

**RETHINKING M.K. GANDHI'S *SWARĀJ*: A REALISTIC UTOPIA**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Rethinking M. K. Gandhi's *Swarāj*: A Realistic Utopia” submitted by Ms. Ekta Bhati, for the requirement of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi -110067, is her original work. It has not been submitted, in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of this or any other University, to the best of our knowledge and belief.

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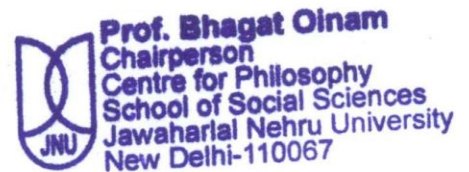
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## DECLARATION

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I, Ekta Bhati, do hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**Rethinking M.K. Gandhi’s Swarāj: A Realistic Utopia**” Submitted to **Jawaharlal Nehru University** for **The Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**, is my original work. The thesis has not been submitted in part or in full to any other university or elsewhere for the attainment of any other degree.

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**DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER**

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I feel fortunate to have received the kindness and support from several people during my research period. Expressing my sincere thanks to all in this limited space is impossible. However, my sincere gratitude will not be accomplished without mentioning some names.

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I shall always remain grateful to my family for their continuous support and love. Finally, I thank, the supreme Lord, for always showing me the light and helping me through every thick and thin and making me realize my true strengths. What I am today is because of the eternal blessings of Goddess *Bhavāni*. I am eternally grateful to the almighty for always providing me with whatever I need.

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## PREFACE

The present study aims to substantiate and assess Gandhi's *swarāj* as a realistic utopia. The realistic or realizable contents of Gandhi's *swarāj* can be made discernible through *satyāgraha*, *swadeshi*, and nonviolence. The idealistic intent of Gandhi's *swarāj* is expounded through his notions of *sarvodaya* and *antyyodaya*. The notion of *swarāj* possesses various strands such as, spiritual, political, social, individual, economic, and moral etc. Thus, the present study, for the originality of its own, attempts to investigate the exemplary dimensions of Gandhi's *swarāj* by expounding the role of utopia in Gandhi's thoughts. And an attempt will be made to investigate the experimental and exemplary aspects of Gandhi's *swarāj* manifested in his direct confrontations with legitimizing authorities and cultures to bring reform. The study also attempts to stimulate various strands of *swarāj* by explicating its relevance in the works of Gandhi's contemporaries like, Sri Aurobindo, Balgangadhar Tilak and K. C. Bhattacharya. Significantly, here, the notion of utopia, stands for dream, hope, creativity, and transformation of the *status quo*. It is not merely an imaginative content as presented in Thomas More's work *Utopia*; rather, it expresses itself through the transformative and revolutionizing dimensions of social change and direct confrontations that renders it as an ongoing mission. It is a notion that stands for freedom both from within and without. Though, freedom or liberation forms an essential characteristic of *swarāj* yet, it is not merely limited by it. In fact, the dynamic and dialectical approach of *swarāj* brings out constant confrontation and experimentation to realize it as a holistic mission. The study is historical, critical, analytic, and descriptive, normative comparative etc. as it works through various dimensions of *swarāj*. Also, an attempt has been made to expound the ecological approach of *swarāj* through contextualizing nonviolence as a response towards current ecological problems.

I am deeply thankful to the authors whose works have directly or indirectly helped me. I have always tried to supply exact quotations and full references to original works in footnotes and bibliography. I have also furnished suggestions for further reading. In referring to the works of Gandhi, More, and others, I have used the most accurate available English translations. I am thankful to those translators of the texts. I have also garnered information from online sources, journals, and articles. I am thankful to those authors as well.

## INTRODUCTION

The present study is an attempt to expound Gandhi's notion of *swarāj* as a realistic utopia. Significantly, *swarāj* occupies a central position in Gandhi's social, political, and individual maneuvers. Gandhi's notion of *swarāj* denotes his idealistic mission of development and transformation of Indian society. It is conceived as an ongoing mission for reformation of society from its existing foibles. As a dynamic model of development, it holds immense capacity to revolutionize the *status quo*. In the task of exploring *swarāj* as a utopian model of development with its realistic or realizable contents, I will try to rethink and vindicate the dynamic and dialectical approach of *swarāj* in the following five interrelated ways:

- A.) To explore the role of utopia in Gandhi's vision of *swarāj*.
- B). to explicate and develop the utopian intents of *swarāj* manifested in Gandhi's *Sarvodaya* and *Antyodaya* vision.
- C). to assess and substantiate *Satyāgraha*, Nonviolence, and *Swadeshi* as realistic means to realize the utopian ideal.
- D). to investigate the exemplary dimensions of Gandhi's political and social maneuvers by contrasting his vision against his contemporaries.
- E). And lastly to examine and substantiate the economic and ecological implications of *swarāj* as a response to current environmental problems.

It is vital to assess at the outset that what is a utopia? What are the kinds of utopia? And what kind of utopia Gandhi would like to advocate? Viewed as an adjective, utopia refers to an imagined perfect community whose social and political custom are organized in a better way than the author's original place. Notably, Thomas More, the father of European socialism coined the term utopia in his famous work *Utopia* (1516) to highlight the foibles of 16<sup>th</sup> century England. Through *Utopia*, he presents a fictional narrative of an island Utopia whose social and political arrangements operate in harmony with individual growth and relationship.

It is significant to note that utopia since its pioneering inception by Thomas More has evolved significantly in the past 500 years. It has traversed from the domain of social and political studies to literature, philosophy, and science etc. It has been widely contextualized in "hope",



“desire”, “progress”, and “creativity” in social, political, and ethical spheres of life. Moreover, there are many definitions and classifications of utopia. For instance, every so often it is referred to as dream, and progress. And on other occasions, it is rendered as impossibility. But what remains common among various contextualization of utopia is that it inevitably denotes an alternative approach, a resurrection of the existing reality. For instance, Ruth Levitas in her work; *The Concept of Utopia* (1990) considers a variety of past definitions and vehemently emphasizes on “desire” as the constituting feature of utopia. Moreover, Andreas Voigt defines utopia as an idealistic picture of the alternative world. Moreover, Joyce Oramel Hertzler defines utopias as representation of a distinctive characteristic.

The methods I will be adopting in this study are historical, critical, pluralistic, descriptive, normative, and comparative. It is historical because I will be analyzing the notion of *swarāj* in the context of India’s nationalist movement and its various representatives like Aurobindo, Tilak, K.C. Bhattacharya and others. The historical approach is made to understand different perspectives on *swarāj*. It is critical because Gandhi’s notion of *swarāj* is a holistic model of development and a catalyst of transformation. It aims at the resurrection of society from its existing ills. It is pluralistic because it accommodates various notions such as, *sarvodaya*, *antodaya*, and *swadeshi* etc. under its shelter. It is descriptive and normative because I shall attempt to discuss *swarāj* in light of the current ecological problems and its relation to peace and dignity of human and animal life.

In the first chapter titled: Utopia and Reality: Interfacing the Antithetical, I will attempt to explicate the role of utopia in Thomas More’s work and also an effort will be made to understand the dynamics of utopianism manifested through the expressions of dream, hope, desire, creativity etc. Gandhi’s idealistic vision of *Rām Rājya* will also be considered to comprehend his alternative approach for development of Indian society on spiritual lines. To expound the similarities and distinctiveness of Gandhi and More’s work, I shall explore the relative dimensions of their works to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of their respective utopias. Thomas More’s work *Utopia* offers a distinctive understanding of the social, economic, and political structures of England during the reign of King Henry VIII. It catalyzes the renaissance period by highlighting the ills of Tudor England and effectuating an alternative approach towards the development of the western society. Through a fictive method of interpretation and arguments, Thomas More

substantively argues for a war-free society where peace and prosperity are fundamentally assimilated in the social, political, and economic structures of Utopia Island. Like Gandhi, his vehement emphasis on greed-less society mirrors his perspective on the welfare of the disadvantaged and exploited groups of the society. Similarly, Thomas More's unbiased approach towards an egalitarian model of development is derivative of Gandhi's *sarvodaya* and *antyodaya* missions.

Though, the notion of utopia since its pioneering inception by Thomas More has evolved and traversed vigorously through the disciplines of social and political science, philosophy, and literature etc. yet its various manifestations are still a subject of debate among the scholars. It often revitalizes the past through its variant of social dreaming. For instance, earthly paradise, fortunate isles, Hesiod's golden age etc. are reflective of human's propensity of proclaiming the assumptions of the past. Significantly, in Gandhi's social and political maneuvers, we notice a positive affirmation towards a revered dream of the golden past mirrored through his vision of *Rām Rājya*. The chapter will unravel the various manifestations of utopia and how they are reflected in Gandhi's vision. I will also explicate a cogent articulation of his vision through his work *Hind Swaraj* to stimulate the various strands of freedom reflected in his struggles. His critique of modern civilization and machinery expansion will also be made discernible in this chapter.

In the chapter II titled: *Swarāj: Contending Viewpoints*, I will attempt to explore the realistic features of Gandhi's *swarāj* amidst his contemporaries like Balgangadhar Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, and K. C. Bhattacharya. I will also endeavor to explicate the similarities and differences concerning *swarāj* in the works of Gandhi and his contemporaries. For instance, Balgangadhar Tilak regarded *swarāj* as our birthright. He vehemently emphasized on the action-centric approach embedded in the ancient Hindu scripture; *The Gitā*. He significantly invoked the revolutionary fervor of *swarāj* in the consciousness of the Indian masses. Moreover, his contribution on the social and the political arena of the British dominated India renders unique value to the notion of *swarāj*. So, an attempt will be made to explain how far Gandhi agrees or disagrees with Tilak's contention that "*swarāj* is my birth right and I will attain it"? To do this, I will compare Gandhi's notion of *swarāj* with Tilak's maneuvers to vindicate their respective positions on *swarāj*.

Moreover, an endeavor will be made to feature Aurobindo's contention that *swarāj* is the *Sanatana Dharma* and a starting point towards the realization of divinity within us. For Aurobindo,

emancipation from the dominion of in-conscience yields an individual to realize his untrammled potential for spiritual *swarāj*. He perceived the spiritual problem of *swarāj* as a quest necessary for divine perfection and immortality to replace the existing constraints and mechanical necessity of the human body. He firmly believed in the teleological involution and evolution and contended against the theory of procession of cosmic phenomena from a mechanical natural necessity. Aurobindo's *swarāj* serves as a means for the attainment of the ideal human unity. It is more metaphysical than political. To explicate how far Gandhi agrees or disagrees with Aurobindo's views on spiritual *swarāj*, I shall attempt to contrast their respective positions to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the notion.

And lastly, the significance of reasonable thinking will be made discernible through comparing Gandhi and K. C. B's standpoint on *swarāj*. K. C. Bhattacharya in his essay titled "Swaraj in Ideas" argues against the assimilation of new/alien ideas without juxtaposition. His essay on *swarāj* explicates a deep psychological and philosophical approach concerning ideas and their representative ideals/ cultures. So, I will explore how far Bhattacharya's contention is feasible in affirming that *swarāj* is being capable of comprehending and comparing old ideas with new ones.

In the chapter III, titled: *Swarāj as a Utopian Mission: Sarvodaya and Antyodaya*, an attempt will be made to discuss whether *swarāj* is an ideal mission in terms of *sarvodaya* and *antyyodaya*. Gandhi precisely experimented with his utopian dream to revolutionize the existing realities. His continued experiments with truth not merely challenged the *status quo* but also contrived to preserve the best in it. Thus, an attempt will be made to address the features of Indian nationhood in Gandhi's successful experiments. It is important to reflect that though Gandhi's utopia strives for a distanced future, yet it is not a leap outside of reality because it challenges the legitimate authorities and catalyzes truthful confrontations with the help of realistic experiments. But to engage with what challenges the Gandhian model of *sarvodaya* confront in terms of its realizability, I will explore the direct confrontations Gandhi had made during his nationalist struggles. Gandhi's struggle and confrontation with existing cultures and their legitimizing ideologies exceedingly motivated the mass struggle to bring reform. Notably, his vision reflects a harmonious consolidation of social and political structures to bring about an emotional, moral, and

social allegiance amongst the citizens of the country. Also, his experiments explicate a conscious and continuous struggle to realize the *swarāj* both within and without to bring self-sufficiency along with political and social integration of man. Gandhi's *swarāj* upholds dual meanings; on the one hand, it refers to one's victory over negative aversions such as lustful passions, greed, etc. and on the other hand, it also denotes independence and sovereignty of the country. Though, the notion evolved significantly under Gandhi's direct authorship yet, it has also been subjected to scrutiny after his assassination.

In the chapter IV titled: The Dynamics of *Swarāj* in Economics: Trusteeship and Nonviolence, efforts will be made to view *swarāj* as a catalyst of transformation. I will argue and substantiate that trusteeship and its inextricable relation with *swarāj* is substantial in paving the way for a nonviolent development of society. By nonviolent development, Gandhi implied a society which is free from structural violence of wants, greed, and acquisition. He vehemently concentrated on removing the wide gulf between the rich and the poor by appealing to the morals and the "goodness" of the elites to look beyond their personal interests. Gandhi argued that nature has provided sufficient for all, and if we take only that which we are in immediate need of then the problem of poverty and malnourishment would dissolve. The premise of Gandhi's *sarvodaya* dream obdurately expresses the need-driven approach which does not merely challenge the modern greed-driven attitude but also rejects it by conforming to the principle of equitable distribution and production by the masses. Gandhi upheld a challenging task of accelerating India on economic lines along with its spiritual progression. Spiritual progression of Gandhi is not married to the boundaries of one's religion or cultural practices, rather, it deals with humanity as a whole. One's love towards his/her neighbor gets extended in social harmony which further generates national and international congruence. His ethical and political maneuvers implicitly echo his reverence for nature, plants, and animals. Simple and minimalistic living reflected in Gandhi's ashram structure fervently reverberates in the 21st century. A careful consideration of his principle of nonviolence is required to comprehend the deeper implications of environmental sustainability embedded in his philosophy. It is a known fact that Gandhi's teachings were expounded on his metaphysical assumption regarding truth, but what fascinated me more is Gandhi's concentration on a simplistic lifestyle to maintain decorum with nature. So, *swarāj* has implications not only for effective socio-economic changes but also for resolving ecological challenges. The creative and imaginative

features of Gandhi's *swarāj* along with its experimental dimensions allow transformation for the welfare of all.

Moreover, *swarāj* as a realistic utopia is a vision and a movement which is in a process of realization on some major lines such as education for all, better social and economic conditions, moral acceleration of man, dignity of both human and animal life etc. It also holds a continuing capacity to awake, enlighten and motivate masses to voluntarily strive for change both from within and without. An effort will be made to investigate the valuable and familiarizing dimensions of *swarāj* such as inclusive society, and sustainable ecological lifestyle. Also, the focus here is to understand the overall movement for *swarāj* and its continuation even after Gandhi's death. The experimental nature of Gandhian thoughts manifested in *satyāgraha* and *swadeshi* movements and reflected in his *ashram* experiments makes the notion of *swarāj* realistic enough to revolutionize and reform the status quo. But since it is a model of change that offers confrontation with the existing system of realities, its employment is contingent to circumstances, hence, it might and might not overcome extremist thoughts and practices.

## CHAPTER I

### UTOPIA AND REALITY: INTERFACING THE ANTITHETICAL

The objective of this work is to expound the nature of utopia in Thomas More's work *Utopia*. Also, an attempt will be made to elucidate various understanding of the genre utopianism to comprehend its manifestations across disciplines of social and political sciences, philosophy, and literature. The work is aimed to explore utopia and its nature in the framework of its idealistic assumptions manifested in human dreams, hope, and resurrection of society. The deep-seated need or desire to change or transform our societal conditioning holds prime significance here as utopia challenges current assumptions by providing a window for an alternative conditioning of society. It aims to exterminate existing ills by offering an idealized blueprint of the future. Also, an attempt will be made to discuss how far Gandhi's utopia is similar or different from More's *Utopia* in highlighting the ills of society and how far the suggestions proposed by them are feasible in annihilating the corrupt endeavors. To contrast utopia from reality, Gandhi's experimentative maneuvers are also palpably discussed to arrive at a comprehensive understanding. Hence, to achieve the above-mentioned task, I have organized my discussion through the following sections:

1. Utopia as Unreal: Thomas More
2. The dynamics of Utopia: An Exploration
3. Realistic Utopia: Gandhi's Exemplary Ethics

In section 1 of the work, I will expound and evaluate different theories concerning utopia. Its manifestation in the cycle of hope, despair, and rejection of hope altogether<sup>1</sup> is also discussed to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the genre. The section 2 is dedicated to studying the significance and purpose of Thomas More's *Utopia* in 16th Century England. Also, an attempt will be made to comprehend how far Gandhi's *Rām Rājya*, an idealistic model of development for India is different from or similar with Thomas More's *Utopia*. And lastly, section 3 is designed to discuss the realistic aspects of Gandhi's *swarāj* vision, his constant experimentations, and the methods he employed to achieve it.

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<sup>1</sup>Sargent, L. T. 1994. "Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited", *Utopian Studies* Vol. 5, No. 1. P. 28.

## Section 1

### Utopia as Unreal- Thomas More

Thomas More's *Utopia* written in 1516 has continued to be a subject of debate among the scholars of political and social studies. More's *Utopia*, primarily a work of fiction, creatively mirrors his witty satire on the ills of 16<sup>th</sup> century England. Notably, the book was originally written in Latin and was later translated into English and many other languages. The work is originally titled as: *De Optimo Rei Publicae Statu Deque Nova Insula Utopia*, literally means, "Of a republic's best state and of the new island Utopia".<sup>2</sup>

The work *Utopia* prompts the readers to switch boundaries between the real and the imaginary as the discussion between Raphael Hythloday and Thomas More unravels. Significantly, the work expounds an idealistic approach through employing an egalitarian perspective towards Tudor England. The genius of the work lies in its hypothetical portrayal of an egalitarian society named *Utopia* whose social and political regulations were in complete contrast with 16<sup>th</sup> century European life. The scholars across disciplines have argued that Sir Thomas More's chief interlocutor, Raphael Hythloday, a sagacious and well-traveled orator represents the fictional Thomas More who implicitly expresses his mind through an imaginary spokesperson. It is vital to observe that Thomas More draws an analytic approach through juxtaposing the social and political customs of the island utopia with the socio-political arrangements of Tudor England.

The work besides its creative genius, "is a strange hybrid of genres: part fantastic travelogue, part philosophical tract, part satire of contemporary English society..."<sup>3</sup>. The book is divided into two parts, while the Book I explore Hythloday's discussion on the problems of contemporary England. Book II effectively traces the social and political customs of Utopia. Interestingly Hythloday who had lived in Utopia for up to 5 years demonstrates an independent

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<sup>2</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utopia\\_\(book\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utopia_(book)) retrieved on 4/18/26.

<sup>3</sup>Gerard, W.B. & Sterling, E. 2005, "Sir Thomas More's Utopia and the transformation of England from absolute monarchy to egalitarian society", p. 75.

perspective on the problems of Tudor England. By contrasting Utopia with 16<sup>th</sup> century England, Thomas More evaluates the harsh social and political laws principally responsible for the prevailing inequality between the rich and the poor. He offers a stringent critique of the law of enclosure and capital punishment for theft. The evils of capitalism are juxtaposed with an egalitarian society which thrives on harmonious social customs and idealized political institutions. The second part captures an interesting discourse between Hythloday and Cardinal Morton (Henry VII Chancellor) regarding peculiar reforms that the former believes might benefit England. “Among the reforms that fictional Hythloday suggests are the abolition of death penalty for theft, the prevention of gambling, less dependence upon the raising of sheep for wool, discontinuance of use of mercenary soldiers, cheaper price for all commodities, and an end to the enclosure of the common lands for the benefit of great and wealthy landlords.”<sup>4</sup>.

As the story unravels, Cardinal Morton is portrayed as prudently listening to the suggestions presented by Hythloday until abruptly interrupted by a lawyer who puts forth an important contestation that further reveals the underlying motive of *Utopia*. The question unfolds in the form of rejection of Hythloday’s suggested reforms as deemed undesirable in the preview of the history and customs of England. However, the work further intrigues the reader as Cardinal Morton immediately dismissed the objections raised by the lawyer. This rejection of objection efficiently demonstrates Thomas More’s propensity to bring genuine reform. Moreover, the part one of the books prepares the reader’s mind to contemplate on the socio-economic conditions of the renaissance life. By providing us a critical account of 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, Thomas More arranges the dais to delineate the idealistic realm of *Utopia*.

The first part of the Book mirrors the geographical, political, social, and economic features of the egalitarian land Utopia. The Island Utopia ruled by the King Utopus is divided into 54 cities each having its own town which are identical in size and magnificence. The commutation difference between each state is not more than a day from its neighboring cities. Economically, the utopian state is largely agricultural and operates on a rotating system of residence and occupation; hence, it offers versatility, and cooperation among its subjects. Moreover, each of its cities is well

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<sup>4</sup>Salem Press Encyclopedia of Literature retrieved from <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.jnu.ac.in/eds/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=d78fba5-f576-42c6-ac51-a014c65aa53c%40sessionmgr101&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=87575487&db=ers> on 20/7/04.



guarded and fortified against encroachments. Though the Utopian leadership represents its people, it is neither democratic nor liberal in the strict modern sense. Nevertheless, there exists a leveling tendency supported by such practices as wearing of uniform and simple dress to keep the citizens moderate in their appearance and demands.

Significantly, Thomas More echoes an idealistic revolution by allotting each city of Utopia island an equal magnificence which reflects his concern towards the displaced masses who often resort to big cities for earning a living. Also, in contrast to Tudor England, where only the elite could afford to wear expensive clothing as a symbol of their high pride and social stature, utopian citizens follow a uniform code representing an equality among them. Due to a huge demarcation between the capitalist and laborer class, poverty and homelessness was prevalent in the socially weaker sections of Tudor England. This was due to an unequal distribution wealth policy which further bolstered the pernicious practice of the enclosure of land causing countless farmers and their employees, their jobs and livelihood. As Hytholoday informs Thomas More:

“In whatever parts of the land the sheep yielded the softest and most expensive wool, there the nobility and gentry, yes, and even some abbots though otherwise holy men, are not content with the old rents that the land yielded to their predecessors. Living in idleness and luxury, without doing any good to society, no longer satisfies them; they have to do positive evil. For they leave no land free for the plow: they enclose every acre for pasture; they destroy houses and abolish towns, keeping only the churches, and those for sheep-barns...”<sup>5</sup>

Contrary to its parallel England, the utopian state prohibits idleness by organizing a mandatory six hours per day working rule. Furthermore, to minimize exploitation none of its subjects are allowed to work beyond six hours. However, the leisure period is advised to be utilized in productive rest, attending, and organizing cultural meetings, having common meals, and attending to lectures on morality, ethics, and philosophy. Notably, the ideal state *Utopia* reflects the hours allotted to enjoyment as significantly essential for the encouragement of social, ethical, and moral learning among its subjects.

Significantly, the work vividly depicts Thomas More’s rebuttal of tyranny and further demonstrates how a tyrant state procures hindrance in reformation of society. He brilliantly illustrates how hostile policies generate crimes and corruption among citizens by emphasizing on the sovereign’s responsibility in deliberately generating poverty through infliction of war.

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<sup>5</sup> More, T. (1992). *Utopia*, (R.M. Adams, Ed.) p. 12.

Moreover, he stringently criticizes death penalty for theft as he contends, “penalty for theft is same as for murder hence, men are driven to destroy the evidence, they kill when they only meant to rob.”<sup>6</sup> He also considers poverty to be the robust cause of theft because men by nature are driven to rob when he finds no other way of providing for his needs. Hence, it is demonstrative of the “invented” ill by European sovereign who abuses his powers to inflict war on others and generate poverty among the weaker sections of society.

Another crucial argument Thomas More subscribes in *Utopia* is the rebuttal of private ownership of property. As Hythloday contends; “so I am quite convinced that things cannot be distributed in equity and justice, nor mortal’s affair be managed prosperously unless private ownership is totally abolished”<sup>7</sup>. He primarily suggests two modifications for minimizing injustices: firstly, the law should compel the elites to rebuild the resources which were destroyed in war, and secondly, the laws be adjusted so that the punishment nearly fits the crime masses. However, the relevance of the work is unraveled through the question representing the moral dilemma of French king. The dilemma is echoed in the form of a question posed by the King to his counselors as to whether he should go to war to increase his powers. And if yes, then what means should he employ to pay for the inevitable expenses? Thomas More attends to this dilemma by elucidating a robust condemnation of a tyrant who selfishly inflicts war on his subjects and fines them with heavy taxes to restore his fortune while throwing its subjects into the dense well of poverty.

To further convince the reader of the “realness” of the work, Thomas More shows sign of being awestruck with Hythloday’s perception, knowledge, and keen observance of the social and political matters. Mildred Witt Caudle in his work; “Sir Thomas More’s “Utopia”: Origin and Purposes” (1970) suggests that More’s work uncovers a classic humanist approach and the influences he has absorbed during his missionary days. Moreover, More’s discourse with Raphael Hythloday on why the latter should work under an enlightened king is suggestive of the dialogues in Plato’s *Republic* on why a philosopher should be the king and “the state will never be blessed until the kings have become philosophers, philosophers can ill afford to refuse to advise kings.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Caudle, M. W. 1970, “Sir Thomas More’s “Utopia”: Origins and Purposes”, p. 164.

<sup>7</sup> More, Thomas, 1966, *Utopia*, p. 66.

<sup>8</sup>More, Thomas. 1966. *Utopia*, p. 26.

However, the treatise *Utopia* further reflects More's views on imperialism as he contends: "for they think it is the just reason for war when any nation refuses to others the use and possession of that land which it does not use itself, but owns in idle emptiness, when others by the law of nature ought to be nourished by it"<sup>9</sup>.

Evidently, he justifies the dominance of countries that possess an abundance of vacant land. In justifying imperialism, he does not promote covetousness and control, rather; it rationalizes only those encroachments which promote universal brotherhood and cooperation. Nevertheless, in *Utopia*, the sovereign does not inflict war to extend his powers; on the contrary, he does so, to protect his state and its people from foreign encroachment by tyrants. More's utopian monarch does not believe in public slaughter over discord with enemies, rather the utopians scorn wars but holds the vanquished to pay for the losses caused in the war. The utopian island is sharply and purposely distinguished from Tudor England as it does not indulge in writing treatise on war and destruction.

The most distinguished feature of utopian society is its economic policy. Moneyless economy of More's ideal society draws out much attention as its subject's scorn gold, silver, and other accessories as signs of slavery and disgrace. It promotes the idea of greedless economic order where the "good life" is essentially associated with natural life or life according to natural principals. It condemns private possession of things as private ownership leads to multiplication of wants which strengthens the vicious cycle of greed. The political, social, and economic structures of the ideal state give way to the following states of life:

- 1). It reinforces the natural way of living. It promotes long lasting pleasurable life without pertaining any harm to fellow social subjects.
- 2). It gives way to life of intellect, mind and promotes contemplation of truth.

Moreover, through *Utopia* Thomas More contemplates upon bridging the gap between faith and reason. Although, he incisively criticized many aspects of church by allowing divorce and religious tolerance to utopian citizens, yet, later in his life, More as the Lord Chancellor of England turned a scholastic approach to catholic practices and was very keen to follow religious commandments of the church. Hence, his real intention towards religious tolerance in *Utopia* is highly debatable.

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<sup>9</sup> More, Thomas. 1966. *Utopia*, p.58.

Nevertheless, in matters concerning religion, *Utopia* offers a liberal approach as all utopian citizens possess the right to public worshipping of God, yet peculiar practices attached to veneration are allowed only within the bounds of one's home. Interestingly, *Utopia* allows the matters of marriage and divorces to be handled by the magistracy. Notably, divorce is allowed only in some extenuating conditions. Thus, divorce is not viewed as an entirely dreadful notion provided that its premises are based on solid and inescapable grounds. Yet, adultery is viewed as a heinous offence and its second commencement would lead the offender towards death penalty. Christianity, according to Raphael Hythloday, was introduced later in utopian state but it was enthusiastically accepted because it offers harmony and peaceful communal life. To quote him: "Yet I (Hythloday) believe they (utopians) were also brought to this opinion because they heard that Christ favored communal living among his followers and that this was still the practice in real Christian communities".<sup>10</sup>

*Utopia* by some scholars is perceived as a unique manifestation of both faith and reason where some aspects of church are unanimously adopted such as communal harmony, living in good faith, brotherhood, and compassion. Whereas life founded on reason is also encouraged to manifest and support better living conditions. However, Raphael Hythloday in contrasting utopian state with its parallel England argues:

"At this point I should like someone to compare with this equity the justice of other nations. I'll be damned if I can find any trace of justice or equity among them. For what sort of justice is this when some noble or goldsmith or moneylender or any one of those who do either nothing or else nothing very necessary to the republic achieves a glorious and splendid life either by idleness or unnecessary business? Meanwhile, a laborer, carter, smith or farmer suffers heavy constant toil that beasts could hardly endure, work so necessary that no republic could last without it for even one year. Yet they provide so poor a living for themselves and lead such a miserable life that the condition of beasts might seem far preferable...when I examine and consider all the flourishing republics in the world today, believe me, nothing comes to mind except a conspiracy of the rich, who seek their own advantage under the name and title of the republic."<sup>11</sup>

Thus, with the above distinctions *Utopia* attempts to delineate the following points:

- 1). First, it sharply draws our attention towards the prevalent inequalities surrounding the poor and distressed.
- 2). Secondly, it distinctly attacks the conspiracies of keeping the rich, richer and the poor, poorer.

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<sup>10</sup> More, Thomas, 1966, *Utopia*, p. 109.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 123.

- 3.) Thirdly, it demands a just structure where the “deserved ones” can flourish with their hard work and sincerity.
- 4.) And lastly, it encourages the readers to contemplate upon the existing inequalities nurturing under the political edifice of 16th Century England.

Hence, the work signifies a shift from religion to renaissance as it stimulates both reason and religion in an intransigent yet congenial manner. Also, the objective for the inception of *Utopia* can be perceived as being manifested towards an alternative reality for the resurgence of 16th Century European life. Though, much of its premise is fictional in character and motive, yet the genuine intention of the author is manifested in the criticism of the existing practices and suggestions to exterminate them. The work intentionally deviates from reality to put forward an imagery of the future that holds hope, wholeness, and improved living conditions deliberately devoid of frustration, exploitation, and poverty. Also, as Lyman Tower Sargent in his work “Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited” points that the work that is utopia or has utopian intention traces us back to the naturalistic state of well-being from which we all have originated. It thrives on the possibility of an alternative future that can be achieved provided we contemplate upon the strengths and weaknesses of the existing order and also hold positive attitude towards change and alteration. Private ownership is purposefully condemned in *Utopia* to beckon the major source of exploitation and poverty. Solution is provided in the form of use of land on the rotational basis. And the decisive reason behind making people of the utopian state scorn precious materials such as gold and silver is to make people realize the value of life above and beyond material gains. Hence, More’s masterpiece “*Utopia*” explores and advocates various virtues and principles of social, political, economic and moral life. By introducing an ideal island whose major operations function without money, Thomas More tries to unveil the evils generated through greed and negative aversion of private acquisition. Though *Utopia* embodies his reformative and humanist approach towards European society, his true intentions are still contentious as his practical maneuvers depict a different story.

To unravel the “real” motivation and purpose of More’s *Utopia*, let us undertake an examination of diverse standpoints. According to Arthur E. Morgan, *Utopia* inventively echoes the description of the Inca Empire.<sup>12</sup> Though, there is no evidence of Thomas More being familiar

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<sup>12</sup>Morgan, A. E., 1946, *Nowhere Was Somewhere: How History Makes Utopias and How Utopias Make History*, p. 19.

with Peruvian civilization, yet it cannot be ignored that he had keen interest in the early voyages of discovery, hence, it might serve us a clue. However, for C.S. Lewis, *Utopia* was merely More's intellectual overflowing with humanistic approach.<sup>13</sup> Yet, another theorist, R. W. Chambers, in his work, titled, "*The Rational Heathen*" tries to shed light on the seeming disparity between More's take on religious tolerance in *Utopia* and his actions and writings against heresy in England. Chambers argues that since Europeans were not fully initiated and consecrated Christians, More doesn't require the same responsibilities of them that he would apply to Europeans.<sup>14</sup> Though, the utopian state does not have the same cultural and political history as England, thus, it can be argued that civic structures and diplomatic policies that suit one state may or may not meet the requirements of the other state. Yet, it should be noted that in *Utopia* when Hythloday was interrupted by a lawyer who put forth the same argument that reform and practices of *Utopia* cannot be undertaken as the state of England does not share historical and cultural similarities with *Utopia*. Cardinal Morton's immediate dismissal of the argument signifies that reform inevitably possesses major significance in Thomas More's writing. However, it also depicts his hesitation as how his suggestion would be treated in his contemporary England.

Moreover, according to Edward Surtz, the key to understanding More's *Utopia* lies in comprehending and analyzing the utopian view of pleasure. "Pleasure is immutably good or bad. That which is good is in harmony with nature; that which is evil is contrary to it. More is calling upon society to throw off corrupting customs which have resulted from false pleasure and to return to that which is sweet, harmonious and natural."<sup>15</sup> However, Karl Kautsky in *Thomas More and His Utopia* (1959) offers a serious examination of communal living in *Utopia*. He contends that the idealization of *Utopia* reflects More's proclivity to transform England into an ideal state. He also titled More as the father of utopian socialism because "More was analyzing the evils of society as he knew them. By attacking the social and economic order, he became the father of utopianism. More was too much of a realist to expect a transformation. His plan failed of actual realization, not because of the impracticability of its aims but because the inadequacy of means to make it

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<sup>13</sup> See, Lewis, C. S., 1968, "*A Play of Wit*" p.68.

<sup>14</sup>Chambers, R. W., 1968, "*The Rational Heathen*" p.19.

<sup>15</sup>Caudle, M. W. 1970, "Sir Thomas More's "Utopia": Origins and Purposes", p. 167. Also see, Surtz, Edward, 1957, *The Praise of Pleasure: Philosophy, Education, and Communism in More's Utopia*. P. 43.

operative.”<sup>16</sup> Karl Kautsky’s claim of Thomas More being the father of utopian socialism was further reinforced by Ernest Barker in “*Utopia and Plato’s Republic*” (1959) where he effectively discards the claim that “communalism described in *Utopia* is borrowed from Plato’s Republic. rejects any claim of utopia’s communalism being inspired by Plato’s Republic.

However, chronologically speaking, utopia or an ideal society first emerged significantly in Plato’s work *Republic* written around 380 BCE. Like *Utopia*, Plato’s *Republic* is also a work of fiction formed through the dialogues between Socrates and others. In *Republic*, Plato sketches a basic political structure and laws of an ideal state as he contends:

“City provides only for the most basic needs of its citizens- food, shelter, clothing, and shoes. It is constructed on a simple division of labor where everyone does a single job based on his most productive skills. Each individual accepts his position in the City and does what he is supposed to do for the benefit of himself and the other citizens. He does this because all of his needs are met. There is no competition among citizens and since the city is perfectly just there is no need for government.”<sup>17</sup>

The passage mentioned above echoes the following similarities between Plato’s *Republic* and Thomas More’s *Utopia*:

- 1). Like, *Republic*, Thomas More’s *Utopia* sanctions for basic amenities to be provided by the state for its subjects.
- 2). In exchange for basic security, each-individual is required to uphold the essential social and moral responsibility for harmonious communal living.
- 3). Like the state of republic, utopian state also operates on the need-based approach, contrary to the modern greed- driven advancement of life.
- 4). Lastly, the perspective of mutual care is ingeniously carved out to explicitly suggest a holistic progress of human life based on mutual peace and harmony.

However, despite the similarities between two major works, they sharply differ on the following significant grounds:

- 1). While *Utopia* explicitly advocates a democratic setup, Plato argues for an aristocratic government.

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<sup>16</sup>Kautsky Karl, 1959, *Thomas More and His Utopia*, pp. 248-249, quoted from Caudle, M. W. 1970, “Sir Thomas More’s “Utopia”: Origins and Purposes”, p. 167.

<sup>17</sup>Levin, M. R., “*Plato’s Republic and the Perfect Society*” p.24.

2). Plato, on the one hand, upholds the allotment of work on the virtues and natural instincts of men. Thomas More, on the other hand, drives the operational structure of *Utopia* on divisional and rotational basis.

3). Moreover, More's work is largely generated from his contempt of 16th Century Europe as it mirrors the corrupt character of European society, whereas Plato's work is essentially a product of his productive dialogues with Socrates.

Thus, from the above discussion we have observed that though *Utopia* bears uncanny similarities with the *Republic*, yet the nature of such similarities is rather coincidental than intentional. It should be noted that unlike the *Republic* which engages the reader in intellectual discovery of the state and its nature, *Utopia* confronts the existing conditions in their weakness and strength. It not only engages in revolutionary transformation through adequate actions but also mirrors the possibility of transformation through holistic vision. *Utopia* attempts to bring change while engaging with an alternative picture of the desired future. However, Plato's *Republic* emphatically maintains the ideas presented in the work, *Utopia* hangs upon the reader's imagination and his vision of reality. Beside calling out the corrupt practices of 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, *Utopia* does not mirror anything explicitly. Yet the views expressed in the text paves way for reform by mitigating the fault in the current system.

A significant contention lies ahead of us in the form of an argument whether More's work which was written during the European renaissance period bears any significance to Gandhi? how and why Gandhi's experiments and his confrontation with the existing systems of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century globe should be studied in the backdrop of More's work. The argument that More's utopian views do not bear a direct reflection to Gandhi's ideal society may seem feasible at first because both the works were written by different personalities at a different time. However, there exists reasonable parallels that cannot be overlooked. The most common feature enjoining both the visions is the alternative perspective they offer against the existing conditions. Their works reflect contempt of the injustices and evils harboring under the political and social structures of civilization. Both the works appear moderate in character, yet both emphatically idolize utopian structure which enables them to shatter the existing conditions by encouraging their readers towards a life of intellect, mind, morality, and contemplation of Truth.

The political criticism and social restructuring that More offers through *Utopia* is both commendable and audacious for a 16<sup>th</sup> century writer. Similarly, Gandhi's convened expeditions



and whetted perspective offers both a confrontation and an alternative to existing conditions. Though, Thomas More's oblique witty satires of his autocratic ruler's obnoxious and pernicious decisions stand in contrast to Gandhi's starkly defiant movements against intransigent British policies that overlooked the welfare of Indian citizens. Yet, despite the prevalent differences between the two reformers there exists a shared desire: yearning for a naturalistic state and contrition of the existing state. Employment of a utopian framework which was never systematically perceived in the past intrigues the readers to think of the similarities between both the reformers of their respective viewpoints. Moreover, the prescient nature of their writings has conjured people to follow on their legacies.

The same can be said true regarding Gandhi's idealized vision of *Rām Rājya*. *Rām Rājya* is a political, social, and economic contemplation of an ancient city named *Ayodhya* whose benevolent king *Rām* was a scholarly wise man who ruled and lived as a saint. Significantly, the second part of *Utopia* is subtly reflective of the *Rām Rājya* governance idealized by Gandhi. Through the *Rām Rajya* model of governance, Gandhi reflects upon the glorious past of India and the kings it has adorned. However, unlike More, Gandhi's views bear a direct influence on the conditions and structure of colonized India. Though, Gandhi refrained from employing fiction to channelize his perspective. Yet, his *Rām Rājya* governance model along with the notions of *Sarvodaya* and *Antyodaya* evoke the utopian perspective which Thomas More had aroused centuries ago. More's meticulous arrangement of arguments has procured attention of scholars on various manifestations of utopia across the globe. Yet, like his work, his career trajectories evoke obscurities. Unlike More, an audacious and blunt approach also secures moderate and humanitarian outlook in Gandhi. Proclamation of nonviolent war against the despot had significantly subverted an almost century long British rule to repeal from the Indian land. Interestingly, both Gandhi and Thomas More evokes a care and need driven perspective to channelize a holistic social, political, and economic construction of human civilization. Yet the all-inclusivity of Gandhi's maneuvers endures far reaching consequences. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of Gandhi being familiar with *Utopia*, yet the astonishing similarity of their views on warfare, pleasure, communal living, and internally stable economy draws unprecedented attention. Like More's Utopian state, Gandhi also believed in the futility of war. They both gave prominence to communal living by strengthening mutual relationships and maintaining harmony with nature. However, they diverge from each other on the accounts of consistency. In contrast to More,

Gandhi's experiments evoke ecumenism and reflect direct influence over the existing conditions of colonized India. Moreover, Thomas More is revered as the father of European socialism by Karl Kaustky and his contribution to renaissance is highly commendable. Notably, while Sir Thomas More is greatly acknowledged as the father of European socialism and Gandhi is also revered as the father of Indian independence. However, divergent from Thomas More's fictional island and its structure, Gandhi laid out a practical proposal for the ideal society. As an experimentalist, his vision of *Swarāj* did not remain confined to his ideas alone; his life offers an adequate example of shaping the world according to one's own ideas.

## **Section 2**

### **The Dynamics of Utopia: An Exploration**

The notion of utopia since its pioneering inception by Thomas More in his famous work *Utopia* (1516) has been received and treated distinctly across disciplines of social sciences, political and cultural studies, and philosophy. It is infused in dominant ideologies, and often entails towards the conception of the new reformed order. However, as a concept, it is surrounded with certain ambiguities, for example, a pragmatic would regard it as an idealistic conception purely based on idealistic intents of the author. Whereas an idealist may view it as a representation of hope. Therefore, it stimulates different strands of thoughts and promotes an ideal future or reformed order as perfect thus, leaving no or less scope for progress after its actualization even in dreams. Utopia operates as a distinct concept, imaginary voyage, and a social depiction of hope aimed to transform the status quo. Though, by general acknowledgement utopia has been widely identified as an imaginary state of being strenuously employed to critically examine or penetrate through the current stems of reality. Yet, it has various manifestations, and one should forestall viewing the whole discipline from a single lens because there are a number of considerations involved. The actuality of the status quo is challenged in utopia by inspiring the readers and interpreters to look beyond what is given.

Brent Nelson in Introduction: "Utopia for 500 Years" (2018) analyzes traversing of utopian tradition in the past centuries as the genre interestingly presents various understandings and definitions of utopia. However, diverse utopia as a conception may appear generally approaches the intention of both the reader and the author for its specific meaning and place in a discipline.

The astounding quality of utopia is that it is open to more than one meaning as the British literary Dominic Baker-Smith contends:

“The extraordinary way in which the title of More’s book has been appropriated by projectors of social idealism over a span of four centuries is some indication both of its strong appeal and its dangerous ambiguity.”<sup>18</sup>

Appropriation of works and ideals are not new to scholarly studies. For instance, “in the seventeenth century, royalists co-opted *Utopia* as a conceit, but in contradictory ways. A tract published in 1947 takes the form of a fictional letter from the king of Utopia (a stand-in for Charles I) which, strangely, references More’s *Utopia* as a defense of monarchy.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, from past old centuries to the new modern world, the concept of utopia seems to widely capture the fascination of human society as its extension ranges from philosophy to political, religious to cultural, and from ancient to modern. It has traversed the discipline of humanities and social studies alike. Interestingly, articles in modern medical journals such as “Utility versus Utopia” in an article on “quality measurement affecting surgical practice”; “Reality or Utopia” (in an article on knee arthroplasty and “Hope or Utopia” in a neurological study on Alzheimer’s”<sup>20</sup> among others appears to use the term utopia quite fashionably. Moreover, as a traversing discipline utopia has attracted much attention in the public sphere, thus, it is no longer the sole property of the ivory tower. A recent bestseller book titled; “*Utopia for Realists: And How We Can Get There* evokes the idealistic intents of people by proposing open borders, a fifteen -hour work week, and universal basic income as a real-world solution to a better, more fortunate society.”<sup>21</sup> As utopia is recognized as a distinct work of fiction, its perusal is expressed in various manifestations of the term. However, “it is a genre, a paradigm that has been modeled and remodeled in countless cultural and historical contexts. As a no-place, it provides a platform for a fully realized otherworld that finds expression in modern fantasy fiction...or of imagined travel beyond current limits, opening the way for science fiction. As a good or happy place, it provides a model for thought experiments in a society organized and administered in a better way than our own.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Smith, Dominic, Baker. 2000. *More’s Utopia*, vii, quoted from Brent, Nelson. 2018. “Introduction: “Utopia for 500 Years”,” p. 8.

<sup>19</sup>Brent, Nelson. 2018. “Introduction: “Utopia for 500 Years”,” p. 8. Also see, Schneider, Gary. 2018. *Print Letters in Seventeenth Century England: Politics, Religion, and News Culture*, pp. 55-57.

<sup>20</sup>Brent, Nelson. 2018. “Introduction: “Utopia for 500 Years” in *Renaissance and Reformation*, Vol. 41, No.3, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. p. 9. Also See, Bregman, Rutger. 2017. *Utopia for Realists: And How we Can Get There*.

<sup>22</sup>Brent, Nelson. 2018. “Introduction: “Utopia for 500 Years”,” p. 10.

Moreover, utopia echoes social dreaming, freedom to dream and desire, along with inspirations from the past. Often it is reflective of deep-seated needs, desires and hopes for the future. It confronts current assumptions by offering better organization and administration of social and political life through the reduction of existing ills in a great proportion. Aspiration of a “good-life” and better living conditions is the underlying motto of a utopian conception as Brent Nelson contends:

“The work that is *Utopia* challenges these easy assumptions about what Utopia is, our reductive notions of what constitutes a good life, or how it might (or whether it can) be achieved, either for an individual or for our species. For More’s *Utopia*, famously, is suggestive of a good place but in the end is no place at all. It remains a problem to work through, always and forever in process.”<sup>23</sup>

Utopia stimulates change and social reform by mirroring the contemporary society in its strength and weakness. It often reflects flaws in the current system and offers change through picturing a better or desirable alternative of the future. Author Lyman Tower Sargent through his work; “The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited” (1994) maneuvers to expound the phenomenon of utopian literature, the historicity of its genre and how it is manifested in dreams, resurrection, and reconstitution. Sargent contends that the task of defining utopia through different perspectives carries prime importance because to summarize the entire study of utopianism through a single dimension confines the reader from arriving at comprehensive understanding of the genre. As he writes:

“Over the past two decades utopian scholars have been coming independently to a generally similar understanding that utopianism has various manifestations. Some writers use the word utopia for everything, while others restrict it to the literary genre, but most have arrived at the conclusion that, whatever we call them, there are a number of phenomena involved. There are, of course, differences about what belongs within the constellation of ideas, concepts, and literary genres that hover around utopia, but there is something like a consensus that there is such a constellation.”<sup>24</sup>

He employed a descriptive, analytic, and historical perspective to recognize the historical and linguistic contexts hovering around the genre utopianism to elucidate it to a contemporary reader. Sargent’s whole maneuver is primarily aimed to understand a question that he posed before himself; “how can we best understand the phenomena of utopianism and its varied

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<sup>23</sup> Brent, Nelson. 2018. “Introduction: “Utopia for 500 Years”, in *Renaissance and Reformation*, Vol. 41, No.3, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup>Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 5. No. 1, p. 2.

manifestations”?<sup>25</sup> In an effort to obtain the answer to the above-mentioned question, he at the outset acknowledges “dreaming” as the broader and general phenomena of utopianism. As he puts it; “utopianism is the result of the human propensity to dream while both asleep and awake”.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, he employs Crane Britons assumption that “the utopian thinker starts with the proposition, by no means limited to the utopian thinker, that things (no more exact word is useful here) are bad; next, things must become better... here on earth and soon; things will not improve to this degree by themselves, by a ‘natural’ growth or development of things as-they-are; a plan must be developed and put into execution....”<sup>27</sup> Also, he keenly observes that “while we often simply fantasize, at times we reason about our dreams, and sometimes we even act on them”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, a hope or desire for a better future is always there as palpable in Ruth Levitas work; *The Concept of Utopia* (1990) where she analyzes a variety of past definitions and nature of current scholarship in utopian tradition.<sup>29</sup> Sargent while expounding the different manifestations of utopianism stresses on three key aspects of utopianism i.e. the literary, the communitarian, and the utopian social theory. As he puts it:

“utopianism has been expressed in three different forms, each with many variants- utopian literature, which includes two fundamental traditions – which I call body utopias or utopias of sensual gratification and city utopias or utopias of human contrivance; communitarianism; and utopian social theory.”<sup>30</sup>

Under the first distinction of utopian literature, Sargent attempts to define different variants of the term utopia arising out of its literary genre, for example, he begins by defining utopianism as social dreaming and characterizes different utopias such as:

1. “Utopianism: Social dreaming
2. Utopia- a non-existent society described in considerable details and normally located in space and time.
3. Eutopia- as a non-existent society described in considerable detail and generally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which the reader lived.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p.2.

<sup>26</sup>Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 5. No. 1, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Briton, Crane. “Utopia and Democracy.” Manuel. p. 50, quoted from Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 5. No. 1, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup>Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 5. No. 1, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup>Levitas, Ruth, 1990. *The Concept of Utopia*, p. 151.

<sup>30</sup>Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 5. No. 1, p. 4.

4. Dystopia or negative utopia- as a non-existent society described in considerable details and generally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which the reader lived.
5. Utopian satire- a non-existent society described in considerable details and generally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of that contemporary society.
6. Anti-utopia- as a non-existent society described in considerable details and generally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of Utopianism or of some eutopia.
7. Critical utopia- as a non-existent society described in considerable details and generally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as better than contemporary society but with difficult problems that the described society may or may not be able to solve and which takes a critical view of the utopian genre.”<sup>31</sup>

Hence, each utopia stages a unique feature facilitating its distinction from other utopias. This distinction is further reflected in the famous classification of body utopia or utopias of sensual gratification and city utopias. In classifying two categories of utopian tradition, Sargent argues that “utopianism is not necessarily a deficiency response. The worst off tend not to have the leisure to write utopias, but such utopias exist-in myth, oral traditions, and folk songs”.<sup>32</sup> However, those eutopias that primarily functions on human tendency to fascinate or dream about earthly paradise, golden past, fortunate isles necessarily contain the feature of simplicity, unity, security, abundance without much struggle and peaceful relations between homosapiens and other living beings are called body utopias<sup>33</sup>. As Sargent further expounds:

“these eutopias are achieved without human effort...well known examples are Hesiod’s golden age, Eden, some versions of the millennium, and various Greek and Roman myths. For want of a better label I call them utopias of sensual gratification or body utopias. They are social dreaming at its simplest.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 5. No. 1 p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p.10.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

However, city utopias offer a distinctive role as in taking control of our dreams, maneuvering to achieve them, and further transforming them into an entirely new tradition. As Sargent writes:

“human beings do not like depending on the whims of nature or the gods, and as a first step in the direction of taking control of our dreams, when it becomes intellectually possible, identical imagery is put in the future and not after death...A permanent body utopia is described and, in most versions, the fantasy is presented as possible for some people after going through almost an incredible rite of passage.”<sup>35</sup>

Hence, city utopias are evolved body utopias where human maneuver becomes necessary for its realizability. City utopias unlike body utopias are often complicated in character as they suggest possibility and attend to take control of one’s vision to create contrivance for realizing a eutopia. Whereas body utopias or utopia of sensual gratification are uncomplicated in character and are often overlooked because they function on the whims of human fantasy and are achieved without any practical maneuvers. Noteworthy, Plato’s *Republic* can be viewed as the most apposite western example of city utopia, however, Sargent considers Plato’s *Law* to be a more adequate model of the city utopia. Though Thomas More’s *Utopia* is notably provided a delineating mark in terms of propagation of the genre among western scholars yet, the propensity to social dreaming existed much before his groundbreaking work. Nevertheless, the modern study of utopianism systematically developed and undertaken by Darko Suvin and Lyman Tower Sargent focuses on the importance of definition because as the latter contends:

“it is necessary to reflect briefly on the nature of definition...we constantly make distinctions and must do so to have any sort of control over the flow of information and knowledge that passes through us each day these distinctions are roots of definition...definitions are rarely or ever useful at the extremes, and boundaries established by definitions are both moveable and porous or permeable, but for certain purpose boundaries are necessary”.<sup>36</sup>

Whereas Darko Suvin after carefully considering variety of past definitions defines utopia as:

“The verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where socio-political institution, norms and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author’s

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<sup>35</sup> Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 5. No. 1, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. pp.4-5.

community this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis.”<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, Suvin assigns prime importance to literary genre arguing that “in the last twenty years (i.e., since 1953), at least in literary criticism and theory, the premise has become acceptable that utopia is first of all a literary genre or fiction”.<sup>38</sup> Sargent accepts the basis of Suvin’s definition that most utopias offer an alternative historical hypothesis but alleges that Suvin missed an important point that is “ a Utopia should describe in a variety of aspects and with some consistency an imagined state or society.”<sup>39</sup> Sargent employs his tripartite division of “three faces” to go beyond the literary genre to understand and distinguish between two other important areas of utopianism i.e. communitarianism and utopian social theory. Communitarianism is “intentional society or community: as a group of five or more adults and their children, if any, who came from more than one nuclear family and who have chosen to live together to enhance their shared values or for some other mutually agreed upon purpose.”<sup>40</sup> Sargent deliberately vexed to have an inclusive definition than an exclusive one because existing definitions on communitarianism are “perfectly good for the particular communities the author studied, but most are too specific to include what we know to be the range of institutions actually established. They generally assume a particular model to be the only model. If we have learned nothing else in the past decade, we have learned that communities vary tremendously.”<sup>41</sup> Moreover, already established communities which go by the set of established rules or writing share a connection with literary utopia. Apart from western monasteries, the international society for Krishna consciousness, and religious monasteries sometimes also called as *Ashram* from East clearly fits the definition of intentional societies.

The third of the three faces of utopianism i.e. utopian social theory have its roots in the idea of progress. Unlike the other two faces this aspect needs more development. However, some progress has been initiated in the past few years and utopian social theory is open to debate. Yet, the most systematic change in utopian social theory arrived in the twentieth century where its subject matter was comprehensively discussed and debated. Moreover, utopian social theory as recognized by intellectuals is the theory of fiction elucidated by Hans Vaihinger in his work, *The*

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<sup>37</sup>Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, pp. 6-7.

<sup>38</sup><https://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/107/fitting107.htm> retrieved on 8/2/2020.

<sup>39</sup>Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, p. 7.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid. p. 15.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 14.



*Philosophy of 'as if': A System of Theoretical, Practical and Religious fictions of mankind*, (1935).  
Vaihinger contends: “fictions are mental structures” and “utopian structure is a distinct category of the fictive activity.”<sup>42</sup> However, Jeremy Bentham asserts a different approach as he concerns himself with the problem of language in which the utopian entity is employed. As Bentham contends: “an entity to which, though by the grammatical form of the discourse employed in speaking of it, existence is ascribed, yet in truth and reality existence is not meant to be ascribed.”, he further adds; “the existence of which is feigned for the purpose of discourse- by a fiction so necessary that without it human discourse could not be carried on.”<sup>43</sup>

From Vaihinger’s consideration of utopia as a fictive activity, and Bentham’s contention that in language the existence of utopia is simulated for the purpose of discourse but in reality, the existence is not meant to be ascribed, we employ Karl Mannheim’s approach to provide a defense for the necessity of utopia. As Mannheim differentiates between two kinds of fictive entities incorporated under the utopian mental constructs. He argues,

“The term utopian, as here used, may be applied to an ant process of thought which receives its impetus not from the direct source of reality but from concepts, such as symbols, fantasies, dreams, ideas and the like, which in the most comprehensive sense of the term are non-existent. Viewed from the standpoint of sociology, such mental constructs may in general assume two forms: they are ‘ideological’ if they serve the purpose of glossing over or stabilizing the existing social reality; ‘utopian’ if they inspire collective activity which aims to change such reality to conform with their goals, which transcend reality.”<sup>44</sup>

Thus, Mannheim divides utopian mental constructs into two categories i.e. ideological and utopian. By differentiating between the ideological and utopian mental constructs, Mannheim identifies ideology as a negative concept, “backward looking, oriented to an outmoded status quo. On the other hand, he is ambivalent upon utopia and argues that the loss of utopia would be a disaster since it is essential for social change. Still, utopia is not oriented to reality but to a vision of a better life. Mannheim wants both the reality and the vision.”<sup>45</sup>

Like other genres utopianism too suffers constraints and one such constraint is a totalitarian argument which bases its proposition on the definitional aspect of utopia. Utopia by the above

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<sup>42</sup>Vaihinger, Hans. 1935. *The Philosophy of 'as if': A System of Theoretical, Practical and Religious Fictions of Mankind*, pp. 12-13,26.

<sup>43</sup>Bentham, Jeremy, 1959. *The Theory of Fictions*, in C. K. Ogden, Bentham’s Theory of Fictions, pp. 12, 118.

<sup>44</sup> Mannheim, Karl. 1935. “Utopia”. *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, p. 200.

<sup>45</sup>Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, pp. 23-24.

discussion has come to be known as a mental fictive activity of the author who idealizes a perfect blueprint for what he “believes to be a perfect society which is to be constructed with no significant departure from the blueprint. It is perfect. And any alteration would lower its quality.” Since, man is imperfect by nature, and “when a convinced utopian tries to build a eutopia, conflict will arise because, failing to achieve eutopia, he or she will use force to achieve it.”<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, use of force will become inevitable either because imperfect people will question the necessity of utopia, or since people are perfectible, utopians will try to implement utopian laws that will make the imperfect people adapt the habits of perfect utopian society enabling them to become perfect. Hence, leaving no scope for progress at all, since everything is already perfect in a utopian state, it would curb the freedom of utopian citizens by binding them to follow utopian laws pertaining to dictatorship.

Though such a state is dangerous, yet the argument is tautological and is ignorant of the nature of ideal state. Much of the premise of totalitarian argument is reiterative of conflict between the state and its citizens yet, it cannot be ignored that utopia pertains to freedom of thought and dream. For Ernst Bloch “utopia is a standard by which to judge existing practices. Far from being the road to totalitarianism, it is the road away from totalitarianism.”<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, Frederick L. Polak in his work titled; *The Image of the Future: Enlightening the Past, Orienting the Present, Forecasting the Future* (1961) also argues that “the image of the future affects the actual future. We will view human society and culture as being magnetically pulled towards a future fulfillment of their own proceedings and prevailing, idealistic images of the future, as well as being pushed from behind by their own realistic past.”<sup>48</sup> Positive image of the future guides the present to strive for improvement because apathy towards the future would only make human existence stagnant. Whereas a positive image of the future would help the present to perceive itself in a better light, hence, encouraging us to make better efforts to realize a better future. Polak furthermore argues that “utopia encourages efforts towards the development of human dignity.”<sup>49</sup> This comes as a contrast to the totalitarian argument which suggests that

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p.26.

<sup>48</sup>Polak, Frederick. L. 1961. *The Image of the Future: Enlightening the Past, Orienting the Present, Forecasting the Future*, vol. 1. P. 15, quoted from Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, p. 25.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. P. 445.

utopia limits one's freedom. Though, Polak's argument is assertive, yet it significantly promotes the underlying features of utopia i.e., choice, freedom, and creativity. Hence, utopia signifies freedom of thought and creativity in the light of fictive assertions that first accepts the fact that current epoch is incomplete, or inadequate and can be made better by exterminating the present ills and tilting the present in the direction of hope to achieve a better society.

However, de-popularization of utopia has become quite significant in the contemporary century either because anti-totalitarian perspective has garnered much confidence among people or anti-fascism has generated a dystopia. As Sargent rightly points out:

“More than any past age the twentieth century has appeared to reject hope. There was a complete loss of confidence, but it seemed, and to many still seems, justified. The catalogue of the twentieth century has been read as nothing but failure-World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Middle East, Northern Ireland, the Gulag Archipelago, the rising rate of violent crime, the Cold War, the apparent failure of the welfare state, ecological disaster, corruption, and now the upsurge of ethnic and tribal slaughter in Eastern Europe and Africa. Not surprisingly this has led to pessimism about the ability of the human race to achieve a better society, and the dystopia-warning that things could get even worse-became the dominant utopian form.”<sup>50</sup>

With the emergence of political conflicts, upsurge in violent crimes, and emerging cultural and religious struggles, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become stagnant to hope for a positive image of the future. As a result, more and more people are falling into depression and anxiety has become a common phenomenon. As M. I. Finley also notes that when a resurgence movement fails, “voices are raised ...against the possibility of human progress, against man's potentiality for good.”<sup>51</sup>

However, to overcome extreme positions available on utopia, a middle path can be asserted. As Sargent also argues that ‘there is a basic ambiguity in utopianism that permits the possibility of both positions containing significant truth’<sup>52</sup>. A totalitarian perspective that rejects the necessity of utopia as inevitably leading to force. And a perspective of freedom that makes utopia a necessary ingredient essential for the free flow of ideas calls for a positive outlook. Both

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<sup>50</sup>Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, p. 26.

<sup>51</sup>Finley, M. I. “Utopianism Ancient and Modern.” In *The Critical Spirit: Essays in Honor of Herbert Marcuse*. Pp. 19-20.

<sup>52</sup>Sargent, L. T. 1994. “Three faces of Utopianism Revisited”, p. 26.

Polak and Ernst Bloch argues that hope is necessary for human civilization to thrive. Moreover, positive expectations breed positive results because negative expectations produce apathy by shattering the hopes for a better future. Utopia when treated as a mirror to contemporary society signals out existing ills and demands for their extermination by keeping in view the strengths of the society.

Utopia reflects our deep-seated needs and desires. It also encourages hope and creativity. It is essential for it allows creativity to thrive and admits the free flow of ideas. It acts as a creative mirror to human civilization. Hence, it is not important that the blueprint of the idealized order is achieved in its fullest form, yet a continuous effort to incessantly strive for a reformed order with a certain amount of tinkering with the current system will allow us to identify fault within the system further enabling us to reform or mitigate the corrupt practices. Thus, utopia inevitably ignites hopes and signals out our faults. However, it is also ambiguous in nature, and one should always abstain from taking extreme measures.

### Section 3

#### REALISTIC UTOPIA: GANDHI'S EXEMPLARY ETHICS

Gandhi made a cogent articulation of his ideas on *swarāj* in his work titled *Hind Swaraj* written in 1909 in Gujarati language. Soon in 1910, he made an English translation of the work as its Gujarati version was proscribed by the government of Bombay. The English version came to be called as *Indian Home Rule*. Notably, the 275 pages long manuscript evidently mirrors the contours of Gandhi's thoughts on *swarāj*. Gandhi's primitive motive in writing *Hind Swaraj*, to quote him was: "to serve my country, to find out the Truth and to follow it."<sup>53</sup>

*Hind Swaraj* is a fountainhead of Gandhi's political testaments, insights, and plan of action for the independence of British dominated India. Though, the fundamental principles contained in *Hind Swarāj* such as nonviolence, *Satyāgraha*, and *Swadeshi* hold obdurate value; yet Gandhi's anti-essential perspective allowed him to welcome criticism and modifications from his

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<sup>53</sup>Mukharjee, R. 2009. "Gandhi's Swaraj, Economic and Political Weekly", Vol. 44, No.50, p. 34.

contemporaries and friends. For instance, in the Rowlett act agitation, Gandhi sought the ennobling assistance of his friend, the famous Indian poet, humanitarian and social worker, Rabindranath Tagore on his *satyāgraha* campaign. The noble laureate while acknowledging and appreciating Gandhi's onerous work for the motherland cautioned him that:

“Passive resistance is a force which is not necessarily moral in itself; it can be used against Truth as well as for it. The danger inherent in all force grows stronger when it is likely to gain success, for then it becomes temptation.”<sup>54</sup>

The views expressed by the poet were prescient as the violent demonstration of Gandhi's arrest reflected. However, Gandhi's own faith in *satyāgraha* remained firm as he principled the technique of passive resistance with a set of rules necessary for cultivating a moral spirit. In May 1919, he expressed his unwavering faith in *HindSwaraj* as:

“After years of endeavor to put into practice the views expressed in the following pages, I feel that the way shown therein is the only true way to *Swaraj*”<sup>55</sup>.

Moreover, RaghuvanIyer, in his work titled: *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* (1973) also describes *HindSwarāj* as “the point d’ appui of Gandhi’s moral and political thought”.<sup>56</sup> The significant political developments that originated in Gandhi's life in diaspora evidently laid the foundation of his primitive contention in *HindSwaraj*. Though the work written on his voyage to South Africa was devoid of experimental value and practical inputs from the motherland. Yet, the promising character of the work became the guiding lamp to Gandhi's lifelong maneuvers. It is significant to recognize that *Hind Swarāj* conveys a lamp reflection of Gandhi's thoughts and ideas both as a writer and a political activist. Gandhi contends that the views reflected in the full-blown polemic are not solely his, rather, “the views... held by many Indians not touched by what is known as civilization” exclaiming further, he says, these views “are also held by thousands of Europeans.”<sup>57</sup>

Significantly, the work dwells on the ills of modern civilization and the corruption it has caused to the world. The primary contention of his polemic is illustrated through the importance he allotted to the native language. As he contends; “one strong reason why the Boers enjoy

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<sup>54</sup>Guha, Ramchandra, 2018, *Gandhi: The Years that Changed the World (1914-1948)*, p. 82.

<sup>55</sup>Iyer, R. (ed.). 1986. *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, 3vols, i, p. 278.

<sup>56</sup>Iyer, R. 1973. *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 24,

<sup>57</sup> Mukherjee, R. (ed.) 1993. *The Penguin Gandhi Reader*, p. 3.

*swarajya*(freedom) is that they and their children mostly use their own language”.<sup>58</sup> He further observes that if Indians pay half the effort that they make on alien language, the things will change altogether. As Opposed to Kipling’s contention, he made a striking claim that East and West could meet though their respective models of civilization may not come together. “It seemed to him that the chief characteristics of modern civilization worshipped the body more than the spirit and gave everything for the glorification of the body. Their railways, telegraphs and telephones, did they tend to help them forward to a moral elevation?”<sup>59</sup> asks Gandhi. It is implausible to contend that there is an impassable difference between East and West, rather, the actual difference resides between ancient and modern. The ancient Eastern civilization believes in keeping the spirit above the body, incorporeal above the corporeal. As Gandhi cautioned his native audience that if ‘British rule was replaced tomorrow by Indian rule based on modern methods, India would be no better; in fact, then Indians would only become the second or fifth edition of Europe and America.’<sup>60</sup> His incessant critique of modern civilization and industrial revolution is indicative of his underivative proposal for India’s advancement as he vehemently condemned the abomination western civilization has caused to the world. For him, western civilization has perpetuated vice, misery, and degradation to the world. Railways, hospitals, and lawyers that West has bred and sought proud in, claims Gandhi, had promoted famine, fermented quarrels, and increased dependency. In *HindSwaraj* Gandhi vehemently elucidates how evil and damaging western civilization can prove to be. His relentless hostility towards modern civilization can be comprehended by the expression he employs to himself as “an uncompromising enemy of the present-day civilization in Europe”<sup>61</sup>. However, *Hind Swarāj* not just constrains itself with a constructive critique of western civilization, rather it also offers an alternative approach to development distinct and unique from the “fashionable” European perspective of advancement. To extricate a new form of slavery emerging in the new world, Gandhi intensified the indigenous new programme of development popularly called as *Swadeshi* movement. In robustly criticizing the radical transformation that industrialization has brought in the public and private domain of human life, he repudiates the emerging western perspectives on life, politics, and economy.

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<sup>58</sup>Guha, Ramchandra, 2014, *Gandhi Before India*, p. 364.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. Pp. 364-365.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid. p. 365.

<sup>61</sup>Iyer, R, (ed.), 1986, *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, 3vols, i, p. 277.

However, Gandhi's opinion on machinery and modern civilization was disregarded by many Indians. A Bombay editor wrote a perusal of discontent against Gandhi's vehement critique of modern life. To quote him:

“Since despite its many faults, Western civilization, taken as a whole, tends more strongly to justice for all than any older civilization. Your career and character is such a vast public asset that one feels that it is a pity it should be rendered less useful than it might and should be by this prejudice, as I must hold it to be, against modernity as such.”<sup>62</sup>

Despite many of Gandhi's colleagues' disagreement on his opinion on modern life, his views remained intransigent. As he opined:

“I cannot recall a single point in connection with machinery. Machines had impoverished India, by throwing craftsmen out of work and encouraging a division between capitalists and laborers. It would be folly to assume that an Indian Rockefeller would be better than an American Rockefeller.”<sup>63</sup>

Despite the limitations of Gandhi's strident criticism of modernity, it imprinted a huge effect on India's working class. Firstly, India under British domination was ill-educated, hence sophisticated use of machinery was alien to many. And secondly, industrial revolution coerced the laborer class into impoverishment after their craftsmanship went wasted. It further facilitated massive unemployment among Indian population. Thus, Gandhi's opinions made a relatable impression on uneducated working-class Indians whose only source of employment depended upon their craftsmanship.

Gandhi's realistic experiments were largely based on the following notions and in order to carve out a substantial comprehension of his maneuvers, it is important to briefly discuss these notions.

- i. Nonviolence: A Strategy and Creed.
- ii. *Satyāgraha*: An Indigenous Experiment.
- iii. *Swadeshi*: A Step towards Self-Sustainability.

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<sup>62</sup>Guha, Ramchandra, 2018, *Gandhi: The Years that Changed the World (1914-1948)*, p. 19.

<sup>63</sup>Guha, Ramchandra, 2014, *Gandhi Before India*, p. 367.

## i. Nonviolence: A Strategy and Creed

Prior to Gandhi's political engagement and experimentation with nonviolence, nonviolence as a virtue was largely observed in the spiritual domain of human existence. Its significance for spiritual emancipation can be traced in Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Gandhi by vehemently courting to general pragmatism of the virtue, shattered the prevalent belief that nonviolence has foremost applicability in the spiritual realm only. The political strategizing of nonviolence holds key importance here because the impact it caused on the pragmatic plane is unprecedented in world history. Notably, Gandhi employed nonviolence both as a way of life and a technique to mobilize the masses. Hence, he expanded its usability and significance from religion to political and social to economic spheres for reformatory changes.

Robert J. Burrowes in his work titled; *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense* (1996) analyses four major categories of nonviolence through two sets of continuums namely:

1. The principled- pragmatic continuum and
2. The reformist-revolutionary continuum.

“The principled-pragmatic continuum indicates the nature of commitment to nonviolence and approach to conflict that activists utilize, notably the attitude towards the opponent. Whereas, the revolutionary-reformist continuum reflects the way conflicts are analyzed (i.e. as a policy problem or a structural problem), the ultimate aim (i.e. a change in policy or a structural change), the presence or absence of a constructive program, and the operational timeframe used by the practitioner of nonviolence.”<sup>64</sup>

Though, both principled and pragmatic nonviolence seems analogous at first, but after careful consideration, they can be distinguished in the following ways:

- a) Principled practitioners employ nonviolence because of its ethical value whereas, pragmatic practitioners choose nonviolence for its efficacy as a method.
- b) Principled practitioners, on the one hand, maintain the indivisibility between ends and means, while pragmatist practitioners, on the other hand, treat them as separable variants.
- c) Conflict is deemed as a shared problem by principled practitioners paving to bridge the gap between antagonist and protagonist. Whereas pragmatic practitioners view conflict as a relationship between antagonists and protagonists with intransigent interests.

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<sup>64</sup>Burrowes, Robert J. 1996. *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach*, pp. 98-101. Cited from Satha-Anand, C. 2015, “Overcoming Illusory Division: Between Nonviolence as a Pragmatic Strategy and a Principled Way of Life”, *Civil Resistance: Comparative Perspectives on Nonviolent Struggle*, p. 290.



- d) Since opponents are seen as allies, practitioners of principled nonviolence choose to endure suffering rather than inflicting. Whereas pragmatic practitioner aims to overthrow the opponent by means of nonviolence confrontation. Suffering devoid of physical injury inflicted is considered acceptable to pragmatic practitioners.
- e) While principled practitioners may view nonviolence as a way of life, pragmatic practitioners do not.

Thus, Gandhi's nonviolent methods can also be called as "principled nonviolence" for he attends to nonviolence not only because of its efficacy in the political and social sphere, but also because of its ethically superiority and intrinsic value. Moreover, Johan Galtung in *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (1996) observes that the attainment of structurally, directly, and culturally nonviolent society is conducive through nonviolent means only. Violent strategy may suppress an arising conflict for a constrained period, but it is structurally and psychologically damaging to both the bearer and "the other". Whereas, Gene Sharp, the foremost propagator of nonviolent action examines Gandhi as a political strategist in his work titled; *Gandhi as a Political Strategist: With Essays on Ethics and Politics* (1979). According to him, Gandhi was realistic enough to never demand complete nonviolence and consistency; rather, he strived towards its maximum manifestation with least inconsistency. Contrary to the popular belief, Gene Sharp contends that Gandhi in his writings maintain nonviolence as a political strategy as Gandhi once contended:

"... being a practical man, I do not wait till India recognizes the practicability of spiritual life in the political world. India considers herself to be powerless and paralyzed . . . and takes up noncooperation out of her weakness. It must still serve the same purpose; namely, bring her delivery from the crushing weight of British injustice, if a sufficient number of people practice it."<sup>65</sup>

Sharp further maintains that nonviolence largely remained a political strategic tool in Gandhi's maneuvers as Gandhi once said; "A policy may be changed, a creed cannot. But either is as good as the other whilst it is held."<sup>66</sup> Though, strategizing nonviolence as a method to win the oppressor is vividly reflective in Gandhi's political endeavors, yet its spiritual and intrinsic attributes also play a significant part in nurturing a genuine nonviolent character. Though external adherence to

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<sup>65</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1920. *Young India*, August 11.

<sup>66</sup>Gandhi M. K. 1931. *Young India*, July 30,

nonviolent strategy may prove efficacious for a limited period yet without evolving an internal attunement with nonviolence, its true characteristics cannot be unraveled. An external strategic adaptation of nonviolence can be easily detected and defeated without much effort. Whereas the efficacy of true indulgence in nonviolence enables one to strive for its value rather than results. Winning is not an end in nonviolence, rather the incessant training in nonviolence itself is the eternal end here.

Nonetheless, Gandhi's notion of nonviolence is not single-dimensional; it is a comprehensive program of action with multiple facets. On the political and economic plane, it can be called a policy or a strategy but on an ethical, spiritual, and individual plane, it holds intrinsic obdurate value. Gandhi's conviction in the ethical value of nonviolence was so vehement that in 1942 when the country was on the verge of communal riots in Bengal and people's conviction in nonviolence had hit a rock bottom. Keeping his physical health aside, Gandhi rose to reiterate the significance of nonviolence among agitating Indian masses. When questioned about the magnitude of nonviolence in *swarāj*, he vehemently articulated his conviction as: "Non-violence has brought us nearer to Swaraj as never before. We dare not exchange it even for Swaraj, for Swaraj, thus there will be no true Swaraj. The question is not what we will do after Swaraj. It is whether under given conditions we can give up nonviolence to win swaraj." He reiterated, "Independence for me means the independence of the humblest and poorest among us. It cannot be obtained by joining the war."<sup>67</sup>

Significantly, nonviolence operates on the ethical principles of social harmony and mutual cohesion. Thus, a practitioner of nonviolence readily endures suffering instead of inflicting it out on others. Features of unity and harmony are explicitly elucidating in Gandhi's notion of nonviolence. And "from a transformative perspective, Gandhi was foremost in his efforts to strengthen the intimacy between individualistic and social approaches to alleviate sufferings."<sup>68</sup> But within Gandhi a dilemma between ascetic and mystic Gandhi can also be seen. But whenever the dilemma between ascetic Gandhi and the mystic Gandhi surfaced, he resorted to his belief in Truth and used its relative manifestations to guide him out of the bias. At many occasions,

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<sup>67</sup>Bose, Nirmal Kumar, 2012, *My Days with Gandhi*. Pp. 140-146. (Kindle edition)

<sup>68</sup>Satha-Anand, C. 2015, "Overcoming Illusory Division: Between Nonviolence as a Pragmatic Strategy and a Principled Way of Life", *Civil Resistance: Comparative Perspectives on Nonviolent Struggle*, p. 292.

Gandhi's internal notions were in struggle with his outer image. One such incidence of internal conflict between the personal and political Gandhi can be unraveled through his letter to the famous Tamil protege C. Rajgopalachari (fondly known as Rajaji). Though the letters that Gandhi wrote to Rajaji and Herman Kallenbach on his spiritual friendship with Sarala Devi Chaudhrani have been lost, yet some fragments of Rajaji's reply is indicative of Gandhi's tussle between personal and political. In reply to Gandhi's request of acquiescent from Rajaji on the developments of his spiritual relationship with Sarala Devi Chaudhrani, Rajaji cautioned him that his public proclamation of the 'spiritual marriage' with Sarala Devi Chaudhrani would bring "unutterable shame and ruin to Gandhi, and destroy all saintliness, all purity, all asceticism, and all India's hope." In an agitated manner, he cautioned him that:

"how could you venture out... when in your boat was the faith and fate of millions of simple souls who if the boat had capsized would have seen neither beauty nor love nor grandeur, but unspeakable shame and death."<sup>69</sup>

As a result of Rajaji's cautioning remarks, Gandhi withdrew his decision of broadcasting his spiritual connection with Sarala Devi Chaudhrani in the public domain. Hence, the ascetic Gandhi who yearned for mystical values and experiences was regulated by the political Gandhi who emerged as the hope of millions of Indians in their liberation from British atrocities. Nonetheless, Gandhi's employment of nonviolence is strategically unique for it does not attempt to humiliate the oppressor after the defeat. Rather, it aims to awaken the humanity and love in the oppressor by means of self-suffering. Thus, it operates to break the chain of violence that nurtures humiliation, anger, frustration, and revenge in the oppressor. Nonviolence, on the one hand, treats "the other" at par with the self, whereas violence, on the other hand, treats "the other" as an obstruction that needs to be conquered. Hence, nonviolence as a strategy promotes peace and tranquility among mankind. Whereas violence as a strategy paves way to forceful suppression of other's ideas and values and widens a divide between personal and social relations.

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<sup>69</sup>Guha, Ramchandra, 2018, *Gandhi: The Years that Changed the World (1914-1948)*, p. 110.

## ii. *Satyagraha*: An Indigenous Experiment

Gandhi's political career originated in South Africa where he fought a shrapnel battle against apartheid. His moral and political development in diaspora was forged with unprecedented use of innovative methods and approaches that rendered him revolutionary and reformist. Contrary to his timid and feeble appearance, his regimen of political and social confrontations was impregnable in force and devastating in effect. In South Africa, Gandhi evolved an extreme personal austerity which led him to develop an unprecedented technique of nonviolent resistance popularized as *satyāgraha*. By evolving a method of nonviolent resistance, Gandhi developed a new form of protest astutely "distinct and different from the polite pleading of the moderates and the bomb-throwing of the revolutionaries".<sup>70</sup> His early encounter with linguistic variability, cultural pluralism, and ethnic diversity enchanted his perspective towards anti-essentialism. And his work in Natal and Transvaal adept him in *satyāgraha* techniques. Writing to an Indian friend in 1909 Gandhi said: 'Satyagraha is the only weapon suited to the genius of our land... The many ills we suffer from in India is an infallible panacea.'<sup>71</sup> By the time Gandhi arrived on his native land in 1915, the success of his battle against the racial government garnered admiration among Indian intelligentsia. Gokhale of whom Gandhi was a promising protégé and Henry Polak who was a close witness of Gandhi struggle in South Africa provided a close account of his confrontations with the racial system to the people of India, and particularly Bombay. As a result, a large populace of Gujrati culture placed in Bombay discovered an indigenous hero in Gandhi. His arrival on the native land was celebrated and revered with several social and organizational gatherings attended by his significant contemporaries like, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and others. As advised by his mentor G.K. Gokhale, Gandhi in 1915 travelled extensively across India to sharpen his knowledge on the socio- economic conditions and perspectives of his native people.

His experiments in *satyāgraha* on the native land commenced only in 1916 on the issue of degradation and exploitation of Champaran peasants at the hands of Indigo planters. The travail of Indigo peasants amplified by a punitive colonial law popularly known as *tinkhatia* system was instrumental in devastating the economic condition of the poor peasantry. The law or system

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<sup>70</sup>Guha, Ramchandra, 2018, *Gandhi: The Years That Changed the World, 1914-1918*, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup>Gandhi to G. A. Natesan, c.29, October 1909, *CWMG*, IX, pp. 506-07.

demanding peasants to put a portion of their land (once 3/20, then 1/10) for Indigo cultivation deserting to obey which would have their land confiscated by the European planters. An enhanced rent extortion known as *Sharabeshi* was also in force to further shudder the dignity and economic conditions of the afflicted Champaran peasantry. Raj Kumar Shukla (a Champaran peasant and activist) besought the Champaran issue to Gandhi's cognizance. After taking palpable cognizance of the devastating conditions of the peasantry, Gandhi resolved to fight for the rights of plantation workers. In a letter written on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1916, Gandhi recounts the situation in Champaran to his nephew Maganlal as; "the situation here is more serious than I had imagined. It seems to be worse than in Fiji and Natal." Adding further, he writes, "I have seen the authorities. They may be thinking of apprehending me."<sup>72</sup>

The intensity of the Champaran case was such that it provided Gandhi a perfect test case against the colonial forces in India. Gandhi's adept knowledge and experience in British legal system and his prior experiments with *satyāgraha* in South Africa procured him a lead on his first ever experiment in India. On his onerous mission of abolishing the exploitative *sharabeshi* and coercive Tinkhatia law, Gandhi collected almost 7000 testimonies only in a span of a month. The evidence produced by Gandhi was so overwhelming in effect that it rendered the official committee designed to examine the Champaran case perturbed. Upon observing the agitation that Gandhi and his resolution has brought about in Champaran district, the Champaran Agrarian Enquiry Committee comprised of four British officers from the Indian Civil Service and a chairman from the Central Provinces decreed in favor of the raiyats (representing peasantry). As a result, the committee reduced the *sharabeshi* roughly by 20 percent. And to compensate the abuse and exploitation that farmers underwent, the committee accepted the demands of Gandhi and raiyats in toto. "The committee recommended 'the voluntary system' in which the 'tenants must be absolutely free to enter into the contract (with the planters) or to refrain from making it'.<sup>73</sup>

Thus, the groundbreaking success of Gandhi's first *satyāgraha* experiment in India facilitated expansion of his social standing among the nationalist circles. Moreover, Gandhi's refusal of the British order instructing him to leave the district of Motihari in April 1917 stunned the loyalist lawyers of Gujarat Sabha who had earlier disdained him as a 'misguided religious

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<sup>72</sup>Gandhi, M. K. *CWMG*, XIII, p. 363.

<sup>73</sup>Guha, Ramchandra, 2018, *Gandhi: The Years That Changed the World, 1914-1948*, p. 48.

crank'.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the champaran experiment achieved Gandhi the much-required popular trust and fidelity among his native people.

After laying the first milestone of successful experiment, Gandhi scored another two consecutive successes in Kheda and Ahmedabad experiment largely distinct in range and effect from each other. The Ahmedabad *satyagraha* procured hardship on Gandhi for the issue turned both political and personal. Nonviolent agitation of the workers from various mills of Ahmedabad against their employers was started turning into a class conflict. And at the center of this class conflict was Gandhi's two close acquaintances, namely, Ambalal Sarabhai and his sister Anasuya Sarabhai. While Anasuya stood in favor of the agitating mill workers, Ambalal Sarabhai formed a union with the Mill owners. At the center of the agitation was a reasonable demand from the mill workers of a 50 percent rise in their wages as the plague of 1917 caused massive economic destruction to the working class. Inflation procured by the aftermath of plague further intensified their economic deficit. Contrary to the demands of workers, the mill owners offered only a 20 percent increase in wages to compensate for the economic wreckage that workers were going through. Thus, in response to the obstinacy shown by mill owners', workers began to strike from 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1918. Upon investigating the crisis, Gandhi found the demands of agitating mill workers reasonable. Ambalal Sarabhai who was guiding the mill owners' union against the workers' demand refused to negotiate against his original offer of 20 percent hike in wages. Such show of obstinacy led Gandhi to observe fast to break the intransigence of mill owners. Consequently, his fast-generated sufficient pressure on the mill owners coercing them to come into settlement with the workers. Soon a scholar named Anandshankar Dhruva was chosen to arbitrate an economic consensus between the mill owners and the workers. And finally, the award arrived in favor of the mill workers and 35 percent of increase in the wages was accepted as compensation to the workers.

Thus, the experiments illustrated above demonstrate Gandhi's rise as a people's leader in India. While the former example reflects the way Gandhi strategized *satyāgraha* to challenge the punitive colonial law and brought reform via confronting the racial system in its strength. The latter example is distinctive in mirroring Gandhi's struggle among his own people and how he had to resort to fast to break the obstinance of both sides. Significantly, the technique of nonviolent resistance brought out a dynamic system of reform which led the entire Indian Independence

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid. p. 49.

movement to revolutionize by nonviolence. Yet, like other techniques it too suffers from constraints as Joan V. Bondant in her work; *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* (1967) brought forth the constraints to make a deep analysis of five *satyāgraha* movements ensued from 1918 to 1931. “The Vykom temple road Satyagraha (1924–25), the Bardoli campaign of peasants against the government of Bombay (1928), the Ahmedabad labor campaign (1918), the nationwide campaign against the Rowlett Bills (1919), and the salt Satyagraha of 1930–31”<sup>75</sup> While examining each *satyāgraha* that took place from the period of 1918 to 1931, Bondant argues that most of nonviolent protests employed *satyāgraha* only as a means and not as an end in itself, that is to say, many participants did not employ it as a way of living rather utilized its efficacy as a political strategy. A similar observation can be unraveled in Nirmal Kumar Bose’s *My Days with Gandhi* where he offers a first-hand account of Gandhi experiments and struggles with nonviolence. He recounts: “I observed that the interest of many workers in satyagraha was not very deep. They were more interested in dealing hard blows on the imperial system which had brought our country to the verge of ruin than in the conversion of British opponent.” Adding further he writes:

“there were perhaps few in Bengal who subscribed to the revolutionary import of Gandhiji’s political method or of his decentralized economic system...Men felt enthusiastic when the battle raged full and strong; but when it came to preparation... the later fizzled down into a dead routine which knew no expansion.”<sup>76</sup>

Perhaps, Gandhi was prescient that his ideals might be misappropriated or be followed in the namesake only, therefore he laid some basic rules for a *satyāgrahi* to follow in his quest for justice:

1. “A *satyāgrahi* must appreciate the laws laid by the government and obey them voluntarily.
2. Should tolerate the laws even when they are uneasy and inconvenient.
3. Be willing to undergo suffering, loss of property, and to endure the suffering that might be inflicted on family and friends.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Satha-Anand, C. 2015, “Overcoming Illusory Division: Between Nonviolence as a Pragmatic Strategy and a Principled Way of Life”, *Civil Resistance: Comparative Perspectives on Nonviolent Struggle*, p. 293.

<sup>76</sup> Bose, Nirmal Kumar, 1987, *My Days with Gandhi*, pp. 275-281, (Kindle edition).

<sup>77</sup>Gandhi, M. K., 1968, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p.106.

The rules, cautioned Gandhi, must be followed by heart, and should vehemently hold the principle of nonviolence as its operative motor. To refrain *satyāgraha* from solely becoming a political instrument, he advocated voluntary suffering and infallible faith in nonviolence.

### ***iii. Swadeshi as Coterminous to Swarāj***

Gandhi's *Swarāj* attempts to integrate various compartments essential for nation building. These compartments are building blocks of social, economic, and political structuration of India. From sanitization to *Swadeshi*, village reconstruction to Dalit exhilaration, these small compartments fill in the gaps to immunize India against structural exploitation. Gandhi had long been demanding economic self-reliance of India. Constant decline in handicrafts was the major reason India was reeling under poverty. Foreign textiles such as Lancashire was instrumental in destroying India's hand spun textile industry. As a result, millions unsophisticated workers lost their jobs to machinery. Thus, *Swadeshi* or economic self-reliance was a crucial key to India's rejuvenation from poverty and famine. For Gandhi *swarāj* and *swadeshi* were coterminous to each other. The neglect in economic self-reliance would consequently hamper the struggle towards true *swarāj*. In the speeches presented in the autumn and summer of 1919 in Godhara, Gandhi contended that "if the free hours of men and women in rural homes were occupied in spinning and weaving, crores of rupees of foreign exchange would be saved".<sup>78</sup> In addition to the economic and political advantage of *swadeshi*, the theme was also personal to Gandhi as each member of his *ashram* was expected to be indulged in hand spinning and weaving daily. Significantly, the survival of the millions of uneducated peasantries depended largely on the revival of hand spun textiles. Gandhi on many occasions advised and invoked the use and need of hand spinning in his various speeches and interviews. Once, writing to his political contemporary Jinnah, Gandhi in June 1919 said; 'Pray tell miss Jinnah that I shall expect her on her return to join the hand spinning class that Mrs. Banker senior, and Mrs. Ramabai, a Punjabi lady, are conducting.'<sup>79</sup> Moreover, *Swadeshi* was treated as the infallible economic doctrine for a self-reliant India. It was regarded

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<sup>78</sup>Guha, Ramchandra, 2018, *Gandhi: The Years That Changed the World, 1914-1948*, p. 86.

<sup>79</sup>Gandhi to M. A. Jinnah, 28 June 1919, *CWMG*, XV, PP. 398-99.



as a “law of the laws”.<sup>80</sup> Gandhi considered *Swadeshi* as a natural law which needs no outer enacting as it is present in all. Thus, *Swadeshi* served two-fold benefits to Gandhi’s political and social maneuvers:

1. First, it operates on a model of self-sufficiency to reconstruct the damaged internal economy of India by insisting upon the use of indigenous products. And vehemently inspires boycott of foreign imported clothes, especially cotton.
2. Secondly, it acts to elevate socially deprived masses by providing them work through equipping them with necessary skills needed for operating small instruments.

Boycott of foreign goods became essential for small scale industries to flourish because unless India becomes self-reliant for its needs, it will inevitably suffer from foreign economic drain. As Gandhi contended:

“India cannot be free for so long as India voluntarily encourages or tolerates the economic drain which has been going for the past century and a half. Boycott of foreign goods means no more and no less than boycott of foreign cloth. Foreign cloth constitutes the largest drain voluntarily permitted by us”.<sup>81</sup>

Therefore, *Swadeshi* became indispensable to *Swarāj*. By *Swadeshi*, Gandhi intended to boost local production by local industries and endeavored to transfer the economic power from the clutches of western production companies to indigenous commerce for stimulating the economic growth of the country. By endeavoring a robust strengthening of the domestic market, Gandhi laid the foundation for India’s economic self-sufficiency. He revived the use of *Charkha* which he perceived to be a “pure” form of machinery reinforced in the *Swarājya* dream. To promote self-sufficiency, production of *Khadi* was encouraged to mobilize the movement on mass scale. As a result of the mass mobilization, the politicians, the socialist and the reformists in pre-independent India largely adhered to dress in *Khādi* as a symbol of their commitment towards economic liberation of India.

Initially, the production of *Khadi* provided work to semi starved, semi employed women of India. *Khādi* industry was majorly composed of home-spun cloth and yarn production. “Cotton, silk, or wool is hand-spun into yarn using a *charkha*, or spinning wheel, which is set on the floor. The vertical spinning wheel was in common use in village India, and it was the first type Gandhi adopted. A spinning wheel of this sort formed the central motif in the flag of the Indian National

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<sup>80</sup>Gandhi, M. K. 2007, *Yeravada Mandir*, p.35.

<sup>81</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1957, *CWMG*, vol. 2, p.73.

Congress until Indian independence.”<sup>82</sup>*Khādi* production was concentrated to experiment whether India can function on the objective of bread labor and if so, whether employment generated through *khādi* production prove significant in minimizing wage slavery and survive contingent conditions of market economy. Another significant goal of *khādi* production was to experiment with the Gandhian model of small-scale, decentralized production.

Significantly, in independent India the *khādi* production was prioritized and supported by Gandhi’s spiritual heir Vinoba Bhave. “It became one of the essential experiments in Vinoba’s *sarvodaya* campaign. And among Sarva Seva Sangh voluntary workers, it was generally considered second in importance only to the *bhoodan* land reform efforts.”<sup>83</sup> The program was supported by the Nehru government as it was included in the five-year planning for India’s reconstruction after independence. Though Nehru believed the mode of production involved in *khādi* to be an outdated model yet, he subsidized production because it served him other benefits such as “it fit in well with the rural production system of India’s peasantry, it helped organize peasantry, and it served to check price gouging by Indian mill owners.”<sup>84</sup> Initially, the *Khādi* program garnered favorable results and provided enough employment. A table of *Khādi* program and its every five-year average is shown below to track its development and downfall:

**The Khadi Program, Five-Year Averages<sup>85</sup>**

Period	Production	Sales	Employment	Subsidy*	Per-Capita Subsidy
1953/54-1957/58	27.31	47.2	.71	45.1	63.17
1958/59-1962/63	62.23	144.9	1.65	104.3	63.09
1963/64-1967/68	75.88	228.3	1.77	108.0	60.91
1968/69-1973/73	58.25	265.1	1.07	86.5	80.99
1973/1974-1977/1978	60.79	513.5+	.89	143.2	160.54
1978/79-1980/81	81.60	919.1	1.12	369.2	329.64

<sup>82</sup>Fox, Richard, G. 1992, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 179.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid. P.180.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Source: Computed from Dagli 1976: tables 5.9, Government of India, Khadi and Village Industries Commission 1980, 1981, 1982: tables 10, 11. Quoted from Fox, Richard, G. 1992, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 181.

In the table shown, in the period between 1953/54 and 1962/63, the production of all kinds of *Khād* i.e., cotton, silk, and wool were more than doubled and the employment rate also significantly increased by 100 percent and sales were tripled. Notably, in the period between 1963/64 and 1967/68, *Khādi* production flourished in all compartments including sales and employment. However, in the years between 1963/64 and 1972/73, though sales doubled but the employment rate decreased by 40 percent and the production rate also dropped by 23 percent as compared to the previous period of 1953/54 and 1962/63. However, in the period between 1953 and 1959, the government increased subsidy for improved spinning wheels and other innovative techniques to increase the per-capita output.<sup>86</sup> With increased subsidy and remarkable support from the government, Khadi in free India soon became a field of expert artisans and its initial objective of providing employment to malnourished masses was mischievously overlooked. As a result, the five-year period of 1973/74 to 1977/78 saw a further rise in production of Khadi goods yet a notable decline in employment by 16 percent. “In 1980/81, there were only 1.2 million workers in khadi, some 37 percent fewer than the highest point reached in 1964/65, but they produced about 11 percent more khadi.”<sup>87</sup>

Though, in the period between 1973 to 1981, the government subsidy per *khādi* worker was increased by 500 percent, yet it failed to facilitate the growth of employment rate. However, it achieved its first objective in providing work for semi-starved Indian masses by ensuring social reconstruction but, as an anticipated model for flourishing small-scale industries, it did not evolve expectantly to become “the” model of self-reliant India. Although, it was an experiment in action which essentially invoked the notion of self-sustainability and social reformation through local production. Yet, its unremarkable fall as a self-reliant model of free India portrays the traits of a depressing economy. It would be unfair not to mention the impact *khādi* as an idea had brought upon the agitating Indian campaigners who revolutionized Indian masses against the alien labor. Yet, as far as the notion of self-sustainability is concerned, *the khadi* program requires to be evolved with other spear headed programs to facilitate economic liberation.

From a reformative perspective, it undeniably holds dynamic possibilities of economic acceleration requisite for small villages. Moreover, proliferation of small-scale industries could provide a requisite boon to millions of migrating workers whose plight have been robustly brought

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<sup>86</sup> Fox, Richard, G. 1992, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 180.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* p. 180.

fore by the covid-19 pandemic and the devastating effect it has brought on the Indian economy. Notably, Indian nation witnessed the world's largest and strictest democratic lockdown in March 2020 rendering millions of middle- and lower-class workers jobless. An unprecedented migration of poor workers and their families amidst the world's deadliest pandemic in the past 100 years has adversely affected the lower and middle-class income. Demand for self-sufficiency resurfaced when opportunities and livelihood of millions of Indians working as labor at construction sites, factories, industries, and homes was subjected to sudden enforced curfew. The legacy of Gandhi's *swarāj* model still stands distinguished, authentic, and pragmatic in terms of the revolutionary changes it offers. Constructive programs such as sanitization, self-sufficiency, social and political awareness are indispensable for growth. Notions of nonviolence and *Satyāgraha* have efficiently proved their pragmatic effectiveness around the world.

Thus, the chapter brings forth the notion of utopia, its role in human dreams and attempts to capture various contestations around it. Having emerged first through fictional characters of Thomas More's work, *Utopia*, the notion has traversed various disciplines of social and political studies. Its resurrection in hope and dreams is reflective of the human propensity to grow, evolve and build a desired future. Moreover, Utopia inspires us to be creative, and courageous. Utopia also confronts the notions of the past as evident through Thomas More's work. Significantly, the enlightenment period brought forth the debate between science and religion as it challenged the ills of the existing society by mirroring an alternative future. Though, there are certain ambiguities around the notion Utopia that often paves way to totalitarianism, yet the obscurities can be avoided by taking palpable cognizance of the contingent circumstances.

Gandhian utopia can be discerned through his notion of *Rām Rājya* and his vision of *Sarvodaya* and *Antyodaya*. Direct confrontation with the existing system of cultures and authority for bringing societal and political reconstruction is at the core of Gandhian utopia. Utopia as a dream for an improved society is manifested politically, socially, and individually in Gandhi's lifelong maneuvers. He constructively challenged the inherent notion of untouchability by acknowledging the untouchables and their plight in his writings and works. Similarly, Thomas More also challenged the unfair system of land enclosure and capital punishment for theft. Thomas More, through his work, stirred up a new wave of revolution which laid the foundation of the renaissance period. The reforms that the enlightenment period brought forward were largely a legacy of the renaissance period instituted by Thomas More. Notably, both *Rām Rājya* notion of

Gandhi and Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* as an oblique criticism of 16<sup>th</sup> century England cautions the readers of forming uniformity with prevalent inequalities. It inspires creativity, freedom, change, and manifest in us a desire to transform the existing conditioning of society. Thus, utopia through its various forms and manifestations inevitably reflects human propensity to dream and challenge the *status quo* to bring reform.

## CHAPTER II

### ***SWARĀJ*: CONTENDING VIEWPOINTS**

My aim in this chapter is to expound the realistic features of Gandhi's notion of *Swarāj* amidst his contemporaries like Balgangadhar Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, and K.C. Bhattacharya. The basic question to be addressed is: to what extent did Gandhi agree or disagree with his contemporaries? Did Gandhi disagree with his contemporaries on the question concerning the attainment of *swarāj*? How far could Gandhi appreciate Sri Aurobindo's view depicting *swarāj* as the *Sanatana Dharma* and a starting point towards the realization of divinity within us? Did Gandhi reject K.C. Bhattacharya's position that *swarāj* is being capable of comprehending and comparing old ideas with new ones? And how far could Gandhi accept or reject Tilak's declaration that "Swarāj is my birth right and I will attain it"? To address the above-mentioned contestation, I have divided the chapter into the following three sections:

- 1- *Swarāj* as Our Birth Right: Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- 2- *Swarāj* as Finding Divinity within Oneself: Sri Aurobindo
- 3 -*Swarāj* in Ideas: K.C. Bhattacharya

#### Section 1

#### ***Swarāj* as Our Birth Right: Bal Gangadhar Tilak**

Lokmanya Tilak (1856-1920) is undoubtedly India's foremost political activist who brought out the *jñāna*/knowledge embedded in Indian scriptures into the political arena of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tilak's credibility lies in igniting ideological activism in the Indian national freedom movement. He significantly stirred up the Indian intelligentsia by stimulating the notion of active resistance into the minds of agitating Indian masses. His dynamic ideological activism perturbed the British regime to the extent where they rendered him as the father of Indian unrest. Initially,

he was named Keshav Gangadhar Tilak but his fidelity and growing popularity among the masses, rendered him the title of "Lokmanya" which generally means "accepted by people".

It is vital to know at the outset that prior to Tilak's involvement in Indian politics; Indian politics did not have much appeal, rather it acted like a polite debating society which accepted British regulations and ideals as almost axiomatic. Objections against government policies were limited to carefully worded drafts serving as a polite plea to the sense of reason and justice of British officials. Indian intelligentsia and politics were more strenuous on accepting western hegemonies than defying them directly. However, Tilak strummed a robust form of activism in political and social programs. He refuted contentions which accepted western regulations and ideologies without juxtaposition; hence, he challenged the conventional method of objection then enrooted in Indian political system. Interestingly, his manner of opposition came out as a challenge to Gokhale's method of activism which was primarily wedded to English parliamentary procedures.

Tilak strived to stir Indian intelligentsia by invoking the native masses to resist British ideologies and regulations. So, it was essential for him to find out indigenous ideologies which could procure a lasting impact on Indian minds to combat the hold of western hegemonies. His foremost influence stemmed from the dynamite Maratha leader popularly known as Shivaji whose enduring courage and effervescent battles with Moslem power in India awakened Maratha soldiers to reclaim their *Swarāj*. Though, his mission of finding one ideology that could revolutionize the whole of Hindu society against the tyrant British power was yet to be unraveled. However, his rummage ended when he unearthed a unifying inspiration apposite to stir up Indian consciousness towards insurgency in the mythological text *Bhagwat-Gitā*. The influence of *Gitā* on Tilak was not of an ordinary kind; rather, it qualified on many grounds to be chosen as a guide of revolution. The biggest advantage of opting *Gita* as the chief action guide was its wide and pervading acceptability in all Hindu households. Its authority over all sections of Hindu culture and mainly on Brahmin culture was prodigiously evident. Tilak apprehended *Gita* as a guide that enables one to wipe out the illusions of the material world and illuminates the path of *Karma Yoga* that is, insisting upon one's duty. Here, the notion of duty refers to one's *dharma* towards the society he/she is born into. The *Gitā* vehemently emphasizes one's *dharma* to illuminate the path of righteousness.

Though, Tilak garnered a unifying inspiration in *Gita*, yet he confronted many challenges in pursuit of a-customizing *karma-yoga* philosophy of *Gita* into the cognizance of masses. Moreover, the varied commentaries available on *Gita* posed a major challenge as they envisaged various paths pertaining to liberation. For instance, Shankara's commentary on the one hand envisages *Gita* as a path leading to liberation through renunciation of actions. While Ramanuja's commentary, on the other hand, stresses on the bhakti or devotional aspect of the mythological text. However, Madhava's commentary did appease Tilak's contention as it highlighted the activism embedded in the scripture. Yet, the commentary alone was not enough to revolutionize the Hindu masses in their battle for *Swarāj*. Hence, to broadcast the philosophy of activism embedded in *Gita*, Tilak while being incarcerated in Mandalay formulated his own commentary on *Gita*, titled as *Gita- The Rahasya or Esoteric Doctrine*.<sup>88</sup>

Interestingly, Tilak's commentary "stands out as perhaps the major philosophical work of the Indian nationalist movement and was characterized by Gandhi, despite his disagreement with some aspects of it as a masterpiece commentary on *Gita*"<sup>89</sup>.

In *Gita- The Rahasya*, Tilak primarily sought to re-establish the philosophy of action as the highest duty of man. He ardently tried to suppress the renunciation part expounded and accentuated in Shankara's philosophy. Through his philosophy of action, he maneuvered to stimulate a sense of duty and responsibility in his fellow citizens in the challenging times of foreign oppression. Notably, Tilak's approach towards politics was never ideologist rather he was a pragmatist whose dynamic maneuvers stirred the entire Intelligentsia towards an accentuating political engagement. His paramount objective was oriented towards the political emancipation of India. He believed that all men possess equal autonomous potentiality and hence, can regulate their own lives. Tilak considered freedom as a divine attribute of life on which our spiritual and moral life functions. Moreover, he never attempted to give a picture of perfect society rather he was content with the political emancipation of India from the clutches of British imperialism. Also, Tilak was a social conservative well versed in ancient Sanskrit literature and his political

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<sup>88</sup> Brown, D. M. 1958, "The Philosophy of Bal Gangadhar Tilak: Karma vs. Jnana in the Gita Rahasya", *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 198.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. P.198.



philosophy stems out as a synthesis of dominant ancient Indian concepts and his idea of nationalism and democratic thought was inspired from the modern West.

He was a firm believer of non-dualism of Vedanta. In this sense, he was a Vedantist, and *Vedanta* school of thought clearly dominated his concept of life and politics. His notion of natural rights served as a progeny to his metaphysics of non-dualism ingrained in Vedanta. He argued that since spirit is the absolute reality, and all men participate in that absolute essence, thus all men possess the same autonomous spiritual potentiality. The *Advaitism* of *Vedanta* inspired him towards the supremacy of the concept of freedom<sup>90</sup>. He regarded freedom as the essence of the entire nationalist movement. He once contended, “Freedom was the soul of the Home Rule Movement. The divine instinct of freedom never aged...freedom is the very life of the individual soul which Vedanta declares to be not separate from God but identical with him. This freedom was a principal that could never perish.”<sup>91</sup>

He strenuously argued to establish freedom as the divine attribute of God and believed that the power of creativity also stems from this very same attribute of God. However, he contended that without freedom no moral and spiritual life could properly function furthermore alleging that foreign dominance destroys the essence of a nation and its culture, thus overthrowing of British regime became the *modus operandi* of his political career. Apart from Hindu epic *Gita*, Tilak significantly learned a lot from the West. For example, in his famous, 3 July 1908 trial speech, he quoted J.S. Mill’s definition of nationality. As Mill writes:

“A portion of mankind may be said to constitute a Nationality if they are united among themselves by common sympathies which do not exist between them and any others – which make them co-operate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government, and desire it should be government by themselves or a portion of themselves exclusively.”<sup>92</sup>

Mill’s suggestion of self- governance and education as important means of progress was strenuously incorporated in Tilak’s political discourse. Wilson, Mazzini, and Burke also influenced his political thoughts. “Though he rejected the most liberal aspects of Mazzini’s thought

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<sup>90</sup>. V. P. 1958, “Political Philosophy of Lokmanya Tilak, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*”, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 15.

<sup>91</sup> Tilak, B.G. *Speeches and Writings of Tilak*, p.354

<sup>92</sup> Mill, J. S. 1977. *Considerations on Representative Government*, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Vol XVIII, Essays on Politics and Society 2, chapter xvi.

however, he adopted his cult of the nation and fused it with Hindu and Vedic unifying myths; the result was a fusion of radical politics and social reaction.”<sup>93</sup> In fact in the period from 1919 to 1920 he emphatically argued for the endorsement of Wilson’s concept of self-determination in India.

Tilak’s *Swarājya* pertains to a synthesis of ancient Indian culture, western ideologies, and political theories that he regarded to be the essential elements of modernity. He connoted *Swarājya* not only as the Indians birth right but also their duty, i.e., *Dharma*. The exogenous influence of modern thought blended with Indian principals procured a dynamic lead to the Indian nationalist movement driving upwards in its freedom maneuver. However, to impart *Swarājya* a robust traditional value, Tilak further applied the concept of spirituality to it. Thus, *Swarājya* proposed two meanings for him, first is the political emancipation of India also called as Home Rule and second it is the attainment of perfection of self-control essential for performing one’s duty (*Swadharma*)<sup>94</sup>. Performance of one’s duty to attain one’s natural rights rendered *swadharma* as essentially coterminous to *Swarājya*.

The notion of *Swarājya* operates at the core of Tilak’s nationalism. Through *Swarājya*, he brought out a vital orientation in Indian politics and powered the Indian audience with moral enthusiasm and courage in their struggle against the exploitative systems employed by foreign rulers to drain India economically and socially. The dominance of Hindu culture and its representing ideas is discernibly explicit in his speeches and maneuvers. He remarkably resuscitated the Ganpati festival in Maharashtra to create encouragement and excitement among Marathas for their age-old traditions and sought to build new traditions on the foundation of old ones as he wrote:

“a true nationalist desire to build on old foundations...we do not want to Anglicize our institutions and denationalize them in the name of social and political reforms.”<sup>95</sup>

Alike Gandhi Tilak did not sanction cowardice. Nevertheless, Tilak’s orientation towards revival of old Hindu traditions and his immense faith in Hindu religion make scholars generalize his political approach as conservative, sectarian and anti-Muslim. Though his unique ideology did make his contemporaries’ cynic of his agitation being anti-Muslim, but it is not true. He often got praised by his Muslim colleagues for the contributions he has made in the national freedom

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Varma, V. P. 1958. “Political Philosophy of Lokmanya Tilak”, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.19, No.1, p. 16.

<sup>95</sup> Tilak, B. G. 13 December 1919, *Mahratta*.

movement. For instance, the Lucknow pact of 1916 got him admirations from top politicians like Jinnah, M. A. Ansari, and Hasan Imam. Moreover, Shaukat Ali and Hasarat Mohani even went to declare him as their political *Guru*. As Shaukat Ali declares:

“I would like to mention again for the hundredth time that both Mohammed Ali and I belonged and still belong to Lokmanya Tilak’s party”<sup>96</sup>.

His views on *swarājya* brought out a vibrant and authentic form of agitation earlier absent in the nationalist independence struggle. However, the financial catastrophe of Indian economy by the British government posed a significant challenge to Tilak’s *swarājya* dream. Without economic freedom, no political *swarājya* can uplift the dispossessed Indians from the slumber of devastating poverty. His *Swarājya* hoisted both the inner freedom of man achieved through vigorous discipline and self-restraint. And the external freedom from alien rule attained by voluntary political activism. And the economic *swarājya* was crucial in accomplishing true freedom. The mobilizing mantra he brought forward was “*Swarājya* is the birth-right of Indians” and hence, “the foundation and not the height of our future prosperity”.<sup>97</sup>

However, it is interesting to note that Tilak’s death coincided with Gandhi’s emergence as the popular national leader and his fidelity among masses further strengthened the launch of his non-corporation movement. Interestingly, Gandhi’s struggle in South Africa trained him in British legal system. His ideas and methods were tested and tried on the foreign land that rendered his approach a practical outlook much needed for the Indian freedom struggle. Though, the immense recognition that Gandhi garnered during the Rowlett act agitation of 1919 would not have been possible if Tilak, the well acknowledged Congress leader had been around during the start of the movement. Gandhi was junior to Tilak in both experience as well as the length of service. As Tilak stated: “he wished he has been in Bombay when Mr. Gandhi began satyagraha. He would have borne the difficulties with him and undergone the hardships.”<sup>98</sup> Gandhi’s idea of nationalism first appears in his work entitled *Hind Swaraj* which he wrote during his 1909 voyage from London to South Africa. Notably, Gandhi’s idea of nationalism did not evolve like as it was in other nationalist leaders because his notion of self -identity first emerged as “an Indian, then Gujrati,

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<sup>96</sup> Bapat, S. V. (ed.) 1928. *Reminiscence of Tilak*, Vol. II, p. 576.

<sup>97</sup> Varma, V. P. 1958, “Political Philosophy of Lokmanya Tilak”, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.19, No. 1, p.17.

<sup>98</sup> Cashman Richard, 1975, *The Myth of Lokmanya: Tilak and Mass Politics in Maharashtra*. P. 205.

and only then a Kathiawadi, it is because of his experience in South Africa.”<sup>99</sup> His experience in South Africa procured him a pluralistic perspective as he met, collaborated, and united people of various ethnic and cultural lineage against the unjust practices that Indian-Muslim population endured in South Africa. His early confrontation with the richness of Indian plural cultures made his idea of nationalism neutral as far as castes or sects are concerned.

His idea of nationalism was not married to the boundaries of one’s sect or state, rather, his holistic vision constituted an important strand of his *swarāj* notion, that is, self-realization in harmony with others. The notions of self and the other are corollary in Gandhi’s idea of nationalism. B.G. Bhosale in his work titled: “Indian Nationalism: Gandhi vis-à-vis Tilak and Savarkar” notes that Gandhi conceived of a nation in terms of *prajā* rather than of *rāshtra*. He furthermore argued that “according to Gandhi, Indians are in the first instance a *praja*, and only, secondarily are they the speakers of this or that language, religion or region. Gandhian term, *praja* helps to bring out the notion that Indians taken as a whole constitute one democratic entity.”<sup>100</sup> Notably, the concept of the other in Gandhi is seen as at par with the self and the notion of nonviolence further substantiates this vision. The methods of nonviolent *satyāgraha* also advocates an inner transformation to bring out the outer change. Various confrontations that Gandhi made during his period suggest us of his firm choice of a unified nation. The idea of nationalism in Gandhi did not operate in isolation from other important structural changes needed in pre-independent India. A path of hope, and change is illumined in his vision of nonviolent construction of a free nation. The problems of women, the exploitation of Dalits and the poverty of the nation constituted significant concern in his political and social maneuvers which he attempted to mitigate. Gandhi firmly advocated that freedom of self-rule should primarily emanate from Indian villages which have long been the center of exploitation and disregard. He strenuously worked to bring out the periphery to the center and acknowledge them in their strengths. His advocacy of decentralized government echoes his belief that self-rule must operate on a holistic vision of inclusion and progression of various cultures constituting a single unified nation. Furthermore, the idea of decentralization of major institutions was to empower the “ordinaries” and bring out the structural transformation needed for the “welfare of all”.

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<sup>99</sup> Bhosale, B. G. 2009, “Indian Nationalism: Gandhi vis-à-vis Tilak and Savarkar”, *Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 70, No. 2, p. 420.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. P.423.

It is interesting to note that there exists no binary difference between Tilak and Gandhi in terms of the notion of *swarāj*. Rather, they have much in common, for instance, both cherished and profoundly advocated the Vedic knowledge inherent in ancient Hindu scriptures. But the methods they both adopted to vindicate their positions on *swarāj* contrast largely. For instance, Tilak opposed the methods adopted by moderates to appeal to the sense of justice of British officials. He disregarded Gandhi's metaphysical approach towards *swarāj*. Tilak's vehement emphasis on the *Karma Yoga* philosophy of the *Gītā* renders his approach as stringently practical. Moreover, unlike Gandhi, Tilak never refrained from using violent means to overthrow or challenge the British authority in India. The political aspect of Tilak's *swarāj* is intertwined with his personal conception of the self as he declared *swarāj* as his birthright.

Moreover, apart from methodological and ideological dissimilarities, there exists some striking similarities between Tilak and Gandhi as they both formulated their philosophy on the influence, they garnered from ancient Hindu texts. Notably, Gandhi succeeded Tilak's vision for *swarajya* as he further intensified his dream for free and unified India. The moral, spiritual, and dynamic approach that Tilak credited to *swarāj* is seen as further intensified in Gandhi. Tilak attributed Indian nationalism with vibrant force as he blatantly opposed British exploitation and strenuously advocated the *Karma Yoga* of the *Gītā* with special emphasis on one's duty towards his/her nation. Likewise, Gandhi also emphasized on the notion of duty with reference to his/her rights. Gandhi profoundly admired Tilak's *Gita- The Rahasya* as "he further improved upon Tilak's interpretation of *Gita* ...in a new modern political discourse which claimed that the service of people is the service of God."<sup>101</sup> To perform one's duty and be responsible towards his/her actions is the teaching they both imparted upon their followers. Though both held their own unique meaning of *swarāj* yet, they profoundly admired each other's ideas and contribution to the Indian soil. While they both accepted English as a global language yet warned us of hegemonizing western educational thought structure to Indian minds at its apparent value. Maintaining a unique identity for India and safeguarding its ancient knowledge predominates their ideology and social and political maneuvers. Gandhi like Tilak believed in the unity of various cultural and religious sects of India. They both firmly advocated tolerance and empathy as essential virtues of a harmonized social order. The Poona pact would not have happened had Lokmanya Tilak not

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<sup>101</sup> Bhosale, B. G. 2009, "Indian Nationalism: Gandhi vis-à-vis Tilak and Savarkar", *Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 70, No. 2, p. 426.

emphatically insisted upon it. Both the leaders insisted upon the multilingual, multiethnic, pluralistic, and secular identity of Indian nation. In Gandhi we see a continuation of Tilak's legacy employed uniquely through his own nonviolent methods and experiments with truth. Though, they differ in methods they adopted to realize *swarāj*, yet they share a unique legacy of bringing revolution in India.

## Section 2

### ***Swarāj* as Finding Divinity within Oneself: Sri Aurobindo**

Sri Aurobindo (15 Aug 1872- 5 Dec 1950) originally known as Aurobindo Ghose was a prominent figure in India's nationalist movement. He was a learned philosopher, yogi, poet, and a seeker of truth. In the early years of his life, Aurobindo became active in Indian nationalist movement. He was one of the important leaders of extremist nationalist party. His philosophy could be divided into two phases. The first phase belongs to his involvement in the National freedom movement. While the later phase of his life was devoted to seeking spiritual freedom. In the later years of his life, he sought *Swarāj* as the beginning of divine life. While, in the early years of his political career he sought *Swarāj* as an essential necessity for India to breathe to life.

For Aurobindo, peace and harmony are possible only when we (i.e., human civilization) come out of our ideological restraint and practices. He was a firm believer of ideal human unity. By spiritual freedom, Aurobindo meant emancipation from the dominion of inconscience. Aurobindo's struggle in national movement was directed towards the realization of *Swarāj*. By finding *swarāj* within oneself, Aurobindo sought individuals to become conscious of their potency for untrammelled possibilities of evolving self-consciousness. His notion of *swarāj* comes out as a synthesis between his early life struggle for India's emancipation and his pursuit of evolving spiritual consciousness by conquering the forces of darkness ingrained in in-consciousness. It is interesting to note that he dealt with the notion of freedom at various levels; first, he tried to materialize freedom in the form of getting emancipation from foreign rule. Secondly, he emphasized on the metaphysical aspect of freedom, i.e., liberating oneself from the clutches of ego and cosmic nature. And thirdly, the ethical aspect of freedom with respect to attaining psychological autonomy is also accentuated in Aurobindo philosophy of life.

Aurobindo perceived spiritual problem as a “quest after divine perfection and immortality: which means the establishment of an infinite freedom in place of mechanical necessity.”<sup>102</sup> He firmly believed in the teleological involution and evolution and contended against the theory of procession of cosmic phenomena from a mechanical natural necessity. As he says:

“...in the substance of the in-conscience there is self- protective law of blind imperative necessity which limits the play of the possibilities that emerge from it and enters into it and prevents them from establishing their free action and result or realizing the intensity of their own absolute.”<sup>103</sup>

Aurobindo argues that our mechanical necessities limit our potency of realizing absolute freedom within us. Notably the term *swarāj* possesses twofold meanings for him; firstly, it stands for having freedom over the administrative affairs of our own country by its own people in accordance with the welfare of all. Secondly, it represents divine freedom untrammelled by our material natural necessities. The former definition of *swarāj*, in Aurobindo, is necessarily related to India’s social and political affairs and its emancipation from foreign rule. As he argues:

“*Swarāj* means administration of affairs in a country by her own people on their own strength in accordance with the welfare of the people without even nominal suzerainty, which is the object which we wish to attain. We had forgotten it for a time and feared to speak about it. We were far away from the truth and we had forgotten it, and on that account, we have been reduced to a bad condition. If we do not acquaint ourselves with the object in view, viz., *swarāj*, I am afraid thirty crores of people, will become extinct. The people of Maharashtra must have some recollection of *swarāj*, because a century ago you represented it.”<sup>104</sup>

Through the above passage, Aurobindo attempts to mobilize Maratha masses towards the goal of *swarāj*. He attempted to invoke the spirit of freedom already existing yet suppressed by the foreign rule in the hearts and minds of Indian multitudes. He reminded his audience of the Maratha spirit of freedom existent during the rule of great Maratha king Shivaji. *Swarāj* for him is an extension of oneself, a natural necessity which cannot be ignored if one wishes to breathe air of life. For him, *Swarāj* is both nectar and salvation. He furthermore argued that *swarāj* for Indian nation is equivalent to the breath of life forever existent yet forgotten or in-consciously suppressed until meditated upon rightly. It is no luxury but an essential necessity which makes a nation alive

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<sup>102</sup> Verma, V. P. 1956, “Shri Aurobindo’s Concept of Freedom and Western Political Idealism: A Reconstruction and Comparative Study”, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 17, No. 2, p.106.

<sup>103</sup> Aurobindo, Sri. *The Divine Life*, II, p. 814.

<sup>104</sup> Aurobindo, Sri, *Bande Mataram*, Political Writings and Speeches (1890-1908), Part Five. Speeches (2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 1907-1 Feb 1908), retrieved from [https://www.aurobindo.ru/workings/sa/37\\_06\\_07/0305\\_e.htm#\\_4](https://www.aurobindo.ru/workings/sa/37_06_07/0305_e.htm#_4) retrieved on 18/11/12.

in its spirit. He further illustrated the significance of *swarāj* by propounding the case of Roman Empire:

“History shows the fate of nations without *swaraj*. In ancient times the Romans had extended their sovereignty over many countries as England has done at present, and under their sovereignty the people of other countries enjoyed as we are now enjoying all the comforts of a peaceful reign. Their lives and properties were all secure as ours are, but in spite of all this, it was said that the people under the sway of the Roman Empire came to grief with its downfall and were harassed by savage people. The reason is, they had no *swaraj*. After a lapse of centuries, they stood on their own legs and established for themselves *swaraj* and became happy. It is for this reason that *swaraj* is essentially needed and is to be gained by our own exertions.”<sup>105</sup>

He argued that without *swarāj* Indian nation will become despicable. No matter how powerful the British regime may seem but when it will come to its downfall it would leave the seized nations handicapped, like an injured animal that falls prey to its predators. He also emphatically argued to realize the mission by one’s own exertions as he criticized the idea that India could attain *swarāj* just by asking for it from the British. For him, English government takes immense satisfaction and pride in their grasp of the native nation and they will never allow it to effortlessly slip away from their crutches as doing so would make them a nonentity in Indian domain. Thus, the foreign government would not rebate their power which they have obtained by immense exertion. He cautioned his native audience that by reposing blind confidence in English regime, India would reduce itself to a miserable condition and therefore, its indigenous identity will become extinct. Moreover, he condemned taking aid from other countries for obtaining *swarāj* because whosoever provides aid would consider its own interest first. Hence, the brave sons of Indian soil must acquire their *swarāj* by their own sweat and hardship.

Notably, Aurobindo also articulated the question of how India can attain *swarāj*? He assessed that the nation cannot realize *swarāj* unless the people as a collective unity struggle and fight for it for one cannot learn swimming unless he learns to struggle with the water. As he stated: “We should, therefore, be prepared to undergo hardships in the struggle for *swaraj*, as there is no other alternative. We want *swaraj*, which means independence, but independence cannot be had unless we are independent. As God created us independent, we should be full of inspirations. With full faith in God, we

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<sup>105</sup> Aurobindo, Sri. *Bande Mataram. Political Writings and Speeches*, part five, speeches, retrieved from - [https://www.aurobindo.ru/workings/sa/37\\_06\\_07/0305\\_e.htm#\\_4](https://www.aurobindo.ru/workings/sa/37_06_07/0305_e.htm#_4) retrieved on 18/11/12.



should preach independence through the length and breadth of the country and a beginning should be made to impart national education.”<sup>106</sup>

He, therefore, emphasized on national education to make the public aware of their rights and duties as the bearer of Indian land. He preached to shun English education for he believed that foreign education would enslave Indian minds and would also limit their actual potency to gain knowledge. He applauded and accentuated the *Swadeshi* policy first invoked and developed by leaders like Dadabhai Naroji, Gokhale, Ranade, Tilak, G. V. Joshi and Bhaswat. K. Nigoni. They were the first advocates of the swadeshi movement in India. Later joined, preached, and improvised by Gandhi and his followers. Aurobindo emphasized that the public should take judicial and executive matters in their own hands and boycott English products and policies. Moreover, he admired the transformation that *Swadeshi* and boycott policies have wrought in India. He invoked the Maratha audiences to the glory of their past and appealed to the culturally diverse masses of Maharashtra and Bengal to unite and fight incessantly for their *swarāj*. In addressing his Maratha audience in Nashik, he quoted:

“O inhabitants of Maharashtra, since you and Bengalis are stirring to attain one end and as we are all sons of Arya Bhumi, let us all jointly set ourselves to the task of bringing about a state of things in accordance with the commandment of God. We, Bengalis, depend upon you because the sons of Maharashtra were brave soldiers a short while ago. You enjoyed *Swarāj* when you were harassed by Mahomedans.”<sup>107</sup>

He stressed on the unity of Marathi and Bengali masses and addressed the call of *swarāj* as the commandment of God, destined to be carried by them. Moreover, he believed that only firm unity among Indians can stir the powerful and exploitative British regime as he offered India the vision of *Poorna Swarāj* through *Swadeshi*, and non-cooperation movement. He espoused to create a parallel local government which would have *Swadeshi* production, local arbitrary courts, and a national education system as its working wheel. With his national education dream, he established Bengal National College and urged young people to enroll and study for India’s betterment. Under his editorial ship journal *Bande Matram* evidently prospered and became the expression of multitudes of Indians. In parallel to his political struggle, his spiritual learning continually deepened and bloomed. In a 1905 letter to his consort, Aurobindo wrote about “three madness in his life; the first being his faith that his talent and knowledge belonged to God and had to be used

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<sup>106</sup> [https://www.aurobindo.ru/workings/sa/37\\_06\\_07/0305\\_e.htm#\\_4](https://www.aurobindo.ru/workings/sa/37_06_07/0305_e.htm#_4) retrieved on 18/11/12.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

for the welfare of others. The second madness depicted the desire for a direct experience of the divine. His third madness is to know and worship his country as “the mother” and fight to free her not with the gun but with the power of Knowledge”.<sup>108</sup>

During his nationalist years, Aurobindo established a vision of free India. He not only emphasized on the political aspect of freedom but also allotted immense significance to spiritual freedom. He urged his audience to unearth influence in their own country’s spiritual past and devote themselves to serve humanity for the greater good of others. Notably, soon after his arrival in Pondicherry, Aurobindo’s “cave years” began to unfold. His pursuit of *Yoga* along with his goal of divinizing human life became prominent in the four-decade long penance. From 1910 to 1950 Aurobindo dedicated himself to spiritual and philosophical pursuits of life. Interestingly in the year 1914, he rolled out his magazine termed *Arya* to impart his experiences and learning of *Yoga*. Moreover, in the same year he discovered his spiritual collaborator Mirra Alfasa also known as the “Mother” who later established the Aurobindo *Ashram*. Remarkably, “on 24 November 1926, after a major spiritual realization, Sri Aurobindo withdrew from public view to continue his spiritual work. At this time, he handed over the full responsibility for the inner and outer lives of the *sadhaks* (spiritual aspirants) and the ashram to his spiritual collaborator, “the Mother”.<sup>109</sup> In an attempt to describe the role and significance of his *Ashram*, Aurobindo himself noted that it had “less been created than grown around him as its center.”<sup>110</sup>

Moreover, to unearth and experience the divine *swarāj*, Aurobindo along with his spiritual collaborator, “the mother” practiced integral yoga as he realized that yoga is the true path through which one can realize the divinity within oneself. It is significant to note that Aurobindo’s later pursuit of life mainly revolved around the attainment of his spiritual *swarāj* and his aim of political *swarāj* is one of its significant corollaries. As he contends:

‘Our aim will therefore be to help in building up India for the sake of humanity – this is the spirit of Nationalism which we profess and follow. We say to humanity “The time has come when you must take the great step and rise out of a material existence into the higher, deeper and wider life towards which humanity moves. The problems which have troubled mankind can only be solved by conquering the kingdom within.... for that work the freedom and greatness of India is essential, therefore she claims her

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<sup>108</sup> <https://swarajyamag.com/culture/remembering-sri-aurobindo-and-the-vision-of-a-life-divine> retrieved on 12/04/18.

<sup>109</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri\\_Aurobindo\\_Ashram](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Aurobindo_Ashram) retrieved on 18/11/12.

<sup>110</sup> Aurobindo, Sri. 2006. *Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest*, p. 9.

destined freedom and greatness, and it is to the interest of all humanity, not excluding England, that she should wholly establish her claim".<sup>111</sup>

However, later in his life, he directed the stream of nationalism towards the enlightenment of man through cognizing the boundless freedom he/she is born with. His emphasis on the evolution of man and emancipation from mechanical necessities of physical life contributed a unique dimension to his notion of *swarāj*. As he maintained:

"*swarāj* emphasizes the idea of self-sufficiency and insists on it. It mitigates against the idea of there being any limit to our expansion. We must be full, we must be perfect, we are the divinity in embryo and when fully developed we shall be co-extensive with God himself. This is what *swarāj* unmistakably means. It at once embodies the ideals of independence, unity, and liberty."<sup>112</sup>

As his quest for *swarāj* evolved, the mysticism ingrained in his philosophy of life further intensified. His essays on *Mahābhārta* and insights from *Isha Upanishad* further broaden the spectrum of his mystical knowledge. He imparted philosophical insights and moral significance to the national freedom struggle. His vision of divine life shattered the constraints of political life and embraced the unity of mankind. He contended against the moderate pleading of intellectuals for he believed that India's own exertion would procure its emancipation from British dominion. He treated *Swadeshi* rather as a way of life than a political vendetta against colonial rule. However, the methods Aurobindo employed to dethrone the British government come across as a contrast to his later spiritual pursuit of life. Notably, he guided an armed revolt, and his insurrection techniques were followed by his secret societies. In a series of articles published in Bombay weekly named; *Indu-Prakash*, Aurobindo vehemently ousted congressmen for their polite policy of protest and petition. He was a visionary whose ideals were nonconforming to the moderates of congress party whose confrontation were merely limited to well-crafted petitions and polite pleading to English officials. "When Aurobindo was in Baroda state service he came in contact with some revolutionaries from Maharashtra and he always looked up to Maharashtra as a favorable ground for his future activity."<sup>113</sup>

He sought to replace the pleading tradition of the congress with a new revolutionary fervor which would enable congress to become "an instrument of revolutionary action instead of a center

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<sup>111</sup><https://www.vedicbooks.net/swaraj-thoughts-gandhi-tilak-aurobindo> retrieved on 18/11/21.

<sup>112</sup> Aurobindo, Sri. 1972, *Bande Mataram-Early Political Writings-I*, vol. I, p. 5.

<sup>113</sup> Bhagwat, A.K. & G. P. Pradhan, 2011, *Lokmanya Tilak: A Biography*, p. 269.

of a timid constitutional agitation.”<sup>114</sup> It is vital to note that Aurobindo’s meeting with Tilak occurred in 1902 at a Congress session at Ahmedabad. Though Aurobindo attended the meeting informally yet his discussion with Tilak procured far reaching consequences. They both opted writing as a means to invoke their native audiences to the greater cause of self-reliance and social action. Tilak’s articles in *Kesari* ignited a new flame of revolution in Maharashtra. While Aurobindo’s articles in *Bande Mataram* enabled the dawn of the New Movement in Bengal. Aurobindo’s writings were dynamic, untrammelled, and contained an emotional tone that rendered his audience a throbbing emotional attachment to his words elucidated through the following lines:

“Courage is your principal. If you are to work out the salvation of your country, you will have to do it with heroism...you have your only guide in the loftiness and spirituality that make their heaven in the thought of the wider light and purer happiness that you may bring to your country by long force of vision and endeavor. The rapture contemplation of a new and better state for your country is your only hope.”<sup>115</sup>

Notably, Aurobindo’s political contention underwent some major modifications. From displaying a tumultuous fervor for attaining *swarāj* to unraveling the divinity within clearly broadcast a major shift in his ideology and plan of action in the later years of his life. Aurobindo as a young revolutionary brought out a wave of New Movement in Bengal which remarkably erupted and posed a challenge to the conventional system of petition and secured unparalleled effect on the native young population of Bengal. Ethics being the cornerstone of his personal as well as social life contributed immensely to his philosophy of life. Notably, Tilak, Aurobindo and Gandhi cautioned their audiences that ethical principles should not be avoided to conform to the laws of the British. They all sanctioned the individual conscience as the absolute criterion for determining the justness of an entity's action. They all dedicated their efforts for improving the political spectrum to operate in harmony with morality, ideas, and virtues. Gandhi improved and perfected upon the notion of moral political life. He brought forth the ideological dynamism much needed in the Indian political and social spectrum. In the struggling times, they emanate a beam of light which inspired the battles of humanity against barriers.

However, there exists a point of contrast between Aurobindo and Gandhi. While Aurobindo was a visionary, his philosophy was inspired by mysticism. And Gandhi was a pragmatist whose unique methods evolved through his experiments with truth. Aurobindo in his

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid. P.269.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. Pp. 269-270.

early years of political activism acted through insurrectionary methods. While Gandhi employed nonviolent experiments to directly confront the existing system of authorities. It is also vital to note that though Tilak never exempted from armed rebellion yet through his evolved experiences of political life, he restrained its employment exclusively to the most radical circumstances. While Gandhi believed in an open consolidated struggle, Aurobindo opted to function with secret societies. Both wrote extensively about courage, and self-reliance yet the method they adopted to give meaning to their thoughts were quite different. Also, it is important to note that while Gandhi also strenuously emphasized on the spiritual aspect of *swarāj*, Aurobindo uniquely attributed a mystic dimension to this vision. Aurobindo's withdrawal from public life to evolve into the spiritual dimension of *swarāj* renders his vision as idealistic. The mysticism ingrained in his spiritual *swarāj* later constituted his *de facto* mission which gradually departed his philosophy away from common consciousness. And Gandhi carefully regulated the common consciousness to drive the masses towards the national goal of freedom. Moreover, the prime goal of Aurobindo's *swarāj* was to find divinity within oneself as he sought to awaken the masses towards a divine experience of freedom only to be achieved through dissolving the ego. He echoed an ideological approach to *swarāj* which by physical confinements appears unrealistic to achieve. Hence, unlike Gandhi who emphasized equally on both the spiritual and the political aspect of *swarāj*, Aurobindo evolved his notion to achieve the highest form of freedom unharmed by material necessities and constraints.

### Section 3

#### ***Swarāj* in Ideas- K.C. Bhattacharya**

Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya (12 May 1875- 11 Dec 1949) who is best known for his method of “constructive interpretation” was a protruding figure during India's early independence days. He was a learned philosopher of *Samkhya* and *Vedānta* philosophy and was peculiarly interested in consciousness and its role in creating the material universe. He also attempted to draw out and develop the problems of the ancient Indian system so that they can be solved and studied like problems of modern philosophy. He further revitalized the Indian intelligentsia and politics through his lecture on “*Swaraj* in Ideas”. In his discourse, he argues that man's dominion over

man can be seen in tangible form in politics. However, there exists a more subtle yet compelling and elusive dominion of ideas by one tradition on another tradition. Bhattacharya contests that this domination of ideas of one culture over other cultures has more serious consequences as unlike other dominions it is not ordinarily felt.

K. C. B argues that dominion of ideas works deep into the psychology of a person and hence, fetters his internal and external life. While political dominion, on the one hand, restrains one's exterior life, ideological dominion, on the other hand, operates as a two-edged sword that penetrates deep into our intimate lives leaving one unconscious of his subjugation. He further contends that though political domination operates primarily as an outer subjugation yet when it gradually sinks deep into an individual's life, it leaves a profound impression on one's inner life. This outer subjugation of one's individual life acts against the very restraint because it enables the individual to identify the subjection and enables him to mitigate it or bear it as a necessary evil. Through "*Swaraj in Ideas*" he makes a robust contention that "slavery begins when one ceases to feel the evil and it deepens when the evil is accepted as good."<sup>116</sup> Cultural subjugation is one such form of slavery. By cultural subjection he did not imply that assimilation of new ideas is evil or wrong. Rather by cultural suppression he meant hegemony of alien ideas without juxtaposition with one's old set of ideas indicates slavery or restraint of thought. This assimilation without comparison or competition further enables the slavery of the spirit. The slavery of the spirit begins when one becomes oblivious of his/her ideological subjugation. However, he argues that when an aware person attempts to shake himself free from this subtle dominion "he feels as though the scales fell from his eyes. He experiences a rebirth, and this is what is called *swaraj* in Ideas".<sup>117</sup> For K. C. B, *swarāj* occurs to those individuals who acknowledge the elusive restraint in thoughts and attempt to mitigate it through reason and comparison.

Moreover, he endeavored to enquire the western education system and its obsession among the Indian political and social circles. He thus questions his contemporaries as how many of them have assimilated the western educational ideas through a proper methodical investigation? He argues for an "open-eyed struggle" between new and old sets of ideas for their assimilation in Indian culture. Notably, he makes a genuine effort to stimulate the minds of his fellow countrymen towards recognizing the actual value of their indigenous culture preserved in ancient texts. He

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<sup>116</sup> Bhattacharya, K. C. 1954, "Swaraj in Ideas" p. 1. <https://1lib.in/book/996106/9dd445> retrieved on 10/12/18.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

contests against the inclination towards the assimilation of western ideas without attempting a proper methodical analysis. K.C.B through his constructive interpretation of ideas enquires his country men's attitude towards their own culture. As he mentions:

“Many of our educated men do not know or do not care to know much of this indigenous culture of ours, and when they seek to know, they do not feel, as they ought to feel, that they are discovering their own self.”<sup>118</sup>

Moreover, he sought to restore his compatriots' faith in their indigenous culture. He cautioned his native audience that with alien ideas, there also arises alien subjugation. And no matter how intangible the suppression may appear, yet it persists to have a great influence on an entity's life because every compartment of an individual's life is regulated through his/her assumed ideology. He criticizes the conventional hegemony of western ideas by Indian audiences as it has escalated the western reach in Indian continent not merely by means of violent persuasion rather by blind hegemony of alien ideas. However, he also admits that some western ideas did come to Indians as a blessing in certain ways, yet he also questions their assimilation without juxtaposition. Moreover, K. C. B emphasizes that though every system of thought contains certain good notions, yet a vital comparison is essential to comprehend the nature of those ideas and their subsequent effect for a broader scheme of things. The notion of slavery of the spirit is not intended towards every assimilation of new ideas, rather, K.C.B admits that new ideas are essential for healthy progress of mankind and it in no way implies lapse of freedom. Yet, the concern is raised over superseding of one's traditional ideas and their representing sentiments by foreign or new ideas without a fair comparison.

For him, a vital adaptation of alien ideas cannot be productive through imposition only. For any culture to be indispensably assimilated into another culture ought to employ a graph of comparison and competition to bring forward the best in both. However, this was not the case with India because in earlier days of suppression, the assimilation was largely admitted by fashion or obsession. In a politically dominated India, western power and education ensued a culture of blind annihilation by willing minds which further suppressed the native land's indigenous culture and its authentic knowledge. He further contends:

“Indian minds have simply lapsed in most cases for our educated men and have subsided below the conscious level of culture. It operates still in the persisting routine of their family life and in some of their

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid. p.1.

social and religious practices which have no longer, however, any meaning for them. It neither welcomes nor resists the ideas received through the new education. It dares not exert itself in the culture sphere.”<sup>119</sup>

K.C.B argues that India for decades has wrongfully counted on western principles which have applicability in already established or free countries who have not perceived the adverse effect of power whose effect seems more real than any logical or political discourse. For him, Indians have not cared much to examine how far the sociological principles proposed by West are universal in their approach and neither did they care to acknowledge and understand the richness of social knowledge ingrained in Indian system. He further adds that either Indians have contented themselves with unthinking conservatism or have idealized an imaginative progress merely imitating the West. It saddens him to acknowledge that none of his countrymen, except a few vernacular minds independent of their times, have attempted to evaluate Western work with an Indigenous approach. To quote him:

“A Frenchman, for example, would not, I imagine, appreciate Shakespeare just as an Englishman would do. Our education has largely been imparted to us through English literature. The Indians mind is much farther removed by traditions and history than the French or the German mind from the spirit of literature, and yet no Indians, so far as I am aware, have passed judgments on English literature that reflects his Indian mentality.”<sup>120</sup>

He contended that the mechanical western thought induced in Indian education system must be challenged and questioned to restore and strengthen the better and progressive in both the hegemonies. He proposed that through philosophizing ideas and their immediate contents, the problem of obtaining continuity of one’s old self with his present-day self could be solved. For him, it is only through philosophy that we could methodically attempt to achieve the richness of cultures and literature. He points out that western education so far has not helped Indians to discover the significance of their past, contentment of the present and their goal for the future. Rather, it has changed the old conscious mind to an unconscious shadow mind that merely imitates ideas and does not effectively produce new ones; thus, leaving one with two confused minds swinging hopelessly between old knowledge and present functionality. For him, *swarāj* in ideas could only be achieved through surmounting the language barrier with strenuous efforts. *Swarāj*

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<sup>119</sup> Bhattacharya, K. C. 1954, “Swaraj in Ideas” p. 2. Retrieved from <https://1lib.in/book/996106/9dd445> retrieved on 10/12/18.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. P.2.



in Ideas is not merely a political pursuit but a social and cultural awakening to millions of Indians for stimulating and reflecting on their past. It calls for the emergence of a conscious mind that can shake itself from unconscious subjugation of both indigenous as well as alien ideas.

For him, inattentive hybridization of ideas paves way for a confusing mind. Notably, all vital ideas are formulated out of ideals. And each ideal reflects a world of culture that further mirrors our values of life. Reason could be universal, but ideas carved from it may vary in distinct cultures and their respective intellect. He contends that though there exists a commonality among cultures and their representative ideas, yet they differ in various respects as each culture owns a unique physiognomy which reflects a vivacious vernacular lifestyle. For K.C. B, the synthesis of two different ideals depends on the situation and method through which it is attempted. A synthesis is not always required, for instance, there are certain ideals in the West that Indians respect from a distance, but they do not appeal to native masses. Similarly, not every idea is self-luminous; they may partly appeal to us through our old ideals. And if a synthesis, if necessary, must be achieved then foreign ideals should be assimilated into the indigenous culture and not the other way around.

He emphasizes that “there is no demand for the surrender of our individuality in any case; *Swadharme nidhanam sreyaḥ paradharmo bhyavaha*”<sup>121</sup>, meaning there is danger in taking others’ duty as one’s own. It is mentioned in the chapter III of the *Bhagavad Gita* that better is death in performing one’s own duty as the duty of others is filled with perils. However, he accepts that if a foreign ideal has affinity with our native ideals then it should be assimilated through reason and treated with reverence. It is wrong to reject it for merely maintaining individuality as an overstrained emphasis on individuality may pave the way to perverse obscurantism. For K. C. Bhattacharya, “progress of a community and of humanity implies a gradual simplification and unification of ideals. This is just the rationalizing movement, emergence of a common reason.”<sup>122</sup> However, he suggests two forms of rationalism:

“...two directions of this simplifying movement. In the one, reason is born after the travail of the spirit: rationalism is here the efflux of reverence, reverence for the traditional institutions through which customary sentiments are deepened into transparent ideals. And in the second form, if rationalism-what is commonly meant by the name, the simplification and generalization of ideals is affected by unregenerate

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<sup>121</sup> Bhattacharya, K. C. 1954, “Swaraj in Ideas”. P.4. Retrieved from <https://1lib.in/book/996106/9dd445> retrieved on 10/12/18

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. P.4.

understanding with its mechanical separation of the essential from the inessential. The essential is judged as such here not through reverence, not through deepened spiritual insight, but through the accidental likes and dislikes of the person judging...’’<sup>123</sup>

It is important to recognize ideals with humility and patience so that the old age customs and sentiments do not get brushed aside. Moreover, rationalism that constitutes sudden decisions though in practical manner, but for its namesake only is wrong and graceless treating of ideas. He then distinguishes between legitimate and obligatory forms of rationalism. Though, it is legitimate to accept and respect ideals that represent a simple and deep understanding of one’s own ideals. But it is simply wrong to reject them for insisting on one’s individuality for it leads to obscurantism. As he contends “to serve this foreign god is to serve our own god: the foreign ideal is here in our own ideal. the guru or teacher has to be accepted when he is found to be a real guru, whatever the community from which he comes”.<sup>124</sup> However, for any foreign ideal that has similarity with one’s own ideals or mirrors an alternative or extended expression of his/her ideals in a foreign idiom that has no practical usefulness nor shares the same sacredness should not be accepted merely as an obligation to that shared ideal. He argues that though sincerity is required to assimilate new ideals into old ideals, yet the most effective way to appraise a new idea is to find its expression in one’s old ideals for the spiritual world does not function on reason. Moreover, values cannot be analyzed in the same manner as facts are.

K.C.B demands for a critical attitude in assimilation of ideals and their representative cultures. Mere acceptance of ideas without juxtaposition gives rise to a confusing mind. Moreover, he sought to revitalize Indian knowledge alongside western ideals. He does not advocate immediate rejection of alien ideals, rather he argues for a constructive medium of comparison to assimilate new ideas. He sought to evolve Indian culture along with its rich traditional inheritance. K.C.B in his famous work titled “*Pain as Evil*” argues that “within our consciousness there is a parallel and simultaneous movement of two strains: One is of the feeling of pain and the other (in the form of a wish) of the reflection to get rid of it. The simultaneous presence of these two opposing strains forms the core of contradictory character of pain, as one strain constantly tries to oppose the other. Yet both exist’’<sup>125</sup>. The acknowledgement of pain stems

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Bhattacharya, K. C. 1954. “Swaraj in Ideas”. P.4. Retrieved from <https://1lib.in/book/996106/9dd445>retrieved on 10/12/18.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. Pp.4-5.

from consciousness and it is further reflected in the desire of getting rid of it. That is to argue that pain has two contradictory characters: first is the experience of it which gets recognized in our consciousness. And second is the desire to get rid of it which also stems after its recognition. Hence, consciousness plays a prominent role in acknowledging the suppression and stemming forward an awakened desire to shake oneself free from it.

Thus, it has been argued that suppression exists in various forms. In the political domain, its tangible effect can be ordinarily realized, and further steps can be taken either to mitigate it or to accept it as a necessary evil. However, unique from tangible domination, there exists an intangible yet elusive suppression of ideas by one culture on another culture. Bhattacharya further argues that *swarāj* is not merely physical or political; rather it penetrates deep into one's psychology and forms the freedom of the spirit. Unaccounted hegemony of alien ideas into one's native ideas or culture give rise to a confusing mind which further enables the slavery of the spirit. Unwarranted assimilation of western culture and its representative educational principles have superseded the high degree of value found in Indigenous cultures. K.C. B further warns that the unwarranted assimilation of ideas has ensued an obsession which has effectively undermined the native audiences' curiosity to discover and appraise their indigenous culture. Unlike outer suppression which happens through forceful impositions: sentiments and culture cannot be imposed on awakened minds yet, Indians with their unwilling minds have accepted western hegemonies in fashion. He shows contempt towards his educated fellow countrymen who have induced their minds to soulless thinking which though appears like real thinking when viewed from the periphery. Yet, at its core, it mirrors a suppressed mind tied by unwarranted hegemonies. He critiques the western education policy which has induced in us a dummy mind that operates like a real mind yet by means of suppression reduces our genuine creativeness. The lapse of genuine creativeness diminishes our ability to judge matter from a logical vernacular perspective especially in the matters of history, philosophy, and literature.

Moreover, in his lecture delivered in 1931 under the Sir Ashutosh Memorial Lecture Series, Bhattacharya sought to ignite the Indian minds against the damage India has suffered in creativeness. He argues that the global positioning of India and its independent stance on the world

movements or the application of bookish ideals garnered through intensive study has not been profoundly formed under the intense shadow of western ideas. He further questions the originality of one's stance or judgment towards western works for materially, it appears similar to other English thinkers and critics. He strenuously emphasized on the role of philosophy in synthesizing the Eastern and Western ideas or effectively rendering a reasoned critique of both if possible. As he contends: "a genius can unveil the soul of India in art, but it is through philosophy that we can methodically attempt to discover it."<sup>126</sup>

Thus, K. C. Bhattacharya reflects a unique dimension of *swarāj* in his lecture titled; "Swaraj in Ideas". He makes a robust contention that slavery or subjugation is not merely restricted to political domain alone as there exists a more vast and efficacious domination of ideas of one culture on another culture. This domination though intangible in appearance and often unrealized in ordinary consciousness seems subtle yet, possesses far reaching consequences than the other physical dominions. He also contends that when one's genuine creativity is superseded by an alien education system that does not share the same spiritual and moral value as one's vernacular culture then it creates a lapse of freedom in the individual. Though, it is significant to assimilate new ideals into old cultures yet the value that old culture has acquired through its travail of reason should not be overlooked. Inconsiderate hybridization of alien ideas gives rise to the slavery of the spirit. The slavery of the spirit has much deep consequences as it captures the psychological impressions of an individual. External dominations can be ordinarily identified, and steps can be taken to mitigate it but the internal or subtle domination that alien ideas bring into our lives remains mostly unidentified which further causes an unwarranted control over our mind.

Like Bhattacharya, Gandhi also stresses on the significance of vernacular language as he contends that the strong reason why Boers possess *swarājya* is because they highly revere and use their own language. For Bhattacharya, genuine creativity stems from a genuine mind which is not overtly possessed by foreign ideals. Gandhi also echoes a similar view in his critique of western civilization. In criticizing the western civilization, Gandhi exalts the age- old ancient values that have constituted a spirit of harmony and brotherhood among Indians. He argues that the tendency of western civilization lies in prioritizing the material over the spiritual. It propagates excessive

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<sup>126</sup> Bhattacharya, K. C. 1954. "Swaraj in Ideas". P.2. Retrieved from <https://ilib.in/book/996106/9dd445>retrieved on 10/12/18

use of machinery by creating a profound division between the capitalists and laborers class. The western stream of thought has captured the Indian minds so much so that a genuine vernacular perspective is often overlooked or suppressed to suit the new fashionable education. Moreover, as Bhattacharya conceives that pain has two contradictory features, first being its realization in consciousness and second its manifestation in desire to mitigate it, is also reflected in Gandhi's views. For instance, Gandhi argues that through the realization of political *swarāj*, the nation can also entail the realization of economic and individual *swarāj* for the holistic growth of Indian society. In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi argues against the regressive assumption that accepts only an exclusive ideology to be entirely true and its treatment of other ideologies as wrong or incompetent.

Like Bhattacharya, Gandhi's views also mirror a comparative and reasoned assimilation of new ideas into old cultures. As Bhattacharya argues for patience and humility towards other ideas and old age customs, Gandhi too stresses on toleration and reverence towards other cultures. They both exponentially stress on the knowledge induced in ancient texts and advocate their audiences to strive back to their roots to grasp a more comprehensive view of the world. Notably, as Bhattacharya propagates that one should assimilate those ideas which share the same intensity of spiritual and traditional value as his/her native ideas, yet the assimilation should not be done without any imaginative effort to realize them in an approach of reverence. Moreover, a genuine effort is observed in Gandhi's perspective where he treats other cultures with humility and endeavors to realize their teaching in a holistic and reasoned manner.

Thus, it has been assessed that there exists a balance of effective inter-relationship between political *swarāj* and Individual *swarāj* in Gandhi. Through *swarāj*, he maneuvered to integrate various compartments essential for nation building, i.e., social, economic, political etc. Notably, the moral and political instrument, *satyagraha* constitutes a unique dimension to his reformist maneuvers. Gandhi preoccupied his experiments and struggles of mundane life with a higher objective of delivering India from the British rule. Interestingly, it was not the only preoccupation he had; he made several other effective confrontations to establish a harmony between the pre-independence India's two major religions, that is, Hinduism and Islam. Also, the pernicious practice of untouchability which constituted major concern in his programme for development is dealt carefully to mitigate it by revering the untouchables as *Harijans*. The impulse of economic self-reliance vigorously developed and broadcasted by Dadabhai Naroji, and B. G. Tilak has been further developed by Gandhi. Moreover, Gandhi adopted a distinctive approach

which at first appeared weird, and timid to some spectators yet, revolutionary, reformist and dynamic to other participants and followers of the national independence movement.

Moreover, Gandhi continued the legacy of *swadeshi* exponentially propounded by B. G. Tilak. Though, they both held their unique approach towards *swarāj*, yet they share its essential features such as political independence of India, maintaining a unique multicultural, multilingual identity for India etc. Interestingly, they both sought inspiration from the Hindu mythological text, *The Bhagavad Gita* and endeavored to employ its teachings on the political and social domain of India. However, they conceived unique interpretations of the texts. For instance, Gandhi in his maneuvers employed the spirit of unity among mankind as an essential attribute of living. Whereas Tilak propounded the notion of *Karma Yoga* as the chief message of the text. It is vital to observe that while Tilak awakened the Indian intelligentsia from its slumber of polite pleading, Gandhi uniquely manifested the role of *satyāgraha* to propagate a polite yet courageous and dynamic form of confrontation against the adversary. While they both accepted English as a global medium of communication, yet they both criticized unwarranted hegemony of western culture and its representing ideas into Indian culture. Similarly, Sri Aurobindo also strived to divert the Indian consciousness towards its rich culture and the knowledge embedded in ancient texts. He too assessed observations and teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* in the public domain. Nevertheless, his conception of spiritual *swarāj* transcends the ordinary understanding as the notion requires deep penetration and years of endeavor to achieve its metaphysical essence.

Significantly, the notion of *swarāj* is inevitably manifested in the ideas of B. G. Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, K.C. Bhattacharya, and Gandhi, yet the maneuvers they employed to achieve it differs in their respective struggles. Sri Aurobindo in the formative years of his political career adopted a dynamic approach, distinct and unique from his other notable contemporaries. He sought to transform the pleading tradition of the congress into a dynamic approach of direct confrontation. Moreover, he established some secret societies to challenge the unjust rule of the British. Moreover, his realization of the divine aspect of freedom transformed his later pursuit of life. He devoted his later life in developing and experimenting with the mystic notion of *swarāj* which he argued is found in all life yet effectively suppressed by the in-consciousness. The mechanical necessity of the human body conceals the divine aspect of freedom which cannot be unearthed unless individuals make a diligent effort to realize it. In Aurobindo, we observe an evolution of *swarāj* in terms of defining divine freedom. His political goal of *swarāj* effectively transformed in

mystic *Swarāj* inspires many Truth seekers to find value in all lives. He contended that coming out of the doom of in-consciousness to consciousness is the first step towards divinity.

Moreover, Tilak brought forth a vibrant approach in his independence struggle which eventually procured a significant insight into the political and social struggles of India to his contemporaries. Also, it is vital to observe that the deep psychological understanding of *swarāj* that Bhattacharya propounded possesses immense significance in contemporary times. His unique perspective revitalizes the personal and the social struggle one confronts with in his/her everyday life. It traces back the roots of domination and paves way to a refined understanding of ideas and throws light on the role of reason in propounding a harmonious way of living.

In the light of above-mentioned arguments, it has been observed that the proposition; how far could Gandhi accept or reject the notion of *swarāj* propounded by his contemporaries, offers a significant insight into the unique dimensions of *swarāj* upheld by his contemporaries. It is noteworthy to observe that the essential features of *swarāj* remains integrated in their respective philosophies. However, a new effort and perspective is realized by each of them to achieve their respective notions of *swarāj*. Though, they differ in their ideologies and methods achieve *swarāj*, yet their maneuvers mirror a creative, transformative, and dynamic approach that renders a unique value to the notion which reverberates even in contemporary times. Moreover, in Gandhi, we observe an integrated approach of confrontation and experimentation which appears polite yet dynamic. Gandhi effectively succeeded Tilak's contention of *swarāj* through his direct confrontations with the existing system of authorities. Though Gandhi's appeal reflects a moderate approach which Tilak obstinately criticized, yet the transformation and nonviolent insurgency he brought forth on the political and social domain of pre-independent India was greatly acknowledged and reverberated by Tilak.

Aurobindo's distinctive handling of *swarāj* efficiently mirrors an untrammled potential for freedom existing within us. He rendered a unique meaning to the whole independent movement by revolutionizing the consciousness of the young population towards insurgency. Though, his political career was short lived, yet it secured an unparalleled effect in the social and political arena of British India. The mysticism embedded in his philosophy of *swarāj* inspired the vision of divine unity in all beings. Unlike Gandhi, Aurobindo failed to establish a balance between spiritual *swarāj* and political *swarāj*, yet his writings inspired millions towards reformation. Moreover, K. C. Bhattacharya's essay on "Swaraj in Ideas" imparts a deep philosophical and psychological insight

to the notion of *swarāj*. Its psychological relevance reverberates in every century for it highlights the basic structures of dominion. His essay allows the readers to contemplate deep on his ideas and encourages him/her to find traces of dominion. His unique contribution in exploring the relevance and impact of ideas in constituting an individual's life is unprecedented. Like Gandhi, he too emphasizes on the significance of vernacular language in forming original thoughts and their representative ideas. He too exalts ancient knowledge and criticizes unwarranted hegemonies that destroy native culture and original ideas.



## CHAPTER III

### ***SWARĀJ AS A UTOPIAN MISSION: SARVODAYA AND ANTYODAYA***

Gandhi's philosophy, teachings, and thoughts are an outcome of his cultural background and his firm belief in "Truth". As he declared; Truth is God and God is Truth. His constant experiments, confrontations and struggle with Truth serve the underpinning of his practical beliefs and thoughts. Gandhi's beliefs and practices were grounded in the metaphysical notion of absolute Truth. His notion of Truth is indispensably inter-related with his notion of nonviolence. He held two absolute notions, namely, Truth and nonviolence as interdependent and inextricably related to each other. For Gandhi, attainment of nonviolence would entail the realization of Truth; and realization of Truth would necessitate the attainment of nonviolence. Hence, he strained to realize the absolute truth by means of attaining the relative truth. Absolute is the ideal and man is only capable of the relative realization of the absolute through engaging into and confronting with the empirical constraints such as, social, cultural, historical and religion precincts. His presuppositions, specific insights and spiritual formations were largely derived from the 'Hindu way of life' as observed by Glyn Richards in *The Philosophy of Gandhi*.

However, the primary inquiry I wish to undertake in this chapter is; how Gandhi's utopian vision constituted a difference in the way India achieved independence. Another important inquiry to be addressed is what constituted the features of Indian nationhood in Gandhi's successful experiments? Another important enquiry to be engaged with is what challenges did the Gandhian model of *Sarvodaya* confront in terms of its realizability? And to realize the above-mentioned objectives, I have divided the chapter into the following two sections:

1. *Swarāj*: An Experiment within and beyond Culture
2. *Sarvodaya*: Development for Transformation of Society

Under section 1 of the chapter, I seek to throw light on Gandhi's experiments with culture. And I also strive to demonstrate how his experiments enabled his utopian mission to transform itself into mass action by bringing reform. And in section 2, I endeavor to understand his social experiments envisioned to achieve a just, social, and economic order by confronting the existing challenges of inequality and modernity to bring society closer towards *Swarāj*. Also, I aim to understand what challenges Gandhi's utopian model confronted after his assassination.

Before embarking upon the above-mentioned task, it is important to briefly discuss and comprehend what constituted Gandhi's thoughts and how his experience and confrontation with reality facilitated him to pursue his ideal dream of *sarvodaya*. It is famously known that Gandhi's beliefs and practices were largely reflected and carried through the impeccable techniques of *Satyāgraha* and *Sarvodaya*. However, many accusations have been laid against his ideology as being inconsistent and formless, though, it should be recognized that his basic ideas sprung from his cultural, religious, and spiritual foundation. Yet, to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of Gandhi's approach to de facto situations, one must employ the framework of ethical, spiritual, religious, and complex cultural history of India.

As Gandhi's autobiography echoes the significance of Truth in his personal and social maneuvers, his attempt to live and lead life in accordance with an existential quest for Truth reflects his constant struggle to define Truth from practical outlook. However, "followers of Gandhi explicitly maintain that he was a practical man with no concern for metaphysics or philosophical speculations, yet it is clear that whenever he attempted to explain what he meant by Truth he was involved in metaphysical speculations whether he or his followers realized it or not."<sup>127</sup> Being an experimentalist his practical outlook towards Truth is apparent from the manner it was employed to construct a way of life. Hence, Gandhi's life is an apparent presentation of the way he was involved with Truth in different aspects of life. Moreover, a comprehensive understanding of Gandhi's approach can be expounded through engaging into his faithful traditions of Hinduism "when he affirms the isomorphism of Truth (*Satya*) and Reality (*Sat*). He refers to reality as Truth and by the use of the term he preserves the metaphysical and ethical connotations of such traditional Hindu terms as dharma, universal law of duty, and *ta*, the cosmic moral law. For him nothing is, or nothing exists except truth."<sup>128</sup> However, Truth cannot be comprehended without right knowledge, and true knowledge of truth is called *cit* and where there is true knowledge of Truth, there inevitably exists pure bliss or *ānanda*. Hence, Truth is defined as *sacchidānanda* generally translated as being, consciousness, and bliss. However, Truth being defined as *sacchidānanda* is absolute, but its apparent presentation in reality is relative. And to reveal truth as it is, it is important to engage in confrontations with it. Experiments with given aspects or attributes of Truth with phenomenal contingent conditions was the challenging task that

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<sup>127</sup> Richards, Glyn, 1991, *The Philosophy of Gandhi: A Study of His Basic Ideas*, p. 1.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. P.1.

Gandhi undertook. However, it is significant to note that Gandhi retrieved from his earlier position of expounding God as Truth “for he came to realize that it was more accurate of him to say Truth is God than it was to say God is Truth. That is, he considered the term God to be an appellation for Truth rather than the term Truth to be a description or attribute of God.”<sup>129</sup> By describing Truth as God, Gandhi reinforced his description of absolute Truth as Being in itself, the eternal, and unchanging reality. However, “in his view Truth need not to assume shape or form at any time, yet when it is made to do so in order to meet specific human needs it is called Īshvara or God and assumes a personal connotation.”<sup>130</sup>

Though, primarily God is impersonal in Gandhi as God is connoted as the sum-total of all life, all pervading, undefiled consciousness, supreme bliss, Truth, goodness etc. However, the formless and nameless God adorns form and name when He is recognized as a personal God. “God is personal to those who need to feel his presence and embodied to those who desire to experience his touch.”<sup>131</sup> The Jain Doctrine of *Anekāntvāda* which greatly inspired Gandhi is also a reflection of how Truth is one yet manifested into many. Similarly, Gandhi’s principle of *Satyāgraha* is a manifestation of many ideas and inspirations which fosters tolerance, courage, love, and compassion for all beings. Moreover, the existential quest for Truth inevitably holds the principle of nonviolence at its center because as Gandhi claimed; ‘they are like two sides of a coin, or rather a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say, which is the obverse, and which the reverse.’<sup>132</sup> Ahimsa is the essence of Gandhi’s quest for Truth, thus, it constitutes an essentially significant feature of his experiments with Truth. The belief that the absolute Truth is one and it is manifested into many inspired Gandhi to indulge in experiment with contingent realities to arrive at a more truthful comprehension of existing conditions. Hence, his attempts towards *swarāj* are reflective of his confrontations and experiments within and beyond culture to arrive at a comprehensive vision of Truth which further facilitated him to form his vision of Ideal India. Interestingly, *Sarvodaya*, an ideal representation of Gandhi’s vision for India is expounded to shatter the pillars of inequality, and injustice which creates hindrances in the path of realizing the true nature of reality.

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<sup>129</sup> Richards, Glyn, 1991, *The Philosophy of Gandhi: A Study of His Basic Ideas*, p. 2.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. P.2.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. P.3.

<sup>132</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1958 &1969. *All Men Are Brothers*, p. 81.

Moreover, Gandhi's ideas are echoed through his experimentation with the existing system of authority and its authorized ideologies. His utopia employs his experimentation with truthful understanding of the active cultures and their practices. Gandhi ascertained a unique course for the development of India firmly grounded and ostensibly founded upon morality and humanitarian outlook. He developed an effective moral and social force against British repression popularly recognized as *Satyāgraha* which later became a realistic tool in realizing Gandhi's utopian dream for India. However, it is important to outline that in this chapter, Gandhi's utopia pertains to his vision of ordered anarchy, spiritual governance, and nonviolent-social order with great emphasis on *Sarvodaya*, i.e., welfare of all.

Chronologically speaking, as it has been discussed in chapter I that the term utopia first appeared in Thomas More's Work *Utopia* (1516) where he imagines a state or society significantly better than the existing England. So, it can be argued that Thomas More employed utopia to represent hope for a better future which necessarily employs struggles for overcoming the existing ills of the status quo. However, Karl Mannheim in his work *Utopia and Ideology* (1936) labels utopia as an incongruous idea or conception "distinguished from ideologies by their success in transforming existing historical reality according to their incongruous vision of the present"<sup>133</sup>. Moreover, utopia is an incongruous conception which aims to transcend the current social reality and even aims to distort it. However, the question arises how utopia is different from ideology? Mannheim contends that both utopia and ideology are incongruous ideas or conceptions which do not adequately describe the current social reality; rather, they both wish to transcend it. However, ideologies are not utopias because "they are ideas that do not challenge the existing social order and fail to transform the world according to their vision. For example, Christian brotherly love was incongruous in a society with serfdom, like feudal Europe; furthermore, it never happened, so it was for Mannheim an ideology"<sup>134</sup>. Whereas utopias have certain degrees of successful realization for it breaks through the existing patterns of society and allow its evolution through constant confrontation with the existing systems:

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<sup>133</sup> Mannheim, Karl. 1936. *Ideology and Utopia*, pp. 193-195, quoted from Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.32.

<sup>134</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.32.

“...ideas which later turned out to have been only distorted representation of a past or potential social order were ideological, while those which were adequately realized in the succeeding social order were relative utopias”<sup>135</sup>.

This enquiry further brings us closer to our understanding of the prominence of utopia in Gandhi’s ideology. First, it is requisite to understand the currents of Gandhi’s thoughts which later formed his utopia. Gandhi conceived of an alternative society devoid of existing ills. He precisely experimented with his utopian dream to revolutionize existing realities. Though Gandhi's vision of a perfected future does not reflect Ricoeur's distinction of utopia and ideology for it familiarizes with Mannheim’s view on utopia and ideology. As one can see, Gandhi’s struggle and confrontation with existing cultures and their legitimizing ideologies exceedingly motivated the mass struggle to bring reform. His continued struggle translated in his experiments with truth, not only challenged the status quo but also contrived to preserve what is best in it. Though, his utopia strives for a distanced future, yet it is not the leap outside of reality because it challenges the legitimate authorities and catalyzes truthful confrontations with the help of realistic experiments. Hence, “understanding of utopian and ideological thinking inspired by Gandhi might be of this sort; both ideologies and utopia are experiments in truthful understanding. Ideologies are false or failed experiments because they only confirm the present cultural constitutions; Utopian dreams succeed as truthful experiments that confront it”<sup>136</sup>.

Moreover, “Gandhian utopia represents a revolutionary rejection of what is often referred to as secular economic progress but what the Gandhians see as the insatiable consumption, undisciplined production, and alienated existence of the West”.<sup>137</sup> The Gandhian dream of the future is constituted to realize what is best in every culture and to confront and reform the aggressive patterns of social development. However, his utopia aims to both preserve and shatter ideologies as it challenges and confronts those currents of thoughts that create hindrance in achieving holistic development of society. Also, it struggles to establish those principles that are necessary for the wellbeing of society.

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<sup>135</sup> Mannheim, Karl, 1936, *Ideology and Utopia*, p. 204.

<sup>136</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.34.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. P.37.

## Section 1

### ***Swarāj*: An Experiment within and beyond Culture**

*Swarāj* quintessentially upholds the spiritual progression of individuals followed by national freedom which is channelized through an underlying common interest of liberation of India from its existing ills. Hence, through *Swarāj* Gandhi upholds a quite challenging task of reviving and realizing India's economic independence through moral firmness and self-discipline. Conjunction of individual autonomy with national independence was a very innovative approach towards a holistic development of mankind. But man, by nature is often a complex being and the perplexing task of realizing both the individual and national freedom overpowered Gandhi's struggle and his various confrontations and experiments with Truth. In Gandhi, the notion of *Swarāj* has been incessantly confronted with several social outlooks. The vows of *Ahimsā*, *Karunā*, *Brahmacharya*, and *Aparigraha*, are some of many crucially abiding undercurrents of Gandhi's *Swarāj* which remained unaltered during his experiments with truth. *Ahimsā* and *karunā* became the umbrella notions under which all the significant dynamics of *Swarāj* has been adjusted. Gandhi on numerous occasions reiterated the substantiality of *Swarāj* by making it an unabated profound expression for both individual and political independence in the consciousness of common masses. Principled living, self-righteousness and brotherly love are some of the many essential expressions of Individual *Swarāj*:

“*Swarāj* really means self-control. Only he is capable of self-control who observes the rules of morality...A state enjoys *Swarāj*, if it can boast of a large number of such good citizens.”<sup>138</sup>

Moral uprightness and unceasing devotion towards the service of humanity are significantly stressed upon notions in realizing *Swarāj* from within and without. It is noteworthy that *Swarāj* went through a lot of modifications since its commencement. At first, it appeared to be a utopia of Gandhi's imagination but later it was strengthened with various successful experiments. Gandhi's authority over the indigenous idea of *Swarāj* was preyed with misinterpretation and misreading of his nonviolence resistance in precipitated new circumstances. The consistency of his ideas came under scrutiny in contingent immediate conditions. However, *Swarāj*'s direct influence over the independence movement resulted in many successful

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<sup>138</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1965. *My Picture of Free India*, p. 85.

experiments. It had changed the way India achieved independence through principally suppressing violence. But again, like any other idea, *Swarāj* too shares a series of both successful and unsuccessful confrontations.

It is significant that due to the direct authorship of Gandhi over his ideas, his confrontations with culturally and religiously diverse India resulted in many successful outcomes. *Ahimsā* being a corollary to *Swarāj* played a significant role in combating oppressive forces through nonviolent resistance. Gene Sharp in “Gandhi as a Political Strategist” (1979) makes a robust hypothesis that around 3 to 3.5 million of Indians would have died in the Independence struggle had the movement not disciplined aggressive agitation through *ahimsā*. Based on his statistics of casualty ratio recorded in the Algerian revolution, the number of death tolls recorded during Indian Independence struggle was far less as roughly estimated around eight thousand in the nonviolent campaign led by Gandhi. Also, Richard G. Fox in *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with culture* (1989) notes that the communal frenzy between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs that took place during India’s partition where people murdered each other discriminately on the basis of their religion would have been much dreadfully violent, “if Gandhian Utopia had not disciplined violence”.<sup>139</sup>

Interestingly, Indian independence struggle was distinctly unique from the other revolutionary struggles occurring in various parts of the world as the techniques adopted by radicals for the suppression of foreign rule were largely aggressive and violent. For instance, detonating bombs, destruction of public properties, burning of factories etc., were some of many common violent strategies that were being largely adopted to display discontent against the antagonist forces around the world. However, India’s revolutionary struggle was evidently nonviolent as compared to the aggressive struggles in other parts of the globe. Considering the fragile social and religious conditioning of India, it would have been much easier for aggressive radicals to sabotage the minds of young Indians to intensify the prevalent religious and cultural differences. However, the experiment of *ahimsā* protected the entire independence movement from sinking deep into the violent sabotage of diverse ideologies. The unique revolution inspired by *ahimsā* also guarded the development of Indian economics on industrial lines. However, *Swadeshi* movement allowed an organized violent demonstration of burning and damaging foreign clothes produced by Lancashire Textiles, a crucial move which later accelerated the establishment of indigenous small-scale cotton industries. As Richard G. Fox observes:

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<sup>139</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.153.

“*Satyāgraha* also curtailed the destruction of India’s economic infrastructure, which had reached a high level of development even though, or sometimes because, India was a colonized society. In the interest of increasing the colony’s revenues or for military reasons, the British had subsidized railroads, the telegraph, great irrigation works... introduced tariffs and trade policies that rewarded and protected indigenous industrialization. Factories and mills sprung up, especially in western India, along with antagonistic classes of owners and wage laborers- as Gandhi could attest from his Ahmedabad experiment.”<sup>140</sup>

However, Sumit Sarkar author of “*Popular*” *Movements and “Middle Class” Leadership in Late Colonial India: Perspectives and problems of a “History from below”* (1983) observes a different approach. Sarkar argues that despite the advantages gained from nonviolent movements in the nationalist revolution, the movement also encountered certain halts on many occasions. It is beyond doubt that due to the direct authorship of Gandhi over the *Swarāj* movement, *ahimsā* proved substantially functional. Yet, Sarkar argues that “Gandhi’s spirited defense of nonviolence had costs for Indian nationalism, too... the periodic halts Gandhi called to nationalist protest severely hurt the movement after 1922 and in the early 1930’s, despite of Gandhi’s arguments that halts were necessary to keep ant colonial forces intact. It was the desire to defend a principle and protect his own authority, not utilitarian calculation of ends, that made Gandhi put the brakes on mass militancy.”<sup>141</sup> However, Bipin Chandra during a presidential address known as, *The Long Term Dynamics of the Indian National Congress* (1985) argued in favor of the withdrawals called by Gandhi by reflecting on how they proved effectively beneficial in the long run. For him, the halts were a part of Gandhi’s effective strategy that kept the nationalist movement intact and in line with the common interest.<sup>142</sup>

It was entirely Gandhi’s convention that made him uphold nonviolence as the supreme tool in realizing *Swarāj*. It proved functional on the Indian soil which has a history of social, religious, and cultural diversity. However, the functionality of nonviolence in contemporary circumstances is surrounded by doubts and distinctions, but not every conscious calculation proves to be successful. Although, we live in a scientific world, yet man is an emotional being, and human

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<sup>140</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.153.

<sup>141</sup> Sarkar, Sumit, 1983. “*Popular*” *Movements and “Middle Class” Leadership in Late Colonial India: Perspectives and problems of a “History from below”*, pp.46-50. Cited from Fox, Richard, G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.154.

<sup>142</sup> Chandra, Bipin, 1985, *The Long Term Dynamics of the Indian National Congress*. Presidential address, presented at the 46<sup>th</sup> session of the Indian History Congress, 27-29 December.



struggle does not simply fall under conclusive calculative ideas where utilitarian end is foreordained. Rather, emotions play a significant role in defining a man's conscious and continuous struggle with ideas. And as Bhattacharya argued that our most common struggles are often guided by the beliefs and values that we learn in our childhood. And behind every precipitated success; there are certain beliefs and desires that determine our actions.

The functionality of nonviolence cannot be proved through objective measures; yet its success on many occasions reinstates one's belief in the essential human nature. I now turn to other successful experiments of Gandhi's *Swarāj* which proved helpful in strengthening the nationalist movement. Most significant among them is mass mobilization of peasantry through nonviolent discipline. Gandhi toured India as part of his campaign of invoking political and social consciousness among common masses. His visit to Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, played a significant role in earning him great admiration in the eyes of peasantry. Shahid Amin in his work titled: "Gandhi as Mahatma"<sup>143</sup> further analyses and reflects upon how Gandhi's peculiar image was structured and promoted by some local contractors to win elections. For instance, Gandhi arrived in Gorakhpur on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1921 to address a massive rally of around 1.5 lakh people. But long before Gandhi's arrival in Gorakhpur, the local congressmen and the influential elites have started to construct a saintly image of Gandhi in the consciousness of local masses. As Amin states:

"...The 'Mahatma' as an 'idea' was thought out and reworked in popular imagination in subsequent months. Even in the eyes of some local congressmen this 'deification-unofficial canonization as the *pioneer* put it-assumed dangerously distended proportions by April-May 1921."<sup>144</sup>

Thus, by the time Gandhi arrived in Gorakhpur his image was already structured as a "mahatma" in the consciousness of local peasantry. And his popularity had reached a significant peak when he was welcomed with exuberance of love from people from all walks of life. "The peasants precipitated their own Gandhi; "not as he really was, but as they had thought him up". Inspired by the structured "godly" Gandhi, the peasants supported direct and violent action against the colonial government or against wealthy Indians- the very actions the "other Gandhi" had

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<sup>143</sup> Shahid Amin, 1984, "Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorkhpur District, Eastern UP, 1921-2", in *Selected Subaltern Studies* retrieved from <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/AminGandhiasMahatma.pdf> retrieved on 12/2.2020.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. P.289.

denounced.”<sup>145</sup> It was the promotion of propagative “godly” image of Gandhi that filled the peasantry with emergent political consciousness. They followed him religiously and by doing so, as Amin observes, “they ignored the subcontractors, they even ignored the nonviolence that mahatma had enjoined”.<sup>146</sup> This is why Gandhi halted the noncooperation movement in 1922. Nonetheless, the nationalist movement grew a strong grip through Gandhi’s portrayal as a Mahatma. The local unsophisticated peasants found their leader in Gandhi and they followed his teachings religiously. This is the reason why Gandhi, like no other leader was able to control and discipline the local masses throughout the entire nationalist movement. Hence, *Satyāgraha* abetted Gandhi in politically igniting the masses, but in a disciplined manner.

Another successful experiment that Gandhi’s *swarāj* undertook was bringing the religious harmony among culturally diverse sects. India, a culturally rich country is a home to diverse religious ideologies. People from different religions and diverse cultures live together in harmony, unless and until this harmony is challenged and revoked for politically marginalizing the common masses into creating a divide among them based on their caste and religions. Gandhi’s vision brought a ‘secular’ approach to a politically struggling India. *Swarāj* meant for one and all. Gandhi imagined an organic, morally disciplined, united society whose main components were religious equality and social harmony among its various religious and culturally diverse sects. He believed in popular Indian notion of “*Vasudev Kutumbh*”, which is literally translated as the whole world is one family. Thus, his struggles depict his diligent efforts in establishing religious coherence in India. The major challenge against this harmony was an intangible rift between two large religious communities, i.e., Hindu-Muslim. Based on his positive experience with Muslim traders in South Africa, Gandhi was enthusiastic and ambitious of bringing these two religiously discrete communities under one nationalist interest. So, he worked assiduously in binding these two diverse communities in a single thread for national prosperity. He addressed various mass rallies to spread the message of religious and communal harmony across the nation.

However, he struggled greatly in bringing communal harmony among the Dalits and upper caste Hindus. The problem of untouchability was greatly abhorrent to Indian culture that it became the main source of exploitation of lower caste Hindus. Gandhi on many occasions criticized the

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<sup>145</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.155.

<sup>146</sup> Shahid Amin, 1984, “Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorakhpur District, Eastern UP, 1921-2”, cited from Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.155.

mistreatment of Dalits by their fellow upper caste Brahmin Hindus as he realized that the maltreatment was an outcome of the misinterpretation of ancient *varna* system which has led to this exploitative ill-treatment. However, controversy surfaced when he disapproved the recommendation made by B.R. Ambedkar in 1932 to provide special status to Dalits solely based on their social position to gain special electoral privilege like the ones Muslims held. Gandhi fasted until the untouchable leadership reluctantly accepted his discipline. Ambedkar thereafter held Gandhi responsible for conserving untouchable backwardness.”<sup>147</sup> However, only after the demise of Gandhi did Ambedkar was able to pass special provisions for the acceleration of untouchables in independent India. Though, it is not to indicate that Gandhi was not in favor of the acceleration of Dalits, but on the contrary, he worked diligently and enthusiastically in exterminating the mistreatment of untouchables in Indian society. In 1913 he started a journal titled *Harijan*, meaning; children of god to address the atrocities happening on Dalits and to bust the ill-conceived notion of untouchability. As he writes:

“...Untouchability as it is practiced in Hinduism to-day, in my opinion, is a sin against God and man and is, therefore, like a poison slowly eating into the vital of Hinduism. In my opinion, it has no sanction whatsoever in the Hindu Shastras taken as a whole. Untouchability of a healthy kind is undoubtedly to be found in the shastras and it is universal in all religions. It is a rule of sanitization. That will exist to the end of time; but untouchability as we are observing to-day in India is a hideous thing and wears various forms...”<sup>148</sup>

Hence, he conceived the notion of untouchability the way it was being practiced in colonized India as a sin towards humanity. However, he denied the untouchables to avail any special provisions proposed by B. R. Ambedkar.

Amidst the domination of colonial forces, voluntary service became essential for social reformation of India. Both on economic and social levels; self-help, individual voluntarism and skill acquirement became essential for societal transformation. Gandhi through his constructive programs successfully condensed the idea of self-help in the consciousness of Indian masses. Reforms that India required were largely channelized through voluntary services. Consequently, *Satyāgraha* campaigns received immense amounts of dedication towards voluntary labor. The self-help program was inclusive and efficaciously ignited

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<sup>147</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.156.

<sup>148</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1933, *Harijan*, February 11.

enthusiasm among poor masses whose selfless voluntary services inspired the struggle to evolve into a mass movement. Notably, the moment extracted its uniqueness through the elimination of prosperous armchair reformists for “it might require them to dig latrines at the annual meeting of the Indian National Congress, as Gandhi did...”<sup>149</sup>

Interestingly, the mass movement of voluntary service reiterated the significance of constructive programs for the reformation and acceleration of the dispossessed. Basic education, skillful training and other social reforms became swift during self-help campaigns. Dedication and selfless service emanated a change of perception in the consciousness of the masses. Therefore, it helped in motivating others to also participate in nation building. Contrary to institutional coercion, voluntary help was aimed at inner reform, whereas institutional coercion that aimed towards outer reforms was followed by punishment and penalty. Inner reforms concentrated on self-regulation and voluntary service to bring self-worthiness among the masses. ‘Belief in voluntary service-that it could be disinterested, that it could change society...distrust of official action-because corruption and inefficiency plagued it and because policies announced from on high could be readily avoided down below- these beliefs constituted significant principles of Indian political consciousness by the time of independence.’<sup>150</sup> Hence, people’s distrust in government authorities rendered official actions inefficient. Moreover, it facilitated a contrast between administration and voluntary service. Under colonial rule these contrasts seem inevitable as India led its way towards national freedom. However, after independence the nature of contrast remained sharp but its relation to the governmental bodies became less hostile. Nonetheless, after the independence “there was a continuing tension between programs of social revolution to be enacted by voluntary labor and the government’s program of officially sponsored social reconstruction, a tension that state subsidies probably exacerbated.”<sup>151</sup> However, even after Gandhi’s assassination, his self-help movement persisted under Nehru’s government’s five-year plan for substantiation and amelioration of the disadvantaged.

Class neutralization or coalition is another successful experiment that Gandhi undertook during the freedom struggle. As observed by Bipin Chandra in his work titled; *The Long Term*

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<sup>149</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.157.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. P.157.

<sup>151</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 158.

*Dynamics of the Indian National Congress*, Gandhi's prime concern was to overcome the contradiction between British colonialism and the entire Indian population<sup>152</sup>. Therefore, he disavowed class struggle and concentrated primarily on class coalition. By class-coalition, Gandhi intentionally kept the anti-colonial movement as an open-ended strategy by disavowing the necessity of any class character. Unlike any radical movement, Gandhi's anti-colonial movement was more inclusive as it included people from roughly all occupations such as, artisans, peasantry, local landlords, intelligentsia, bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, radicals, and anti-colonialists etc. Though Gandhi's attempt at class coalition played a significant role in maintaining the unity in the nationalist movement, yet it slowed down the class revolution ignited by the socialists. As Sarkar asserts that Gandhi's struggle for class coalition "led to "deferred revolution" or "passive revolution", colonialism was defeated, but a radical redistribution of wealth and power was not instituted."<sup>153</sup>

Contending further, he observes that class revolution was deferred mainly because Indian bourgeoisie had sufficient influence over the nationalist movement which facilitated them to keep the independence movement somewhat detached from the revolutionary social transformation. Gandhian utopia which deferred itself from class struggle also proved instrumental in keeping India under the influence of bourgeoisie class. The national movement led by the national congress did not bear any inevitable dependency or connection to the bourgeoisie class as the movement essentially signified a united political struggle against colonialism. "The Multi-class coalition leading the nationalist movement was not just an already determined response to circumstances. It's very fragility argues that it had to be continually reauthorized-hardly what one might expect of an institution supposedly dictated by existing conditions."<sup>154</sup> So, Gandhi continually attempted to arbitrate between internal class conflicts and radical ideological communism. 'Gandhi for example, strained to ensure that his congress coworkers did not upset the class coalition. When Nehru in 1931 pushed through a

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid. P.158.

<sup>153</sup> Sarkar, Sumit. 1983. "Popular" movements and "middle Class" Leadership in Late Colonial India: Perspectives and Problems of a "History from Below", p. 72. Cited from, Fox, Richard, G. 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 158.

<sup>154</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.159.

no-rent campaign, in which tenants held back payments to their (Indian) landlords, Gandhi intervened to reassure the landlords that the congress did not intend class struggle.<sup>155</sup>

Gandhi opposed radical communism for its violent approach, yet he always remained firm towards social transformation through nonviolence and consensus. As Chandra notes:

“...He was committed to basic changes in the existing system of economic and political power, though he hoped to bring them about in a non-class way and without overt class struggle. Moreover, he was constantly moving in a radical direction during the 1930s and 1940s. Judging from his overall ideological framework and his stand on economic, social and political issues during this latter period, it can be said that he was certainly intellectually or ideologically not a bourgeois and had very many ideological, programmatic and policy positions in common with the Left.”<sup>156</sup>

Gandhi’s perspective on social transformation abetted a class-free struggle and his special emphasis on the acceleration of the down-trodden prevented the movement from overtly guarding the interest of the bourgeois class. In fact, “Gandhi’s program, in opposition to the communists and kisan movements, disciplined peasant militancy. It emphasized self-help measures and labor-intensive means that would not require large investment of capital...Gandhi even reverted to his initial prescription of handloom weaving as a form of self-provisioning bread labor, rather than as a cure for rural underemployment...”<sup>157</sup> His constructive programs emphasized strenuously on the labor-intensive approach. To strengthen the rural economy, he stressed upon skill development programs to enable the unsophisticated rural masses to excel up on their own. Expropriating wealth through trusteeship would allow the unemployed rural masses to exalt their economic position by means of bread-labor. For Gandhi, class-struggle between the bourgeois and labor class would have entailed destructive measures for India’s economic growth as trampling the former would not ineludibly enable the elevation of the latter.

“It is important to remember that his ideas and activity did not restrain the masses or pacify them; they aroused and activised them. Moreover, with the presence of all the radical themes in it, and with its orientation towards the lowly, the exploited and the down-trodden, Gandhi's own overall social

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid. P.159.

<sup>156</sup> Chandra Bipin, 1985, General Presidential Address: *The Long-Term Dynamics of The Indian National Congress*, p. 70.

<sup>157</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, pp. 160-161.

ideology was open to development and transformation in a socialist direction, though he did not himself articulate them into a coherent socialist world view.”<sup>158</sup>

Jaiprakash Narayan, an ardent Marxist, in his early political days strongly reprehended Gandhi and his ideology of gentle persuasion by means of trusteeship. He accused Gandhi of favoring the big bourgeois through his disavowal of class-struggle. ‘In his view the ‘essence’ of Gandhi’s ‘curious philosophy’ consisted of such naïve ideas as, class collaboration, austere lifestyle, reliance on gentle persuasion, to secure large scale economic changes, and an ineffective theory of trusteeship which made ‘the shark a trustee for the minnow’.’<sup>159</sup> He further contended:

“Gandhism may be a well-intentioned doctrine. I personally think it is. But it is ...a dangerous doctrine...because it hushes up real issues and sets out to remove the evils of society by pious wishes. It thus deceives the masses and encourages the upper classes to continue their domination.”<sup>160</sup>

The utopia of ideal society asserted by Gandhi prompted J.P. Narayan to question the functionality of nonviolence and trusteeship in unfavorable circumstances. However, when the Indian nation was under the state of emergency in 1965, Narayan retracted from his earlier position on trusteeship as an incompetent measure for industrial production and development. Rather, he recognized trusteeship as an effective alternative to eliminate industrial exploitation and bureaucratic control. Later, he enthused towards experimenting the measures of trusteeship and its applicability on practical grounds as a possible solution against explicit governmental control and interference.

During the 1930’s, radical forces began acquiring consensus among educated middle-class Indians and consequently socialism became more robust. Notably, during this period, Gandhi’s authorship over the national movement struggled a dubious battle. Notably, Chandra (1985) argued “that Gandhi became increasingly radicalized from the 1930’s on and began to champion the economic demands of the rural population... The threat of a Marxist socialist model, sponsored by the urban, educated middle class, explains Gandhi’s apparent

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<sup>158</sup> Chandra Bipin, 1985, General Presidential Address: *The Long-Term Dynamics of The Indian National Congress*, p. 71.

<sup>159</sup> Parekh, Bhikhu, C.1999, *Colonialism, Tradition, and Reform: An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse*, p. 296.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. P.297.

“radicalization” in his last years.”<sup>161</sup> Moreover, Gandhi’s ideological utopia was constantly confronted with instantaneous challenges. Therefore, he had to persistently reaffirm his authorship in precipitated conditions to reaffirm its certainty. “The Gandhian dream therefore continued to be somewhat responsive to immediate circumstances, although within even more narrow limits imposed by its own increasingly substantial existence.” As Gandhi’s image as Mahatma gained popularity, he somehow had to avow this typecasting to control the sub-contractors to reaffirm his authority. “So, his individual vision became fixed or constituted within the nationalist movement. Gandhian utopia, like any set of public, activated beliefs, lost its flexibility and became more compelling than enabling.”<sup>162</sup>

With a set of successful experiments, unsuccessful ones also followed. Gandhi’s utopian vision experienced impediments in the form of India’s partition and the communal frenzy that divided the Hindu and Muslim nationals. As Richard G fox (1989) analyzed: “Gandhian experiments failed because it had insufficient authority to remake society completely.”<sup>163</sup> He states the following reasons for the failure of Gandhi’s experiments:

1. “Political Hijacking” of Gandhian Utopia.
2. Gandhian Utopia as ideological “Transplant”
3. Reauthorizing Gandhi.”<sup>164</sup>

The first impediment followed in the form of “Political Hijacking” of Gandhian Utopia, Fox asserts that after Gandhi assassination, Congress appropriated Gandhi’s utopia ‘in the name only by using it in the most opportunistic fashion to label practices that actually violates the vision.’<sup>165</sup> Though, it substantially appropriated *Satyāgraha* movement and class-coalition, yet it couldn’t rampart the central meaning inherent to Gandhian utopia. Also, David Arnold in his work; *The Congress in Tamilnad* (1977) argues that though Gandhi’s methods were revolutionary, yet they were dampened by congress’ expedient use in the Southern part of India before independence. Gandhi’s *Satyāgraha* method could not

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<sup>161</sup> Chandra Bipin, 1985, General Presidential Address: *The Long-Term Dynamics of The Indian National Congress*, pp.6-7. Cited from Fox, Richard. G. 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.160.

<sup>162</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.161.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. P.161.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. Pp. 162-166.

<sup>165</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.162.



influence madras in 1919 as the proprietor classes of Madras readily collated with British forces against the increasing threat of left-wing revolution and class-struggle. However, they later accepted *Satyāgraha* in 1937 as it branched out as a tool useful in nonviolent struggle in raising local issues and constitutional reforms. Arnold further argues that from 1937 onwards “*Satyāgraha* was being used by the congress as a clamp from outside the constitutional system to exert pressure inside the system.”<sup>166</sup> Thus, misappropriation of Gandhi’s revolutionary tools was not unusual even under Gandhi’s authorship. Instead of cracking down the colonial system with *Satyāgraha*, Congress seemed to have embezzled it in its own interest.

Fox further contends that political hijacking of utopia narrowed down the entire national mission of social transformation to “institutional” Gandhism only. After Gandhi’s death, his mission was narrowed down to its “brand name” only. Congress up kept the ‘brand’ name to channelize its own interest appropriating the trust that Gandhi has built among the masses: “Nehru for example, reputedly rejected a plan for national reconstruction even though it was truly Gandhian (Kantowsky 1980: 25-27). Nehru could inaugurate a mass production factory and claim that Gandhi would have approved had he been alive (Chatterjee 1986a:154). These instances are part of a general pattern by which congress leaders appropriated “the political consequences” of Gandhi’s vision without his Truth.”<sup>167</sup>

The general patterning of Gandhi for political benefits helped Congress to gain control over *Satyāgraha* movements. After acquiring authority over Gandhi’s vision, Congress appropriated it for channelizing and manipulating the entire vision with superficial adherence to innovative transformation. Canonizing Gandhi as a saint helped it to establish trust over the poor Indian masses who sought to collate with Gandhi’s revolutionary experiments. Gaining authority over Gandhi’s utopia became relatively easy after his assassination for ‘the Gandhi required congress leaders to hand spin daily. It was, among other things, a symbolic enactment of his authority. It was a real acknowledgement that congress could have Gandhi only if they accepted Gandhian experiments.’<sup>168</sup> Under Gandhi’s direct authorship, the congress could only hijack the utopia partly. However, even after Gandhi’s assassination, it could not move beyond

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<sup>166</sup> Arnold, David. 1977. *The Congress in Tamilnad*, p. 186.

<sup>167</sup> Fox, Richard, G. 1995. *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 163.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. P.163.

hijacking as his attempts to transform Gandhi's vision failed miserably for the Gandhians continued to exert an independent authority over it.

Nonetheless, the second impediment followed in the form of Gandhian Utopia as Ideological Transplant. Under this title Richard, G. fox. (1989) tries to expound how ideological transplant offered a greater set of challenges than hijacking of utopia. For it includes, 'a true appropriation, a radical misreading and therefore a deauthorization of the utopian vision, rather than just emptily lip service.'<sup>169</sup> In ideological transplant an attempt of reauthorizing the ideas operates at its center. In case of garnering domination over Gandhi's utopian model, new collaborators emerged, or rather old collaborators tried to co-author the vision via challenging the authentic authority. The Congress attempted to challenge the authentic authority through reauthorizing the mission. Notably, in ideological transplant, ideas are not reformulated; rather they are reauthorized as contended by Fox; "when the ideological transfer is successful. No longer do the ideas challenge the present by a vision of future perfection. Instead, they are made to legitimize existing vested interests or to rationalize current circumstances."<sup>170</sup>

Gandhian utopia served a contingent interest to urban class peasantry. Business and politics served each other's interest. Business class never operated on its own as bourgeois appropriated Gandhi for their own benefit. It is vital to note that the relation upper class peasantry and business community shared with Gandhi was never class driven, rather it was curiously contingent. Hindu business community was largely composed of Hindu banyas who created a connection between Hindu business class and a Hindu political leader. Gandhi reflected both a Hindu baniya and a Hindu political leader, thus, a link was created between business and politics.

Claude Marcovits (1985) in his work; *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-1939* formulate this contingent connection in the following lines:

"The link created between Gandhi and a large section of the business community was a link between Hindus banyas (people from the merchant caste category, as was Gandhi, too) and a Hindu political leader, rather than a link between an emerging capitalist class and a national leader; it had a strong religious component and was also highly personalized."<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid. P.164.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.P.164.

<sup>171</sup> Marcovits, Claude, 1985, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-1939*, p. 188.

Nevertheless, both business class and labor class carved their own ‘Gandhi’. For the former, Gandhi was a Hindu political leader who possessed sufficient influence over the aggressive peasantry which might become its potential antagonist in active class struggle. And for the latter, Gandhi was a revolutionary leader who lived as a saint and has channelized the whole nation against the cruelty of the colonial system. Through Gandhi’s utopian vision, the business class successfully escaped the class-struggle of 1930’s. Moreover, Sumit Sarkar (1983) reflects on the popular civil disobedience movement and the reasons behind Gandhi’s desist movement in 1931. He contends that the business community urged Gandhi to abort the movement for it feared that mass upheaval of peasant military could turn into urban boycotts, no-tax campaigns etc. which would damage the business economy and would further create a divide between capital and labor class. Although the speculation seemed plausible, yet Sarkar rejects such assumptions and observes that Gandhi’s reason for halting the civil disobedience campaign was much more robust. After the violence at Chauri-Chaura, Gandhi realized that violence could shatter the whole united front of the independence movement and would further generate an anti-class conciliation struggle. The violence at Chauri-Chaura challenged Gandhi’s ‘authority’ over the disciplined peasant movement and the class conflict it could sponsor. “Similarly, the alliance between business interests and the Gandhians later in the 1930s was contingent on the increasingly militant leftists in the Congress. Fearing the leftists would initiate a new confrontation with the British, the Gandhians courted big business as an ally in their fight to keep control over the movement and to maintain the dominance of the Gandhian program (Marcovits 1985; 97-99).”<sup>172</sup>

The transplant of Gandhian utopia was never completed for it would require Gandhi and other experimentalists of Gandhian utopia to comply with the transfer but Gandhi never complied to such transplant as he ‘used his authority to make connections only when they served his experiments.’<sup>173</sup> Hence, the transfer was never successful under Gandhi’s direct authorship however, after his death the hijacking became easier. “Shortly after independence, Gandhian utopia had been almost completely hijacked by a state committed to heavy industrialization, centralized socialism, and the needs of upper-caste rich peasants and an urban

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<sup>172</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.166.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. P.166.

lower middle-class. The ideological transplantation did not occur until later, in the 1980s, when Hindu nationalism appropriated Gandhian utopia.”<sup>174</sup>

Fox contends to reauthorize Gandhi through his utopian vision and the way it could condensate his philosophy. By the third impediment titled as ‘Reauthorizing Gandhi’, Fox expounds that there are several ways to deauthorize his authority. The first argument followed in the form of given “circumstances in India would have led to a similar nationalist movement and a similar independence in 1947 or thereabouts with or without Gandhi.” Then the second arguments follow as “that Gandhi was only a mouthpiece of bourgeois interests and that his utopia simply rationalized bourgeois domination, similarly deauthorize Gandhi.”<sup>175</sup>

However, these speculations merely reflect assumptions around Gandhi’s authorship and his vision of ideal India. Gandhi’s utopia did discipline the mass protests across the country and narrowing down Gandhi’s influence over the nationalist’s movements to geopolitical forces seems implausible because he constantly confronted precipitated circumstances and made a significant impression upon the entire anti-colonial struggle. Gandhi’s shrewd understanding of Indian culture and the role it plays in activating the political and social consciousness of Indian masses is discernible through the success of his *satyāgraha* campaign. The political and social conditioning of India has many layers to it and the most significant one is its class-conditioning which marks its influence as consequential to social and political structuring of the country. The fact that Gandhian experiments and methods were able to possess sufficient control over class connections differentiates Gandhi’s utopia from other idealized visions. In Gandhi’s struggle “circumstances sometimes dictated; failures happened; class connections were forced, or even stumbled into naively. All this only says that Gandhi was human and fallible and not above his own times.”<sup>176</sup>

Significantly, Gandhi’s struggle dictates his positive anti-colonial perspective and what he conceived to be in the best interest of his utopian vision. Sometimes, Gandhi’s experiments confronted against class-interests and generated class consciousness in other experimentalists as well. However, in other circumstances, class connections were forced upon him, and he had to passively affirm them to keep his utopian vision intact. Gandhi’s own experiences and other collaborators of Gandhi’s experimental vision defined Gandhi’s intentions. “By authorizing his

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid. P.166.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. Pp. 166-167.

<sup>176</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.167.

intentions into a utopian vision and by authorizing himself as its creator, Gandhi came to express Gandhian utopia, but Gandhian utopia also came to express the personhood of Gandhi. Gandhi was therefore not just the creature of his time or of his class. The Gandhi that most people know was also the creature of his utopia dream.”<sup>177</sup> The experiments of Gandhi’s contemporaries, and his own encounters proved significant in confronting the present. Although, “the successful experiments had transformed the Gandhian vision into a powerful set of cultural meanings and practices that configured the post-independence political identity of many Indians (secularism and *Satyāgraha*) and compelled the character of the society they lived in (passive revolution and class conciliation), by constituting a dream so absorbing (the future welfare of all) that it might turn into a nightmare for any Indian government that did not control it.”<sup>178</sup>

Gandhi as a utopian experimentalist envisioned and implemented nonviolent resistance to confront the ills of the status quo. In the contemporary world, he is memorialized and invoked by many titles such as saint, political thinker, humanitarian, peacenik, and other similar portrayals. But such invoking of Gandhi on public platforms for political benefits is without much meaning. The dream that Gandhi envisioned for India stays unrealized. Indian villages which he conceived to be the center of an organized anarchy and truthful governance have continued to be the dungheaps. And have become a whirlpool of various religious, social, and sectarian conflicts. Invoking religious hate and upsurge in sectarian conflicts have become a shared propaganda by political parties to win elections. The *Swarāj* that Gandhi envisioned for India, struggles in the hands of governmental influences. Moreover, it is an aspiring experiment which when mirrored through a humanitarian outlook possesses the capacity to bring transformations at various levels. Rightful channelization of the Gandhian idea is required to bead various cultures together in one thread.

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid. P.167.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid. P.168.

## Section 2

### ***Sarvodaya: Development for Transformation of Society***

*Sarvodaya* serves an ideal underpinning to Gandhi's vision of *Swarāj*. Inspired by his reading of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, *Sarvodaya* symbolizes spiritual development of man in Gandhi's utopia. It reflects his deepest concern for what the order of society should be. *Sarvodaya* echoes a revolutionary transformation of inward and outward development. *Sarvodaya* in Gandhi is modeled to establish a necessary connection among economic, political, and social fibers of Indian society along with its expansion on spiritual lines. Just as Ruskin in *Unto This Last* (1860) "repudiated Europe's capitalism, it concerns for "money-gain" and "coin-glitter" and emphasized rather on "true gain", which is humanity".<sup>179</sup> Gandhi also promoted societal well-being over monetary advancement. As Ruskin quotes:

"There is no wealth but life, life, including all its powers of love, of joy, of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings... The maximum of life can be reached by the maximum of virtue."<sup>180</sup>

Similarly, Gandhi also advocated developing virtues and moral understanding towards self and the other as no social life can truly prosper without taking the basic virtues that humanity should follow into consideration. It is eminent that soon after Gandhi's debut on India's political domain; he became canonized as the man of the masses, an image which helped him to establish a ground connection with Indian peasantry. He was revered as the man of common people with whom unsophisticated ordinary masses were able to relate. Thus, the common peasantry followed him religiously as he sparked in them the gusto of freedom against the oppressive forces. However, to extrude British colonialism, Gandhi realized that India needs spearheaded programs for its social and economic acceleration. Hence, to revive India socially and economically, Gandhi pioneered *Sarvodaya*; a movement largely inspired from his reading of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. His firm belief in the principle of oneness of mankind and the essential unity of all beings derived his work and life closer to the *Sarvodaya* ideal. Behind *Sarvodaya* was Gandhi's theological assumption that all men and women are created equal and thus, they all fundamentally possess the right to feed and clothe. Thus, to realize this, India must produce sufficient opportunities to provide enough work for everyone. "The prodigality of nature is such that it produces more than enough for man's

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<sup>179</sup> Fox, Richard, G. 1995. *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 42.

<sup>180</sup> Ruskin, John, 1965 (1860): *Unto This Last*, pp. 88-89.

daily needs and provided everyone took just enough for himself there would be no poverty or starvation in the world”<sup>181</sup>. Even though nature produces sufficient for all its beings, there still prevails inequality, poverty, and famine. Hence, it would be too idealistic, even for Gandhi to assert that equal distribution could prove to be the solitary substantial solution to the monstrous problem of scarceness. In catering the solution to poverty, Gandhi adjusted the ideal of equal distribution and narrowed it down to equitable distribution to place it at a realistic achievable ground.

Moreover, it is a known fact that rich people possess an overabundance of worldly goods while the other half of the world population suffers from want. On observing this he diligently made an appeal to the conscience of the rich to engage in voluntary dispossession of their wealth and dispose of a portion of their wealth and goods to keep their riches in moderation. Since Gandhi opposed violence, use of nonviolent persuasion to move the elites to part with the surplus of their wealth was quite challenging. The implication of *Sarvodaya* that denotes “welfare of all” is to achieve an inward development of society defines the significant characteristic of Gandhi’s ideal mission. Also, revolution without change in consciousness and attitude of its bearers is superficial and materialistic, and hence, Gandhi refrained from such superficial successes.

The concept of *Sarvodaya* is characterized by the need of *Antyodaya* that maintains that *Sarvodaya* mission is a guiding force towards well-being and empowerment of all. Gandhi initiated his experiment of *Sarvodaya* with constructive programs and further extended it to decentralization of power followed by a vision of creating self-sufficient villages. He thrived on the idea of bringing the power back to villages by forfeiting its exploitation by the center. Hence, he challenged the conventional use of power to reduce inequalities in income and wealth. He argued that every individual has the right to basic amenities such as food, cloth, and shelter. Gandhi’s *Sarvodaya* utopian lies in shattering the status quo and preserving the ideology of “welfare of all”. *Sarvodaya* enables Gandhian dream of “ideal India” in the following ways:

1. Spiritual Progression.
2. Home-production (*Swadeshi*): Economic development via small scale industries.
3. Boycott of foreign goods.
4. Trusteeship: Voluntary donation of land to reform India socially and economically.
5. Self-help/ Voluntarism

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<sup>181</sup> Richards, Glyn, 1982, *The Philosophy of Gandhi*, p. 113.

6. Sanitization; essential groundwork towards public health care
7. Panchayat Raj; local governance for local people
8. Removal of untouchability; bringing others at par with the self.

India since antiquity has been the center of spiritual development and unlike West's model of development which focuses primarily on material uplift of Individuals; India in ancient times had created a connection between material and spiritual progression to attain a holistic goal. Considering India's old age tradition of spiritual upliftment, Gandhi strived to recreate the glorious past with both the spiritual progression and materialistic advancement of life. His ideal model of *Rāmrājya* sprung as an inspiration from the past that India had relished for centuries which also influenced his utopian vision of idealistic society. However, the ideal model of Gandhi's holistic society has yet to overcome various challenges that the pre- independence India offered. Among many challenges, the system of untouchability posed great hardship in Gandhi's experimentalist mission. It was representative of the abhorrent customs used by upper caste Hindu's to exploit the lower caste Hindus. This exploitative custom almost led Gandhi's first ashram to fail because he allowed entry of "untouchables" in his ashram. However, such instances never stopped Gandhi from dedicating himself to the service of humanity. In his service of mankind, Gandhi never self-consciously made any grandiloquent gestures to win the trust of the dispossessed. He enjoyed serving humanity; in fact, he would find pleasure in tending to sick people or prescribing regimens for family and friends. "He dressed a leper's "wounds" (as he called them) and later the injuries of Britons wounded in Boer war".<sup>182</sup> And even in the initial years of his political career Gandhi never hesitated from cleaning latrines during the annual meetings of the Indian national congress. He sought strength in service of humanity which gets reflected in his vision of ideal society.

Although the notion of ideal society pictured through Gandhi's vision was not received well by other radical revolutionists of Indian national movement. Among many radical revolutionists, most famous was Bal Gangadhar Tilak who severely criticized Gandhi's approach of spiritual progression as it appeared mystified and inapproachable to him. Tilak contended that political affairs are a "game of worldly people and not of *sadhus*."<sup>183</sup> Another similar reaction ensued from Bengali revolutionists who termed Gandhi's development program as "national

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<sup>182</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.43.

<sup>183</sup> Wolpert, Stanley, A. 1961. *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India*. Pp.291-292.



radicalism” that is, getting rid of British colonialism-but fearing “social radicalism” that is, reordering of society.”<sup>184</sup> J. H. Broomfield in his work titled; *Elite Conflict in Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal* calls Gandhi’s strategy of national progression as centralist between two other categories, namely, extremist and moderate, for he failed to consider his program of action as revolutionary. “Although the Bengalis also disliked Gandhi’s appeals to simple and moral life, they worried more about social radicalism of the Gandhian program and criticized it severely.”<sup>185</sup> Contrary to Broomfield, Ostergard in his work titled, *Nonviolent Revolution in India* (1985) notes that Gandhi’s spiritual approach towards development was taken differently by different commentators as Gandhian advocacy of spiritual over material revolution impresses some commentators as a true revolutionary program and others as a deferment of revolution.”<sup>186</sup>

Gandhi’s programme of action greatly inspired Vinoba Bhave who later became the spiritual heir of Gandhi’s ideal mission. After Gandhi’s assassination in 1948, Vinoba took charge of realizing Gandhi’s mission of ideal society. But several speculations and questions are raised regarding Vinoba’s contribution to Gandhi’s *Swarāj* ideal. Questions such as: did Vinoba completely comply with Gandhi’s ideals and programme of action? Or was he a pawn at the hands of Nehru and Indian government? Or did he overtake the movement to establish his authority over Gandhian thoughts and practices? And the most hypothetical among them is whether his policies and actions complied with Gandhi’s idea of *Swarāj* within a *Swarāj* government? Hence, I shall seek to expound the answers to the above-mentioned questions. Also, I shall expound how Gandhi’s *Sarvodaya* is different and more revolutionary than Vinoba’s *Sarvodaya*.

Vinoba became Gandhi’s repudiated spiritual successor for he effectively managed the Sevagram ashram for the longest time and remarkably was among the first followers of Gandhi who readily experimented with his vision even when he was incarcerated for pursuing Gandhi’s mission. Vinoba together with other Gandhians established the Sarv Seva Sangh to continue Gandhi’s constructive programmes. However, significantly after Gandhi’s death, there emerged two strands of revolutionists who experimented with Gandhi’s utopia. The first strand consisted of Vinoba, his followers and Nehru along with Congress party and the second strand belonged to

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<sup>184</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 43.

<sup>185</sup> Broomfield, J. H. 1968. *Elite Conflict in Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal*, p. 149-51, 225. Cited from, Fox, Richard, G. 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>186</sup> Ostegaard, Geoffrey. 1985. *Nonviolent Revolution in India*, 4-5 quoted from, Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 44.

Gandhi's self-anointed heir Rammanohar Lohia. Both strands appropriated their own Gandhi for "they all claimed to be Gandhi's legitimate heirs because they needed the authority of his person and his program to justify their own experiments."<sup>187</sup>

As Gandhi's legitimate heir, Vinoba modified *satyāgraha* to suit the conditions of independent India. Hence, "he differentiated two types of *satyāgraha* i.e. negative or harsh *satyāgraha*," also called as "*duragraha*, aimed to coerce the opponent" and mild *satyāgraha*, aimed to convert the opponent by "assistance in right thinking."<sup>188</sup> Vinoba while differentiating harsh *satyāgraha* from mild *satyāgraha* opted to exercise the latter version of *satyāgraha*. He maintained that Gandhi in his struggles and experiments chose to employ harsh *satyāgraha* to resist British colonialism and since independent India has a *Swarāj* government then it is fitting that harsh *satyāgraha* may well be relaxed. However, as criticized by his contemporaries, Vinoba's mild *Satyāgraha* appeared as neither a confrontation with the existing realities (as it used to be in Gandhi), nor posed a challenge to the status quo. Rather *satyāgraha* in its mild form ends up providing nonviolent assistance to Nehru's government. As contrary to Gandhi's maneuvers, it neither posed threat nor even an alarming warning to the status quo, in fact, it idealized the whole mission in such a way that the revolutionary experiments of Gandhi became unworldly under Vinoba's authorship. Commentators like Devdutt criticized Vinoba's deauthorizing of Gandhi in his commentary, "Vinoba and the Gandhian Tradition" (1984) and strenuously opposed Vinoba's "undoing of essential Gandhi"<sup>189</sup> for he contended that Vinoba's mild approach has diminished the actual capacity of Gandhi's revolutionary weapon, *satyāgraha* and have made it into a plaything.

Nevertheless, Fox (1992) maintains that even if we consider the above allegations as plausible then it is also important to keep in mind that Vinoba did what he did to protect Gandhi's legacy from a rival claimant, i.e., Rammanohar Lohia. Rammanohar Lohia (1910-1967) an activist and revered socialist maintained that *satyāgraha* must prevail otherwise "the gun and the bullet will".<sup>190</sup> He like Gandhi agreed that *satyāgraha* requires a long-standing discipline but he detached himself from its spiritual aspect for he called himself a "heretic Gandhian" because his pursuit of *satyāgraha* was inspired by Marxism. Lohia appropriated *satyāgraha* to suit the socialist

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<sup>187</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.170.

<sup>188</sup> Prasad, Nageshwar, 1984. "Vinoba's Consensual Revolution: A Critical Appreciation." In *Vinoba: The Spiritual Revolutionary*, p. 106, quoted in Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 173.

<sup>189</sup> Devadutt, 1984, "Vinoba and the Gandhian Tradition", In *Vinoba: The Spiritual Revolutionary*, p. 176.

<sup>190</sup> Arora, V. K. 1984, *Rammanohar Lohia and Socialism in India*, p. 55.

revolution he aimed to bring in India. Hence, he rejected class-conciliation and trusteeship as ideals claiming that they are inadequate for a socialist society. He deferred from Vinoba's contention that mild *satyāgraha* is an essential feature of Gandhi's utopian ideal. Moreover, on the contrary, he opted to employ harsh or negative *satyāgraha* to bring a socialist revolution that rectifies social ills and coercive domination. Lohia "called for the "renunciation of force as a revolutionary weapon" as he "launched what he thought of as a "permanent" *satyāgraha* from the middle 1950s through the middle 1960. He agitated nonviolently to "Remove English", "Fix Prices", "Casteism", and appealed to "Save Himalayas" (from Pollution)." <sup>191</sup> However, Lohia maintained that nonviolence and confrontation are essential features of Gandhian *satyāgraha*, thus, he substantially practiced harsh or confrontational *satyāgraha* to become a significant opposition to the Nehru government.

Nargolkar in his work "Gandhi, Lohia and Deendayal" (1978) maintains that Lohia's chief operation of revolutionary reform essentially consisted of "the prison, the spade, and the ballot box". <sup>192</sup> His indispensable strategy for a socialist revolution was a peaceful class struggle for he was convinced that the mild *satyāgraha* led by Vinoba cannot bring the real change required for the substantial transformation of Indian society. Hence, Lohia's course of actions were in complete contrast to Vinoba's strategies for change and reform. Vinoba, on the one hand, believed that mild *satyāgraha* can change the minds of people and motivate them to voluntarily participate in nation building whereas Lohia, on the other hand, conceived harsh *satyāgraha* as an essential element in igniting a peaceful class struggle. Francine Frankel author of *India's Political Economy, 1978* further draws a seemingly sharp distinction between Lohia and Vinoba in the following lines:

"Ironically, the differences that kept them apart were, to a large extent, rooted in a common legacy-the thought and practice of Gandhi. The question they all tried to answer was how best to adapt Gandhi's technique of nonviolent resistance against foreign rule to India's internal struggle against social and economic exploitation." <sup>193</sup>

Lohia and Vinoba both contested and confronted each other over Gandhi's "true" legacy. They both took a part if not the whole of Gandhi's *satyāgraha* and claimed to have gained the "essential" feature. "They divided up the original experiment with *satyāgraha*. Lohia disdained Vinoba's

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<sup>191</sup>Sharad, Onkar. 1972, *Lohia*, p. 272. Cited from Fox, Richard, G. 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 174.

<sup>192</sup> Nargolkar, Vasant, 1978. "Gandhi, Lohia and Deendayal", In *Gandhi, Lohia and Deendayal*, p. 9.

<sup>193</sup> Frankel, Francine, 1978, *India's Political Economy, 1947-1977*, p. 107.

*Sarvodaya*, his social reconstruction, his politics of truth and love, as ineffective. Vinoba distrusted Lohia's power politics, his encouragement of social dissent."<sup>194</sup>

However, both failed to employ the "real" *satyāgraha* as it was originally conceived by Gandhi to be both sharp and mild. Its application was contingent to conditions and circumstances. For example, the civil disobedience movement required Gandhi to employ harsh but nonviolent *satyāgraha* to repress the unjust regulations of British India. And on other occasions, Gandhi used mild *satyāgraha*, such as making his own salt to embarrass the British. Moreover, they both tussled to establish themselves as Gandhi's "true" heir, but Vinoba exceeded the position through garnering massive support from Gandhi's followers. Fortuitously Vinoba also enjoyed institutional sustenance from Nehru and his government. Moreover, Lohia's defeat was largely reflective of the lack of "strong organizational base for his claims. He worked through political parties without strong grass root cadres and incapable of major political success, and these parties were further handicapped by functionalism, ideological disagreements, and indiscipline."<sup>195</sup>

Remarkably, Vinoba's authority grew vigorously from the period of 1950 to 1960's. His mild *satyāgraha* succeeded in the initial years of experiment with voluntary land reform. However, it is alleged that his mild *satyāgraha* provided a saintly service to Nehru's government for it neither posed threat nor challenged or actively justified their course of action. Vinoba "foresaw a peaceful evolution from state rule (*rajniti*) to people's government (*lokniti*). He believed the state would no longer be necessary and would disappear. Class, caste, or sectarian conflicts, just as confrontations between the state and the people, were not inherent in this evolution, but they could be elicited by a power politics that battered on them."<sup>196</sup>

Hence, Gandhi's vision of ideal India went through major alteration in Vinoba's authorship. By branding Vinoba as the true heir of Gandhi's mission, Congress merely provided a lip service to Gandhi's ideals and dreams. This facilitated congress to gain trust among Indian masses and further enabled them to establish their indirect authority over Gandhi's legacy which later got divided between the Congress and Vinoba:

"Like the country itself, the Gandhian legacy was officially partitioned after independence, the main claimants agreed on this division...: A Spiritual heir Vinoba was soon appointed, and the secular successors,

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<sup>194</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 175.

<sup>195</sup> Ostegaard, Geoffrey. 1985. *Nonviolent Revolution in India*, pp. 13-14. Quoted in Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 175.

<sup>196</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 177.

Nehru and the Congress government, were already in situ. Lohia was effectively disinherited; even his status as legitimate heir was denied.”<sup>197</sup>

The Congress Government aided by Nehru’s vision provided financial assistance to Vinoba’s constructive programs as his mild *satyāgraha* proffered no substantial consequences against governmental policies. In fact, the connection between Vinoba and the Congress government only grew stronger. Vinoba voluntarily refrained from active politics and admonished the members of Sarv Seva Sangh from taking any electoral position or joining active politics. Hence, no crucial clashes emerged between Vinoba’s sangh and the Congress party. Rather, markedly in 1965, Vinoba’s movement came to be closely identified with the Congress party in common crowd consciousness. Government continued to subsidize and support Vinoba’s constructive programs by acknowledging them in the First Five Year planning as of considerable moral value.

Vinoba commenced his experiment with Bhoodan in 1951 to neutralize the class warfare that broke out between landlords and tenants in Telangana. He invoked Gandhi’s ideal of trusteeship and experimented with it to bring peace in the southern region. Like Gandhi, he too endeavored to build an organic society through the ideal of trusteeship. He employed mild *satyāgraha* or nonviolent persuasion to convince the landowners to voluntarily give away a part of their land to the poor. This act of voluntary trusteeship was based on love and care for the dispossessed and cannot be forced upon landowners by means of violent persuasion. A crucial condition for donation was laid that the land given for donation must be used for social reciprocity and cannot be used as a marketable commodity. As a result of his experiment, landowners in Telangana made a gift of their land to the poor. This gave a necessary boost to Vinoba’s mission of land reform which further encouraged him to appeal to the elites for *gramdan*, i.e., the gift of village. The donation made by the rich was originally to be used for the “welfare of all”. The resolution behind *gramdan* was to make the village an independent entity capable of handling its own economy and polity. To ensure the uplift of the poor, Vinoba traversed the countryside to raise the number of donations aiming that it would revolutionize village life. “The initial response to Vinoba’s appeal was enormous. By 1970, Vinoba had obtained about 4 million acres in bhoodan donations (although most gifts came before 1956). By 1971, more than 168000, or very roughly 30 percent, of India’s villages had been pledged to *gramdan*.”<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid. P.176.

<sup>198</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 187.

The Congress government also provided enormous cooperation in creating a successful outcome from the movement. It subsidized the voluntary land donations given for the village reform. However, by the early 1970's the failure of Vinoba's appeal started to become perceptible as nearly 40 percent of the donated land was uncultivable and only the 30 percent of the total land was offered for redistribution. And almost 30 percent of pledges were never made into legal proprietorship. However, in response to the opposition of wealthy peasantry, Vinoba introduced *Sulabh Gramdan* in the middle 1960's to make the process of donation simpler. This new redefined land donation system allowed the landowners to remain in effective possession of their donation, yet nearly 5 percent of the donated land was redistributed to the poor. The simpler process of donation had also failed as again the donated land was not fertile enough. Even Vinoba's followers from Sarva Seva Sangh believed that perhaps, Vinoba went too soft on the landowners.

The fact that Vinoba gained satisfaction in pledges alone marked the failure of the moment. He was too stringent on changing the minds that he couldn't differentiate "between lip service and change of heart. With Gandhi's centennial year (1969) approaching, Vinoba in 1965 launched a "whirlwind" (toofan) campaign in Bihar to enroll enough new gramdan villages to declare the entire state as pledged to his program."<sup>199</sup> Though the whirlwind campaign which was aimed but not limited to raising land donations in Bihar was successful, but it later came to stall when the pledges didn't turn into actual redistribution of the land. In fact, the donated land came under the power of influential villagers who used it to control the poor and when it did go to the poor, their authority over the land was uncertain. "Landlords in Bihar, where the moment was strongest, supported gramdan superficially and in bad faith. They hoped to avoid the class warfare that had riven Telangana. Government support may also have had the same motivation-Nehru's socialism regarded class struggle as alien to India's tradition after all."<sup>200</sup>

"By the early 1970s, problems were emerging within the movement itself. Vinoba increasingly retreated from worldly matters as he pursued a new goal of "entry into abstraction".<sup>201</sup> The members of Sarva Seva Sangh failed to convert the pledges into legal proprietorship because turning the pledges into reality would require them to use some sort of harsh or negative *satyāgraha* which Vinoba profusely opposed. As a result of this struggle, Vinoba in 1974 accepted

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid. P.188. Also see, Ostergaard, G. 1985. *Nonviolent Revolution in India*. Pp. 23-25.

<sup>200</sup> Barik, Radhakanta. 1977. *Politics of the J. P. Movement*, p. 35. Quoted from Fox, Richard, G. 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 188.

<sup>201</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p.189.

the de facto situation and officially halted the movement. Vinoba's mild approach led the movement to fall on its face. It made the Gandhian mission into a daydream. His dismissal to confront the reality allowed the Nehru government to hijack Gandhi's utopia.

Hence, after Gandhi's assassination, his experiments underwent major modifications that were remotely Gandhian. Vinoba's approach to *satyāgraha* was so mild that it made the *Swarāj* mission into a daydream. The fact that Vinoba was too concentrated on the spiritual progression allowed the Congress and Nehru government to officially hijack Gandhi's *Swarāj*. Though Vinoba qualified as the spiritual heir to Gandhi's *Swarāj* mission yet his limited experiment with *Sarvodaya* and *Swarāj* rendered his mission ineffective. It is true that Gandhi's *Swarāj* also holds a mild approach to *satyāgraha* and nonviolence is the chief modus operandi of his all political and social maneuvers. Yet, it is also noteworthy that confrontation with existing reality also forms an essential strand of Gandhi's *Swarāj*. Vinoba embraced Gandhi's *Swarāj* spiritually but aborted its basic characteristic which lies in confrontation and experimentation in precipitated conditions. In Gandhi, we find directness to alteration and modifications according to contingent conditions. This is the reason why Gandhi continued to evolve his methods of *satyāgraha* and his experiments with *sarvodaya* and *swarāj*. But, in Vinoba's approach, we find a certain reluctance towards modification towards ideals and methods.

In Gandhi, "*sarvodaya* echoes a concrete manifestation of many spiritual ideas found in many religions"<sup>202</sup>. His utopian *sarvodaya* ideal prescribes a society spiritually developed and alienated from the insatiable production, inhumane development, and possessiveness of the west. He proposed a separate mode of development for India ostensibly different from the western materialism. The *Sarvodaya* utopia in Gandhi attempts at reordering society through its economic and social acceleration in the form of decentralized governance. However, in Vinoba the *Sarvodaya* model is not concentrated on decentralization; rather, it proposes a mild approach to confrontation, if any, and actively stays away from the matters of political governance. While Gandhi's *Sarvodaya* endeavors to restructure Indian social life through emphasizing on humanism and moral values coterminous with ancient Indian culture and its Vedic ethos. Vinoba's experiment with *Sarvodaya* essentially aims at the change of heart. Yet, it failed to cultivate any practical outcome. However, the *Sarvodaya* mission of Gandhi is articulated to experiment the

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<sup>202</sup> Harris, Ishwar, C, 1987, "*Sarvodaya* in Crisis: The Gandhian movement in India Today", p.1038.

deep ancient Indian ideas and their representing values. As Richard G fox, in *Gandhi's Utopia: experiments with culture*, analyzes:

“Gandhi’s pre-independence program of *Sarvodaya* publicly articulated the cultural meaning constituting Gandhian utopia most clearly, but it was foreshadowed in images of India held by earlier reformers and nationalists- sometimes Indian by birth, like Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, and sometimes Indian by persuasion, like Anne Besant and Margaret noble (sister Nivedita)”<sup>203</sup>.

In defining *Sarvodaya* as the humanitarian model of development, Gandhi attempted to cultivate the essentials of Indian culture and its ancient Vedic profoundness embodied in its primeval civilizations. Cultivation of moral values and embracing a humanitarian outlook are also at the core of Vinoba’s *Sarvodaya* model, but the fact that these features remained limited to the cultivation of spirituality alone makes the movement inefficient in achieving groundbreaking results.

India since ancient times has advanced and developed on a spiritual plane. Development of man’s moral fiber, his ethical advancement has always been of the paramount importance in ancient Indian culture. Individual upliftment acquired through understanding of the inner self has always been the *weltanschauung* of Indian philosophy and religion. Indian civilization is unique and different from the West in matters of the preference allotted to spirituality over materialism. Materialistic growth and possessiveness of wealth are essentially western features of advanced civilization that has resulted in degradation of man on moral and ethical planes. Avarice for power and dominance has superseded the genuine and natural model of human development.

Gandhi as the catechist of Hindu religion and ambassador of world peace and harmony quite intelligently adopted the good in every culture and hence, cultivated the teaching of many religions to constitute a spiritual and moral weapon of nonviolence. With faith deeply rooted in Hinduism and spirituality at the core of his understanding of the world, a noble barrister rises up as a ‘Mahatma’. He viewed India as the spiritual center of the world in the internal matters such as spirit, self- knowledge, and soul-searching. To quote him:

“Just as in the West, they have made wonderful discoveries in things material, similarly India has made still more marvelous discoveries in things of religion, of the spirit, of the soul... We are dazzled by the material progress that Western science has made. I am not enamored of that progress... After all,

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<sup>203</sup> Fox, Richard. G, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, pp. 38-39.



there is something in Hinduism that has kept it alive up till now... and the reason why it has survived is that the end which Hinduism set before it was not development along material but spiritual lines.”<sup>204</sup>

So, Gandhi’s utopia of ideal India gets pertained through his vision of *Sarvodaya* and *Antyodaya*. Both *Sarvodaya* and *Antyodaya* find their expression through Gandhi’s experiments of *Swarāj*. Gandhi’s utopia of *Antyodaya* society was incongruous to the existing realities of pre-independent India. So, Gandhi made stringent efforts to bring social and economic reform through *Sarvodaya* that echoes his aim of transcending the current reality. Gandhi’s utopia is conceived through his dream of ideal India devoid of the existing ills. Significantly, his utopia is not merely a wishful thinking; rather it is reflected through a concrete manifestation of *Satyāgraha* in bringing reform. Notably, after Gandhi’s assassination, his utopian dream was hijacked through deauthorization. After Independence, Vinoba came forward to take charge of Gandhi’s utopian vision for he was throned as Gandhi’s spiritual heir. Moreover, his concentration on spiritual progress of society reflects Gandhi’s vision of development combined with spiritual progression of individual life. Though, Vinoba through Mass support “authorized” Gandhi’s utopia, yet his experiment with *Sarvodaya* botched for he failed to distinguish lip service from genuine efforts. Also, he made *satyāgraha* inefficacious by obtaining only an aspect of it, i.e. “nonviolent persuasion”, as he aborted any confrontation with existing realities which formed an essential part of Gandhi’s *satyāgraha* maneuver. Thus, the failure allowed congress to hijack Gandhi’s utopia without necessarily ascertaining to its Truth. Continuous political hijacking and deauthorizing of Gandhi’s genuine authority has made Gandhi’s dream of ideal India into a daydream. His utopia is misinterpreted as his escapism from reality, but his essential and remarkable strategy of *satyāgraha* put such misinterpretation to an end as his constant experimentation and confrontation with reality reflects a social objective which has roots in reality and further provide us with practical measures of social transformation.

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<sup>204</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1965 (1921), *My Picture of Free India*, p. 10.

## CHAPTER IV

### DYNAMICS OF *SWARĀJ* IN ECONOMICS: TRUSTEESHIP AND NONVIOLENCE

The present chapter aims to explore, demonstrate, and expound the economic, ecological, and moral implications of Gandhi's notion of trusteeship and its inextricable relation with *Swarāj*. Gandhi's theory of trusteeship is founded upon his firm belief that every economic policy must function on some basic moral principles. He contended that "no truly acceptable economic policy can ignore moral values. It should provide, for example, sufficient work for everyone to be able to feed and clothe himself and his family."<sup>205</sup> For him, a man's moral nature lies in utilizing only that which he/she is in immediate use of and never seeking to possess anything which is beyond his/her immediate use. He considered accumulation of resources/wealth beyond or above one's immediate use as an act of theft.

The problem to be addressed here is how far his experiments of *Swadeshi* and *Sarvodaya* can be stretched in attaining a fiscal autonomy that could bring a balance between need and greed economy. Also, an effort will be made to explicate the ecological implications of nonviolence in sustaining a healthy environment and achieving a vigorous lifestyle. Hence, to pursue the above-mentioned task, this chapter is divided into the following four sections:

1. Economy: Dilemma Between Need and Greed
2. Trusteeship: A Perspective on Economy
3. Village Centered Economy: *Swarāj* as Fiscal Autonomy
4. Ecological Dimensions of Nonviolence: An Exposition

Gandhi firmly believed in the prodigality of nature and held that "nature produces more than enough for man's daily needs and provided everyone took just enough for himself there would be no poverty and starvation in the world."<sup>206</sup> But as we are aware that man by nature is a complex being who often functions upon his desires rather than morals, hence, it would be too idealistic even for Gandhi to assume that problems of starvation and inequality could be left to man's moral nature alone. So, Gandhi offered equitable distribution as a sound economic solution for inequality and poverty. Fair and impartial distribution of goods would ensure a concentrated justice against

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<sup>205</sup> Richards, G. 1991, *The Philosophy of Gandhi: A Study of His Basic Ideas*, p.113.

<sup>206</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1958 & 1969. *All Men are Brothers*, p.129.

the problem of inequality. Gandhi emphatically insisted on the notion of trusteeship and equitable distribution to abate the gap between the rich and the poor, haves, and have-nots.

## Section 1

### Economy: Dilemma Between Need and Greed

“Economic equality is the master key to nonviolent independence; working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and the labor. It means leveling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation’s wealth on the one hand, and leveling up of the semi- starved naked millions on the other...a non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility, so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists...”<sup>207</sup>

The notion of need or greed economy mirrors a dilemma in economic planning of a society. Gandhi conceived greed as violence towards both nature and society because greed procreates structural violence and inequality. He held that “one of the principal causes of poverty and inequality is the hedonistic norm which industrialism has generated in India”. Hence, he vehemently opposed the modern civilization “which led to the creation of a vicious cycle of wants that further generated more wants, joint wants, derived wants, and the infinite parabola of wants.”<sup>208</sup> He concentrated on removing the prevalent wide gulf between the rich and the poor sections of society. So, he proposed decentralization and home production to reduce impoverishment and structural violence.

Gandhi’s notion of *sarvodaya* further explicates a need driven economy for its rejected mass production and consciously focuses on production by the masses. Leveling up of the dispossessed became a significant feature of his economic planning. Thus, realizing economic *swarāj* was instrumental in bringing social and structural change in India. To achieve a structural change, Gandhi proposed multiple dimensions to his economic planning, i.e., non-exploitative work order, dignity of human labor, home production and distribution, spirit of love and service, etc. It is in this context that *charkhā* became a significant symbol of self-sufficiency and indigenous

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<sup>207</sup> Gandhi, M.K. 1944, *Constructive Programme*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>208</sup> Mukherjee, Partha, N., 1974, “Sarvodaya and Planning”, p. 204, *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 23, No.2, *Indian Sociological Society*, pp.202-223.

production. He popularized spinning of wheel/*charkhā* to remove the obscurantism caused by industrialism. He conceived industrialism to be the chief cause of rapidly increasing inequality, poverty, and unemployment. Unlike *charkhā*, industrial machineries were complex which required sophisticated skills. Sophisticated equipment was reserved for elite erudite classes. The misbalance generated from urban industrial advancement spiked up the exploitation, embezzlement, and impoverishment among dispossessed sections and thereby ensued a slow decay and denial of village industries.

To liberate India from industrial economic slavery, Gandhi emphasized on *Khādi*. *Khādi* served as a corollary to the broader notion of *Swadeshi*. *Swadeshi* by means of indigenous production and distribution was aimed to revive and reinforce the village economy. He proposed the use of simple unsophisticated machinery like spinning wheel to produce clothing and accentuate handicraft and agricultural labor to generate employment. Gandhi did not oppose machinery per se, what he did oppose was its foibles severely affecting the Indian economy. As he contended;

‘What I object to is the craze for machinery. Men go on ‘saving’ labor till thousands are without work and thrown on the streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labor not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth not in the hands of the few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery helps to ride on the back of millions. The impetus behind it is not philanthropy to save labor but greed...scientific truths first cease to be mere instruments of greed...I am aiming not at eradication of all machinery but its limitation.’<sup>209</sup>

Gandhi opposed the idea of exclusivity of machinery that fascinated the elite urban population on the pretext of saving time and labor. The fact that it generated unemployment among rural Indians caused concern for Gandhi. The scientific advancement in the form of machinery facilitated greed and embezzlement in the rich which led Gandhi to conceive its exclusivity as a source of exploitation and inequality in unsophisticated Indian masses. Also, the demands of western civilization were distinct from the Indian civilization. The West’s method of development failed to apprehend the need of Indian society. Gandhi considered India as an inherently spiritual civilization. India’s advanced spiritualism uniquely manifested its identity as an organic society functioning upon the principles of cooperation, neighborly love, moral and ethical conciliations for the harmony of its diverse cultural and religious citizens. As Gandhi maintained that;

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<sup>209</sup> Ganguli, B. N. 1973. *Gandhi’s Social Philosophy*, p. 204.

“Just as in the West, they have made wonderful discoveries in things material; similarly, Hinduism has made still more marvelous discoveries in the things of religion, of the spirit, of the soul... We are dazzled by the material progress that Western science has made. I am not enamored of that progress...After all, there is something in Hinduism that has kept it alive up till now...And the reason why it has survived is that the end which Hinduism set before it was not development along material but spiritual lines.”<sup>210</sup>

The end that Gandhi put before his *Sarvodaya* and *Swadeshi* planning was the economic self-sufficiency of India along with its spiritual progression. Gandhi’s most critical yet uniquely maneuvered proposal of trusteeship was inspired from the ethical and spiritual heritage of Indian civilization. The notion of *Dāna* is significantly eminent in Indian culture and its various religious traditions. *Dāna* in general, is an ethical and moral duty upheld by an Individual in terms of making donations to the hungry and destitutes according to his/her capacities. Similarly, by means of trusteeship, Gandhi invokes the moral understanding and responsibilities of privileged classes to voluntarily contribute for the elevation of their fellow citizens. Trusteeship required a moral obligation in the heart and mind of the rich well- possessed Indians to voluntarily part with the surplus of their wealth to uplift the poor. However, Gandhi opposed donation or endowment of wealth to healthy but poor Indians for he did not want to encourage idleness in Indian masses. Donation to healthy yet poor would facilitate the notion of greed and voluntary indolence among poor masses. So, the refusal of contribution or donation to healthy poor individuals marks a significant shift from *Dāna* to trusteeship. The notion of *Dāna* in Indian tradition does not differentiate between an exclusive donation given to already wealthy individuals from donations made to genuine needy and destitute people. But Gandhi’s provision of trusteeship clearly upholds this division and deliberately rejects donation to healthy yet poor and already well-off individuals.

Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj* sought for a value based social order where justice, equality, and peace are manifested in their maximum capacities. He conceived a society of equals and autonomous individuals working towards a common goal, i.e. political and economic independence of India. To construct his idealized social order, Gandhi put forward his plan of action in the form of *Swadeshi* and *Khādi* for India’s freedom both economically and political. “His eyes were not towards the upper strata of the population... but towards the hungry and the

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<sup>210</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1965. *My Picture of Free India*, p.21, cited from Fox, Richard, G., 1989, *Gandhian Utopia: Experiments with Culture*, p. 40.

destitute, the weak and the exploited, to whom he was able to present at least one machine of which he could be the owner and master, with which he could produce unassisted, and with which he was in some position to fight his exploiter.”<sup>211</sup> Hence, to overcome exploitation and machinery aided greedy civilization, Gandhi proposed the reiteration of village industries. The dignity of human labor is an important feature of nonviolent economic structure. He vehemently advocated control of consumption to save mankind from falling into an infinite trajectory of wants. Unceasing wants would enable the inequality to embellish in the face of poverty. Structural violence generated through greed and followed by inequality has diminished the spiritual heritage of Indian civilization by paving way to obscurantism of industrialization.

He conceived a non-exploitative interdependence of social and economic order. The decentralization of economic production and distribution would uphold this social and economic change by transferring concentrated power from few rich individuals to the public and its representatives. He visualized a global community of harmonious interdependence with non-exploitative economic order by creating self-sufficient village industries. “A structure which permitted unrestrained growth of private capital was inimical to an equalitarian society. Hence, he saw the need for attacking the institution of private property which created inequality.”<sup>212</sup> Gandhi’s insightfulness on economic advancement through economic equality reflects his commitment for the welfare of the society. Though trusteeship has its limitations and home production, or *Swadeshi* alone cannot make India an economic equal society, yet Gandhi emphatically appealed to his fellow citizens to show reverence, concern, and care towards each other in curbing the gap between the rich and the poor. Through trusteeship, he appealed to the affluent Indians to voluntarily part with their surplus wealth and dispense it to help those in need. Trusteeship here acts as both a spiritual action and an economic reform. In Gandhi’s vision mass production alone cannot reduce the prevalent inequalities; a society with a robust moral system can play a significant part in deducing the gap between haves and have-not. He argued for a society based on moral values where people would participate in economic and social activities for common unity and harmony. He asked a *satyāgrahi* to “...lead a simple life with great honesty. He should handle public funds

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<sup>211</sup> Mukherjee, Partha, N. 1974. “Sarvodaya and Planning”, p. 203.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid. P.205.

more carefully as he is accountable with utmost care. This is the first step towards a healthy life in society.”<sup>213</sup>

The need-centric approach explicitly dominates Gandhi’s economic maneuvers. The care and value oriented economic and social endeavors mirrors his dream of an egalitarian non-exploitative order. Hence, the dilemma between need and greed driven economic planning gets resolved in Gandhi’s principle of nonviolence. The notion of nonviolence mirrors a healthy and harmonious inter-dependent social order of minimized wants and self-sufficient village economy.

## Section 2

### Trusteeship: A Perspective on Economy

Gandhi introduces a fair and impartial economic policy of equitable distribution to minimize injustice largely arising out of abounding possession of goods by the rich. Thus, he appealed to the morality of the rich sections to dispose of or donate a certain amount of their wealth which they have in overabundance to poor people to keep their possessions in moderate limits. Insisting on the morals of the wealthy people and legitimately expecting them to voluntarily “hold their riches and talents in trust and use them for the service of society”<sup>214</sup> is called trusteeship by Gandhi. Though, it can be argued that Gandhi’s theory of trusteeship is idealistic and depends much upon the moral calling of wealthy people. Yet, it is a nonviolent effort in the direction of economic acceleration of the poor, and to relinquish rich forcibly from their wealth would be a violent practice which Gandhi would never allow. So, he chose the path of persuasion to make wealthy people part voluntarily from their treasured wealth and donate it to those who are in need.

The essence of his trusteeship lies in holding that “a rich man should be allowed to retain his wealth and not be forcibly deprived of it. He should use it for whatever he reasonably requires satisfying his personal needs and then act as the trustee for the remainder of his wealth which should be used for the benefit of society as a whole.”<sup>215</sup> So, it enables trusteeship to function on altruism of the rich. Here, Gandhi uses persuasion as a weapon to urge wealthy people to have regard for poverty in India, to help dispossessed people to secure at least two adequate meals a

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<sup>213</sup> Srinivas, K, 2014, *Gandhi: The Pacifist*, p.65.

<sup>214</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1958 &1969. *All Men are Brothers*, p.137.

<sup>215</sup> Richards, G. 1991, *The Philosophy of Gandhi: A Study of His Basic Ideas*, p.114.

day. Gandhi's notion of equitable distribution also operates through the grounds of trusteeship for trusteeship requires rich sections to practice self-restraint and minimize their wants to help the poor. Equitable distribution undertakes that there should not be any surreptitious possession of goods by one section or individual so that the available resources and goods can be made accessible to almost everyone. Hence, "equitable distribution of wealth of a country is brought about by means of voluntary renunciation on the part of the rich. It could in fact be described as a voluntary form of socialism."<sup>216</sup>

Since the doctrine of trusteeship functions upon the act of persuasion, it can be alleged that man's attachment to his/her acquisitions may pose some serious hurdles in the path of its success. To overcome such shortcomings of the doctrine of trusteeship, Gandhi advocates other nonviolent methods such as non-corporation, civil disobedience, boycott etc. to combat and challenge existent inequalities. Through nonviolent non-cooperation or civil disobedience workers reserve the right to protest against their employer and place their justifiable demands. It is a known fact that capitalists depend upon workers, and workers through their talents hold the right to choose to become co-partner with their employers in the wealth produced. The choice of becoming co-partners with their employers is further reinstated through nonviolent civil disobedience and non-corporation which when proved efficacious enables workers to demand a justifiable share in the profit produced to alleviate themselves from their poverty. While arguing for economic equality, Gandhi acknowledges the significance of capitalists for he believed that "the elimination of millionaires constitutes no solution to the problem of poverty and economic inequality as killing the goose that lays golden eggs"<sup>217</sup> would not solve anything. His socialism did not require the violent relinquishment of the capitalists to establish egalitarianism. Instead, he believed in keeping both the capitalist and the worker class within their justified measures as not allowing one to overpower or exploit the other. Here, "Gandhi distinguishes between capitalism and capitalists. The latter, he maintains, are not necessarily exploiters; their interests are not really opposed to the interests of ordinary people. He objects to the unacceptable face of capitalism, or the wrong use of capital, rather than to capitalists as such."<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid. P.114.

<sup>217</sup> Richards, G. 1991, *The Philosophy of Gandhi: A Study of His Basic Ideas* p. 115

<sup>218</sup> Ibid. P.115.



Here, it is worth observing that Gandhi too understood that the complete eradication of inequality is beyond realistic limits. Though, trusteeship through nonviolent persuasion does open a window of hope but trusteeship as Gandhi contended should not be misinterpreted as free donation to the poor healthy people. He vehemently rejects charity and free gifts of food, clothing or any other item to the abled poor people for it would upsurge the idleness, hypocrisy, redundancy, and corruption in them. Trusteeship should not be interpreted as the rich's charity to the poor; instead it is a voluntary act of parting away with the surplus wealth to provide poor people a fair chance of earning a respectable living. Donation or giving alms to the healthy poor people is not trusteeship; rather it is a shameful and repressive act of charity that does no good to both the giver and the receiver. As he contend; “my *ahimsā* would not tolerate the idea of giving a free meal to a healthy person who has not worked for it in some honest way and if I had the power, I would stop every *sadāvrata* where every free meals are given.”<sup>219</sup> However, he does not discard charity completely, for him charity is reasonable only in two cases: first, where it is given to Brahmins, who own nothing and second to those who are differently abled such as blind, and handicapped. Moreover, the state is legitimately responsible for providing and supporting its differently abled citizens. Hence, it is the state’s duty to make provisions for its differently abled citizens.

To replace charity, Gandhi suggested bread labor, originally proposed by Ruskin’s *Unto This Last*, and later influenced by Leo Tolstoy’s theory of bread labor. “Tolstoy had popularized T. M. Bondaref’s theory that man must earn his bread by his own labor and Gandhi believed the same principle to be contained in the Gita.”<sup>220</sup> By advocating bread labor, Gandhi wanted to send off the message that individuals must be independent and self-capable of producing what they themselves need. Self-dependency would enable them to be their own boss thus, allowing them to escape slavery and starvation. So, works such as agricultural activities, handicrafts, weaving, and sewing would provide them employment and would also prove helpful in escaping alienation, wage slavery and exploitation from the employer. Apart from vocational work, people must be able to do scavenging, and disposing of their own waste. He contended that low reputed jobs such as cleansing, scavenging should not be ill-treated and cleansing workers should also be given equal reputation as those holding irrigation, carpentry and other vocational jobs. Similarly, “intellectual labor is not enough; it had an important place in the scheme of things but it did not do away with

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<sup>219</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1958 & 1969. *All Men are Brothers*, p.134.

<sup>220</sup> Richards, Glyn. 1991, *The Philosophy of Gandhi; A Study of His Basic Ideas*, p.116.

the need of manual labor.”<sup>221</sup> Gandhi challenged the cherished Indian class- system where people belonging to Brahmin section would do only intellectual work and people belonging to *shudra* section would only be deemed fit to perform the cleansing work. He sought *samyāsins* to also engage in manual labor as “to do no work whatsoever is not an exercise in renunciation; it was rather an indication of inertia.”<sup>222</sup>

Another purpose of promoting bread-labor to achieve economic equality was to reject machinery completely. He was a staunch critic of materialism and its corollary modernity, and he conceived machinery to be a dehumanizing, unspiritual and alienated form of development. Machinery by its nature is made for mass production which would necessarily entail mass consumption of superfluous products, exploitation of natural resources, alienated stationed jobs, thus giving rise to more economic inequalities along with the manipulation of natural resources. Additionally, machinery, a by-product of modernization also strengthens the root of capitalism facilitating it to override socialism. “Furthermore, machinery, meaning modern technology is inherently bad, railways, for instance, carries off food grains to far off markets leaving famine behind; transfer plague germs from region to region, and brings rogues rather than true devotees to pilgrimage centers. Good, Gandhi believed travels by bullock cart; evil runs the track.”<sup>223</sup>

He treated manual labor as significant and sometimes more substantial than the intellectual labor for he believed that intellectual labor too requires physical labor to improve its quality. Thus, he gave more importance to the *vānaprastha* system of life than to *sanyāsins* way of life. Gandhi evoked the dignity of manual labor which was considered only as a low-profile job reserved for people of low strata. He questioned the contemporary intellectuals’ disinterestedness in soiling their hands as he believed that intellectuals in ancient India i.e., *Brāhmins* were engaged in both physical as well as mental activities. Through procuring the cultivation of the practice of bread labor in his fellow Indians, Gandhi aimed to dignify physical labor; a reform much required in pre-independent India. He sows the seeds of revolution in Indian minds towards veneration and rightful recognition of manual labor.

The significance of bread labor for Gandhi was paramount in terms of providing employment and revitalizing village life. Besides, bread-labor Gandhi also advocated spinning

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Fox, G. Richards, 1989, *Gandhian Utopia; Experiments with Culture*, p. 54.

wheel to minimize dependency and forced idleness caused by natural disasters such as drought and heavy floods. But does this mean that Gandhi considered spinning wheel as a temporary solution for diminution of idleness and famine caused by heavy floods and drought? The answer is no because Gandhi conceived spinning wheel not just as a temporary activity rather a key to economic independence for the millions of Indian who are placed under the constant fear of being replaced or thrown out of their jobs for artificial technological advancements. As he quotes; “no scheme of irrigation or other agricultural improvement that inhuman ingenuity can conceive can deal with the vastly scattered population of India or provide work for the masses of mankind who are constantly thrown out of employment.”<sup>224</sup>

Spinning wheel has a twofold advantage; firstly, it ensures employment at a domestic level and secondly, it saves money that goes into the purchasing of clothes from foreign mills. Thus, Gandhi directed attention towards revival of cotton mills to ensure home production. Income generated from production and selling of domestic products would help in removing poverty and generating jobs for unemployed Indian masses. To quote him; “when once we have revived the industry (*khādi*) all other industries will follow. I would make the spinning wheel the foundation on which to build a sound village life; I would make the wheel the Centre round which all other activities will revolve.”<sup>225</sup>

Bread labor and *charkhā* or the spinning wheel was Gandhi’s two-fold experiment, which at first can be conceived as his counter response to machinery or modernization and secondly, it is stridently indicative of his blueprint for India’s nonviolent economic advancement. But *charkha* as he said; “is not meant to displace any existing form of industry not to oust a man from any remunerative occupation that he might be engaged in. Its main purpose is to harness every single idle minute of our millions for common productive work.”<sup>226</sup> Nonviolent economic progression held significant importance to Gandhi because on the one hand, he was determined to preserve the good of ancient Indian culture and on the other hand, he was stridently ensuring dignity of human labor in contrast to the desensitizing machinery work. He described *charkha* as “the symbol of nonviolent economic self-sufficiency.”<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Bose, N. K. 1948. *Selections from Gandhi*, p.56.

<sup>225</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1968. *The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. VI, p. 393.

<sup>226</sup>, Bose, N.K, 1971, *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 57.

<sup>227</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1968. *The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. VI, p. 393.

*Khādi* served as India's call for economic independence as it was contemplated to preserve and promote village crafts along with the removal of impoverishment caused by Lancashire textiles. Establishment of the Village Industries Association was an experiment in the direction of economic self-sufficiency to promote self-reliance and domestic resourcefulness to achieve dignity of labor. So, *Khādi* is conceived as a stepping stone in the direction of economic independence through domestic production. Gandhi insisted that it should be employed as a symbol of solitude and care for one's neighborhood for reinforcing the zeal of common interest, i.e., self-governance.

In Gandhi's model of economic equality considerable emphasis is given to the care perspective manifested in the spirit of self-sacrifice and self-restraint towards one's neighbor. An individual as a part of society should possess a sense of moral obligation towards others in society. Individuals must adjust their lifestyles to accommodate a livable lifestyle for others. To part with one's wealth which he/she is not in immediate use shows commitment and sacrifice for the welfare of society. Trusteeship is not just an empathetic appeal to the affluent, but also a reasonable demand for a contented society. Gandhi had foreseen that to achieve an economic equal society, one first needs to do away with the greed mentality. Unnecessary attachment for one's acquisitions would only deepen the gap between the rich and the poor. Whereas, embracing the need approach, i.e., possessing wealth for one's immediate needs, education and healthcare would enable the dispossessed to have an equitable share in the economy. "Spirit of renunciation and rising above one's own self are the necessary prerequisites on the part of every individual to strive to contribute to economic equality."<sup>228</sup>

He advocated equitable distribution as a fundamental objective of economic equality. The economic equality he proposed should be vehemently based on nonviolence and rationality of the people. Possessing only what one needs is an ideal which may never be realized yet, it is a step towards transformation which we all should keep in our minds and employ it in our actions, as Gandhi quotes;

'The real implication of equal distribution is that each man shall have the wherewithal to supply all his natural needs and no more. For example, if one man has a weak digestion and requires only a quarter of a pound of flour for his bread and another needs a pound, both should be in a position to satisfy their wants. To bring this ideal into being, the entire social order has got to be reconstructed.

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<sup>228</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1968. *The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. VI, p. 66.

A society based on nonviolence cannot nurture any other ideal. We cannot perhaps be able to realize the goal, but we must bear it in mind and work unceasingly to near it. To the same extent as we progress towards our goal, we shall find contentment and happiness.<sup>229</sup>

Hence, to achieve economic prosperity, it is necessary to curb the greed and attachment towards acquisitions. The economic implications of restricting the gap between need and greed economy facilitates equality through transformation of society. Yet, it is an ideal which Gandhi himself admitted is difficult to accomplish. However, as a part of society, individuals are morally obligated to limit their greed to enable others to have an equal access to goods and resources.

### Section 3

#### Village Centered Economy: *Swarāj* as Fiscal Autonomy

Village centered economy as Gandhi conceived was a stride towards the reduction of impoverishment in India. It can also be conceived as his roadmap for restructuring the village economy, making it self-sustainable and independent from within. Transformation as he suggested must begin from the bottom level. Gandhi was adamant on making Indian villages capable of managing their affairs from within, thus, enabling panchayats to have full power and autonomy. *Khādi* was one such experiment in the direction of economic acceleration of villages supported by decentralization of production and distribution. He firmly emphasized on the acceleration of cotton industries serving as corollary to the concept of *Swadeshi*. As he said: “*khādi* serves the masses, mill clothe is intended to serve the classes. *Khādi* serves labor, mill clothe exploits it.”<sup>230</sup> Thus, *khādi* became the symbol of one’s love for nation and often employed to denote sympathy towards the poor. However, it never entailed the “exclusion of all foreign goods from India”; rather, it was an expression of an individual’s love for his neighbor. *Swadeshi* for Gandhi doesn’t “harbors ill-will and displays an antagonistic attitude towards all things foreign. True *Swadeshi* is that which serves the interest of the millions of India, and it is possible even when the capital and talent are foreign but under effective Indian control.”<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1940. *Harijan*, 25<sup>th</sup> August.

<sup>230</sup> Bose, N.K, 1971, *Selections from Gandhi*, p.58.

<sup>231</sup> Richards, Glyn. 1991. *The Philosophy of Gandhi; A Study of His Basic Ideas*, p. 120.

So, *Swadeshi* should not be seen merely as a replacement to all foreign industries, rather it seeks to remove poverty by providing employment to Indian masses. Though Gandhi has opposed industrialization and use of machinery on several occasions, yet it is also to be noted that “he seeks to limit not eradicate the use of machines. He refuses to be blinded by the magnificence of machines. Under no circumstances should they be allowed to deprive a man of his right to work. The kind of machines Gandhi favors is the one which saves a person from unnecessary labor, and the sewing machine is cited as a perfect example.”<sup>232</sup> But it may rightly be argued that though sewing machines serve as the ideal example, yet its production requires heavy industries and a centralized control which Gandhi vehemently opposed. Gandhi readily admitted this limitation and proposed that such kinds of big industries should be nationalized and employed in the best interest of humanity. He suggested that big industries should lead by example and provide humanitarian treatment to its employees by making provision for principled working through functioning beyond the profit-making outlook. So, Gandhi suggests a humanitarian outlook to employment to reinforce ideal working conditions compatible with meeting the requirements of the employees.

He obstinately advocated decentralization of power to enable a more swift and autonomous economic acceleration of the villages. By decentralization, he intended to allocate control from a centralized government body to many autonomous units. Although he recognized the centralization of big heavy industries in national interest, he demanded to constrain their scope by limiting their activity in the interest of vast national activities principally functioning in villages. Gandhi acknowledged that machinery has established its place in the market as he contended: “it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labor...I would favor the use of the most elaborate machinery if thereby India’s pauperism and resulting idleness be avoided.”<sup>233</sup> So, in other words, Gandhi’s criticism of machinery was not merely a hasty response against modernization, instead, it came as his concern for the unemployed millions and the threat machinery poses not just to manual labor but also to human life.

It should be noticed that the decentralization of *Khādi* programme facilitated the villages to become more self-sufficient, but at the same time, it marked the slow destruction of big textile industries. So, it may be argued that Gandhi on the one hand, sought to generate and provide employment to the semi starved masses through manual labor, yet, on the other hand, he initiated

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid. P.123.

<sup>233</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1968. *The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. VI, pp. 379-80.

the virtual destruction of textile industries like Lancashire, hence, leaving many workers unemployed. This contradiction can be dealt with a more systematic approach to Gandhi's thought as he favored the idea of keeping the textile mills only if they intend to reconcile their profit driven outlook and adopt an egalitarian approach. He sought to retain the industries provided that they operate in a new nationalized guise for the service of humanity as a whole.

So, in other words, we have expounded that Gandhi was not against industrialization as such, instead, he was opposed to the industrialization that intentionally excavates the gap between the rich and the poor and gives rise to poverty by forcing idleness. Also, he vehemently rejected the power concentrated mindset where power will be held by few people who are in acquisition of amassed fortune produced by the toiling poor masses. Nevertheless, it is also to be noted that industrialization as rightly understood by Gandhi essentially thrives on mass production and operates through some of its indispensable features such as profit generating outlook, materialism, exploitation, etc. which are inextricably linked with it. So, it does not seem plausible to argue that Gandhi was in favor of industrialization because the essential features on which industrialism thrives are in complete opposition with Gandhi's social and economic principles. The dark future that extensive industrialization has brought to the present world has already been foreseen by Gandhi. He held *Charkhā* as the most appropriate and right kind of machinery for it does not thrive on the methods of exploitation.

But the question arises that though the criticism against industrialization presented by Gandhi is plausible, yet does the solution he suggested for the replacement of industrialization hold vital relevance in the modern world? The answer here demands a subtle analytic approach instead of a direct method towards Gandhi's principles as some aspects of his thoughts are idealistic, yet hold strong practical orientation grounded in reasoning and community care. Richard Glyn in his work titled; *The philosophy of Gandhi* argues that this problem might be taken "by a consideration of the economic theory propounded by E. F. Schumacher, the author of *Small Is Beautiful* and founder of the intermediate Technology Development Group with its Indian counterpart the Appropriate Technology Development Association."<sup>234</sup> Schumacher in his work titled; *Economics as if People Mattered* talks extensively about the practicality of Gandhi's methods in India and their deliverance in the 1960's. He argues that the economic policy which the third world requires should not be oriented towards the massive industrialization, mass production

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<sup>234</sup> Richards. Glyn, 1991, *The Philosophy of Gandhi; A Study of His Basic Ideas*, p.124.

or new technology instead, it requires the adoption of policies which creates provision for making the quantity of human life better. To quote him; “the wisdom required to be able to free oneself from the greed that has made man captive to the power of the machine in the first place, could only come from acknowledging with Gandhi that a man possessed a soul as well as a body.”<sup>235</sup> So, from an egalitarian point of view, it does seem that the world today really needs Gandhi’s principles for we have seen the catastrophe caused by massive expansion of industrialization. The damage that greed driven outlook has brought to the third world has been becoming explicitly obvious and is threatening to the quantity of human lives by each passing day. Besides, political, and social conflicts, other factors such as poor air quality, extensive exploitation of natural resources, depleting health conditions etc. are some of the many grave consequences of technology centered attitude.

Schumacher calls the activity of economics fragmentary because in economics any activity which does not garner profit for those who undertake it is called uneconomic. He argues that “it is the duty of economists to understand and clarify its limitations, that is to say, to understand meta-economics.”<sup>236</sup> He implies that “it is essential for the economist to recognize the ‘derived’ nature of his thinking. He needs to understand that his aims and objectives are derived from certain basic presuppositions concerning the nature of man, and that his methods derive from his presuppositions concerning nature. When his view of man and nature changes, so do his economic judgments.”<sup>237</sup> So, economic activity is to be construed concerning the fundamental aspects of man and nature. Gandhi was never methodical regarding the systematization of economics, yet his economic policy was largely influenced by his metaphysical belief concerning the fundamental nature of man. Moreover, Schumacher argued stringently against the profit-oriented economy. Gandhi’s economic spectacles, namely, *Sarvodaya* and *Swadeshi* construct an ideal healthy economic situation where the greed generated outlook is undermined, and the care and concern perspectives are postulated. Gandhi’s concern towards the social, creative, and spiritual satisfaction of man stands in contrast against the modern greed centric approach of mass production and power concentrated dynamics. His quest for Truth led him to pioneer the *Sarvodaya* movement, an intense and ideal forerunner of economic equality.

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid. P.125.

<sup>236</sup> Schumacher, E. F. 1973. *Small is Beautiful*, p. 44.

<sup>237</sup> Richards. Glyn, 1991, *The Philosophy of Gandhi; A Study of His Basic Ideas*, p.125.



Schumacher further illustrates his contention through an examination of Buddhist theory of economics entrenched in the four noble truths of Buddhism. The four noble truths of Buddhism echo its eightfold path of righteous living. “This is the path one takes in order to remove one’s craving (*tānhā*) that binds one to *samsārik* world of suffering (*duhkha*).”<sup>238</sup> One of the essential principles of the eight-fold path is right livelihood which as Schumacher contends involves the activity of economics.

Schumacher suggests that Buddhist philosophy of economics recalls the principles of right livelihood proposed by the Buddha. In Buddhism, one’s incessant desires are the root cause of suffering and these desires are largely arising out of self-centeredness. So, to remove suffering one must overcome self-centeredness to mitigate incessant desires. The Buddhist economic policy seeks to remove the self-centeredness to achieve a community care system. Gandhi’s perspective of minimalistic living must have stemmed from the influence Buddhism has emblazoned upon him. The minimalistic approach rightly conceives of a lifestyle based on right livelihood which enables an individual to part with his/her possessions and uphold a lifestyle congenial with nature and society. Gandhi makes the basics of his economics evident through the requirements he proposed to be fulfilled by a *satyāgrahi*. He required a *satyāgrahi* to uphold non-possession, control of the palate, and non-stealing. By non-possession, he emphasized that a *satyāgrahi* must not take or acquire anything beyond his daily requirements. He advocated control of the palate to ensure that a *satyāgrahi* does not take pleasure in having meals because taking pleasure in eating would weaken his oath of celibacy and would lead him to have yearning for more. And by non-stealing, Gandhi argued that a *satyāgrahi* must not take which does not belong to him/her. The pledge of non-stealing can be understood in terms of refuting a profit seeking outlook responsible for the existent inequalities and exploitations. The minimalistic approach that Gandhi undertook is largely concerned with the refutation of materialism thriving in western countries. Gandhi considered India to be the core of spiritual learning; a hub of transcendental and mystical knowledge targeted to achieve inner advancements and purifications.

Though, one may ask that the economy does not thrive on inner advancements and India’s poverty cannot be reduced with spiritual knowledge. This assertion is indeed right, but to address the problem from Gandhi’s perspective; we find that Gandhi did not overtly concentrate on the profit and benefits generated from economics. His core aim was the reduction of impoverishment

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid. P.126.

and forced idleness of the millions of Indians and to realize this aim he conceived economy not merely as a policy for financial growth but as a corollary for the social and financial welfare of the dispossessed masses. *Swadeshi* for example, was not solely aimed for expanding Indian production but also to rejuvenate and reinforce one's love and reverence towards his neighbors. Thus, Gandhi's economic policy goes hand in hand with his social and ethical principles.

Nevertheless, the meta-economics of Buddhism emphasizes on working towards the development of a care-based approach in economics. Schumacher notices the same approach in Gandhi through his economic policy of *Swadeshi*. He stringently differentiates materialism from the meta-economics espoused by Buddhism and echoed through Gandhi's vision. In materialism, for instance, "goods are more important than people and consumption as more important than creative activity. It implies shifting the emphasis from the worker to the product of work, that is, from the human to the sub-human, surrender to the forces of evil."<sup>239</sup> But meta-economics in Gandhi and Buddhism provides equal preference to both i.e., the financial acceleration and development of man's character. Here, it does not reduce workers to mere employees; instead, it aims to bring them at par with others, effectively involved in a collective activity of economics. Both in Buddhism and Gandhi's vision, more emphasis is allotted to the development of skills and the ability to produce within the community. "According to Schumacher, the Buddhist economist would consider it a failure if he had to import goods in order to satisfy basic local needs. The economics of modern materialism has no such aim. It is not basically concerned with the social or spiritual values of community life and such consideration do not normally enter into assessments."<sup>240</sup> Thus, the materialistic outlook to economics has resulted in a collapse of the village economy thereby rendering the village economy paralyzed in terms of production and distribution. It has been conducive in giving rise to unemployment, regressive social system, and upsurge of proletariat society.

Schumacher agrees with Gandhi in his criticism of industry controlled economic acceleration as it has only deepened the gap between the rich and the poor. Schumacher was quick and wise in pointing out the meta-economics behind the economic considerations adopted by economists. But my contention here is to understand how far Gandhi's alternatives of industrialization can be held vital in the modern world. Schumacher seems convinced with

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<sup>239</sup> Schumacher, E. F. 1973. *Small is Beautiful*, p.53.

<sup>240</sup> Richards. Glyn. 1991. *The Philosophy of Gandhi; A Study of His Basic Ideas*, p.127.

Gandhi's understanding that mass production indeed serves as the major cause of exploitation worldwide. So, he accepts and embraces Gandhi's suggestion of production by masses for it would not only seize the gap between the rich and the poor but also would be extremely helpful in reducing impoverishment and forced idleness. As he contends; "the technology of mass production is inherently violent, ecologically damaging, self-defeating in terms of non-renewable resources, and stultifying for the human person".<sup>241</sup> So, production by masses seems plausible with regard to satisfy both the economic and social needs of the individual. Interestingly, many economists, ecologists, politicians, and social activists of the contemporary world have started to acknowledge directly or indirectly the vitality of Gandhi's principles. Also, the problems of ecology, poverty, and social deprivation etc. have one thread in common, i.e., massive industrialization. Hence, it would be not superlative to assert that the modern darkness has ensued from the evil and greed based gigantic expansion of industrialization. Schumacher argues that production by masses is a more human mode of development for it ascribes significance to people than goods and it also preserves environment and creativity. Thus, "technology of production by masses as intermediate technology, or as it is called in India, appropriate technology"<sup>242</sup> is a moderate mode of development significant in keeping vital connection with the natural world.

Schumacher asserts that the poor countries of the third world are fortunate because their financial inability to adopt highly complex western technology have somewhat constrained the gigantic inhumane industrialization. Also, he appeals to the western countries to adopt the simplicity and directness of the underdeveloped countries to protect themselves from the major catastrophe of industrialization. However, in the light of "new advancement" that industrialization has offered to the world, it can be alleged against Schumacher and Gandhi that they held a rather regressive than a progressive approach towards development. But when one thinks deeply of the psychological, sociological, and moral implications of development; the new notion of progress stands in contrast to a healthy advancement of man and nature. For Schumacher "it depends entirely on what is meant by progress. If increased sophistication and complexity is technological development constitutes progress, then it would have to be admitted that intermediate or appropriate technology could not be regarded as progress."<sup>243</sup> Moreover, if the upliftment of the

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<sup>241</sup> Schumacher, E. F. 1973. *Small is Beautiful*, p.145.

<sup>242</sup> Richards, Glyn. 1991. *The Philosophy of Gandhi; A Study of His basic Ideas*, p.128.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid. p. 128

downtrodden sections around the world and a simpler yet effective method of impoverishment reduction along with sustainable ecology, and a fair labor utilization is implied as progress then intermediate technology or sustainable development as proposed by Gandhi can be called progressive.

Schumacher contends that the economic approach proposed by him and Gandhi carries a human face, that is, it is directed towards serving man instead of exploiting him. Also it requires “an effort of the imagination and an abandonment of fear.”<sup>244</sup> Like Gandhi, Schumacher too envisages that heavily centralized industry cannot be allowed to occupy both the rural and the urban production because such a policy would perturb creativity and enable the servitude of man to machinery. Schumacher warns the developing countries of the third world of the over occupation and centralization of industries. Schumacher, in his work; *Small is Beautiful* bends the conceptions concerning development by taking along Gandhi’s ideas of sustainable living and exemplifies *charkhā* or the spinning wheel as the ideal kind of intermediate technology. Though, as we have expounded, Gandhi throughout his life condemned heavy industrialization and machinery, accusing them as the crucial cause of both social and economic evil. Yet, the fascinating strand of his economic policy lies in his proposal for progress through production by masses which can also be understood in terms of intermediate technology. While emphasizing on *Swadeshi*, Gandhi aimed to imply a labor intensive approach to technology. The labor intensive approach would enable the unsophisticated workers from all walks of life to comprehend the use of simple equipment without extensive training. Gandhi once quoted that the real India lives in its villages and by this, he meant that the people living in villages and small towns are the periphery that needs to be uplifted. Thus, the first and the prime most aim of Gandhi’s *Sarvodaya* was to ensure that the Indian masses who live in villages, farthest areas, the dispossessed and the most needed get hoisted through domestic production and simple equipment. The establishment of big industries in cities would not harbor any profit to those who live in villages and remotest areas. Instead, it has encouraged migration from villages which in turn have resulted in overpopulated cities, low pay scale jobs, poor living conditions, redundant competitions, along with psychological ills such as alienation, loneliness, and depression etc. It has also caused an upsurge in extensive rural deployment. So, for Gandhi, “the need was to establish agro-industrial structure, in the villages and small towns, which would involve innumerable places of work providing the

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<sup>244</sup> Schumacher, E. F. 1973. *Small is Beautiful*, p.151.

maximum number of job opportunities.”<sup>245</sup> The contemporary issues of village deployment, increased poverty, famine and unemployment could be cured through the establishment of agro-industries. Gandhi after returning from South Africa was instructed to visit Indian villages to get an unaltered perspective of their conditions, needs and demands. It is through his visit to different villages in India, he realized that any centralized set up would not provide for the basic needs and demands of Indian rural masses. Hence, the campaign for *Khādi* turned out to be a master stroke in exposing the exploitation caused by gigantic, centralized industries for it certainly shook the roots of Lancashire textile: the most popular western outlet of textiles.

Both Schumacher and Gandhi appropriately conceived the aftermath of extensive industrialization. They both held a community care approach and comprehended the meta-economics by means of their metaphysical presuppositions. However, their alternatives are conceived as slow and second-best options in terms of development. But the requirement of the current world is not the fastest mode of development, instead the contemporary world suffers from want, impoverishment, unemployment, and rapidly increasing rates of crimes, so, the need here is of subsistence and removal of social and economic ills. Thus, whether the mode of development is best, or second best does not make difference to those who are starving and struggling through immense hardship to have a single meal per day. Also, the notion of development has various strands as it is dynamic in nature; it need not to be necessarily economic for it is extended through various branches and each branch requires transformation from within. The proposal of production by masses treats the economic situation from within. Unlike its counterpart i.e., mass production which only treats the problem from periphery, it works deep to exterminate structural illness causing poverty, unemployment, and exploitation. Thus, as Schumacher contends that: “it is wrong to assume that the most sophisticated equipment, transplanted into an unsophisticated environment, will be regularly worked at full capacity.”<sup>246</sup>

Moreover, for Gandhi any mode of development that intentionally employ exploitation of the poor would be considered violent and bigoted. The fundamental aim of Gandhi’s alternative approach for development through *Swadeshi* and production by the masses was to ensure the welfare of unsophisticated workers. It goes deeper and higher than materialistic advancement. Hence, any policy that dehumanizes man and his work is considered intolerant in both Gandhi and

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<sup>245</sup> Richards. Glyn. 1991. *The Philosophy of Gandhi; A Study of His Basic Ideas*, p.129.

<sup>246</sup> Schumacher, E. F. 1973. *Small is Beautiful*, p.172.

Schumacher. To quote Gandhi in this context; “Economics that hurts the moral well being of an individual or nation is immoral and, therefore, sinful...true economics never mitigates against the highest ethical standards, just as all true ethics to be worth its name at the same time be also good economics.”<sup>247</sup>

So, Gandhi’s notion of economics is governed by his ethical principles. *Khādi* and *Swadeshi* were employed to eradicate poverty and forced idleness among Indian masses. Gandhi’s alternative approach to development in terms of production by masses is indeed a right step towards the removal of ills of mass production. As Gandhi conceived that unlike the West, India does not need sophisticated equipment of production, its first and foremost need is providing employment to the unsophisticated, dispossessed Indian masses. Hence, to achieve this task, *Swadeshi* becomes a necessity for the economic and social well-being of India. In the contemporary world, evidence of the catastrophic implications of industrialization renders Gandhi’s principles more approachable and vital in terms of sustainability in the long run. The impact of the stringent lockdown caused by Covid-19 further makes the need of self-sufficiency more lucid than ever. Organized work in every sector is needed to uplift the downtrodden. Apart from economic security, social protection and wellbeing is also required for India to achieve fair advancement. However, Gandhi never fully systematized his economic policy, yet from his application of *khādi*, it becomes evident that a nation can only be prosperous when it does not import more than its export. People oriented approach to economics is undoubtedly the need of the hour yet food wastage, agricultural exploitation is rapidly increasing despite the prevalent problem of impoverishment. Undertaking the current scenario, any solution which does not involve ecological and sociological concerns is deemed inadequate in mitigating the contemporary challenges of development. The minimalistic approach suggested by Gandhi requires an embedding and following rigorously to tackle the economic ills at upsurge.

## Section 4

### **Ecological Dimensions of Nonviolence: An Exposition**

Gandhi’s principle of nonviolence incorporates his ethics of environmentalism. The ecological perspective of Gandhi’s thought is interwoven in his ethical and social philosophy of

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<sup>247</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1968. *The Selected Works*, Vol. VI, pp.321-22,

nonviolence. I readily admit at the outset that Gandhi never structured his ecological philosophy yet, the deep implications of Gandhi's thought and his theory of nonviolence enables one to understand the environmental perspective behind the peace-oriented contentions of Gandhi. To establish my contention on the ecological dimension of Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence, I will be exploring, studying, and analyzing the following works:

- I. Gandhi, Deep ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics by Thomas Weber.
- II. Mahatma Gandhi and the Environmental Movement by Ramachandra Guha.

Thomas Weber in his work entitled; "Gandhi, Deep ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism economics" (1999) argues that Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence influenced the deep ecology of Arne Naess, peace research of Johan Galtung and Buddhist Economics of E.F. Schumacher. As he contends; "the new environmentalism in the form of deep ecology, the discipline of Peace and Research and what has become known as 'Buddhist Economics' very closely mirror Gandhi's philosophy"<sup>248</sup>.

Arne Naess, who first coined the term 'deep ecology', admits the influence of Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence in structuring his ideas and works. Naess through his work on deep ecology attempts to explicate the significance of self-realization in establishing personal identification with nature. Apart from Gandhi, another significant inspiration came from Richard Carson's work *Silent Spring (1962)* which enabled Naess to think beyond the then existing conservation ethic therefore, led him to pioneer a new area of environmental studies known as 'deep ecology'. In 1973, Naess emphasized that a deep and influential movement is the need of the hour, as "he characterizes the 'shallow' ecological movement as one that fights pollution and resource depletion in order to preserve human health and affluence, while the 'deep' ecological movement operates out of a deep-seated respect and even veneration for ways and forms of life, and subsequently accords them an 'equal right to live and blossom.'"<sup>249</sup> He argued that each living species on the planet deserves kind treatment and veneration. And mankind must be pursued to think beyond the prevalent dogma of self-obsession that entertains the thought: only those lives are worth preserving which have usefulness for mankind. As he quotes; "deep ecology sees that natural diversity has its own (intrinsic) value and equating

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<sup>248</sup> Weber, T. 1999, "Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics", p. 349.

<sup>249</sup> Thomas, Weber, 1999, "Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics", p. 350.

value with value for humans reveals a racial prejudice and plant species should be saved because of their intrinsic value.”<sup>250</sup>

By examining the basic principles of the general features of deep ecology that Arne Neass and George Sessions (1985) made comprehensive during their campaign in California, the following arguments can be laid:

1. Flourishing and well-being of both human and nonhuman lives is significant and possesses an intrinsic value that should be undermined.
2. Prohibition of any concession with non-human lives except when it is vital to fulfill the essential needs.
3. Over population is incompatible with reservation and flourishing of non-human: “human interference with nature is excessive, and increasing; and therefore economic, technological and ideological principles must change.”<sup>251</sup>
4. Quality of life should be the measurement of living.

Neass further argues that man’s basic presuppositions regarding nature and non-human lives must change to improve the “quality of life rather than the standard of living; and those who subscribe to these points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.”<sup>252</sup> With reference to the veneration of both human and non-human life, “Naess admits in a brief third-person account of his philosophy that his work on the philosophy of ecology, or *ecosophy*, developed out of his work on Spinoza and Gandhi and his relationship with the mountains of Norway.”<sup>253</sup>

Gandhi experimented extensively with his social, ethical, and political ideas. His social and ethical philosophy operates through his metaphysical presuppositions of the unity of all-beings. He adopted a minimalistic lifestyle and advocated his followers to abstain from animal killing unless it is vital to satisfy their basic needs. It is vital to note that “he lived before the advent of the articulation of the deep ecological strands of environmental philosophy. His ideas about human connectedness with nature, therefore, rather than being explicit, must be inferred from

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<sup>250</sup>Naess, Arne. 1984. “Identification as a Source of Deep Ecological Attitudes”, p.257.

<sup>251</sup> Thomas, Weber, 1999, “Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics”, p. 351.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid. P.351. Also See, Devall & Sessions, 1985, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*, p. 225.



an overall reading of the Mahatma's writings."<sup>254</sup> Gandhi was immensely influenced by Buddhism and Jainism's philosophy of *Karunā* and *anekāntvāda* respectively. The philosophical insight of these two schools quite explicitly contains the ecological underpinning of nonviolence. Gandhi employed an extensive practice of nonviolence in both his personal and professional life. Naess emphasized that "Gandhi made manifest the internal relation between self-realization, nonviolence, and what sometimes has been called biospherical egalitarianism" and he further admits that he was immensely influenced by Gandhi's metaphysics "which contributed to keeping him (Mahatma) going until his death" also his "utopia is one of the few that shows ecological balance, and today his rejection of the Western world's material abundance and waste is accepted by progressives of the ecological movement."<sup>255</sup>

The basic features of Gandhi's nonviolence lie in simplicity, integrity, reverence, and unity of all lives. These features are explicitly manifested in his experiments with Truth. While holding reverence for all kinds of lives, Gandhi contended that Truth is diverse and can only be unveiled through tolerance and compassion for others. He extensively tried to establish a relation between the self and the others (humans and non-human lives) by the ethical maneuver of *Karunā* and patience. Gandhi considered self-realization to be the chief factor in establishing a congruous relationship between self and the other.

Hindus are generally cosmo-centric people who worship trees, rivers and even mountains in their various festivals and cultural programs. Sharing the same lineage inspired Gandhi to hold veneration for all kinds of life. "While Gandhi allowed injured animals to be killed humanely to save them from unreasonable pain and at times even because they caused undue nuisance, his nonviolence encompassed a reverence for all life."<sup>256</sup> Interestingly in Hinduism, the culture of animal worship has been observed since antiquity. Animals are recognized as important entities of the natural world. And nothing can translate the reverence for all lives better than nonviolence. "The clearest indication of Gandhi's respect for nature, however, comes through his interpretation of the Hindu worship of the cow. Gandhi saw cow protection as one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution"<sup>257</sup>. As he contends: 'It takes the

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<sup>254</sup> Thomas, Weber, 1999, "Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics", p. 351.

<sup>255</sup> Naess, Arne, 1974, *Gandhi and Group Conflict: An Exploration of Satyagraha*, p.110.

<sup>256</sup> Thomas, Weber, 1999, "Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics", p. 351.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid. P.352.

human being beyond his species. The cow to me means the entire sub-human world. Man, through the cow, is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives.’<sup>258</sup>

Gandhi declared nonviolence to be the law of human species because it enables one to cultivate compassion towards all things living. His experiments with Truth were principally governed by his notion of nonviolence. Nonviolence, therefore, is not only a thread of ethnic, cultural, and social human harmony but also a holistic approach towards the incorporation of fundamental provisions for conservation of animals and other kinds of lives as well. As he contended: “I do believe that all God’s creatures have the right to live as much as we have.”<sup>259</sup> Moreover, Naess while acknowledging the connection between nonviolence and nature conservation quotes Gandhi; “I Believe in advaita (non-duality), I believe the essential unity of mankind and, for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one man gains spiritually the whole world gains with him and, if one man fails, the whole world fails to that extent.”<sup>260</sup> Naess further proposes that to confront the environmental issues, we are required to go beyond and deeper than the strategies of conservatism. He argues for a rigorous assessment of ideologies stemming from one’s cultural, social, and philosophical backgrounds. A necessary shift in the ideologies of the modern Western countries is required to undergo change and transformation to stimulate a more compact and deep ecological thinking. He referred to the modern western ideologies of environmentalism as shallow because it confronts the ecological problem only after it begins to surface. Deep ecology analyses and confronts the environmental issues through a true understanding of nature. Hence, it is evident from the discussion above that Arne Naess, the father of deep ecology borrows his inspiration from Gandhi in saving and conserving the environment. Thomas Weber makes this connection more explicate by drawing Naess’ systematization of Gandhian Ethics<sup>261</sup>:

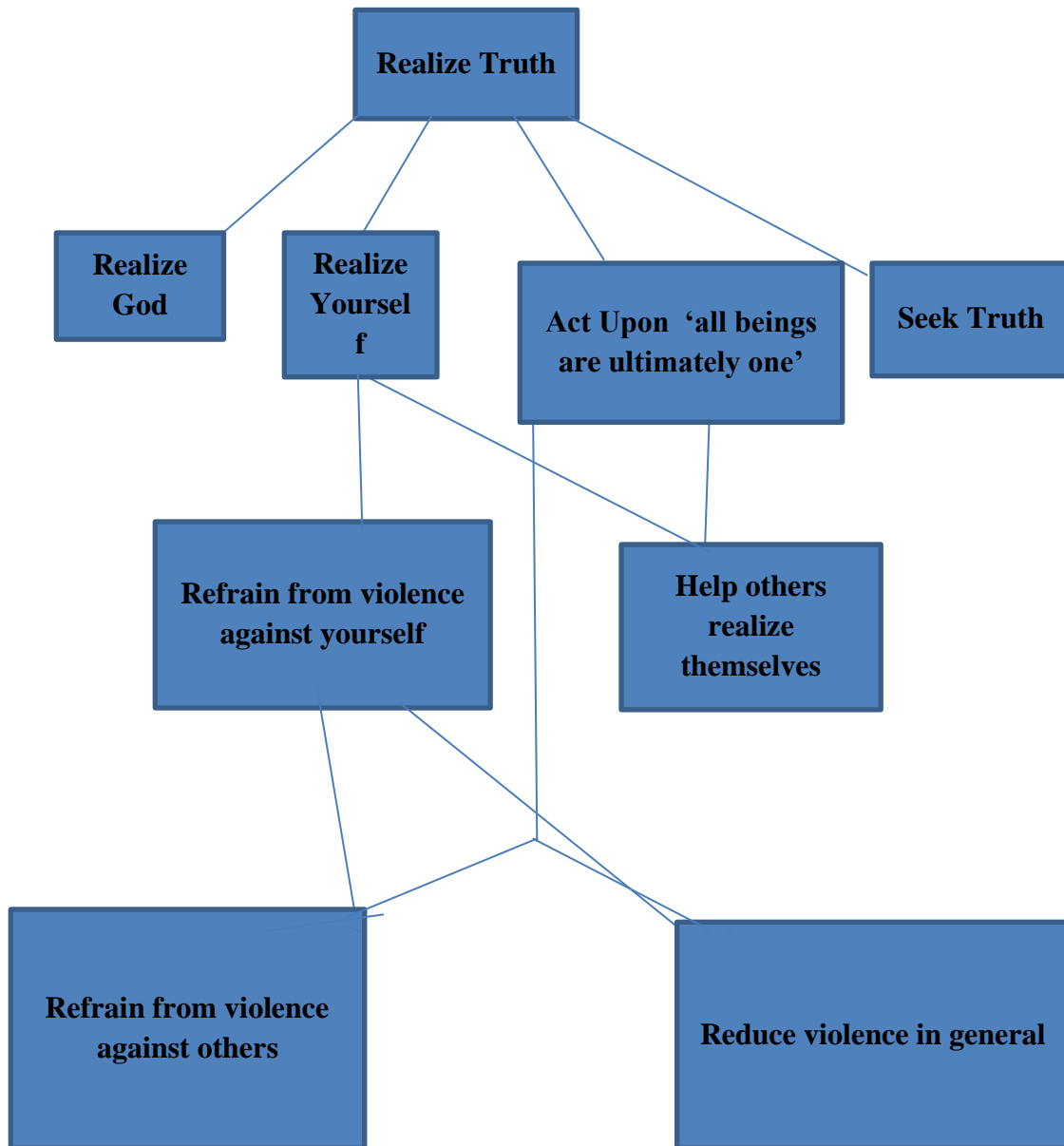
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<sup>258</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1921. *Young India*, 6<sup>th</sup> October.

<sup>259</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1937. *Harijan*, January 19.

<sup>260</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1924. *Young India*, 4 December.

<sup>261</sup> Cited from, Weber, T. 1999. “Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics, p. 353.



In the graph shown, it is reflected that self-realization provides an engine to the activity of Truth in the following ways:

- A) The prime activity involves a search for Truth as the supreme goal manifested in the three parts, namely, Realize God, Realize Yourself, and act upon all beings as necessarily one. The foremost aspect of Truth is that it is manifested through various sources. Hence, one must seek self-realization to comprehend Truth which Gandhi equalized with God.

- B) The second activity ensues a care perspective which later manifests in compassion for all beings.
- C) The third activity cautions the seeker to mitigate violence or *himsā* that obscures the path of self-realization. To get rid of hindrances caused by violence, the individual is required to help others and act upon the principle that all living beings are essentially one.
- D) And lastly, the one who realizes that violence is the obstruction in the path of self-consciousness deliberately refrains from it which in turn reduces violence in general.

Thus, through the above- mentioned conceptual construction of Gandhi's ethics, Naess tries to systematize Gandhi's principle of nonviolent living which includes the critical hypothesis that all beings are essentially one. As Naess argues that every being possesses an intrinsic value and hence, the intrinsic value of a being should not be conceived as distinct from its usefulness. He further adds; "If you hear a phrase like, all life is fundamentally one", you should be open to testing this before asking immediately, "What does this mean".<sup>262</sup>

Hence, from the above discussion, the influence of Gandhi's principle of nonviolence is clearly discernible in Arne Naess works and writings. This now leads us to our second expedition of a socialist and peace researcher Johan Galtung's work. Johan Galtung through his pioneering work on peace research primarily shifts the focus from negative aspects of peace to the positive aspects of peace. Earlier, "peace was interpreted as an absence of war and the discipline of peace research left other social problems to different disciplines."<sup>263</sup> This practice was common in the peace researchers of the post-world war II period which conceived peace as a non-war situation. Galtung through his work analyzed the comprehensive nature of peace. His work expounds the wholeness of peace and analyses the structural violence violating the peace. As he argues:

'Peace Research should liberate itself from a materialistic bias dealing with bodies, dead or alive, healthy or unhealthy-in other words with mortality and morbidity only, and not with the mental and spiritual dimensions of violence and human growth and development.'<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>262</sup>Rothenberg David, 1993, *Is it Painful to Think?: Conversations with Arne Naess Father of Deep Ecology*, p.151.

<sup>263</sup> Weber, T. 1999. "Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics", p.354.

<sup>264</sup> Galtung, Johan, 1985, 'Twenty-five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Some Responses', *Journal of Peace Research* 22(2): 156.

Peace in Indian tradition is referred as *Shānti* which incorporates outer as well as inner peace composed of serenity and quietness of mind. Thus, peace in Indian tradition employs a far-fetched meaning than western conception of a non-war situation. The ancient Indian tradition cherishes and practices the holistic nature and all-inclusivity of peace. Alike Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism also emphasizes on the all-embracing aspects of peace. These traditions primarily concentrate on the elimination of outer as well as inner disengagements. Significantly, “primarily as a response to the work of Galtung, the central concern of peace research for many researchers moved from direct violence and its elimination or reduction to the broader agenda of structural violence and its elimination”.<sup>265</sup> Galtung recognizes the structural violence embedded in social, political, and economic inequality. He argues that the indirect aspects of violence often go unnoticed and hence gives rise to “unequal power and consequently unequal life chances. It includes exploitation, alienation, marginalization, poverty, deprivation, misery etc. and exists when the basic needs for security, freedom, welfare and identity are not being met.”<sup>266</sup>

Galtung contends that structural violence is far more dangerous than direct violence because direct violence can be tackled and mitigated with certain organizational planning. Whereas indirect violence assumes a subtle form and reduces the quality and growth of human life by procuring structural inequalities and exploitations. So, the negative peace cannot safeguard the human life against the intangible structural inequalities as they often go undetected. Whereas positive peace also referred to as all-encompassing peace can improve the quality of human life through elimination of structural violence breeding under the social, political, and economic edifices of the world. Containment of outer responses of dissent resulting in conflict or warfare war does not ensure well-being of humankind. Rather, peace realized at structural level can facilitate freedom, justice, and protection of mankind. Weber points out that Galtung didn't make the distinction between negative and positive peace explicit until his 1969 paper; “Violence, Peace and Peace Research” which he wrote sitting on the “roof of Gandhian Institute of Studies at Rajghat in Varanasi, India, explaining its origin, Galtung points to his desire to link the theories of peace, conflict and development; the emerging distinction between actor-oriented and structure-oriented social cosmologies, and the exposure to Gandhian thinking.”<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Weber, T. 1999. “Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics”, p.354.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid. P.354. Also see, Galtung, Johan, 1996, *Peace by Peaceful Means*.

<sup>267</sup> Weber, T. 1999. “Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics”, p.354.

Well-being of the poor holds paramount importance in Galtung's peace research for he believes that inequalities "were in and by themselves violence... unnecessary evils in their own right."<sup>268</sup> Significantly, Galtung's standpoint and his writings are inspired by Gandhi because Gandhi was the first and foremost politician/ humanitarian who argued against both the direct and the structural form of violence. His political philosophy conceives holistic peace by encompassing social, ethical, and economic equalities realized through nonviolent maneuvers. Gandhi considered nonviolence to be the law of human species. He argued that it is our duty to treat others as equals and hold compassion and reverence towards all things living. Hence, degradation, mistreatment and dehumanization of human life is considered unethical and therefore, violent in Gandhi's philosophy. Against the economic inequality pertaining to exploitation and alienation, Gandhi contends that:

'I venture to suggest that it is the fundamental law of nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world...'<sup>269</sup>

So, apart from seeking international peace, one must seek structural peace to ensure a qualitative growth and well-being of mankind. But the question may arise how we may achieve structural peace? Galtung suggests that the path to achieve structural peace employs adoption and practice of structural nonviolence, i.e., preventing premeditated damage to others. Galtung argues that Gandhi's methods and teachings render him as a 'structuralist' in the following sense:

"conflict in the deeper sense as something that was built into social structure, not into the person...Colonialism was a structure and caste was a structure; both of them filled with persons performing their duties according to their roles or statuses...The evil was in the structure, not in the person who carried out his obligations... exploitation is violence, but it is quite clear that Gandhi sees it as a structural relation more than as the intended evil inflicted upon innocent victims by evil men."<sup>270</sup>

Gandhi's philosophy explicates a psychological underpinning of nonviolence, in other words, in nonviolence the structural inequalities entrenched deeply in our social and individual conduct gets dissolved by means of self-realization and positive peace. On the contrary, violence

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<sup>268</sup> Galtung Johan, 1975, 'Introduction', in Johan Galtung ed., *Essays in Peace Research*, vol.1. pp.23-24.

<sup>269</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1933, *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, p.384.

<sup>270</sup> Galtung, Johan, 1971a, 'Gandhi and Conflictology', in *Papers: A Collection of Works Previously Available Only in Manuscript or Very Limited Circulation Mimeographed or Photocopied Editions*, Vol.5, pp.133-134, cited from Thomas, Weber, 1999, "Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics", p.356.

substantiates the structural inequalities that further facilitate the intended evil. So, through the above discussion, it is plausible to assume that Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence works deeper into the psychology of man inspiring him to commence transformation from within. The third part of Weber's exposition comes in the analysis of E.F. Schumacher's 'Buddhist Economics'. Noticeably, in the Section II of the chapter, I have expounded that both Gandhi's principles and Buddhist philosophy of economics served as a major influence in Schumacher nonviolent approach to economics. Moreover, in the current section, I endeavor to explicate nonviolent economics as a means for reducing ecological violence to attain a sustainable environment.

Schumacher's work, *Small is Beautiful*, helped in relocating and structuring Gandhi's economic ideas by making his economic philosophy a focal point of study. And it has also earned him the title of "later-day [sic] Gandhi"<sup>271</sup>. Schumacher realized that the modern western model of development or mass production incorporates various economic ills such as exploitation, alienation, and dehumanizing working conditions. So, he arrived at the understanding that "economics did not stand alone. As with other disciplines, it derived a view of the meaning and purpose of life."<sup>272</sup> He discovered that Gandhi's economic approach is laden with meaning and purpose of life as he extolled the principles of *Swadeshi* and *Khādi*.

Gandhi proposed *Charkhā* or the spinning wheel as a symbol for both economic independence and one's true reverence for his/her neighbors. *Charkhā* became the center for economic revolution in India. Schumacher argued that Gandhi did not propose the complete destruction of Industrialization rather his purpose was to constrain the regulation and extension of industrialization. Through *Khādi*, Gandhi aimed for decentralization of production and distribution as he argued that India's pauperism cannot be removed unless sufficient work is provided to the millions of idle Indian masses.

*Swadeshi* echoes Gandhi's effort of localizing the production and distribution by minimizing the cause of production, thus making it available for consumption at cheaper rates. As he contended:

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<sup>271</sup> Hoda, M. M., 1978, 'Schumacher: A Profile', in M. M. Hoda, ed., *Future is manageable: Schumacher's Observations on Nonviolent Economics and Technology with a Human face*, p. 2.

<sup>272</sup> Weber, T. 1999, "Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics", p. 356.

“Swadeshi is that spirit in us which requires us to serve our immediate neighbors before others, and to use things produced in our neighborhood in preference to those more remote. So, doing, we serve humanity to the best of our capacity. We cannot serve humanity by neglecting our neighbors.”<sup>273</sup>

Schumacher explored the link between economics and war in the light of Gandhi’s thinking and arrived at the assumption that what was needed was nonviolent economics.<sup>274</sup> Schumacher described his manifesto of nonviolent economics in the following manner:

“A way of life that ever more rapidly depletes the power of earth to sustain it and piles up ever more insoluble problems for each succeeding generation can only be called ‘violent’...In short, man’s urgent task is to discover a nonviolent way in his economics as well as in his political life...Nonviolence must permeate the whole of man’s activities, if mankind is to be secure against a war of annihilation... Present day economics, while claiming to be ethically neutral, in fact propagates a philosophy of unlimited expansionism without any regard to the true and genuine needs of man which are limited.”<sup>275</sup>

So, he regarded expansionism of industries as violent for he considered the activity of mass production ecologically damaging and innately violent. Following Gandhi, he then draws a distinction between mass production and production by the masses. Mass production, on the one hand, is a product of shallow meta-economic ideology which does not take into consideration the fundamental nature of man and the essential importance of nature itself. He argued that mass production gives rise to unjustifiable wants, over-consumption, non-renewable resources, alienation, and dehumanizing working conditions. Production by the masses, on the other hand, functions through the meta-economics of man and nature and understands their fundamental characters. It procures an economic activity a meaning and dignity which further enables an individual to learn, grow, and earn reverence simultaneously. It establishes an essential contact between the worker and the environment of the work and is suitable for a country with a humongous population.

He proposed that Gandhi’s ideal/alternative model of economic development can be realized through a medium of technology that is small, decentralized, easily manageable, low-cost, environment friendly and renewable etc. A technology that can be skilled through unsophisticated masses is the ideal requirement of third world countries where a large number of economic

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<sup>273</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1919. *Young India*, 20<sup>th</sup> August.

<sup>274</sup> Weber, T. 1999. “Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhism Economics”, p. 357.

<sup>275</sup> Schumacher, E. F. 1960, ‘Non-violent Economics’, *Observer*, 21 August.



activities are unorganized. The quandary of extensive industrialization could be challenged through decentralization and skill enhancement of unsophisticated workers. Gandhi was not against machinery per se; rather he opposed the incessant craze and want for machinery. To quote him in this context:

‘The craze is for what they call labor-saving machinery. Men go on ‘saving labour’ till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labor, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labor but greed.’<sup>276</sup>

It is evident that both Schumacher and Gandhi vehemently advocated a nonviolent economy oriented towards people and their well-being. They both rejected the greed driven economic development which dehumanizes and degrades human labor and potential. Schumacher’s intermediate approach to technology was extolled by Gandhians who acclaimed him as ‘the man who could interpret Gandhi’<sup>277</sup>. Thus, it is evident from the works and writings of Naess, Galtung and Schumacher that their inspiration comes from the life and maneuvers of Gandhi. It is apparent that Gandhi never structured his ethics of environmentalism, yet the notion of nonviolence serving his political, social, and economic maneuvers provides us the ground to infer and make expositions on his ethics of environmentalism.

Moreover, Ramchandra Guha’s work titled; “Mahatma Gandhi and the Environmental Movement” seeks to answer the question; ‘was Gandhi an early environmentalist?’ He unfolds the matter by acknowledging the influence of Gandhi on the early environmentalist of India who adopted his nonviolent techniques to protest the depletion and exploitation of natural resources. This further led him to enquire about the source of the claims made by environmentalists that Gandhi could foresee the ecological crisis descended through the western model of development. He contends that such claims are without much supporting evidence and asks ‘where and in what ways did’<sup>278</sup> Gandhi exhibits his concern for environment conservation.

Guha invokes *Hind Swarāj* for the purpose of illustrating Gandhi’s viewpoint on man’s relation with nature. And later expounds that *Hind Swarāj* is not the adequate source to discern

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<sup>276</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1924. *Young India*, 13<sup>th</sup> November.

<sup>277</sup> Wood, Barbara, 1984, *Alias Papa: A life of Fritz Schumacher*, p.322.

<sup>278</sup> Guha Ramchandra, 1996, “Mahatma Gandhi and the Environmental Movement”, in Raghuramraju, A, (ed.), *Debating Gandhi: A Reader*, p.224.

Gandhi's stand on environmentalism. He resorts to Gandhi's other scattered writings of 1920, 1930, and 1940's where he finds indication of an alternative path to development.

Guha argues that Gandhi's immersion in Indian villages enabled him to apprehend the economic exploitation taking place in Indian villages. Gandhi noticed that urban industrialization generated unemployment and forced idleness in village multitudes. So, he opposed the extensive industrialization which resulted in major exploitation and alienation of the poor. Gandhi further contends:

“God forbid that India should ever take to industrialization after the manner of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island kingdom (England) is today keeping the world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 million took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts.”<sup>279</sup>

The selfish and competitive trait of industrialization has chained the modern society by the passage of expansion and exploitation which is generating a bias between the urban and the poor population of India. Gandhi recognized that dispossessed masses are thrown into exploitative structures to fortify the edifice of sophisticated urban Industrialization. As he quotes; “The blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built.”<sup>280</sup> Gandhi while addressing a gathering in Indore warned public against the exhaustion of resources for industrial development as he argued; ‘we are sitting in this fine *pandal* under a blaze of electric lights, but we do not know we are burning these lights at the expense of the poor’<sup>281</sup>. Gandhi rightly diagnosed the evils of Industrialization and how badly it affects the poor. To eradicate the ills of Industrialization, he proposed decentralization of economic development essentially intended to construct and accelerate village economies by means of home production and distribution.

Guha further argues that the pre-eminent aim of Gandhi's economic model of development “was the decentralization of political and economic power, so that the villages could resume control over their own affairs.”<sup>282</sup> As Gandhi claimed that the centralization of production has created a large gap between the rich and the poor class. Scientific inventions including electricity that exists as an exclusive privilege to the rich urban classes further foster this difference. Gandhi

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<sup>279</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1928. *Young India*, 29<sup>th</sup> December.

<sup>280</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1946. *Harijan* 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

<sup>281</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1955. *Harijan*, 11 May.

<sup>282</sup> Guha Ramchandra, 1996, “Mahatma Gandhi and the Environmental Movement”, in Raghuramraju, A, (ed.), *Debating Gandhi: A Reader*, p.226.

contended; "if "we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity."<sup>283</sup>

Guha claims that "there are many elements" of Gandhi's ideology "that would fit nicely into the utopia of the environmentalist: local self-reliance, a clean and hygienic environment, the collective management and use of those gifts of nature so necessary for a human life, water and pasture."<sup>284</sup> He further noticed that Gandhi, though idealist, also had an 'uncanny knack for practical means' echoed through the 'attention he paid to soil fertility'.<sup>285</sup> As Gandhi warned that; "trading in soil fertility for the sake of quick returns would prove to be disastrous, shortlisted policy. It would result in the virtual depletion of the soil."<sup>286</sup> Guha further provides an underpinning to the claim of Gandhi being an environmentalist for he suggests that Gandhi "was an enthusiastic supporter of organic manure, which enriched the soil, improved village hygiene through the effective disposal of waste, saved foreign exchange, and enhanced crop yields".<sup>287</sup>

Guha recognized that Gandhi greatly admired the work of Albert Howard who pioneered the innovative methods of organic agriculture at the Institute of Plant Industry in Indore. Gandhi himself mentioned and greatly extolled Howard's innovative approach of converting waste such as mixture of cow dung, farm waste, wood ash, and urine into invaluable fertilizers.<sup>288</sup> Guha acknowledges that Gandhi's principles and his criticism of modern civilization are clearly explicit in today's environment. Gandhi characterized the modern civilization in terms of standing on the stack of multiplication of wants, whereas the ancient civilization was much more stable and satisfied with "an imperative restriction upon, and a strict regulation of, these wants".<sup>289</sup> Guha further elaborates that Gandhi's lifestyle and his code of conduct was in line with the environmental approach we require to adopt to sustain in the challenging contemporary environment. He argued:

"At an Individual level, Gandhi's code of voluntary simplicity offers a sustainable alternative to the modern lifestyle. One of his best-known aphorisms, that the 'world has enough for everybody's

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<sup>283</sup> Ibid. p.226

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Gandhi, M. K. *Harijan* 25<sup>th</sup> August 1946

<sup>287</sup> Guha Ramchandra, 1996, "Mahatma Gandhi and the Environmental Movement", in Raghuramraju, A, (ed.), *Debating Gandhi: A Reader*, p.226.

<sup>288</sup> Gandhi, M. K. 1953. *Harijan*, 17<sup>th</sup> August, and 24<sup>th</sup> August.

<sup>289</sup> Gandhi, M.K. *Young India*, 2 June 1927.

need but not enough for everybody's greed', is, in effect, an exquisitely phrased one line environmental ethic. This was an ethic he himself practiced; for resource recycling and the minimization of wants were integral to his life."<sup>290</sup>

The agrarian economy that Gandhi endorsed has larger implications for rural reconstruction and poverty reduction. His "analysis of macro processes of economic development, his prescription for rural reconstruction, and his ethic for living; at all these levels Gandhi's writings, when interpreted in contemporary terms, offer acute insights into the environmental crisis."<sup>291</sup>

To sum up, the deep environmental implications of Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence is explicit through the works of Arne Naess, Johan Galtung, E. F. Schumacher and Ramchandra Guha. In light of the above expositions and writings, I have found that an inference has been made through Gandhi's ethical and political maneuver of nonviolence to arrive at somewhat inexplicit environmental concerns deeply rooted in the larger concept of nonviolence. It is a known fact that Gandhi's teachings were expounded on his metaphysical assumption regarding truth. Gandhi's evoking of simplistic lifestyle to maintain decorum with nature expresses his concern for the sustainment of all things living. Gandhi through his writings and maneuvers frequently invoked the larger implications of nonviolence in terms of an ethical and social tool for resolving both physical and environmental violence. His constant emphasis on self-realization as rightly observed by Arne Naess was innately significant in improving the quality of human life via espousal of nonviolence towards all beings. Through trusteeship, Gandhi advised the public to liberate themselves from the clutches of materialism, another similarity that echoes in Galtung's approach for peace. Like Gandhi, he too blamed the structural violence for creating hindrance in way of holistic peace. Moreover, the exemplary works by E. F. Schumacher have also contributed immensely in recognizing and reiterating Gandhi's alternative approach to development. Historian Ramchandra Guha through his systematic analysis of Gandhi's work and writings explicates the environmental ethics behind Gandhi's moral and ethical philosophy of nonviolence.

Thus, the dynamics of *Swarāj* economics is discernible through the concepts of trusteeship, nonviolence, and *swadeshi*. Gandhi alternative approach to development obdurately criticizes the greed driven approach held by the big industrialists towards economics of the world. It attempts

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<sup>290</sup> Guha Ramchandra, 1996, "Mahatma Gandhi and the Environmental Movement", in Raghuramraju, A, (ed.), *Debating Gandhi: A Reader*, p.227.

<sup>291</sup> Raghuramraju, A., (ed.), *Debating Gandhi: A Reader*, p.227.

to shift the focus from materialism to naturalism. Basic principles of holistic living ingrained in nonviolence are deeply extolled in Gandhi's philosophy. A deeper analysis of structural violence has also been attempted to discuss its role in generating pauperism and exploitation. Gandhi rightly observed that structural violence works deep in the psychology of man invoking him to perform his/her actions in the wake of societal and structural constraints. Nonviolence, on the other hand, attempts to dissolve such conflicts by means of transforming social and economic structures to reduce inequalities, injustice, and exploitation. The violent evil of exploitation perceived by Gandhi in its structural relation to individuals reflects his concern for inequality and poverty. So, instead of holding individuals as an evil agent of their maneuvers, he held structures responsible for generating evil in man. *Swadeshi* being a multi-facet tool echoes personal, social, and economic dimensions to enable individuals to serve themselves while serving their neighbors and nation. So, if mankind is to be secured against the war of exploitation and annihilation, nonviolence should persist in the whole of man's conduct. It is required from the economics of the contemporary world that instead of subscribing superficially to the virtues of ethics, it should attempt to introduce and employ peaceful means for sustainable development.

## Conclusion

In the present study, we have explored Gandhi's notion of *swarāj* in its operative terms of *Sarvodaya* and *Antyodaya* which have been philosophically articulated and presented in terms of utopia and reality. I have attempted to address the basic question - what is a utopia and what kind of utopia Gandhi would like to advocate. The popular understanding of utopia as a work of fiction was first proposed by Thomas More who efficiently utilized his work as a socio-political satire on the ills of Tudor England. The work which is divided into two parts offers a fictional narrative of an island society named *Utopia*, and its religious, political, and social norms. Notably, many aspects of More's utopian society reflect the structure of life in monasteries. Though these views do not bear any direct reflection to Gandhi's social and political contestations, however, the discussion between Thomas More and Raphael Hythloday could illuminate some of Gandhi's views. For instance, Thomas More's early interlocution with Raphael Hythloday substantially condemning the modern ills affecting the European society such as the king's propensity to invade other countries and granting extravagant expenditure of money and resources on fruitless endeavors significantly mirrors Gandhi's confrontation of societal ills in his political and social endeavors. Similarly, in Gandhi an attempt to introduce peaceful resistance or what is popularly known as *Satyāgraha* could be regarded as an alternative to needless violent confrontations such as wars or revolts. However, unlike Thomas More, Gandhi's dispersal of dynamic confrontations and experiments with Truth assume a direct influence on the Indian freedom struggle.

I have organized the discussion by expounding the role of utopia and its emergence in Thomas More's work to discuss the realistic features of Gandhian *swarāj* in terms of his exemplary ethics articulated and presented through his *satyāgraha* movements. To establish Gandhi's *swarāj* as a realistic utopia, it is vital to comprehend the nature and role of utopia. Viewed as an adjective, utopia pictures an ideal human society which enjoys flawless social and political establishments. Notably, Thomas More, the father of European socialism pioneered the word Utopia in his fictional work *Utopia* where he strenuously condemns the societal and political ills persisting in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe. To further elucidate the nature of utopia, I have endeavored to comprehend its varied manifestations across disciplines of social and political sciences, philosophy, and literature. To do so, I have considered the works of L. T. Sargent: "Three faces of Utopianism Revisited". Brent

Nelson's Introduction: "Utopia for 500 Years", Ruth Levitas': *The Concept of Utopia*, Karl Mannheim's *Utopia and ideology* and many more. Through these works, I have expounded that utopia through its various currents of creativity, desire, dream, and hope etc. inexorably reflects our deep-seated need or desire to change or transform. When employed as a creative mirror to society, it inevitably procures societal reconstruction. Though, the notion attracts certain ambiguities in terms of being an idealized blueprint of the perfect societal order that often paves way for totalitarian thinking. Yet, totalitarianism can be prevented by a careful construction of ideas and policies that allow alteration in contingent circumstances. Significantly, the purpose of utopia is to incessantly strive for a reformed order by identifying and mitigating the predominant corrupt practices in the current system. Utopia through essential free flow of the ideas evidently echoes hope and creativity. Moreover, it promotes a positive outlook that inevitably reflects possibility for human progress. Also, man's potentiality for good is reflected deeply in utopia. Notably, utopia when treated as a mirror to contemporary society not only underlines the flawed structures, but also inspires individuals to strive for stringent efforts to realize an improved future.

However, Gandhi's utopia is evident through *Sarvodaya* and *Antyodaya* attempts towards a complete eradication of structural violence in social, political, and economic spheres of human existence. Exploitative practices of untouchability, unfair extortion of tax such as *Sharabeshi* and other heavily levied taxes on basic goods were some of the many harsh systems that he valiantly confronted and attempted to extenuate. His *satyāgraha* movements on Indian soil are significantly reflective of his incessant efforts towards the realization of his holistic vision of *Rām Rājya* for India.

I have also endeavored to develop the realistic features of Gandhi's notion of *swarāj* amidst his contemporaries like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, and K. C. Bhattacharya. The basic question which I have addressed in contrasting Gandhi's position against his contemporaries is, to what extent did Gandhi agree or disagree with his contemporaries?

Gandhi pioneered and implemented *satyāgraha* and *swadeshi* to provide *swarāj* with practical footing. Nonviolence, village reconstruction, and *Swadeshi* movements are the *point d'appui* of Gandhian *swarāj*. However, philosophers and social reformists like Sri Aurobindo, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and K. C. Bhattacharya, also attributed unique dimensions to the notion of *swarāj* which Gandhi profoundly admired. For instance, Bal Gangadhar Tilak strived to stir Indian intelligentsia by invoking the native masses to resist British ideologies and regulations. So, it was

essential for him to find out indigenous ideologies which could procure a lasting impact on Indian minds to combat the hold of western hegemonies. He unraveled his indigenous inspiration in *Gita* which profoundly influenced Tilak's notion of *swarāj* as it advocates the path of *Karma Yoga* to realize the divinity within us. *Gita* as a spiritual and political guide qualified on many grounds to be chosen as an action guide of revolution. Moreover, it procured him the advantage of its wide pervading acceptability in Hindu households. Its authority over almost all sections of Hindu culture and mainly on Brahmin culture was prodigiously evident. Tilak apprehended *Gita* as a guide that enables one to wipe out the illusions of the material world and illumines the path of *Karma Yoga* –insisting upon one's duty. To profoundly elucidate his philosophy of *Karma Yoga*, Tilak formulated his own commentary on *Gita* known as *Gita- The Rahasya*. In *Gita- The Rahasya*, Tilak strenuously attempted to manifest the philosophy of action as the highest duty of man. Furthermore, he ardently tried to invoke the sense of duty and responsibility among his fellow citizens to fight the British oppression. Tilak's *swarājya* notion reflects a synthesis of his beliefs in the teachings of ancient Hindu scriptures, western ideologies, and political theories.

Tilak's nationalism brought out a vital orientation in Indian politics which empowered his fellow countrymen with enthusiasm and devotion towards one's nation. He notably revived the Ganpati festival in Maharashtra to invoke the spirit of brotherhood among other Maharashtrians. Tilak's contention that "*swarājya* is my birth right and I will achieve it" is plausible to Gandhi as well for them both sponsored a holistic vision for Indian Independence. Moreover, Tilak's contribution in Indian Independence movement is unprecedented as his vision constituted far reaching consequences rendering him the title of "the father of Indian unrest". Notably, Gandhi was both junior to Tilak in age as well as the duration of political experience. Tilak laid the foundation of a vibrant struggle against the British exploitation which Gandhi further intensified during his struggle. They both strenuously disdained the unwarranted hegemonization of western ideologies upon Indian cultures. Moreover, Tilak stirred up the Indian intelligentsia from its slumber of polite pleading and petition to British power by storming off the Indian Independence struggle with his dynamic ideology and methods.

Furthermore, Gandhi's experiments with truth allowed him to modify and alter his positions in contingent conditions. In Gandhi, we find a holistic vision of *swarāj* unconstrained by one's cultural, religious, or regional identity. Similarly, Tilak also opted for a unified vision. His unique contribution comes forth in the form of various social and political reforms that he



undertook during his leadership for instance reviving the Ganapati festival to ignite the spirit of brotherhood in fellow Maharashtrians. Notably, the sectarian stratification of Indian society is not seen in Gandhi; rather, he maneuvered to dissolve the exploitative practices authorized under sectarian divisions. Though, Tilak in later years of his life did raise concern against the exploitative practice of untouchability, yet it gained no profound and fruit bearing significance as he refused to sign a 1918 petition demanding the abolition of untouchability. Moreover, Gandhi's notion of nonviolence and his firm adherence to it renders his political philosophy a unique weapon to unite and fight simultaneously. Likewise, Tilak also strenuously emphasized on the unity of Indian masses to dethrone the Colonial power, yet the methods he adopted to vindicate his position varied largely from Gandhi. In Gandhi, we find a moderate approach towards revolution through peaceful means, whereas, in Tilak a dynamic perspective for revolution is mirrored through his *Karma Yoga* philosophy granting the employment of violent means if required.

Moreover, Aurobindo's *swarāj* allotted major significance to the divine realization of human life. It attempts to unearth the possibilities of human life beyond the mechanical necessities of one's body. His vision operates on a mystical level of divine unity achieved through the complete dissolution of the ego. It is interesting to note that Aurobindo in early years of his political career expounded the insurrection method as more effective than polite plead of intellectuals to the British system. He contended against the conservative system of well-crafted petitions followed by Indian intellectuals to appeal to the British sense of justice. Moreover, he ran secret societies to counter the biased practices of colonial government. Notably, his articles in *Bande Mataram* stirred a new wave of political activism in Bengal. He enabled the dawn of the New Movement by inspiring young minds to revolt and struggle for their motherland. He was a visionary who sought to revolutionize the congress to become the center for revolutionary action rather than a hub of timid constitutional petitions. However, his political career was short lived because upon arriving at Pondicherry his "cave years" started. In his pursuit of realizing the divine life, Aurobindo explicated the Integral Yoga to delimit the constraints of physical mechanization. He further dives into the notion of consciousness and expounded in-consciousness to be the cause of our ideological and physical restraint. Hence, he evolved his goal from attaining political *swarāj* to realizing spiritual *swarāj* by founding the divinity within oneself.

Sri Aurobindo expounded the necessity of moral virtues for substantial political transformation. Likewise, Gandhi also allotted great significance to one's moral assertion in

political, social, and individual maneuvers. It is significant to note that while Aurobindo held an idealistic approach to *swarāj*, Gandhi possessed a pragmatic approach. The mysticism ingrained in Aurobindo spiritual *swarāj* renders it incomprehensible to the common mind. In contrast, Gandhi established a unique harmony between the spiritual and the political *swarāj* to lead India in its fight for independence. Though both Gandhi and Aurobindo wrote extensively on the issues of national interest like, self-reliance, courage etc., yet the methods they adopted to realize their vision were contrasting. Though Gandhi agreed on Aurobindo's vision of *swarāj* as finding divinity within oneself, yet the idealism employed by Aurobindo bequeath his vision as incomprehensible to ordinary consciousness.

Significantly, K.C.B rightly appropriated a methodological attitude towards ideals and their representative ideas. He effectively located *swarāj* in the realms of constructive interpretation of ideals. He vehemently argued for a vital assimilation of ideas through competition and comparison with one's old set of ideas. Like Gandhi, he too criticized blind annihilation of ideas. Furthermore, he encouraged his fellow countrymen to take pride in their indigenous cultures. Gandhi, on the one hand, ignited the zeal of courage in Indian masses, K.C.B, on the other hand, ignited the fervor of *swarāj* in ideas. Moreover, Bhattacharya expounded the notion of "slavery of the spirit" to highlight the actual problem of subjugation. He contended that though political suppression holds sufficient power to regulate the external interior of an individual's life, yet there exists a more subtle, deep, and efficacious suppression of ideas that enables the control of one's mind by alien ideas. He argued that ideas play a significant role in constructing one's ideology that further translates into the role an individual is going to play in a society. So, inattentive hybridization of alien culture or new ideas might lead to a confused mind whose authentic authority for creativity gets superseded in following the trail of new hegemonies.

He has further contended that all ideas are representatives of their ideals. And the assimilation of new ideals is not wrong; rather what is erroneous is an unreasoned hegemony of new ideas without their comparison with one's old set of ideas. In the context of Indian civilization, he strenuously argued against the obsession for English education among educated circles of India. In his discourse, he asks his fellow countrymen how many of his educated audience have assimilated new culture through a proper methodical investigation. Have they compared their new ideas with their old sets of ideas? He furthermore questions the unreasonable propensity of accepting western hegemonies in fashion. However, he mentions that though India has profited

from some western hegemonies, yet for any assimilation to have meaningful significance in other cultures, a critical assimilation is essential. Though, maintaining a distinct identity for oneself in integrating new ideas is vital yet, simply rejecting new good ideas merely to maintain individuality paves way for obscurantism. Bhattacharya was not against annihilation of new ideals, rather he objected the unreasonable annihilation which forms the slavery of the spirit.

It is vital to note that like Gandhi, Bhattacharya also strenuously emphasized on the use of vernacular language and traditions to stimulate creativity and knowledge inherent in ancient Indian cultures. Gandhi in his critique of western civilization brilliantly argues against the modern obsession for western cultures and their hegemonies which may not share the same spiritual and ideological values as one's native culture. Every culture represents a unique ideology, and it should be revered for its uniqueness but at the same time, a critical approach is required to judge its significance from a native point of view. Thus, we have unearthed a balance of inter-relationship between political, spiritual, and individual *swarāj* in Gandhi's approach. Through *swarāj* Gandhi maneuvered to integrate various compartments essential for nation building, i.e., social, economic, and political etc. His keen vision fortified India with a moral weapon of nonviolence which proved fatal in its fight for independence.

I have attempted to emphasize on Gandhi's experiments with culture. And I have also demonstrated how his experiments enabled his utopian mission to transform itself into mass action. Moreover, I have endeavored to understand his social and political experiments envisioned to achieve a just order through attempting direct confrontation with the existing systems of inequality and modernity. Also, significance of *swarāj* with and without Gandhi's direct authorship has been discussed comprehensively. Focusing on the issues of class conciliation and social reform, the ideological impact of *swarāj* has been made discernible. The study demonstrates Gandhi's struggle and his positive anti-colonial perspective and what he conceived to be in the best interest of his utopian vision. In some instances, Gandhi's experiments confronted class-interests and generated class consciousness in him and his fellow experimentalists. And in other cases, class connections were forced upon him that he had passively affirmed to keep his utopian vision intact. Gandhi by authorizing his intentions in a utopian vision established his experiments with truth to express his utopia. His utopia also came to express his personhood for he did not constrain his struggles to time or class alone; rather the Gandhi that most people know evolved himself through his utopian vision.

Struggle for independence in India was distinctly unique from other revolutionary struggles occurring in other parts of the world. The efficacy and practicality that nonviolence rendered to the whole movement proved substantial in bringing reforms and transformation. The experiment of *ahimsā* efficiently reduced violent sabotage of diverse ideologies. It had also disciplined the revolutionary fervor of insurrection and contributed uniquely to confront the existing ills. Nevertheless, with a series of successful experiments, some impediments also followed. One such impediment occurred in maintaining the religious diversity of India in precipitated circumstances which proved challenging amidst the insurrection of 1942. Gandhi went on to fast for several days to dissolve the violent fervor and attempted to reiterate the usefulness of nonviolence. Still, his vision of ideal India later got hijacked by the Congress party who pursued his teachings superficially. To suit the sentiments of Indian consciousness, the Congress appropriated Gandhi in the name only. After his assassination, the Congress government appropriated Gandhi's utopia to label practices that would violate his vision. Though, the Congress and Vinoba Bhave substantially adopted the class-coalition and *satyāgraha* campaigns, yet neglected another important fervor of Gandhi's thought, i.e., direct confrontation with the existing ills. The political hijacking of Gandhian utopia narrowed down the all-inclusive approach inherent in his movement to merely suit the "institutional Gandhism". The misappropriation of Gandhi's legacy enabled Congress to obtain control over the *satyāgraha* campaigns.

Significantly, after Gandhi's death, there emerged two strands of revolutionaries who tussled over Gandhi's legacy. The first strand consisted of Vinoba, his followers, Nehru, and the Congress party. And the second strand belonged to Gandhi's self-anointed heir Rammanohar Lohia. Both strands appropriated their own Gandhi for they needed the legitimate authority of his character to justify their own experiments. While Vinoba Bhave, on the one hand, the trusted collaborator of Gandhi acquired substantial institutional support from Nehru and the Congress party. Lohia, on the other hand, lacked organizational support for his claims. They divided up the *satyāgraha* experiment, as Vinoba distinguished between two forms of *satyāgraha*, namely, *Durāgraha*, i.e., harsh *satyāgraha* and mild *satyāgraha*. Vinoba, on the one hand, opted the mild *satyāgraha*, as an act of nonviolent persuasion to bring a change of heart, Lohia, on the other hand, employed harsh *satyāgraha* to bring radical transformation. They both appropriated their own Gandhi to suit the character of their mission. However, Lohia failed to legitimize Gandhi's authorship due to the lack of organizational support. Thus, Vinoba Bhave succeeded as Gandhi's

legitimate heir and pursued his *sarvodaya* mission through the *gramdan* movement. He marched on foot to spread awareness on Gandhi's thoughts and vision. As a result of his diligent efforts, landowners in Telangana gifted their lands to the dispossessed. It provided a significant acceleration to Vinoba's mission and further inspired him to make appeal to the elites for *gramdan*. Notably, the donations made by the rich were initially to be utilized for the "welfare of all". By 1970 his mission obtained around 4 million acres of land in donation. The Congress government also provided support to his movement for it helped them to control Gandhi's authorship. However, soon the failures of Vinoba Bhave's movement started becoming perceptible as nearly the 40 percent of the donated land proved uncultivable, and only the 30 percent of the total land was given in redistribution. Vinoba's stringent emphasis on the change of heart or nonviolent persuasion of individuals alone marked the failure of his moment. He was so rigorous in persuasion of heart that he failed to differentiate between lip service and the actual change of heart.

His overt emphasis on nonviolent persuasion facilitated the Congress party to officially hijack the Gandhian utopia. As a result, Gandhi's vision was followed superficially in bad faith. Moreover, Vinoba's denunciation of harsh *satyāgraha* rendered the *swarāj* dream into a utopia for he did not actively participate in confronting the existing ills. Perhaps, he went too soft on societal and political issues as his nonviolent experiments were constricted to spiritual progression only.

I have strived to expound the role of Gandhi's notion of trusteeship and equitable distribution in abating the gap between the rich and the poor, haves, and have-nots. I have also attempted to address; how far Gandhi's experiments of *Swadeshi* and *Sarvodaya* can be stretched in attaining fiscal autonomy to build a balance between need and greed economy. The ecological implication of nonviolence in sustaining a healthy environment and attaining a balanced lifestyle is also examined. Significantly, Gandhi's economic maneuvers are regulated through his need-based approach. The care and value oriented economic and social endeavors mirrors his dream of egalitarian society. Gandhi employs his principle of nonviolence to attend to the dilemma between need and greed economy by strenuously focusing on value-oriented planning to realize a harmonious inter-dependent social order of minimized wants and self-sufficient village economy.

Gandhi's economic policies were governed by his ethical and metaphysical principles. By employing Truth as God, he strenuously emphasized on the moral aspects of development. *Khādi* and *swadeshi* model for indigenous production mirrors a substantial step towards eradicating

poverty and forced idleness among Indian masses. Gandhi conceived that unlike the West, India does not require sophisticated equipment for production, rather, its first and foremost need lies in providing employment to the unsophisticated idle Indian masses. To achieve economic sustenance *swadeshi* evolved as an economic necessity for the well-being of India. Evident from the catastrophic repercussions of industrialization, Gandhi's principles emerge as more vital in sustaining the economic and ecological strands of development. It is significant to note that Gandhi never systematized his economic policy, yet his vehement emphasis on *khādi* and *swadeshi* programs echoes his visions of economic sustenance and development. He argued for a self-regulated model of development which does not rely heavily on imports.

Despite the rampant conundrum of impoverishment, there seems no sign of reduction in food and agricultural wastes. Considering the significant upsurge in the ecological, and sociological challenges, a minimalistic approach proposed by Gandhi seems plausible to eliminate the basic elements constituting sociological and ecological ills. The need and care-based approach proposed in trusteeship should also be stretched to confront the structural ills operating under the political, social, and economic edifice of India. Moreover, Gandhi's principle of nonviolence obdurately attempts to dissolve the ecological challenges by proposing a balanced lifestyle. He argued for the reverberation of all lives to maintain decorum with nature. His unique emphasis on self-realization as observed by Arne Naess is intrinsically significant for improving the quality of human life via espousal of nonviolence towards all beings. By proposing trusteeship as a care-oriented model, Gandhi advised populace to liberate themselves from the clutches of materialism. Johan Galtung through his pioneering discipline of peace and conflict research emphasizes on the importance of positive peace expounded in Gandhi's notion of nonviolence. Galtung by conceptualizing peace building efficiently traced the problems of inequality and injustice to the structural arrangements of society. He argued for structural transformation to address and mitigate the root cause of conflict. Moreover, E. F. Schumacher through his work, *Small is Beautiful* has also reiterated Gandhi's suggestion of production by masses to seize the gap between the rich and the poor. He argued against the technology of mass production for it fosters ecological damages and promotes structural violence in stultifying the human person. Production by masses is considered as an alternative approach towards the reduction of impoverishment in third world countries. Interestingly, many economists, ecologists, politicians, and social activists of the contemporary world have already started to acknowledge the implicit vitality of Gandhi's

principles and his alternative approach to development. Moreover, Ramchandra Guha through his systematic analysis of Gandhi's work and writings explicates the environmental ethics behind Gandhi's moral and ethical philosophy of nonviolence. Thus, Gandhi as a thinker through his incessant maneuvers for *swarāj* profoundly reverberates in the contemporary world. Though, he was not a political strategist in the strict sense of the term yet, the solutions proposed by him in tackling the economic, social, and political foibles of Indian society holds obdurate value as his thoughts transcend time and inspires us to be courageous, creative, and nonviolent in the holistic structuring of human society.

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