the treatment of qualified doctors and not quacks. Suspicious drugs to cure venereal diseases, or to stop pregnancy, are freely advertised which are probable to prove dangerous. Innocent people are also lured to make investments in fictional concerns. Offers of jobs on some security to be made in advance are also made during certain advertisements. There are advertisements of drugs which are habit forming and very dangerous from health perspective.

However, there were advertisements which are fraudulent in nature. Some of these try to take advantage of the unemployment condition in the country and attract simple folk into snares for purposes of extortion of money. Services of astrologers making predictions for all kinds of things are also presented through the columns of advertisements. On the top of it there is the cheap way of drawing notice of the readers by exposing nude poses or near nude poses of females to which the content of the advertisement lays no importance whatsoever. Then there is huge section of cinema advertisements, illustrations and texts of which are at times quite objectionable.

Lack of good taste is also found while composing the advertising text. Matrimonial advertisements are at times rudely worded. Although these may possibly be done unintentionally, advertisements of medicines to be used for women’s ailments
or so called advice to the married couple are deliberately written in the most offensive way.

Advertisers did not even hesitate to play with the national flag and photos of national leaders to improve their products, straight away after independence. The public and the press were equally insensitive in taking things carelessly which they admire most. The pictures of Hindu Gods and Goddesses on match-box, cigarette box, liquor bottles, prominent sign boards of shops and calendars were abundant. Writing in the Harijan of April 18, 1948, Shri K.G. Mashurwala said:

“On the one hand we worship them (Gods and Avatars) as divine beings and on the other display them on the stage and screen and name our business concerns after them. You will not see Jesus or Mohammad represented on the stage or displayed on advertisements and sign-boards or business houses, such as Jesus Christ Mills or Rasul Mohammad Pharmacy. Christian or Muslim public opinion would not tolerate it. When you attach a kind of divinity to a person, if should be considered bad manners if not blasphemy to reproduce his image or presume to play his part or name your concerns after his in a light manner”.

It is an irony that Gandhi, who was fighting against indecent advertisements, became himself an object of exploitation by the advertisers. Acharya J.B. Karipalani, Secretary, Gandhi National Memorial fund, had to come out with a statement reproduced in the editorial wherein he said:

“I have been pained to read in the papers advertisements inserted by private firms invoking the name Gandhi, ostensibly to pay homage to his memory but really to help in advertisement of their particular wares. Often the wares advertised are such as Gandhi would have considered harmful and unpatriotic to use Gandhi, as is well known, was against advertisements in general and never accepted any for the journals with which he was connected hope the business community will respond to my appeal and will refrain from the use of Mahatma Gandhi’s name in their advertisements”.

(Bhattacharya, 1984: P-126)
Under the signed article ‘Spurious Medicines’ published in the Harijan, dated December 12, 1948, Shri K.G. Mashruwala who took over the editorship of the paper after the death of Gandhi, published the copy of the resolution passed by the Newspapers Proprietors’ Association in Great Britain. This was sent by an Indian doctor. The resolution was as follows:

“1. No advertisement will be accepted which is claimed to be effective in Bright’s Disease, Cancer, Tuberculosis, Diabetes, Epilepsy, Fits, Locomotor ataxia, Disseminated sclerosis, Osteo-arthritis, Spinal, Cerebral and Venereal diseases, Luppus, Paralysis, or for the cure of Amenorrhoea, Hernia, Blindness, Rheumatoid Srthritis and for procuring miscarriage, or for the treatment of habits, associated with sexual indulgence or for any ailment connected with these habits.

2. No advertisement will he accepted from any advertiser, who by printed matter, orally or in his advertisement undertakes to diagnose any condition or to receive a statement of any person’s symptoms, with a view to advising or providing treatments by correspondence.

3. No advertisement will be accepted by containing a testimonial, other than limited to the actual views of the writer or any testimonial given by a doctor other than a recognised British Medical Practitioner.

4. No advertisement will be accepted, containing illustrations which are distorted or exaggerated to convey false impressions.

5. No advertisement will be accepted which may lead persons to believe that the medicine emanated from any hospital or official source or is any other than the proprietary medicine advertised by the manufacturer for the purpose specified, unless the advertising agent submitting the copy declares that the authority of such hospital or official source has been duly obtained”.

The reforms advocated by Gandhi in advertisement were pursued later on, though half-heartedly, by the Indian and Eastern Newspapers Society which adopted a code for the press. Most of the papers unfortunately interpreted this code by saying that
it was recommendatory and not mandatory. There had been a few exceptions where some papers tried to honor this code but they also shortly fall prey to the same.

Gandhi did not believe that newspapers were to be published at any cost. It was not money but service which was the motto. Like in other fields Gandhi had a positive approach to this problem as well. He had faith in self-control and self-restraint. He fervently hoped for a code of conduct amongst journalists which could alone stop such mischievous advertisements. He queried, “We have a Journalists’ Association. Is it not possible, through it, to cultivate the uniform code of morals among them and create public opinion that would make it impossible for a respectable journal not to follow the prescribed code?”

Under the heading: ‘How to stop obscene advertisements’, in the Harijan of November 14, 1936, Gandhi reproduced a letter from one of the readers who discussed about an advertisement that she saw in a magazine and requested Gandhi to write on the responsibility of the newspapers and journals in regard to obscene advertisement.

“A sister, sending me a cutting from a well known magazine containing the advertisement of a most objectionable book, writes, “The enclosed came under my eye when glancing over the pages of the magazine. I do not know if you get this magazine. I do not suppose you ever have time to glance at it even if it is ‘sent to you. Once before I spoke to you about the obscene advertisements, I do wish you would write about them sometime. That books of the type advertised are flooding the market today is only too true, but should responsible journals like encourage their sale? My woman’s modesty is so utterly repelled by these things that I cannot write to anyone but you. To think that what God has given to woman with intent for an express purpose, should be advertised for abuse is too degrading for worlds. I wish you would write about the responsibility of leading Indian newspapers and journals in this respect. This is not the first by any means that I could have sent to you for criticism”.

Gandhi wanted to make a strong public opinion, with women in the forefront, against such advertisements. Earlier, he appealed to fellow journalists to adopt a code
of conduct and put a stop to these awful advertisements. There was some response. In the same journal, on January 2, 1937, he wrote,

“A correspondent who saw my article on obscene advertisements writes: ‘You can do much in preventing obscene advertisements by exposing the names of the papers and magazines which advertise such shameless things as you have mentioned’. I can’t undertake the censorship my correspondent advises, but I can suggest a better way. ‘If public conscience is alive, subscribers can write to their respective papers if they contain objectionable advertisements, drawing their attention to them and stopping their subscriptions if the offence is not cured’.

“The reader will be glad to know that the sister who complained to me about the obscene advertisements wrote also to the editor of the offending magazine who expressed his regret for the inadvertent admission of the obnoxious advertisement and promised to remove it forthwith. I am glad also to say that my caution has found support from some other papers. Thus the editor of the Nispruha of Nagpur writes: ‘I have not only read with great care your article in the Harijan regarding obscene advertisements but have given a detailed translation of it in the Nispruha. I have also added a short editorial comment thereon.’ I am enclosing a typical advertisement which though not obscene, is yet immoral in a sense. The advertisement is obviously bogus and it is generally the villager who falls a prey to it. I have always refused such advertisements and I am also writing to this party similarly. If an editor must supervise the reading matter that he will allow, it is as much his duty to supervise the advertisements, and no editor can permit his paper to be used by people desirous of duping the simple villagers’.

Although Gandhi believed in self-imposed limitations by the editors in not giving publicity to such things, he would not, as we saw earlier, hesitate to recommend to the Government strict actions. As a practical man, he knew that though big papers would take steps to ban indecent advertisements, smaller language papers and journals would pay no attention to such decisions.
In a country like India where democracy has not so far stood on solid grounds, some kind of legal action could be needed in the early stages. When common people see that the State is not interested in controlling bad things, nor does it commend virtues, they are likely to suppose that the law has only negative sides. In the final analysis we come to the people who should be educated and be able to differentiate between right and wrong and should put voluntary restraint on things. Gandhi believed in raising the standard of the society and conception of a strong public opinion which would force people to do things in the right way.

In the editorial 'False and Obscene Advertisement’ published in the Harijan, November 7, 1948, Shri K. G. Mashruwaia wrote:

“Public libraries and reading rooms can also play a great part in controlling papers and advertisers. They can keep a black-box, in which readers should put in complaints about a journal not keeping to a proper standard either in its writing, pictures or advertisements. The managers of libraries should verify such complaints, and if satisfied draw the attention of the journal asking them to correct themselves, and if not heeded refuse to patronize it. This would, by the way, be a superior and more effective censorship than that exercised through Government Executive”.

Was Gandhi afraid of taking advertisement in case it influenced the policy of the paper? It is not easy to believe that he would personally have cared for any such outside influence. But none the less it raises an interesting issue. Cannot advertiser exert influence on the paper through which he advertises his products? The Harijan of October 18, 1948, published an editorial by Shri K. G. Mashruwaia, wherein it stated:

“We have been talking of freedom of the press; it has been called the Fourth Estate and so on. But what about the sacred responsibility of the journalists? They seek to corrupt the Government though the criticism, but they themselves are under the effective control of their advertisers or the industrialists who pay them. They accept any rubbish of an advertisement or afford any industrialist interest if they are paid their price. They write a
leader to denounce drink and at another place give a full-page advertisement of some wine”.

However Gandhi would raise the essential questions on the responsibility of a journalist to the society. If the system was good and worth emulating, why should space be purchased to advertise it? Why should a conscious newspaper black out useful news? Is not money, in such cases, trying to influence the policy of some papers? As we find all questions are still relevant.

4.4 Ethical Practices of journalism in Post Independent India

Gandhi as a development journalist showed an example to the present day media how to practice ethic based and development journalism. Further, after Independence, that mission was partly carried by researchers as well as newspapers in conducting a few experiments in development journalism to accelerate rural development. Selden Menefee and Audrey Menefee conducted an interesting study of mimeographed newspaper in Mysore containing some developmental information. Known as Menefee experiment, a small newspaper called Gram Samachar (village news) was published in Kannada, the local knowledge, for thirteen weeks to test the effects of communication on the villagers. For the purpose, four villages were chosen near Mysore in Karnataka. The researchers found an increase in the information level of the regular readers because of the newspaper (Menefree S & Menefee A, 1964). In 1969, B.G. Verghese, the then editor of The Hindustan Times, New Delhi proved that the development reporting would be helpful to accelerate development. Verghese asked a team of reporters to write periodically about Chattera, a small village in Haryana, about its people, their problems and the process of development taking in that village. ‘A Third World Perspective of News’, May-June, Freedom at Issue’, reported: Our village, Chattera is a bold attempt to give rural orientation to the predominantly urban based and elite-oriented newspapers in the country. It is the form of journalism that can prove of immense help in bridging the rural-urban communication gap in the Third World.

27 Mimeograph is a low-cost printing press that works by forcing ink through a stencil onto paper.
The Indian Press has taken up development-linked campaigns for the public good. The Press has a social responsibility function apart from educating, informing and entertaining the public. The theory of social responsibility postulates that the Press has to play a crucial role in the people-centric issues. Because people depend on media for their day-to-day information needs, media should act to inform and educate people on social issues. The socially responsible press helps the citizens to be well informed on issues of immediate concern to them. Moreover, the degree of media attention given to social and developmental issues makes people and government take necessary action on them. In this context, the Press in India played an activist role for effecting changes in development. A few case studies in development journalism are presented under to appreciate the role of newspapers in development.

_Udayavani_, a Kannada daily established in 1970 which is published from Manipal (Karnataka) carried a three year (1981-84) experiment in development journalism, ‘Identify Backward Village Experiment’ in early 1980s. In order to carry out the experiment, the newspaper carried an advertisement on January 2, 1981 detailing the objectives of the experiment by inviting nominations from the readers. The advertisement was as follows: Udayavani has taken up a novel scheme to identify a backward village for studying the impact of numerous Central and State Government-sponsored schemes since Independence. Readers’ involvement is of paramount importance. They are encouraged to identify two backward villages, one in their _taluka_28 and one in the district. To help you, a Performa listing the ten basic infrastructure facilities has been provided. These facilities have been identified based on Government of India census report.

The newspaper identified a backward village if it does not have a primary school, middle school, electricity, post office, telephone, doctor, hospital, drinking water, and road and bus service. The newspaper encouraged readers to identify a backward village basing on the above criteria and a fifty-day time limit was fixed to send their nominations. A total of four hundred and sixty five readers sent their nominations.

28 A subdivision of a district or a group of several villages organized for revenue purposes
nominations identifying four hundred and seventeen villages and hamlets in the district as backward. However, keeping in view the scope and nature of the experiment, nominations from eight *talukas* of the district were considered for further evaluations. The readers’ responses were analyzed with a view to selecting the most backward villages. Fifteen legislators were involved in identifying the villages from the district and they selected ten villages. Further, *taluka* level officials were asked to identify villages under their jurisdiction by checking their official records. The coordinator of the project, Sanjay Daitota, travelled over nineteen kms to verify and crosscheck the information given by the people. At the end of seventeen-day visit, the coordinator could identify ten backward villages for the experiment. The identified villages were: (1) Alanthaya (2) Bellapady (3) Bolmane (4) Didupe (5) Kemtoor (6) Kudyady (7) Malachowki (8) Mandekolu (9) Manila, and (10) Navoora.

The main problems of these villages were: non-availability of potable drinking water, mosquito threat, frequent malarial attacks, diarrhea, and other water-borne diseases. Since the villages lacked even a miniscule of medical facilities, the patient has to be taken to nearby towns for Medicare. Lack of proper roads along with isolation of villages made the emergency medical care very difficult. To make the project successful, some youth in these villages were motivated to take up development works, and later these youth formed a team of grass root reporters for the newspaper. The newspaper decided to highlight the problems and to sensitize the people for solving their problem. In the first year, the newspaper covered all the problems and activities of the villages extensively and regularly. The coverage concentrated on development processes with an interpretation of the problems when the coordinator was touring the villages to understand the village’s problems. In the second year, the coverage was restricted to happenings and occasional success stories. In the third year, there was no coverage of any issues while the coordinator was contacting the youth who were working as field assistants. Moreover, the coverage concentrated on ordinary folks instead of politicians and rural elite. For instance, Maila, a resident of Mandekolu village was the first to travel by a bus to village could easily be recognized in the village after a photo story on him appeared in this
newspaper. The coverage used all formats of publications such as front-page news, photo-features, readers’ complaints and double-page supplements. The coverage accelerated the process of development in South Karnataka. Farm clinics and school library came into being. Officials cooperated with the villagers and youth and others participated in development works.

In a further experiment, a research started a rural newspaper, *Gramyavani*, in 1993 in Deulpudi, a village in Ganjam district of Orissa to give information to the rural people. The fortnightly newspaper reaching eight villages continued for 16 months. A chief aim of the newspaper was to give development-linked information to the people. The contents of the newspaper included agriculture, health, forestry, and animal husbandry. The newspaper brought awareness among the villagers exposed to the newspaper (*Jena, 1995*). The two studies proved that the news; would raise the information level of the people and thereby give to accelerating developmental processes at the individual and community level.

### 4.5 Challenges of Ethical Practices of Journalism in India

Where is the place for ethics in the globalized marketplace celebrating social Darwinism? The reasons for not taking up ethic based and development journalism by Indian media are or the challenges posed by the market forces for ethical journalism are:

**Corporatization of media houses**

The sole purpose of journalism has become profit making and Journalism as service to society has been replaced by journalism aimed at profit and affluence for media promoters and media workers. Hence, most of the media groups are not only dependent on market but they are also controlled and guided by the markets. According to Chomsky and Herman most of the media organizations are owned by large corporations with an objective of the news provided by the media will take care of their interests.
It is also a major factor deciding media content. Also, media companies have included corporate captains and big businessmen on their boards of directors.

- The board of directors of Jagran Publications includes Pantaloon Retail’s Managing Director (MD) Kishore Biyani; MacDonald India’s MD Viram Bakshi; Lodestar Universal India’s Chief Executive Officer Shashidhar Sinha; Mirza Internatinl’s MD Rashid Mirza and real estate consultancy firm JLL Meghraj’s Chairman Anuj Puri.
- The board of directors of HT media, Publishers of Hindustan Times and Hindusatn, includes former Chairman of Earnst and Young K.N. Memani and Chairman of ITC ltd. Y C Deveshwar.
- Joint MD of Bharti Enterprise Rajan Bharti Mittal and MD of Anika International Anil Vij are a part of TV Today’s board of directors.
- DB Corp (that pulishes the Hindi daily Dainik Bhaskar) has Ajay Piramal, Head of the Piramal Enterprises group; Nitin Malhan, MD of Warburg Pincus and Piyush Pandey, Executive Chairman of advertising firm Ogilvy and Mather among its board members.
- The board of directors of Hindustan Media Ventures Limited includes Ashwani Windlass, Chairman, SA and JVs MGRM technologies, US and Shardul S Shroff, member of the board of Dnfirastructure development Finance Company (IDFC) and NIT (formerly National Institute of Information Technology).
- The board of directors of New Delhi Television includes Pramod Bhasin, President and CEO of India’s biggest business process outsourcing (BPO company GenPact).

Many of those on the board of directors of media companies represent some of the biggest advertisers, companies with large market capitalization. Board Members not only exercise an influence on media content, they also influence appointments to key positions. Ideally there should be a Great Wall of China between the editorial and advertising departments or sections of a news media company, but this wall now has cracked, surprisingly not at the level of reporters and advertising executives who bring in
funds but at the highest levels. Most of the board members of these media companies are not professional journalists. As Chomsky and Herman opine that due to the dependency on advertising revenue of the media organizations news becomes a product. Hence, stories that may affect the ‘buying mood’ of the audience or the interests of the advertisers will be marginalized or avoided.

Corporate majors are also increasing their stakes in media/news companies. The Anil Ambani headed Reliance Capital has invested in broadcasters such as Network 18, which operates CNBC TV 18, CNBC Awaz, CNN IBN and IBN 7 and the TV today network, which operates Aaj Tak and Headlines Today. Anil Ambani is gradually expanding his presence in the media sector. In 2010, reliance capital picked up 18 per cent in Bloomberg UTV, the business news channel. The Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG) has several footprints over the Indian news industry. The influence of the corporate sector in general and large advertisers in particular, on the working of the media in India seems to be rising with passing year. (Thakurta, P-208)

Reliance Industries acquired indirect control over one of country’s top most media houses Network 18 through a multi layered deal. Another of country’s major brands TV Today network is in the process of selling its stake to the Aditya Birla Group and thus going through a major restructuring. Although news networks being owned and run by political parties is not a new phenomenon in the country especially in the southern states, regional political parties are showing a lot of interest in controlling the distribution on TV signals in their respective states. This way they are not only broadcasting content of their interest through their channels but also able to control the broadcast of other channels.

**Ownership of the media house by the politicians**

Today many media outlets are run and governed by the politicians and this trend has become a major threat to media ethics. Vineeta Kohli in her article viewed that “more than one third of news channels are owned by politicians or politico-affiliated builders. An estimated sixty per cent of cable distribution systems are owned by local politicians. These have influenced and funded several local elections. There are dozens of small and
big newspapers owned by politicians or their family members that influence the course of several local elections. Many newspaper chains with political affiliations also own broadcast networks. Most of them now have Internet portals (Kohli, 2006). Orissa is also not an exception to the political control of media outfits which started with a noble objective subsequently got trapped in to the hands of political backed business conglomerates. The unique nature of media ownership in India seems to be divided in to two categories. One the national media which is largely controlled by the big conglomerates followed by their crony politicians where as the regional media is largely being controlled by the politicians followed by business groups.

In the last few years there has been a growing consolidation of media organizations across the globe. In the political economy of the media the world over there is clearly an alarming absence of not-for-profit media organizations. Neither subscription- nor advertising revenue-based models of the media have been able to limit this tendency of large sections of the corporate media to align with elite interest groups. In not just economic terms, the media is perceived as an active political collaborator as well seeking to influence voters on the basis of allegiances of owners and editors. This can, and often does, constrain free and fair exchanges of views to facilitate democratic decision-making processes. According to Chomsky and Herman, media organizations need information continuously so it has to rely on government organizations and major business that have the required stuff. The theory suggests that the information provided by these sources is generally biased and most media organizations avoid providing information that can affect their interest adversely.

Paid News

One of the factors that is affecting media ethics is the practice of “Paid News”. News Media outlets are supposed to provide information that is factually correct, balanced, fair, and objective. These are the elements that clearly sets apart news from opinions expressed in editorial page or advertisements by corporate houses, governments, organizations, or individual. When the difference between news and advertisement starts
getting unclear, when news is published or broadcast in favor of a particular politician or political parties by selling editorial space, the readers is misled and news lose its credibility. Corruption in the media is admittedly part of the corruption in society and in recent times, it has assumed an institutionalized form, with newspapers and television channels receiving funds for publishing or broadcasting information in favor of particular individuals, corporate entities, representatives of political parties and candidates contesting elections that is sought to be disguised as news. By publishing advertisements as news, especially about election candidates, the media is undermining the process of democracy and clearly violating the Representation of People Act, 1951 and rule 90 of the conduct of election rules, guidelines on media practices of the Securities and Exchange Board of India and norms of acceptable media practices of Press Council of India.

**Propaganda by the media**

One of the major challenges of media ethics is the propaganda by the mainstream media. Noam Chomsky in his book ten-authored with Edward S Herman entitled Manufacturing Consent: The political economy of the mass media first published in 1988, several detailed case studies are mentioned to highlight how the mainstream media circulates propaganda. According to this propaganda model of the media, democratic societies like the US use nonviolent means of control, unlike totalitarian systems, where physical force can readily be used to coerce as well as the population at large.

The propaganda model tries to explain a systematic bias in terms of structural economic causes. It focuses that the bias derives from five ‘Filters’ which all published news must pass through and this in turn distorts new coverage. The five filters are:

It is important to notice that mass media outlets are now run by large corporations, they have to be as the same competitive pressures as other corporate bodies. It becomes quite obvious that the pressures to run profit centric business to distort the spirit of news. Hence, companies those focus on profits over news quality survive and
grow. On the other hand the media organizations that try to present a more objective picture tend to get more marginalized.

In a country like India, which is plagued with problems like illiteracy, lack of health care facilities, pollution, corruption, and the apathy of government officials etc, the role of the Press in development is desirable. It is the need of the hour to realize that media has a very constructive and positive role to play. Instead of sensation, scams, crimes against women, cricketainment and dramatization of the news, our media should be more objective, accountable and mass-oriented as Gandhi practiced throughout his life.