

**CONCEPT OF 'RAMRAJYA' :
GANDHI VS BJP
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

Certified that the dissertation entitled 'Concept of Ramrajya Gandhi vs BJP, a comparative analysis' submitted by Gunanidhi Parida, in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Philosophy at Jawaharlal Nehru University, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. To the best of my knowledge this is an original work.

We recommend that this dissertation to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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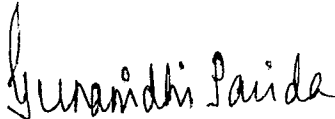
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CONTENTS

| | <u>Page</u> |
|--|---------------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | |
| INTRODUCTION | (i) - (vi) |
| <u>CHAPTER - 1</u> | 001 - 019 |
| Ramrajya as a Concept, its meaning and historical implication | |
| 1.1. Political dimension | |
| 1.2. economic dimension | |
| 1.3. Spiritual dimension | |
| 1.4. Social dimension and Summary | |
| <u>CHAPTER - II</u> | 020 - 053 |
| GANDHI and B.J.F. on Religion and Western Secularism. | |
| 2.1. Early age and historical background | |
| 2.2. Cosmic spirit and different religions | |
| 2.3. Spiritualisation of Politics | |
| 2.4. Meaning and development of Secularism | |
| 2.5. Different approach to Secularism in different Countries | |
| 2.6. Rejection of Secularism (Western) by Gandhi and B.J.F. | |
| 2.7. Difference between Dharma and Religion | |
| 2.8. Gandhi and B.J.F comparison | |

CHAPTER - III

054 - 102

Gandhi and BJP : Religion and Politics Paradigm

- 3.1. Importance of religion in Politics
- 3.2. Religion and Politics of B.J.P.
- 3.3. Co-Operative farming and Market regulation of B.J.P.
- 3.4. Ramjanmabhumi and Politics
- 3.5. Rituals of Communal mobilisation and Confrontation
- 3.6. Comparison.

CHAPTER - IV

103 -154

Mahatama Gandhi and Communal Problem in Freedom Movement and B.J.P. in solving Hindu-Muslim Problems.

- 4.1. Imperialism and Indian Nationalism
- 4.2. Khilafat Movement and Gandhi
- 4.3. Minority Problem, national integration and Gandhi
- 4.4. Gandhi and Two Nation Theory
- 4.5. B.J.P.'s Stand on Hindu-Muslim Question and development of it's allied organisations
- 4.6. RSS, BJS, VHP, and their role in Politics
- 4.7. Shah Bano Movement and BJP.
- 4.8. BJP and Gandhi Comparison
- 4.9. Gandhi Murder and Babri demolition

CONCLUSION

155 - 162

BIBLIOGRAPHY

163 - 176

INTRODUCTION

Mahatama Gandhi, the father of the Nation is not a person but a Personality. His Personality not lies with the principles which he followed in his personal life but in day to day public life. To bring about a new spirit and vigour in Indian political scene and fight against British imperialism and colonialism his personality factor and leadership traits is undeniable. Sometimes some historians admit the very fact that without a clear understanding of Mahatama Gandhi and his field of action it is unimaginable to know the nature and character of Indian Freedom struggle and at last independence. The dynamic personality of Gandhi not only gave a new meaning to the people of India but also a new idea and way of life and living to the World civilisation. He not only fight against external bondage but also internal problems like casteism, communalism superstitions and many other social evils to make India a better place to live in. As a man of original thought and practical action he will be remembered for all the times to come for his concept like Satyagrah (Satya + Agraha) i.e. inclined towards truth, Sarvodaya (development of all and development of every aspect of life), i.e. both material and spiritual, socialism (industrial democracy, handicrafts, trusteeship, small scale and cottage industry), political democracy (proper relationship between individual liberty and

state autonomy, autonomous village community and decentralisation of authority and responsibility). By making the above principles in practice of the then Indian society he thought up to build an ideal society i.e. Ramrajya in India.

Gandhi's conceptual analysis of Ramrajya which has a strong philosophical and historical base has a broader meaning and social implication in the then society. He used the concept of Ramrajya very often as the kingdom of God on earth. Sometimes he said, while addressing to both communities of India i.e. Hindu and Muslim, that I can not find out any difference between Ramrajya and Rahimrajya though the concept "Ramrajya" is related with the Puranic tradition and based on religious approach to Politics it is quite above ritualistic and idol worshipping nature of politics. He very often used the term to maintain unity and integrity of India to build a strong and stable nation by eradicating exploitation and British imperialism. It was quite broader in meaning touching almost every aspects of human life.

When in 21st Century Gandhi and Gandhism became more relevant in both national and international level in terms of environmental crisis, morality and its role in politics, disarmament and peace proposal, social psychological deviation and moral self control through spiritualism at the same time BJP tries to inher-

it its concept of Ramrajya and used it for mass mobilisation and popular support. It is true that man is guided by history and the great personalities, but some times the wise saying and its manipulation is also evident in the pages of human history. Times changes, new things became old with the process of social change and old things became outdated and replaced by new thoughts and ideas. It is clearly evident from the statement relating to dialectical spiritualism that no man can put his leg twice in the same water. So inheriting the concept and used it one's personal benefits and gaining political power through mass mobilisation is quite different from Gandhi.

If we draw the analogy between Gandhian concept of Ramrajya and the BJP then the following common factors will be evident. Both stood on religious basis of politics after rejecting the western concept of secularism. Theoretically, and conceptually both visualised an ideal state and to make it practicable in the soil of India. Both rejected communism i.e. leftist approach to politics and supported democracy as an ideal form of government for the development of individual and state at large. Regarding the economic aspects of human life both followed trusteeship and self sufficient village community. If we have a glance to the historical origin and development then it will be clear that the Predecessor organisations like Hindu Mahasabha and RSS was quite

educative, reformatory and propagation of Hindu culture in India. In social aspect of Ramrajya, Gandhi also strive to fight against social evils and orthodox practices.

In difference, while Gandhi wants to built 'India' on the basis of composite culture at the same time BJP wants to promote Indian nationalism on the basis of its perceived majority culture i.e. the Hindutva culture. Once Golwalkar said minority has right only subordinating their culture before the majority culture and adopting the majority culture in their day to day practices. While Gandhi favoured minority rights and minority protection at the same time BJP advocating the rejection of minority right and maintenance of universal civil code through out India. For Gandhi Dharma and religion is almost same and as Dharma is based on ethical standard and morality, it should not be separated from politics. But for BJP, Dharma is much broader concept than western concept of religion and religion is narrower and religions may differ but the essence of Dharma is eternal and Sovereign. So it advocated Positive secularism by rejecting western concept of secularism and protection of life and liberty of all and appeasement to non. Gandhian religion is based on spiritualism and humanism i.e. (universalism, love and compassion) but BJP's religion is quite ritualistic and it is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. But Gandhi's religion is both a means and

an end. Regarding the communal riots and Gandhi-BJP approach to solving it, is quite different in nature and character. So far as the international relation and armament is concerned when Gandhi believed in total disarmament and non-violence, BJP believed in production of nuclear weapons and development of nuclear technology.

The first chapter is about the historical notion of the concept its meaning importance and various dimension i.e. social, political, religious and economic. The second chapter clearly depicts the spiritual basis of religion of Gandhi and its role in Politics and BJPs concept of religion and Dharma and how it is different from western secularism. The meaning development and various concepts of secularism in different parts of the world also dealt with in this chapter. The third Chapter deals with Gandhian views about the relationship between religion and politics and BJP's use of religion for political purposes. The means, procedures and ends of Gandhi and BJP in this respect are quite different. The ideal of Ram with the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya and its consequences in Indian politics is also highlighted. The fourth chapter is all about communal problem in pre-independence India and Gandhiji's leadership and role to solve the problems and the present communal problems and the role of

BJF and it's allied organisations. The last chapter is a general assessment of the problem and the nature of the communal problem and the responsibility of both Hindu and Muslim organisations.

Borrowing the concepts and following the principles of great personalities in history is not a bad thing in theory but its potential future value depends upon its proper use and operations.

For the proper analysis of the above topic I followed the comparative and analytical method which based on the collection and utilisation of both primary and secondary sources of materials.

CHAPTER ONE

RAM RAJYA AS A CONCEPT IT'S MEANING AND HISTORICAL IMPLICATION

Etymologically speaking the concept of "Ramrajya" (Ideal State) enlightened anarchy or pure democracy has been derived by Gandhiji from "Ramayan". In Ramayan "Valmiki" recognised that sovereignty primarily was vested among the people who had the right not only to formally sanction a king's succession to the throne but also to stop it if it went against their interests. Thus king 'Dasaratha' had to seek the approval of his subjects on the proposal of appointing 'Rama' as Yuvaraj and king Sagar banished his eldest son 'Asamanja', for his practices were objected to, by the subjects. Out of the above historical connotations Gandhiji once said the state is an ideal state, an absolute end, the highest good or the "Ramrajya", which the whole humanity is aspiring to attain. Ramrajya is the abode of the three great ultimate values viz liberty, equality and Fraternity. It can be established or the ultimate truth can be achieved only when ahimsa or non-violence is observed. His Ramrajya corresponds to the "Ta Tung" or great harmony of Mao-Tse Tung. For the understanding of the mass people of China Mao often compared the ever cherished socio-political goal of China to "Ta Tung" or great harmony which could be realised by the realisation of liberty, equality and fraternity.

1) Journal of Gandhian Studies, Puranic Tradition and Gandhi concept of Ideal State Dr N Mohanty. Quarterly Publication of Institute of Gandhian thought and Peace studies. University of Allahabad Vol. 10, No 40, July 1983.

India of Gandhiji's dream of Ramrajya was based on the principle of individualism. To quote him --, "the first step of Swaraj lies in the individual. The great truth as with the individual so with the Universe, is applicable here as elsewhere - " Government over self is the truest swaraj. Swaraj of the people means the sum total of Swaraj or self-rule of individuals. By this he attached much importance to Morality in nations administration. In any country if every individual is inspired by the sense of morality in all his actions then it will be possible to establish Swaraj or Ramrajya .²

In contradicting Marxian notion of the ideal state i.e state less, classless and casteless society. Gandhiji Prescribes maximum decentralisation of political authority. His steps of Gramswaraj, Panchayati Raj, individual freedom etc are right steps in right direction, whereas Marxian steps of dictatorship of Proletariate and stifling of individual freedom are wrong step in wrong direction.

His faith was more upon the institution rather than the individual. As the result he made the institution omnipotent, autocrat and even anti individual. But Gandhiji felt that individual is the supreme consideration and the state would evolve alone with the moral evolution of Man. Hence he prescribes like Marx the three stages of the evolution of his ideal state. (a) "Hind Swaraj" or Political freedom and representative democracy.

2) Young India, 8th January 1925, Harijan, 8 Jan, 1942

(b) Gram Swaraj of village Republics and grassroot non-violent democracy. (c) Ramrajya or enlightened anarchy of pure democracy

However he has prescribed six conditions for stable, social, economic and educational basis of his conception of pure democracy or " Ramrajya ." These conditions are as follows . (1) Place of dissent (Satyagraha) (2) growth of village industries i.e gramodaya (3) education through craft (Nai Talim) (4) Removal of Untouchability (Asprasuyanta Nivaran) (5) Communal harmony (Sampradayika Ekta) (6) and Non-violent organisation of Labour. Pure democracy is not a political concept but it is also a social and economic concept. Representative institutions, adult Suffrage equality of Men and Women, Sovereignty of people and manual labour as one of the basic criteria of the voters. However the principle of representation is different from the western practice. He favoured direct participation of the people but direct elections. It is like the oceanic circle the villagers would elect their Panchayats directly and the Panchayat elect the district administrators, the district administrators would elect the Provincial bodies and the provincial bodies will elect the central legislature and the National Chief executive the villages will be the grassroot of democracy. For his realisation of Ideal state or say Ramrajya he wants there should be perfect decentral-

3) Parekha , Bhikhu , Gandhi's Political Philosophy a critical examination Hampshire , Macmillan Press 1989 , 'theory of the state ' ch -5 P.P 136-138.

isation in every sphere of state activities . In short his concept of Ramrajya was based on political , economic , moral and spiritual aspects of the individual.

So far as the Political dimension is in question , the ideal state is one in which the individual can freely develop his moral and spiritual nature there is no restriction from the outside to hamper his self expression and self realisation , but all the restraints that is necessary is exercised from within by his own conscience or moral sense. It can be visualised only in a decentralised society consisting of small self governing units . Large centralised society or state cannot possibly maintain itself without the use of force which is incompatible with Gandhiji's idea of Non-violence . "The end to be sought is human happiness combined with full mental and moral growth . This end can be achieved under decentralisation . Centralisation as a system is in consistent with the non-violent structure of the society .⁵

A small unity in decentralised society is like a family in which the individual feels that he is surrounded with the warmth and love of living beings . The big centralised society of state

4) Journal of Gandhian studies , Article by Ramjee singh the least govt. of Gandhiji , P.P 175-76, a quarterly publication of institute of Gandhian thought and peace studies , University of Allahabad vol . 10 No 39 april 1983.

5) Journal of Gandhian Studies " the way of Gandhi and Nehru , by S. ABID HUSAIN , PP.38-40

is a giant soulless body which binds man to itself not with the silken cord of love but the Iron chain of law . Therefore Gandhiji does not approve of state in any shape or form . Rejecting all types of states existing today in Western countries , he has put before India the ideal of " Ramrajya " . His Ramrajya is a perfect anarchy , a stateless society which is governed by no other law except the moral law ; by no other force except the force of love . Regarding the liberal Western democracy he said in a public meeting that " they have system suitable to their genius , We must have ours suited to ours . What that sense , is more than I can tell . I have described it as Ramrajya i.e sover-⁶ignty of the people based on pure moral authority .

Political Power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives . If national life becomes so perfect, as to become self regulated , no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of "enlightend anarchy". In such a state every one is his own ruler . He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neigh-bour . In the ideal state, therefore, there is no Political Power because there is no state .⁷ The power which is sufficient to maintain peace and order is this non-violent state less society ; is the force of love or soulforce used in the form of " Satyagraha " . Satyagraha is regarded by Gandhiji to be an effective instrument

6) Harijan , 2nd January 1937.

7) Young India , 2nd July 1931.

for resisting oppression or exploitation of an individual by another individual or of a class by another class or of a nation by another nation. In the ideal society or state of Gandhiji , Where every individual has the same intrinsic value , social equality will naturally be added to Political equality . There will be no distinction of cast and class in the sense of regarding some people as higher than other or superior to other on account of their birth or occupation . But the variety of varnas based on inherited aptitudes will continue because it is derived from the healthy principle of division of labour . He said " I regard varnashrama as a healthy division of work based on birth. The Present ideas of caste are a perversion of the original. There is no question with me of superiority or inferiority . It is purely a question of duty .

"I believed that every body is born in the world with certain natural tendencies. Every person is born with certain definite limitations which he cannot overcome .For a careful observation of these limitations the law of varna is deduced . It establishes certain spheres of action for certain people with certain tendencies" .

8. Young India 23rd, April 1945 " . regarding varnashram and caste ridden society he stated this " .

9. Modern Review , October 1935.

"Children inherited the qualities of parents no less than their Physical features . Environment does play an important part but the original capital on which child starts its life is inherited from its ancestors " ¹⁰ . He said regarding the casteless society " I want to bring about an equalisation of status, I want to allow no differentiation between the son of the weaver, the agriculturist, the school Master" ¹¹ . Birth while it gives start and enables the parents to determine the training and occupation of their children , does not Perpetuate the varna of ones birth if it is not fulfilled by works ¹² .

Gandhiji had no doubt that if India was to live an exemplary life of Independence which will be the envy to the world all the Bhangis doctors Lawyers, Merchants, and others would get the wages for an honest day's work.

The last quotation is a link of Gandhiji's social and economic ideas. He seems to accept economic equality as a necessary corollary of Moral Principle of social equality . His basic attitude to economics is the same as to Politics . To him economics as well as Political values are subordinate to Moral Values . An economics which does not take into account Moral Principles should be rejected as false . " That economics is Untrue which ignores or disgraces Moral values". "True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, Just as all true ethics to be worth its name, must at the same time be good econo-

10. Experienc with Truth , Navajivan Trust 1927 , P 381.

11. Harijan 15 th January 1958

12. Harijan 15th april , 1933.

nomics . An economics that inculcates mammon worship and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak is a false and dismal science . It spells death. True economics, on the other hand, stands for a social justice, it Promotes the good of all equally including the weakest and it is indispensable for decent life " .

13

Economics is a science which tries to find out the best way of satisfying the material wants of a man. True happiness does not lie in multiplying our wants indefinitely and then wearing ourselves out of the ceaseless effort to satisfy them , but in keeping our desires within the bounds of moderation . The criterion of a moderate and legitimate desire is that its fulfilment should increase our capacity for the service of humanity. Gandhiji had made it clear (quite) that he does not regard material comfort as bad in itself and inculcates self denial for its own sake . His point of view is the real purpose of life is spiritual development which can only be achieved through the service of our fellow beings . Material comfort, as far as it helps us in this, is not merely permissible but necessary . But as soon as it reaches the point where it produces indolence and proves to be an obstruction in the way of service leading to spiritual development , it is positively bad . Even intellectual pleasures should

13. Harijan 9th October 1937 "Regarding true, healthy economics and national Progress and Prosperity".

be judged by this standard .

"According to Gandhiji the economic constitution of India and for the matter of that of the World , should be such that , no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing . In other wards , every body should be able to get enough work to enable him to make the two ends meet . And the ideal can be Universally realised only if the means of production of the elementary necessities of life remain in the control of the masses . These should be freely available to all as god's air and water are or ought to be . They should not be made the vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others . There monopolisation by any country , nation or group or persons would be unjust. The neglect of the simple principle is the cause of the destitution that witness today not only in this Unhappy Land but in the other parts of the land too " .

15

Besides he pointed out the following conditions should be realised regarding social , moral and economic to make the Ideal state (Ramrajya) possible . (1) Everybody get an opportunity to earn his living through manual work . Bread labour is for Gandhiji an important religious principle . It can strictly be

14. Lala Kanwar ' Goodby Mr Gandhi ' , Indian publishing House chapter 9, " India of my dreams and God versus Mammon PP115-116.

15. Young India, 15 th November 1928 Regarding the Basis amenities of life , decentralised economy us monopoly economy and its impacts .

followed only when each individual can grow enough food for himself by tilling the soil with his own hands. (2) Land which produces food and other necessities of life does not belong to any individual or individuals but remains in the control of the masses. So that everybody can use it , freely like natural gifts i.e air and water . Being in the " control of the masses " means that the whole land in a village should be the property of the village community and all the people of the village should cultivate it on a collective or co-operative basis. The individual ownership of land , being against the principle of "Aparigraha " has no place in Gandhiji's Ramrajya. Besides if land belongs to any individuals it cannot be freely used by all, and the principle of bread-labour cannot be universally followed. (3) Articles of food and clothing should be produced for use and not made commodities of trade and commerce .Obviously these conditions could be fulfilled only in decentralised rural economy consisting of small self sufficient village communities. Such social order alone could be strictly non-violent dispensing with state and government army and police . Centralisation necessarily implies all these instruments of violence .

By criticising the large scale modern industry he said the real cause of international tensions and wars was the exploitation by the industrially advance nations of the backward ones. So he regarded the modern industrial system and its instruments, the machines as the root of all troubles

16

16. Harijan, 4th November, 1939.

"Gandhi thought that in addition to being inherently unacceptable both capitalism and communism and indeed all such west based and itself centred western ideologies, were incompatible with India's essentially spiritual civilisation. Rather than copy the west or indigenise imported ideologies, India should evolve a distinctively human and spiritual economy both expressing and sustaining man's moral beings " .

Regarding the spiritual dimension of his ideal state or Ramrajya he said religion is primarily and mainly concerned with the ethical aspect of society. He said "spiritual perfection is the consummation of moral endeavour " . Stripped of their accretions of superstitions and indigestible dogmas, the ethics of all religions the equally pure and practical. Moral courage has no use for one struck with senseless religious fanaticism. Moral courage seeks truth where even it is to be found, sifts the chaff of ignorance. The ethics of all religions. is fundamentally the same because code of ethics is found on the urgent need of the human race. Religion, signified to him the belief in the ordered moral governance of the World. It meant the spirit of faith in and dependence upon the absolute truth. He accepted the spiritual and moral essence of Hinduism which according to him was the essence of all the great religions of mankind such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism.

The fundamental tenets of religion, which he

17. Paicekh, Bhikhu, Gandhis, political philosophy a critical examination, Hampshire Macmillan Press, 1989. chapter 5. P.136.

stressed was not adherence to dogmas and creed but a god fearing life. His objective of religion is salvation " . For him he says " the road to Salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and of humanity . Religion is not only Personal Purification but it was an immensely powerful social bond , which bind man to god and man to man ¹⁸ ". The incorporation of religion in politics meant a progressive movement towards justice , truth and non-violence .

Religion is the Philanthropy, Forbearance, Justice, Fraternity, Peace and all embracing love is the basis of the existence of the World . Satyagraha based upon the autonomy of moral will is the antidote to political tyranny. He has said - "Politics bereft of religion is a death trap because it will kill the soul" ¹⁹ . For this he infused spiritualism into politics. He believed that "a religion which could not be practiced by a common man of which could not be put into practice in political sphere was no religion at all" ²⁰ . It shows his recognition of the social responsibility of the religions . According to him " I do not expect the India of my dream to develop one religion i.e to be wholly Hindu or wholly Christian or wholly Muslims but I want

18. Gandhiji centenary papers - Edited by K.S Saxena , P 54-55.

19. M K Ganddhi - My philosophy of life , the Navajivan Trust 1967.

20 Ibid - P 184.

to be wholly tolerant with it's religions working side by side
with one another " ²¹ .

Speaking at Bhopal in the first week of September 1929 he told his audience containing a very large number of Muslims in it; "I warn my Muslim friends against misunderstanding me in my use of the word "Ramrajya". By " Ramrajya "I donot mean Hinduraj. I mean by Ramrajya- Divineraj the kingdom of god . For me Ram and Rahim are one and the same deity . I acknowledge no other god but the one god of truth and righteousness. Whether 'Ram' of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth , the ancient ideal of 'Ramrajya' is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly Procedure " ²² .

" Ishwara Allah Terenam

Sabko Sanmati de Bhagawan "

All the different holy names refers to what is one and the same ultimate reality-a sentiment which can easily serve to bind people of various faiths . The second line is a direct prayer for

21 I bid - P 184

22 Journal of Political Studies, Mahatma Gandhi's deal state by Mrs Anirudha Datta , a biannual Journal of the post graduate Deptt of Politics , Dav collage , Jalandhar Feb -1982 vol.xv

all well being i.e Sarvodaya" . By criticising the different practices of different religions and the superstition, superiority inferiority complexity, dogmas of each religion and making all religions equal he said " My difficulties went deeper. I could not swallow the belief that Jesus Christ alone was the son of god and that only those believing in him could attain Salvation . If god could have sons then we all are his sons . If Jesus was like god or indeed god himself, everyman is like god and can become god. The intellect simply cannot literally accept the view that the sins of the world can be washed away by the death or blood of Jesus, although metaphorically the view may contain truth . Again according to christian belief only the human beings have souls not other living beings, for whom death, means total extinction. My own belief was quite different. I would accept Jesus as a renouncer , a great soul a divine teacher but not as one without an equal . His death was a great example to the world, but I could not accept that there was something mysterious or miraculous power in it . I did not find anything in the pure lives of the christians that I could not find in those faiths of the adhernts of other faiths . I have seen their lives way changing in just the same way as those of the christians . So I did not see any thing extra ordinary in christian Principles I could not accept christianity as the perfect and the greatest religion so also (Hinduism), limitations were clearly evident to me.

 23. Journal of political studies " Gandhian good life" by Suman-
 khanna , P-138

If untouchability was really a part of Hinduism, then it is certainly an excrescence and a corruption . I could not make sense of the multiplicity of sects and castes . What could be the meaning of saying that , the Vedas were divinely inspired ? And, 24 if they were so inspired why not also the Bible and the Koran .

For him all religions including Hinduism are based on specific conceptions of a personal god . They involve distinct forms of prayer, worship, rituals and beliefs about world his nature and relation to the world and are all sectarian . The pure and true religion lies beyond them and has nothing to do with organisations, beliefs and rituals . It consists in nothing more and nothing less than recognising that the Universe is pervaded and governed by a cosmic power and organising one's entire life accordingly. It is basically living in constant, intimate and unmediated presence of the cosmic Spirit and represents the purest forms of spirituality . The true religion transcends (but) does not supersede organised religions and constitute their common basis and connecting link . 25

To Summarise the pictur of Ramrajya that Gandhiji visualised was an expression of the yearning for a just and perfect society- the kingdom of righteousness on earth. Ramrajya means more than -----

24. Parekh (Bhikhu) Gandhiji's political philosophy a critical examination, Hampshire , Macmillan press 1989 , page 65-66.

25. I bid . P 79.

swarajya or political self government . It is a convenient and expressive phrase the meaning which no alternative can fully so express to millions. Once he said, when I visit to frontier province or address Predominately muslim audiences I would express my meaning to them by culling it Khudairaj, while to Christian audience I would describe it as the kingdom of god on earth .²⁶

In 1937, Gandhiji descried Ramrajya as sovereignty of people based on pure moral authority as distinguished from the British, Soviet or Nazi system of rule .²⁷ Later he added a concrete meaning to the term. In an editorial on "Independence" he wrote friends have reapeatedly challenged me to define Independence . At the risk of repetition, I must say independence of my dream means Ramrajya i.e kingdom of god on earth. I donot know what will be iike in heaven. I have no desire to know the distant scene,if the present is attrative enough, the future cannot be very unlike. In concrete terms, then the Independence should be political economic and Moral. Political necessarily means the removal of the control of the British army in every shape and form. Ecomomics means entire freedom from British capitalist and

26 Harijan 18 th Aug 1946 , P 266 " May 'Rani ' is another name for 'Khuds' or god . I want the Khudairaj which is the same thing as the kingdom of god on earth".-quated in Pyarelal Mahatma-gandhi, the last phuse Navajivan publishing house, Ahmadabad 1965, vol , 1, p-549.

27 Harijan , 2nd Jan 1937 p.374.

that dreamland, ever trying to realise it in the quickest way .
 Gandhiji held that there can be no "Ramrajya" in the present
 state of iniquitous inequalitions in which a few roll in riches
 and the masses donot get even enough to eat" .

31

In the political transfer of power in India didnt enthuse
 him. In a prayer speech dated 2nd Dec 1947 he said that "the
 Independence of today strifled him . It is unreal and unstable.
 He looked beyond the present for the state that would belong to
 the people. His pronouncements on the subject made during the
 last days of his life indicate that he improved upon his earlier
 abstract concept .

To sumup, Ramrajya, notwithstanding its religious tenor and
 nostalgic reference , stands for an egalitarian non-violent
 democratic order , with moral values forming the base of such an
 order . Gandhiji did not like the ancient myth to be transformed

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 30. I bid p.549.

31. Harijan 1st June 1947, quoted in M K Gandhi , Nonviolence in
 peace and war, Navjivan publishing house, Ahmadabad 1960 vol ii,
 p.248

32. Dr Badurant observes " the ideal which Gandhiji referred to
 as the " Kingdom of heaven on earth " was defined not in a tradi-
 tional Hindu manner , but his own way on the basis of social
 and political desiderata, conquest of violence, violence,
 Oxford University press, Bombay Calutta etc, 1959. p. 225.

into a reality but at the same time he envisioned a future which transcends the present to become a reality . Whether this utopia is realisable through the method he advocated is a matter of sharp controversy, for it is a question as ones intellectual preferance but the urge behind this vision can hardly be ignored. It truely inspires.

CHAPTER-II

Gandhi and BJP on Religion and Western Secularism

Although Gandhi grew up in a devout and educated vaishnavite family, his knowledge of Hinduism was extremely limited. He had learnt little Sanskrit, was innocent of Hindu philosophy and had not even read the Gita (Gita) until persuaded to do so in England by two theosophists. It was only when he went to South Africa that he began to take serious intellectual interest in Hinduism. As he admitted to a lay Preacher, "I am Hindu by birth". And yet I do not have much knowledge of where I stand and what I do or should believe and intended to make a careful study of my own religion. His employer "Abdulla Sheth Pressed Islam on his attention and he read the Koran and several commentaries on it. Finding that he was troubled by and unable to offer a coherence defence of his religious beliefs, some of his enthusiastic Christian contacts sought to convert him. Gandhian dutifully read all these books they gave him, even attended the Church and participated in discussions on the comparative merits of the two religions. The book that most impressed him was Tolstoy's "The kingdom of God is within you" before whose independent thinking profound morality and truthfulness, all other religious books seemed to pale into insignificance.

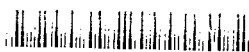
1. Autobiography, p.113.

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Overtime he read and deeply reflected on the literature of all the major religions especially Hinduism and Christianity, the two religions to which he was most attracted and developed of a fascinating philosophy of religion. For Gandhi religion was essentially concerned with how one lived, not what one believed. Accordingly he experimented with whatever religious ideas appealed to him, rigorously tested their "truth" in the crucible of daily life and explored their existential potential and limits. Indian religious tradition conceived the supreme power or God in both personal and impersonal terms. The vedas conceived it as both rita the objective and impersonal law regulating the universe and Vishvakarma the supreme creator of the universe.² Following Indian philosophical tradition, Gandhi used the term Satya to mean the eternal and unchanging, what alone persists in the midst of change and holds the universe together. For a long time he had said that "God is truth" implying both that truth was one of Gods many properties and that the concept of God logically prior to that of truth. In 1926 he reversed the proposition and said that Truth is God.³ He regarded this as one of his most important discoveries and thought that it crystallised his years of groping. The new proposition implied that the conception of

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2. Bhikhu Parekh - Gandhi's Political philosophy - "Philosophy of religion", 1989, MacMillan Press, pp. 65-68.
 3. Ramshankar Srivastav - Contemporary Indian philosophy (Publication 1984).

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truth was prior to that of God, and that calling it God did not add anything new to it but only made it more concrete and comprehensible to the human mind.

For Gandhi the Brahman, truth or cosmic spirit was nirguna, beyond all qualities including the moral. As he put it -- fundamentally God is indescribable in words... the qualities we attribute to God with the purest of motives are true for us but fundamentally false. And again beyond the personal God there is a "Formless Essence" or cosmic spirit was not a personal being and to think that it was represented a mistaken and inferior

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conception of its nature. Although the cosmic power was without qualities, including personality Gandhi argued that such a limited being as man found it difficult to avoid attributing them to and personalising it. First the human mind was so used to the world of qualities that it did not find it easy to think in non-qualitative terms. Second man was not only a thinking but also a feeling being and the head and the heart had different requirements. The quality-free cosmic power satisfied the head but was too remote, abstract and detached to satisfy the heart. The heart required a being with heart one who could understand and respond to the language of feeling. Gandhi articulated the

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4. Harijan, 23 March, 1940 and 28 July 1946 - For Gandhi the idea of the personal God encourages a "false hope" for miracles, generates fear and can never satisfy the intellect.

5. Harijan, 12 July, 1947.

nature of the cosmic spirit in the following terms. First it was a pure and non embodied consciousness, not the consciousness of some being, for the latter would then have to be other than consciousness, but rather consciousness simpliciter. Second it acted in a law like manner in the sense that it was never arbitrary or capricious. Third, it was active and represented infinite shakti or energy. Fourthly, it pervaded, informed and structured the universe. Fifth it was benevolent⁶. Since the cosmic spirit is supposed to be beyond good and evil, it is not entirely clear what Gandhi meant by calling it benevolent and whether he could consistently so describe it. He seems to have thought that although it was beyond good and evil in the conventional moral sense and its actions were not amenable to moral evaluation, the very facts that the universe functioned in a stable and law-like manner, made life possible, was conducive to the well being of all living beings and offered the necessary conditions for a good life showed that it had a structural bias towards good and was regulated by a well meaning spirit.

As Gandhi put it, there can be no manner of doubt that this universe of sentient being is governed by a law. If you can think of law without its giver I would say that the law is the law giver, that is God.⁷ Cosmic power structured and regulated

6. Young India, 24th November, 1927.

7. Harijan 23 March 1940 and February 1934, Young India 11, October, 1928.

the universe by means of natural laws. The fact that the natural laws were unchanging and conducive to the preservation of the universe indicated that they were not blind but vehicles of an intelligent principle. The spiritual law did not and could not override the natural laws as the cosmic spirit would then be guilty of contradicting himself. Indeed, that he cannot disregard his own laws in an indispensable condition of his very perfection. That's why Gandhi rejected miracles and thought that the religions that stressed them diminished gods rationality and dignity. Like many Hindu thinkers, Gandhi viewed cosmic power differently. Since the universe for him was eternal the question was not only of creating but ordering and structuring it. His god was therefore not a creator but a principle of order a supreme intelligence, infusing and regulating the universe, from within : Unlike a supreme being who can and perhaps must be extra cosmic, a principle of order cannot be. As Gandhi put it, God is not some person outside ourselves or away from the universe. He pervades every thing... (is) immanent in all things. Gandhi was fascinated by the facts that the world should throw up life at all and that living beings should adopt themselves to their environment with such ease. Not surprisingly he sometimes described the cosmic spirit as the totality or the sum total of life.

Gandhi claimed that his own experience of unexpected divine guidance in the form of an "innervoice" in terms of great crises pointed to the existence of cosmic power. Such experiences were

not unique to him but attested by countless men and women over the centuries. These were all real, although obviously they could not be dismissed simply because it did not conform to an apriori and arbitrary standard of evidence. Indeed it was inherently improper to judge spiritual experiences by the criteria of evidence drawn from the physical world.

Even natural scientists talked about a number of entities they had never seen and will never see. We accept their existence because we have confidence in the intellectual caliber and honesty of the scientists and in the rigour of their methods. For Gandhiji the spiritual world was exactly like this. It too involved search and research and had its own methods of investigation, experiments and ways of rigorously training the spiritual scientists. Over the centuries scores of high intellectual men/intellect men had cultivated the science of spirit under taking rigorous research and unanimously arrived in the view that God exists. They included among others, Jesus, Moses, Zoroaster, Mohammed, Kabir, Nanak and great Hindu sages and seers, the Buddha, Mahavira, Ramakrishna and Rai Chandbhai. They could not all be dismissed and decluded and confused for their conduct and character had been profoundly transformed for the better by their spiritual experiences and mere delusions could never have

8. Harijan, 8th July, 1933.

and such a lasting impact. Turning now the other criteria of rational faith, Gandhi contended that faith in the existence of the cosmic spirit was a better guide of life than its opposite. It made easier to bear the burdens of life, encouraged men to trust one another and guarded them against the cynicism provoked by the ingratitude and meanness of their fellows. It helped them to resist the temptations, to bend moral rules to suit their narrow personal interests, inspired them to great acts of sacrifice and gave them the strength to launch struggles and take risks they otherwise would not. Although one could not be absolutely certain of the existence of the cosmic spirit belief in it had beneficial consequences and was "better hypothesis" than its opposite.¹⁰ On the point of inability to comprehend God's nature and mode of operation, Hinduism takes an optimistic view of human powers and believes that man can discover and see God by following the rigorous and carefully worked out programme of spiritual training and meditation.

When the young and sceptical Swami Vivekananda asked Ramakrishna Paramhansa, a great 19th Century Yogi, if he had seen God, the latter replied - "Yes I have seen him more vividly than I see you and you can him too". The history of Hindu religious thought contains many such examples.

9. Bhikhu Parekh - 'Gandhi's Political Philosophy' - 'Philosophy of religion', Ch. 3, p. 76.

10. Harijan, 25th April 1936.

For Gandhi a specific conceptions of God forms the basis of every religion. Since conceptions of God vary from man to man, he argues that there are as many religions as men, each men relating himself to God and worshiping him in his own way. Like most Hindus Gandhi has considerable difficulty coming to terms with organised religion and single conceptions of God and the uniform structure of beliefs lying at its basis. He acknowledges that men might find sufficient similarities between their conceptions of God to induce them to belong a common religion. However he is convinced that since men are naturally different, their conceptions and ways of relating to him can never be completely identical. Every organised religion must therefore remain a loose fellowship of believers and accommodate, even encourage, individual diversity. Insistence on total credal conformity denies their individuality, violates their spiritual integrity and leads to untruth. For Gandhi every major religion articulates a unique vision of God and emphasises different features of the human condition. The idea of God as a loving father is most fully developed in Christianity and the emphasis on love and suffering is also unique to it. I cannot say that it is singular and it cannot be found also in other religions. But the presentation is unique. Austere and rigorous monotheism and the spirit of equality are most beautifully articulated in and peculiar to Islam. The distinction between impersonal and personal conceptions of God the principles of the unity of all life and the

doctrine of ahimsa are distinctive to Hinduism. Every religion has a distinct moral and spiritual ethos and represents a wonderful and irreplaceable "spiritual composition". to a truly religious man all religions should be equally dear.¹¹ Gandhi argues that since the cosmic power is infinite and the limited human mind can grasp only a "Fragment of it" and that too inadequately, every religion is necessarily limited and partial.

Even those claiming to be directly revealed by God are revealed to men with their fair share of inescapable human limitations and communicated to others in necessarily inadequate human language.¹³ To claim that a particular religion offers an exhaustive or even definite account of the nature of the cosmic spirit is to imply both that some men are free from inescapable human limitations and that God's partial and thus to be quality of both spiritual arrogance and blasphemy. Since no religion is final and perfect, each can greatly benefit from a dialogue with other religions.¹⁴ Unlike Rammohun Roy, the Brahmos and the other Hindu leaders, Gandhi does not think that the purpose of inter-religious dialogue is to distil their common or complemen-

11. Young India, 11 August 1920, 12 August 1920, and 25th September 1924.

12. Young India, 22 September 1927 and 16th February 1934.

13. Iyer, Vol. II, Page 539.

14. Young India, 19 January, 1928 and Harijan 2nd February 1934 and 28 July, 1946.

tary insights and create a new and higher universal religion. Rather its purpose is three fold. First it cultivates humility and enables each religion to understand the others better and to feel relaxed enough to assimilate from them whatever it finds worth accepting. Second it enables each to understand itself better and to appreciate both its uniqueness and similarities with the others. Third it lifts each religion above the superficial level of beliefs and rituals deepens its spirituality and enables it to catch a glimpse of the eternal religion laying beyond all religions.

Since Gandhi believed that all religions charted the identical spiritual terrain from different directions he thought that they had much to say to each other. Accordingly he made it a practice to read passages from different religions at his prayer meetings and encouraged his follower to make a "reverential study" of their basic texts. When he was reading the new testament with the students of Gujarat Vidyapith, there was a public protest. He replied :

"I regard my study and reverence for the bible, the Koran and the other scriptures to be wholly consistent with my claim to be, a staunch sanatani Hindu. My respectful study of other religions has got not abated my reverence for and my faith in the Hindu scriptures. They have broadened my view of life. They have enabled me to understand more clearly many an obscure pas-

sage in the Hindu scriptures. While all religions are "equally valid" for Gandhi he thinks it is possible to compare them in terms of the degree to which they realise the essential nature of religion. He works out four criteria. (1) Religion is ultimately a matter of how one lives not what one believes and beliefs are important only in so far as they inspire morally desirable conduct. (2) Since all religions are inherently partial, the more open and tolerant, a religion and the more it welcomes a dialogue with the others, the better it is. (3) Since each individual is unique and relates to God in his own way, the greater the scope for self-expression, offered by a religion, the better it is. (4) Finally since "God creates and loves all loving beings, a true religion must be based on the twin principles of the unity of all men and of all lives". The greater the scope for compassion in a way of life, the more religion it has, Gandhi argues.

16

Gandhi thinks that judged by the criteria, Hinduism has an edge over other religion. It is most tolerant, most free of dogmas, gives the largest scope for self-expression and offers the highest expression and application to the principle of

15. Bhikhu Parekh - Gandhi's political philosophy a critical examination, Hampshire, MacMillan Press, 1989, Ch. 3, PP. 82-83.

16. Bhikhu Parekh - "Gandhi's Political philosophy"- Chapter 3, Gandhi's philosophy of religion, P. 83..

universal compassion. Like the Christian missionaries who using their religions as the model of a "proper religion", dismissed Hinduism as not really a religion at all. Gandhi universalised the Hindu conception of religion and naturally found the others difficient. Unlike them however, he did not think unfavourably of other religions or refuse to call them such.

For Gandhi a truely religious man should aim to live at three levels, representing increasingly higher form of spirituality. Firstly his own religion is his necessary starting point and he should endeavour to live by its central values. Secondly, he should respect, enter into a dialogue with and assimilate from other religions whatever he finds valuable. He should eventually seek to go beyond all, organised religions and practice the pure religion in which prophets, priests, images, beliefs and rituals are all transcended. Gandhi's own religions evolution followed this pattern. He was born and for a time lived as a Hindu; he later generously borrowed from other religions and enriched his own, over time he evolved and practised a religion being a strong resemblance to what he called "pure religion". In this context the Christian biographers statement may be highlighted. A few days ago I was told that "he is a "Buddhist". Not long since a Christian news paper described him as a Chris

17. Young India 21 March, 1929.

18. Ibid.

tian Mohammadan, an extraordinary mixture indeed. His views are too closely allied to Christianity to be entirely Hindu, and his sympathies are so wide and catholic that one would imagine he has reached a point where the formulae of sets are meaning less.¹⁹

For Gandhi the modern age was the age of politics par excellence. Almost all aspects of individual and social life directly or indirectly organised and administered by the state. Its presence was ubiquitous, and all human relationships were politically mediated. He thought this was particularly true of India and all other colonies.²⁰ Since politics was so pervasive, Gandhi advanced the fascinating thesis that it was the central terrain of action in the modern age. In a politically dominated age it was impossible to serve ones fellow men and eliminate social and economic ills without active political involvement. Gandhi thought that if political life could be spiritualised, it would have a profoundly transformative effect on the rest of society. In every age a specific area of life was the unique testing ground of religion and morality and offered them a unique opportunity to revitalise themselves. In the modern age it was politics, and no religion could be taken seriously, that failed to address itself to its political challenges. In modern age and especially in India, political action was therefore the only available path to moksha, a truly revolutionary view in the

19. J.J. Doke, M.K. Gandhi an Indian patriot, p. 12.

20. Young India, 2 March 1922, 18 June 1925 and Oct. 1, 1931.

Indian context. The fundamental principles of Hinduism were being weighed in the political scale, and its only chance of regenerating itself lay in reaffirming them on the political plane. As Gandhi put it "Every age is known to have its predominant mode of spiritual effort best suited for the attainment of moksha. Whenever the religious spirit is on the decline, it is received through such an effort in tune with the times. In this age, our degradation reveals itself through our political condition perceived this right at the beginning of his public life but also followed the principle in action. Every one had realised that popular awakening could be brought about only through political activity. If such activity was spiritualised, it could show the path of moksha. In this age, only political sannyasis can fulfill and adorn the deal of sunnyasi, others will more likely than not disgrace the sannyasis saffron garb. No Indian who aspires to follow the way of true religion can afford to remain aloof from politics. In other words, one who aspires to truly religious life cannot fail to undertake public service as his mission, and we are today so much taught up in the political machine that service of the people is impossible without taking part in politics. In comparing to present day with older days he argues, "in older days", our peasants, though ignorant of who ruled them, led their simple lives free from fear, they can no

21. Harijan 12 September 1936.

longer afford to be so unconcerned. In the circumstances that obtain today, in following the path of religion they must take into account the political conditions. If our Sadhus, rishis, munis and priests realised the truth of this, we would have a 'servant of India society' in every village, the spirit of religion would come to prevail all over India, the political system which has become odious would reform itself.

22

For Gandhi then every Indian had a duty in the modern age to become politically involved. The purpose of political engagement was to regenerate India in its every aspects of its lives. Political involvement therefore took a number of forms and occurred at a variety of levels. Although, participation in the struggle for independence was obviously important, it was not the most important and could itself take different forms. Since independence was merely formal and had no meaning without national regeneration, true politics in Gandhi's view consisted in revitalising Indian society, culture and character by working in the villages, fighting against local injustices, helping people acquire courage and self respect, building up their organised strength and in general devoting one self to any of the 18 items of the constructive programme. Every activity that contributed to India's regeneration and made it just and cohesive was politi-

22. Bhikhu Parekh - Gandhi's political philosophy - Spiritually, politics and Hinduism, Hampshire, MacMillan Press 1989, Ch. 3, P. 101.

cal in nature. Since "true politics" was primarily concerned with man's moral and spiritual development, it involved removing his addition to the state and necessarily occurred outside it. For Gandhi then the pursuit of moksha consisted in self purification and the active service of all men. Sometimes he called the former spirituality the latter morality and the two together religion defining it as spiritually grounded and orientated morality.²³ For him morality was at once both social and spiritual, both are directed and self-directed, and a moral being must act on two places at once, the world as well as his soul. All religious traditions have perceived a potential conflict between the concerns of the soul and the world, and warned against excessive preoccupation with the latter even in the morally acceptable form of social service. Gandhi disagreed and argued that the traditional view rested on three false assumptions. (1) God was separate from the world as otherwise; this service could not conflict with that of the world; (2) His own salvation was every man's sole or highest concern; (3) His salvation might conflict with and be hampered by worldly involvements. For him God was not separate from but identical with the totality of living beings, and there was therefore no question of his service conflicting with theirs.²⁴ Gandhi not only linked but

23. Preface to Autobiography.

24. Young India, 23 February, 1922.

also identified the "vita activa" and the vita contemplative, and gave political life a spiritual foundation. First, moksha consisted in identification with the Brahman. Second, since the Brahman was manifested in all living beings, moksha consisted in identification with all living beings, especially men. Third, love was the only means of identification, therefore moksha involved universal love. Fourth, love implied active and dedicated service to one's fellowmen, including fighting against inequalities and injustices. Fifth, in the political dominated modern age and especially in a poor and subject country like India, injustices could not be fought without engaging political action, in the wide sense in which Gandhi used the term. Sixth, politics so understood was therefore the only or at any rate the most effective path to moksha in modern age. Gandhi's conclusion that politics was a spiritual activity was not novel and had been advanced by a large number of his predecessors such as Gokhale, Tilak Ranade and Aurobinda and many others. Indeed the phrase "spiritualisation of politics" seems to have been first used by Gokhale and Gandhi himself acknowledged that he had borrowed it from his political guru. Several important differences, however, separated them from Gandhi. First unlike them he offered well considered reasons for regarding politics as a spiritual activity. Second while many of them separated politics and spirituality and talked of spiritualising politics, for Gandhi the two were identical. Politics as he defined it was itself a spiritual activity and all true spirituality culminated in politics.

Third, for most of them spirituality largely meant morality and politics was spiritual in the sense of being a moral activity. Hardly any of them saw it as a vehicle of moksha. Indeed, they would have been horrified by such a view. Finally many of them generally defined morality in social terms and equated politics with social reform. Gandhi was one of the first to define morality in political terms and politics in terms of active struggle against injustices and oppression.

Gandhi well knew that his theory of morality represented a radical departure from Hindu religious tradition and that his only hope of getting it widely accepted consisted in criticising and drastically reinterpreting the latter.²⁵ He distinguished between philosophical and practical or popular Hinduism, the two extremes which in his view it had become polarised, and contended that they had failed in their own different ways to develop a satisfactory theory of morality.²⁶

(ii) Western secularism :

The term secularisation came into use in European languages at the peace of west phalia in 1648, where it was used to describe the transfer of territories previously under ecclesiastical control to the domination of laying political authorities. Later the term secularisation was applied in a different though

25. Harijan, 8th December, 1946.

26. Ibid.

related sense, to the dispensation of priests from their vows. The term was applied in even more diverse ways once the concept acquired a more general sociological connotation in the twentieth century. Sociologists have used this word to indicate a variety of processes in which control of social space, time, facilities, resources and personnel was lost by religious authorities and in which empirical procedures and worldly goals and purposes displaced ritual and symbolic patterns of action directed towards other worldly or supernatural ends. So secularisation relates essentially to a process of decline in religious activities, beliefs, ways of thinking and institutions that occurs primarily in association with or as an unconscious or unintended consequence of other processes of social structural change. Secularism is an ideology, its proponents consciously denounce all forms of supernaturalism and the agencies devoted to it, advocating non-religious or anti-religious principles as the basis for personal morality and social organisation. From the religious point of view, the term "secular" is used in a pejorative sense, and from the non religious point of view, it tends to be used in an absolutistic sense. Its root meaning is derived from the latin word 'SACCULUM' which means "the age", 'the world' or "this age" or "this world". Later on, it was interpreted as the opposite of sacred and was identified with a religious institutions

27. The Encyclopedia of religion, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1987, Page 159,160, Vol. 13.

(i.e. the Church) and this led to the distortion of the meaning of both - the secular and the sacred. This resulted in the various interpretations of the concept of secularism.

Encyclopedia of social sciences defined "secularism to be defined as the attempt to establish an autonomous sphere of knowledge, purged of supernatural, fideistic presuppositions. The new schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of religious knowledge defines it as "an atheistic and materialistic movement, and goes on to state, "the sole ethical principle of the school was utilitarian and its dogmatic position was entirely negative, denying the justifiability of assuming the existence of God, the divine governance of the world, the reasonableness of prayer and the possibility of the future life. At the same time this position was primarily not one of absolute denial but rather extreme agnosticism with the assumption that what cannot be positively and indubitably known should be ignored, but in theory and in practical life.

Secularism as a historical process:- Secularism has occurred through out the history. Unevenly but in a broadly discernable pattern. In pre literate societies, apprehensions that

28. G.J. Holyoake, the origin and nature of secularism (London, 1896), p. 41.

29. The New Schaff - Herzog Encyclopedia of religious knowledge (Michiyan, 1959), Vol. X, p. 326.

may be considered supernaturalist were both ubiquitous and inextricably intermingled with empirical knowledge and rational techniques. Explanation evoked super empirical entities, social goals were confused with symbolic acts and magical means were intermixed with pragmatic procedure. Steadily the process, which Max Weber designated, "the disenchantment of the world" drained natural phenomena of their magico-religious meaning as men acquired more matter of fact, positivistic orientations. The development of monotheistic religions involved in the rationalization and systematization of conceptions of the supernatural. This process was evident in the history of Judaism, steadily extinguished the preexisting plethora of random, local magical ideas and local deities. It introduced a very universalistic spirit made religious apprehensions ethical and gradually established a coherent conception of an increasingly transcendent and universal deity .

The doctrine of secularism has been used by scholars to attack most of the contemporary isms . These include scientific humanism, naturalism and materialism, agnosticism and positivism, intellectualism, rationalism, existentialism and philosophy; nationalism, and totalitarianism, democratic faith and communism, utopian idealism, optimism and the idea of progress, moral

30. Encyclopedia of religion, MacMillan Publishing Company, (New York, 1986), Vol. 13, P. 162.

ism and a moralism, ethical relativism and nihilism; The industrial revolution and its divorce from the nature, modern education in separation from religion, historical method when applied to the Biblical revelation, mass atheism and depersonalization of man.

31

From the point of view of philosophy, we find that secular trends are reflected in "cosmism" temporalism, world affirmation, worldliness etc. A very sober approach to give expression to this view may be observed in the statement of H.M.

Kellen. Wherever salvation is sought by means of science and by technology based on science, men are freer, healthier, better fed and happier more peaceful and live longer.

32

Broadly speaking there are three shades of secularism, depending on the type of status they have granted to religion under their secular society.

The first is the marxist view. Marxism has been undoubtedly, the biggest anti-religious force in the present century. It is a bold antithesis to religion. Marx considered religion as the source of exploitation of the have-nots. Marx wrote man makes religion, religion does not make man. Religion is the sign of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of

31. E.E. Aubrey, *Secularism a myth* (London 1956), p. 25.

32. John Dewey and Horace M. Kellen eds., *the Burtr and Rusdi case* (New York 1940, pp. 35-36)

the people. He (Marx) believed that if man was to live on this earth, god must go. A similar antimony was eloquently brought out by Dr. Hushin who said, the most important contribution that religion of this world could make to modern societies in the world today would be to commit suicide. The socialist societies have ideologically dethroned divine deities and have come to pragmatic terms with the social realities of religion. They discard religion so that they can present a better world and the better life for the man on this planet so that he may stop searching for the mirage of heaven. In other views the concept of secularism, in the present century originated in the west, where it started as movement against the high handedness of the church in the matters relating to civil life. Secularism was thus put forward, more as a solution to the church state controversy than philosophical ideology. It was more a political than political ideology. Later it assumed the form of a political ideology in the hands of the Marxists.

33. "The contribution to the critique of Hegels-philosophy of right" in Karl Marx and Ergels "On Religion" (Moscow 1960) pp. 41-42.

It is for this reason that western secularists believed in a strict separation of the spiritual and political authority. By putting these two authorities in a watertight compartment, the possibility of a future conflict is avoided.

In the west, the concept of secularism has been changing its shades from one country to another. The British concept is quite different from the American concept. In Britain there is a great divergence between theory and practice. In theory Britain is an atheocratic state with its own national Anglican church, and the king or the queen as the head of the church, with a title of the "defender of faith". In practice British people are secular minded. They believe in the rule of law and freedom for all. They believe in religious liberty to all. They have a tolerant view about religion. There are hardly any constitutional safeguards guaranteeing a secular society, and yet English society is both secular and religious at the same time. They do not deny the importance of religion in man's life and yet they do not let religion intrude in their civil life. The American concept on the other hand, attempts to constitutionalise the whole thing. The United States constitution established a state which was secular and separate from the church. The USA supreme Court has explained the meaning of the separation of church and state. Neither the state nor the federal govt can set up a church. Neither can it pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions or prefer one religion over another. No tax in any amount, large or small can be levied to support any religious activity or institu-

tions, what ever they may be called, or what ever form they may adopt to teach or practise religion. Neither a state nor a federal govt can openly or secretly participate in the affairs of any religious organisation or group and vice-versa. ³⁴ The Separation was for adual purpose - to keep the states hand out of religion and also to keep the hand to religion away from the state. By another important decision of the supreme court of US, the question whether Separation meant merely that the state should treat all religions equally or not, was finally resolved.

It was held that the separation was not to secure equal treatment by the state. Of various religions but to uproot all relationship between the two. ³⁵ Thus the Amercial Concept of secularism is essentially a negative concept in nature.

Freedom of religion in the US constitution implies two principles. First, to ensure that the government be secular, it is forbidden to pass a law respecting an establishment of religion". Secondly it is addressed to the individual and to the religious institutions he creates. By its terms, the govt is to make no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion". Both these principles have been set in the first Amendment of the constitution. govt

34. The supreme Court [330US. 1(1947) Everson vs. Board Of education.

35. MLCollum vs. Board of education, 333 US 203, at 213, 227 and 231.

originally meant federal govt but the supreme court has firmly established the principle that one purpose of the fourteenth amendment was to guarantee the first amendment freedoms gainst a state invasion and this doctrine is beyond controversy. ³⁶

In France and other catholic countries, secularism took basically a different turn. Where as the English lay man carried over his sectarian convictions into political and social spheres and gradually diluted them to apoint where they did not offend representatives of the bother sects. the freech layman sought to occupy a more vital place for himself in the church, which has so far ignored him.

The development of secularism in Franch was greatly affected by the fact that anti clerican and anti theological view coincided with the rise of the middle class. The cultured bourgeoisie, shut out from the place in church, resenting partiality shown to the clerical hierarchy as having the monopoly of ex pound religious doctries brokeaway from church. They radically attacked the other worldliness of theologician. The spread of such seular attitudes led to an exclusive emphasis on the Practical and immediately verifiable elements inlife as distinguished from theological theories of the otherworld of theological metaphysics. instead of hankering after the mirage of mere imaginative, mysterious and vague world, they were determine to attain the maximum of social Justics and happiness through the most enlightened methods envolved through science and reason. As a aresult of

36. Cantwell v. Connecticut, 310 US, 296, 84L, ed, 1213 (1940)

these different types of thinking, two patterns of church and state relationship emerged. The first was an establishment of a particular church, recognised as the religion of the state, and rest of the other churches enjoying a degree of freedom, which differed according to the circumstances of the states. The second was of all the churches enjoying equality of status. Despite the fact that the church and its followers enjoyed liberty of religion, the state was not by any means secular, since it regulated and controlled in both the patterns the affairs of the church. In the first place, it was concerned with the establishment and maintenance of one church, in the second, of multiple establishments.

In the west "secularism" both in its intellectual and Political aspects has passed through various phases. The meta-physical -natural law period witnessed the emergence, under secular auspices of rationality grounded philosophical system of self contained and self evident political principles and systematically formulated Political conceptions of the world. In this phase, there formulated Political conceptions of the world. In this phase, there was a tendency to carry over to secular realm a number of older idealistic elements which has been identified with religion. In the second phase there were several type of compromises between secularism and religion. In most effective one was that of John Locke who fused Renaissance humanism, stoic natural law formulae and Erasmian conception of christianity as

primarily a system of ethics into one integrated system later the forces of secularism, repudiating the universalistic formulae, characteristics of medieval thought and placing their reliance on a more precise methodology, turned to the investigations of individual phenomena and to a more specialised inquiry to social Problems. In the next phase, realistic and orientalist doctrines regarding basic and inevitable disparities between different nation states led to the development of exclusive particularism and the revival of nationalism., The revolt against particularism, later led to a revival of Juristic Universalism, based on theories regarding universality of human nature and of humanitarianism and the emergence of socialism or the attempt to establish maximum of social Justice and welfare of this world. There was also an increased emphasis on practical and immediately verifiable elements in life. But on account of the fear of soviet union, the latest trend in west particularly in united states, is once again in the direction of hard headed realism, an increasing belief in the efficacy of force and violence a loss of faith in higher possibilities of human nature and cynical attitude towards all forms of idealism.

So the concept of secularism in its modern form which was expressed by George Holyoake" for a amelioration of the miserable conditions of the labourers during the industrial revolution took different dimension in different western countries and at last reached in its present shape.

Gandhi, BJP and Western Secularism:-

According to BJP, the state is brought into existence to protect the nation, produce and maintain conditions in which the ideals of the nation can be translated into reality. The ideals of the nation constitute "chiti" which is analogous to the soul of an individual. The laws that help to manifest and maintain "chiti" of a nation are termed as Dharma of that nation. Hence as a repository of a nation's soul it is supreme. If Dharma is destroyed, the nation perishes and who abandons Dharma, betrays the nation. Dharma is in relation to God, temples and mosques; it is said Dharma is not confined to the above but it is much wider. In this approach BJP is quite nearer to Gandhi and his view of Dharma as a positive good. But it is directly contradicting the western concept of secularism like Gandhi, believing that without observance of Dharma an ideal society cannot sustain.

37

In the past temples have served an effective medium to educate people in their Dharma. To attend temple or mosque constitutes apart of religion, sect, creed but not necessarily "Dharma". Many misconceptions that originated from faulty English translations, include this most harmful confusion of Dharma with religion. By contradicting religion which is a product of the West it advocated

37. Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya " Integral Humanism Bharatiya Janata Party Publication 1965 April pp. 46- 48.

Dharma and religion are not same. On the other hand increasing ignorance, neglect of our society and dharma, and greater acceptance of European life became the outstanding features of our education. As a result all the characteristics of a narrow religion especially as practised in the west, were attributed automatically to the concept of Dharma also. In west bitter conflicts, battles were fought in this name of religion, all these were enblock listed on the debit side of "Dharma" also. We felt that in the name of dharma also battles were fought. However battles of religion and battles of Dharma are two different things. Religion means a creed, or a sect; it does not mean dharma. Dharma is very wide concept and touches almost every aspects of human life. It sustain the society and the whole world. That which sustains is "Dharma". But critically analysing the theory and practice of Dharma of BJP it is clearly evident that building temple to maintain and sustain Hindu Dharma and creating communal tension is contradicting what it Preach and pratise in day to day action.

For Gandhi religion i.e Dharma is the end in it self and every thing including state should be subordinated for maintenance of peace, progress, prosperity and harmony in both national and international sphere. But for BJP Dharma is now working as an instrument i.e. mean to an end i.e. to achieve Political power.

38. Ibid p. 47.

Regarding the dynamic nature of Dharma it said, though it is eternal and Universal, it also changes with the changing of time, place and circumstances. It is a fact that a human being requires food for maintaining is today. However that a particular person should eat in how much quantity, at what intervals is all decided according to circumstances. It is possible at times that even fasting is advisable. Similarly the principles of Dharma have to be adopted to changing place and time. So it also advocated different type of "dharma" at different places and performing different functions. Criticising the tradition and custom bounded constitution of UK and adding dynamism and change to Indian constitution with the progress of Society, it believed that "which ever tradition proved an obstacle in the progress of England should be discarded. The traditions are respected every where, Just as in England. We have a written constitution, but even this written constitution cannot go contrary to the traditions of this country. In as much as it does go contrary to our traditions, it is not fulfilling Dharma. That constitution which sustains the nation is in the tune of Dharma. Dharma sustains the nation. hence Primary importance should be given to Dharma which is considered sovereign. All other entities, institutions and authorities derive their power from Dharma and re subordinate to it.

One of the best comprehensive studies on Indian and BJP Gandhi approach to it, has been done by Donald Eugene Smith Under the title 'Indian as a secular state'. Succinctly summing up the

difference in approach of Gandhi and BJP, Smith write, Gandhi's starting point was that of a religious man, who believing all religions to be true, accepted a theory of state which fit in this belief hence the secular state. He perceptively observed "despite the composite nature of Indian culture, Hinduism remain by far the most powerful and pervasive element in that culture." Those who lay great stress on the composite nature of Indian culture, frequently minimise this basic fact. Hinduism has in deed provided the essential genius of Indian culture. The Ramayan and mahabharat may evoke feelings of piety and religious reverence in the Hindu. But they are in valuable treasures of Indian cultural heritage, of which every Indian, Hindu, Muslim or christian ought to feel proud. Breaking a cocoanut or lighting a lamp may be part of a religious ritual with Hindus. But over a period of time these have become a distinctive and graceful Indian customs. A secularism that means hostility to any thing that has a Hindu tinge about it would not be acceptable to India.

39

By contradicting other Political parties and their concept of Secularism BJP stated that if Muslim league, Akalis and the Allah Tigers of Kashmir have claim themselves to be Secularist and there fore, like the socialist hat that fits one and all, we

39. L.K. Advani, Hindu Tinged Secularism Calcutta, 6th April, 1990 pp. 59-60.

will also have to call our own Brand of Secularism a piece of cloth which can cover the naked truth about all those who bandy it. Every group claims itself to be more secular than every other. When Gandhi called it sarvadharm Samabhaya i.e. equality of all religions and some people relate it with human right. BJP put it on the par with the eternal concept of Hindustva. ⁴⁰

Comparsion of Gandhi & BJP

Gandhi rejected western secularism becuase he thought that Politics divorced from the religion will be dragged to the destruction. To be religious means to be virtuous and moral man and no Politics can be survive without morality and virtue. BJP's rejection to secularism and acceptance of Positive secularism is also quite approximate to Gandhian secularism but when Gandhi though secularism interms of Composite culture, Minority protection at the same time BJP things interms of appeasement of none and equality to all and provide quarantee for the life and liberty of minority community.

The sole motto behind Gandhi was to maintain a unified India irrespective of religion but for BJP it is maintenance of uniform civil code, thus imposition of the BJP's concept of Hindustva over the people of India.

40. Muzaffar Hussain, Secularism is the strategic bridge that leads across to democracy, organiser, 1993 p.25.

Though both Gandhi and BJP rejected the western concept of Secularism on the same fundamental ground and make Dharma the basic structure of society still in their (BJP & Gandhi) approach, orientation and altitude towards its operation and relation with the social structures and Problems is some what different. Here if the theory of social change, with the change of time and place will be given a slightest heed then the maxim of differentiation will be envitable and unadvoidable.

CHAPTER III

Gandhi and BJP : Religion and Politics Paradigm

A great spiritual leader, Mahatma Gandhi, was not a highly speculative thinker, rather a strong man of action; whatever preached was not to form a theory rather he, practised that in his life. He was a religious reformer and political leader. Contradicting the general notion of religion and politics, i.e., religion has nothing to do with the Politics he said, Politics divorced from the religion will be dragged to the destruction. His political philosophy is the practical implication of his religious belief. To be religious is to be virtuous, to be a moral man. Regarding the controversy of the origin of the state and the ideal relationship between individual liberty and state authority, he said the individual supremacy should be regarded. The state is a building and individuals are the component parts of the state. Now comes the use of morality. If the bricks in the house are joined with clay, the house will be weak but joined and plastered by cement, it will make the house stronger one. In the same way, when in the national building the individuals are joined and plastered by morality, that moral relation strengthens the building more and more. Therefore, the state and the politics must have a religious base. A religious life is a purified life with strong social and political impact. To be religious is to be virtuous. Religion tames the savage nature of man. It purifies human motive and conduct and stimulates the cooperative and sympathetic nature of man. Politics is not a

game that is to win by politicians rather it is a great service to the people. Hence, without purified motive and conduct, a man cannot go ahead in the political field. That's why he made religion and morality the basis of politics. In his words "for me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and of humanity. I want to identify myself with every thing that lives. In the language of Gita I want to live in peace with both friend and foe. So my patriotism is for me a stage on my journey to the land of eternal freedom and power. Thus it will be seen that for me there were no politics devoid of religion. They sub-serve religion. Politics bereft of religion is a death-trap because they kill the soul".

A faithful practice of moral vows of non-violence, truth and love can only ensure religion in politics and only that will be anon-violent politics - a peaceful politics not a power politics. This faith and devotion in truth brought him to the politics. therefore, that cannot be violent. So far as the political ideology is concerned, Gandhiji believes that value of a government depends not on its form but on its spirit. Whether the form may be either communism, Bolshevism socialism of the west or fascism, anarchism, democracy or capitalism - the value of it lies in its spirit. If it is able to provide a peaceful atmos-

1. Gandhi, M.K. "My Mission", Young India, April 3, 1924, Page 112.

phere and promote general good to all, then it is alright, otherwise is simply a show. Bertrand Russell has rightly observed, "the purpose of the communists is one with which, on the whole, I am in agreement, my disagreement is as to means rather than ends. But in the case of fascist, I dislike the end as much as the means". He also further added that "fascists and communists, having in their minds a picture of society as whole, distort individuals so as to make them fit into a pattern those who cannot be adequately distorted are killed or placed in concentration camps. I do not think an outlook of this sort which totally ignores the spontaneous impulses of the individuals, is ethically justifiable or can in the long run, be politically successful".²

Gandhiji accepted socialistic pattern of democracy as a political theory that may be known as Gandhism. He was a spiritual thinker and a moral thinker. Nothing could satisfy him unless it was guided by moral principle. This religious ideal found concrete shape in his political activity. He himself told I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of the mankind and that I could not do unless I took part in politics. The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide, social, economic, political and purely religious work into water

2. Russell, Bertrand, in *Praise of Idleness*, p. 117.

tight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of "sound and fury signifying nothing".³

Gandhiji never believed in power politics. Politics for him, is a means for the upliftment of all. Therefore the state should provide an atmosphere in which individuals can get equal opportunity of right and justice, equal opportunity of self development. Now one thing must be clear that what he mean by power politics. After independence, when the Congress took the charge of Government, it was the duty of the Congress to provide a suitable atmosphere for which the people of India was claiming. The Congress had vehemently criticised the paternalistic rule of British Govt. that had destroyed the initiative of the public. But what had been done by our own govt. by declaring the state as a welfare state they tried to turn over everything with power. Naturally inevitably dependence on the state was bound to come. It can rightly be said that in that state the people become a hard of sheep, always relying on the shepherds' staff soon

3. Gandhi, M.K., Nonviolence in Peace and War, Navajivan Published House, Ahmedabad, Vol. I, PP. 181-82.

becomes a rod of iron, and the shepherd's turn into wolves".

In the first stage, the planner of the nation were much interested in national building. Their aim was to make India great and powerful by adequate military potentiality with big industries and business to make it modern and up-to-date. Gandhiji could never accept this plan of the Congress and said, that it was no secret that the Congress willingly said good bye to non-violence when it accepted power.

The concept of democracy is based purely on people's will. He has rightly defined it, "the art and science of mobilising the entire physical, economic⁵, spiritual resources of all the various section of the people in the service of the common good of all".⁵ The work of the govt. is to face the problems of life through its own collective effort. In a real form of democracy, people will learn their hard experience of work. He was a born democrat. In the western democracy 'the greatest good of the greatest number' is given the primary importance, but in India, the democracy will have to fight for the good of all. He told, my notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest".⁶ It is govt. of the people, by the people and for the people. That is pure Ahimsa.

4. Jung, C.G. Essays on contemporary Events, Routledge and Kegan-paul, London, 1947, p 53.

5. Harijan, 27th May, 1939.

6. Harijan, 27th May, 1939, p. 143.

What he meant for freedom is not only right of the strongest, rather, the right of the weakest, too. He believes in a non-violent state based on moral principle of co-operation and fellow-feeling and not on coercion and intimidation. The state will interfere as minimum as it can do. The state for its public protection and maintenance of peace needs military force but that force, will not be the master rather helper to the state and the people. He had rightly told⁷ "I have not the courage to declare that we can carry on without a police force as I have in respect of an army". But this police force would be "a wholly different pattern from the present day police force. Its rank will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants and not masters of the people. The people will instinctively render them every help and through mutual co-operation, they will easily deal with the ever decreasing disturbances. The police force will have some kind of arm but they will be rarely used. In fact policeman will be reformer⁸. Like Rousseau, he also said that military power of a state can never be a sign of its progress and development but a sign of decadence.

The work of the police is to check anti-social elements in a non-violent state. All other social and economic problems will be solved in a non-violent way. He was confident that our adher

7. Harijan, 1st Sept. 1940, p. 263.

8. Ibid.

ence to the stick of non-violence will provide every success. He had strongly told, "no one trust me with the reins of govt. Otherwise, I would show how to govern non-violently".⁹ The state should promote a non-violent atmosphere, this political ideas was to establish Swaraj, self govt. and that is not possible by force. Of all the countries in the world, India's uniqueness, lies in its non-violent way which is its unbroken tradition and this mission will be far from violence. His firm conviction makes it clear that, "if India looks to the doctrine of the sword, she will cease to be the pride of her heart. India's acceptance to the doctrine of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope, I shall not be found wanting".¹⁰ The light of non-violence can only triumph over the darkness of violence. If few can support this light the darkness is bound to vanish like a chaff before a whiff of wind. His religion lies in his insatiable love for the millions of his country men and of this world. That's why he worked for the freedom of all. First is the political freedom then social and economic freedom and finally altogether, will lead to a "Sarvodaya Samaja" for self-realisation. Adlous Huxley has rightly told that, "Gandhi like Jefferson

9. Harijan, 25th Sept. 1940, p. 262.

10. Young India, 24 Sept., 1938, p. 266.

thought of politics in moral and religious terms". Politics without moral base will be degenerated. It will give birth to dictator and armament race crushing all whatever is valuable in the individuals. This political ideology strengthens the idea of nationalism. But his nationalism is not restricted within the geographical boundaries rather it transcends the line of nationality and rises to the international morality.

The cause of unrest and strife today is the absence of faith in each other. War can be abolished only if national armies are abolished but that is an absurd imagination. Nations are very much ambitious and self-centred today. What we need today is purer roots of action and deep awakening that can only eliminate war. Plato also hold the opinion that if the state is well organised it must be perfectly good. Equal right and justice should be the motto of the politics, "not might is right". The govt. should fulfill the interest of the governed rather than governors. H.G. Wells has rightly told "modern democracy is not only legalism and equalitarianism but it is socialism. It sets its face against all abuses of the advantages of ownership".

But Gandhiji advances one step forward when he utters that modern democracy is not only socialism and not only it abuses the

 11. Spinks, Stephen, Viswabharati quarterly, Gandhi Memorial Press, p. 129.

12. Harijan, Nov. 2, 1947, Page 389.

advantage of ownership rather equates Politics with morality. Though his theory has been sometimes criticised but every where, he has strongly advocated the non-violent basis of the State. He suggested disarmament on the part of the democratic power as the only solution. He has rightly told, "I am as certain as I am sitting here that this would open Hitlers eyes and disarm him". He further added, "perhaps, but it would save the world from the butchery which seems impending". The hardest metal yields sufficient heat even so must the hardest heart melt before the sufficiency of the heat of non-violence, and there is no limit to the capacity of non-violence, to generate heat".¹³ Gandhiji saw violence everywhere and was very anxious for the peaceful consideration. Struggle in Palestine between the Jews and Arabs, fratricidal war in China which was at the climax. The Dutch attack on Republican Indonesia touch the heart of Gandhiji. He was also very much influenced by the Kashmir violence which paved the way for revolutionary idea which latter named Sarvodaya. The western idea of the greatest good of greatest number and Gita's teaching of merger, of oneself in the good of all brought him to the equilibrium point which he called Sarvodaya. Following the foot prints of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the moderate leader from Maharashtra, whom Gandhi reverently called his political guru, was influenced much by the "spiritualisation of

13. Young India, 10th August, 1931.

politics". He stressed the value of morality in politics. Religious basis of politics first started by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa. He was a man of religion, so he turned to politics and looked upon life as a whole. Due to the national character of leadership, he tried to penetrate into the minds of Indians for the cause of political freedom. This germinating idea of political freedom slowly became powerful and settled in "swaraj" for the masses of India. He believed that Swaraj really means "self-government which can be achieved through self-control".¹⁴ His experience with national movement of Africa compelled him to feel the importance of Swaraj for a country like India. For him national life should be so perfect to make it self-regulated. No representation will be necessary, every one will be his own ruler. According to him Swaraj means own Govt. It is self-rule or home-rule but he elaborates Swaraj, as every country is free to eat, free to drink and to breath even so is every nation free to manage its own affairs no matter how holdly.¹⁵

Gandhiji never believed in anarchy, no such anarchism was his political ideal. His ideal state is, "an ordered anarchy" or a state of enlightened anarchy in such a state everybody is his

14. Gandhi, M.K., Sarvodaya, p. 61.

15. Young India, 15th October, 1931.

own ruler¹⁶. In the ideal state there is no political power because there is no state.¹⁷ It is sure that without a Govt. nowhere, a state can exist. From practical point of view, some sort of govt. is essential but it must be non-violent govt, that governs least, a nearest approach to the self-governed stateless society. He was not in favour of excess interference in the life of the individual. Therefore, he stressed on democratic self-govt. But Indian govt. should imitate neither British, Russia, Italy nor any other country. They have systems suited to their,¹⁸ we must have our suited to ours. Regarding the promotion of strong and perfect individual and of self-govt. he stress on introduction and proper implementation of local self govt. through the provisions of Gandhian principles of Directive State policy. First of all, National Unity should start from village. There should be no communal clash. Unity is the only strength of the nation but that can never be established with social disparity. A nations development needs the removal of disparity in all respects. The weaker section of the society should get maximum attention. There should not remain a term in untouchability. Weaker section may be very harmful for the stronger one, like the quick sand to the elephant. By providing equal opportunity to all weak and strong, male and female, rich and poor, the unity can be strengthened. Sanitation, education, village industries,

16. Young India, 18th Nov. 1931.

17. Gandhi, M.K. Young India, 1931, p. 162.

18. Harijan, 2nd Jan. 1937.

service to the backward, all are the parts of the constructing programme.¹⁹ Among the towns and villages, Gandhi think that cities are sucking the village life like blotting papers. He writes that Indian cities as "blotting sheets of London and other western cities which consciously prey upon villages and share with you in exploiting them by becoming the commission agents of England".²⁰ He was opposed to considering villages as backward relics of a primitive economy and society. To him, villages were the soul of India and he wanted them to be creative forces in the advancement of the country.²¹

Adored with religious basis of Politics, Gandhiji began to utter about the greatness of the religion and his religion thus became the axial of his politics. With all greatness as a leader and his power of the pen, Gandhiji cannot in fairness be considered a systematic social and political thinker like Plato and Hegel. Gandhiji's greatness lay in his lofty character, his political and moral leadership, his inner intuitive experience and his message of truth and Ahimsa.²² The novelty of the philos

19. Lal, P.C., Reconstruction and education in rural India, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1st published 1932, p. 25.

20. Gandhi, M.K., To the student (Mingorani Ed) P. 263.

21. Verma, V.P. The Political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 250.

22. Verma, V.P., The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 4.

sophy be perceived by comparing his economic notion with the ideas of Marx, Angel, Marshall, Keynes and Schumpeter. Thus it can be taken into light of the advances in political and juristic thought of Sovigny, Duguit, Sorel, Barker, Kelsen, Laski, Cole etc. Similarly his moral and psychological assumptions can be believed as the western social, political with scientific views. His ethics is as broad as realisation of justice, disarmament, peace and fraternity. His idealistic and social views are very realistic based on the principles of humanistics. According to him, morality is human and humanism is thus apart of religion but not a substitute of it. Regarding democracy and non-violence he said "violence should never be allowed to develop under the form of democracy but if that allowed it will be no democracy but exploitation. A genuine democracy will minimise exploitation and coercion. That's why he defined it "the rule of unadulterated non-violence". He has rightly told that,....

23

Constitutional or democratic govt. is a distant dream so long as non-violence is not recognised as a living force, an inviolable creed, not a mere policy. He advocated a spiritualised democracy based on non-violent revolution. Opinion of the majority will be of great consideration but the opinion of minority must be honoured, even the opinion of an individual must be honoured if it is sound.

23. Harijan, October 13, 1940 p. 230.

Thus the real democracy should discard the tyranny of the majority if it offends the moral sense. A non-violent state or a democracy must be secular. Generally people think, that religion and politics are two different things. Really it is so, if religion is a particular form of religion and politics is free of non-violence and truth. In reality religion is the inner purification love and non-violence. To be religious, is to be virtuous in that case it is common to all religions and the politics is the ground for the proper development of a nation. Therefore, it is only through religious guidelines that man can work in a proper way, a right way wherever he belongs. His concept of religion in its broad sense accepts secularism. In an extraordinary way, he never utters about any particular religion, like Hinduism, Islam or Christianity.

He did not believe in the exclusive divinity of the vedas. To him, Bible, the Koran and the Zend Avesta were as divinely inspired as the vedas. His religious eclecticism was matched by his spirit of protestantism when he declared that he was not bound by an interpretation. However, learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason and moral sense. ²⁴ For him truth is god, that's why even if he could draw the atheists charismatic spell of truth. It is the unique feature that he thoroughly realised

24. M.K. Gandhi, Truth is God, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad 1957.

truth and it became the embarrassing weapon of politics. The realistic approach of Gandhi to a man, for a man, of a man is purely secular, progressive and for all round progress of mankind.

A secular man is not irreligious, if so, it is mere negative approach because a religious man of any religion is not beyond determination but in a very real sense religion of that person is the religion for all in respect of love and faith. If any one thinks that secularism is a particular type of religion that will be a false imagination. It is nothing but faith in universal principles of religions of this world. His belief in man is not for religious approach but on the basis of religion he reconciles himself with self-realisation with service to society. He stressed on the holiness of the living and in the holiness in every action whether it is in the politics or in the social field. Holiness and inner purification are the basis of religion. He insisted more on morality. The basis of religion, he has rightly remarked - "True morality consists not in following the beaten path but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it. It promotes inner discipline in man. To him secularism is not a belief in a particular religion. We had gone through different religions and found the

25. Dhawan, H.N., The Political Philosophy of Mahatama Gandhi, N.P.House, Ahmedabad, 1946, p. 53.

26. Gandhi, M.K., Ethical Religion, p. 38.

universal qualities common to all. His Ram is not different from Allah or Christ. As a synthesiser of world religion he stressed the need of unity in all religions and of all god-heads for the good of all. His religion stands for the unity of religions. He at one side conceived the idea of non-violence, renunciation, detachment, sacrifice and brotherhood for the entire mankind, on the other hand he followed Leo Tolstoy, in village reconstruction, decentralisation and satyagraha. Thus by going through various religious books, philosophy and theories of human welfare, he laid the foundation stone of secularism. Dr. Rajendra Prasad the first President of the Indian Republic, writes, "to the extent that the Indian national life inspired by and patterned after his ideas, it will continue to be a source of inspiration". He further says, "to the extent free India works his ideas and attains progressively higher, integration, civil success in extending the frontiers of culture and blazing a new trail".

Secularism is not a belief in a particular religion, neither it means to deny the religion. India is a big country where believers in different religions live together and we know it well that religion is a faith in higher superman values. Man cannot live without religion hence by accepting the one we cannot

27. The collection of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. I, p.7.

deny the other. Secularism means no privilege on the basis of religion in social, economic and political life. Each one has the same right to live according to his religious faith but at the same time, none has the right to abuse the other religion to which one, he does not belong and for this we need religious tolerance. His concept of religion is communal harmony and universal brotherhood which he dealt in day to day life of mankind on the basis of politics and strengthening the ideal of secularism. The light of Buddha and Mahavir, teaching of Mohammed Saheb and Preaching of Jesus Christ all are for the one end - the humanity and service to mankind. Thus all religions in this sense of the term aims at the purification of the mankind and service to the mankind in this sense the aim fulfills the meaning of secularism. Religion basis of politics thus become truth to Gandhi and he utilised it for all the suffering people of the world. He was thus secular at heart and embraced god as Almighty and truth. Religious are different paths conveying to the some point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals. He defined god as truth - God can be found in inner purification and in love "God cannot be found in temples or idols or places of

28.
28. Gandhi, M.K., Hind Swaraj or India's Home Rule, G.A. Natesan, Madras, 1943. pp. 35-36.

worship built by man's hands nor can he be found by abstinences.
God can be found only through love, not earthly but divine".²⁹

Religion adopted by him as service to mankind and that he had done through politics. He uttered, "I cannot render this service without entering politics. I find myself in them".³⁰ When he uttered the religious basis of politics he never meant that he stressed on any particular religion, rather he meant moral basis of politics. He never supported any state religion but he always appealed that the state should be secular. Everybody should be left free to follow his religion that suited to him. Gandhiji wrote out - "he did not believe in state religion even though the whole community had one religion. The state interference would probably always be unwelcomed. Religion is purely a personal matter. There were in reality as many religions and minds each mind had a different conception of God, from that of the other, he was also opposed to state aid partly or wholly to religious bodies. For he knew that an institution or group which did not manage to finance its own religious teaching was a stranger to true religion. This did not mean that the state schools would not give ethical teachings. The fundamental ethics were common to all religion."³¹

29. Harijan, 23 November, 1947, p. 425.

30. Gandhi, M.K., my religion, p. 51.

31. Harijan, March 16, 1947.

Gandhiji has rightly told "we are all aware of this fact that we have to suffer a lot for the state aided religion or state church". In his words, I do not believe that the state concern itself or cope with religious education I believe of religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations. Do not mix religion and ethics. I believe that fundamental ethics is common to all religions, teaching of fundamental ethics is undoubtedly a function of the state. By religion I do not have in mind fundamental ethics but what goes by the name of denominationalism. We have suffered enough from state aided religion and state church".

32

The passive resistance of new testament impressed him very much. Bhagwat Gita and Tolstoy's Kingdom of God within you made his idea permanent. Henry David Thoreau, like Gandhi, also emphasised on resistance. But there is slightly difference. Thoreau in his Civil Disobedience never hesitated to allow violence if it is needed but Gandhiji checks here. Thoreau wrote...." if (injustice) is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of the injustice to another, then I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine of government".

33

32. Harijan, March 23, 1947.

33. Thoreau, H.D., "Civil Disobedience", p. 95.

to the State, people may show their resentment and may resist. But here Gandhi denied the mode of resistance advocated by Thoreau. For him everywhere the resistance must be non-violent. Civil disobedience is limited to the law of revenue whereas Satyagraha advocated by Gandhi has a dynamic character a wider approach in every field of life wherever injustice and untruth dominating the society. Gandhiji not only preached Satyagraha rather practised it in his life from his childhood. Instead of Thoreau's Civil disobedience Gandhiji named it as civil resistance based on non-violence. Satyagraha utilises non-violent method of non-cooperation, civil disobedience, fasting, picketing and hartal or temporary cessation of work as a protest. Satyagraha is not passive resistance. In its application Satyagraha is more universal than passive resistance.

During Swadeshi movement, Tilak and other extremists advocated this passive resistance but this resistance took different meaning in different places. At the time of anti partition agitation it meant Swadeshi and Boycott, where as Aurobinda described it as disobedience to unjust laws and authority. But Tilak and Aurobinda, though were not violent revolutionary, but they did not condemn revolutionists on moral grounds. Gandhiji strictly advocated Ahimsa and non could sack him even one inch from it in his life. Civil disobedience is the right of the citizen. He may utilise it if the state is lawless; where as,

Satyagraha as a moral prerogative of the human being. Satyagraha is the force of truth and pressure of truth having two attributes - suffering and trust. It is the positive love that can strengthen Dharma and Satyagraha inconsistent with these. It is to convert the opposite by truth, therefore not to compel him by force or violence. "Thus Satyagraha is thus a philosophy of life and technique of politics and it even contemplates stupendous mass action for paralysing the total structure of despotic government".³⁵

Gandhiji firmly believed in fasting and prayer as the other mode of Satyagraha. He believed that the great teachers of the world are bestowed with extra ordinary powers for the good of the humanity and they have acquired through fasting and prayers. These two important weapons motivate the soul power. Prayer is the essence of religion. It is a way to present one's feeling and devotion to god. It is the basis of inner peace. In all other religious forms we find prayer as the method of offering ones own devotion. Prayer is the very soul and essence of religion, and therefore prayer must be the very correct life of man, for no man can live without religion, without prayer there is no inward peace.³⁶ It is so essential

34. Gandhi, M.K. Satyagraha, p. 174.

35. Verma, V.P., the political philosophy of Mahatama Gandhi and Sarvodaya, p. 200.

36. Gandhi, M.K., Nations voice, p. 103.

for soul, as food for the body, prayer and fasting both are treated together and are helpful for the purification of the body and soul. Prayer is not the vain repetition nor fasting mere starvation of the body. Prayer has to come from the heart from which is known god by faith and fasting is abstinence from evil or injurious thought activity or food. Fasting as an important form of Satyagraha but it has to be applied only against those who are bound by ties of close personal affection or are responsive to moral persuasion. By this he wants to say that fasting is a method that can be applied against one has love and sympathy. It cannot be fruitful if applied against a tyrant. In 1924, for Hindu-Muslim unity, he observed 21 days fasting. For self purification it is the best way he thinks. He also did the same in 1933. For common unity he observed fast in Calcutta and Delhi in August 1947 and January 1948 respectively. He was categorical in his view that fasting should be used as the last resort when all other techniques have been explored but have proved wanting. It has to be resorted to only when absolutely necessary. Fasting and prayer increase self discipline and self sacrifice. Besides the above modes of Satyagraha strike or Hartal are another form of Satyagrahi, when one stops

37. Harijan, 10th April, 1937, p. 63.

38. Verma, V.P., Political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya, p. 200.

working. Ahmadabad strike in 1918 was very important when he supported the strike of the workers by fasting. Strike on a mass scale is a form of Satyagraha against the oppressor that had been utilised against the British govt. The object of Hartal is to strike the imagination of the people and the Govt. But he forced the people for repeated strike that would spoil the image of it. To some extent, social boycott is also used. But he repeatedly warned the people to use it frequently. It should be used in a limited sense against black legs in a community who defy public opinion and do not adopt non-cooperation. But social boycott should not be too much violent.

Regarding the non-cooperation technique of Satyagraha he said it means withdrawing their cooperation with the evil doers, people may show their resistance and may compel the ruler to abstain from weakness. But the means adopted must be peaceful and non-violence. Although non-cooperation seems to be negative approach but in reality "It is a positive philosophy of constructive, social and national development". Gandhiji himself wrote in 1930, "A little reflection will show that civil disobedience is unnecessary part of non-cooperation. You assist an adminis

39. Young India, Vol. I, p. 23.

40. Dawan, G.N., The political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 230.

41. Gandhi, M.K., Young India, April 4, 1930.

42
tration must effectively by obeying its orders and decrees".
Even the worst state may have some good points. But if the state
is corrupt, should reject the entire system .
43

Gandhiji had rightly told, disobedience to the civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant, must be based upon some well understood principle, must not be conspicuous above all, must have no ill will or hatred behind it. The authority of the statement be challenged but not in violence. Gandhiji applied civil disobedience of salt law in 1930-34. He recommended the 'Peace Brigade' that is to form non-violent army, they would work as volunteers at the alter of communal frenzy and mob violence. This army will act as an equilibrium to all sorts of riots, disturbances and anti-social activities. Thus it may be said that in his political philosophy, Gandhiji advocated non-violence and morality as the basis of politics. In the state the people will have the right to protest the unjustified and coercive authority. He was truly a religious person - Satya and Ahimsa were the two strong weapons for him and Satyagraha was the

42. Verma, V.P., Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya p. 203.

43. Young India, March 27, 1930.

44. Ibid, Dec. 31, 1931.

45. Verma, V.P., the political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya, p. 208.

path leading to that goal of freedom.

The entire philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi is derived from the principle of spiritual unity. His mission was to establish human relationship through non-violence, love and co-operation. A country where social co-operation and social solidarity resigned at least within caste, within villages and within urban areas has been entirely disrupted and distinguished by unlimited and uncontrolled competition. Hence we need a mutual relationship based on cooperation not on blind competition. This is only possible through a discipline life of the individual in a society in a nation. He had a firm conviction on discipline and for the welfare of the society, for the common good, he was bold enough to resist the coercive authority wherever it crushed the human right and justice. His was a motto to establish a socio-economic structure of non-violent state based on justice and morality not on power and violence. Dhawan has rightly examined the idea of Gandhian philosophy. It is only through the path shown by Gandhi that can be the path guide for the nation and the

46

47

world. If the world is to be saved from the triumph of authority, over liberty and justice, if peace justice, and democracy are to prevail, leaders of unquestioned integrity and a cour-

46. Modern review, Dec, 1919, p. 606.

47. Dhawan, G., the political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, N.P. House, Ahmedabad. 1946, p. 126.

age vigilant civil sense in the mass are indispensable.

Gandhi was not only a political thinker or rather a seer whose constant endeavour for about six decades has been the steady pursuit of moral discipline.⁴⁹

The BJP today, acknowledged successor to the BJS is a mass party with formidable (and, in recent years, rapidly growing) electoral support, which yet embodies the paradox of being constituted by something like an absence. Its cadres and ideology are overwhelmingly borrowed from a formally distinct organisation, the RSS. The bookshop attached to the BJP Central office in New Delhi is strongly bare of ideological literature and stocks little more than party conference reports and manifestos. It seems to generate no autonomous political doctrine and few cultural signs of its own. Particular existence beyond the high investment area of election propoganda; for which, of course, a wide variety of are deployed from wall slogans and photographs, to couplets and posters, stickers, video raths, rallies and motorcades. Since the Rath Yatra days of Advani, however, even the election campaign has become intricably bound up with VHP activities. Advani's rath used and augmented VHP symbols and the movement, while in 4th April VHP rally at Delhi and the Sant

48. Ibid. P.343.

49. Verma, V.P., political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya, p. 341.

Sammelan that preceded it were really the opening of the BJP's election campaign. The BJP Vice President Sunder Singh Bhandari said, the BJP is "political" the VHP "Social" and the RSS "Organisation" and each is independent in its own domain. The distinction quickly broke down as he went on to add that all three were nationalist and all were guided by a 'culture' which was promptly equated with 'the Hindu' ethos. Bhandari has been in the RSS since 1937, and belongs to the original batch of cadres (Alongwith Deen Dayal Upadhya, Vajpayee and Advani) sent by Golwalkar in 1951 to start the BJS.

In 1965, Deen Dayal Upadhyay tried to give the Jan Sangh an ostensibly distinct ideology and impart a veneer of flexibility and openness to the Savarkar-Golwalkar framework through a series of lectures to party members on integral humanism. He claimed to be 'scientific' welcome western science (as distinct from western ways of life) and declared that even the principles of dharma may have to "adopted to changing places and times" certain economic objectives - like full employment and free education and medical treatment - were mentioned for the first time, without specifying concrete methods for realizing such laudable goals. There was little use of the word 'Hindu' and no obvious abuse of Muslims.

50. Tapan Basu, Pradip Dutta and others, "Tracts for the times", Orient longman Ltd., 1993, Ch. 2, pp.47-48.

The fundamentals, however, clearly remain unchanged. A reference was slipped into the 'thousand year old struggle for freedom' and Golwalkar quoted to the effect that while there are good and bad individuals among Hindus and Muslims alike, Hindus are distinctive in the way they always think of good things. When acting as a group change has to be in conformity with our culture, that is our very nature, and here 'Bharatiya integral humanism is opposed to both individual capitalism and marxist socialism, for they are based on harmful western ideas that progress comes through conflict. The ideal in contrast is one of the harmonious relationship everywhere as between a body and its limbs, applied to man and nature, individual and society, labour and capital: an obvious echo of Golwalkar's "agangibhaba". In each interesting gloss on Savarkar, the underlying unity of Bharatiya culture is located not so much in a place of origin as in a distinctive soul or 'identity', and the laws that help manifest and maintain its inner essence constitute the dharma of the nation. Dharma, in this sense, is superior to the state. Particularly relevant in today's Ram Janmabhoomi context are Deen Dayal's categorical statements that traditions are more important than Parliament, and that Dharma cannot be determined by plebiscite. 'True democracy' if it is to avoid license and conflict has to combine freedom with dharma. There is also a sharp attack on the federal aspects of the Indian constitution, which dilute the indivisibility of Bharat. Instead, there should

be 'decentralisation' giving more powers to village panchayats. How that could be combined with a strong unitary state was left admirably vague. Intragrual humanism seems to have been kept deliberately vague, and this has helped it to plug into changing intellectual condition. G.S. Sudarshan, Joint General Secretary of RSS described it as an effort to recover, in suitably modernised form, the alleged Hindu ideal of a multi-centred pluralist world.

This had been harmed to Islam, but damaged much more fundamentally by western forms of power and knowledge. British rule had brought in political and economic centralisation and the evils had been compounded by the Nehruvian model. The BJP ideal stated Bhandari was decentralisation through village panchayats as well as in the economic life, and combined in the growth of a strong nation, Gandhian socialism, he added, could be readily accommodated within this framework.⁵¹

If we compare the BJP discourse, as represented by Bhandari with that of RSS and VHP, it appears to consist of a series of politic qualifications that inadequately mask an underlying identity. The BJP probably needs both the mask - and its fairly apparent inadequacy. Thus Bhandari disclaimed any intention to treat Muslim as second class citizen - but you are not permitted

51. G.S. Sudarshan, Joint General Secretary of the RSS, proudly recalled this idea of Nevedita in an interview - Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags, Orient longman Ltd., 1993 Ch. 2p.-49.

to be pro-Pak and the 'Pseudo-Secular' placating of Muslims and discrimination against Hindus must stop. He repeated all the usual charges against Muslims but added as 'qualification' that the Muslim, too, can be a gentleman. Pseudo-secularist politicians are ruining him. Bhandari was obviously eager to emphasise the more secular aspects of his party's activities. The BJS and BJP, he said have always been 'political through and through', and have campaigned on any number of day to day political and economic demands. But all these have only prepared the soil for the crop and now barish (rain) has come with Ram. Evident also was a desire to disabuse us of any notion that the BJP was primarily a town and trader based party.⁵² He repeatedly told of his party's work among peasants, starting with a campaign in the mid 1950s against Nehru's Plato socialise agriculture, right down to rural participation in the Ayodhya movement. The BJS, he told us, had won 95 seats in U.P. in 1967, thanks to the other backward classes support, but then Charan Singh took advantage of anti-congress coalition politics to walk away with the stratum. About the Mandal issue Bhandari strongly favoured economic and caste based reservation.

In the first election manifesto of 1951 the new party endorsed the principle of individual proprietorship and set out a new policy which is very close to that favoured by moderate

52. Ibid, pp. 49-50.

congress men. The relevant passage stated that - "in the interest of the increase of production and the betterment of the lot of the actual cultivator of the party would take all steps to introduce land reforms so as to make the cultivator 'Kshetrपाला' i.e. virtual owner of the land. In the interest of the economy of the country the party would abolish Jagiridari and Zamindari as with compensation and distribute the land to tillers. Enough land, however, would be left with such Zamindars and Jagiridars as would settle down as cultivating farmers".

The Central working committee of the Jana Sangh claimed that reference to farmers retaining property rights after the pooling of land was 'futile and misleading', and argues that, "such entry of property rights in the books of the farm is farce, since the owners are prevented from operating on their lands as masters with the full rights of disposal and management of their own responsibility and in accordance with their own plan of life.

In Actual, co-operative farms are not radically different from the next state of collectives after the Russian and Chinese patterns (before the communes) . The Party's central general

53. Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Manifesto, 1951, p. 5, "Regarding Politics of Land".

54. Central Working Committee, Delhi, 15th March, 1959, BJs documents II, PP-64-66, Quotation From P-65.

council later decided to stage a campaign in October 1959 against the scheme and its central working committee envisaged this taking the form of conferences aimed at 'awakening the Peasantry against inherent dangers of co-operative farming and prepares them for future struggle' . In December 1963 the Jana Sangh National session at Ahmedabad declared that this proposal indicated that the union Government was seeking powers to seize land from the tiller of the soil under any kind of tenure for any purpose. Besides, in view of the government's objectives of collectivisation of agriculture under the guise of co-operative farming, this step cannot be looked at with equanimity. It creates apprehension that this power is being sought by amending the constitution to put an end to peasant proprietorship and family farming. The resolution declared the Jana Sangh to be totally opposed to this particular provision and directed all its units to organise the mass movement in support of the rights of the tiller to his land and labourers. .

Regarding its Politics of agricultural marketing the Party's unredeemed preference for the ideal of the simple cultivator was revealed once more in the principles and policy document of 1965 which states that the Indian farmer had evolved methods of farm-

55. Hindustan Times, 23 September, 1959, P.10.

56. Bhartiya Jana Sangh, Resolution of the 11th Annual Session Ahmedabad, December, 28-30, 1963.

ing most suitable to his circumstances. These age long systems should not be abandoned suddenly in favour of methods which have not been fully tested, particularly in conditions similar to those existing in India. The Indian farmers has been practising rotation of crops using manures and right soil after curing. He knows the value of bunding and plantation for checking soil-erosion. He has maintained the fertility of the soil for ages. Of course, for sometime past, it has not been possible for him to put his knowledge to full use. His capital resources need to be augmented and fixing of tenure assured.

Regarding the consumptional pattern and control by the central government and state governments, in January, 1966 its national session at Nagpur decided that - "State trading in food grains should not be restored as a government monopoly. The Government should, however, enter the market for purchasing at the time of the falling prices and for setting up fair price shops in times and areas of scarcity. Arrangements will be made by government to purchase agricultural commodities at a minimum price announced in advance of the sowing season. While fixing the minimum price a certain amount of profit to the farmer, in addition to his cost, will also be included.

57. Bhartiya Jana Sangh, Principles and Policy, pp-31-32.

58. Eight National Session, Nagpur, 25th January, 1960, BJs Documents, 11, p. 134.

59. Bhartiya Jana Sangh, Election Manifesto 1962 p.16.

Although the Jana Sangh tolerated many features of the control system of the mid 1960-s, including the establishment of the food corporation, it did press for the abolition of food zones and argued that various schemes of levy and procurement administered by the State governments should be ended. At the same time, it insisted that it was not willing to move any further along the path to complete public control of the trade for reasons which Upadhyay stated as follows. "The doctrinaire extremes of a total Nationalization of the food grain trade or complete free trade must be avoided. The government should come as a partial trader to build buffer stocks and also to regulate prices. Monopoly by the government will lead to corruption and increase in the cost of distribution. The government's present policy of entering the market as a big trader is correct. But they should not talk about complete nationalization even as a concession to 'slogan Mongering Communists' and their fellow travellers in the ruling party. It disturbs normal business and trade" .

The battle for the Ramjanamabhumi is part of a wider political struggle for a constitution of Hindu Consciousness and identity, for the construction of a united Hindu tradition and for the assertion of Hindu power over all other communities in India. The VHP activities acquire their meaning with this broader context. One of the major objectives of VHP is to fore a

60. Deen Dayal Upadhyay, Food Problem (Bhartiya Jana Sangh), New Delhi, 1964, p.8.

national and international unity amongst all those it defines as
61
Hindu .

Hindus, they feel, have fragmented and divided into groups and castes in conflict with each other. The weakness has allowed the foreigners to invade and rule over India, and the minority communities to become defiant. To reassert their power, the Hindus have to become conscious of their underlying common identity, rediscover and for the unity which lies submerged. It is essential for all Hindus to realize that they respond to the same historical memories. Their hearts beat to the same spiritual tune. They are bound by the same ties of
62
blood.

This Project of forming a Hindu community, united at the National and International levels, marks a major effort at restructuring religious traditions within India. The diversity and difference within religious traditions, considered by religious reformers a sign of the strength and vitality of tradition, now acquires a new meaning. It become a sign of weakness

61. Raghunandan Prasad Sharma, Vishwa Hindu Parishad Ke Uddeshya Karyatatha Upalabhdhiyan, New Delhi, Pamphlet series.

62. H.V. Seshadri, Organiser, April, 1982, reproduced in Seshadri, Hindu Renaissance Underway, Bangalore 1984.

of the community. To overcome the weakness, the Hindu must unite,⁶³
they must act together, they must speak with one voice.

Unification is essential, according to the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and the VHP not merely to bring Hindus together but to arouse them to awaken the Hindu spirit. The struggle for the Ramjanambhumi has an important part to play in this process. "The present agitation to liberate the Sri Ramajanambhumi" we are told, 'is no less than a battle for national self assertion'. It is, in fact, "nothing short of a phase of struggle for the liberation of the national soul".⁶⁴

Rajmata Scindia has repeatedly defined the politics behind the struggle for the Ramjanambhumi, our target is Jagriti, awakening and unity among Hindus. Hindus have to come out of their stupor, overcome their inertia, and regain their Swambhiman (self respect). They need to rise and act. This is not a movement for an awakening of the 'old' Hindu spirit. It seeks to redefine the spirit of Hinduism and the identify of a 'good' Hindu. Underlying the plea for self assertion is a specific nation of self and an effort to develop an authoritarian Hindu personality. The need for aggression is a theme which recurs

63. A Shankar, Chetawani, Desh Ko Khatra, VHP Pamphlet, New Delhi, Sitaram Goyal, Hindu Samaj Shankata Ke Ghare Me, Lohit Prakashan, Lucknow, Organiser, 19 July, 1987.

64. Bhanupratap Sukla, Shilanyas Se Sikhar Ki Or, Suruchi Prakashan, New Delhi.

insistently in the speeches and writings of BJP and VHP . It is powerfully expressed in a Polemic against secularism which first appeared in the pages of organiser and was then reprinted in a pamphlet for popular circulation⁶⁶ . The author, speaking through the voice of an Angry Hindu, attempts to explain the reason and justifications for the Hindu anger.

Yes, certainly I am angry. And I have every reason to be angry. And it is also right for me to be so. Otherwise I would be no man. Yes for too long I have suffered affronts in silence. For ever so long I have been kidnaped by the hostiles. My numbers have dwindled...My adored Motherland has been torn as under. And still you tell me I should not get angry? That I should not stand up and shout 'enough'? My temples have been desecrated, destroyed.

Their sacred stones are being trampled under the aggressor's feet. My gods are crying. They are demanding...reinstatement in all their original glory. When I speak out of my agony, you of the secular tribe condemn me as a threat to 'our secular peace'. You add insult to my injury. You rub salt into my wounded heart. For you, our national life minus every bit of Hindu secularism. In short, you want me to cease to be myself. Should I, tell me frankly, continue to sit silent in face of all such indignities and exploitations? And do you dare to tell me that I

65. M. Verma, 'The Beleaguered Hindu Organiser', 24 April, 1988, Angry Hindu! Yes Why Not? Organiser 14th February, 1988.

66. Angry Hindu! Yes Why Not? Suruchi Prakashan, New Delhi, 1988

have no right to be angry? Even a worm turns, they say. Do you think I am worse than a worm?

You have derided me as an 'angry Hindu'. On the contrary, I take it as a compliment. For so long- for too long- I was lost in a deep coma. I saw nothing, I heard nothing, felt nothing even when my motherland was cut off. But all such incessant blows have at least awakened me. Now I have begun to see I have begun to hear, I have begun to understand and I have begun to feel what tragedies have undertaken me... Here after I will sleep no more. I will not remain dumb; I will speak out. I will not remain inert; I will begin to act. I will not run away from challenges; I will face them. I now realise I had been too good for this world of 'hard reality'. I believe that others would respect my gods and temples as I respected others. I believed generosity begets generosity. But alas, again and I was deceived. I was betrayed, I was stabbed in the back. My goodness has been turned upon me. I know now a bit of the ways of the world. And I have decided to speak to others in the language they understand. And finally, I have come to know the value of my anger itself.

Patience, tolerance, generosity are first claimed as innate qualities of the Hindus - virtues which differentiate them from others. Then the same qualities are identified as signs of weakness the basis of inertia, apathy and passivity the cause of all their present problems. To face contemporary challenges new values had to be developed. The value of aggression and anger had to be realised. This frame work of discourse idea-

lises masculinity - a specific form of masculinity. Anger and aggression are identified as the qualities of manhood, tolerance and patience are feminine. Manliness symbolises strength and femininity is a sign of weakness. To overcome their weakness Hindus had to give up their femininity and assert their masculinity.

Beyond anger and aggression, is the politics of vengeance and retribution. Other communities it is argued have subjected the Hindus to innumerable indignities and oppression in the past. The Hindus have foolishly and silently tolerated all this far too long. Now is the time for avenge past injustice. 'For centuries the injustice of Hindu community by Babur's hordes cannot be allowed to perpetuate' ⁶⁷ .

The struggle for Ramjanmabhumi is fed by this ideology of retribution. The logic is 'simple'. If Muslim rulers inflicted their tyranny on Hindus, all Muslims today have to bear the burden of this guilt. It is as if the guilt of an individual can be transferred to the entire community to which the individual belongs, and as if guilt is passed down the generation over centuries. If Hindu temples have been destroyed in the past, Mosques will be destroyed today. This is the demand for a re-enactment of medieval politics. Since sacred and temporal authority was closely connected in the past, religious institutions were also symbols of political power. Conquerors often asserted their power by destroying sacred places. Mosque like the Babri-Masjid

67. Organiser, 6 July 1986 "Interview with Rajmata Scindia".

are seen as symbols of Hindu subjection, and their destruction,⁶⁸
a necessary part of the liberation movement of the Hindus .

Destruction is not always the inevitable logic of the politics. Institutions and buildings can be appropriated without being destroyed. The strategy here is to deny creativity to the Muslims. Muslims only pillage, not create, 'Islam only destroyed'. It never built anything of its own. It captured temples and places and advertised them as Mosques and tombs⁶⁹ . P. Noak has not tired of arguing that Fatehpur Sikri, Buland Darwaza, Taj Mahal, were all built by Rajputs.⁷⁰ The claim that the Babri-Masjid is a Hindu temple is nothing unique.

The new Hindu spirit requires its own popular imagery and symbolic representation. Traditionally Ram was represented as powerful but restrained; he is Maryada Purushottam (Supreme Man) but tender hearted. This image of Ram is transformed into that of an aggressive masculine, warrior god. Yet in the present context, Ram cannot provide the symbol of desired aggressive values. Popular communal literature often respondents Shiva as the per-

68. H.V. Seshadri, 'Wiping out the Bolt of Foreign Slavery', Organiser 5th January 1986; Pratap Narayan Mishra, Kya Kahati Hai Surju Dhara, p. 139.

69. Organiser, 14th July, 1985.

70. P.Noak, 'Akber was only the captor, not the builder of Fatehpur Sikri', organiser 14th July, 1985.

sonification of new ideals. The imagery of death, destruction and fiery anger and its association with Shanker and Chandi, is emphatically expressed in the followed Passage from a poem which attempts to define the identity of a Hindu:

"Hindu tan-man, hindu jeevan, rag-~~rag~~-hindu mera

perichay

Main Shankar Ka Wah Krodhanal, Kar Sakta Jagti

Ksharkshar

Main damru ki pralaya dhvani hun jis main nachta

bheeshan Sanhar

Ramchandi ki atripta pyas, main durga ka unumatta

has

Main yam ki pralayankar pukar, Jatte Marghat Kadh-

uandhar

Phir antartam ki Jwala se Jagti Me ag laga dun

main,

Yadi dhadhak Uthe Jai-thal-ambar-jar-chetan phir

Kaisa vismay?

Hindu tan-man, Hindu jeeva, rag-~~rag~~ hindu Mera

71

Parichay .

If Shiva expresses the new militant aggressive spirit of Hindutva, Ram is projected as the symbol of the Hindu Unity. Here again the symbolism of Rama is being subjected to a new politi-

71. 'Angry Hindu'! Yes, Why Not?, p.17. on the iconography of Ram Anuradha Kapur, 'militant images of the Tranquil God', Times of India, 10th January, 1989.

interpretation. Traditionally, Ramayan has been an open text which has been adopted to local contexts and read in different ways⁷². In some versions, Rama is the personification of the ideal Kshatriya, the perfect man; in other he is also the embodiment of evil - a man who treacherously kills Bali Raja in an unethical combat⁷³. In some versions Ravan is a tenheaded monster; in others he is a learned sage or a hero. Heterodoxical sects like Buddhism and Jainism have their own versions of the Ramayana. The Dalits in South India venerate Bali Raja and contest the representation of Rama as the virtuous king. The efforts by the BJP and the VHP to unify the Hindus around the image of Rama is an attempt to erase the diversity of conflict within a catholic Indian tradition to repress controversy which question dominant myths and produce a homogeneous, universalist Hindu tradition. Conducive to communal politics. The formation of a new identify and new collectivity also requires the invention of new rituals and practice. In India, rituals and practices are usually specific to sects and castes. Their collective performance binds the members of a sect or a caste together and separate different sects and castes from each other. To tran-

72. J.L. Brokington, *Righteous Rama, the evolution of an Epic*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1984.

73. David Shulman, 'Divine order and Divine evil in the Tamil Tale of Rama' *Journal of Asian Studies*, August, 1979.

scend these differences and build a larger Hindu Unity, the BJP and VHP have invented new rituals. There are not traditional religious rituals. They are desacralised, in the sense that their objective is solely political. Through these rituals the BJP and VHP seek to mobilise the people, instil an aggressive sense of Hindutva and generate a communal consciousness.

In early 1980s saw the beginnings of a new phase of intensive communal mobilisation⁷⁴. The first Hindu Samajotsava (Hindu Unity Conference) was held at Shimoga in Karnataka in January, 1981. Since then the VHP has organised similar Hindu Samajotsavs all over the country. In October, 1981 a virat Hindu Sammelan was organised in Delhi, in March 1983 a three day vishal Hindu Sammelan was held in Jammu in 1982 in Kanya Kumari respectively. Subsequent sammelans have been held in Ranchi (1987), Tirupati (1988) and Alandi in Maharashtra (1987). Processions and Rath Yatras have been regular part of the rituals of communal propaganda, Jana Jagarini Abhiyans, Vishal Hindu Aikya yatras, Ekamata Yatras, Rama Rath Yatras. Now bonds of unity cemented through earth water (ganga-jal), fire (torchlights) blood and ashes of the dead.

The rituals of communal mobilisation are rituals of confrontation. Mobilisations are essentially against other communities. The crude demonstration of 'Hindu' power through the

74. H.V. Seshadri, Hindu Rennissance Underway, Indraprastha Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Sri Ramjanamabhumi Mandir Mahabhiyan Mein Kiya Gaye Mahatwapurna Karyakaram, New Delhi, 1986.

practice of these rituals is meant to intimidate others and to defy and provoke them. The Yatras have been invariably accompanied by violent riotings blood shed and death. The experience and memories of such hostilities have deepened the divide between Hindus and Muslims and created in turn a further context for confrontations. Other faiths do not provide the only targets of political aggression. The new face of Hindu communalisms is characterised by its violent opposition to secularists - to all those who are opposed to the politics of religious intolerance. Such an opposition has always been a part of communal politics, but now it is one of its defining features. The communal argument is simple; experiments in modernity have failed, rationalism and secularism has led to a civilisational crisis in India, assertive Hindutva alone can provide the possibility of the nations survival. Secularism, we are told, 'is draining away the nations "elanvital of Hindu spirit'⁷⁵. Secularists are identified as 'Hindu baiters' traitors, Muslim communalist. They are 'trojan horses' who weaken Hindu strength from within⁷⁶. These 'traitors' have to be attacked to defend the Hindu Nation.

The politics of Ramjanmabhumi is thus part of a wider communal politics which seeks to forge a combative unity amongst Hindus.

75. Organiser, 5th January, 1988.

76. P.C. Asdhir "Do not Put the Hindu Psyche too hard" Organiser, 6 September, 1987.

It seeks to reconstitute Hindu identity as an aggressive Masculine. It speaks the language of vengeance and retributive justice.

This effort as a redefinition of Hindu identity leads to a series of conflicting arguments. The discourse of communalism criticizes other religions for being monolithic, but aspire to build a monolithic unity. It glorifies diversity within Hinduism as a mark of its superiority over semitic religions, but seeks to repress these diversity. It identifies aggressiveness as an evil intrinsic to other religions, but attempt to instil the same quality of all Hindus. It talks of patience and intolerance as innate virtues of Hindus, yet sees their traits as the basis of Hindu weakness. It condemn other religions for their politics of repression and temple destruction, but organises itself around the same politics.

The politics of Ramajannabhumi, does not seek to defend Hindu tradition, religion, myths, practices, values and norms. It legitimates its communal politics through the discourse of tradition, it appropriates tradition in communal ways. In the process of transforms, politicizes and communalises tradition and religion. It demeans both religion and tradition .

77

77. Sudipto Kaviraj, 'On the Discourse of Communalism', Ashis Nanda Transformation of Hinduism Capitalism and cultural Process, Sudipto Kaviraj, Journal of Arts and Ideas ND(19), May 1990, Chapter 7.

Regarding the comparison between "Religion and Politics Paradigm" between Gandhiji and BJP regarding temple issue, Prem Sankar (V.P. Singh's advisor) said in his article "Fascist up surge Against secular democracy, that, the VHP has learned a good deal from its first major exercise in mass mobilisation. What is still more disquieting is the Goebbelsian finesse with which it intends to use Hindu symbols to achieve its ends. The use of the VHP and that of the national socialists (Nazis) in Germany 60 years ago is so great to be a mere coincidence. The possibility must therefore be entertained that what we are seeing are a beginning of a new fascist movement whose goal is the capture of state power and the replacement of a democratic state with an authoritarian state. The recent exalting Hindutva, Ramnath, Aswamedh Yagna, Kar Sevaks are sufficient proves about
78
the above statement . Out of the above it is clearly evident that when Gandhian religion and its place is quite broad and end in itself VHPs approach towards religion and mass mobilisation is a means to an end. But the similarity is, both stood in the same fundamental principle i.e. adding religion with politics.

By out rightly rejecting the belief of excessive ritualism and idol worship Sankuntala Singh in her article "How Mahatma Gandhi's plan can solve temple issue" said - An idole in a temple is to be worshipped only if it is legitimately installed and sanctified. The legitimacy can not be vouchsafed it is, for

78. Prem Shankar, "Fascists Upsurge Against Secular Democracy" Mainstream, 1991, July.

example installed in a mosque or for that matter a Grantha Saheb is kept in a mosque. Further it has to be sanctified and that requires to be worshipped in pure hands. Can hands which stealthily or forcefully install idols be considered pure? A person who installs an idol in a mosque desecrates the mosque and equally important insult the idol. It is his duty to remove it as soon as possible. It is not the government but the Hindu themselves should take the lead and even bear the expenses of the damage to the mosque so affected. Those who wish to manage such temples should also lead a life of austerity. There should be in than a purity of heart that moves those who enter into it. True faith, industry and patience, austerity, good deeds and penance are needed. There is no place for haste religion.

The patience of Gandhiji could hardly be countered by saying that the Hindus have waited enough. The patience that Gandhiji would want is that of the pure and truthful person who waits for his purity and truthfulness to percolate and influence the impure and untruthful. Not by violence but by good deeds by waiting for the result rather than snatching it from the pages of history. .

In his speech at the Kathiawar Patidar conference, Gandhiji talks of the flag over the temple on the side and the mosque,

79. Singh (Anjali) and Sankuntala, How Mahatama Gandhi's Plan Can solve temple issue. *Mainstream*, 29(13), 19(Jan) 91, 19-20 (ISN=12261).

the garden and the Parsi temple on the other. Else where people
80
spirit .

Writing on, what is a temple he said "a temple is not merely an edifice of brick or marble nor does it become a temple by the installation of the image of a deity. It can be called a temple only if life has been breathed in to the image. There may be hypocrisy in calling the priest and making sacrificial offering at the time of laying the foundation stone of the temple. If sufficient purity of heart and mind is not there behind its construction then it is merely a building and, take it is a burden on earth. Since it would be called a temple the area occupied by it would go waste. It can be put no use and it may turn out to be a pernicious institution and even a haunt of many
81
sins. .

The result of this three years build-up of tensions and resentments has been the systematic Provocation of one community over another. What the news papers not usually tell us but can be gleaned from the central governments intelligence reports is that, regrettably four out of five acts of provocation, if not more have been by the VHP and the Bajranga Dal. This range from deliberately taking religious processions through sensitive areas to attack on and the desecration of mosques and Idgahs to the burning of shops to the stabbing of individuals simply

80. Collected works, Vol., 16, pp. 186-90.

81. Collected works, "Vol. 16, PP. 190-95 Speech at Vertej, January 24, 1928.

because they belongs to other religion and community. In the ~~last~~ ~~two~~ years in particular, the Shilanyas at Ayodhya (Oct-Nov 1989 and Dec 6, 1992) the sending of Rama Jyoti Mashals to the villages (Sept. 1990) and the Kar Seva of October have been the main roles for fanning communal passion. Each of these has left a trail of dead bodies in its wake. Out of the above, it is clearly evident that while Gandhian religion is quite humanitarian, positive service to the state and universalistic BJP's approach is quite ritualistic, ceremonial and based on, to serve the Hindu community .

To conclude Arnold Toynbee a great historians of this century began his book on a "Historians view on religion" by using the term religion in its etymological sense ;from "religion" which means to bind together as a set of ideas, feelings and purposes animating all these who pursue a particular vocation or profession in life such as law, medicine or teaching.

82. Arunchalam (K) Mahatama Gandhi and Comparative religion, Political Science Review, 22(4) Dec 83, pp. 400-411.

CHAPTER-IV

Mahatama Gandhi and communal Problem in Freedom

Movement and BJP, in solving Hindu-Muslim Problems.

Nationalism and communalism are the results of the same process of the emergence of a united India. Nationalism reflected the growing unity of India and the identity of common interests vis-a-vis imperialism. However, the emergence of India as a nation was a differential process and this resulted in the extremely uneven development, both in time and space of national and anti-imperialist consciousness among different social classes and strata as well as people belonging to different religion, castes, linguistic areas etc. ¹. The slow and imperfect growth of national consciousness resulted in the emergence of communalism which in turn hampered better integration of India as a nation. In the absence of nationalism and communal consciousness grew based on religion, the familiar ideology. The communal ideology tended to play up the difference between various 'communities' of India and to ignore the basic contradiction with imperialism. The national movement could not be successful unless it managed to unite people professing different religions, and in order to be able to do so, fight to divisive communal forces.

1. Bipan Chandra (ed), Nationalism and colonialism in Modern India, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1979.

Mahatama Gandhi came in to Prominence on the Indian national scene in 1920 and since then was in effect an guiding force behind the anti-imperialist struggle. Hence Gandhiji's understanding of, and approach, to the communal problem was of momentous consequences. In the following pages an attempt is made to understand Gandhiji's approach to communalism in the context of the Hindu-Muslim problem.²

No other leader has devoted so much time and attention to the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity as Gandhiji, who held communal unity was almost an article of problem with him and he always maintained that 'Swaraj' is impossible without Hindu-Muslim Unity.³ He left no stone unturned in his effort to bring about that unity. He preached, he wrote, he negotiated, he fasted and prayed Hindu-Muslim Unity during Khilafat cum non-cooperation movement. The communal harmony that Gandhiji so assiduously laboured for, eluded him. Despite all his efforts, the canker of communalism grew more vigorous and resulted in the partition of the country.

2. The communal Problem in practical meant the Hindu-Muslim Problem, by and Large, Gandhiji considered the Unity between Muslims and Hindu's was the same as over all communal harmony. Collected works of Mahatama Gandhi, xx 23; XXVII, 6; XXXVII, 20; (cited here after as collected works.

3. Collected works, XVII, P. 306.

Many writers have attempted to pin -point the factors which contributed to this monumental failure of the Mahatama Gandhiji failed to solve communal problem according to some, because he lacked a historical perspectives. He did not take into account the hold that religion with its dogmas, tradition, custom, ritual and historical memories has on the minds of the men in a pre-modern society. He assigned only a derivative role to the cultural factor. He did not grasp the deeper social and cultural roots of the Hindu-Muslim conflict. According to them Gandhiji placed the whole blame for the communal problem on the British. He thus overlooked the fact that the British did not create separatism. Another reason why Gandhiji's approach to communal problem failed was because he overlooked the emergence of Muslim nationalism along with Indian Nationalism.

The above criticism is itself vitiated by communalism. It is in fact the communal position that communalism is due to religious, cultural and structural differences between the Hindu and Muslims. Religion was never the cause of communalism but religion were used by communalists. We have to look for socio-economic causes to understand the emergence of communalism. And to treat

4. Afaquekhan, 'Gandhian approach to Hindu Muslim Problem in India' Radical Humanist xii, (n. 12) March, 1978 PP. 11-16, and A.B. Shah 'Gandhi and the Hindu-Muslim question; quest, 64, PP. 19-33.

communalism as a form of sub-nationalism to be integrated at the national level is to fall into the pit dug by the communalists themselves.⁵ A more valid criticism of the Gandhian approach by this group of authors is that it was saintly in the main and precisely on that account it was bound to fail. Gandhiji thought that the Hindu Muslim Problem was essentially religious and so missed the social aspect of the problem.⁶

A second school of thought finds fault not so much with Gandhiji's understanding of the problem as with his strategy to solve it.⁷ Even since the inception of the congress the nationalist leader had tried to involve all sections of Indian society in the national movement by bringing about an understanding among leaders of various communities. The Gandhian technique to bring about communal unity did not differ from this strategy. Hindu and Muslim masses were sought to be brought into the anti-imperialists struggle through their respective leaders who had entered into an understanding among themselves. The weakness of

5. Bipan Chandra 'Communalism in India' New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1979, Ch. 2.

6. A.B. Shah, 'Gandhi and Hindu Muslim question, quest, 64, PP. 22-25.

7. Bipan Chandra, Indian National Movement and the Communal Problem, Nationalism and colonialism in Modern India, Op. Cit. PP. 252-74.

this strategy was that this willy-nilly led to the recognition and even indirect acceptance of the concept of religious communities in India.⁸ This only weakened the cause of nationalism, vis-a-vis communalism. Communalism which stressed the divergence of interests of different communities could be successfully combated by mobilising the masses on issues that underlined the unity of India. While accepting the above criticism, it shows that Gandhiji did realise the mistake in trying to bring about that unity from below. But he could not sustain his efforts in this direction owing to the constraints imposed by the basic strategy of pressure-compromise-pressure followed by the anti-imperialist struggle.

Our study begins with the Khilafat movement because it was this movement which brought the Muslim masses into the anti-imperialist struggle. It was the Khilafat cum non-cooperation movement which not only pushed Gandhiji to the front rank of Indian politicians but also made him the supreme leader of Indian people.⁹ The theme of Hindu-Muslim unity was central to

8. *ibid*, p. 257.

9. It was only after the Calcutta and Nagpur sessions of the Congress accepted his programme of non-cooperation that Gandhiji became the undisputed leader of India. He managed to carry the congress on these two occasions because of the support extended to him by the Muslims who attended these sessions in unusually large numbers. Mushirul Hassan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India*, pp. 174-175.

Gandhiji's order of priorities. While in South Africa he had realised the importance of Hindu-Muslim Unity. He returned to India at a time when Turkey had entered the world war against Britain and Gandhiji with the uncanny insight that he possessed, realised the great opportunity this might present to bring the Indian Muslims into the national movement as well as to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity which he wanted so much. He therefore, landed in India with ideas of Hindu-Mahamedan Unity and the 'Turkish question' and with the desire to assist in securing a proper solution to the question. He spoke extensively on the subject and cultivated influential Muslims like the Ali brother, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Shuaib Qureshi and Dr. Ansari in order to understand their fears and aspirations.

During the years 1915-18 when Gandhiji was deliberately avoiding controversial politics, his advice was often sought by Muslim leaders on the future of the caliphate or as it came to be known as Khilafat. The future of Khilafat had become by then the most important issue for the Indian Muslims. The virtual liquidation of Khilafat, which was a symbol of Muslim unity, after the allied victory over Turkey began to agitate the Indian Muslims and they were demanding better terms for Turkey in the

10. 'Speech on Khilafat' Bombay, May, 9, 1919, collected works, XV 295.

11. *ibid.*

Peace Treaty . Gandhiji realised the depth of muslim feelings over the issue and decided to champion their cause. Gandhiji declared that the 'Khilafat question' was the greatest of all, greater even than that of the repeal of Rowlatt Act, for it affects the religious susceptibilities of Million of Muslims. He championed the Muslim cause because he realised that it was an opportunity to win the goodwill and confidence of the Muslims and thus strengthen, Hindu-Muslim unity. It was a golden opportunity 'to cement that unity for good' and might perhaps never again recur .

By December, 1918 Gandhiji had almost become the spokesman and hero of Indian Muslims who were agitated over the future of the Khilafat . But Gandhiji's first opportunity to play an important role in the Khilafat movement came at the All India Muslim Conference on 21st September, 1919 in Lucknow. He supported the call to observe the 17th October, 1919 as Khilafat day and appealed to Hindus to join their Muslim brethren. From

12. Ibid.

13. 'Speech on Khilafat', Bombay May, 1919, collected works, XV, P. 296.

14. 'Speech at National Week Meeting', Bombay, April 9, 1920, collected works, xvii, PP. 309-10.

15. Judith Brown, Gandhiji's rise to powers: Indian Politics, 1915-22, Cambridge University Press, London, P. 190.

16. 'Letter to the Press' October 10, 1919, collected works, xvi, p.22.

October, 1919 onwards, Gandhiji began to take a more active interest in the Khilafat movement. He attended the All India Khilafat Conference in Delhi on 23-24 November and supported the resolutions passed including the resolution that in the event of the Khilafat question not being satisfactorily solved, the Muslims of India shall progressively withhold all cooperation from the British Government. He once again asked Hindus to join the Muslims in regard to the 'Khilafat question'. It was their duty as brothers to share one another's sorrow .

The publication of Turkish Peace Terms on May 14, 1920 produced a blaze of resentment among every section of the Muslim community. Even some of the Muslim land owners, who had generally kept aloof from the Khilafat Movement condemned the peace terms. Mahatama Gandhi in his Press statement on Turkish Peace Terms described the Peace Proposals as a 'staggering blow' and recommended non cooperation as the only effective remedy.....for

17. Resolution of All India Khilafat Conference, November, 24, 1919, cited in Mohibun Hasan, 'Mahatama Gandhi and the Indian Muslims', S.C. Biswas (ed), Gandhi theory and Practice, P. 133.

18. Speech at Khilafat conference, Delhi November, 24, 1919, collected works, xvii, P. 308.

19. Mushirul Hasan, Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1916-1928, Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 1979. P. 165.

healing the wounds inflicted on Mahammedan opinion . Publication of the Peace Terms and a section of Khilafat leaders had already accepted Gandhiji's Programme of non-cooperation as early as February, 1920.²¹ However, any non-cooperation movement over the Khilafat issue could not exert real pressure on the British without the participation of the other sections of Indian society. Gandhiji hoped to achieve this by getting leaders of various communities to support the Programme of non-cooperation. An all Party Conference was convened at Allahabad in June 1920 to discuss the matter. Even though the congress leaders were not prepared to take a decision then and there, the central Khilafat committee unanimously approved the programme of non-cooperation and authorised Gandhiji to launch the programme after giving a month's notice to the viceroy. The congress leaders, however, wanted to live the decision to the special session of the Congress convened to discuss the issue.²² Gandhiji did not wait for the decision of the congress and launched the movement on August 1, 1920 by returning his medals to the government. Later he was able to persuade the congress to accept his programme both at the Calcutta and Nagpur sessions.²³ Henceforth he became the leader of both Nationalism and the Khilafat struggles. He toured

20. Collected works of Mahatama Gandhi, XVII, PP. 426-427.

21. B.R. Nanda, Mahatama Gandhi, P. 183.

22. Judith Brown, Gandhiji's rise to Power, P. 226.

23. *ibid*, PP. 250-303.

the country with Ali brothers, exhorting Hindus and Muslims to join the struggle. Hindu-Muslim cordiality touch a new high never to be surpassed during the entire period of National struggle for independence.

But the edifice of communal harmony built by Gandhiji collapsed before long. The Mopah revolt of 1921 shook it to the foundations. The calling off of the non-cooperation movement and the eventual abolition of Khilafat by Turkey, were blows which shattered this unity. The mid twenties were in fact years of acute communal tension and disunity. ²⁴

Gandhiji was blamed for his ugly development by many of his contemporaries. He was criticised for bringing the Muslims into the anti-imperialist struggle on a religious issue and that too of an extra-territorial nature. Lala Lajpat Rai held that 'Hindu-Muslim conflicts were the result of the non-cooperation movement. ²⁵ Mr. Jayakar echoed the same sentiments. Some later writers have held his participation in the Khilafat Movement ²⁶ entire responsible for the partition. Gandhiji was aware of

24. Collected works, XXIV, P. 136; XXV, P. 46.

25. Cited in Mahibul Hassan, 'Mahatama Gandhi and the Indian Muslims, in S.C. Biswas (ed) Gandhi, Theory and Practice, P. 137.

26. Jayakar maintained in a private letter that Hindu-Muslim conflict was the necessary reaction to Gandhiji's Policy which aimed a most artificial and unreal unity between Hindu and Muslims'. quoted in Mushirul Hasan, Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, P. 194.

these criticisms. But he defended his participation in Khilafat. He said, 'had I been a prophet and foreseen all that has happened, I should have still thrown myself into the Khilafat movement.²⁷ He did not repent to his part in the Khilafat at all as he was but doing his duty by his Mussalman countrymen. Gandhiji made use of the Khilafat to bring Muslim masses in the national movement. He realised that many Muslims did not, regard themselves as Indians, so the Mussalman masses do not recognise the same necessity for Swaraj as the Hindu do.²⁸ It was therefore not possible to induce Mussalmans to take interest in Swaraj except in terms of the Khilafat. He also maintained that inspite of the present strained relations between the two communities, both have gained. The awakening of the masses... is itself a tremendous gain.²⁹

He also used Khilafat, a purely religious issue affecting the Muslims, to bring about Hindu-Muslim Unity. He thought that the Hindu-Muslim problem was essentially religious and that unity the country should come through true religion. He believed that religious issues such as Music before Mosques and cow slaughter which had been a constant source of communal riots should be resolved peacefully by awakening the true spirit of religion in the two communities. There could not be any compulsions in religion.

27. Young India, May 29, 1924, collected works XXIV, P. 137.

28. Young India, July 29, 1921, collected works, XX P. 436.

29. Young India, August, 25, 1921.

He wanted the people to realise that there was nothing in either religion to keep them apart. Save for the cow Hindus can have no ground for quarrel with Muslims. The latter are under no religious obligation to slaughter a cow. On communities lived side by side, the religious sense of one demands a scrupulous regard for the practices of the other.

30

His appeal to both Hindus and Muslims for participation in the Khilafat couched in religious terms. It was the religious duty of every Muslim to defend the interests of the Khilafat, the symbol of Muslim Unity. True religion demanded that Hindus should help unconditionally their Muslim brethren. Gandhiji hoped that owing to the unconditional support which Hindus would give Muslim in the hour of their need, the latter would give up eating beef. That is why he asked the Hindus to join the Khilafat agitation and thus save the cow. And Muslims in large numbers did give up cow slaughter . The game of politics has to be played with the pieces actually on the board and the pieces in

31

30. 'Speech at Public Meeting', Nellore, April 7, 1921, collected works, XIX PP. 530-540.

31. The Muslims in Phulwari Sharif in Bihar announced that in future they would not slaughter cows. The Muslim league at its Amritsar session of December, 1919 passed a Cow Protection resolution. The Ali Brothers gave up eating beef. Mohibul Hassan, Mahatama Gandhi and Indian Muslims, In S.C. Biswas (ed) Op. cit. P. 140.

the Muslim board were religious feelings. Therefore, we cannot find fault with Gandhiji for bringing Muslims into the anti imperialist struggle over a religious issue. However, it was a short sighted policy to keep the Khilafatists separate ;from the congress. This hungered the integration into the nationalist movement. The congress and the Khilafatist Muslims, though they united against the British, were fighting for different things. As a result, when the caliphate was abolished by the Turkish National Assembly, Indian Muslims found themselves totally drift.³² It left them politically all dressed up and nowhere to go .

Gandhiji did not try to integrate the Khilafat Movement with the struggle for Swaraj because he sought to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity through an agreement between the Khilafat and Congress leaders. It was hoped that his friendship with Ali Brothers, the most prominent Khilafat leaders, would ensure unity between Hindus and Muslims. The election of Hakim Ajmal Khan, President of the Khilafat conference, as the President of the Congress in 1992 was in line with this policy of achieving communal unity through unity at the top.³³

32. Peter Hardy, the Muslims of British India, P. 198.

33. Gandhiji thought that Hakimji's election as Congress President strengthened Hindu-Muslim Unity, Navjivan, January 8, 1922, collected works, XXII, P. 147.

Mahatama Gandhi's unity with the leaders of the Khilafat was the most successful effort at Hindu-Muslim unity in the course of the national struggle. But it was not without its draw backs.

Since the Muslims Masses and lower middle classes were brought into the anti-imperialist movement through an agreement with the top leaders ;and on religious question, they came into it with their existing consciousness intact. What is even more important, the very terms of this agreement prevented Gandhiji and the nationalist leadership from using this opportunity to impart a modern, secular democratic and anti-imperialistic consciousness or understanding of the social forces to the Muslim masses who participated in the 'Non-Cooperation Cum Khilafat Movement'.
34

The Khilafat movement also helped to legitimise and perpetuate the intrusion of religious outlook into politics. The Khilafat Propaganda also heightened the sense of Muslim identity which proved a psychological asset for the communal leaders for popularising Muslim separatism.

The Khilafat movement was the first all India agitation in which the Muslim and Hindu masses had participate don an unprecedented scale. The movement also witnessed the halcyon days of communal unity. But this unity was a short lived one. Almost immediately after the withdrawal of non cooperation, signs of -----

34. Bipan Chandra; Indian National Movement and Communal Problem', Nationalism and colonialism in Modern India, P. 255.

Hindu-Muslim friction appeared. In fact, communal riots periodically disfigured the towns of North India³⁵. Apart from the riots, there was a new bitterness in politics and in the press. In an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and fear every incident was twisted and every move of one community was suspect to the other.

Following the Moplah riots of 1921 and as a reaction to the reaction of the Khilafat leaders to condemn the Moplah atrocities, forced conversion of Hindus in particular, many Hindus had felt the need of an organisation for the purification and protection of Hindu community. In 1923 Madan Mohan Malaviya, Swami Shradhananda Swaraswati and other launched the Shudhi (purification) and Sanghathan (Unity) movements to consolidate Hindu society. The growth of this movement was matched by a corresponding growth of tabligh (Propagation) and tanzim (Organisation) bodies among the Muslims. The communal activities of these organisations and their propaganda led to many a communal riots.³⁶

There was no doubt however that communal tension had been aggravated by Political factors. The communal problem in the

35. Thus there were serious communal riots at Multan in September 1922, at Panipat, Agra, Saharanpur and Shahajampur in 1923, at Allahabad, Lucknow in 1924, at Aligarh in 1925, Allahabad, Lucknow and Calcutta in 1929 and at Bareilly, Kanpur and Lahaor in 1927, Peter Hardy, Op. cit; PP. 203-204.

36. Gyanendra Pandey attributes the spate of Hindu-Muslim riots in U.P. during the mid twenties to this cause, Gyanendra Pandey, Ascendancy of Congress in Uttar Pradesh, 1926-34, Oxford University, Press, Delhi, 1978, P. 116.

1920s was in fact reduced to the struggle for the fruits of political power between the professional classes of the two communities. It was a scramble for the crumbs which the government offered to political India.

As the result of the Montague-Chelmsford reforms for the first time, a large mass of work relating to public health, sanitation and education came under the effective control of Indians who could favour their friends and members of their the religious community. But the reforms of 1919 were operated in a period of economic stagnation, in elastic if not declining revenue and intense middle class competition. The decline of the level of production had forced the government to reduce public expenditure³⁷. This reduction in the real order of public expenditure meant fewer buildings, roads, or drainage contracts for local contractors, fewer teaching posts, relating to the increasing of these sufficiently qualified to hold them, fewer posts relatively in the administration and fewer opportunity for patronage³⁸. In the absence of industrial development or cultural and social services, government jobs were the only source of

37. The current expenditure on goods and services in public sector in real terms which stood at 345.61 crores of rupees in 1921, rising to 371.40 crores in 1922-23, Bank to 324.33 crore in 1924-25, it did not recover the level of 1922-23 until 1929-30. Peter Hardy, Op. cit. P. 206.

38. Ibid, P. 208.

employment particularly for the middle classes. And these jobs had become scarce due to the impact of depression and economic stagnation. In this social situation the farsighted intelligentsia worked for the long term solution i.e. overthrowing the colonial regime. However, in the absence of the strong anti imperialist movement, those who lacked this vision reverted to communalism in order to find solutions to the problems of short term nature such as jobs of the colonial government, communal riots were external manifestations of communal politics. Communal politicians made use of the riots to strengthen their hold over the electorate. Thus in the elections of 1925-26 Hindu communal propaganda was an important part of Malaviya's offensive against Motilal Nehru and his nationalist followers. In Allahabad for example, the question of religious processions playing music before the Muslim Mosques became the centre of controversy in the year 1923-26 and in 1926 Malaviya and others Proved an obstacle in reaching an understanding over "the music before mosque question".

39

Gandhiji had wanted the people to feel instinctively that our union is necessary as the breath of our nostrils. In 1922 he had hoped that this could be achieved if there were a few Hindus and Muslims fanatically committed to Hindu-Muslims unity. However in February, 1924, on being released from prison, he

39. Gyanendra Pandey, The ascendancy of Congress in Uttar Pradesh, P. 116.

was perplexed by the turn the communal situation had taken. Once again he reiterated his faith in the necessity of unity. It is clear that without unity all talks of Swaraj is idle. This unity which he fondly believed, in 1922, had been nearly achieved has, so far as Hindus and Musalmans are concerned, I observe, suffered a severe check. Mutual trust has given place to distrust. An indissoluble bond between the various communities must be established if we were to win freedom.^{40.} In May 1924 he described the communal question as the most pressing one and devoted an entire issue of young India to the understanding of communalism. Goondas were not responsible for communal riots. In fact respectable classes were behind the communal tension. He said 'the goondas came on the scene because the leaders want them. The leaders distrust one another. A variety of causes, more felt than realised, breeds distrust. We have not yet visualised the fact that our interests are identical. Each Party seems vaguely to believe that it can displace the other to some kind of Manoeuvring.'⁴¹

The solution to the problem therefore lay in the Hindus trusting the minorities. In order to facilitate this he tried to

40. Letter to Mahamed Ali, February 7, 1924, collected works, XXIII, PP. 200-209.

41. 'Young India', August 21, 1924, collected works, XXIV, P. 272.

dispel the wrong notions that some Hindus had regarding the Muslims. I have come in closest touch even what may be considered a "bad lot". I cannot recall a single occasion when I had to regret it. The Mussalmans are brave, they are generous and trusting the movement their suspicion is disarmed. The history of Islam, if it betrays aberrations from the moral height has many a brilliant page. In its glorious days it was not intolerant. The key to the situation lies with the Hindus. We must be brave enough to trust all will be well. ⁴²

However, Gandhiji was aware of the fact that communal tension were the result of the constant rivalry between Hindus and Muslims for government jobs and particularly for elected seats.

The seat of the trouble, however, is in the Punjab, The Mussalmans complain that the Hindus have raised a storm of protest Mr. Fazlul Hussain trying very timidly to give a fair proportion of government employment to Mussalmans. The causes of tension are thus more than merely religious. Gandhiji again suggested that the majority community should trust the minorities and should let them be elected for representatives bodies. ⁴³ For all his exhortations Gandhiji failed to prevent communal violence. Riots flared up in September, 1924 at Kohat where 155

42. 'Young India', May 29, 1924, collected works, XXIV, P. 153.

43. 'Young India', May 29, 1924, collected works, XXIV, P. 142.



Hindus lost their lives and the rest of the Hindu population fled from their homes. Gandhiji was deeply affected by this happenings and went on a 21 day fast. The fast had the desired effect. The leaders of both the communities meet at Delhi in Unity conference and agreed upon measures to remedy the situation. He broke his fast in October 8, 1924 in an atmosphere of sentimental religiosity. He tried to bring about communal unity during this period through an understanding among the leaders regarding the distribution of seats. The criticism that he followed the strategy of bringing about unity at the top to secure communal harmony is eminently valid for this period. Motilal Nehru seems to lost faith this method by 1924 and started a Hindu-Muslim Sanghathan in order to bring about unity from below, and Gandhiji seems to have approved of this ⁴⁴. And if he succeeds in forming genuine Hindu-Muslims Sanghathans, he will have done service of a first class order to the country. His decision to work from the bottom, instead of through middlemen, must result in nothing but better relation between Hindus and Muslims.

But Gandhiji still tried to bring about unity through middlemen, i.e. the leaders. He attended the Punjab Provincial conference in 1924 and also called an All Parties Conference at Delhi in 1925 in an attempt to solve the communal problem. He offered a scheme as an alternative to the system of separate

44. 'Young India', May 29, 1924, collected works, XXIV, P. 152.

electorates. His plan was to do away with the separate electorates but secure the election of the desired and agreed number of Mussalmans and other candidates in a given constituency under a joint ticket. Mussalmans candidates to be nominated by Previously known Mussalman associations. His efforts failed as he could not get the leaders to agree on this scheme. This failure together with the constant riots, over music before mosque and cow slaughter, and bitter wranglings over the question of separate and joint electorates filled him with great disappointment. He despaired of the congress, discovering and enforcing a solution since the congress did not represent the fighters in either camps. But he did not despair of finding a solution to the communal problem.

Fortunately Hindu-Muslim unity does not find depend upon religious or political leaders. It depend upon the enlightened selfishness of the masses of the both communities. Already from March 1925, Gandhiji began to remind himself for actively trying to solve the communal tangle since he could not present a workable solution that you will accept. In the atmosphere surcharged as it is with mutual distrust I cannot pursued either the Hindus or the Mussalmans to accept my solution. The solution that Gandhiji offered was that Hindus should give a blank cheque to the minority, if they could not agree upon a scheme regarding elec-

45. 'Young India', Feb, 19, 1925.

torates. He was sick of the scramble for the shadow power and once again expressed his opposition to counter entry. He thought that the exaggerated importance of the people were giving the councils, out of all proportion to their usefulness, was keeping the Hindus and Mussalmans apart and therefore they had to be shunned. One cannot take interest in parliamentary activities and also work for Hindu-Muslim unity, for the same are incompatible with each other. Hindus and Muslims were not prepared to act according to his solution and by 1927 he despaired of finding any solution to the problem. Addressing a public meeting at Komilla in Bengal declared, in January, 1927, ' I dare not touch the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. It has passed out of human hands⁴⁶ and has been transferred to God's hands alone

In 1920-22, Gandhiji was the undisputed leader of India. But by 1924-25 he had lost the confidence of extreme sections of both communities for various reasons. His analysis did not please any side of the communities. Under the then socio-economic and political situation leaders who promised to work for the occluding interests of the communities were more popular than Gandhiji who⁴⁷ emphasised their common interests. Muslims communalists did not like his advise to Hindus to defend themselves against Muslims hooligans by any means if they lacked faith in non-violence. Gandhiji repudiation of proselytisation and Shuddhi made him

46. Collected works, XXXII P. 511.

47. Young India, April, 2, 1975

unpopular with both Hindus and Muslims. Another reason why he lost the confidence of the people was his defense of communalist leader of Hindu and Muslim. At the time when the Suddhi and Tabligh leaders were actively communal many approached Gandhiji to condemn their activities. But he would not even hear of it. Even if the whole Muslim world were to turn against me, I would also declare in the same breath that non of the mussalman leaders is an enemy of Hinduism. He could not condemn the communal leaders become his strategy for bringing about unity called for their participation. If neither the present Hindu or Muslim leaders are to be trusted unity can be achieved, if at all, only after his death .

48

Even in 1926 when Malaviya was actively communal Gandhiji maintained that 'when a time for settlement comes, the approval of Malaviyaji and others will be certainly essential'. The fact that he did not take active interest in the communal problem, did not mean that he had lost faith in the necessity of Hindu-Muslim Unity. He used his influence to get Dr. M.A. Ansari elected as the President of Congress since we thought the latter being a Muslim, would be able to do 'something' about the 'Hindu-Muslim question'. His effort to reach an agreement among the leader seems to have succeeded in Dec. 1927 when the Madras Congress

48. Young India, June 12, 1924.

passed a resolution which conceded the demands of the Muslim regarding N.W.F.P. and Sind. It was passed a resolution on the question of law killing and music before mosque along the lines suggested by him. ⁴⁹ The successful conclusion of the Madras Congress and Unity displayed by the people of Bordoli seemed to have revived his faith in achieving unity through agreements at the top. He was therefore hopeful of the success of the Lucknow Conference and later hailed the Nehru report as the most brilliant victory achieved at Lucknow. However, in the face of renewed Hindu-Muslim tension he expressed his inability to do anything. He realised once again that the unity at the top did not affect the masses. Lucknow seems evidently to have felt the masses untouched. Today riots are going on in Gujarat which never before knew Hindu-Muslim rioting. Gandhiji therefore expressed his desire to stay even from the Calcutta session of the Congress. ⁵⁰

Unity from the below and anti imperialist struggle :- The Lahore Congress passed the independent resolution and also authorised him to start civil disobedience movement, thus providing him the opportunity to try to bring about unity from below. Dr Ansari and other Muslim leaders wanted Gandhiji to

49. Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Ansari (M.A.) December 25, 1927, collected works, XXXV, P. 421.

50. Letter to Motilal Nehru, Sept. 30, 1928, Collected Works, XXXVII, PP. 318-319.

postpone the civil disobedience movement until unity (at the top) was achieved. While Gandhiji agreed with Ansari that the Hindu-Muslim problem is a problem of problems he differed from the latter about the solution. He considered that the postponement of civil disobedience movement until communal harmony was achieved was to enter into vicious circle.

His faith in unity is as bright as ever. But he felt that it could not be achieved by adjustment of political power.⁵¹ He said give and take is possible only when there is some trust between the respective communities and their representatives. If the Congress can command such trust the matter can proceed further, not before. The Congress can do so only by becoming fearless and strictly just. But meanwhile the third party - the evil of British Power - has got to be sterilized. There would be no independence before the Hindus and Muslim united. The civil disobedience campaign was however to generate the power for the whole nation to be independent.⁵²

He did not think that the leaders however influential, were capable of dispelling deep-rooted suspicious. He was therefore going to appeal to the masses over the heads of the leaders for unity. The masses are sound at heart. They only require a

51. Young India, February 20, 1930, Collected Works, XIII, pp. 510-11.

52. Young India, March 1, 1930, Collected Works, XIII, p. 383.

correct and courageous lead. The answer to communalism was the common struggle of the masses to redress common grievances. Therefore, he wanted to take civil disobedience movement. The attention of the nation off the communal problem and rivet it on the things that are common to all Indians, no matter to what religion or sect, they may belong. Thus he seems to have visualised the civil disobedience movement itself as the best mean to bring about unity. He also wanted people to take part in the campaign as Indians and not as Hindus or Muslims with their separate grievances'. Whilst we may staunchly adhere to our respective faiths, we must be in the Congress Indian first and Indians last. There never can be any conflict between the real interest of the country and that of one's religion. It is not surprising therefore, that he started the civil disobedience movement with the Salt Satyagraha. In an interview to Yusuf Meherally, Gandhiji was confident that the Salt Satyagraha should appeal to all communities in India. Since the resistance of the salt tax can hurt no single communal interest. On the contrary it must if successful help the abstainers equally with the participants.

Maulana Shaukat Ali had pointed the civil disobedience movement as a movement to achieve 'Hinduraj' and had discouraged Muslims from participating in it. Gandhiji considered it as a

53. Collected Works, XIII, p. 379.

54. Collected Works, XIII, p.

grave charge against the movement and repudiated it forthwith :

The fact that those taking part in the movement are preponderatingly Hindus is unfortunately true. By proclaiming boycott the Maulana is helping the process. Ever so there can be no harm, if the Hindu civil resisters are fighting not for themselves but for all - Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and others who will make the nation of the future free India. ⁵⁵

In spite of the objections of nationalist and communal Muslim leaders, the Muslim participated actively in the movement until 1931-32 and communal parties and leaders were made to look for cover. The suspension of the civil disobedience movement and the policy of negotiating with the colonial authorities once again enabled communal leaders to appear on the scene. Another attempt was made to reach an understanding at the level of leadership regarding a solution to the communal problem. At the meeting of round table conference delegates in Delhi, Gandhiji reiterated the need for communal harmony and the Congress stand of not seeking a solution that did not satisfy the parties concerned. At the same time he tried to bring the masses into electoral politics by insisting on adult suffrage which, he suggested, would prove to be an indispensable condition of the communal solution. ⁵⁶ The leaders did not agree with the Congress scheme

55. Young India, March 12, 1930, Collected XIII, P. 56.

56. Collected Works, XIV, PP. 322-323.

which had among other things, guaranteed minority and religious rights, universal adult suffrage and joint electorate with reservation. This was the occasion for Gandhiji to reiterate his faith in the efficacy of achieving unity from below and he once again asked the Congress to give up all ambition to capture power. Instead, the Congress should work to improve the economic and social condition of the masses from outside.⁵⁷ For example, a fight for the revision of the land revenue laws to make them more equitable and to reduce the burden of land revenue would be for the benefit of all communities and in time every body would join it. Such a fight would result either in the desired reforms being effected or in those holding power handing over the power to the rebellious people.

Gandhiji attended the Round Table Conference in London but returned empty-handed. The colonial authorities had made the solution of the communal problem the precondition for any discussion or constitutional progress. Returning from the Conference, Gandhiji once again expressed his belief that communalism could not be solved at the conference table. It can be solved by the Congress and it is doing all that it can to solve it. The remedy is to serve all classes and communities. That Gandhiji was correct in his approach to communalism and demonstrated by the absence of communal tension until the defeat and withdrawal of

57. 'Navajivan', June 21, 1931, Collected Works, XVII P. 424.

the civil disobedience movement in 1933-34. In 1934 he decided to keep away from active politics and devote his attention to the question of untouchability. In any case communalism did not grow strong till about 1937. It was only during and after 1937, when the Congress accepted office under the new Govt. of India Act of 1935 and got reduced to a parliamentary party that communal forces were able to come into their own and to get ready for a leap forward. Events were moving very fast from 1938. Jinnah had unleashed a virulent communal propoganda campaign against the Congress and particularly against Gandhiji. One of the result of the communal propoganda was increased incidence of communal riots. Gandhiji once again began to take active interest in finding a solution for communalism. In March 1938 he discussed the problem with members of Gandhi Seva Sangha. He prescribed Satyagraha as the only solution for communal riots. He said "I have only one way of attaining independence as well as Hindu-Muslim unity, and that is Satyagraha. We adopted the path of Satyagraha against the Govt. for the attainment of Swaraj. And we did not succeed to some extent. But we have done almost nothing with regard to this question.

59

Gandhiji felt that had he placed before the people unadulterated Ahmisa there could have been unity by now. He wanted

58. Speech at Public meeting, Bombay, December 28, 1931, Collected Works XIII, P. 449.

59. Collected Works, IXVI, P. 428.

members of Gandhi Seva Sangh to be ready even today down their lives to prevent riots. He also wanted them to be friendly with every Muslim in their village or locality and through sincere service, with their confidence and trust. And this would help prevent riots. ⁶⁰ Behind communal riots lay communal politics and Gandhiji had to tackle this. While Jinnah raised the cry of "Islam in danger" and wanted the minorities to defend their interests, Gandhiji tried to educate the people through the columns of the Harijans, that Hindus and Muslims are but one nation.

He said there is no substance in our quarrels. Points of differences are superficial, those of contact are deep and permanent. Political and economic subjection is common to us'. He was sure that when the masses were fully awakened they would combine to fight common evils. Gandhiji realised that Jinnah was looking to the Govt. to safeguard the so called Muslim interests, and that the Govt. was taking advantage of the dissensions between the Hindus and Muslims. The only solution to communal problems was therefore to get rid of the British. It was the British statesmen who are responsible for the divisions in India's ranks, and the divisions will continue so long as the British sword holds India under bondage. Let them withdraw from India and I promise that the Congress and the league and all other

60. Collected Works, IXVI, PP. 424-33, 433-40, 444-450.

party will find it to their interest to come together and devise a home made solution for the Govt. of India'. However Gandhiji hesitated to start another mass movement against the Govt. since he was afraid that it would result in further riots.⁶¹ The Hindus and Muslims have two different religious philosophies, social customs, literature. They belong to two different civilisations which are based on conflicting ideas and conceptions.... It is quite clear that Hindus and Musalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history.⁶²

Gandhiji called the two nation theory an untruth and showed that the similarities between the Hindus and Muslims were greater than any differences. A Bengali Muslim speaks the same tongue that a Bengali Hindu does, eats the same food, has the same amusements as his neighbour. The Hindu law and inheritance governs many Muslim groups.⁶³ In 1941, it was clear to Gandhiji that unity could not be achieved through an agreement with the Muslim league. As long as the policy of keeping at a distance from both the Govt. and the Congress and using concessions by either side for extracting more from the other remains, no understanding seems possible. The situation deteriorated considerably in 1941 and there were many communal riots instigated by the Muslim

61. Statement to the Press, April 25, 1941, Collected Works, IXXIV.

62. Collected Works, IXXI, p. 389.

63. Harijan, April 6, 1940, Collected Works IXXI, pp. 388-89.

league to 'intimidate the Congress'. Gandhiji was prepared to ignore this since it was the people who would intimately decide the communal question.

Gandhiji seems to have become convinced towards the end of 1941 that communal unity could be brought about only by bringing together the masses in a struggle against the common foe and thus diverting the attention from the riots which had taken on the proportions of a mini-civil war.⁶⁴ In January, 1942, he began to emphasise that a mere pact between the Congress and Muslim league would not solve the problem. It is probable that Mahatma Gandhi decided to launch the Quit India Movement in 1942 to solve the communal problem through a struggle. Significantly, there were no communal riots while the Quit India Movement lasted. Unfortunately the history of Independence India has belied Gandhi's expectations. Nevertheless, his understanding of communalism and the strategy he wanted to employ to combat it, seems relevant even today. In a way the communal problems remain unsolved because neither Gandhiji nor the leaders of independent India tried out over a long period of time the strategy that Gandhiji had himself suggested in the 1930s, that is to say, a mass movement of the people for the redressal of common grievances. Gandhiji's failure to bring about communal unity in the twenties through negotiations and pacts among the communal leaders is a significant

64. Address to the Congress Workers, January 17, 1942, Collected Works, IXXV, p. 230.

lesson which today's leaders seem to forget.

BJP'S Stand on Hindu-Muslim

BJP, the political party is the product of its various allied organisations like RSS, VHP, Bajaranga Dal etc. By basic nature and function the allied organisations are different. But BJP followed the provisions and fundamental principles of the allied organisations and striving to attain the sole fundamental objectives of allied organisation. Besides the following methods and principles are followed by its various organisations to attain its political goal.

Historical development of nationalism in India and the role of BJP's allied organization : - The rise of nationalism in India too is a phenomenon of modern age. As a brilliant chapter in history it denotes the growth of the consciousness of political and social awakening and will power of the people. Despite being a geographical entity since time immemorial, India lacked the ingredient of political homogeneity, except in some specific occasions, through out her long chequered history. The Arya Samaj, the Brahma Samaj, Rama Krishna Mission, the Bharata Dharma Mahamandal, theosophical society all India Shuddhi Sabha, Hindu Maha Sabha and Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) sought to

65. Sumit Sarkar, 'The logic of Gandhian Nationalism', Indian historical Review, III (1 July, 1976), PP. 114-146.

strengthen the structure and foundation of Hinduism. To strengthen the Hindus physically several Akhanda Dais were opened. The activities of these leaders and the organisations could be significant by infusing a spirit of strength, dynamism, social solidarity and nationalistic fervour amongst the Hindus.

The period from 1850-1875 can be included in the early phase of development of Hindu nationalism. The first war of independence in 1857 evoked a great spirit of nationalism and patriotism in the Indian minds. In 1864, under the initiative of Raj Narain Bose the first Hindu mela (Hindu meet) was inaugurated and later in 1868, the National Society was formed in Bengal. The second phase which started in 1885 and ended in 1905 deals with the formation of Indian National Congress which accommodated various groups in the beginning and later divided into Extremists and moderates. The Extremists group gave major contribution to the growth of Hindu nationalism. The third phase started with the partitioned of Bengal and came to an end with the down of Gandhian era in 1920. During this period Extremists movements dominated the scene. The fourth phase started with the emergence of Hindu Mahasabha, especially under V.D. Savarkar. Savarkar for the first time gave a clear definition of Hindu nationalism. This phase covers the period from 1920 to 1950. The emergence of

66. Varma (V.P.), Modern Indian Political thought, Agra, Laxmi Narayan Agrawal Education Publishers, 1961, p. 371.

Bharatiya Jana Sangha in 1951 under the initiative of RSS in the fifth phase. While the current phase of Hindu nationalism is represented by the RSS and the BJP.

Fourth phase of the evolution of Hindu nationalism started with the emergence of Hindu Maha Sabha, especially under V.D. Savadkar. The ideal and ideology with Savadkar laid down and propagated was called Hindu Sangathan ideology or Hindu nationalism. Savadkar was there to this Hindu ideology what Newton was to the law of gravitation or Karl Marx to socialism.⁶⁷

According to Savadkar "every person is a Hindu who regards and owns this land (India).⁶⁸ The land from Indus to the seas as his father land and Hollyland.

Therefore, it included the followers of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism but excluded the Muslims and Christians. He believed that there were three fundamental bonds which united the Hindus, the territorial, the racial and the cultural. These three bonds constituted Hindutva, which was broader and more comprehensive concept than Hinduism. It is important that in order to define "Hindus" on the basis of beliefs or doctrines, Savarkar emphasised the cultural and historical aspects in the definition of a Hindu. To consolidate the Hindus, it was neces

67. Sankar Ghose, *Socialism, Democracy and Nationalism*, Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1973, p. 134.

68. Dhananjaya Keer, *Savarkar and his Times*, Bombay, India Printing works, 1950, p. 225.

sary to purify Hindu practices and to remove the inequalities of
69
castes. So Savarkar espoused the cause of the untouchables,
pleaded for their right to enter Hindu Temples and was in favour
of inter-caste marriages. Thus the idea of Hindu organisation of
Savarkar lead to Hindu social reforms. The Hindu nationalism,
Savarkar reiterates, "does not aim at usurping what belongs to
others". He wanted to build a strong and militant Hindu nation.
He was the first thinker to interpret and define clearly the
basic tenets of Hindu nationalism. He is regarded as the father
of modern Hindu nationalism.

In 1925, its programme was enunciated as follows by Lala
Lajpat Rai, who was then President of 'Mahasabha' : (1) To orga-
nise Hindu Sabhas throughout the country, (2) To provide relief
to such Hindus who need help on account of communal riots, (3)
Reconversion of Hindus who have been forcible converted to Islam,
(4) To organise gymnasiums for the use of Hindu young men and
women, (5) To organise Seva Samities, (6) To popularise Hindu,
(7) To build Halls attached to the temples for people to assemble
and to discuss matters of social and religious interests, (8) to
celebrate Hindu festivals, (9) To promote good feelings with
Muslims and Christians, (10) To represent communal interests of
the Hindus in all political controversies, (11) To encourage

69. Ibid, P. 226.

Hindus to take industrial pursuits and to better the condition of
70
Hindu women. Out of the above points regarding Gandhian na-
tionalism and Hindu Mahasabha of Hindu consolidation and nation-
alism it is clear that both agreed with the reformative aspect of
Indian society in terms of abolition of untouchability, inter-
caste marriage, better condition of Hindu women and like that.
But when Gandhiji thinks nationalism in terms of Hindu Muslim
unity and adequate opportunity for weaker sections of society at
the same time Savarkar's approach is towards Hindu nationalism
and exclusion of Muslims and converting Hindus who have been
forcibly became Islam and help Hindus who need help on account of
communal riots. Gandhiji was quite against communal riots.
Regarding the practical utility of the formation and operation
of Hindu maha Sabha, in 1924 Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, argued
that it is wrong to think that 'Maha Sabha' is a communal organi-
sation which would clash with the national congress. It is a
socio-religious and cultural organisation to deal with social and
non political matters such as untouchability, inter-caste jeal-
ousies, child marriages and other social abuses. The Mahasabha
would deal with these matters and also safeguard the interests

70. Indraprakash, A review of the History and work of Hindu
Mahasabha and Hindu Sangathan movement, (Delhi, Hindu Mahasabha
Publication, 1952) pp. 43-44.

of the Hindus. But when the out break of Hindu-Muslim riots followed the suspension of the "Non-cooperation movement" it provided an additional base for the establishment of Hindu Sabha through out the country.

These riots brought into focus the general absence of a strong unified body among the Hindus, which in turn provided an impetus to the Hindu unification movement.

The Communal Award of 1932, which set up special electorate for Muslims and other communities, was severely condemned by the Maha Sabha. After 1932, the Mahasabha grew increasingly estranged from the Congress party and from Mahatma Gandhi, whom they accused of Muslim 'appeasement' which leads to the forbade any of its members by the Congress from being in communal organisations, including the Mahasabha. After the world war I, Mahasabha activities were increasingly directed against the Muslim league. And in latter part of the 1930s, especially after 1937, when V.D. Savarkar became President, its target was increasingly against the Congress party.

The Maha Sabha was strongly opposed the

71. Sankar Ghosh, Political ideas and movements in India, (Bombay Allied Publishers, 1975), P. 176.

72. Mishra, B.B., The Indian Political parties, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1976) pp. 321-22.

73. Myron Weiner, Party Politics in India (Princeton, Princeton University Press 1957), p. 164.

formulation of Pakistan and the partition of India. The Mahasabha antagonism started in the early 1930s against the Congress for its policy of placing the Muslims at the expense of the Hindus, reached its peak during Savarkar's era.

Here both Mahatma Gandhi and Hindu Mahasabha opposed partition of India. But Gandhi's approach is quite moderate towards Muslim league and its operation in comparison to Hindu Mahasabha. Gandhiji had agreed of communal electorate under the circumstances but Hindu Mahasabha is quite antagonistic to it.

Dr. Shyam Prasad Mookerjee, who succeeded Savarkar in 1943, was responsible for democratising and modernising the Maha Sabha. After independence of the country in 1947, he exhorted the Maha Sabhahites either to give-up politics and confine themselves as to admit people of all communities in order that the Mahasabha might grow into a national organisation. His advice went unheeded, and in the upheaval that followed the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in January 1948, by a member of Maha Sabha renounced politics for some time and later returned to it in May 1949. Meanwhile, Mookherjee severed his relations with the Hindu Maha Sabha and took initiative to form a new political party i.e. the Bharatiya Jana Sangha. And after the independence in 1949, some orthodox Hindus formed a new party of their own called the Ramarajya parisad. It participated in the first three general elec

74. Sadasivan, S.N. Party and democracy in India, Tatame-Grow-Hill Publishing Company Ltd.(New Delhi), 1977, P. 126.

tions and in 1967 elections it did not participate. The Hindu Maha Sabha, however, could not secure any important position in the political life of free India. In the place of Hindu Maha Sabha, the party which gained its strength was the Bharatiya Jana Sangha which was founded by Dr. Mookherjee after leaving the Mahasabha.

75

Regarding the RSS and Indian nationalism it believed that the Hindu culture was the sole binding force of Indian nation. The feeling of a burning love for Mother India has bloom the basic tenet of RSS philosophy. In the initial period it had two objectives (a) to unite Hindus to fight against the colonial rule, (b) to organise Hindus against further disintegration and from the proselytising influence of external religions like Islam and Christianity. But later it expanded its scope of activities into many other fields, such as politics, education, social welfare, trade union and intellectual activities. When Gandhiji believed and strive for bringing nationalism in terms of plurality of culture and integration of Indian society irrespective religion at the same time RSS and Jana Sangha believed that

76

75. Sankar Ghosh, *Socialism, Nationalism and democracy in India* (Bombay, Allied Publishers 1973), p. 171.

76. Walter, K. Anderson and Dalme, the *Brotherhood in Saf-
fron, the RSS and Hindu revivalism*, (New Delhi, Vistar Publica-
tions, 1987), p. 34.

nationalism can be achieved only by Hindu culture and Indian society is nothing but Hindu society. The Jana Sangha stated in this respect that "it stood for the rebuilding of India on basis of Indian culture and tradition. It further stated its fundamental principal is "one nation, one culture and one people." In a book published in 1939 and entitled we or our nationhood defined, Golwalkar, the second Chief of RSS defined the ideology of the organisation. He adopted a definition of the Hindu nation similar to V.D. Savadkar in Hindutwa. He did not believe in the separation of religion from politics. He declared, "we cannot give-up religion in our national life as it would mean that we have turned faithless to our male spirit, to the ideal and mission for which we have lived for ages."

This is a reminiscent of the ideas of some of the extremist leaders of the first decade of this century, who considered that no national awakening in India would be fruitful except on the foundation of religious faith. Though RSS is mentioned as a revivalist organisation by its critics, its leader asserts that RSS stood for the renaissance of the Hindu religion and the Hindu

77. Bharatiya Jana Sangha Publication, New Delhi, 1957, and manifesto and programme of Jana Sangh,

78. M.S. Golwalkar, we or our nationhood defined, 4th edition, (Nagpur RSS Office, 1947), P.N. Indurkar, Bharat Publications, 1939, pp. 30-31.

society. At present, the RSS has a leading position among various Hindu organisations in the country and represents the idea of Hindu Rastra or Hindu nation. The RSS and its family organisations including Bharatiya Janata party- the present form of erstwhile Bharatiya Jana Sangha - constitute the movement for Hindu nationalism in the present Indian politics. To the Jana Sangh, the Hindu Society and nation were identical. This meant that, Hindus did not form a religious community, but a nation, to which all individuals belonged, irrespective of castes, creed and language. The contention implied that secularism as a value system was maintained in the garb of Hindu culture. ⁷⁹

The principle of integral Humanism, propounded by Deen Dayal Upadhaya form the basic principle of BJP. At the same time, it expresses its commitment to five ideals. They are (a) Nationalism and national integration, (b) democracy, (c) positive, secularism, (d) Gandhian socialism and (e) a value based politics. It shows the party's faith in all democratic norms, with the hope that it will create consensus politics in major national issues and compete with others where conflict situation arise. As national consensus cannot be based on mere struggle for power, it must be based on certain principles and national objectives. The people of different faiths and ideologies should be able to co-exist in peace and harmony but those who have extra territori

79. Horst, Hartmann, Political parties in India (Meerut, Mee-nakshi Prakasan, 1980) p. 115.

al loyalties or are engaged in anti-social activities cannot be expected to contribute to national consensus and for this reason would have to be kept out. As a believer in democracy as Gandhiji believed, BJP would like to fight against all trends of fascism and authoritarianism. Its commitment to positive secularism implies a rejection of what the Congress has been advocating so far. It rejects the idea of appeasement towards any community and instead supports the idea of full protection to the life and property of minorities.

It desires filtering of common moral values, whether derived from different religions or from other historical and civilised experiences and approaches, which always remained integral to Indian nationalism. While accepting the doctrine of Gandhian socialism the party seeks to replace both capitalism and communalism by the principle of cooperative system and a form of trusteeship in all fields of economic activity. Finally, it desires a value based politics. It also desires to pursue the course of a welfare state. Its programmes lay stress on the need for land reforms, reconstructing the agrarian system, eradication of poverty by Antyodaya schemes. Food for work, adult education, drinking water for rural areas, low cost housing, nutrition and primary health care, family planning, vocation-oriented education, women welfare, introduction of -----

80. Our five commitments (New Delhi, BJP Publications, 1980), p. 4.

employment guarantee schemes for youth, nationalisation of major industries, growth of public sector etc. Theoretically it followed Gandhian concept of economic life and living to bring out the ideal state i.e. Ramarajya possible.

81

Regarding international relations and foreign policy it favours (BJP) non-alignment and an independent foreign policy, aiming at preserving world peace and promoting enlightened self-interest of the nation. Regarding the nuclear weapon production it differs from Gandhian concept of complete non-violence approach by favouring the policy that India should have a policy of producing all kind of nuclear weapons and bombs.

Gandhi and BJP were fighting under different banners to bring out Indian nationalism, i.e. in Congress and through its different allied organisations respectively. While Gandhiji had a strong faith in Indian National Congress to bring out the same the BJP developed the antagonistic attitude towards the same and tried to preserve the same through other socio-cultural, reformative organisations outside the then Congress.

According to the BJP assertion the challenge from Dalits came at a time when the oil revolution in the Arab world had brought about an assertion of Islamic fundamentalism. It was being rumoured that petro-dollars were following into India to

81. Economic policy declared adopted by First National Conference of BJP, in December 28, 29, 30, 1981 at Bombay.

finance Muslim organisation and with a view of making Muslims a political challenge to the Hindus. In fact it was alleged, according to BJP that petro-dollars were the main inducement for the conversion of the Dalits. The impact of the conversions on the mind of the Upper Caste Hindus must be assessed in this context. According to BJP also, for various reasons, the Punjab problem assumed menacing proportions around 1983. The Sikhs who were historically not considered different from Hindus began to assert their separate identity and even object to being bracketed with the Hindus in the Constitution. Thus the Sikh religious assertion created another major challenge for the Hindus. Sikhism was seen to be so much an integral part of Hinduism that any assertion of separateness on the part of the Sikhs was no less than a traumatic experience for the Hindus, according to BJP. Here also it was perceived by BJP as not merely losing a friend but providing an ally to the Muslims. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwalle had told the BBC correspondent that the Sikhs should join hands with Muslims and should together challenge Hindu hegemony.

82

The Shah Bano movement in 1986-87 also had an adverse effect on the Hindu mind. The Muslims aggressively opposed and rejected the Supreme Court Judgement in the case of maintenance claimed by Shah Bano of Indore beyond the period of iddah (the

82. Sarvapalli Gopal, *Anatomy of Confrontation*, Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 1991, p. 190.

three month period after a divorce during which a divorce is entitled to claim for maintenance, according to Muslim law). The Muslim kept on agitating until the govt. agreed to nullify the court judgement by enacting a separate law for muslim woman. This was seen as a complete negation of secularism by the BJP and it perceived that only Hindus are secular and the minorities are communal.

The Hindus led by VHP and RSS now began to demand the construction of a Ramjanmabhumi Mandir on the site of Babri Mosque. In order to broaden the movement the VHP, RSS and BJP devised a clever move. They organised the worshipping and consecration of bricks in every village and taking them out in processions. These bricks were to be subsequently sent to Ayodhya for the construction of temple. Basically it was a clear political move. A large number of Hindus were politically mobilised. But it communalised the whole situation and Hindus and Muslims came dangerously close to confrontation. The processions were organised in October-November, 1989 just on the eve of the general elections in the last week of November, 1989. It was no wonder that many major riots broke out in Indore (Oct. 1989), Kota (Sept. 1989), Bhagalpur (Oct. 1989) etc., in which hundreds of innocent muslims were killed. Thus it can be seen that the Hindu-Muslim

83. Ibid., p. 191.

relations are not merely governed by the religious factors alone but more often, by political and economic developments. The political contour is determined by the social changes brought about by economic development and technological progress which in turn decides the pattern of behaviour and political perceptions. And these perceptions ultimately determine the shape of the relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims in society. Thus it is the process of economic development, social change and political perceptions which are far more important than the religious factor in determining inter communal relationships. ⁸⁴

Similarity between Gandhi murder and Babri demolition :

Regarding Babri Masjid demolition a group of researcher named D.R. Goyal and others in their article "Gandhi murder to Babri demolition" point out that there are some similarities between the two incidents and it is those that gave rise to this reaction among people. First of all the reaction itself. Assassination of Gandhiji had shaken the entire nation. The Muslims were gripped by intense fear and insecurity. Among the people at large there was deep grief and anger. The target of people's anger was the Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangha and its

84. Asgar Ali Engineer, Hindu-Muslim relations before and after 1947, Babri masjid- Ramjanmabumi issue, edited with an introduction by Sarvapalli Gopal, Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 1991, p. 192.

associates. On December 6, more or less the same atmosphere prevailed all over. Secondly the Sangha tribe dissociated itself from December 6 deed with the same alacrity as it had displayed after Gandhi murder. It is, of course, patent that the show of sorrow was hypocritical now as well as then. The foul deed on January 30, 1948 was celebrated in RSS Sukhas with distribution of sweets, and when the Babri Masjid ultimately fell Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharati jumped with joy into each other arms. Gowalkar's tears then and Advani's display of remorse now, both are equally hypocritical. Subsequent developments in both cases have exposed the reality. Thirdly, in both case, attempts were made to prepare people's minds to welcome the criminal deed. Before the assassination of Gandhiji was described by the Sangha tribe as a traitor and a misfortune of the nation. This time around the Babri Masjid had been projected as a black spot on nations identity and a symbol of slavery. Fourthly, poisonous propaganda on both occasions had motivated people towards violent action and to take law into their own hands. Setting the mischief a foot the RSS stood aside to absolve itself of the crime. The Sangha does not maintain any membership register or record so that the outsider cannot prove the association with the RSS of the person who wields the pistol or uses dynamite and pickax. At that time, it was proclaimed that Godse had connection with the RSS and now the demolition squad of "kar sevaks" had been disowned. Fifthly, there are

similar efforts to take credit for each deed. Of course, more time elapsed in the case of Gandhiji, for obvious reasons, as compared with the Babri Masjid. After Gandhi murder the Sangha tribe continued to claim for about two decades that the Mahatmas name had been incorporated in the "Pratah-Smaran" i.e. (morning prayer) of the RSS. No hesitation was shown in describing the Mahatma as the father of the nation. Not in public at least. ⁸⁵

The reality surfaced, like the proverbial cut out of the bag, when the "Jana Sangha (the erstwhile Political platform of the RSS) secured a majority in Delhi Municipal Corporation and Delhi Metropolitan Council and became the rulers in the Capital. The RSS Swyam Sevaks in the political field began to dream of capturing political power. The Congress party in the corporation moved a resolution which described Gandhiji as the father of the nation and the ruling Jana Sangha opposed it tooth and nail for the same reason. Now that the Sangha stalwarts captured Chief Ministership in four states and got the exulted position of the opposition leader in Parliament. Their confidence took the form of arrogance and in the same proportion their apparent reverency and regard for Gandhiji also began to decline. The Sangh tribe therefore revived its objection to reference of the Mahatma as father of the nation. One wonders at this queer attitude. If

85. DES RAJ GOPAL, "Gandhi murder to Babri demolition", Qaumi Ekta Trust, A. 199, Pandara Road, New Delhi, 1993 pp. 2-6.

K.B. Hedge was called "Swayamev Mrigendrata" and M.S. Golwalkar can be referred to as Guruji by their followers why should there be any objection if a grateful nation remember its unifier and liberator as father?⁸⁶

Difference between Gandhi and BJP in solving Hindu-Muslim Problems

Out of the above discussion the following differences can be drawn from the Gandhi and BJP's approach to Hindu-Muslim relations and nation building through promotion of national integration and nationalism which Gandhi believes in a composite or say plurality of culture but not a dominate culture i.e. Hindutva or Hindu culture. Gandhiji not only tried for bringing Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people to the national mainstream but also to promote harmonious relations among Hindus and Muslims.

By affirming the universality and equality of all religion he said the problem is not with the religion as such but with the votaries. Due to the lack of proper understanding they do not follow their religions properly. According to his understanding of religion, the difference will not divide mankind but will only enrich it. Regarding the very basis of Hinduism he said my

86. Des Raj Gopal and Others, "Gandhi murder to Babri demolition" Quami Ekta Trust, New Delhi-3, 1993 pp.2-3. "Motive behind Gandhi Murder and Babri Demolition was the same : paving the way for Hindu Rashtra of the RSS conception instead of "Ram Rajya" of Gandhi's dreams".

Hindu instinct tell me that all religions are more or less true. All proceeds for the same god, but all are imperfect because they have come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality. Once he stated I am fighting for unity not only among Hindus and Hindu untouchables but among Hindu, Muslims, Christians and other different religious communities. So it is clearly evident that while Gandhiji thought Indian culture and Indian nationalism in terms of unity in diversity BJP thinks in terms of one culture i.e. Hindu culture and Unified India. Though in means they are different but in end it is the same i.e. to build a strong and unified India. Both Gandhiji and the parent organization of BJP were against partition of India.

For Gandhi communalism is not only the out growth of religion but other factors in terms, social, economic and uneven development is responsible for the same problem too. So he preferred minority protection and minority rights but BJP is quite against the same for proper implementation of directive principle of state policy i.e. uniform civil code and full protection of life and property of minority. In this respect BJP is against the present policy of ruling Congress party too.

Thirdly regarding the reformative approach of Gandhiji, and Hindu Mahasabha Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya said "the Hindu Mahasabha is not a communal organization to clash with the national Congress in its first inception, but it is cultural organization to deals with various socio-economic and religious reform-

mations like inter-caste marriage, abolition of untouchability and better conditions of women. But with the process of time and circumstances after Gandhiji assassination it took a different approach and converted itself a new interest group in Indian politics.

As Gandhi supported democracy in terms of social, economic and political so also BJP in terms of majority rule and majority rights. A quotation from Jana Sangha news paper suggests the tone and temper of democracy advocated by the Hindu radical rights.... Some Muslims will be get terribly disturbed by reading this.... (but) the minority will have only the rights which the majority bestows upon them at its pleasure.⁸⁷

Last but never the least, when Gandhi visualized the disintegration of India and communal conflict is an obstacle to fight against British imperialism, and tried to bring about communal unity through various measures including his dynamic leadership at the same time BJP frightened about the further sub-division of the country on the basis of religion and strive to make a strong unified future India at the cost of communal riots.

87. Embree (Ainslie T), Religion and Nationalism in modern India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1992, Ch. 3, P.47.

CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSION

Religion is always related with bad news in India. Communal riots; Sikh extremists; the support of Untouchability by the Sankaracharya of Puri; the killings in Kashmir that followed the theft of the Prophets hairs, stories of human sacrifice at the laying of the foundation for a bridge in Rajasthan are the various religious images that emerge from the press, both Indian and international. Such phenomena catches the imagination of many observers even those who are by no means personally ill-disposed to religious values and customs. It is the voice of many impartial personalities that to bring about Progress and prosperity through social Justice it would be better to separate religion from Politics. By referring A.B. Shah, the Indian social critic, said that, "India has enough problems to tackle apart from those created by the obscurantism of its communal parties and quasi-political groups; if religion allowed to complicate these problems, we may as well give up all hope of creating a modern secular democracy and a single nation out of the diverse groups constituting the people of India".

The conflict and tension produced by the confrontation of religious formulation of the society with the agents of change have often been attributed to a head long clash between the forces of tradition (or reaction) and those of modernity (or progress). Gunnar Myrdal, for example has spoken of such a clash as a major motif of the unfolding Asian drama. One sees, he

suggests, a set of inner conflicts operating on people's minds between their high-pitched aspirations and the bitter experience of a harsh reality, between a desire for change and improvement and mental reservations and inhibitions about accepting the consequences and paying the price". This almost mythic vision is no doubt valid, but one should not assume that it takes the form of a collision between the defenders of traditional religion and the exponents of modernity. What is happening in India is something much more complicated and more subtle.

The secularism that is one of the most cherished goals of the dominant Indian Political culture is derived not from modern western political practice, but from Gandhi's translation of nationalist ideals into the vocabulary of Neo-Hinduism. The theological basis of Indian Secularism is not a denial of the claims of religion but an assertion - one can say a profoundly dogmatic one - that all religions are true.

Anything that appears to be socially harmful can be avoided and abandoned - what is left will be the kernel of truth. This is what Gandhi meant, when he said, "for me truth is god", which is very different in its implications from the Christian formula "god is truth". For Gandhi and his followers such as interpretation of religion was the answer to India's most pressing Political Problem - the antagonism between Hindus and Muslim as well as such other social Problems as untouchability. Secularism in Indian sense, is an attempt to create a basic requisite of a

nationalist state, a homogeneous population. Gandhian solution have an attraction of people of good will, but it carries within its seed of conflict. Many serious and knowledgeable students of modern India have wondered if Gandhi's use of a religious vocabulary - inevitably Hindu in origin did not in fact provoke the political and social relations between the Hindus and Muslims. Gandhi - and this is true for neo - Hindum in general by overlooking the historically determined character of culture and institutions, mis understood the intractable nature of India's social problems especially the basis of conflict between the religious groups- Gandhi thought and Propagated that if a unity in religion could be achieved and maintained then social conflict would end. His approach to mix up religion in Politics and Preaching the universality and commonness of all religion is multiple. In one hand by doing this he thought that a unified India could be possible and it will be able to give a strong fight against British imperialism. For maintenance of social Justice, end of economic exploitation through sarvodaya and Antodaya Programme, Political Independence through autonomous self sufficient

*** Neo Hindum means the interpretation of BJP and its allied organizations about Hindum.**

**** Radical right means for the BJP and its approach to National inteynation and nation building and its difference forms radical left.**

village communities, the Practical significance of religion and its place in Indian Politics in the then time is obvious. One might almost say that, Gandhiji who was so deeply conscious of the need for personal purity, didn't take seriously the problem of the fierce passions that religious differences could arouse. There is another factor in the neo-Hindu approach to conflict that must be noted; a seemingly complete inability to understand that Muslim and Christians, to the degree that they are committed to their faiths, find their identities in being part of the religious community. For the Hinduism at the deepest level, on the other hand, salvation is ultimately individualistic, concerned with transcending the social order.

The statement that outside the church there is no Salvation is both abhorrent and childish to a neo-Hindu, while it must be fundamental to everyone who truly lives within the confines of the semitic faiths. Neo-Hinduism's solution to religious pluralism is thus a denial of the basis of what to muslims is a fundamental of their faith - the sense of community. Out of which it given in the bitter religious riots in recent years.

The second category of responses made by Hinduism is coming to terms with the modern world; that the groups known variously as Hindu communitarians, Hindu reactionaries or preferably, the Hindu radical right. This response is represented institutionally by such groups as the old Jana Sangh, the Hindu mahasabha, the Siva Sena, the Restriya Swayamsevek Sangh (RSS). They are radical, not reactionary, because the goals they formulate and the

solutions they propose would as truly transform Indian society as would that of radical left. Their literature, especially in Hindi, is filled with Programs for change, how ever absurd these may seem to these with different ideological commitments.

The trust of Hindu radical right can be seen most significantly in its attitudes towards the four major goals of the dominant Political culture. These goals are (1) national unity (2) social Justice (3) Democracy and Secularism are not rejected by the radical right but transformed through redefinition. Its adherents allege that it is a dominant Political groups, who through a false interpretation of goals, are destroying India. National Unity they argue, means an integrated, homogeneous society; and this can be found by recognizing that Indian culture and Hindu culture are synonymous terms. This means, of course, that the place of the religious minority is at once called into question, for the essence of Islam and Christianity - the belief in Salvation. Through membership in a collective social body - seems to be a denial of national unity.

* Regarding secularism M.S. Golwalkar, the best known spokesman for Hindu right, when he stated, "the non-Hindu people in Hindustan must adopt the Hindu culture and religion, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion and must entertain no ideas but those of glorification of Hindu race and culture....claiming no Privileges ... not even citizens

rights¹. Such views are not put forward as part of any party's political Platform, but they are part of the rhetoric religious appeal.

Such a quotation, however extreme and Perhaps, a typical, reinforce that the radical right (BJP) does not engage in frontal attacks on modernity as much as on other religious groups. The demand for abad on the slaughter of cows illustrates this quite neatly, for it is at one a way of embarrassing the governments devotion to secularism and away of attacking Muslims. A ban on cow slaughter would be obviously sectarian legislation, but its symbolic appeal is very considerable. The attack on urdu in Bihar and uttar Pradesh is defended as a movement towards national Unity but the goal is homogeneous society characterised by the dominance of the Hindu culture.

* All most all observers would agree that whether the objective situation justifies it or not, a deep sense of frustration and anxiety characterises much of the Indian Muslim community. According to Dr. Abid Husain of Jamia millia University, it was the Muslimost India who had to pay the heaviest Price for Partition and independence, not only in the form of spiritual and mental anguish but also in that of economic depression and educational and cultural backwardness. It may be argued that the condition of

1. M.S. Golwalkar, we and our nationhood defined, quoted in Farooqi, communist Party and the problems of the Muslim. Minority, p.8.

Indian Muslims is no worse than that of millions of other Indian located in similar interstices of the social system, but the Muslim perception of their situation as isolated from the mainstream of national life remains. There are two aspects of this perception, (1) The Muslims, are 'a remnant of their eyes, cut off from the Islamic state many of them had supported, and because of this, they are in the eyes of the Hindu majority "a potential fifth column". (2) The Muslims response to social change, one of that is analogous in many ways to that of Hindu radical right.

One is tempted to assume that in the Indian situation the Hindus radical right (BJP and its allied organization) is alone responsible for the increasing violence and bloodshed of the communal riots during recent years, but there is reason for thinking that the Islamic extremists i.e. the Muslim radical right, to maintain the analogy - have bear responsible to some extent for bringing about the violence. The Declaration by the jamaat-i-Islami and other groups that Salvation comes through communal solidarity and obedience to god alone suggests to the more despairing muslims that it is better to die in a righteous cause than to live in subservience to an alien culture. That death has often been the reward for such views is shown by the increasing number of communal riots in which the majority of those killed have been Muslims. To conclude with the conceptual analysis of "Ramrajya" i.e. ideal state by Gandhiji and BJP is

nothing but two concepts for mobilization of people in different Phases of Indian history. When Gandhi wanted to mobilise the total people of Indian against British imperialism and colonialism to retain Indian independence at the same time by using such concepts, BJP intended to mobilize the majority Hindu people to capture Political power. Gandhian concept of "Ramrajya" in this sense was quite a wider connotation highlighting economic, social, political and religious aspects of Indian life but BJP's approach to the same is relatively narrower and based on more religious and cultural aspects of Hindu life rather than Indian life. For Gandhi ramrajya means harmonious living of all sections of communities which is based on love, purity of mind, fellow feeling and compassion but BJP wanted its philosophy of Hindutva i.e. majority dominance (both Politically and culturally) over other sections of the society including minorities. Out of the following statement which was given by Gandhi in 1938 to the group of missionaries it will be clear about his approach to Politics, religious spirit and religious life.

He stated " I could not be leading a religious life unless I Identified myself with the whole of mankind and that I could not do unless I took Part in Politics. The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole.. I do not know of any religion apart from activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities without which life could be a maze of sound and fury signifying nothing. But BJP wants to dominate the whole Indian society and culture by its philosophy of Hindutva.

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30 87